HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT VIEWS ON THE FIRST AMENDMENT:

TRENDS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

KNIGHT FOUNDATION

JOHN P. WIHBEY
AND BROOKE FOUCAULT WELLES
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Future of the First Amendment survey series with U.S. high school students, commissioned for the first time 15 years ago by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, takes on increasing importance each year, generating a unique body of evidence that connects to emerging questions in popular culture and policymaking around online speech, journalistic freedom, extreme forms of expression, and personal privacy, among other important issues.

Drawing on seven nationally representative surveys of U.S. high school students from 2004 to 2018, this research synthesis report finds:

1

THERE HAS BEEN A MODEST INCREASE IN AVERAGE SUPPORT AMONG STUDENTS FOR THE FIRST AMENDMENT.

However, there are significant differences in First Amendment support by race across all years, and gender, beginning in 2011.

2

BOYS AND WHITE STUDENTS ARE LESS INCLINED THAN GIRLS AND STUDENTS OF COLOR TO AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT: "THE FIRST AMENDMENT GOES TOO FAR IN THE RIGHTS IT GUARANTEES."

Of note, beginning in 2011, average responses by group fall on either side of the agree/disagree divide, with boys and white students slightly disagreeing with the statement, and girls and students of color slightly agreeing with it.

3

THERE IS A GROWING DIVIDE BETWEEN WHITE STUDENTS AND STUDENTS OF COLOR ON THE ISSUE OF FIRST AMENDMENT OVERREACH .

White students' support is relatively stable, while students of color increasingly agree that the First Amendment goes too far.

4

THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BY U.S. CENSUS REGION AS TO WHETHER THE FIRST AMENDMENT GOES TOO FAR, MOST NOTABLY BETWEEN THE NORTHEAST AND WEST/MIDWEST.

Generally speaking, the Midwest and West were the most supportive of First Amendment rights, as of 2018, whereas the students in the Northeast and South were more likely to believe the First Amendment goes too far.

5

IN GENERAL, COURSEWORK HAS A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON STUDENTS' SUPPORT FOR THE FIRST AMENDMENT.

On average, students who have taken a class that dealt with the First Amendment are more supportive of various rights and protections, and less likely to think the First Amendment goes too far.

6

ACROSS THE SURVEYS, NEWS CONSUMPTION HAS NOT BEEN A PARTICULARLY RELIABLE PREDICTOR OF FIRST AMENDMENT VIEWS.

The exceptions are students who often use social media for news; they were more supportive of specific First Amendment rights and protections, as compared with peers, in the 2018 survey.

7

THE ABILITY OF SCHOOLS TO REACH BEYOND CAMPUS WALLS TO MONITOR SPEECH IS AN ISSUE THAT IS VEXING SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY RIGHT NOW.

As values of safety and security clash with notions of personal freedom. On average, students mildly disagree that schools should be allowed to discipline students who post offensive content online outside of school time. Girls and students of color are more supportive of punishments.

8

IN TERMS OF FREEDOM OF PUBLICATION FOR ONLINE NEWS SITES, THERE ARE LARGE DIFFERENCES BY GENDER, WITH BOYS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE SUPPORTIVE OF ONLINE NEWS FREEDOM THAN GIRLS.

Boys are also more supportive than girls regarding the right of people to say whatever they want in public, including offensive statements. Girls are more supportive of government intervention when bullying or offensive speech on social media.

This research report offers a number of other insights that may be useful to parents, educators, and policymakers as they contemplate new approaches on a variety of pressing topics, from the shape of civics curricula to policies specifying which kinds of student speech should be tolerated on social media.

Further, the report provides a barometer of how society is raising the next generation to see the core First Amendment commitments of the country. In 2019, America marks both the 100th anniversary of its first major Supreme Court decisions interpreting speech under the First Amendment and the 50th anniversary of its landmark ruling protecting student political expression in schools. This report explores the implications of changing student interpretations of the First Amendment and how such changes may affect American society in the long term.

1

INTRO_DUCTION

The future of the First Amendment seems uncertain. So does the underlying reality of public opinion in this area and its trajectory moving forward. Debates over the extent to which diverse and sometimes extreme views should be tolerated, both on the streets and on digital platforms, rage on. Although public sentiment about the First Amendment appears to be evolving, hard data remain in short supply. This research report provides an orienting picture of how American youth generally see issues of free expression, charting trends over time, and perhaps, giving some indication of the future for society.

From the perspective of history, it seems an appropriate time for deeper reflection on both the First Amendment generally and its role within the lives of young people. While the First Amendment may appear a set of rights set in stone at America's founding, it is worth remembering that it took the country a long time to give specific meaning to these particular constitutional rights. In fact, 2019 marks the 100th anniversary of the first Supreme Court cases, coming out of the tumult of World War I, that provided robust interpretation of the First Amendment and spelled out general protections for free expression.[1] Likewise, 2019 is also the 50th anniversary of the landmark Supreme decision *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District,* which upheld students' rights to voice political protest in the context of the nation's public schools.[2]

Yet it is clear that applying core principles will not be easy in the years ahead. The boundaries of private and public speech have blurred in the age of digital media, as many schools and workplaces become increasingly vigilant about monitoring what individuals may say or post even outside of an institutional context. Through both laws and norms, protections for speech appear to be morphing: for corporations and organizations in their ability to broadcast messages in an unfettered way; and for individuals and groups who may assert that hostile speech and perceived harassment affects their ability to function on an equal basis in institutions and society at large.

The public sphere has extended into a dizzying array of new, often commercially owned, digital platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, as well as subcultural domains, sometimes highly networked and polarized ones, across the internet. Accordingly, debates about free expression have taken on novel dimensions relating to platform neutrality, volume, amplification, and visibility.[3] And in the increasingly deafening hurricane of online speech, the central speech-related challenge of the 21st century may very well involve the ability not just to speak, but to be heard.[4]

THE CENTRAL SPEECH-RELATED CHALLENGE OF THE 21ST CENTURY MAY VERY WELL INVOLVE THE ABILITY NOT JUST TO SPEAK, BUT TO BE HEARD.

Given all this societal churn, there is growing interest in where patterns and trends relating to First Amendment issues may lead, and how they will affect the underlying structure of democratic life and the quality of its debate in the years ahead. Is a new paradigm emerging, or are these just the growing pains typical in eras of rapid change in communication technology, with norms and values regressing to a historical mean in the coming decades?

In popular media, too much is often made of singular events — the latest shocking internet tempest, the fight over some public policy or speech by an influential thinker or leader. But as social scientists and historians know, major changes in societal norms and values often need to be measured carefully over time to see their true trajectory. Sea changes in American public policy preferences often happen gradually, the result of accumulating social and economic trends, while in other instances they are marked by events; sometimes these events are felt directly (the rise of gas prices, major disasters), and other times experienced indirectly, primarily through media reporting.[5]

If we are to have any chance of discerning true structural shifts, and perhaps peeking into the years ahead, it helps greatly when the data involved speak to the very source and wellspring of the question, where attitudes are formed among emerging groups and rising generations. For these reasons and more, the Future of the First Amendment survey series with U.S. high school students takes on increasing importance each year it continues, generating a unique and growing body of evidence.

This report builds on 15 years worth of surveys that gauge these crucial areas of expression and speech, and assess profound questions relating to the future of the First Amendment. Professor Kenneth Dautrich of The Stats Group and the University of Connecticut has fielded the survey seven times now — conducted with a nationally representative sample of high school-age persons in 2004, 2006, 2007, 2011, 2014, 2016 and 2018.

This survey series has consistently probed students' views on core First Amendment issues, as well as their attitudes on free speech, expression, and publishing in the culture more widely. Starting with the initial survey in 2004 that involved more than 100,000 students at hundreds of high schools, the research project then semi-regularly began selecting roughly 10,000 students from a randomly drawn sample of 30 to 40 high schools in order to track trends over time and to update public understanding on emerging topics. Years 2004 to 2016 all involved the same pool of high schools, though different student respondents year over year. Dautrich and Eric Newton, formerly of the Knight Foundation and now at Arizona State University, have interpreted the results through timely reports, which this research synthesis builds upon.[6]

On every survey, a central question has been asked about whether the First Amendment goes too far in its promises. Accompanying this question on each survey has been the plain-language text of the amendment itself:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

After reading this, students have been asked to respond to the following statement: "The First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees." Of course, a wide array of rights is guaranteed in that constitutional language, and students are asked to speak to these freedoms as a whole. This may seem to invite imprecision, but there is good reason to consider the text in aggregate. In general, scholars see the First Amendment as a structural aspect of the Constitution. Certain rights such as that of speech and the press, as James Madison once suggested, have "ever been justly

deemed the only effectual guardian of every other right."[7] All of the political institutions and rules set forth in the Constitution are predicated on the notion of a free people capable of deliberating. Jurists and legal scholars now typically see the First Amendment as having roughly three functions: To ensure the self-governing and deliberative capacity of political society; to foster a "marketplace of ideas" where truth might best emerge; and to guarantee individual autonomy and liberty consistent with the general idea of personal freedom. As mentioned, however, the modern conception of the First Amendment as it pertains to speech protections is only a century old. Well into the early 20th century, blasphemy and criticism of the military, for example, could be punished. It was only in 1919 that the Supreme Court first began interpreting the words of the amendment and applying them, at first in cases that came out of the societal turmoil, and the dissent and protest, of the World War I era.[8] There is, in other words, little continuous legal tradition in this area that begins at the country's founding. Society has had to create a set of standards to apply to the evolving circumstances and needs of America in the 20th and 21st centuries centuries. This will no doubt continue.

Students, of course, will have varying degrees of sophistication on these matters, and for the purposes of this report we combine statistics across all grades, 9-12, despite differences in maturity and capacity among those grades. Overall, support for the First Amendment and its core ideas remains reasonably strong among high school students, relative to notable declines in support that were observed in the mid-2000s. Yet there is considerable nuance. For example, we see substantial demographic divergence, growing over time, among gender and racial subgroups, with white males often more supportive of comprehensive protections for free expression and female students and students of color more worried that such rights can go too far.

This report analyzes these trends longitudinally, from 2004 to 2018 where possible, across a variety of specific issues and dimensions. A smaller subset of teachers was regularly surveyed, as well, alongside the larger group of students. For the purposes of this report, we occasionally reference teachers' attitudes, although our analytical focus is on the nationally representative sample of students. We also examine the role of

geography as a predictor of attitudes; the relationship between news consumption and views on the First Amendment; and the relationship between classroom civics learning and such views.

