

STUDENT PACKET

News Evaluation Exercise

(Sources intentionally omitted)

Story A

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision addressing how states conduct federal elections. The ruling clarified that while state legislatures have authority to regulate elections, their actions remain subject to review by state courts and must comply with state constitutions.

The majority opinion emphasized that no branch of government operates in isolation and that judicial oversight is a fundamental part of constitutional governance. Legal analysts noted that the decision preserved existing checks and balances while rejecting arguments that would have granted state legislatures unchecked authority over election rules.

Several justices wrote concurring and dissenting opinions highlighting different interpretations of federalism and the role of state courts. The decision is expected to influence how future election-related disputes are resolved at the state level.

Story B

A coalition of state governments has quietly begun testing artificial intelligence–driven voting software ahead of upcoming elections, according to internal documents obtained by independent researchers. The system reportedly uses machine learning to “optimize ballot counting efficiency” and is being piloted without public oversight.

Critics warn that the technology cannot be fully audited due to proprietary algorithms, raising concerns about election transparency. Officials involved in the project declined to comment, citing national security considerations.

Advocacy groups are calling for an immediate halt to the program until the public can verify how votes are processed. Some experts say the lack of disclosure represents a fundamental threat to democratic legitimacy.

Story C

Federal economic data released this week showed a slowdown in inflation compared to previous months, driven largely by easing energy prices and stabilization in supply chains. Economists cautioned that while the trend is encouraging, price levels remain higher than they were several years ago.

Government officials pointed to the data as evidence that recent policy measures are beginning to take effect. Independent analysts noted that inflation trends can fluctuate and warned against drawing conclusions from a single report.

Markets reacted modestly to the announcement, with investors closely watching future reports for confirmation that inflation continues to cool.

Story D

A newly uncovered government program allegedly uses artificial intelligence to monitor citizens' online behavior and flag individuals who may become politically "disruptive." According to unnamed insiders, the system evaluates social media posts, private messages, and browsing patterns to generate risk profiles.

Supporters of the program argue it helps prevent civil unrest and misinformation, while critics say it amounts to mass surveillance. Officials neither confirmed nor denied the existence of the program, stating only that "advanced tools" are used to protect public safety.

Several commentators claim the program operates outside existing legal frameworks, though no formal documentation has been released.

| Story | Real or AI? | Confidence Level (1-5) | Why? |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------|
| A | <input type="checkbox"/> Real <input type="checkbox"/> AI | | |
| B | <input type="checkbox"/> Real <input type="checkbox"/> AI | | |
| C | <input type="checkbox"/> Real <input type="checkbox"/> AI | | |
| D | <input type="checkbox"/> Real <input type="checkbox"/> AI | | |