

**Volunteer State  
Community College**

**Best of  
Student Essays  
from the  
2017-2018  
Academic Year**

## **Acknowledgements for the 2017-2018 Academic Year**

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*This issue of Best Essays is dedicated to Dr. Leslie LaChance. Dr. LaChance served as the first VSCC English Department Publications Coordinator, overseeing this publication, the Pioneer Pen, and Number One. In addition to teaching numerous composition, literature, and creative writing courses, Dr. LaChance launched Sigma Kappa Delta (the English Honor Society for two-year colleges), chaired the department's most recent TBR Academic Audit, participated in the weekly Writer's Group, and initiated the department's adoption of a patch for the Volunteer State Community Garden. Dr. LaChance retired in December 2018. Her English colleagues will miss her energetic contributions to the department and her captivating laugh.*

- Laura Black, Associate Professor of English



## Introduction

*Volunteer State Community College Best of Student Essays* showcases some of the best writing being done by students at Volunteer State. Each year, instructors at Volunteer State nominate students who have demonstrated excellence in writing and invite them to submit an essay to our selection committee; that committee of Vol State faculty then works collaboratively to choose superior student work for publication. *Best Essays*, then, represents the exemplary writing of student authors, the support of their instructors, the efforts made by nominating faculty, and hours of hard work the selection committee does in reading and choosing the best of the best submissions.

The purpose of this publication is twofold: first, to showcase exemplary student writing by Vol State students, and second, to provide our faculty with helpful tools for teaching writing and critical thinking skills to our students.

The student essays published here exhibit the elements essential to high-quality, college-level writing. They are original, thoughtful, well-developed, well-organized, and carefully edited documents. The authors' voices are strong, the prose is engaging, and the pieces are written with a clear sense of audience and purpose. The work in this volume includes expository and personal essays, short research-based essays, analytical essays, and longer, more advanced researched arguments. The student submissions are separated into three categories, and one student in each category is awarded a prize for his or her work. Prize winners are chosen based on creativity, originality, critical thought, organization, and an awareness of the fundamentals of good writing.

Section 1 focuses on expository writing such as personal responses to selected topics, critical analysis, and essays which do not typically include formal research. The essays generally rely upon the rhetorical modes of narration, description, illustration, and analysis.

Section 2 focuses on short research essays written for English Composition 1. This category gives first semester composition students the chance to show off their beginning collegiate research skills without having to compete with more advanced writers. Good research essays employ rhetorical modes such as comparison and contrast and/or analysis of cause and effect as a means of critical engagement. They include research from a limited number of sources.

Section 3 focuses on research essays written by students taking English Composition 2 (English 1020) and other courses in which research-based writing is required. The critical discussions are well-developed, and the research for some of these essays may be substantial.

The student essays appearing in this publication were submitted between the summer 2017 and spring 2018 terms. We think they demonstrate both the excellence and diversity of student writing at Volunteer State. We would like to thank all the professors who nominated student essays and encouraged students to submit. We'd also like to extend our sincerest congratulations to the students whose work appears here. It is our goal to continue to develop this project, and to publish the best student writing at Volunteer State in a way that is meaningful to both students and faculty alike.

Leslie LaChance, Committee Chair  
On behalf of the Best Essays Committee  
Fall 2018



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# Section 1: Expository Writing

**CATEGORY PRIZE WINNER**

*“My Fifth Grade Fiasco” author Ashlan Doss takes readers on a journey through her childhood memories as she describes her experience with learning one’s limitations. Using detail and nuance, Doss recreates what it is like to be a child who refuses to give up the “good” seat despite consequences.*

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Ashlan Doss

English Composition I

Professor Hall

September 25, 2017

**My Fifth Grade Fiasco**

Before fifth grade, school was a breeze for me, and I thought that is what made a person “smart.” I could not have been more wrong. Due to some elementary teachers’ lack of interest in teaching, I was accustomed to always receiving fantastic grades whether I fully understood the material or not. This all changed when I met my caring but stern fifth grade teacher, Ms. Roark. Whilst in fifth grade, I was stuck in between my lack of self-confidence and my plentiful supply of stubbornness. Because of these two downfalls, I left fifth grade with a devastating letter grade on my report card and a humiliated heart.

Ms. Roark, who taught all of the basic subjects, set her classroom up like most teachers do: struggling students in the front and gifted students in the back. During our first seating chart, I was sat near the center of the class, so not quite as smart as I thought I was. Needless to say, when she moved me to very back of the class later on during the year, I was ecstatic. To me, I had received the recognition that I had desired since the beginning of the school year. As she told us our seats, we all stood up, grabbed our books and pencil cases out from underneath our desks, and shuffled to our new “homes.” As I put my things down and got comfortable, she began to start a new lesson with copying terms off of the Smart Board. After I got out my pencil and a sheet of paper, I looked up at the Smart Board and realized that this may be the worst gift I have ever received.

I was squinting so hard that my eyes were almost completely shut, but I still could not see a single word. I was very self-conscious as a child. Therefore, I did not have the confidence to explain my problem to my teacher. I viewed not being able to see the Smart Board as there is something wrong with me. In addition, I had worked for this seat. I was not willing to give it away! I specifically remember having out my math note-taking binder and listening to what Ms. Roark was saying, but I still was unable to follow along. I remember watching everyone else write down what she had on the board, and I felt left out. To solve this, I began writing random numbers and math symbols to make it seem like I knew what I was doing. In actuality, I was terrified. That year, I mainly depended on my mother for help in math. Truth be told, if I would have been able to see the board, I would not have needed any help. Although my mother helped me tremendously on the homework, the quizzes and tests were very difficult. My grades started to reflect how little I was learning from class time. It began with an eighty here, a seventy-five there, and maybe a sixty thrown into the mix. I was not that worried about it until I received a progress report in March.

As Ms. Roark handed out the report cards, I was expecting an A in all of my classes. I can recall looking down the list of subjects whispering under my breath, "A...A...A...A...C. I made a C in math." Immediately, I felt my stomach drop. With my heart pounding out of my chest, a swarm of negative thoughts entered my brain. "You have never been this type of student. How could you let this happen?" Tears fled my eyes as I asked Ms. Roark if I could go to the restroom. She nodded in compliance. As soon as I heard the door shut behind me, my hands covered my face while I tried to keep my sobs to a minimum. After a few weeks, she typed out in huge bold letters an enormous word and told us to copy it. I grew impatient waiting for my peers to copy it, so I asked her if I could walk up to the front of the classroom to write it down. Her jaw dropped as she just realized that I had problems with my vision. As my classmates and I walked into Ms. Roark's room the following day, we realized that we had a new seating chart; I was sat directly in front of

the Smart Board. This was fantastic, although it was too late in the school year to make a significant change in my math grade. That afternoon, my mother received a call from Ms. Roark saying that I desperately needed glasses, which I got within a few days.

This experience is engraved into the back of my mind and has shaped me greatly as a person. While I was receiving unsatisfactory grades, I was humiliated because all of my other peers who I sat around were making great grades. In turn, I am reserved as a person and tend to not speak up much in class. After this experience, math was and still is very intimidating and stressful to me, especially when I see that others are understanding it at a faster pace than I am. I learned that if I ever have a question or concern, I should not be so fearful and tell the teacher what is bothering me. I also learned that someone's grade or where they sit in a classroom is not a reflection on how intelligent they are as a person.

*Drawing on personal details, Allyson Oakley-Dobbins creates a full profile of VSCC student Tim Dobbins and his experience as a young father and student in "Making Lemonade." Through perseverance and hard work, Dobbins was able to complete his college degree, a feat that Oakley-Dobbins describes using first-hand information from Dobbins himself. Oakley-Dobbins structures her essay in such a way that readers are provided background and context that paves the way for Dobbins success.*

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Allyson Oakley-Dobbins

English 1010

March 2, 2018

### Making Lemonade

Sitting in a hot van while traveling with his college's recruiting band, a phone call was received that would change everything. Tim Dobbins was in the height of his college life when his girlfriend called to let him know she was expecting a baby. Very little words were exchanged in that moment; the utter silence was a clear sign of absolute panic. With three years of non-transferable college credit and a low gpa, Tim Dobbins would surprise his future family and friends by taking on a paternal role, starting community college, and learning to pursue a good education no matter the cost.

At the age of 21, Tim Dobbins had no idea how to take care of another person. He had only recently started doing his own laundry. Up until now, getting an education was a benefit of living the college lifestyle. Life took on an entirely new meaning when he found out he would have a child. Changes had to be made for Tim to get his education and support a family. At a time when most people would panic under so much pressure, Tim found a drive and determination to push himself.

He walked into Tennessee Temple University, the school he had been attending in Chattanooga for three years, and applied for his transcript to transfer to Volunteer State Community College in Gallatin, TN. After several conversations with admissions it became

obvious that the bible and music classes he had taken could not be transferred. However, the gpa of 2.3 was sure to carry him through his college career like a scarlet letter. Not only would he be moving back home to be with his pregnant girlfriend, but he would have to start college over as a freshman.

