



yale dems

SEMESTER IN REVIEW

◆ [DECEMBER 2023](#) ◆



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A Note from the Board



Dear Extended Dems Community,

Fall 2023 was an action-packed semester for Yale Dems. This semester, a record-breaking 95 students joined our fellowship program, working to elect candidates in Virginia, advocate for progressive policy in Congress, support New Haven nonprofits, and ensure that Yale students had the resources to vote in crucial elections. We were proud to have had a hand in flipping the VA legislature blue, passing Ohio's referendum protecting reproductive freedom, expanding the Dem majority on the PA Supreme Court, and re-electing Andy Beshear as Governor of Kentucky!

Outside of our four branches, we hosted major speakers ranging from high-profile congressional candidates to presidential speechwriters. We provided career opportunities for Yale Dems members—and all Yale students interested in politics, government, law, nonprofits, and grassroots organizing—through professional headshots, resume reviews, law school panels, and a revamped alumni mentorship matching program. We served as the primary progressive voice on campus in responding to major events such as the [repealing of Affirmative Action](#) and the [Yale Police Union's fearmongering tactics](#). And we maintained the traditions that make our Dems community special, such as Dems Formal, Initiation, Dems Families, and Toasting.

None of this would've been possible without your support—thank you for all that you do! 2024 will be a pivotal, tumultuous year for America, but we are confident that next year's board will be more than capable of continuing our fight for justice, equity, and progressive values.

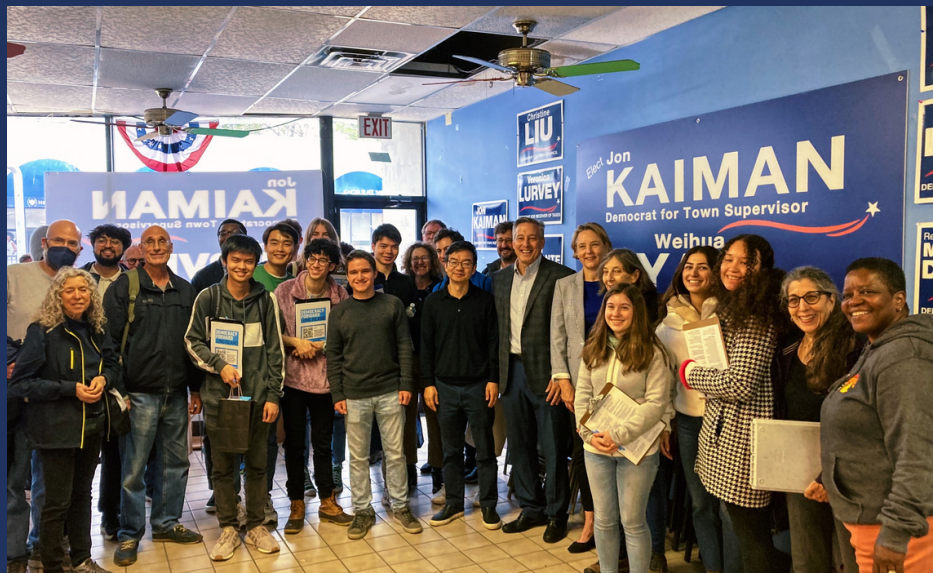
YALE DEMS BOARD 2023

JOSH GUO '24, RYAN SMITH '24, JANALIE COBB '25, JEREMY WILLIAMS '25, EMMA POLINSKY '25, ISABELLA MORALES '24, EVELYN LETONA ROBLES '25, ISABELLA WALTHER MEADE '25, KATE REYNOLDS '25, XIMENA PULIDO '25



