Photo of the Day |



Two students converse as they walk to class on a sunny day. Students strengthen their connections this fall semester. PHOTO BY ALEXANDER RENZULLI, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Activism for more, not less

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Marking an end to a long period of litigation, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its landmark ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization in 2022, overturning Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey. This ended the federal constitutional right to abortion. What had been built through decades of litigation, organizing and political advocacy was reversed in a single decision. The reversal served as a reminder that political progress is not self-sustaining; even rights secured through decades of litigation and organizing can remain vulnerable when the legal and political conditions supporting them change. Therefore, protecting these gains requires sustained political participation across various levels of government.

History offers a clear example of what this kind of sustained political participation can accomplish. The women's suffrage movement, spanning more than 70 years from Seneca Falls in 1848 to the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, is one of the most significant examples of sustained activism for women's rights in American history. Rather than relying on a single surge of participation, activists used tactics including petitioning, fundraising, parading, picketing and lobbying. By applying pressure through multiple forms of participation over prolonged periods, the movement gradually built political momentum. As time went on, suffragists accumulated victories without treating them as an endpoint. Even after women in Colorado won the right to vote in 1893, they continued advocating for nationwide suffrage.

You and I, along with the 91% of Americans who own a smartphone have seen our fair share of an @impact infographic on Instagram. Through our miniature computers we always have in our pockets, we can mobilize en masse at scale in ways that would be seen as fiction to those who have come before us. Thankfully, we have! Through the Women's March in 2017 and the current series of No Kings demonstrations in 2025 and 2026, Americans have used these tiny pocket computers to help mobilize at a national scale.

Okay, great! Millions of people rallied across the country in some of the largest mass demonstrations in American history. Now what do we do?

It can feel easy to sit down and look at the pictures of the millions of people spanning New York City, New Haven and New Orleans and tell yourself that it was largely successful, but as history will often tell us, protests are just one of many steps when it comes to mobilizing change.

Modern day protests are often episodic; people will protest and mobilize intensely around one event and then participation drops once attention is moved elsewhere. Political scientists have long described a similar pattern as the "issue-attention cycle." In the internet age, the cynical catchphrase "nothing ever happens" has come to express the frustration that can follow when highly visible political moments fail to produce immediate transformation.

A 2026 Harvard Kennedy School working paper by Liz McKenna found that political attrition approached 90% among people whose first civic action was a mass mobilization, meaning that nine out of 10 people did not return for another civic action event during the study's duration. Obviously, this is bad, but can we fix it? On the surface, it seems logical that shooting for the heavy hitters is the quickest and simplest way to get the change you want.

It may seem counterintuitive but first think about what is happening in your own district, city or town. Talk to your mayor, call local representatives and volunteer for your local campaign.

Yes, it will naturally feel as if you are doing less by focusing on your small community. However, choosing to look beyond the national scale and instead toward more state and local politics is what invited the Women's Suffrage Movement to work. Following the Dobbs decision in 2022, voters found measurable change at the state level. In Michigan, Proposal 3 amended the state constitution to protect reproductive freedom, including decisions about abortion, contraception and pregnancy. The result provides an example of how political change can continue below the federal level after a major national decision.

Rather than staying stagnant and waiting to attend the next record-breaking protest, we should go and turn that temporary national attention to sustained action within our own communities. To achieve lasting political change, we must build it through sustained political participation through our cities, towns and states, where our local victories can grow and mold into broader movements.