When he arrived back in Nashville, he lived in a one bedroom studio apartment with a new baby and girlfriend. The walls and tables in the tiny apartment were lined with stacks of books. Tim recalls locking himself in a bathroom and sitting on a crate in order to complete an essay and driving several blocks daily to the nearest McDonald's to access free wi-fi. Late nights and long hours were the norm for several years. Hanging out with friends was a distant past time. Tim learned to enjoy writing and reading. He took classes at Volunteer State in History and Literature. Professors would take time to talk with Tim and became big influences in his life. When I asked Tim what got him so focussed on school he said, "Having been a horrible student since I can remember, something snapped in me and I just wanted to learn everything I possibly could, probably to make up for the lifetime worth of education I neglected."

Tim's son had no knowledge of how hard his dad worked on school, mostly because school did not take away from Tim's time with his son. He loves on his son like he is everything. If his son initiates it, there is not a body of water that Tim will not jump in, a lego set he won't spend hours on, a tickle fight that he won't participate in. He's a kid at heart. It's obvious that he is an amazing dad. At times, his son refers to him as "bro" and that's the kind of relationship they have.



Tim and his son goofing around the house.

Tim Dobbins received a scholarship to attend Belmont University the summer of 2013. While at Belmont he made connections with professors and students. Majoring in economics, Tim was doing incredibly well in his classes. Tim had to work incredibly hard to keep up with the other students; many of them lived on campus and did not have jobs. On the day Tim graduated from Belmont University, his son was graduating from preschool. He ended up doing a few internships before he found his passion in data analytics. Tim explains, “I knew I had to do something besides play guitar or baseball. And I wanted it to be something I was deeply satisfied with. What’s the point in living a life that doesn’t make you excited?”

Tim has been on a steady uphill climb since the day he found out he would be adding a child in his life. Running on an incline made him work harder than he ever had before. He has managed to juggle work, school, and family yet somehow effortlessly made it into an adventure. He made a decision to change his life and his family’s future by applying himself to work harder in every aspect. At twenty-one, Tim Dobbins saw the lemons he was given and decided to turn them into the sweetest lemonade; with hard work and persistence, he managed to do just that.



Tim, his wife, and son on their graduation day from pre-k and college.

*Being a successful student is no easy task. In Daniel See's "Curiosity", the concept that curiosity is the most important trait in a successful student is explored. Using data from Scott Kaufman, See argues on behalf of curious students everywhere. His analysis asks readers to consider their own curiosity and, through argumentation and support, subtly encourages individuals to seek knowledge.*

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Daniel See

Professor Baldo

English 1010

31 January 2018

### Curiosity

While some may say curiosity killed the cat, it can be argued that curiosity nourished it. Curiosity can excel the improvement of the most understood subjects of the world. Take Christopher Columbus for example. His curiosity and desire to find a new trade route to India sparked the exploration of the New World, when before it was assumed that there was no land past the horizon of the Atlantic. Instead of simply understanding the information of nautical travel, he took his own information and used it to his advantage to become one of the most recognizable names throughout history. Although the time periods differ, and Columbus was a student of exploration and adventure, academic students of today can identify with him well. Curiosity drives a student to go the extra mile and use on-the-surface information to make deeper connections and create self-motivating questions. Curiosity changes motivation into intelligence due to a connection with a certain subject, and is a characteristic that requires no instruction to possess. Therefore, curiosity is the most important quality in students because every student has the potential to exceed his or her previous intelligence.

Curiosity can be the difference between a student memorizing the information then moving on, and a student taking information and using it to further his or her own development on a subject. This is exactly what "Curiosity" from Scott Kaufman is saying. Several studies have



focused on purely intellectually gifted children and recorded their successes through time. While the successes of some of the intellectual children are incredible, the number of children that fulfill their intellectual potential does not reach the number of children that are needed in order to have a well-supported society. It is estimated that nearly 60 percent of gifted students are looked over when the criteria is limited to only intellectual prospects. What Kaufman goes on to explain is that in a study where students were determined to be motivationally gifted versus intellectually gifted, motivationally gifted students displayed extreme enjoyment of school and learning, while also leaning toward a mastery and persistence of tasks they were curious of. The beauty of curiosity is the yearning to not be content with mediocrity which is exemplified in the motivationally gifted students.

Does this mean that motivationally gifted students are naturally curious? Not necessarily. Curiosity does not come to everyone in the same form. Research shows that curiosity is an innate trait that comes to students in different ways about a variety of subjects. This is where the motivation embeds itself in the minds of curious students. If a student believes he or she can learn about a subject and develop subject knowledge into pieces of information that can cause revolutionary ideas of thinking about topics, then the student is spurred to follow his or her interest until no more questions can be asked. At this point, the student can do more than just recite facts that he or she has learned about a subject. The student would be able to explain the coverage of his or her study while knowing how to communicate it to someone else who may not have the curiosity to fully comprehend the scope of the subject. Not everyone has the same interests, and that is why specialists are created – to understand the complete in-and-outs of a subject that others may not find as much interest in. Subject specialists are products of curiosity and passion, and are vital to understanding different views on topics.

The curious desire that one has for a subject is what pushes a student go above and beyond is what deserves emphasis. It is important that a student feels a connection with a subject that he or she is studying, because that connection is what will create an educated individual that is a useful member to society. Curiosity may not be a trait that is present in all subjects and at all times, but when it is present it should be used as a motivator for learning, and not simply a catalyst to skip to other forms of education and motivation.

Curiosity spurs changes in thoughts, technology, and beliefs, and it will continue to do so with upcoming generations with the condition that young minds are given the push to explore their own innate curiosity. The world continues to push forward with new inventions, and the curiosity of younger students is the main driving force. The inventions of these students will be fundamental to the growth of society, but only with the combination of motivation and curiosity.

Section 2:  
English 1010  
Researched Argument

### **CATEGORY PRIZE WINNER**

*Kelia Ingram's bleak discussion over the connection between social media and depression in teenage girls is an eye-opening account of our modern society. Providing several direct links between depression and teenage girls, Ingram encourages parents to be aware of their teen's internet usage and limit their time online. Expert opinions and academic studies bolster Ingram's argument, making this essay a convincing testimonial to the dangers of social media.*

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Kelia Ingram

Professor Hall

ENGL1010 – English Composition I

22 April 2018

#### The Relationship between Social Media and Depression

##### Among Teenage Girls

It is hard to believe that just over a decade ago most people didn't know anything about social media. Today social media and internet usage are a part of almost everyone's daily life. It is a great way to communicate and get access to information. Most people will tell you they do not know how they ever survived before Google. However, there is a negative side to social media and internet usage as well, and there is evidence that proves it. Most teenagers' favorite past time seems to be spending many hours each week on Facebook and Instagram, and they can rarely be seen doing anything other than staring into their cell phone. This is of great concern to me, personally, because I have a twelve-year-old daughter whose favorite past time is spending many hours each week on Facebook, Instagram and Snap Chat. I am noticing problems such as lack of social skills, becoming easily frustrated or anxious when made to get off her devices, and social media is increasingly becoming her main source of joy. These are all problems that should not be ignored. Parents should begin taking steps to control the influence social media has on their

teenagers, and the amount of time they spend on their devices. If not, I believe we are going to see a major increase in teenage depression, anxiety, and even suicide.

Social media is causing teenagers to become more and more vulnerable, and there are many questions being raised as to what impact it is having on adolescent health, especially their mental health. As Carol Midgely, an award-winning journalist for *The Times*, points out “[t]he number of middle-class teenage girls suffering from anxiety or depression has surged in the past decade...according to the study of 30,000 teenagers” (Midgely 46). In her article, Midgely reports that these findings were more prevalent among teenage girls than boys. Anne-Sophie Bine, a writer for *The Atlantic*, reports that “between 2008 and 2010, 12 percent of teenage girls aged between 12 and 17 suffered from a major depressive episode, which is three times higher than the rate of their male counterparts” (Bine). She bases her information on a 2012 report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Bine goes on to explain that unlike boys who tend to deal with their problems directly and then forget about them, girls tend to dwell on their problems. Social media facilitates this because it provides the perfect place for a troubled teenage girl to share all her problems, thus creating the perfect situation for these girls to “feed off of each other’s obsessions” (Bine). The information provided in both of these articles seems to provide enough evidence that not only are adolescent girls at a higher risk for depression than boys, but also that these problems are slowly but steadily getting worse.

As if worrying about your teenage daughter suffering from depression wasn’t enough, there are even worse issues to consider when it comes to social media and internet usage, issues such as cyberbullying and sex trafficking. All a cyber bully has to do is upload an embarrassing picture or make up a horrible story, and post it to social media, which leaves a teenage girl feeling as if her life is over. Regarding the issue of sex trafficking and sexual solicitations, a pediatrician, who specializes in adolescent medicine, Dr. Rachel Dawson reports that “Teenagers frequently meet

strangers online, become friends, and can eventually end up being sold for sex” (Dawson 275). It may be hard to believe but online sexual solicitation is a serious issue. In 2006, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, reported that “1 in 7 youth Internet users (13%) received unwanted sexual solicitations or approaches in the past year... 90% of solicitations happened to teenagers (ages 13 to 17) ... Seventy-five (75) percent of solicitors asked to meet youth in person” (Wolak 15, 16, 18).