✦ Elections ✦

This semester, Elections fellows worked as remote interns in competitive races across the country. In addition to Virginia House of Delegates and Senate candidates, we also worked for a candidate for the Alabama State House and the Philly City Council, as well as for two grassroots organizations in Texas and Florida. Fellows' work in Virginia helped contribute to Democrats retaking the state House in Virginia (one of the campaigns we worked on was the tipping point seat in the House!) and helped set up groundwork in Virginia as a key battleground state for 2024. Despite our loss in Philadelphia, we helped build a stronger foundation for the Democratic voter base in Pennsylvania, another key battleground state in 2024, and our campaign in Alabama (the race is still ongoing) seeks to take advantage of changing demographics in the state's largest metro area. Throughout the semester, fellows conducted donor and policy research, connected with voters, and assisted with data analytics, meeting weekly with senior campaign staff and often with candidates themselves. In weekly meetings, fellows led the charge in letter-writing and phonebanking for Virginia, the abortion referendum in Ohio, Gov. Andy Beshear's re-election campaign in Kentucky, and more! During Fall Break, we canvassed in Long Island to support local candidates in 2023 and lay the groundwork for federal House races in 2024.



500+ 80+ 300+

**DOORS KNOCKED
ON FALL BREAK
TRIP**

**HOURS WORKED
BY FELLOWS**

**LETTERS
WRITTEN TO
VIRGINIA VOTERS**



Elections

Grassroots Organizations and Campaigns



Michael Feggans for VA House of Delegates



Kimberly Pope-Adams for VA House of Delegates



Phil Hernandez for VA House of Delegates



Gary Masino for Philly City Council



Monty Mason for VA State Senate



Marilyn Lands for AL State House



Florida Rising



Texas Organizing Project



Legislative Advocacy

18

**POLICY MEMOS
PRODUCED**

42

**FELLOWS TACKLING
NATIONAL ISSUES**

7

**CONGRESSIONAL
OFFICE
MEETINGS**



Dems tried an entirely new approach to Legislative Advocacy this semester. In the past, the Legislative Advocacy branch has spent the fall semester preparing for the spring semester, when the Connecticut General Assembly is in session. This semester, instead of just preparing for the spring, we decided to lobby for federal legislation in Congress. Fellows worked on a wide range of topics, including solitary confinement reform, maternal mortality, artificial intelligence privacy protections, automatic voter registration, and much more. Each fellow conducted thorough research on their topic, identifying areas where current policy fails to benefit—or even directly harms—the country. They each produced targeted research memos that articulated where and how Congress should address these issues. Many fellows also chose to reach out to community organizations in Connecticut and across the country to get their support. Leg fellows concluded the semester by conducting email campaigns to the offices of many Democrats in the House of Representatives. This culminated in 18 policy memos and engagements with 7 Congressional offices by the end of the semester, successfully capping off Yale Dems's first federal lobbying effort.



Voter Advocacy

This fall, our voter advocacy fellows led efforts to contact Yalies from each state with key elections—Virginia, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Louisiana. Each fellow emailed students from their state with important deadlines, voting procedures, and candidate information throughout the semester to ensure they would be well-prepared to vote absentee for Democratic candidates and issues. Fellows also served as points of contact for any questions these students might have about those procedures and candidates. Together, the fellows hosted a bagel night info session where they answered any questions students had and helped them fill out any paperwork they needed to meet final deadlines. Overall, this semester of voter advocacy work served not only the student voters with key elections this fall, but also Dems at large in our efforts to prepare for extensive voter outreach in 2024! We hope to build upon our work this year to continue voter outreach and combat voter suppression in key battleground states across the country.



795

Students reached

FROM

6

States with key
elections



City Engagement

7 21

**NHV ORGS
SUPPORTED**

**FELLOWS
VOLUNTEERING**



During the fall, City Engagement worked closely with existing non-profits and campaigns in New Haven to aid and support these organizations. Every fellow was able to be a part of sustainable and impactful progressive change in New Haven while exploring the complex relationship between Yale and New Haven. This semester fellows had the opportunity to choose an organization that aligned with their own interests, ranging from climate action to food justice to immigration services. Some chose to continue working with organizations they have in the past, like New Haven Reads, and others explored new non-profits. In addition to supporting ongoing change in New Haven, fellows were tasked with updating all members with important news regarding the city at every meeting. Fellows led Elm City Updates during every Tuesday meeting which varied from news stories to upcoming protests and more. The City branch also led Dems members in participating in protest actions, namely the Fridays for Future Climate Rally in New Haven and the March to End Fossil Fuels Rally in New York City.



