

***Statement of purpose***

Journalism is a compelling instrument to right wrongs and balance power. That is what draws me to the profession. Economic and political power is fascinating in its effect on our society, yet utterly obscure in its methods of operation. However, in a democracy, the public has a right to know how the forces that shape our society do so. The first thing that draws me to journalism is a sense of idealism about how the world should work. Then, there is the thrill of breaking a story and of interviewing people from all walks of life. I first found myself doing “journalism” at my elementary school’s paper. (I have reported and edited at various student publications ever since.) Armed with a steno pad and all the accoutrements of a 20th-century reporter, we would parade around our tiny school writing about the most trivial and well-understood facets of student life. But still (when we managed to put enough writing together to get something printed) there was something inexplicably exciting about picking up the paper in a hallway or classroom, and seeing your name on it, and seeing others read it. Perhaps that feeling is merely accountable to solipsism or pride, but I sincerely hope not. When I consider the feeling more carefully, it has much more to do with being a trusted arbiter of truth, however ephemeral that status may be. There is something stirring about the responsibility of being a journalist that inspires its own sense of excitement. The responsibility that we shoulder as journalists is especially important today, when trust in our political and corporate institutions has fundamentally eroded. In short, I am driven by the idea that my job is important to society and that people rely on the accuracy of my reporting. The opportunity to participate in The New York Times Student Journalism Institute would be an invaluable step towards a career in the profession. It would be a signal honor to attend.

***Reporting work samples***

1. From “Connecticut joins census lawsuit,” *Yale Daily News*, April 8, 2018

The latest scuffle between Connecticut and President Donald Trump’s administration looks set to play out in federal court.

The state has joined 16 others in a lawsuit to prevent the Trump administration from asking respondents about their citizenship status on the 2020 United States census. Connecticut Attorney General George Jepsen announced that the state had joined the lawsuit on April 3.

Jepsen emphasized that Connecticut has a substantial immigrant population, particularly from Latin America, and many of them are not U.S. citizens. He warned that an undercount of the state’s total population could undermine the state’s legitimate political representation in Congress and federal aid.

“We believe ... that having a citizen question results in an undercount of the population because people are intimidated that that information might be used against them,” Jepsen said in a Friday interview with the News.

“And the Constitution is very clear that the purpose of the census isn’t to count citizens, it is to count residents, people.”

The plaintiffs argue that the Constitution mandates that the census - and accordingly, congressional delegation size and federal funding proportions, which are determined from census results - be based on total state population, not just on registered citizens...

Read more at <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/04/08/connecticut-joins-census-lawsuit/>

2. From “Kavanaugh scrutiny increases,” *Yale Daily News*, September 18, 2019

President Donald Trump on Monday called for a “full process” in the investigation of a nearly 40-year-old sexual assault allegation against Yale alumnus and Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh ’87 LAW ’90. But even as the allegation has sent shockwaves through American politics, Yale faculty members and administrators who voiced support for Kavanaugh after he was nominated for the high court have mostly remained silent. One exception is Akhil Reed Amar ’80 LAW ’84, a Yale law professor who penned an op-ed defending Kavanaugh in The New York Times over the summer and who testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee last week. Asked on Monday whether he believes the allegation should be investigated before a confirmation vote, Amar said that it should. “Yes, this seems the most fair way to proceed - for the Professor and the Judge, for the Senate, and for the American people - even though the process may well be painful for the participants,” Amar, who taught Kavanaugh in the 1980s, wrote in an email...

Read more at <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/09/18/kavanaugh-scrutiny-intensifies/>

3. From “Local officials criticize plan to arm teachers,” *Yale Daily News*, August 30, 2018

...William Clark, the chief operating officer of the New Haven Board of Education wrote in an email to the News that arming teachers is not something the board’s security task force - a committee that includes leaders from the school board, emergency operations center, and the police and fire departments - has supported or recommended. “Funding for education programs, school meal and food programs and health programs among others are all targeted under [DeVos’] watch for cuts, yet this is her focus?” Clark wrote. “Her priorities seem to be contrary to the actual needs of public schools and students.” Clark said it would be more constructive for the department to focus on public education funding - rather than the private-sector “school choice” voucher funding DeVos has long supported....

Read more at <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/08/30/local-officials-criticize-plan-to-arm-teachers/>

4. From “Berkeley Orchestra returns to Battell,” *Yale Daily News*, November 6, 2017

Yale’s family weekend ended on a high note last Sunday with the Berkeley College Orchestra’s 41st season opener. The orchestra returned to Battell Chapel at 4:30 p.m. Sunday afternoon, with a program featuring works from Beethoven, Schubert and Dvořák. The performance concluded at 6 p.m. with the triumphant Dvorak’s Symphony No. 9: “From the New World.” More than 175 people attended the concert, with many families visible in the crowd among the usual mix of students.