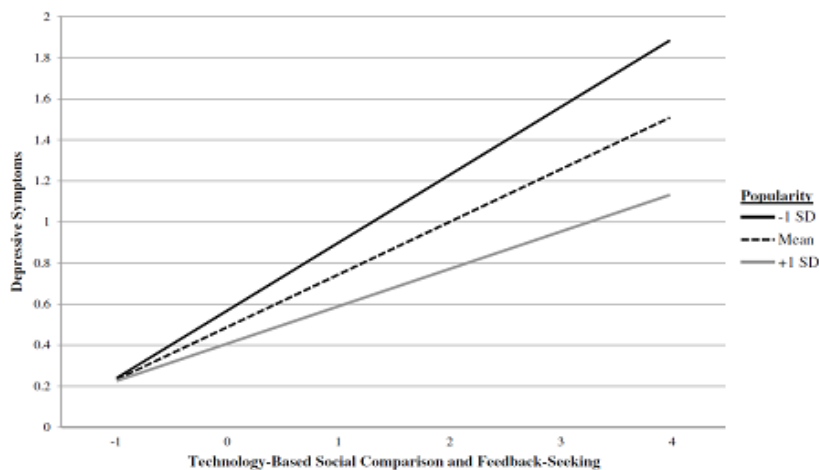
In Dr. Dawson’s article, *Talking to Adolescents About Social Media*, she tells an enlightening story about a 15-year-old girl she had seen in her clinic. This girl met a 35-year-old man online, and began a romantic relationship with him, she was completely ignorant of his age. She trusted this man enough that he could convince her to have sex with other men for money, telling her that this was a way she could prove her love for him, and the money she made was for their future together. Her parents were clueless, they just thought she was dating someone from school. Dr. Dawson also stresses in her article the need for parents to be aware of all the new social media apps that are being directed at teens. WhatsApp is one app that Dr. Dawson mentions. This app is an Internet-based app that makes it easy for the user to send images, videos, and messages. The thing to worry about is, as Dr. Dawson states “because it uses the Internet to send messages, anybody who can access the network and is in range of your signal could be looking into your chats and files” (Dawson 274). There are apps available which are designed to intercept messages. All a hacker has to do is download one of these apps and they can begin reading all WhatsApp messages within their signal range, and the user will never even know. Our young generation is naïve about such things, making them easy prey for an online predator.

Jacqueline Nesi, a researcher at the University of North Carolina, and Mitchell Prinstein, a professor at the same University, are the authors of an article that was published in the *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*. Much of their article highlights a study that was conducted over the

course of one year in which 619 students, with the mean age being 14.6, were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire initially, and again at the end of the study. This study was unique because it was the first to incorporate more individual characteristics of the teens, such as gender, popularity status, and social based behaviors, like, social reassurance, social comparisons, and prior depressive symptoms. The authors of the article stated that “[c]onsistent with hypotheses, technology-based social comparison and feed-back seeking (SCFS) were associated with depressive symptoms” (Nesi 1427). It is important to note, as Nesi and Prinstein point out, popularity status and gender played an important role, because there was such a strong correlation between these factors and depressive symptoms. The chart shown below, represents the findings regarding popularity status. The bold line represents the individuals that were low in popularity.

Table 1

Association between popularity status and depressive



Source: Nesi, Jacqueline, and Mitchell J. Prinstein. "Using Social Media for Social Comparison and Feedback-Seeking: Gender and Popularity Moderate Associations with Depressive Symptoms." *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, vol. 43, no. 8, Nov. 2015, pp. 1427-38. ProQuest Database. Accessed 11 Apr. 2018.

These were individuals that rated one standard below the mean for popularity. This chart clearly shows that there is a stronger association between technology-based SCFS and depressive symptoms for individuals low in popularity (see table 1). The authors state that these “findings highlight the importance of

understanding how these modern social environments may intersect with existing interpersonal models of psychopathology” (Nesi 1437). That said, it is important, when conducting studies of this type, gender and the teenagers mental state prior to the study, at minimum, need to be considered.

Teens are spending too much time online and not enough time physically interacting with friends and family. Dr. Dawson states that “According to a 2011 poll by the council on Communications and Media, 22% of teenagers log on to their favorite social media site more than 10 times per day” (Dawson 275). Even when teenagers are around others, at school, ball games, and even church functions, they are too busy looking at their cell phones to interact with any of them (see fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** Teens are more interested in their cell phones than talking to each other.

Adolescents may think they are ready to spread their wings and fly, but parents, guardians, or anyone that is taking care of them, need to rein them in a little. By this, I mean parents should talk to their teens and let them know they can trust and confide in them. Parents should warn their youngsters about the dangers of social media interaction, on a regular basis. Parents also need to be aware of what social media sites their children are using, and even more important, monitor the time they spend online. There is a positive side to social media and internet usage, such as being able to stay connected with friends, making new friends, sharing ideas, and in return, receiving positive feedback such as, compassion or appreciation. Parents just need to regulate the use of social media, among our teens, and don't sit back and allow it to become a threat to their mental health.

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*The rise of foodie culture was no coincidence. Restaurant culture has been in our society's DNA, as Devon Cotter discusses in "A New Era: The Rise of Restaurant Culture," since the fast-food industry spurred a slow economy and became a favorite pastime. Cotter's use of expert research and data underscores his authorial wit as he posits that cutthroat restaurant culture is taking the place of long held traditions.*

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Devon Cotter

Professor Black

English 1010-U23

27 September 2017

### A New Era: The Rise of Restaurant Culture

For years, the family dinner table has symbolized tradition and family authenticity, a place not restricted to eating, but a place where memories unfold, laughter is created, and connections are made. The dinner table binds a family together. Even if the table is set for two – and the space between each dining constituent is spread like countries abroad – the atmosphere still maintains a presence of congenial stories to be told, hearty laughter to be heard, and grand home-cooked meals to be eaten. The wholesome environment that encompasses the dinner table promotes genuine family experiences that prolong the meal that originally brought the family together. However, several families are throwing in the towel on home-cooked meals and leaving their family dinner tables empty to reserve a similar table at a restaurant. As families move away from the intrinsic tradition of home-dining, there emerges an advancing era inundated with restaurant consumerism and dominating restaurant culture.

Historically, restaurant dining surfaced from the rapidly advancing infrastructure and commerce in the twentieth century. In Suzanne Kapner's article "Dining through the Decades," Kapner claims, "The invention of the automobile in the early part of the century and the economic hardships invoked by the Depression contributed to an emerging transient society. Both travelers taking advantage of the new highway systems and drifters looking for work needed places to eat."

Thus, restaurant-dining sparked opportunity in the failing economy by offering economic growth in a suffering country. However, it was not until after the World Wars – while the economy was prosperous – that restaurant-dining began to expand and grow in popularity (Kapner). Restaurant-dining promoted stability in the economy.

Since the restaurant-dining industry aided in producing a benign economy, the demand for such an industry skyrocketed. Furthermore, capitalism thrived and provoked an evolution in restaurant-dining. Fast food was born. Fast food dining was considered both radical and sensational. First, McDonalds emerged in 1948 – offering hamburgers for only 10 cents – then KFC, Burger King, and Wendy’s quickly trailed behind (Kapner). These fast-food chains almost spontaneously brought about an extremely cutthroat restaurant industry, which ultimately produced the competitive and consumer-based dining market that exists today.

As society began to adjust to the palate of fast food dining, the corporate industry began to plot their next move. They carefully began to move their pawns in a very strategic manner. The objective for the fast food industry was to maintain relevance. From demographic outreach to simply meeting the demand of the target audience, the industry had to kindle a flame to consistently keep them in the industrial stratosphere. Richard Martin and Paul Frumpkin, authors for *Nation’s Restaurant News*, argue, “More often, however, careful and calculated research into consumers’ tendencies and desires is what can make or break a restaurant operator’s adaption to lucrative trends.” In other words, the marketing agenda in the restaurant industry derives from precision. The restaurant industry concluded that precision produces profit.

It was when profit began to accumulate that consumerism in the restaurant milieu was born. Dining services pinpointed ways to target new consumers. Frumpkin emphasizes, “Consumers want choice.” Once this realization was made by restaurant operators, dining services began to broaden their horizons by offering variety to consumers. Recently, more and more restaurants have

begun to target families. According to *The Food Institute Report*, “More than a third of all dinner occasions at fast-food/pizza restaurants include children, and kids are present for a quarter of the dinner occasions at casual dining restaurants” (“Families Dining”). Children play a key role in where most families decide to eat. If a restaurant promotes a family-friendly environment, then families are most likely to eat there. However, restaurant-dining – as it is overwhelmed with consumeristic emphasis – tarnishes the family dining experience. If dining out seems as genuine as dining at one’s own dinner table, then the restaurant has achieved its goal of appealing to wholesome family tradition. This achievement is yielded by a restaurant’s willingness to gain profit through consumer-influenced culture and values. Gary Fine, an author for *Contemporary Sociology*, argues that “You are where you eat.” Fine’s adage sums up restaurant culture to a T. Restaurant owners know exactly what their audience enjoys, which justifies why a restaurant can represent and define a person.