City Engagement

Select Projects

NEW HAVEN CLIMATE MOVEMENT

Fellows spent the semester conducting research on electrification throughout cities similar to New Haven and proposed plans of an electric future.

WARD 1 ALDER KIANA FLORES

Fellows did several days of canvassing for Kiana Flores and helped out on Election Day, eventually leading to her victory!

HAVEN'S HARVEST

Along with their work volunteering for this food recovery organization all semester, fellows also supported Haven's Harvest's second annual volunteer appreciation event.

INTEGRATED REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT SERVICES

In addition to visiting the IRIS office to work on case management, fellows also spearheaded a new advocacy branch for IRIS.

NEWREACH (COORDINATED ACCESS NETWORK)

Fellows worked on a new homeless prevention program for residents of New Haven. In addition to this, fellows spent time analyzing data and created a report for the Department of Housing.

NEW HAVEN READS

Fellows mentored and tutored up to two young New Haven students under the New Haven Reads mentoring program.

HAVENLY

Along with focusing on food recovery and food justice, fellows also worked closely with supporting the ongoing effort to aid refugee and immigrant women find careers and community in New Haven.



Speaker Events

This semester, Dems held a variety of speakers in high-profile events for the entire Yale community. From congressional candidates to presidential speechwriters to political pundits, we exposed Yalies to pioneering voices in local and national politics through extended Q&As and intimate small-group dinners. Below is our Fall 2023 speaker lineup.



Beto O'Rourke and Maxwell Frost

Mr. O'Rourke is a former House representative (D-TX-16) who has run high-profile campaigns for TX Senator, Governor, and President. Rep. Frost (D-FL-10) is the first Gen-Z member of Congress and a former gun control organizer. We were proud to host both virtually to speak about issues of youth voter engagement and Democratic organizing in red Southern states.

David Litt

Mr. Litt served as a speechwriter for President Barack Obama, and has since been a best-selling author and head writer for *Funny or Die DC*. In this event co-sponsored with the Yale Record, Mr. Litt spoke about the role of comedy in political journalism and press engagement.



Jessica Tarlov

Ms. Tarlov is a rotating Co-Host of "The Five," the most-watched cable news program, serving as one of the most vocal liberal voices on the Fox network. In this event co-sponsored with the Yale Journalism Initiative, Ms. Tarlov spoke about bias in political media and her efforts to defend Democrats in an environment dominated by conservatives.



Mayoral Forum

In 2023, New Haven's Democratic mayoral primary election was heavily contested, with Hartford Inspector General Liam Brennan challenging Justin Elicker, the incumbent. Yale Dems collaborated with the Yale Law School Dems to host a debate between the two Democratic candidates.





The Dems Community

Dems members work hard—but we also know how to have fun. Throughout the semester, we put on a variety of events, ranging from formals, to debate watch parties, to storied traditions like end-of-the-year toasting. We also made an effort to provide a wealth of professional opportunities for our members, giving career support for students interested in the political, government, nonprofit, and organizing sectors.

First-Year Initiation

First-Year Initiation is one of our favorite traditions that helps us welcome our new members with style. New Dems members are divided into teams and compete in a campus-wide scavenger hunt, and then everyone meets up for a party, where their Dems Families are also revealed! We had a blast this time, despite getting soaked in the rain.



Dems Formal

Dems Formal is a cherished Dems tradition—a chance for Dems members to dress up and have a good time. This fall, we took on Luther (27 High) to dance the night away and take a bunch of cute photos.



Debate Watch Parties

Nothing screams comedy like Republican debates. This semester, we hosted Republican debate “hate watch” parties, getting together to play bingo and laugh/cringe at the antics on stage. “Donald Duck” anyone?



Professional and Career Events

Dems is not a primarily preprofessional club, but it is still important to provide career opportunities and resources to our members. With that in mind, this semester, we hosted government career info sessions, free professional headshots, resume reviews, and law school panels with our friends in the Office of Career Strategy and Yale Law School Dems.