The orchestra began with the Beethoven overture, “Overture to the Creatures of Prometheus,” a full-length ballet by Beethoven. The overture is a bright and hopeful piece whose levity inspired the rest of the evening’s music.

Next came Schubert’s unfinished Symphony No. 8, which ranges from the delicate and precise to the sweeping and grand. Daniel Rudin ’19, the Berkeley College Orchestra’s music director, co-conducted orchestra on Sunday.

“In the selection of the pieces, we wanted to do something that really honored what we anticipated being the size of the new orchestra this year,” Rudin said. “We thought ‘New World’ was just the piece to do it. We want to get a lot of people really excited to play and a lot of people really excited to hear it.”

Read more at <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2017/11/06/berkeley-orchestra-returns-to-battell/>

5. “Durham sworn in as U.S. Attorney,” *Yale Daily News*, March 2, 2018

John Durham has been sworn in as Connecticut’s United States attorney, after receiving the nomination from President Donald Trump in November. Durham was sworn in on Feb. 22 in New Haven by Janet Hall, the chief judge of the federal district court in Connecticut. The U.S. Senate confirmed Durham’s nomination on Feb. 16. Before the appointment, he had served as the interim U.S. attorney for the District of Connecticut, by an order of United States Attorney General Jeff Sessions.... Kevin Kane, the current chief state’s attorney for Connecticut, emphasized the importance of Durham’s long career in prosecution for his new role.

“He’s an excellent prosecutor, excellent trial attorney and he has very good judgement, balance and sense of fairness,” he said. “I think he’s had a great deal of experience prosecuting, and that’s taught him a very good sense of balance.

Kane added that Durham has collaborated with federal, state and local law enforcement in the past. He pointed to Durham’s approach as “critical” for Connecticut, particularly in an era of diminished resources for the state....

Read more at: <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/03/02/durham-sworn-in-as-u-s-attorney/>

6. “CT uncertain about Azar ’91,” *Yale Daily News*, February 2, 2018

The recent confirmation of Alex Azar LAW ’91 as secretary of health and human services has left local organizations and health policy professionals hopeful but uncertain about the future of health care in Connecticut.

Before President Donald Trump nominated him to the federal post on Nov. 13, Azar served as an executive at the pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly and Co. Azar was confirmed with a 55-43 vote on Jan. 24, securing the

required 51 votes. But both Connecticut senators, Chris Murphy, D-CT, and Richard Blumenthal, D-CT, voted against Azar's confirmation, with Murphy saying he voted against Azar because of the former pharmaceutical executive's views on drug pricing and regulation.

Still, Murphy spoke optimistically about the new secretary at an event at Planned Parenthood last week.

"The new HHS secretary, who I voted against, is much better than Tom Price," Murphy said. "My hope is that the new secretary of HHS, Alex Azar, is not going to be as ideological as his predecessor. So for the time being, I'm going to have high hopes that Secretary Azar is going to depoliticize HHS once he gets there."

Local and state health care leaders echoed Murphy's remarks, but with more hesitation. Patricia Baker, president and CEO of the Connecticut Health Foundation, told the News that it is difficult, at the moment, to say where Azar's tenure will take health care. Baker cited Murphy's comment and said the future depends primarily on how closely Azar will follow the national agenda set by the Trump administration.

Katherine Kraschel, the executive director of the Solomon Center for Health Law and Policy at Yale Law School, said the Trump administration seems to embrace "barriers" to health care like the work requirement....

Read more at: <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/02/07/ct-uncertain-about-azar-91/>

Full story archive: <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/author/keshavraghavan/>

*Note:* Since I am applying as a reporter, I have only included samples of stories that I have written. Samples of stories that I have edited are also available upon request.

### ***Pitch Idea | Tariffs and your local bodega***

As the US-China trade war heats up with no real resolution in sight, small businesses — often with slim margins in the best of circumstances — are in a precarious spot. How do local business owners in New York view the trade conflict; are they doing anything to reposition themselves for a tariff environment; are any feeling the pressure on their bottom line from the increased cost of goods?

### ***Pitch Idea | Effects of the deregulating push at the SEC***

Under the cover of simplifying and eliminating superfluous regulation, the SEC is pushing reforms in their enforcement of the recession-era Dodd-Frank rules. What are the practical consequences of this for banks in New York, and what risks, if any, is the SEC running with its overhauls? How dramatic have the revisions been, and are more significant changes expected?