Restaurant operators began to speculate the elements that appeal to family tradition – namely, holidays. Celebrating holidays as a family has been a conventional, traditional, and sentimental thing to do for years; however, restaurant operators wanted to reform holiday conventions and traditions while recreating the same sentimental essence of a family-oriented holiday. Dave Barry outlines his family’s holiday traditions in the essay, “Turkeys in the Kitchen.” The essence of Thanksgiving is satirized by Barry as he writes, “On the floor, three small children and a dog who long ago had her brain eaten by fleas are running as fast as they can directly into things, trying to injure themselves. On the television, the Detroit Lions are doing pretty much the same thing.” Even with his humorous tone, many can relate to his description of Thanksgiving Day. Restaurant operators wanted to eliminate these irritating holiday experiences (Cantrella). For

Dave Barry, a restaurant might offer a better environment to celebrate the holidays by ridding of the abrasive holiday atmosphere. All in all, restaurants want to adhere to a family's traditional holiday.

In depth, traditional holidays symbolize a time spent practicing the wholesome rituals of family tradition. Norman Rockwell's renowned painting *Freedom from Want* depicts the deep connection that emanates from the dinner table during the holidays. Around the table, smiles are spread wide, which symbolizes the joy established from a family-joined occasion. *Freedom from Want* was created in 1942, a time full of hostility and global discourse. Such



Figure 1: Norman Rockwell's *Freedom from Want*

discourse is derived from the tension and the heat of World War Two. However, Rockwell establishes, from his painting, that even in a world of chaos, family prevails. In the bottom righthand portion of the photo, there is a man with an inviting gaze. It is almost as if Rockwell is attempting to invite the audience to sit at the family dinner table. If there's any way to resolve the mayhem in the world, it would be by joining together at a table and eating a delicious meal.

However, in the twenty-first century, these wholesome memories that are shared on the holidays are being trading in for the restaurant experience. Heidi Cantrella, writer for the *Oklahoma City Journal Record*, informs readers about the contentions and morality associated with dining out on the holidays. Wade Starr, the owner of Deep Fork Grill, told Cantrella that, “He believes it is important to remain open [during the holidays] for customers.” Starr made it apparent that restaurant consumerism exists during the holidays, a trend provoked by the ever-advancing restaurant industry.

As the restaurant industry continues to advance, families begin to veer away from the traditions of home-dining and towards dining out. Roughly forty percent of dual enrollment students that attend Station Camp High School in the Hendersonville/Gallatin area spend more than six nights a week participating in extracurricular activities and another forty percent of these students participate in extracurricular activities at least four nights a week. Together, eighty percent of students devote over half of their week towards extracurricular activities. These students immerse themselves with an extremely busy schedule. Maintaining a busy schedule is the leading cause for dining-out. Thirty percent of these students dine out, either with their family or friends, approximately four times a week. That means twenty-four percent of students, who devote half of their week towards extracurricular activities, dine out quite frequently. As students and families become absorbed with an intensive agenda, dining-out becomes more convenient.

An industrialized restaurant empire emerged due to the advancing and bustling society of today, ultimately replacing the tradition and value of home-dining. This empire produced a merciless dining market founded on consumerism and the modernizing culture of American people. Restaurant-dining, at first being altruistic, gave way to a prosperous economy in the twentieth century, but mutated into a hostile, profit-influenced industry today. In this era of

restaurant sovereignty and accelerated responsibilities, family tradition becomes abandoned. In such a society, home dining has become an archaic ritual in the repertoire of family interrelations.

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*In an essay that valiantly tackles climate change, Sarah Boening opens with a simple thought: that her children and their children may not be able to experience the grandeur of glaciers. In a straightforward and succinct style, Boening outlines her argument that melting glaciers are having a drastic effect on our planet, including already present consequences and future climate change dangers.*

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Sarah Boening  
Prof. Cynthia Wyatt  
English 1010  
4/1/2018

### Glaciers and The Effects They Have On Our Planet

Did you know that we have a national park here in the United States that was established to preserve glaciers? Glacier National Park is in Montana's portion of the Rocky Mountains near the Canadian border. I didn't know anything about the place until I was traveling the Northwest while my ex-husband finished his career with the Army while based in Fort Lewis, WA. My sightseeing turned quite morbid as I lined up my camera and prepared to take a picture in front of my first glacier. It hit me that my children may not be able to see this thousand-year-old glacier and my great grandchildren may never see one in real life. As climate change warms the world, glaciers are disappearing, altering coastlines, oceans, wildlife, and resources we use every day.

Global warming is the term used to describe "the gradual increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans, a change that is believed to be permanently changing the Earth's climate" (Weisberger), and unfortunately it is our seemingly unstoppable reality. According to research published by NASA in January of 2018, "the hottest years in NASA's 134-year record have occurred since 2000, gradually increasing, with 2017 being the warmest" (Elkins and Schmunk). We are not delusional in our casual conversation when we say it seems hotter or colder every year. We are, in fact, facing hotter summers and colder winters. Judah Cohen, lead author and director of seasonal forecasting at Atmospheric and Environmental who is currently researching and assessing the risks from weather events and climate change connects the dots by telling us "unusually warm Arctic winter temperatures are linked to bitter cold and snow in

parts of the Northern Hemisphere, such as the U.S., parts of northern Europe and northern Asia” (qtd in Weisberger).

Changes in our landscape are imminent should our glaciers fully melt into our oceans and earths surfaces. According to U.S. Geological Survey, “Glacial ice is the largest reservoir of freshwater on Earth; as three fourths of our water is frozen in our glaciers” (“How Much”). With global warming, glacial retreat has occurred at record a breaking pace in the last twenty years. In a study highlighting the risks of climate change, “San Francisco International Airport, as well as the entire pacific coastline, is one of the areas at risk of flooding due rising seas. Up to half of the runways and taxiways at the airport could be underwater by the year 2100” (Ghose). One could compare glacial retreat to the sand in a timer. The more that disappear, the closer we are to a catastrophic existence. For instance, Jessica Leber, an environmental journalist from *Oceans Deeply* warns:

If Thwaites, a glacier in West Antarctica roughly the size of the state of Washington, goes, it could trigger a chain of events that destabilizes the West Antarctic ice sheet causing the kind of worst-case scenario spun out of climate models that would force humanity to flee from the world’s coasts. (Leber)

One could only hope we come up with a way of stopping this before it happens. We do not want our children and our grandchildren to live in an environment that we’ve only seen movies.

As our climate gets warmer, our oceans change too. The changes are “causing tropical storms to occur more often and hurricanes to strengthen and cause damage at stronger rates” (MacMillan). “Our oceans are warming and becoming more acidic. Everywhere one looks, the impacts of a disrupted climate are confronting us” (MacMillin). There is an immeasurable number of researchers out there working to predict the pace in sea level rising.

Animals are seeing a difference in when its coming to glacial recession. One species of animal that is being pushed toward extinguished is the polar bear. “The polar bear was officially

listed as threatened under the U.S. endangered species act on May 14, 2008” (Fitzgerald). As glaciers thin they deposit fresh water into the ocean, sending an excess of carbon into the water. As the pH changes in the oceanic waters surrounding the ice, the fish move to different environments. While they relocate, the arctic food chain cannot keep up. Fish feed the penguins and seals, those of which are the food for the polar bear in the Arctic. Fish feed the grizzlies in the Pacific Northwest. When the deposits change the water, they change the aquatic biosphere, creating a shortage in food for the grizzlies.

Climate change now threatens agriculture worldwide, reducing lakes, diminishing aquifers and shrinking glaciers that feed crops. In areas as diverse as California, Uganda, Peru and the Himalayas, farming communities often rely on melt water descending from glaciers or snow caps to replenish their rivers and springs in the springtime. As glaciers retreat in many parts of the world, this source of freshwater may no longer be available in merely decades. Jeffrey Bury, a professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz warns, “We’re talking about the disappearance of frozen water towers that have supported vast populations,” (qtd in Casey). The aforementioned changes in climate will bring extra inches of rainfall with the increase in storms over the oceans while moving inland. This is certain to disrupt agriculture, bringing floods, mudslides and dam breaks. As sea levels rise, our groundwater will change. Nearly half of our population depends on groundwater sources for drinking water and other uses but with coastlines changing, saline water intrusion into the groundwater aquifers will decrease the available resources to the general public,” (Casey).

We must change the patterns that we have in place to slow the progression of glacial melting. We teach our children to recycle but we are not raising them to understand that our planet is truly melting away in front of our eyes. If we want them to see the same landscapes that we’ve been blessed with, we must drastically change our entire industrial infrastructure. Most climate

scientists agree the main cause of the current global warming trend is human expansion of the "greenhouse effect", the warming that results when the atmosphere traps heat radiating from Earth toward space. We need less cars, factories and electricity production that rely fossil fuels. We have to change the way we fertilize our massive industrialized crops and stop the loss of forests that would otherwise store CO<sub>2</sub> (Leber). We can do all of these things. Ideally, our grandchildren will drive their electric cars, that were charged from salt water based fuel sources through fields that are atmospherically friendly with fertilizers that are made organically and hike through forests that span for miles and miles that have been preserved to go see our glaciers that we as a globe helped saved. We can do it, but we must do it right now.