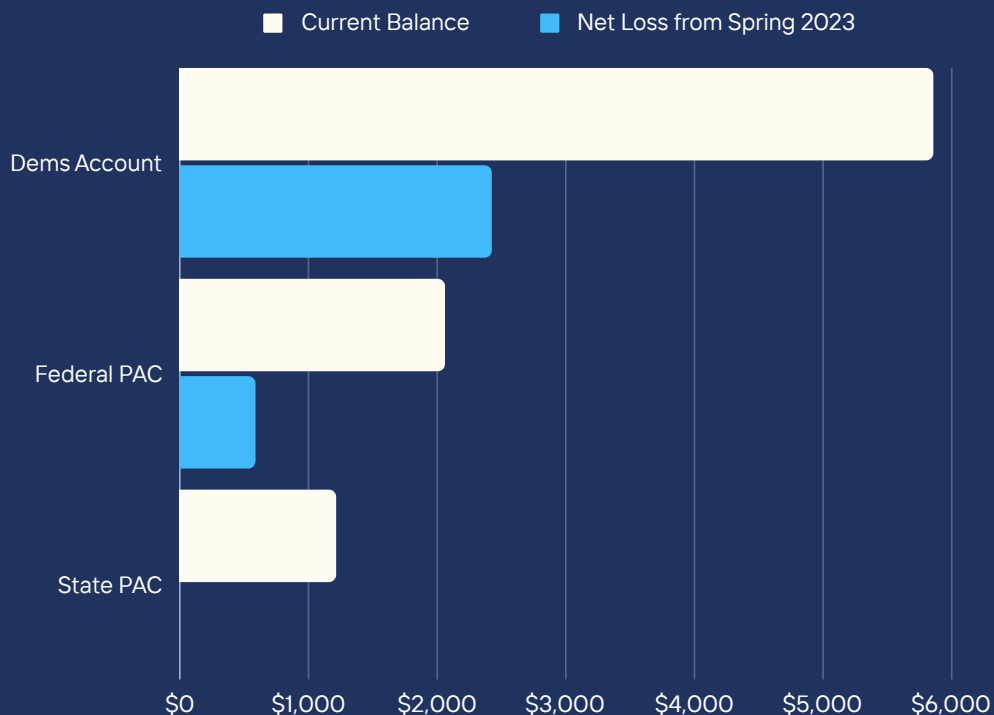




Finances



This spring, we raised a record amount of money, which was put to good use in the fall for our canvassing trips, speaker events, and more. To continue supporting our efforts, we hosted a successful Family Weekend Brunch fundraiser, with food catered by our friends at Haven's Harvest (one of our City projects!), where board members and fellows spoke in depth about our work to parents willing to donate. We also launched a Dems Donations program, where members signed up to propose and vote at our weekly meetings on campaigns for Dems to donate to from our PACs, which served as a way for members to also learn more about campaign finance. Moving forward, we hope to continue to build our finances to achieve our ultimate goals of stipends for our fellows and financial self-sustainability for our organization.





Stay Connected!

We say this every semester—and every semester we mean it. THANK YOU for all that you do to support Yale Dems! Whether you donate money, serve as a mentor in our Yale Dems Mentorship Program, come visit us on campus, or even just read our alumni newsletter, we appreciate your energy and engagement. We accept donations through our [federal PAC](#) and [GoFundMe](#). If you have not yet subscribed to our alumni newsletter, please feel free to do so [here](#) (we promise we don't spam your inboxes). If you're interested in becoming a mentor—or have any other questions or ideas—please reach out to our new Vice President, Jeremy Williams (jeremy.williams.jaw239@yale.edu). We'd love to hear from you!



Leading Yale Dems has been the highlight of our Yale experience, and we're excited to pass the baton to the 2024 Yale Dems Board. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities in the months to come, whether it be through our [weekly newsletter](#), [Instagram](#), or [alumni Facebook group](#). In the meantime, we would like to formally introduce you to the 2024 Dems Board, from whom many of you should be hearing shortly:

YALE DEMS BOARD 2024

JANALIE COBB '25, JEREMY WILLIAMS '25, ALASTAIR RAO '26, ROY KOHAVI '26, NATALIE MILLER '26, CHRISTIAN THOMAS '26, ZACHARY PAN '27, NICOLE CHEN '26, ALEX MARTINEZ-GARCIA '26, RILEY ELLIOTT '26, MAIA ROOTHAAN '26