FRAMING THE FUTURE

How high school students see the First Amendment and the related patterns that can be observed over time are consequential for American society along several dimensions. First, students' views constitute a kind of cultural barometer — and perhaps an indication of the future. These students will, if they have not already, soon become voting-age adults, and eventually some will occupy positions of power and influence over society's rules. As the late Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens wrote: "The schoolroom is the first opportunity most citizens have to experience the power of government. Through it passes every citizen and public official, from schoolteachers to policemen and prison guards. The values they learn there, they take with them in life."[9] Indeed, after an individual's teenage years, views on issues such as free speech and minority rights tend to remain relatively constant.[10]

In the short term, importantly, the majority of students will arrive at institutions of higher education, where codes and norms relating to free expression are now being fiercely reinterpreted and debated across the United States. Survey data indicate important shifts on college campuses toward greater acceptance of limits on free speech.[11] Many schools are seeing tensions between more freewheeling norms around speech and the newer establishment of "safe spaces" — where the limits of speech are shaped with regard to the overall cultural climate that is created. Such limits on speech have provoked an avalanche of external criticism about alleged overly sensitive students and faculty, as well as ringing defenses from a new generation of rights advocates.[12] But it has also engendered newer ideas of differentiating learning spaces for varying purposes in this regard; this might include parallel "brave spaces," which could stand as settings that expose students to the kinds of clashes of ideas one might find in the world outside of academe."[13]
In any case, the lesson of immediate past generations of Americans

is that campus cultures often eventually rewrite parts of the culture at large. If history is any guide, new, evolving generational notions around permissible speech, privacy and publishing, for example, will change norms — and steer U.S. policy and law of the future. Generational attitudes on politics can prove remarkably durable.[14]

A second reason to pay careful attention to this area is that the views of students furnish a kind of referendum on the educational engine that perpetuates civil society: Are Americans sufficiently inculcating the core values and teaching the legal-ethical propositions that have provided the glue, to the extent it exists, for our large and diverse nation over time? Insights in this regard are actionable for a broad array of institutions, schools chief among them.

At the curricular level, schools also have evolved in terms of both the content of civics education and general pedagogical approaches, which look nothing like the staged, lecture-based classroom model of prior generations in many high schools. Students are not only likely to study a broader range of voices, views, and groups in their civics and history courses — to see widening participation and voice within the democracy, and its challenges, as a central concern — they are likely to be engaged in more active learning where discourse and dialogue are central. That said, as will be discussed later in this report, there are significant concerns about civics curricula being cut back, relative to historical standards, and students continuing to lack core knowledge and proficiency.

A third rationale for paying particular attention to this domain is that diverse interactions among school boards, administrators, and teachers on the one hand, and students and their parents on the other, are a volatile mix, producing novel questions, new norms, and in notable cases, new legal interpretations from courts at every level. Students may develop general views on the U.S. Constitution in the abstract, but these views are embedded in their lived experience within the public educational institutions in which they spend their days. Schools are themselves unique First Amendment environments. Everything from book banning to restrictions on language and political expression, from strictures on social media use to school uniforms, affects students' identity and their conceptions of public right and wrong. Indeed, some legal scholars contend that the public school has

served as the most consequential site of U.S. constitutional interpretation over time.[15] How students are to be treated as they enter the proverbial "schoolhouse gates" is a debate seemingly without end, echoing down through the generations.

Three-quarters of a century ago, the landmark Supreme Court case of *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943) provided the foundation for students' First Amendment rights in American public schools. Writing for the majority, Associate Justice Robert H. Jackson ruled that the children in question in the case, Jehovah's Witnesses who declined to recite the Pledge of Allegiance on religious grounds, were afforded significant First Amendment rights and could not be expelled for their principled refusal. No local school board, Jackson asserted, could violate basic rights: "That they are educating the young for citizenship is reason for scrupulous protection of Constitutional freedoms of the individual, if we are not to strangle the free mind at its source and teach youth to discount important principles of our government as mere platitudes."[16] The case was decided in the middle of World War II, when as the Court noted, issues of patriotism were particularly sensitive. But the principle at issue was not just one of rule of law but also one of inculcating the value of freedom to young citizens, showing by example, and thereby developing "the free mind." The Supreme Court decided that, in effect, a school must practice what society preaches. Yet what exactly society is preaching now is not nearly as clear as it was a generation ago — nor are the limits on what students might consume and experience, and see modeled within the culture. Contemporary students are part of what might reasonably be seen as a giant social experiment. All of the protective gatekeeping that society has carried out over the centuries to shield young people from extreme ideas, sexuality, violence and the like are functionally obsolete, at least for those with internet access. It is unclear how this massive shift in information access and cultural openness will shape their policy views on free speech over the long run, although this survey series begins to provide some clues.

ALL OF THE PROTECTIVE GATEKEEPING THAT SOCIETY HAS CARRIED OUT OVER THE CENTURIES TO SHIELD YOUNG PEOPLE FROM EXTREME IDEAS, SEXUALITY, VIOLENCE AND THE LIKE ARE FUNCTIONALLY OBSOLETE, AT LEAST FOR THOSE WITH INTERNET ACCESS.

To put this in some perspective, consider how impossible, even quaint, the following scenario now seems in the 21st century: In the 1970s a man driving with his teenage son in Brooklyn heard expletives over the radio, and the father complained to federal regulatory authorities. That resulted in the 1977 Supreme Court ruling *Federal Communications Commission v. Pacifica Foundation*, which supported the banning of certain vulgar words from American television and radio broadcasts.[17] For the vast majority of media consumption now, there seems to be no regulatory mechanism in sight, at least in the United States, that would establish such speech-related general restrictions again. Students now live in a radically changed world. From expletives in media to nudity, extreme political views to violence, almost all of the things that were hard to access in prior generations are now available instantly to many teenagers.

The year the Knight surveys began, 2004, was the year the social media company Facebook was launched, opening channels for expression that had never before been conceived. The subsequent three years saw YouTube (2005), Twitter (2006) and the iPhone (2007) launched. Within the span of this survey series, in other words, students went from only being able to, for example, pass handwritten notes to friends in class to being able to broadcast videos and GIFs instantly from their seats to large numbers of other students (and millions in the public at large). Along with this, students have also gone through a dramatic opening in terms of the range of speech they can access and the media channels they can use.

Further, it should not go unremarked upon that during the entire period in which these surveys were conducted, 2004-2018, America has been at war abroad, across the Middle East and Afghanistan. Traditionally, the most contentious cases around student speech — such as the landmark case *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, which involved students wearing black armbands to protest the Vietnam War — often have implicated matters of patriotism. Although the invasion of Iraq (2003) saw strains over student activism, fewer such controversies have emerged over the past decade, as American society seems to shift into a new paradigm where the military is held in general high regard and yet protest against foreign policy is also routinely tolerated if not accepted in many schools.[18]

Over this survey-series period, political polarization has increased, and perceptions of both the political left and right have grown more negative about one another.[19] Dramatic swings in national electoral politics have taken place, with the reelection of President George W. Bush in 2004 and the elections of the first African-American president, Barack Obama, and then-political outsider Donald Trump. Meanwhile, the rise of school shootings, most notably at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in 2018, have generated a new wave of student activism that is rooted in the public school system. Many school districts across the country have taken to vigilant monitoring of student online speech outside of the school context.[20] Such monitoring, coupled with new forms of political activism, will undoubtedly test the First Amendment environments of schools in the years ahead as students use their new power through digital media to contest prevailing norms and rules.

NOTE ON METHODS

The analysis uses the anonymized data for about 170,000 U.S. individual students over the period 2004 to 2018; it does not follow individuals over time, but rather samples from the same pool of schools, in order to generate periodic snapshots of opinion — generally from 30 to 40 high schools after the larger initial 2004 survey. In some cases, new questions were introduced after the survey began, in which case we look at trends for shorter intervals. Most questions on the survey asked for student responses of agreement or disagreement across a four-point scale (with a fifth response for "don't know" typically available). We compute the mean (average) score for responses and compare these over time when we examine longitudinal patterns. Where we examine the relationship between variables, we use tests of significance of difference on means (independent samples t-test, ANOVA). It should be noted that the data format for the survey in 2007 did not allow for individual-level analysis, so we excluded using that data for the purposes of this report. The regional and state variable was also not available for the 2006 survey, so that was excluded in any analysis involving geography.

2

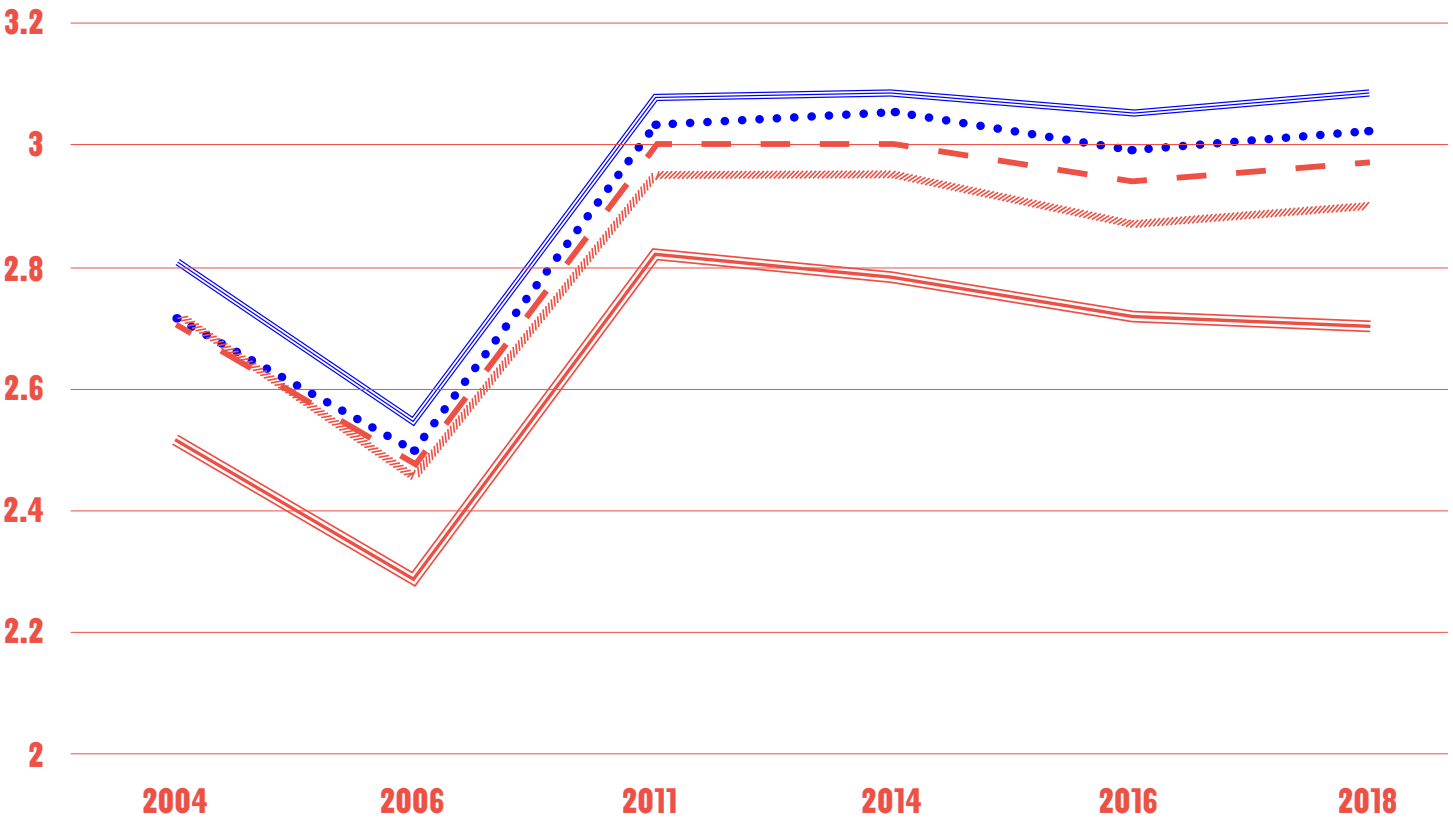
GENERAL TRENDS AND DIVERSE VIEWS

Since 2004, there has been a modest increase in average student support for the First Amendment, reflected by an increase in mean response to the statement, "The First Amendment goes too far in its rights and guarantees." Of note, the overall upward trend in support (toward disagreeing with the statement) was interrupted in 2006, with a sharp decline towards students mildly agreeing with the statement. Over time, on average, students mildly disagree with the statement (SEE TABLE 1 IN APPENDIX).
However, there are significant differences in First Amendment support by race across all years, and gender, beginning in 2011.[21] Boys and white students are less inclined to agree with the statement than girls and students of color, respectively. Of note, beginning in 2011, average responses by group fall on either side of the agree/disagree divide, with boys and white students slightly disagreeing with the statement, and girls and students of color slightly agreeing with it. There is a growing divide between white students and students of color on the issue of First Amendment overreach — white students relatively stable, students of color increasingly agree that the First Amendment goes too far.