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# Section III

## Advanced

# Researched Argument

**CATEGORY PRIZE WINNER**

*The American justice system has spent quite a bit of time in the public spotlight in recent years. Nikki Sander's argumentative research essay, "Guilty Until Proven Innocent," delves into the issue of unfair bail practices and how they affect individuals who cannot afford to pay bail and who have not been convicted of a crime. Additionally, Sanders explores options for resolving the problem and saving tax money.*

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Nikki Sanders

Professor Baldo

English 1020

April 27, 2018

Guilty Until Proven Innocent

At any given time, around 450,000 innocent people are held in American jails (Gupta, par. 1). They are considered innocent because of the American justice system's standard of innocent until proven guilty, and these people have not been proven guilty. They are being held in pretrial detention because of their inability to afford bail. One example of an instance in which the bail system failed an American is with Sean Ramsey. In 2017, Atlanta authorities arrested Ramsey for standing in public with a sign that said "homeless, please help." He had violated a law prohibiting solicitation. He was jailed for 72 days because of his inability to pay \$200 cash bail. Meanwhile, the county spent \$5,580 to detain him. He was finally released when the Southern Center for Human rights stepped in (Pishko, par. 2). There are many more examples similar to this one that show how the current bail system exploits the poor, ignores the presumption of innocence, and costs American taxpayers extraordinary amounts of money to imprison someone who has not been convicted of a crime. This problem can easily be fixed to restore the fairness of the American justice system and save taxpayers money.

When someone is arrested, they appear before a judge who first has to decide whether or not the defendant should be released before their trial. The judge makes this decision according to flight risk- the chance that they will not return for their trial, and danger to the community- the chance that they will commit another crime while released (U.S. Code, Section C). If the judge decides the person is not “bailable,” they will be held in jail until their trial. Otherwise, the judge deems the accused deserving of bail. The judge now has three choices. He or she can release the defendant on personal recognizance, conditional release, or a monetary bond which can either be secured or unsecured (Criminal Justice, par. 9). A secured bond means the accused must pay the money to the court before they can be released and will only receive the money after they appear for their trial (Criminal Justice, par. 9). Secured bonds has become a large system of corruption in the United States judicial system and has begun to be ruled unconstitutional in some local courts based on the eighth and fourteenth amendments (Pishko, par. 24).

Over six out of ten jail inmates are awaiting trial, and 9 out of 10 of them are there because they were not able to post their bond (“The Problem,” pars. 5-6). Taxpayers spend almost \$14 billion every year housing pretrial detainees who are unable to afford their bail (“The Problem.” par. 8). Many of these people have been accused of misdemeanors, and 75% have been accused of non-violent crimes such as drug possession or property crimes (Criminal Justice, par. 11). These people typically wait months, sometimes years, for their trial to begin. In the meantime, they tend to lose their job, as most low-income families cannot afford to miss work and can easily be fired for not showing up (Pishko, pars. 5-9). This can also cause them to lose contact with their family or even lose custody of a child (Pishko, par. 8). Pretrial detention can devastate a person’s life, and they have not been proven to have committed the



crime they have been accused of yet. This effect on a person's life can make them more likely to commit a crime in the future (Pishko, par. 10). Some people have been forced to plead guilty for fear of awaiting months more jail time for a crime they have not committed. This makes it especially difficult for these people to find a job and try to salvage their life.

The current jail system unfairly targets low-income Americans. Two people accused of the same crime and given the same bail hearing can have drastically different outcomes when one person can afford their bail and the other cannot. Many judges are given a list of suggested or required bail amounts based on the charge against the defendant (Pishko, par. 7). The eighth amendment of the Constitution prohibits excessive bail, which changes from person to person based on what is "excessive" for their income (Nelson, par. 10). What would be a fair bail for one person might be outrageous for another based on income. Judges are not allowed to take a person's financial status into account when setting bail (U.S. Code, pars. 58- 64). The Justice Policy Institute expands on this:

The ability to pay money bail is neither an indicator of a person's guilt nor an indicator of risk in release. The focus on money as a mechanism for pretrial release means people often are not properly screened for more rational measures of public safety: their propensity to flee before their court date or their risk for causing public harm (par. 3).

The fourteenth amendment which provides for equal protection under the law, has also been used in courts such as Houston, Chicago, and Nashville to rule the monetary bail system unconstitutional, as it provides less protection to lower income families and much more for wealthier citizens (Nelson, par. 16). Court systems have begun to recognize that everyone, if allowed bail, should have an equal opportunity to receive bail, which is why some local court

systems have begun limiting the use of cash bail (Pishko, par. 24).

If a person accused of a crime cannot afford the bail amount, they can seek out a bail bond company. Typically, the customer is required to pay 10% of the bail amount and the bond company pays the rest (Liptak, par. 17). Whether the person is ruled innocent or guilty, they will not receive the 10% back. This means that innocent people are punished by paying for-profit companies in order to stay out of jail. If the customer does not show up for trial, the bond companies have virtually no limitations in what they are allowed to do to bring the person in. In some states, bounty hunters, employees of bail bond companies who retrieve fleeing customers, have more rights than police in regards to tracking bail violators. They are allowed to cross state lines, break and enter without search warrants, and physically harm their prey (Liptak, par. 27). There are also very few limitations on who can become a bounty hunter (Liptak, par. 27). The industry has also been known to collude with judges and lawyers in order to raise bail amounts so that bail bond companies can turn a higher profit while sharing a cut with the willing judicial officer (Liptak, par. 30). This privatization of the legal system has led to unjust corruption and treatment of Americans.

This problem does not just affect the 500,000 people awaiting trial in jail or their families, it also affects every single person who has ever had a job, bought groceries, or paid taxes in a different way. Taxpayers spend billions of dollars every year housing pretrial detainees (“The Problem,” par. 8). Meanwhile, more prisons are being built and privatized because of overcrowding. Defendants held in jail because they cannot afford their bail are costing millions of Americans. It would be financially beneficial to both the detainees and the average American for these people to be allowed free before their trial. There are other ways to ensure accused citizens appear for trial that cost billions less and would release some of the

strain on overcrowded jails and prisons (“The Problem,” par. 18). Some issues with reforming bail occur when people are released and commit terrible crimes before their trial. Another worry is that cash bail is the most surefire way to ensure defendants will show up for their trial, and other methods will be less effective. These claims target the poor because cash bail is much more likely to make sure people living below the poverty line appear at trial because they need their money back more than affluent citizens. There have also been systems that show high rates of people returning for trial that do not involve a monetary bail or discriminate against a certain income bracket (“Research,” par. 3). While it is an issue that some people commit more crimes, sometimes violent ones, when released on bail, these people have the opportunity to do so based solely on whether or not they can afford bail. If the judge is willing to allow the person to be set free if they pay bail, there is no reason to detain the person solely based on their financial status, as it does not necessarily make them more likely to commit a crime when released on bail.

The presumption of innocence in America is given to all Americans so that they will be assumed innocent until proven guilty. This policy cannot be upheld when thousands of people who are meant to be presumed innocent are being held in jail. The system is deeply corrupted by allowing companies to profit off of the judicial system and punishes innocent people and millions of taxpayers. America is one of the only countries in which bail bond companies are legal (Liptak, par. 5-6). England and Canada, among other countries, consider it an immoral practice to allow a business to profit off of a system that is supposed to be fair and free of influence from outside sources and greed (Liptak, pars. 33, 38). Doing so is considered a crime punishable under the same statutes as witness tampering and bribing a juror (Liptak, par. 33).

The bail system was originally intended to ensure that people accused of crimes could be allowed the presumption of innocence by returning to their normal lives while at the same time ensuring that the accused would show up for their trial (Criminal Justice, par. 2). It has since created an enormous for-profit industry, been abused by corrupt judges, and discriminated against low-income households. The system has grown to be unconstitutional and many county and state courts have begun to address this problem in different ways.

The two most notable examples of bail reform are the pretrial service agencies in the District of Columbia and Kentucky. Pretrial Service Agencies (PSAs) are organizations employed usually by the state or local governments that perform risk assessments for people accused of crimes and can monitor those released and remind them of court dates. In many areas, these institutions have actually lowered the failure to appear (FTA) rates in the court system (Mahoney 13). Kentucky's PSA's failure to appear rate is at 8% (Mahoney 13). Most of these are non-violent crimes and the extensive background information that the agency has collected on them makes it much easier for law enforcement to track them down and return them to court (Mahoney 14). The Kentucky agency has 220 employees located in 60 offices across Kentucky and interview 84% of detainees in a timely manner. Interviewers are often available around the clock and can have a report on the accused in the next 24 hours after arrest to present to the judge (Mahoney 13). This helps preserve the presumption of innocence, save the court system money, and better assesses the risks the defendants pose instead of relying on a judge's personal opinion with little to no knowledge of their case or history.

There have only been 94 pretrial service programs implemented so far across the United States at the county level (Mahoney iii). Nevertheless, a National Association of

Pretrial Services Agencies has already been formed to work with the American Bar Association in order to create National standards for agencies with guidelines and rules for conducting risk assessments fairly (“Pretrial Services,” par. 1). The Association has set six core functions for PSAs which includes:

Impartial universal screening of all defendants, regardless of charge, verification of interview information and criminal history checks, assessment of risk of pretrial misconduct through objective means and presentation of recommendations to the court based upon the risk level, follow up reviews of defendants unable to meet the conditions of release, accountable and appropriate supervision of those released, to include proactive court date reminders, reporting on process and outcome measures to stakeholders (“Pretrial Services,” par. 2)

Pretrial Service Agencies conduct in-depth background checks on defendants in order to make an informed recommendation to the court about the defendant’s release (“Pretrial Services”, par. 2). Judges can choose to release defendants on personal recognizance alone or with conditions attached such as drug testing, rehabilitation programs, electronic monitoring, curfews, or restricted travel (“Pretrial Services,” par. 4). These stipulations can be attached because of a judge’s concern of flight risk or danger to the community. They are usually attached when the bail sentencing is delivered.

