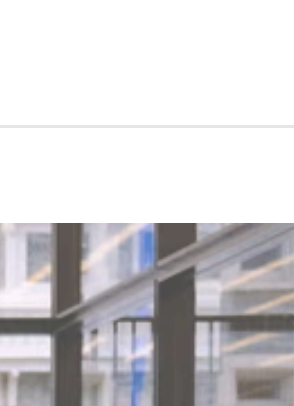


The Week in Patriarchy

US news

Women’s suffrage is apparently up for debate again in America

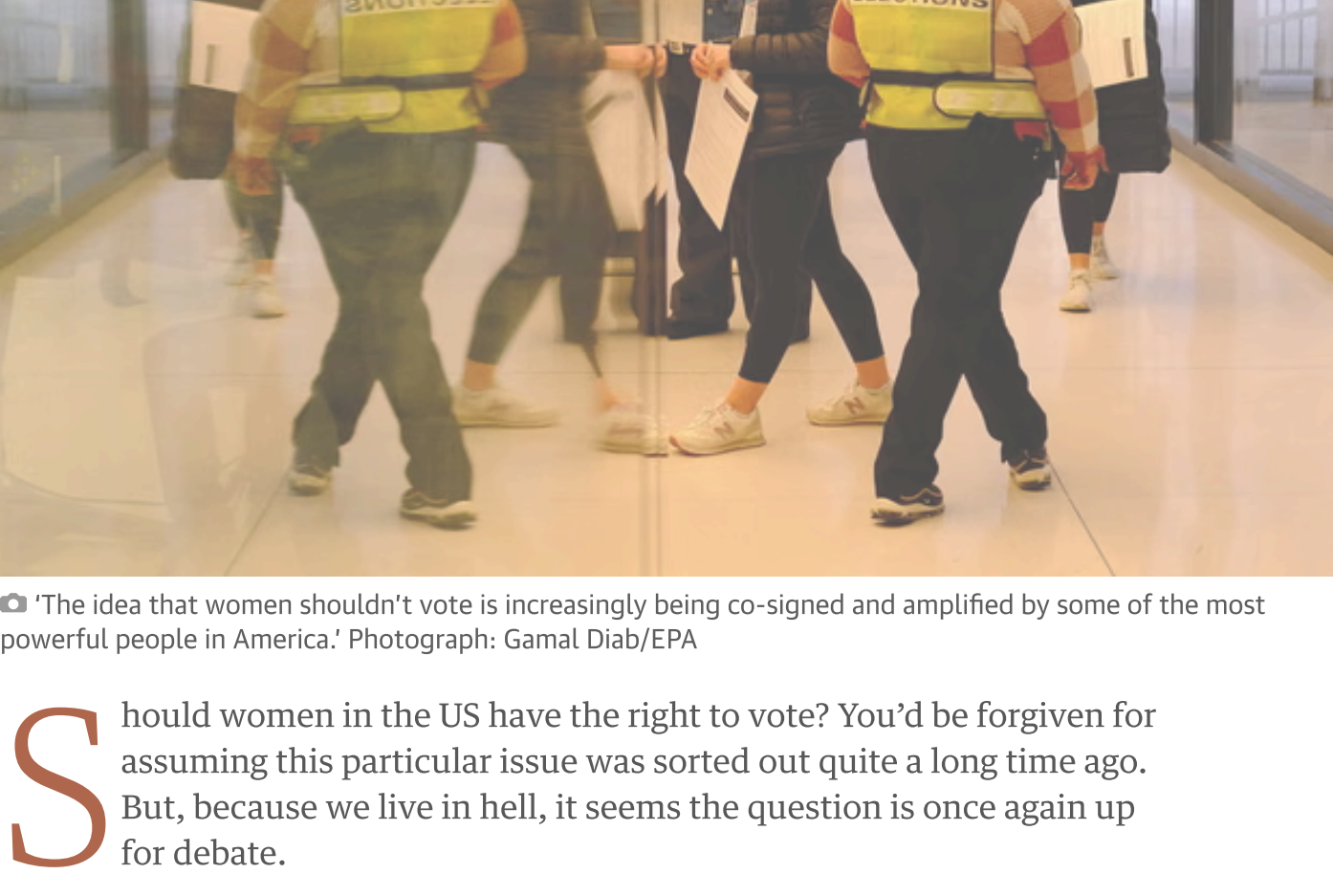
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The country’s finest male intellectuals – including some in positions of power – are weighing in on the matter