These patterns are roughly consistent with those observed among college-age students.[22] More research on underlying causes must be done to understand this, although the contentious cultural and political atmosphere during the 2016 election and after — characterized by emboldened anti-immigrant, misogynistic and ethnic nationalist rhetoric — certainly would be a plausible explanation. As high-profile events such as the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017 and the mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, in August 2019 (at least one of which was linked to white supremacy) play out, a reaction to the structure of the public sphere might be expected among marginalized, nonwhite, and non-male-identifying groups. Students are, on average, mildly supportive of a range of First Amendment rights and protections, with the notable exception

STUDENT VIEW NO. 1

THE FIRST AMENDMENT GOES TOO FAR IN ITS RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES



4=STRONGLY DISAGREE
3=MILDLY DISAGREE
2=MILDLY AGREE
1=STRONGLY AGREE

AVERAGE

BOYS

GIRLS

WHITE STUDENTS

STUDENTS OF COLOR

of the right to burn or deface the American flag in political protest, which students mildly to strongly disagree with. Students are most supportive of the right to express unpopular opinions. Average student scores have remained relatively stable on many issues, though they have become somewhat less supportive of offensive song lyrics, and somewhat more supportive of the freedom of print newspapers to publish stories without government censorship (SEE TABLE 2). Overall, significant differences in student opinions by race and gender persist across various dimensions of First Amendment rights and protections.

WITHIN THE SCHOOLHOUSE GATES

It is important to note that the surveys that produced the basis for this report were conducted during a particular time and within a specific kind of place — the distinctive context of high schools. Some of the questions asked were about students' views on free expression within their school setting. It is crucial, then, to contextualize these students and their experiences in these institutions, in order to understand the data more fully.

On any given day in the United States, a large proportion of the population — more than 50 million students, and millions of adults — enters into the unique legal and cultural environment that is the modern public school system. In doing so, these children and adults, some one-sixth of the population, operate in an environment where First Amendment rights enjoy protections but remain circumscribed in particular ways, as compared with adult citizens' rights in other public spaces.[23] The everyday politics of speech play out distinctively in tens of thousands of classrooms, hallways, offices, sports fields, and auditoriums, generating a set of formative experiences for millions and, at times, pushing the boundaries of existing norms and rules for the wider society.

There are roughly five major Supreme Court decisions that, in theory, govern the parameters of acceptable speech and its regulation in American public schools at the present moment:[24]

— WEST VIRGINIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION V. BARNETTE (1943)

Which established that students have First Amendment rights that school boards must respect.

— TINKER V. DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT (1969)

Which confirmed students' political speech rights, permitting regulation only when activity would substantially disrupt school activity.

— BETHEL SCHOOL DISTRICT V. FRASER (1986)

Which allowed schools to restrict vulgar or profane speech categorically.

— HAZELWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT V. KUHLMEIER (1988)

Which found that schools could regulate school-sponsored speech (activities in which a reasonable observer would view the speech as the school's own) based on any legitimate educational concern.

— MORSE V. FREDERICK (2007)

Which established that schools may restrict and punish all speech that advocates illegal substance use, unless there is a political dimension to the speech.

The law has moved incrementally toward greater restrictions on speech in schools under specific conditions, partially fueled by confusion on the part of educators, even as the general protections have remained in place.[25] Yet the application of these decisions and the degree of respect they demand in practice varies widely according to school district and geography. Despite more attention from some school boards and administrators to their legal duties to respect students' rights, scholars have documented the myriad ways in which courts and schools

continue to impinge on students' First Amendment protections. In schools across the country, new issues continually press up against prevailing rules and norms. At times, there are questions about how far religious expression can go or be suppressed; at others, it is about speech and curricula on such matters as sexual health, or gay, lesbian, and transgender issues. Schools provide a litmus test; issues in the wider culture frequently have a way of being publicly tested first in the school context.

The Future of the First Amendment survey series surfaces a number of important trends that bear on a number of crucial issues in this regard. Again, there are significant differences among white and boy students compared with girls and students of color.

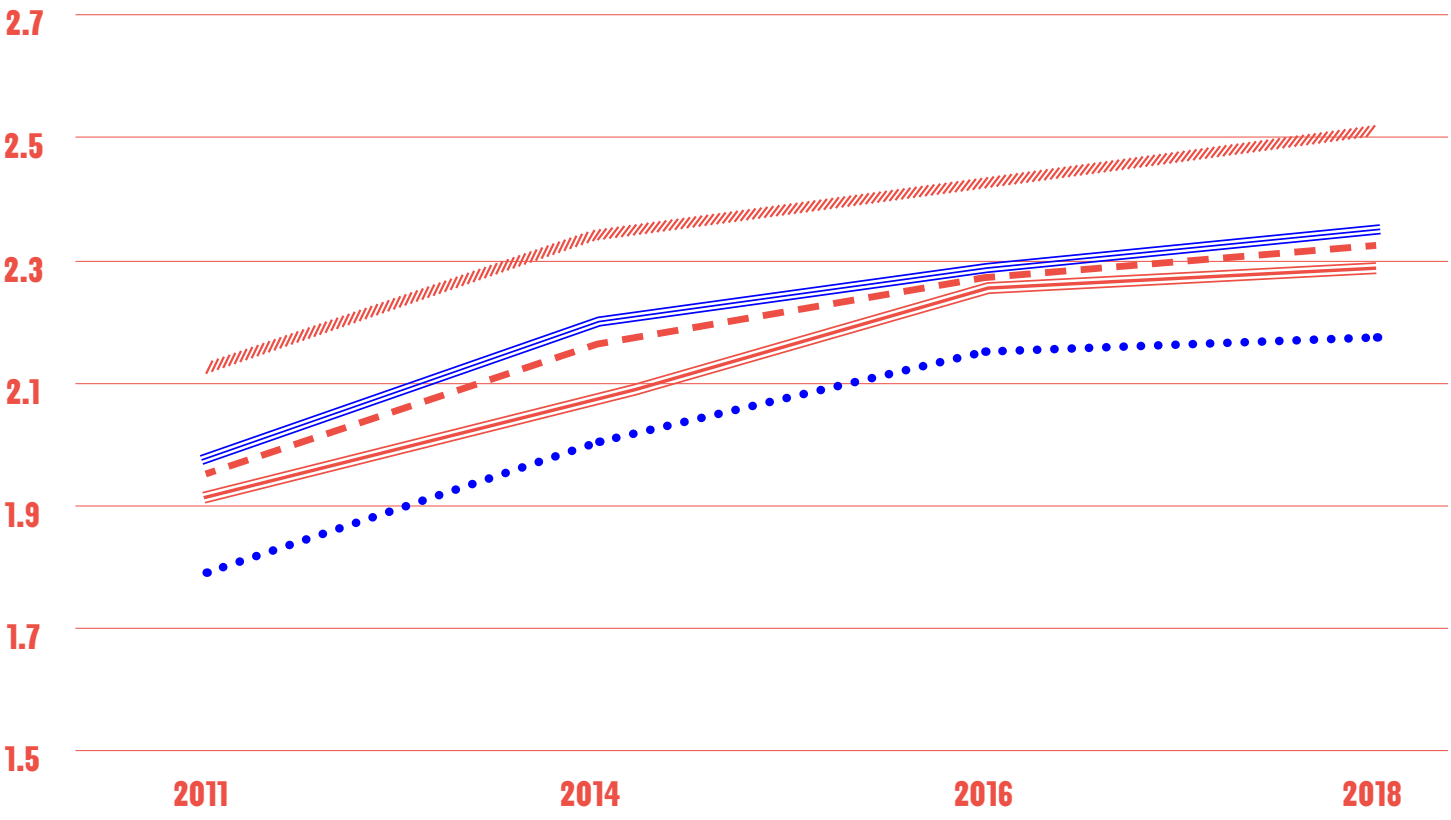
Two central questions on the survey address students' right to critical speech about authority figures. Beginning in 2011 respondents were asked explicitly whether students should be allowed to critique teachers and school administrators online. Although they mildly agree that such speech should be permitted, responses trend toward mild disagreement over time. In general, girls were less supportive than boys of critical online expression, with the gap widening over time. Students of color were more supportive than white students of critical online expression, with the gap widening over time (SEE TABLE 3). A second question, asked across all survey years, implicitly queries students abilities to critique teachers and administrators through reports on "controversial issues" in student newspapers. Students mildly agree with this protection, a response that has been stable across all survey years (SEE TABLE 4).

[SEE STUDENT VIEW NO.2 ON PAGE 26]

On a related issue, the capacity for school officials to reach beyond the campus walls to monitor speech is an issue that is, as mentioned, currently challenging school districts across the nation. Sensitivities around issues such as bullying, as well as the rising temperature around safety and security in the wake of relentless school shootings in recent years, have made this domain only more complicated. On average, students mildly disagree that schools should be allowed to discipline students who post offensive content online outside of school time. Girls and students of color are more supportive of punishments (SEE TABLE 5).

STUDENT VIEW NO.2

STUDENTS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ON FACEBOOK OR OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT BEING PUNISHED BY TEACHERS OR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS FOR WHAT THEY SAY



4=STRONGLY DISAGREE
3=MILDLY DISAGREE
2=MILDLY AGREE
1=STRONGLY AGREE

AVERAGE

BOYS

GIRLS

WHITE STUDENTS

STUDENTS OF COLOR

STUDENT VIEWS ON MEDIA PUBLISHING

Students are somewhat more supportive of websites being held accountable for offensive content than they are of schools punishing students for their online behavior, although they still mildly disagree with punishment overall. Once again, girls and students of color are more supportive of punishments than boys and white students (SEE TABLE 6).