Pretrial service agencies can be implemented into a community gradually. They can start by setting up an office at a local level and beginning to interview more and more defendants in order to provide a risk assessment report to a judge. This benefits both the judge and the defendant, as the accused will have a much more fair chance of being released and will therefore have more trust in the current legal system. The judge will be able to make a

much more informed decision on whether the defendant should be released before their trial and will be much more assured that they did not release a dangerous criminal into the community. The local community will also feel safer because they know that the people being given bail have been carefully evaluated by professionals who performed a thorough background check instead of relying on one judge's personal opinion.

The physical cost to the community will also be significantly less. Taxpayers spend almost \$14 billion every year housing pretrial detainees ("The Problem," par. 8). Keeping a defendant in jail for one night varies widely across courts, but the average amount is around \$75 a night ("The Problem," par. 9). Pretrial service monitoring also varies significantly depending on the amount of monitoring or drug tests that are administered, but one day of supervision averages around \$7 per day ("The Problem," par. 9). This is a significant difference that could actually save taxpayers money while also creating a constitutional bail system that allows for personal liberty. These changes would benefit everyone, whether or not the person has been touched by the court system, because their tax money is being used to house innocent people who have not been convicted of a crime.

The people that would be harmed by these measures would be for-profit bail bond companies and corrupt judicial officials and lawyers. Bail bondsman would not be able to profit off of innocent people and those same innocent people would not be forced to pay money even though they did not commit a crime. While employees of bail bonds companies would be put out of business, they could move to work in the new pretrial services agencies or use their bounty hunting skills on the police force. This would also make American citizens safer by not allowing bounty hunters to infringe on their constitutional rights by breaking and

entering, and also add to the police force and create a more informed process when judging bail candidates. It would also help prevent a measure of corruption in the courtroom when lawyers and judges receive payment from bail bond companies in exchange for making higher bail rates. This is an enormous issue in the American justice system. By eliminating bail bond companies, America would be stopping a practice that profits off of the justice system and is illegal in most other countries (Liptak, par. 33).

The District of Columbia has completely abolished cash bail and has since established a pretrial services program that not only monitors pretrial defendants, but administers drug screenings with their very own drug testing laboratory (Keenan 4). Most other pretrial agencies tend to outsource their drug tests and only administer by request of a judge or if their history shows a strong possibility of drug use. This program spends more on drug regulation than it does on pretrial monitoring at over \$30 million per year for drug testing and laboratories (Pretrial Services, par. 6). This is not a good use of the pretrial service program as it is a way of forcing self-incrimination by requiring drug tests in order to obtain release before trial, even if the defendant was not accused of a drug-related crime, which is also unconstitutional. It also spends a lot of tax dollars on a system that was meant to save money and tends to drug test constituents that have not been accused of a crime that relates to drugs in any way. Kentucky's pretrial system is the better model for the legal system as it is cost effective and makes the best use of its time and funding by keeping Americans safe and creating a fair legal process.

A pretrial services agency is meant to help promote the constitutional rights of American

citizens by creating an efficient and cost-effective way to run the bail system. Background checks allow judges to make informed decisions about a defendant's release, and the interview process gives the defendants a chance to defend themselves and the transcript is often sealed and read only by the judge. Interviews are performed within a 24-hour period from the defendant's arrest and the accused's statements are fact checked along with any references they give

(Mahoney, par. 11). This helps gauge the defendant's honesty and trustworthiness. PSAs can also allow for more effective monitoring of those released on bail and can create a safer community for everyone at a lower price.

It is every American's duty to create a safe country that promotes the values of freedom that it was founded on. Not all Americans can be free if innocent people are locked up because they are poor. If every person is created equal, then every person deserves equal treatment in the justice system and a fair opportunity to their personal liberty and freedom. No American should have to be imprisoned against his or her will because of their financial status. No one should be forced to permanently pay 10% of their bail regardless of their innocence or guilt. All Americans should have the right to a fair justice system without the corruption of bail bond companies, and lastly, all Americans deserve a fair trial, which cannot be accomplished if the judge is not informed about the person or their risk assessment. Bail reform is an issue that is a necessity in a free democracy such as the United States and cannot be accomplished without the support of the people. A fair justice system is important to everyone, because America promises liberty and justice for all, and right now it is not keeping its promise



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*Hope can get us through some of the darkest times, including illness and disease. Samuel Joseph McKinney's essay, "Hope in Distress," analyzes the role of hope in the course of treatment for patients with cancer. McKinney discusses the transformation of hope through the prognosis of the disease and draws from professional studies in order to affirm his argument that hope is a crucial aspect in treating this often terminal illness.*

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### Hope in Distress

Even though hope is the most important aspect in a person's life when going through a tougher period of time, hope is also the first thing that gets completely shattered when a person finds out that they have to face the frightening disease called cancer. Many studies show how important hope is for the well-being of cancer patients, but still many medical professionals do not take into consideration the patient's state of mind when relating to the patient's development and course of treatment. While hope is clearly beneficial and necessary for cancer patients, it is still apparent that it is not well applied or developed for the improvement of the cancer patient.

When defining hope most articles tend to go around the same idea, but with different variations. That idea is that hope is the desire for a better outcome. This definition, even though it is simple, is true in the many forms hope reveals itself. In Emily Beckman's article, "The Content of Hope in Ambulatory Patients with Colon Cancer," she states, "Patients reported that the Content of their hopes changed with the diagnosis of cancer. More specifically, perspectives changed" (Beckman). With the research done in Beckman's article, it becomes clear that the state of mind of cancer patients needs to adapt to changes in their diagnosis. When a patient is diagnosed with cancer in the early stages, they hope for an easy cure and a normal life. As the

cancer worsens their hope changes and they start hoping for a painless treatment and a long life. Once the cancer becomes terminal, for most people all that is left to hope for is more time on earth and a peaceful death, but for patients with religious beliefs and their families there is a hope for an afterlife. All of these forms of hope are important for maintaining the patient's well-being.

It is not common to find negative views on hope. Most people in the American society and anywhere else in the world would agree that hope is very important and necessary, especially for patients coping with cancer. In Emily Beckman's article, they interviewed many patients that had been diagnosed with colon cancer about the contents of hope, and after gathering the information they found that all, except for one, of the patients said that hope is essential to survive in a life with cancer, and still after talking to the only patient that rejected the idea of hope, they concluded that she also was being supported by her own hopes (Beckman). Even though hope is universally accepted all around the world, it is still common to find some cases in which people reject hope because they are afraid they will be disappointed by the outcome and become depressive. What is most often rejected is the hope that comes from Christianity and other religions because people do not have the same beliefs, they will often view that as nurturing false hope. Most people are supportive of hope, but the biggest obstacle for hope is the fear that it is a false hope.

Hope is a characteristic that is naturally good, but when hope is set upon the wrong things it can lead to vulnerability. In situations where there seems to be little hope, like cancer, it is very common for the patient to find himself in desperation for hope, and his first reaction would be to latch on to any hope that is offered leaving him very vulnerable for exploitation. In Adrienne M. Martin's article "Hope and Exploitation" she makes the connection between hope and exploitation by stating:

As noted in the previous section, such a hope involves a strong desire for a cure, and that desire is expressed in and reinforced by the clients' imaginative engagement with the idea of a cure. The more extensively a sick person engages in such activities, the more invested she becomes in her hope. It is this investment that the charlatan exploits by lying about his product's curative powers. (Martin)

The market for cancer treatment is a very rich business, which is the main reason it is easy to find people who are willing to exploit cancer patients. When many cancer patients become terminal, they desperately search the Internet for a cure and easily fall into scams that will take all their money. The problem of exploitation becomes more severe when the patient loses hope on the doctors and treatments and starts looking for a cure where there is no medical expertise.

Hope is the best way the human mind finds to deal with a difficulty, but when a person finds out they are diagnosed with cancer their hope is completely shattered. In Chloe Eustache's article, "Exploring Hope and Healing in Patients Living with Advanced Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer," she described the initial reaction of patients diagnosed with cancer when she stated:

Many depicted the initial difficulty of responding constructively to their diagnosis, describing the overwhelming uncertainty and crippling emotional distress that plagued them in this traumatic phase of the healing trajectory. This phase was most aptly described by three categories: (a) overwhelming losses, (b) emotional paralysis, and (c) challenges to rebuilding hope. (Eustache)

It is astounding the lack of hope and mental distress that is present in the initial diagnosis. The initial fall is what makes the need for a more powerful comeback so precious. It is during that period that hope is at its highest need and the most absent at the same time.

