

# PPAS Voice

*Celebrating diversity, promoting unity*

## Sexual Harassment Allegation Throws Stringer Campaign into Turmoil

By: Ellis Rubin

Among progressives, City Comptroller Scott Stringer has by far the most government experience with three decades as an elected official to warrant the label. He has used examples from his time as a state assemblyman, borough president, and his current position as proof he would “radically change” city government while also being “ready on Day One” and champion fighting climate change and reforming public housing. Recently, Stringer divested the city from fossil fuels and released a 47-page housing plan. In his “Children and Education” plan, Stringer laid out over 30 policy ideas, including: guaranteeing paid internships for all CUNY graduating seniors, investing \$500 million in child care facilities, removing armed police officers from schools, and tripling the amount of social workers in schools. Stringer also long sought to increase diversity in city government, a commitment that had won him a diverse following.

However, a recent accusation of sexual harassment from a former intern has unraveled the candidate’s record of support of progressive values. The accusation comes at a time when other local, established male politicians such as Governor Andrew Cuomo have also faced accusations of inappropriate sexual advances. They have raised the resentment harbored by many New Yorkers toward men who’ve historically held positions of power in government and elsewhere. Stringer has denied the charges, but they have left his campaign reeling as the candidate had relied heavily on endorsements to improve his standing versus moderates Andrew Yang, the former presidential

candidate and entrepreneur noted for his support of universal basic income, and Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, a former police captain. Prior to the accusations, Stringer had landed influential endorsements from groups representing teachers, workers, and the LGBTQ community. However, these organizations have debated whether to maintain their support of the candidate. While Stringer has retained his endorsement from the United Federation of Teachers, a labor union with almost 200,000 members, he has lost that of the Working Families Party. As of this writing, the Stonewall Democratic Club of New York City, a prominent coalition of LGBTQ-identifying Democrats

in the city, was poised to decide whether to maintain or rescind its endorsement of Stringer. Regardless, the damage may be too much to overcome. Stringer needs these organizations to mobilize their members; this demands a level of enthusiasm that his compromised credibility may no longer command. Prior to the accusations becoming public, the candidate had narrowly trailed Adams by two percentage points, but lagged behind Yang by 11 percentage points. Depending on how the accusations unfold, they could particularly damage Stringer’s support among women versus fellow progressives Maya Wiley, former counsel to Mayor Bill de Blasio and MSNBC legal analyst, and Dianne Morales, former non-profit executive. Unfortunately for those supporting progressives, Wiley’s and Morales’s increasing popularity may split the progressive vote, all but ensuring a victory for the more moderate Adams or Yang.



Comptroller Scott Stringer. JStone/Shutterstock

## It’s a Privilege to Puncture

By Tanya Jaffe

In December, when vaccines were still in test trials, countries around the world were already placing orders on different vaccines. High-income countries like the U.S. and the U.K. could buy large amounts of multiple vaccines to ensure that the population would have enough. While having different and diverse vaccines is great for Americans, many middle- and low-income countries (World Bank classification) weren’t able to buy nearly enough for

even half of their population. For every 100 people in America, 69 have been vaccinated. Indonesia, which has a similar population number to the U.S and is a middle-income country, has vaccinated about 10 people for every 100. Not one of the low-income countries

has even reached 10 people for every 100. Vaccines are available to all Americans older than 16 now, and about 30% of the population have been vaccinated. Restrictions have been lifted for fully vaccinated individuals, as they can now travel without quar-

antine, and gather with other vaccinated people without masks on. Moving forward, America will be able to “go back to normal” much sooner than most countries - this is a huge privilege. India, a lower-middle income country with the second largest population on earth, has reached a second Covid spike, and it’s much worse than before. The average number of new cases on April 28th was over 300,000. The infection rate is around 20%.



Dhiraj Singh / Bloomberg via Getty images

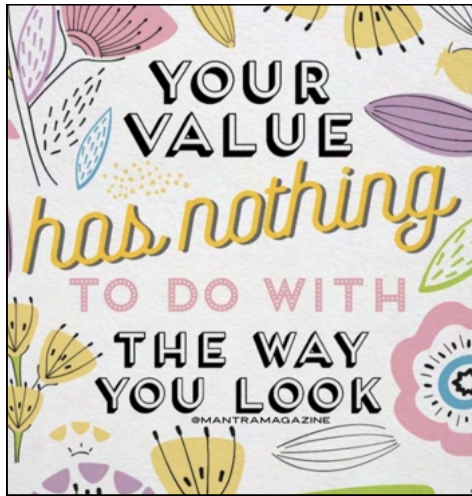
## What Is Body Neutrality, and What Can It Do for You?