In terms of schools controlling student press, the views of students have been relatively stable over time. On average, students mildly agree that students should have the right to publish stories without approval of school authorities. Notably, a spike of support in 2006 corresponds with a decline in support for the First Amendment overall that year. There some significant differences by gender and race, though gaps appear to narrow over time (SEE TABLE 4).

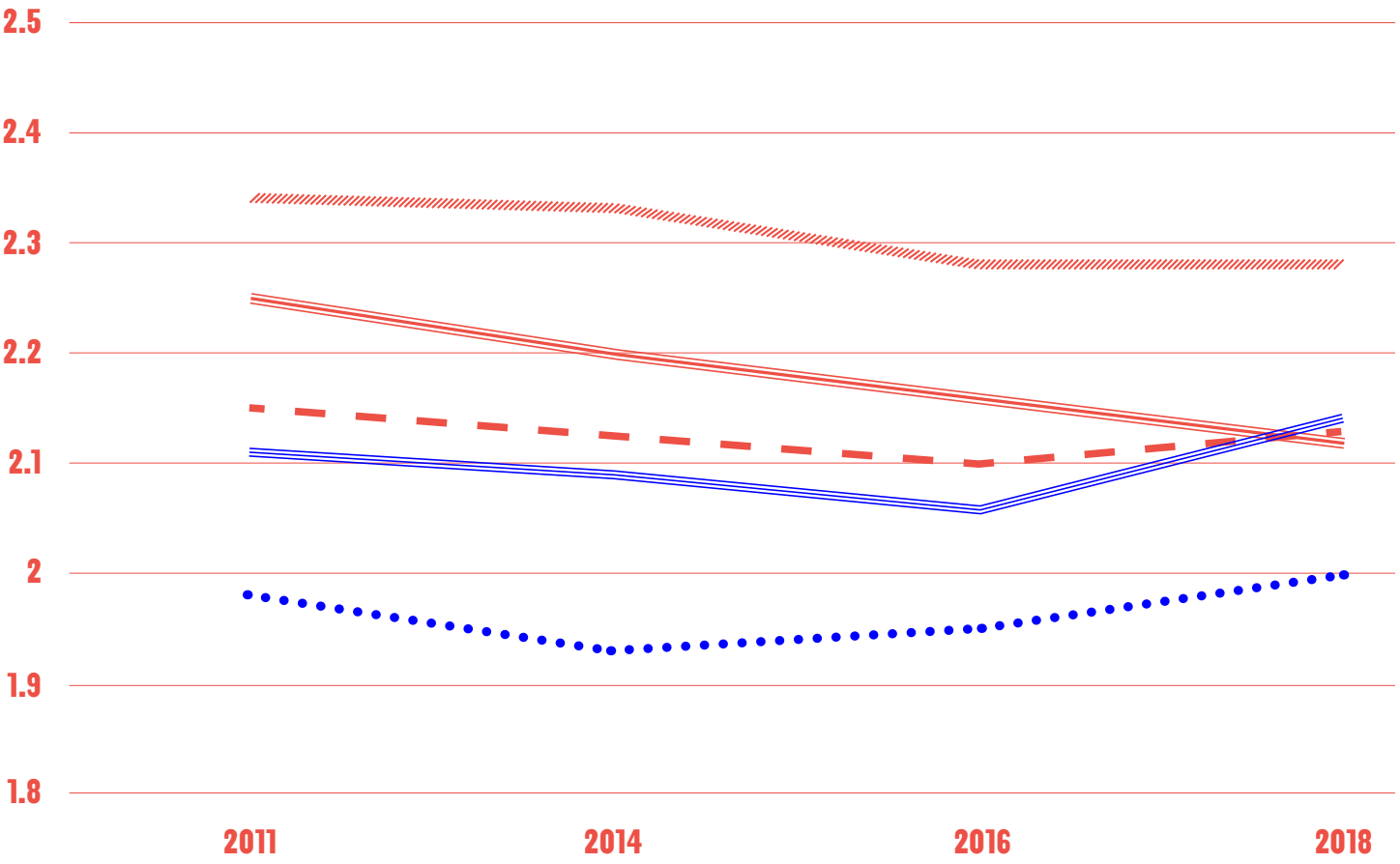
Further, students are generally slightly more supportive of their own freedom of press than on freedom of press in general, although in most years the differences are small. Students have also consistently been asked to respond to a prompt about the freedom of newspapers to publish: "Print newspapers should be allowed to publish any story without the government having the ability to block or censor them." There has been a significant shift toward supporting freedom of the print press, with a particularly sizable shift between 2006 and 2011 There are, again, sizable differences for gender in most years — boys are much more supportive of print press freedom than girls (often on either side of the strongly/mildly agree divide). We observe smaller differences for race, which is nonsignificant in some years (SEE TABLE 7).

We can observe similar overall support for online news, stable since the question was first asked, in 2011. It bears noting large differences by gender, with boys significantly more supportive of online news freedom than girls (SEE TABLE 8).

The Future of the First Amendment survey series began asking specific questions in 2018 about the way social media contributes to controversial or extreme speech. Although this means there is no longitudinal pattern yet to assess trends, the one-year snapshot contains several notable items. First, despite all the clamor for more regulation of social media — and greater responsibility by the likes of Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook to moderate content

STUDENT VIEW NO.3

ONLY NEWS PROVIDERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PUBLISH ANY STORY WITHOUT THE GOVERNMENT HAVING THE ABILITY TO BLOCK OR CENSOR THEM



4=STRONGLY DISAGREE
3=MILDLY DISAGREE
2=MILDLY AGREE
1=STRONGLY AGREE

AVERAGE

BOYS

GIRLS

WHITE STUDENTS

STUDENTS OF COLOR

— only 47% of students agree at some level that social media companies "should be responsible for limiting hate speech on their platforms." That said, 53% of students agree that "social media stifles free expression because people are afraid of being attacked or shamed by those who disagree with them." More than two-thirds of students (69%) believe that it is "too easy for people to say things anonymously on social media." It is also worth noting in this context that 46% of students think hate speech should be protected by the First Amendment. In general, boys and girls differ substantially in what sort of speech they find acceptable — the right to unpopular and offensive speech is generally supported, but girls on the whole do not support threats and bullying (online or in public). Students generally less supportive of restrictions on their own speech (e.g., student news, punishments for online content) than on restrictions on similar speech in general (e.g., government censorship, websites being punished for content.)

WIDER CULTURAL ISSUES

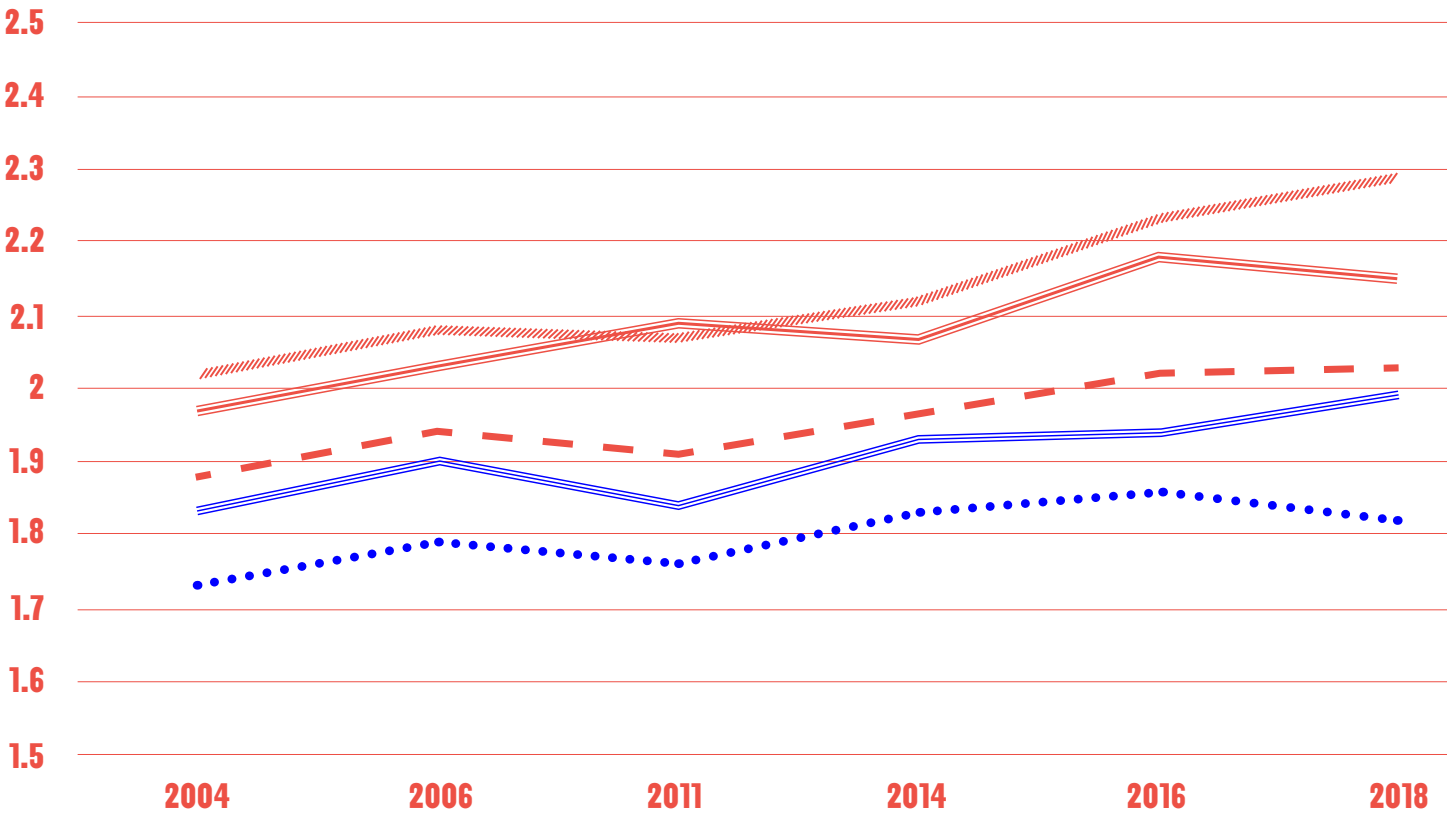
The survey series has also queried students about their views on cultural issues, asking for their views on music and offensive lyrics. Students have displayed strong support over time for musicians' right to sing offensive lyrics, with a slight move toward mild agreement over time. There was a larger jump between 2014 and 2016. The data suggest sizeable differences between boys and girls, with girls less supportive of musicians' rights than boys and the gap growing over time (SEE TABLE 9).