Hope is clearly an important factor in the well-being of cancer patients during their diagnosis and treatment, but how often is hope really taken seriously by medical professionals in the hospitals in our community? In that matter it is hard to find a clear answer; we can find many hospitals that are doing a great job in keeping their patients motivated and hopeful, other hospitals seem to only be focused in helping patients with their physical problems without realizing how much their state of mind affect their body. In the article “Fostering Hope in the Patient with Cancer” the author, Rebecca Lichwala, states “Nurses may find it hard to adequately assess patients and implement a hope intervention in a particular timeframe. They also may not have time to get training in counseling patients” (Lichwala). Even though there are many nurses that are experts in their field and do an amazing job at fostering hope in cancer patients, there are still many that lack those skills. As for other medical personnel, like doctors, there is less of a need to have a relationship of building hope in patients, but what is most often ignored and extremely important is that the doctor understands the patient’s hopes, goals, and mindset before following a course of treatment, in some cases guiding them to more realistic expectations. It is the objective of the nurses and doctors to deal with the hope of the patient, but the family also plays a big role in the motivation of their sick loved one.

Patients that were diagnosed with cancer will easily find themselves in emotional stress and without any hope. Many of them had plans and dreams they looked forward to that simply seemed to get cut short. The need cancer patients have for hope is undeniable. If hope remains too little, they can easily become vulnerable and susceptible for exploitation. It becomes the families and medical personnel job to boost the hope and motivation in the patient with cancer for their mental well-being. Developing hope in cancer patients is quite a complex matter; it is not possible to just create a law that makes people with cancer be more hopeful, but the more

informed and skilled the medical professionals are the most often that will be the outcome. It is important to acknowledge the great job that most nurses already do, but there is still a need for training and improvement on how nurses should deal with developing hope in cancer patients. Nurses have a big role in providing support for cancer patients, especially when the patient does not have family willing to support him or the family does not have enough hope themselves to give him support. Nurses are naturally the medical personnel that have the most interaction with cancer patients, and if the family does not provide the support needed for the patient, they have to fulfill that role. Many people would argue that there is a need for psychological help and that hospitals should have psychologists, but with the appropriate counseling training nurses would be able to fulfill that role more efficiently according to the needs of the patient. In the article “Fostering Hope in the Patient with Cancer,” Lichwala states, “Nurses should build relationships with their patients, providing positive interactions that decrease patient anxiety and increase hope” (Lichwala). This article shows that nurses would be more efficient in helping the patients, because when they are dealing with cancer they often need more of a good relationship that will build their hope than just counseling. When developing a relationship with their patients, the nurses become a great help for the patient’s development of hope, instead of only a person that cares for their physical needs.

It is most common for doctors to have less of a contact with their patients, that in itself is not a problem, the problem occurs when they are not aware of the patient’s state of mind and expectations for the treatment that they have chosen to follow, but if the doctor is well informed and prepared he will be able to disclose the possible outcomes of the treatment. In the article “The Content of Hope in Ambulatory Patients with Colon Cancer,” Beckman states, “Additionally, clinicians may gain important information about whether patients’ goals are

realistic in light of their disease trajectory” (Beckman). It is important for the doctor to understand the patient’s hopes and expectations for the course of treatment, so that he may help the patient form more realistic expectations for the outcome of the treatment. It may seem sometimes that if a doctor provides more realistic expectations for a treatment, it would make the patient lose hope, but the doctor can help the patient develop more realistic hopes and maintain a good mindset. Like, if a patient with terminal cancer is hoping to find a cure with a treatment, but the doctor clarifies that it is not a possible outcome and promotes the idea that this treatment could extend months or years to the patient’s life time. The patient’s attitude is out of the doctors control, but if the doctor can offer hope with whatever treatment is pursued than that will tend to help the patient cope with the disease. In Beckman’s research she concludes, “By reaching a deeper understanding of the content of hope, cancer clinicians will be able to provide better support to patients at all stages of illness” (Beckman). With the understanding of the patient’s goals, hopes, expectations, and mindset the doctor can be better prepared to help the patient.

The lack of hope for cancer patients can leave many people desperate to find some hope, that desperation opens a vulnerability that many are willing to exploit. The exploitation of cancer patients can be a serious problem especially when the patient loses their hope on doctors and looks for a cure elsewhere. Many look for a cure on the internet where they easily fall into scams that claim to have a cure, but only robs thousands of dollars from the desperate cancer patients. To stop these internet scams, it would be necessary to pass a law that prohibits the advertisement of any cure or treatment for cancer that has not been approved by a specific group of medical experts, and if not obeyed the punishment could lead up too many years of jail time. That law would not be enough to stop the scams completely, but it would create a list of safe treatments that were medically approved. So, that the amount scams are very limited there would need to be



an enforcement of that law that shuts down any site or add and tries to find the creator of the site for prosecution. Even though internet scams are the most obvious form of exploitation, there is a less obvious and more socially acceptable form of exploitation that is the universal over price of cancer treatments. Because of the emotional despair for a cure, cancer patients tend to pay a lot more than they would normally be willing to pay. In the article “Hope and Exploitation” Martin describes a way of preventing exploitation when she states, “To prevent exploitation, it is necessary to establish a standard for fair prices to be enforced either by federal regulation or by a system of incentives and disincentives for drug developers and manufacturers” (Martin). In a market where the need and demand are desperately high it would be impossible to have a fair price of the product, therefore to ensure the non-exploitation of the consumer a federal intervention is more than necessary. Preventing the exploitation of cancer patients is an important role that most families, doctors, and nurses could be a part of by maintaining the patient informed and hopeful, but just like it is our country’s job to ensure the safety of children and elderly, it should be its job to ensure the safety of the sick and vulnerable.

The initial diagnosis of cancer has been described as a moment of emotional distress and extreme loss of hope, that negative effect shows that the need for restoring hope in the patient is very precious, especially in the first downfall. The best solution for restoring hope in cancer patients is hope itself. Fonya Lord Helm writes an intense article about the effect hope has in psychology called “Hope Is a Curative,” and she states, “This research is consistent with the idea of hope as curative and as part of a positive affective exchange” (Helm). It would be very wrong to say that hope is a cure for cancer, but it is undeniable that hope has a positive effect in the human minds, and that effect can also improve a person’s physical condition. In the article “Fostering Hope in the Patient with Cancer,” Lichwala states, “Hope in patients with cancer

provides an increased sense of well-being, a positive outlook on a cancer diagnosis, and a reason for living... hope can provide patients with a positive sense of physical and mental well-being” (Lichwala). It is amazing to hear a person sincerely say, “I am doing well,” even though they are slowly being killed by a cancerous tumor, hope makes that possible. That level of hope and attitude has not only a positive effect on the well-being of the patient, but also on their supporting family. The act of restoring hope can be well developed by many different intervention groups, like medical programs formed by hospital staff, family involvement, and even patients meeting to talk about their difficulties and hopes. Hope is necessary, and it should be made sure to be restored and maintained on people diagnosed with cancer.

When dealing with the idea of hope in near death situations it is undeniable that most religious beliefs provide an unlimited supply of hope that has the same positive effect as any other hope. In the article “Hope Against Hope in Cancer at the End of Life,” Natalie A. Pattison stated, “Christian hope is not just about a cure. It is also about life beyond death. This means that whatever the treatment outcome or level of suffering, there is hope of life beyond the disease” (Pattison). The hope that is found in most religions is not only unlimited, but also cannot be shattered by negative results from treatments. The point is that the hope that comes from religious beliefs is a very powerful resource that cannot be diminished and should not be ignored. To make good use of the religious hope, would be to make it available for any patient that desires without imposing it.

In conclusion, hope is very important for the cancer patient’s well-being and to help them with the ability to cope with their disease. It is during cancer that hope is at its lowest levels, and at the same time more needed. The family, nurses, and doctors play a big role in helping the patient develop hope without leaving space for exploitation. Often what can easily be considered

the most powerful resource of hope, religious hope, is just simply discarded. When facing cancer hope finds itself in distress, but with the collaboration of medical professionals, family, and a positive development of the patient, hope can be hopeful again.

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*Social media is no longer a novelty technology; it is a serious force that has the potential to impact almost any aspect of our society and culture. In “Adolescents on Social Media,” Karla Majano calls on state legislation to implement ordinances in order to combat the connections between social media, sexual predators, cyberbullies, and mental stress in adolescents.*

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### Adolescents on Social Media

According to research, social media plays a key part in connecting people and in creating a sense of belonging and community. However, social media still causes many problems. Social media has become a widely controversial topic gaining notoriety while recognizing its public significance. Genuinely, the way people use social media needs to be rethought. State legislation needs to institute an ordinance that holds both social media content and individuals to a stricter standard in media censorship to combat the increasingly prevalent presence of cyberbullying and anonymous sexual predators, and mental stress on adolescents.

As more high schoolers create social media accounts, social media’s effectiveness in spreading messages grows. Because of this, cyberbullying has become increasingly prevalent due to its anonymity. There are several ways messages can be spread. “Cyberbullying: Bullying in the Digital Age” by Kowalski, explains several forms of cyberbullying. One of them is harassment, a form of cyberbullying where offensive messages are sent to the victim (62- 63). This is an effective form of bullying, because this technique can involve one or more bully that harasses the victim with hundreds of messages and the intimidations are long-lasting. In 2015, a teen named Maurine Molak was bullied by multiple teens online and ended up committing suicide because he felt as if everyone at his school hated him. One post on Instagram stated that

he looked like an ape from a movie and the bullies commented that he should be put in a ‘body-bag’ (Ladika 99). Since the bullies were not face-to-face with the victim, it increases how badly they can hurt the victim before getting caught due to being able to hide their identity. The bullies can easily change their profile name and information when attacking the victim. Another way messages are spread is through denigration, meaning posting false information about the victim. (Kowalski 63-64). This form of spreading messages can be emotionally harmful to the victim, and the bully typically photoshops the victim in a degrading way. On social media, denigration can seriously affect a victim’s reputation. There are many ways a bully can manipulate a photo into looking realistic. An example is photoshopping a teen girl into looking like she is pregnant. It is very easy for a bully to post false information and convince everyone that it is true. Not only does this spread to people who know the victim, but to anyone who sees the post as well.