By: Rosabella Procaro-Soler

The Body Positivity movement has certainly been trending for a while, with support gaining on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. The movement encourages people to love how their body looks, and not bring others down because their bodies do not fit the beauty standard our current world has set. Many popular celebrities have shared their stories and joined users in celebrating their bodies and embracing their physical images, in any form they may appear. But there's a new movement on the rise, and it's called Body Neutrality. It's not very widely known, but it has started gaining traction with supporters such as actress Jameela Jamil, singer Taylor Swift, and even Lizzo. The movement promotes mental detachment from body image and focuses

more on your body as a vehicle. A vehicle which can take you places, give you energy, and allow you to live a happy and healthy life.

Many people who have tried Body Positivity struggle with the idea of constantly loving their body, so Body Neutrality creates a sense of impartiality and objectivity. As Jameela Jamil of NBC's *The Good Place* told *Glamour* in an interview in September of 2019, "Imagine just not thinking



Caption: Body Neutrality prioritizes what your body can do for you, rather than how it looks. *Mantra Magazine*.

about our legs that walk us around your each day. These examples of body. Body Neutrality display just a fraction of the benefit we can receive from practicing this mindset. You're not hating it. You're not loving it. You're just a floating head. I'm a floating head wandering through the world." Instead of aimlessly fawning over our rolls and stretch marks everyday, we can appreciate that our body can naturally protect us, and cherish the fact that we are still growing day by day. Rather than exercise to keep the figure we adore, we will workout to gain strength in

our legs that walk us around each day. These examples of Body Neutrality display just a fraction of the benefit we can receive from practicing this mindset. Since the new idea of Body Neutrality has come into the limelight, we can only hope it will stay. Forgetting about our body's image and focusing on our body's health can reward us in so many ways, and take us to new mental heights. In a time of chaos, we're able to find stability in the things we can control; our bodies, and our mindsets. As more people become aware of the concept, the thought of "floating heads" becomes more prominent each day. Yet in a time where our "floating heads" are covered in masks, the remaining question is: Are "floating heads" enough?

## Scott Rudin

By: Lucian Zanes

Scott Rudin has spent the past few decades establishing himself as one of the most powerful producers, both in the film industry and on Broadway. He is among the 16 people in the world to have received EGOT status, meaning he has an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar, and a Tony. He had become somewhat of a God in the Broadway industry- up until about a year ago.

Last January, a girl from Laguardia, Paige Levy, organized a protest against the casting of Amar Ramasar in *West Side Story*. Before *West Side Story* had even been cast, Amar Ramasar had several sexual assault allegations brought forth against him, and was suspended from ABT. Scott Rudin, being fully aware of his history of misconduct, cast him anyway, and aided him in avoiding the charges

brought against him. The protest slowly but surely expanded into a large movement to get Amar terminated from the show. This was the first movement that questioned Rudin's moral codes. He had just freely put a predator on the Broadway stage.

This spring, just a few short weeks ago, several of Rudin's former employees and coworkers came forward about his actions in the workplace, and their stories went viral. Rudin is notoriously known for throwing things at walls/near employees, having extreme temper tantrums, speaking down to just about everyone, and treating every-

one below him like absolute garbage. When Rita Wilson informed Rudin that she had to drop out of a show because of her breast cancer diagnosis, she said that he made her feel bad and replaceable. He is a true monster.

Last week, Paige Levy, among other members of the Broadway community, came together to protest Scott Rudin and his ob scene ly large throne on Broadway. The protest made five demands requesting better protection for the whole of the Broadway industry from monsters such as Rudin, but specifically protection for BIPOC artists, who

have historically been taken advantage of in this industry by people like Rudin. After many more of his co-workers came forward, and the work of the protestors made major news sources, Rudin released the following statement, "After a period of reflection, I've made the decision to step back from active participation on our Broadway productions, effective immediately. My roles will be filled by others from the Broadway community and in a number of cases, from the roster of participants already in place on those shows."

It goes to show how powerful a community can be when everyone can come together and organize. He may have been one of the most powerful and successful people in the industry, but the real power is in the people.



## Strength through Alliances

By: Emma Tom

I think many of us can agree that isolation within our houses and the fact that our interactions with people suddenly turned virtual, took a huge toll on our social lives. For months, I was disconnected from the PPAS community and it no longer felt like I was truly interacting with my peers. So I wondered, what were some ways that I could salvage these relationships with my classmates and start to be a part of our community once again? That is why when a friend of mine asked if I would like to start the Asian Student Alliance (ASA) at PPAS with her, I eagerly accepted the offer.