The survey series has also consistently asked, since its inception, about burning or defacing the American flag as a "political statement." On every survey, flag defacement is the form of protest least supported, by a wide margin; it is the only item that tips into "strongly disagree" territory. However, there are significant differences by gender and race. Beginning in 2016, there was divergence in support between white students and students of color. Students of color are generally milder in their disagreement (SEE TABLE 10). In terms of divergence of views along racial lines, it is worth noting in this context the substantial public discussion that has

evolved since several events with national visibility took place, including the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the various criminal justice protest movements, including Black Lives Matter, that have grown as a result. In 2016, professional athletes such as NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick began kneeling during the national anthem to register protest against police-involved killings of minority persons, and he was joined by many other athletes, prompting highly public criticisms, including from President Trump. In 2018, the survey series asked students whether "professional athletes have the First Amendment right to protest during the playing of the national anthem." On this question, 60% of students agreed athletes had that right. While 52% of white non-Hispanic students supported this right, 81% of black non-Hispanic students and 76% of white Hispanic students did.

STUDENT VIEW NO.4

MUSICIANS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO SING SONGS WITH LYRICS OTHERS FIND OFFENSIVE



4=STRONGLY DISAGREE
3=MILDLY DISAGREE
2=MILDLY AGREE
1=STRONGLY AGREE

AVERAGE

BOYS

GIRLS

WHITE STUDENTS

STUDENTS OF COLOR

3

CLASSROOM LEARNING AND NEWS CONSUMPTION

Two important concerns have troubled scholars, media commentators, public officials, and educators alike with respect to younger generations and their engagement with democracy: first, that the push for better and more systematic civics education has stagnated, losing out to a greater collective focus on math and reading.[26] Survey research has suggested that U.S. adults as a whole have diminished civic knowledge,[27] and, according to critics and many researchers, the obvious way of redressing this -- robust education in the schools — is not being carried out with a sufficient degree of seriousness. Indeed, comprehensive assessments of U.S. students' civics knowledge suggest that only 1 in 4 are able to score at a proficient level.[28]

Second, there continue to be worries that Generation Z and millennials (born mostly in the 1980s and after) will grow up substantially "news-less," severing the natural mediating connection points between individuals and collective civic and political life. As the theory goes, the swirl of content on social media and the lack of "appointment" news habits, traditionally rooted in mainstream community, regional and national media outlets, may result in a lack of attachment to the civic life of town, city, state, and region. Recent studies of college students have not fully borne out these worries,[29] but changing and more fragmented news habits among Generation Z and millennials, coupled with the steep decline in local news generation capacity in the United States, seem a recipe for negative trends over time in terms of civic engagement and political participation. But the reality is complicated. News consumption has, traditionally, been correlated with various measures of political participation and engagement, and a substantial body of research suggests associations with democratic engagement are true of digital media use, as well.[30]

The Knight Future of the First Amendment survey series provides a unique window into these profound concerns and potential structural change over time. Some of the trends that can be observed seem positive, while others are more ambiguous or even troubling.

Across the period of the Knight surveys, views on the First Amendment among both teachers and students have moved roughly in parallel, suggesting a cultural shift that may be relevant to understanding the contemporary school environment writ large. In 2004, nearly a third of teachers (29%) either strongly or mildly agreed that the First Amendment went too far in its guarantees; by 2018, that figure had fallen to just 14%. A similar pattern can be observed with students: in 2004, 35% either strongly or mildly agreed that the First Amendment went too far, but by 2018, that figure had dropped to 26%.

Asked about whether they personally think about First Amendment rights or take it for granted, both teachers and students have reported becoming somewhat more conscious of the rights the law guarantees. Among teachers, 50% said they thought about these rights personally in 2004, while 59% said so in 2018. Likewise, among students, those figures moved from 27% who thought about First Amendment rights personally to 32% by 2018.

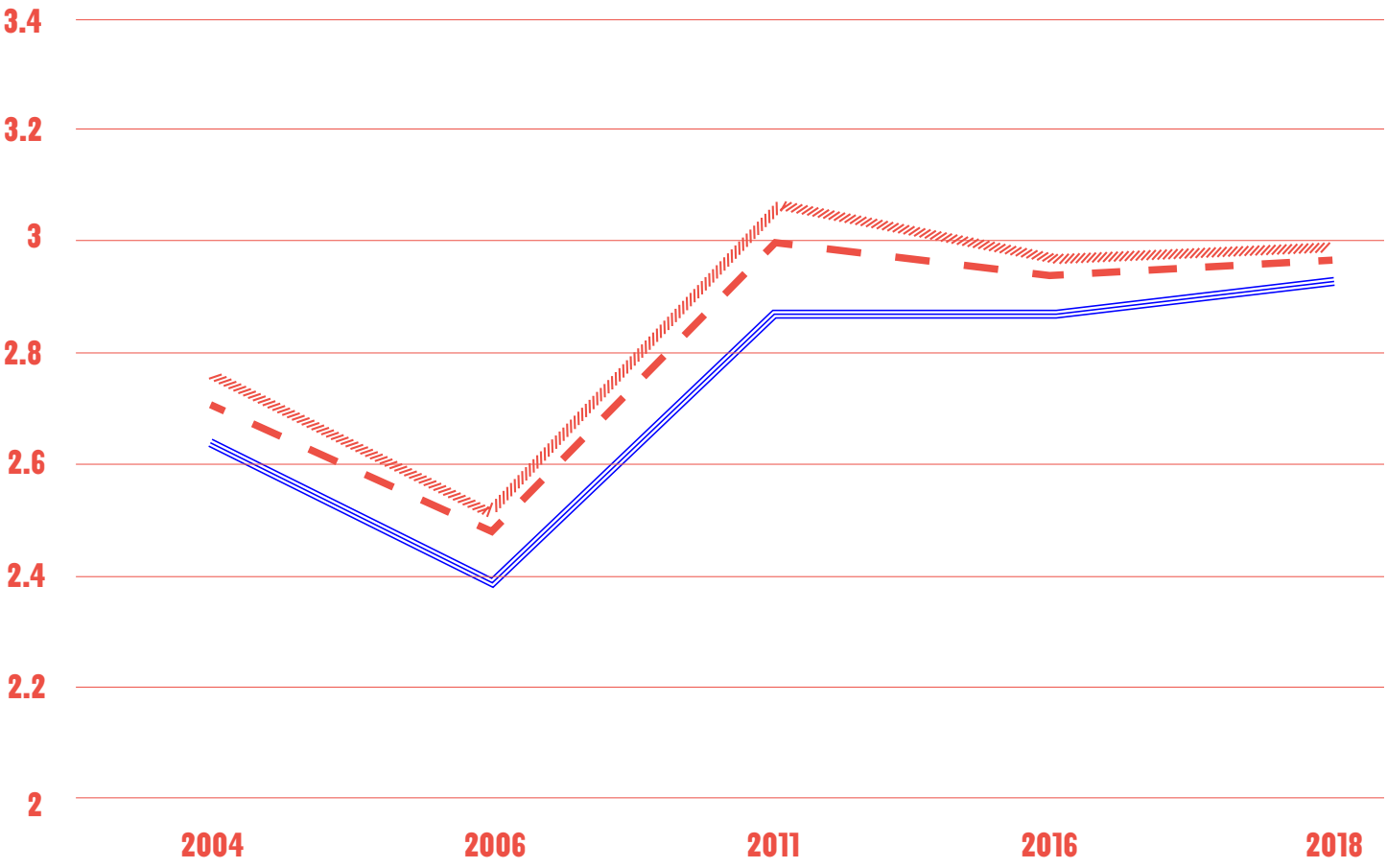
The Knight surveys also indicate relative stability in terms of the number of students who are encountering First Amendment-related curricula in their school experience. Since 2004, student respondents have been asked, "Have you ever taken classes in high school that dealt with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution?" The percentage responding affirmatively was 58% in 2004 and 72% in 2006; it has then varied between 64% and 68% over the next four surveys, and stood at 64% in 2018. Roughly two-thirds of students, then, are receiving some education in this area. (Note that the 2014 survey did not include this question.)

In general, data analysis shows that coursework has a significant effect on students' support for the First Amendment. On average, students who have taken a class that dealt with the First Amendment are more supportive of various rights and protections, and less likely to think the First Amendment goes too far. Differences are stable year over year in most cases, except for general support for the first Amendment — the gap between those with coursework and those without has narrowed. This may reflect a general increase in student support for the First Amendment, as even those without coursework are less inclined to think the First Amendment goes too far in 2018, than they were in 2004 (SEE TABLE 11). Freedom of the press is more consistent. Regardless of

STUDENT VIEW NO.5

THE FIRST AMENDMENT GOES TOO FAR IN ITS RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES

(CLASS VS. NO CLASS)



4=STRONGLY DISAGREE
3=MILDLY DISAGREE
2=MILDLY AGREE
1=STRONGLY AGREE

NOTE

"Class" indicates that students reported taking a class that dealt with the first amendment.

"No class" indicates they did not report taking such a class.

AVERAGE

NO CLASS

CLASS

coursework, students tend to think that the print and student press ought to be able to publish what they want without intervention from authorities. In years where students were asked, they are not inclined to support bullying or threatening speech, nor are they likely to support punishments for offensive content, regardless of prior coursework. This suggests there are some social norms and sensibilities that take precedence over First Amendment protections and/or that First Amendment coursework does not address some pressing issues of harassment/bullying and consequences for various forms of speech.

NEWS CONSUMPTION AND INFLUENCE

The Future of the First Amendment survey series has asked students about news consumption patterns and their views on news, and particular outlets, in various ways over the period 2004 to 2018. There is no straightforward way to assess change over the entire period in terms of how news consumption may affect First Amendment-related views, and vice versa.

Over the course of the surveys, there has been evidence that news consumption is associated with stronger First Amendment support. In 2011, the survey first noted student use of social media to access "news and information" were more likely to signal greater support for free expression rights. Likewise, in 2014 students who reported more frequently consuming news and information through digital media were more likely to report greater support for First Amendment rights.