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‘The idea that women shouldn’t vote is increasingly being co-signed and amplified by some of the most powerful people in America.’ Photograph: Gamal Diab/EPA

Should women in the US have the right to vote? You’d be forgiven for assuming this particular issue was sorted out quite a long time ago. But, because we live in hell, it seems the question is once again up for debate.

Not by women, though; the fairer sex is obviously too emotional for such muscular discussion. So please sit this one out, ladies, and listen to what America’s finest male intellectuals have to say.

First up is Braeden Sorbo, a 24-year-old conservative influencer and nepo baby (he’s the son of the Hercules actor Kevin Sorbo), who claims he is constantly harangued by women telling him how desperate they are to have their rights taken away.

“I know more young women today who say they wish they didn’t ever get the right to vote than I’ve ever talked to in my life,” Sorbo [recently told](#) Richard Harris, host of the Truth & Liberty YouTube show. Which rather raises the question: how many young women has Sorbo ever talked to in his life? Harris didn’t push Sorbo on the veracity of this anecdota, however. Instead he just gave a manly chuckle as Sorbo blamed all the ills of the world (abortion, feminism) on the 19th amendment.

Per Sorbo, his female peers have also told him that “I would much rather give up my one right to vote if it meant 10,000 liberal women wouldn’t be allowed to vote, so that we could return to a better place”. ([Many](#) such cases!) He went on to [say](#) that his ultimate vision is a “voting system based on Christian morals, which relates to married couples having one joint vote”.

Perhaps you’re thinking: what does it matter what a 24-year-old jamoke on a far-right YouTube show says? I refer you to line three of paragraph one: it matters because we live in hell. In a normal world, Sorbo would be a fringe figure shouting into the ether who we could all happily ignore. But thanks in part to digital media, we don’t have that luxury any more. Sorbo has 1.9 million followers [on TikTok](#).; while some of his videos only get a few thousand views he has quite a few that top a million.

More importantly, however, Sorbo’s views can no longer be dismissed as “fringe”. Rather, the idea that women shouldn’t vote is increasingly being co-signed and amplified by some of the most powerful people in America.

Last month, for example, the US defense secretary, [Pete Hegseth](#), shared a video on X in which [several pastors](#) say women should no longer be allowed to vote as individuals. “In my ideal society, we would vote as households,” one of the pastors in the [CNN clip](#) says. “I would ordinarily be the one to cast the vote, but I would cast the vote having discussed it with my household.” While Hegseth didn’t explicitly endorse the video, he did retweet it with the caption “All of Christ for All of Life.”

Slate then [contacted](#) the Pentagon to give Hegseth a chance to clarify his thoughts on the matter. The reply wasn’t a straight answer; instead it just said Hegseth was a member of a church affiliated with Pastor Doug Wilson and “very much appreciates many of Mr Wilson’s writings and teachings”. Wilson is a Christian nationalist [who has said](#) “women are the kind of people that people come out of” and written blogposts with titles such as “[The Lost Virtue of Sexism](#)”.

Then there’s the tech billionaire Peter Thiel, who helped [bankroll](#) JD Vance’s political career. Back in 2009, Thiel [published an essay](#) that argued it may have been a bit of an error to give women the right to vote. “Since 1920, the vast increase in welfare beneficiaries and the extension of the franchise to women – two constituencies that are notoriously tough for libertarians – have rendered the notion of ‘capitalist democracy’ into an oxymoron,” Thiel wrote.