What started off to be a simple pastime with weekly meetings became a space where people felt comfortable to share their opinions and anxieties. A place where we educated and were educated. A small but tight knit community that understood each

other and supported one another, something I had been yearning for since the beginning of the pandemic. It did not stop with the Asian Stu-



dent Alliance, I started to attend the PPAS Democrats (HSDA), which meets every other Friday, where the members were equally inviting and informative. Even if you were not necessarily interested in politics, their conversations were easy to follow and they always gave time for

open discussions and questions. I also had the privilege of meeting Gabby, Indie, BK, and Mikayla and collaborating with them to address the

social injustices of our current climate. They were so supportive and shared a common goal with the Asian Student Alliance to combat cultural stereotypes and unite minority groups. I had always been intimidated to join the clubs at our school, but after meeting with the leaders and real-

izing that they are all teenagers with ambitions akin to mine, I knew that I had been missing such a wonderful piece of my high school experience.

Joining clubs is all about taking a leap of faith and who knows it might be what you have been longing for all this time. Our clubs have so much to offer and if you simply sat in on one of our meetings just to listen you might learn something that could never be taught by our curriculum. Include yourself in these conversations and make yourself known in this space.

- **ASA** meets every other Monday (6:30) code: kv7eg7b;
- **BSU** (Black Student Union) meets every Wednesday (4:30) code: siu32rj
- **HSDA** meets every other Friday (5:00) code: e4o4lwc
- **LSU** (LatinX Student Union) meets every Tuesday (5:30) code: h7b5p6e

## Everything Has Changed for Taylor Swift

By: Joelle Leopold

Taylor Swift has had a pretty busy quarantine. She wrote two albums primarily on her own, and she won Album of the Year at the Grammys! On April 9th, 2021, *Fearless* (Taylor's Version) came out. You might be wondering, didn't Taylor Swift already release an album called *Fearless*? The answer is yes! However, Taylor Swift did not own the album.

Taylor Swift first signed with the record label Big Machine Records when she was thirteen. Right before she released her seventh album, *Lover*, she switched to a different record label called Republic Records. Every album Swift has released with Republic Records, she owns. Big Machine Rec-

ords still owned the masters to her first six albums.

In 2019, Big Machine Records hired Scooter Braun, who is a music manager. When being hired, Braun acquired Taylor Swift's masters. When Swift had first left Big Machine Records, she was told she could earn her masters back one at a time, but once Scooter Braun was hired, things were much different. Scooter Braun wanted to sell Swift's masters to an investment fund in November of 2020. Swift's team tried to negotiate with Braun, but he would not sell her masters back to her. This means Taylor cannot even perform music from her first six albums. According to Taylor Swift's contract, she could start re-

recording her first five albums in November 2020.

Taylor Swift can not re-record her sixth album, *Reputation*, until 2022. This is because *Reputation* was released in 2017, and you cannot re-record an album until five years after its original release. Taylor Swift's re-released versions are not getting released in chronological order, and we do not know when and in what order the rest of her re-recorded albums are getting released. As of right now, we have *Fearless* (Taylor's Version) that includes six songs that were not on the original album! Taylor Swift is a female musician who was able to break through three music genres throughout her career



Image from Taylor Swift Twitter

and has written all her music. With all this groundbreaking work for the music industry, shouldn't Taylor Swift be able to own all her masters too?

# The Law Is Not Situational

By: John Powers

Recently, a Minnesota jury comprising a diverse set of 12 men and women found Derek Chauvin, the police officer who killed George Floyd, guilty of second-degree murder, third degree murder, and manslaughter. Without a doubt, this verdict came as a relief to the many citizens who feared uncivil riots would tear down their cities and provided some sense of justice to Floyd's family and Black Lives Matter organizers and protesters, as well.

However, the significance of George Floyd's murder and Derek Chauvin's conviction markedly outstrip our nation's discussion with the role of police in our lives and the declared oppression of BIPOC Americans. This verdict raises a bigger question: in a moral and civil, democratic society, is it just to view verdicts that we do not agree with as vile miscarriages of justice? An answer of anything but a firm no is a dangerous one because it undermines our nation's democratic and non-tyrannical judicial system. Indeed, many Americans probably can come

ly, there is a large consensus that Casey Anthony was a liar, who killed her baby to escape the duties of motherhood. This consensus stands in sharp contrast to a Florida jury finding her not guilty of murder in 2011.

In addition, some Americans may believe that if they were accused of something and stood trial, they would feel uncomfortable knowing that anyone could decide their fate, even those who are grossly uneducated or those who may mis-understand jury instructions. These feelings are fairly rational, but when one uses their opinions on this matter to change some aspect of our judicial system fundamentally and unfairly, it becomes a colossal societal plight.