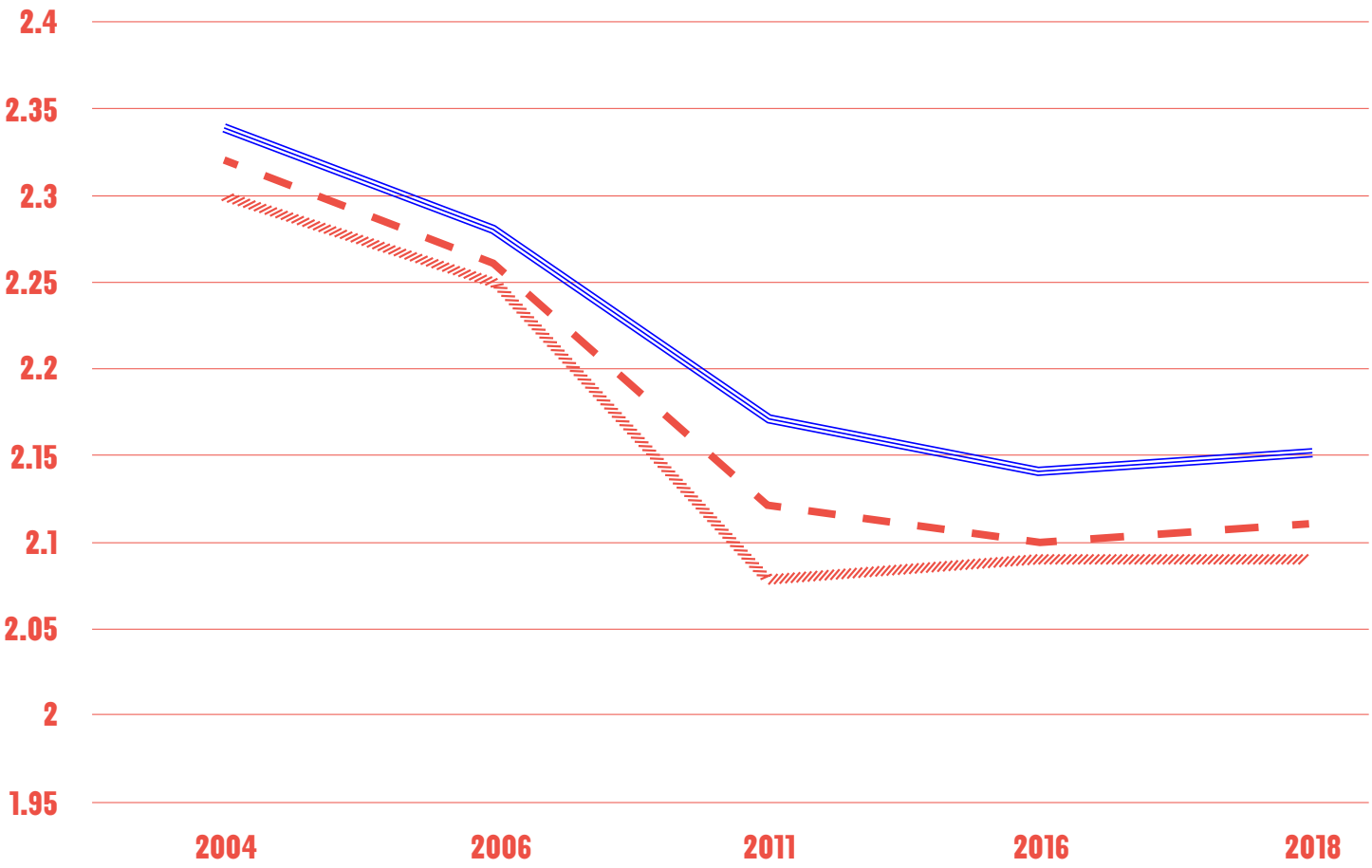
Social media is the most common source for teenagers to get news, followed by access through websites. All other media forms, including television, radio, and print newspapers, make up only a small portion of their news consumption.[31] The surveys in 2016 and 2018 asked students about their news consumption habits, and those two have the advantage of asking consistently about frequency of news access (and not "information") across three key pathways. In both years, social media was most likely to be used "often" by students to get news (51% and 46% respectively). In more recent surveys, news consumption has not been a reliable predictor of First Amendment views, generally speaking. Although there are significant effects in the data, effect sizes are small, and

clusters are idiosyncratic. For instance, in 2016, those who consume news via social media "often" and "never" are more supportive of students' rights to critique administrators than those who consume news from social media "sometimes" or "hardly ever."

However, there is some suggestion of a pattern emerging in the most recent (2018) survey. Students who report using social media "often" for news did not differ significantly from peers who used social media for news less frequently on general support for the First Amendment. There were small but significant differences between frequent social media news consumers and their peers on specific rights and protections; student who often who often use social media for news are more supportive of specific First Amendment rights and protections. Of note, similar patterns are not observed for news consumption via other media in 2018 (local television news, cable television news, messaging services, etc.), suggesting social media news consumption is the primary driver of news-consumption-based differences in teens.

STUDENT VIEW NO.6

PRINT NEWSPAPERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PUBLISH ANY STORY WITHOUT THE GOVERNMENT HAVING THE ABILITY TO BLOCK OR CENSOR THEM



4=STRONGLY DISAGREE
3=MILDLY DISAGREE
2=MILDLY AGREE
1=STRONGLY AGREE

NOTE

"Class" indicates that students reported taking a class that dealt with the first amendment.

"No class" indicates they did not report taking such a class.

AVERAGE

NO CLASS

CLASS

The 2018 survey also approached these questions from the perspective of student trust in news, following on the broad national conversation about the rise of "fake news" and significant worries about declining trust in news.[32] An analysis of the data strongly suggests that trust in news proves to be an important predictor of First Amendment views, at least within the 2018 dataset. Students who trust the news a great deal are significantly more likely to think the First Amendment goes too far in its rights and guarantees at a general level. At the same time, they are also significantly more supportive of various rights and freedoms, including unpopular opinions, offensive lyrics, flag burning and freedom of the press.

These seemingly paradoxical responses may indicate that the news is reporting on First Amendment issues that are not covered in the present survey. For instance, at the time of the survey, the First Amendment was used as a defense for Confederate statues and hate speech on college campuses and at various types of public rallies. It is plausible that student respondents who trust news have, when asked about the First Amendment in general, certain kinds of emerging controversies in mind, given the news coverage of people using the First Amendment to defend such controversial speech.

RELATED RESEARCH AND CAVEATS

A word of caution should be said about this particular line of analysis. It would stand to reason that students who receive more civics instruction that involves the First Amendment — educational interventions targeted in this area — would be more supportive of the First Amendment. It might also be expected that students who consume more news media might be more supportive of the free press protections that enable such news production; or likewise, it might be expected that more educational interventions would spur more news consumption by students. While all of these propositions have some support in the data, it is worth noting that the specific realities are likely complicated and may not lend themselves to easy interventions or remedies.

Indeed, an extensive statistical analysis of the first and most comprehensive Knight survey, conducted in 2004 and involving some 100,000 students, came to some surprising conclusions. If a student had a "class that mentions the First Amendment or a class that discusses the role of the media in society," that student was only slightly more likely to have favorable attitudes toward the First Amendment and free speech activities, or have more factual knowledge about the First Amendment. If a student reported having a teacher require the use of news media in class, then attitudes toward the First Amendment, as well as factual knowledge in the domain, did increase. But nearly all of the effects measured by researchers were small. Further, more robust state educational policies — ones that mandated more education in this area in schools — made little difference in terms of student views and attitudes. Even greater student media opportunities within schools did not correlate with student support for the First Amendment.[33]

This is all to say that the relationship among education, news consumption, and First Amendment support is likely mediated by a number of specific contextual factors, some of which may be difficult to capture. Still, we can continue to look at straightforward correlations between common questions and the related trend lines across the survey series. Such an analysis may point to useful policy interventions or ways of thinking about how to organize curricula and school environments toward better First Amendment-related educational outcomes, even if analytical validity in this respect is limited and provisional.

4

THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY

Scholars of American political life have long noted the varying cultural attitudes across regions in the United States, and the degree of varying "political cultures" and sectionalism has long been debated.[34] More recent decades have seen new trends emerging, such as pronounced "social sorting" — the merging of social and partisan identities, creating a kind of "red-blue" political tribalism in the country — into divided political camps that map onto specific geographies.[35] Although commentators often note that polarization and division are still not as deep as the period before the Civil War, some political scientists worry that social and cultural divides create conditions that invite even deeper hostilities.[36] Given these concerns, it should be of more than passing interest how young people across the country are either united or divided on core issues such as the validity and meaning of the First Amendment.

In general, the Midwest stands apart from other regions for First Amendment support. Students in the Midwest are the least likely to agree that the First Amendment goes too far. Since 2004, the Northeast and South have become more similar, as have the Midwest and West. Of note, this suggests an East Coast, West Coast difference in First Amendment attitudes.

There were no survey data available from the 2006 and 2007 surveys with state codes, so the analysis here relates 2004, 2011, 2014, 2016, and 2018. The analysis clusters the states of the schools surveyed into U.S. Census regions (North, South, Midwest, and West). Trends unfolded over time as follows (SEE TABLE 13):

2004

There were significant differences by Census region. The Midwest was the most supportive of First Amendment rights, whereas the students in the South and West were more likely to believe the First Amendment went too far.

2011 There were few significant differences between regions, save for the West and Midwest. On average, students from the West were significantly more likely than students from the Midwest to think the First Amendment goes too far.

2014 There were no significant regional differences in First Amendment support. Because the sample size was smaller that year, these results must be seen as provisional.

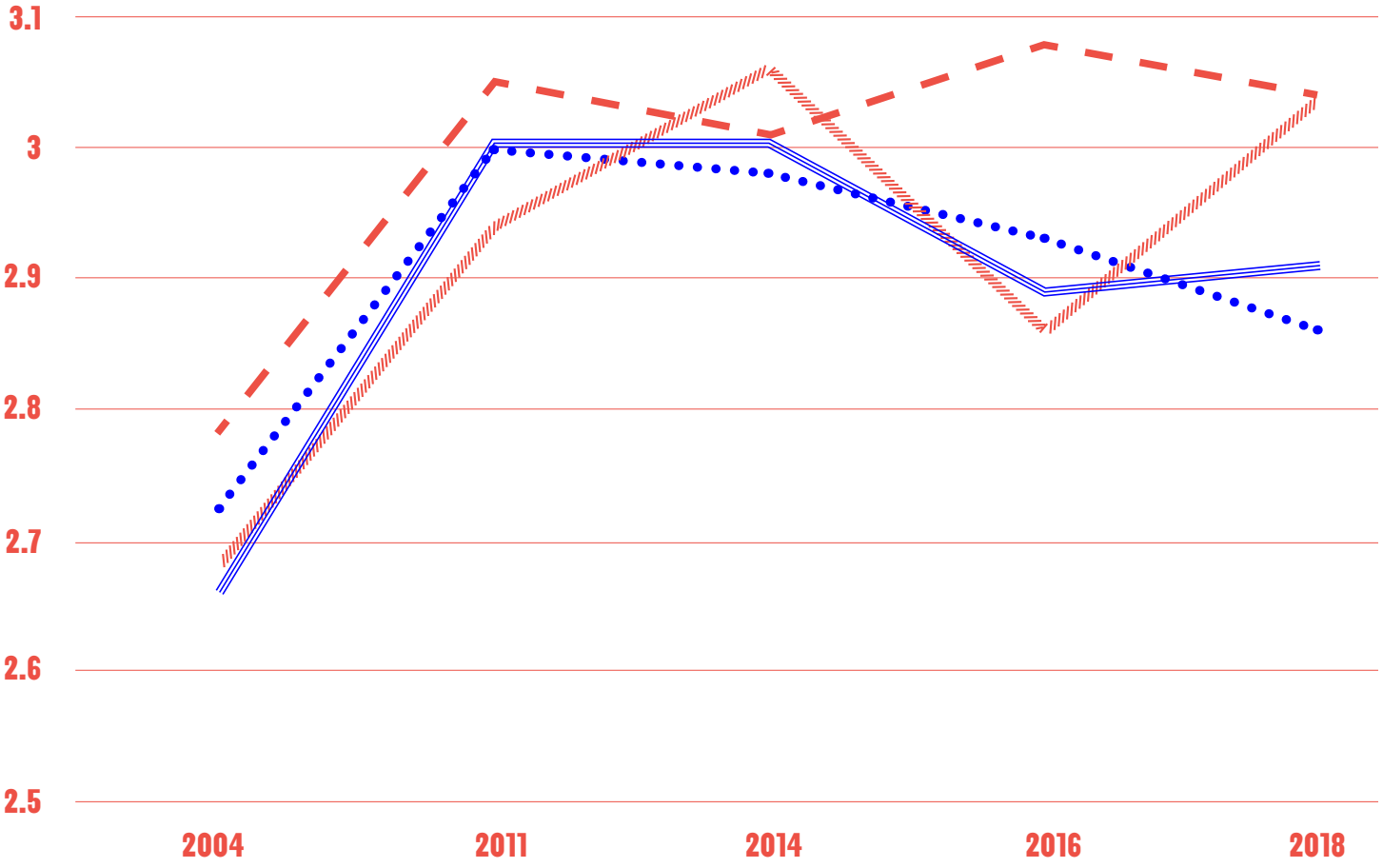
2016 There were significant differences by region. Most notably, the students from the Midwest were significantly less likely to believe that the First Amendment goes too far.