Thiel got a lot of flak for this and later [clarified his statement](#), saying: “It would be absurd to suggest that women’s votes will be taken away ... While I don’t think any class of people should be disenfranchised, I have little hope that voting will make things better.” Which is rather different from saying: “Of course women should have the right to vote, I’m mortified anyone misinterpreted my pretentious word salad.”

Predictably, Elon Musk also has some views on this matter. While the tech billionaire (soon to be [trillionaire?](#)) has never explicitly argued women shouldn’t vote, he has amplified tweets that undermine the idea of universal suffrage. [Last year](#), for example, he wrote “[interesting observation](#)” on a retweet of a post by an account called Autism Capital which argued a “Republic of high status males is best for decision making.” The same post argued “women and low T men” are “malleable” and can’t think freely. A year before, Musk appeared to [endorse the idea](#) that “democracy is probably unworkable long term without limiting suffrage to parents”.

The right are very good at shifting the Overton window [in their favour](#) and propelling once [fringe views](#) into the mainstream. They’re also adept at [weaponizing](#) the law to help advance their agenda. They won’t be able to get rid of women’s voting rights overnight, of course. Just like the right to a legal abortion, they’ll [chip away at it](#) gradually with bills that disenfranchise the “wrong” sort of people and [mechanisms](#) that make voting more difficult. But we should not mistake their ultimate objective. Musk, Thiel and Hegseth are some of the most powerful people in the world: when they, along with influencers such as Sorbo, hint that they are interested in getting rid of women’s suffrage, we should take them very seriously indeed.

**Texas professor fired after accusations of teaching ‘illegal’ gender identity**  
Texas A&M University [fired a professor](#) on Tuesday after a viral video in which a student complained they were being taught illegal notions about gender identity. The university president responded by saying: “This isn’t about academic freedom; it’s about academic responsibility.” But the professor, Melissa McCoul, has [appealed](#) against her termination and is exploring further legal action. McCoul’s termination comes amid a broader crackdown by the Trump administration on [higher education](#) and freedom of speech. Rather than fighting back, many universities (hello [Columbia!](#)) are shamefully bending the knee.

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**US gender pay gap widened in 2024 for second year in a row**  
Median gender pay increased 3.7% for men, but [stayed flat for women](#).

**Moma trustee appeared in Epstein’s birthday book**  
In 2021, the billionaire Leon Black [stepped down](#) from his position as chief executive of Apollo Global Management after an inquiry into his financial ties to Jeffrey Epstein. Black has said an independent inquiry found he had a limited relationship with Epstein and didn’t know about his sexual misconduct. However, he knew Epstein well enough, we found out this week, to reportedly write a two-page poem with a line about a “[wet dream](#)” in Epstein’s birthday book. Following the release of the birthday album, Black, who has strong ties to [New York’s Museum of Modern Art](#) (Moma), attended a private event at the museum. This may well [reignite previous demands](#) for Moma to cut ties with Black.

**New Mexico is the [first state to promise](#) free childcare for all families**  
BRB, just going to look at house prices in Santa Fe.

**Chicago man travels to Gaza and boasts about killing civilians**  
Please take the time to read this [important and disturbing investigation](#) in the Guardian about how Daniel Raab, a sniper from Chicago, went off to Gaza, where he massacred three members of the same family. Meanwhile, despite it dropping from front pages, [famine](#) continues to spread in Gaza and Palestinians in the West Bank are [facing forced](#) mass displacement by Israeli forces and settlers.

**The week in pawtriarchy**  
The idea that you can tip over a cow that is taking a standing snooze [is a myth](#). However, you can now tip Winnie, an internet-famous cow, with treats. The utterly adorable Winnie (the Moo), who lives at Alveus animal sanctuary, has [gone viral](#) on streaming platform Twitch for moving at the camera to get people to activate her automatic treat feeder by sending donations. The animal sanctuary is wisely milking the virality for all it’s worth.

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