No better example of how this could pummel America's judicial system are the recent comments by Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), who said that if a not guilty verdict were reached on the Derek Chauvin trial, then "we've got to get more confrontational." More confrontational in Minneapolis? For a

past year. It's a clear incitement of violence by the standards set by the Democratic party, who impeached former President Trump over his use of rhetoric surrounding the January Capitol insurrection. Nevertheless, Waters' com-

ver, the law is generally not situational. The most core process of a fair trial does not change because of the alleged crime(s) committed or because of the threats of crazed politicians and ideologues, nor does it change because of the his-



Rep. Waters pictured above. Source: Shutterstock.com

ments are not about the hypocrisy of Democrats, they are about the judicial system. As a sitting congresswoman, telling others to be "more confrontational" if a verdict does not go their way suggests that our justice system only works when it matches public perception. It was an unacceptable comment to make, and it warrants a serious investigation and a possible stripping of committee assignments. No matter how obvious the guilt of a crime may be, even with crimes committed on video, our judicial process must work in an unobstructed way. That means that it was lawful to assume Derek Chauvin was innocent, listen to the prosecution exercise their burden of proof, take in the defense's optional commentary on areas of reasonable doubt and speculation, and accept the jury's decision. Just because a case may anger us or is clearly a wrongdoing from a video, does not give us and the people in power a right to wipe away the established process of our judicial system. Moreo-

torical/societal circumstances surrounding the case. At the end of the day, our founding fathers designed our judicial system to protect against the Maxine Waters type of tyranny. They thought that a trial by a jury of one's peers is the best system to protect against bad forces marking their influence in the judicial system, such as oppressive forces and agendas by our government. As John Adams once said, "Representative government and trial by jury are the heart and lungs of liberty. Without them we have no other fortification against being ridden like horses, fleeced like sheep, worked like cattle and fed and clothed like swine and hounds."

Our system is surely not perfect, nor should we sit down and never think about ever making our judicial system fairer, but we must ensure that our emotions and irrational logic never guide us to decide that some cases are fit for our judicial process, while others should be decided by mob rule.



Jury of peers.

Source: Shutterstock.com

up with one or two publicized court cases that yielded verdicts that they did not agree with. For instance, Americans remain sharply divided among their opinions on whether O.J. Simpson was not guilty of murder and general-

city that projects damages in the millions due to the rioting and looting of 2020, a threat of more economic harm and more societal harm for a city that needs to recover from the battering that it's had over the

## Trigger Warning: Let's Talk about Eating Disorders

By: Dannilynn King

I find that the vast majority of people in the performing arts industry don't have any interest in talking about eating disorders. Considering that a lot of people in the performing arts world struggle with eating disorders, I think that not talking about them is just adds to the stereotype that performers are all "tall and skinny." In reality we all know that the we come in range of different shapes and sizes. Social media plays a big role in this stereotype and if you find yourself feeling insecure from someone else's posts because you don't look the way they do, I suggest you unfollow them and find the beauty in yourself because at the end of the day we're all different. Eating disorders aren't just a problem in



Contact: National Eating Disorders Helpline: [myneeda.org/helpline-chat](https://myneeda.org/helpline-chat)

one major, this is a problem in drama, vocal, musical theater, dance -people who aren't even in the performing arts industry struggle with eating disorders as well.

I found myself feeling uncomfortable trying to write this, so I started asking myself questions such as, "Why are we so

afraid to talk about eating disorders?" Is it because we are uncomfortable or are we afraid that we'll approach this topic inappropriately? If so, what's an appropriate way to address eating disorders? Why do we keep telling people they have to look a certain way to become something?

With all this being said, I think it's time to have these hard conversations with our friends, if we notice that they might be experiencing symptoms of eating disorders, to let them know we see them and hear them and want to be there for them in every way we possibly can. I know for me personally I like to make everyone around me, whether that's a close friend, family, or my peers, feel as comfortable as possible and to know that I am a safe person they can talk to about anything and everything, free from judgement. If they want too. I want you all to know that your weight DOES NOT define your artistic ability or your ability to "fit in" with the people around you.

## Land of the Not-So-Free

By Audrey Cross

How can this country claim to be so very free

With the history it has?

America, When are you going to come to your senses?

Let's admit it,

This timeline has very little good.

A trail of breadcrumbs that symbolize tragic events

Mark the path of U.S. history.

So much for all men being created equal.

America, how can we claim to be free

When so many people still suffer from your past?

When are we going to start providing the safety and happiness promised?

We the people are sick of sitting around waiting.

A legacy of hate shouldn't define us,

So we'll take a stand.

There's been enough blood,

Enough tears,

Enough hate.

So tell me America, when are your people going to catch a break?

# PHOTOGRAPHY: *Moonset over Eastchester Bay*

By: Cianna Geni



## Call for Contributors

### Writers! Poets! Artists! Photographers! Political Junkies!

If you would like to contribute an article, a work of art, a story—please contact [theppasvoice@ppasshare.org](mailto:theppasvoice@ppasshare.org).

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