2018 Significant differences by region persisted, most notably between the Northeast and West/Midwest. Generally speaking, the Midwest and West were the most supportive of First Amendment rights, whereas the students in the Northeast and South were more likely to believe the First Amendment goes too far.

There may be no obvious way to interpret these trends. The American South is sometimes an outlier, relative to other regions, on certain kinds of political measures, given its more conservative orientation and complex social history along racial and party lines. But that is not the case within these survey data; the fault lines are more East-West. This division we observe here on questions of First Amendment support has no parsimonious explanation, but it may be related to population density along the East Coast. Students living in the East (including Southeastern states) may be more likely to be regionally proximate to cities, where contact with marginalized groups (and news about them) is more likely and therefore the potential negative effects (e.g., hate speech and offensive views that offend or intimidate) of extensive speech protections may be more apparent.[37] In any case, students from the Midwest seems to be the most consistent in their support for the First Amendment.

STUDENT VIEW NO.7

THE FIRST AMENDMENT GOES TOO FAR IN ITS RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES (BY REGION)



4=STRONGLY DISAGREE
3=MILDLY DISAGREE
2=MILDLY AGREE
1=STRONGLY AGREE

MIDWEST
NORTHEAST
WEST
SOUTH

CONCLUSION

This research synthesis report makes a number of new inferences about student views of the First Amendment and related changes in public opinion among youth across the early 21st century. The analysis provides a long-term statistical baseline and more general orienting picture relating to how attitudes have changed over a consequential, and dizzying, chapter in American history, when technological change, political upheaval, and war abroad have all been persistent in the lives of students. Subsequent Future of the First Amendment surveys, as well as other public opinion and research projects, might usefully be framed by this data and its analysis.

The findings presented here are diverse, but they speak to the importance of educating all students to become capable citizens and interpreters of constitutional rights and responsibilities. Although there has been an increase in average support among students for the First Amendment, there are significant differences in First Amendment support by race across all years, and gender, beginning in 2011. Significant differences by region persist as to whether the First Amendment goes too far, most notably between the Northeast and West/Midwest, where students show stronger support for those constitutional rights. Further, at the general level, having educational coursework appears to have a significant effect on students' support for the First Amendment. Students who report having taken a class that dealt with the First Amendment are more supportive of various rights and protections, and less likely to think the First Amendment goes too far.

News access and the frequency of consumption have at times been correlated with greater support for the First Amendment, but the relationship is inconsistent; and across recent surveys it is not a reliable predictor of First Amendment views. Intriguingly, however, students who reported often using social media in the 2018 survey were significantly more supportive of specific First Amendment rights and protections. Consistent with the general divergence in attitudes along demographic lines,

there were large differences by gender in terms of supporting freedom of publication for online news sites, with boys significantly more supportive of online news freedom than girls. Boys are also more supportive than girls regarding the right of people to say whatever they want in public, including offensive statements. Girls are more supportive of government intervention when bullying or offensive speech on social media.

Finally, the ability of schools to reach beyond the campus walls to monitor speech is an issue that is vexing school districts across the country right now, as values of safety and security clash with notions of personal freedom. Relentless school shootings, coupled with a robust national conversation about bullying and teen mental health, have brought more issues into play for school districts. On average, students mildly disagree that schools should be allowed to discipline students who post offensive content online outside of school time. Girls and students of color are more supportive of punishments.

In two fundamental respects, schools serve as laboratories for American democracy. These environments are, first and foremost, the place where students learn some amount of civics and history, and perhaps equally as important, learn to express opinions and to argue their views in a public context. Society in part regrows and replicates its values there, and substantial political socialization takes place.[38] Students get their first taste of the structure of the public sphere, its norms and modes of operation. The views they develop will, over time, perhaps evolve and mature, but the impressions they gather in those formative years will be powerful. A generation nurtured under a certain kind of expressive environment may, as history would suggest, modify the rules later on as it comes into political power.

Second, schools have continued to serve as legal forums for substantial contests over First Amendment rights writ large. Indeed, they are a central public space for constitutional interpretation through history. Can a school board separate students by race, or any other category? Can a student be compelled to participate in shows of patriotism? Can prayer time be mandatory, or a student mention God in a graduation speech? How far may young people go in promoting and debating their political views, potentially generating controversy within

their learning environment? Technology adds new dimensions to these endless sorts of questions. Can students express views about their classmates and teachers on social media, outside of school time, without consequence? Can, or should, schools monitor students at all hours online? Where is the line between bullying and freedom of speech, or between diversity in political ideas and outright hostility to disadvantaged groups?

Questions like these have been litigated in the courts and debated in school districts over the past century, creating a vast body of law and policy that has, in turn, had decisive effects on the way Americans understand the structure of speech rights and the contours of what is permissible in public life. The way a society chooses to raise its young, of course, is perhaps the deepest reflection of its values.

Novel questions arise across school districts seemingly each week in the digital age. Many of these questions have analogs to other areas of public life, with the school serving as the legal and cultural laboratory. Educators, meanwhile, continue to scramble to keep up with the rapid pace of change and evolving societal needs and competences, hoping to prepare young adults for meaningful and productive citizenship and participation. The Knight Future of the First Amendment survey series will, in any case, continue to help paint a picture of this vital and evolving idea space that occupies the center of democratic theory and practice in American society.

APPENDIX

NOTE: SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES ARE INDICATED IN ITALICS.

TABLE NO. 1

	2004	2006	2011	2014	2016	2018
The First Amendment goes too far in its rights and guarantees	2.71	2.48	3.00	3.00	2.94	2.97
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
Boys	2.72	2.50	*3.03*	*3.05*	*2.99*	*3.02*
Girls	2.72	2.46	*2.95*	*2.95*	*2.87*	*2.90*
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
White students	*2.81*	*2.55*	*3.07*	*3.08*	*3.05*	*3.08*
Students of color	*2.52*	*2.29*	*2.82*	*2.78*	*2.72*	*2.70*

TABLE NO. 2

	2004	2006	2011	2014	2016	2018
The first amendment goes too far in its rights and guarantees.	2.71	2.48	3.00	3.00	2.94	2.97
People should be allowed to express unpopular opinions	1.54	1.52	1.53	1.48	1.48	1.47
Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics others might find offensive.	1.88	1.94	1.91	1.96	2.02	2.03
People should be allowed to burn or deface the american flag as a political statement.	3.43	3.44	3.53	3.50	3.43	3.39
Print newspapers should be allowed to publish any story without the government having the ability to block or censor them.	2.32	2.26	2.12	2.08	2.10	2.11
High school students should be allowed to report on controversial issues in their student newspapers without the approval of school authorities.	2.12	1.99	2.08	2.09	2.03	2.10

TABLE NO.3

	2004	2006	2011	2014	2016	2018
Students should be allowed to express their opinions about teachers and school administrators on Facebook or other social media without worrying about being punished by teachers or school administrators for what they say	-	-	1.95	2.16	2.27	2.32
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
Boys			*1.79*	*2.00*	*2.15*	*2.17*
Girls			*2.12*	*2.34*	*2.42*	*2.50*
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
White Students			*1.97*	*2.19*	*2.28*	*2.34*
Students of Color			*1.91*	*2.07*	*2.25*	*2.28*

TABLE NO.4

	2004	2006	2011	2014	2016	2018
High school students should be allowed to report on controversial issues in their student newspapers without the approval of school authorities	2.12	1.99	2.08	2.09	2.03	2.10
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
Boys	*2.00*	*1.89*	*1.98*	*1.98*	*1.96*	*2.05*
Girls	*2.23*	*2.09*	*2.19*	*2.22*	*2.11*	*2.15*
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
White Students	*2.10*	*2.00*	2.08	2.10	*2.01*	*2.11*
Students of Color	*2.15*	*1.96*	2.09	2.06	*2.06*	*2.07*

TABLE NO.5

	2004	2006	2011	2014	2016	2018
Schools should be allowed to discipline students who post material on social media outside of the school that officials say is offensive.					2.99	2.98
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
Boys					3.01	*3.02*
Girls					*2.97*	*2.93*
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
White Students					*3.01*	*2.99*
Students of Color					*2.94*	*2.94*

TABLE NO.6

	2004	2006	2011	2014	2016	2018
Websites should be punished for publishing comments from the public that many people would consider offensive.					2.88	2.92
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
Boys					*2.93*	*2.95*
Girls					*2.81*	*2.87*
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
White Students					*2.94*	*2.97*
Students of Color					*2.76*	*2.80*

TABLE NO.7

	2004	2006	2011	2014	2016	2018
Print newspapers should be allowed to publish any story without the government having the ability to block or censor them	2.32	2.26	2.12	2.08	2.10	2.11
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
Boys	*2.17*	*2.12*	*1.97*	*1.90*	*1.97*	*1.97*
Girls	*2.46*	*2.39*	*2.28*	*2.29*	*2.28*	*2.26*
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
White Students	*2.30*	2.25	*2.07*	*2.05*	*2.06*	2.11
Students of Color	*2.36*	2.28	*2.24*	*2.18*	*2.18*	2.11

TABLE NO.8

	2004	2006	2011	2014	2016	2018
Online news providers should be allowed to publish any story without the government having the ability to block or censor them			2.15	2.12	2.10	2.13
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
Boys			*1.98*	*1.93*	*1.95*	*2.00*
Girls			*2.34*	*2.33*	*2.28*	*2.28*
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
White Students			*2.11*	*2.09*	*2.06*	2.14
Students of Color			*2.25*	*2.20*	*2.16*	2.12

TABLE NO.9

	2004	2006	2011	2014	2016	2018
Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics others might find offensive	1.88	1.94	1.91	1.96	2.02	2.03
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
Boys	*1.73*	*1.79*	*1.76*	*1.83*	*1.86*	*1.82*
Girls	*2.02*	*2.08*	*2.07*	*2.12*	*2.23*	*2.29*
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
White Students	*1.83*	*1.90*	*1.84*	*1.93*	*1.94*	*1.99*
Students of Color	*1.97*	*2.03*	*2.09*	*2.07*	*2.18*	*2.15*

TABLE 10.