Another kind of cyberbullying is impersonation. This occurs when a bully steals the identity of the victim by hacking into their social media or making a new account with their information. When it comes to spreading messages, the bully could post something to not only harm the victim, but the victim’s family and friends as well. Also, bullies who want to keep people from knowing who they are use this form to keep their identity hidden. Due to the anonymity, the bully can find many ways to destroy the victim’s reputation without needing to worry that people will know who is behind the screen. Unfortunately, it is very easy for someone to hack an account and to be a victim of it. Social media is a source bullies use to attack their victims, consequently leaving the victim in an awful situation.

Social media has expanded in such a way to where child sex trafficking has become a bigger issue. Many teens are victims of sex acts, even if there is no sign of coercion on social media. According to medicine physician, Rachel S. Dawson, “Teenagers frequently meet

strangers online, become friends, and eventually end up being sold for sex” (11). This is becoming a widespread problem due to so many young adolescents having social media accounts at such an early age. They get manipulated by adults who have sexual and criminal intentions.

An example according to Dawson is:

I had a 15-year-old girl in clinic who was doing well in school and was active in sports, but who one day met a man online. The man was actually 35-years-old, which she initially was not aware of. He told her how beautiful she was, listened to her problems, and started a romantic relationship with her. Her parents were completely unaware of the situation and thought their daughter was dating a school classmate. This man ended up convincing her to have sex with other men as a sign of her love for him and to have money for their future life together. (10)

This case is one of many situations where this has occurred. Little by little, social media is negatively influencing and impacting teens by providing an anonymous location that can incite criminals to sexually take advantage of teens.

Social media usage is taking a toll on kids mentally. There is a strong correlation between social media and health concerns in adolescents. One of them being the social pressure adolescents face, which also causes them to spend a detrimental amount of time on social media. Adolescents today are focused on their social status and this pressures them into posting things that do not exactly define who they really are. One of the ongoing trends on social media today is “body goals,” meaning to have a good and fit body. Because of this, many adolescents feel the need to want to fit in. From St. Joseph News-Press, a professional school counselor named Sarah Dudeck was interviewed and states, “Students will spend hours upon hours taking selfies, finding the perfect filter and obsessing over how many 'likes' they get” (5). Due to the social

pressure, many adolescents feel the need to change their behavior and waste time to look “perfect,” but in the end, they lower their self-esteem. “Adolescents now spend 7-11 hours per day with different media, which is far more than the maximum 1-2 hours typically recommended” (Dawson 13). This is leading to many health concerns resulting from the excessive usage of social media and time spent on mobile devices. All time spent on social media can harm mental health by taking away from other activities and forcing teens to focus so heavily on themselves.

Anxiety and depression are linked to social status demands, thus being another factor on health concerns in adolescents. A recent study from the University of Connecticut and Tsinghua University sought out to see if social media has become an addiction. In their results, they found out that there are two types of people when it comes to social media becoming an addiction. Some were at least risk due to just simply seeking information on the media, for example, looking through social media accounts without having a need to post a comment or picture. However, others look for happiness or a sense of belonging that’s missing is some part of their lives (Bai 5). These people who seek happiness tend to feel alone and isolate themselves on the media. This type of behavior can be linked to depression or anxiety, because social media has become an addiction and increases the reliance adolescents feel on it. In the research study, the things online users commented was paid attention to; one comment being, “My dependence on social media usage sometimes seems beyond my control” (18). In the end, this behavior results in one isolating themselves when getting hooked on social media, and an anxious feeling to check the phone when it rings.

The anonymity and effectiveness of spreading messages through cyberbullying on social media has resulted in consequences such as suicide. According to CQ Researcher, “Suicide is the



second-leading cause of death among teenagers in the United States, and children who are bullied in person or online are more than twice as likely as other children to consider killing themselves” (Ladika 99). Due to the anonymity, it is hard to know who the bullies are and how to find them quickly. This needs to be reduced by having a stricter policy enforced to where the bullies will need to go through a program before heading back to school. This will ensure the victim to no longer be harmed, thus lowering suicide rates. Every state in the U.S. has policies that can be correlated to cyberbullying. However, many of them are not enforced as they should be. According to CQ Researcher:

There is evidence that state anti-bullying laws have helped reduce in-person bullying and cyberbullying, but experts note that states often do not budget money to implement those laws, such as training for teachers. State laws also tend to focus on punishment, but researchers say expulsions and suspensions do nothing to address the underlying behavior problems that help create bullies. (Ladika 101)

Even though certain laws address how to prevent cyberbullying in schools, they are not necessarily effective. Expulsion and suspension in schools as punishment to the bullies does not address the problem. Many bullies will not learn anything from getting expelled or suspended and might even hurt their victim more for getting caught, or find another victim to intimidate. It is also an advantage bullies can take due to them being able to reach an electronic device and continue attacking their victims without getting in trouble in school. To prevent this, a policy should be created to where the bully will not only face suspension and expulsion in schools, but enrolled in a program that must be completed before heading back to school.

The program consists of discussions and give the bullies an opportunity to speak on their behalf. This would help determine if the bullies would need any further help, depending on how they respond and act. Also, many parents of victims want to allow their child to meet with the bully to try to find out the reasoning behind the bullying incident. With the parents' consent, the program would allow victims to have a discussion with their bully if wanted. This program could lower suicide rates due to victims being able to receive a response from their bullies, instead of their bullies pushing the subject away.

Unfortunately, many teens get manipulated on social media, which can lead to child sex trafficking. Because of this, social media developers should take matters into their own hands. There should be a coalition between social media developers and Thorn, an agency that works with non-profit and governmental organizations to stop the spread of child sex trafficking. Thorn has created a product called Spotlight, a software that can speed up the process of victims' identification. Developers should then have permission to scan social media for triggers, such as the number of derogatory and demeaning words directed at specific accounts. This would be very efficient in locating victims of child sex trafficking quickly before additional harm is done. According to Thorn, the agency has partnerships with social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat, and has helped find eight victims per day. However, if developers and Thorn teamed up to where both would be able to scan for triggers at specific accounts, it can increase the number of victims found per day. Spotlight itself has proven to be very effective in helping the law enforcement find victims. Matt Blumenthal, a supervisor at the San Diego Human Trafficking Task Force, states "With shifts in technology, Spotlight has become our most effective tool in locating victims. The software has solved countless cases for us and located

many victims” (“Thorn”). This software would be an opportunity for developers to take part in and reduce the amount of child sex trafficking on their media.

The responsibility falls to an individual to monitor one’s own time spent on social media, how much of an effect social media has, and how much stress or pressure is being exerted from social media onto them. To reduce mental stress on social media, certain procedures need to be established in places adolescents frequently visit, to be reminded how influential social media can become. One way to minimize the mental stress adolescents have on social media is having pediatricians bring up social media, as they would when they ask, “Have you been drinking plenty of water?” According to Dawson:

Pediatricians should ask about social media use when they see children and adolescents who already have access to electronic devices. They should also ask parents about controls that are set in place to monitor social media use, content, and friend connections on those sites. They should ensure that their children know personally everyone they are connected to on social media and that their accounts are always private and not public (1)

This way can be very effective, due to many adolescents having to go once a year to the clinic or hospital for their physicals, flu shots, etc. Also, parents of the teens will be included in the discussion. This would help remind and have parents concerned about how much time and secrecy is used when their teens are using social media. Furthermore, this method would have a quicker access for teens to get the help they need if they are addicted. If teens need help, pediatricians can have a thorough discussion of what to avoid on social media, refer them to a therapist, or even introduce the teen to a program that will take time away from being hooked on the media. The parent of the teen would be there for consent and could join their teens in the

process. The advantages of this method would lower the number of adolescents who have mental stress due to social media, allow teens to get the help they need right away, and make parents aware of the problem so they will be able to take matters into their own hands.

Social media is continuing to grow and is becoming an ever increasingly important part of many adolescents lives. The online safety procedures and policies needing to be established for the vulnerable population is extremely important to prevent negative issues from occurring. Giving priority to the censorship and regulation to the media is important in protecting the minds and hearts of adolescents.

Social media initiated a new form of communication that allows the creation of communities. Many people are in support of social media because of the access they have to people and ideas. However, they should realize that social media also aids in creating an open space for cyberbullies, sexual predators, and in creating stress in teens both mentally and physically. Unfortunately, access to people and ideas can also be extremely destructive.

Protecting adolescents' lives from social media is an important task Americans should focus towards restoring. Although social media plays a key role in people connecting and creating a sense of belonging to a community, it still causes many problems. Cyberbullying, anonymous sexual predators, and the amount of mental stress are negative effects caused by social media. However, by creating new policies and procedures, adolescents can continue to grow in a safer environment.

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