In defense of the 9-to-5

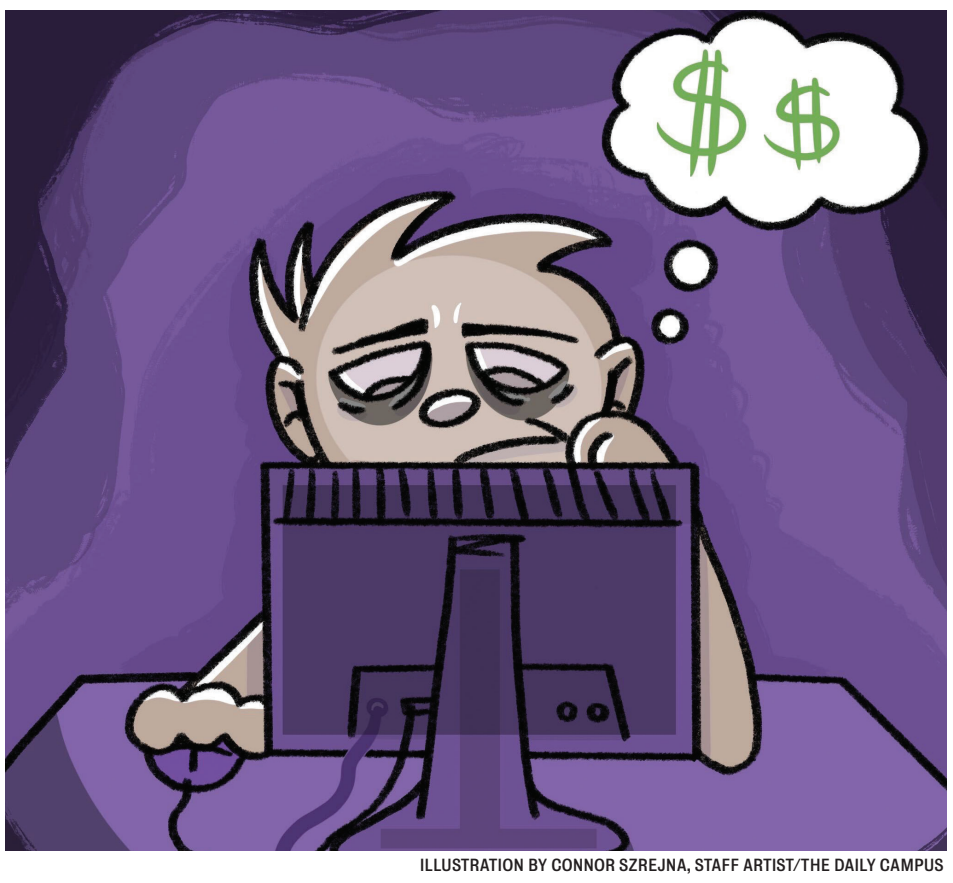


ILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR SZREJNA, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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In the wake of Dolly Parton's death, I have been giving a lot of thought to the traditional 9-to-5. According to Parton, it's just "a way to make a living" and it's full of "all taking and no giving." It wasn't until I looked at the lyrics for the first time that I realized that this song written in '80s demonizes traditional jobs just the same as we do today. It's not new to hate on the 9-to-5, but I think the hatred has been and is becoming increasingly misguided.

As the older half of Generation Z begins to move into the workforce, we are increasingly hearing and seeing that young people are finding office life much less appealing than their Millennial peers did a decade ago. Gen Z grew up with families impacted by the Great Financial Crisis, saw technology take over the workplace and burnout affect workers at high rates. Instead of joining the workforce, they are aspiring entrepreneurs, a path that has rewarded the likes of Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg. On top of this, social media only increases the appeal. Trad wife advocates and fans of Andrew Tate's message to "escape the matrix" push against traditional jobs and even college, characterizing them as some kind of evil scheme meant to keep the little guy down.

What 9-to-5 naysayers don't understand is that the entrepreneurs and companies we idolize are a product of survivorship bias and a long period of economic expansion full of optimistic investors willing to throw money at any fledgling company. But 25 years later, the seed funding that got businesses like Facebook off the ground is continually collapsing, and that means that aspiring entrepreneurs need to find another way to finance their ambition.

I'm sure you've guessed it by now, but an office job is a great place to start. In these positions, you can collect a predictable salary and the skills, network and professional reputation needed to build a company and convince others to believe in it. Most importantly, you can get all of these things without sticking your own neck out. An entrepreneur might own the upside, but the risk always matches the reward, which means that if things go awry, a 9-to-5 employee gets to go home. An owner often cannot.

Beyond the financial aspect, the separation between work and life that a 9-to-5 offers is valuable in its own right. In the right company, when the day ends, you shut your laptop and the rest of your life belongs to you. You don't have to love your job, because you are left with plenty of time in the day to do what you actually enjoy, and you have the funds to make it happen.

As a society, we seem to look at adult life as one of two extremes. You might choose a job that is deeply meaningful, but you will almost certainly be poor. Or you might choose a job that you hate, but at least you'll be rich. I just don't buy it. There is a huge amount of gray area between loving every second you spend at work and waking up each morning full of dread.

To be satisfied with your day-to-day, a job doesn't have to be great. Good is good enough. You can enjoy the company of your coworkers, find some small wins in your work and make enough money to build a 5-to-9 that you genuinely enjoy. Your passion doesn't need to lead to a paycheck, and your paycheck doesn't have to come at the expense of your passion. Sometimes your job is "just a way to make a living." Sorry to disagree with you Dolly, but I think that is perfectly okay.