	2004	2006	2011	2014	2016	2018
People should be allowed to burn or deface the American flag as a political statement	3.43	3.44	3.53	3.50	3.43	3.39
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
Boys	3.35	3.35	3.45	3.39	3.36	3.33
Girls	3.52	3.54	3.62	3.63	3.52	3.46
	2004	**2006**	**2011**	**2014**	**2016**	**2018**
White Students	3.49	3.49	3.56	3.53	3.48	3.48
Students of Color	3.31	3.31	3.45	3.42	3.33	3.16

TABLE NO.11

	2004	2006	2011	2016	2018
The First Amendment goes too far in its rights and guarantees	2.71	2.48	3.00	2.94	2.97
Class	*2.76*	*2.51*	*3.06*	*2.97*	*2.99*
No Class	*2.64*	*2.39*	*2.87*	*2.87*	*2.93*
People should be allowed to express unpopular opinions	1.54	1.52	1.53	1.48	1.47
Class	*1.51*	*1.51*	*1.50*	*1.47*	*1.45*
No Class	*1.59*	*1.58*	*1.58*	*1.50*	*1.49*
Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics others might find offensive	1.88	1.94	1.91	2.02	2.03
Class	*1.84*	*1.91*	*1.86*	*2.00*	*1.99*
No Class	*1.93*	*2.01*	*1.99*	*2.08*	*2.11*
People should be allowed to burn or deface the American flag as a political statement	3.43	3.44	3.53	3.43	3.39
Class	*3.42*	*3.43*	*3.50*	*3.40*	*3.33*
No Class	*3.45*	*3.49*	*3.58*	*3.49*	*3.49*
Print newspapers should be allowed to publish any story without the government having the ability to block or censor them	2.32	2.26	2.12	2.10	2.11
Class	*2.30*	2.25	*2.08*	*2.09*	*2.09*
No Class	*2.34*	2.28	*2.17*	*2.14*	*2.15*
High school students should be allowed to report on controversial issues in their student newspapers without the approval of school authorities	2.12	1.99	2.08	2.03	2.10
Class	*2.10*	1.99	*2.05*	2.02	*2.08*
No Class	*2.15*	1.99	*2.14*	2.05	*2.14*

TABLE NO.12

	2018
The First Amendment goes too far in its rights and guarantees	2.97
Social Media News Often	2.97
...Sometimes	2.95
...Hardly Ever	2.97
...Never	3.01
People should be allowed to express unpopular opinions	1.47
Social Media News Often	1.41
...Sometimes	1.48
...Hardly Ever	1.51
...Never	1.54
Musicians should be allowed to sing songs with lyrics others might find offensive	2.03
Social Media News Often	1.92
...Sometimes	2.06
...Hardly Ever	2.09
...Never	2.11
People should be allowed to burn or deface the American flag as a political statement	3.39
Social Media News Often	3.25
...Sometimes	3.41
...Hardly Ever	3.49
...Never	3.50
Print newspapers should be allowed to publish any story without the government having the ability to block or censor them	2.11
Social Media News Often	1.97
...Sometimes	2.14

TABLE NO.12 (CONTINUED)

...Hardly Ever	2.19
...Never	2.22
High school students should be allowed to report on controversial issues in their student newspapers without the approval of school authorities	2.10
Social Media News Often	1.96
...Sometimes	2.12
...Hardly Ever	2.21
...Never	2.22

TABLE NO.13

	2004	2011	2014	2016	2018
Northeast	2.72	3.00	2.98	2.93	2.86
South	2.66	3.00	3.00	2.89	2.91
Midwest	2.78	3.05	3.01	3.08	3.04
West	2.68	2.94	3.06	2.86	3.04

NOTE ON TABLE 13: REGIONAL MEANS IN EACH CELL, CELLS ARE CODED BY COHERENT SUB-GROUPS (SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIFFERENT COLORS IN EACH YEAR, CROSS-YEAR COMPARISONS SHOULD NOT BE INFERRED BY COLOR.)

ENDNOTES

1 Lee C. Bollinger and Geoffrey Stone, "Dialogue," in The Free Speech Century, eds. Geoffrey R. Stone and Lee C. Bollinger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1-10.

2 "Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District," Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1968/21. Accessed 13 Aug. 2019.

3 See Tarleton Gillespie, Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, Content Moderation, and the Hidden Decisions That Shape Social Media (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018); and Kate Klonick, "The New Governors: The People, Rules, and Processes Governing Online Speech," Harv. L. Rev. 131 (2017): 1598.

4 Tim Wu, "Is the First Amendment Obsolete?," Knight First Amendment Institute, September 2017, https://knightcolumbia.org/content/tim-wu-first-amendment-obsolete

5 Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences (Chicago, IL.:University of Chicago Press, 2010), 353.

6 Kenneth Dautrich, The Future of the First Amendment: Survey of High School Students and Teachers, commissioned by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (Miami, FL: Knight Foundation, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2011, 2014, 2016, 2018), https://www.knightfoundation.org/

7 James Madison, "For the National Gazette, [ca. 19 December] 1791," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 29, 2017, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-14-02-0145

8 Bollinger and Stone, "Dialogue," 1-10.

9 "New Jersey v. T.L.O.," Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1983/83-712. Accessed 13 Aug. 2019.

10 Kenneth Dautrich, David Yalof, and Mark Hugo López, The Future of the First Amendment: The Digital Media, Civic Education, and Free Expression Rights in America's High Schools (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

11 "Free Expression on Campus: What College Students Think about First Amendment Issues," A Gallup/Knight Foundation Survey, March 12, 2018, https://www.knightfoundation.org/reports/free-expression-on-campus-what-college-students-think-about-first-amendment-issues

12 See Robert C. Post, "Freedom of Speech and the University," in The Free Speech Century, Stone and Bollinger, 106-122.

13 John Palfrey, Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces: Diversity and Free Expression in Education (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), 21.

14 Mark Hugo López, Peter Levine, Kenneth Dautrich, and David Yalof, "Schools, Education Policy, and the Future of the First Amendment," Political Communication 26, no. 1 (2009): 84-101.

15 Justin Driver, The Schoolhouse Gate: Public Education, the Supreme Court, and the Battle for the American Mind (New York: Pantheon, 2018), 9.

16 "West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette," Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1940-1955/319us624. Accessed 12 Aug. 2019.

17 "Federal Communications Commission v. Pacifica Foundation," Oyez, www.oyez.org/cases/1977/77-528. Accessed 15 Aug. 2019.

18 Brian Kennedy, "Most Americans Trust the Military and Scientists to Act in the Public's Interest," Pew Research Center, Oct. 18, 2016, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/18/most-americans-trust-the-military-and-scientists-to-act-in-the-publics-interest/.

19 Yphtach Lelkes, "Mass Polarization: Manifestations and Measurements," Public Opinion Quarterly 80, no. S1 (January 1, 2016): 392-410.

20 Judy Woodruff, "Schools Are Watching Students' Social Media, Raising Questions about Free Speech," PBS NewsHour, June 20, 2017, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/schools-watching-students-social-media-raising-questions-free-speech.

21 General linear models run on 2016 data reveal a significant interaction effect on race and gender, such that boys of color are significantly more likely to agree with the statement than their white boy peers. Real mean values are similar for boys of color and girls of color in 2016. However, no other significant interaction effects were found, so we do not run interaction models in this analysis.

22 Evette Alexander, "First Amendment Vitals: Taking Gen Z's Pulse on Free Expression and Inclusion," Medium, Informed and Engaged, Knight Foundation, May 9, 2019, https://medium.com/informed-and-engaged/first-amendment-vitals-taking-gen-zs-pulse-on-free-expression-and-inclusion-1aeeae50cae1

23 Driver, The Schoolhouse Gate, 9.

24 Catherine J. Ross, Lessons in Censorship: How Schools and Courts Subvert Students' First Amendment Rights. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 36-62.

25 Ross, Lessons in Censorship, 4-8.

26 Sarah Shapiro and Catherine Brown, The State of Civics Education. Center for American Progress, 2018. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/02/21/446857/state-civics-education/

27 Annenberg Public Policy Center, "Americans' Knowledge of the Branches of Government Is Declining," September 13, 2016, available at https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-knowledge-of-the-branches-of-government-is-declining/

28 The Nation's Report Card, "2014 Civics Assessment," National Assessment of Educational Progress,

https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/civics/

29 Alison J. Head, John Wihbey, P. Takis Metaxas, Margy MacMillan, and Dan Cohen, "How Students Engage with News: Five Takeaways for Educators, Journalists, and Librarians," Project Information Literacy Research Institute, Oct. 16, 2018, https://www.projectinfolit.org/news_study.html

30 Shelley Boulianne and Yannis Theocharis, "Young People, Digital Media, and Engagement: A Meta-Analysis of Research," Social Science Computer Review (2018): 0894439318814190.

31 Elisa Shearer, "Social Media Outpaces Print Newspapers in the U.S. as a News Source," Pew Research Center, Dec. 10, 2018, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/12/10/social-media-outpaces-print-newspapers-in-the-u-s-as-a-news-source/

32 "Indicators of News Media Trust," A Gallup/Knight Foundation Survey, Sept. 11, 2018, https://knightfoundation.org/reports/indicators-of-news-media-trust

33 López, Dautrich, and Yalof, "Schools, Education Policy, and the Future of the First Amendment," 92-93.

34 For example, see: Samuel C. Patterson, "The Political Cultures of the American States," The Journal of Politics 30, no. 1 (1968): 187-209; and, James Graydon Gimpel and Jason E. Schuknecht, Patchwork Nation: Sectionalism and Political Change in American Politics. (Ann Arbor, MI.: University of Michigan Press, 2009).

35 See Lilliana Mason, Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018); and Ryne Rohla, Ron Johnston, Kelvyn Jones, and David Manley, "Spatial Scale and the Geographical Polarization
of the American Electorate," Political Geography 65 (2018): 117-122.

36 Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, How Democracies Die: What History Reveals about Our Future (New York: Crown, 2018).

37 On the question of population density proximate to schools and potential urban-rural divides within these data, it should be noted that we did not have access to the specific municipalities for the individual schools in question. This was in order to stay consistent with the survey's original mandate, per Knight Foundation and The Stats Group, that the original data remain anonymized.

38 J. Celeste Lay, James G Gimpel, and Jason E. Schuknecht, Cultivating Democracy: Civic Environments and Political Socialization in America (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
200 South Biscayne Boulevard
Suite 3300
Miami, FL 33131-2349
(305) 908-2600
www.kf.org

KNIGHT
FOUNDATION