

# Fall / Winter

# NEWSLETTER

March 13, 2025 / Vol 5 / Issue 1

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



APR - OTI Scholarship portal opening



APR 12 - oSTEM Regional Conference



MAY 3 - NSPN Symposium in Seattle



MAY 6 - AAAS 2026 Proposal Deadline

## SPOTLIGHT

Out to Innovate is working toward mounting a response to the transphobic policies put forth by the Trump Administration. We will be dedicating our next newsletter entirely to the science behind gender and sex. If you have any scientific articles, reviews/books, medical literature, or resources worth highlighting, please send them to [editor@noglstp.org](mailto:editor@noglstp.org).



## OUT TO INNOVATE STATEMENT ON EXECUTIVE ORDERS



In February 11, 2025, the Out to Innovate Board released a statement regarding the Trump Administration's executive orders:

"By now, we've all seen the Trump administration's executive orders erroneously restricting gender to two biological sexes, banning trans student athletes from competing, and attempting to erase any language related to DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility) from the government, including research funding.

We at Out to Innovate remain steadfast in our commitment to protect our trans and gender non-conforming communities, to lead with science in policy-making concerning gender and sexuality, and to uphold the principles of DEIA that make the STEM community and our society a better place for everyone. An attack on one community is an attack on all of us, but there is power in solidarity. This is not the first time the LGBTQ+ community has faced such open and overt animosity. And history has taught us that our strength lies in allyship, grassroots organizing, and having the courage to make our voices be heard.

To this end, Out to Innovate is working on opinion editorials and a white paper to establish our stance with the full-backing of scientific research. We are also dedicating our winter newsletter to scientific and legal resources and articles on the science of biological sex and gender identity and expression and are thus soliciting you, our members, for entries. We will highlight these resources on our website and social media. We will continue to advocate, as we always have, for the rights and freedoms of the members of our community, as well as educate all communities on LGBTQ+ issues in science. And we are also doubling down by pushing for greater presence at scientific conferences and by planning a town hall and our first in-person Out to Innovate Summit in five years. Now, just as before, finding our community and being unapologetically visible is paramount in fighting back against this cruel backlash and attempts to drag the scales back toward inequality.

If there are ways you want to get involved or think we should engage, please don't hesitate to reach out to our Board Members.

Signed,  
the Out to Innovate Board"

## SHELLEY DIAMOND INTERVIEWED BY OUTWORDS

Board Director emeritus, Shelley Diamond, is interviewed by Outwords in an animated video about her story about being out in science and the importance of diversity in STEM fields. Watch here: [youtube.com/shorts/nvTR1WZJMVk](https://youtube.com/shorts/nvTR1WZJMVk)

## DISCORD SERVER COMING MARCH 30

In an effort to foster community and better connect the membership with the Board committees' activity, the Out to Innovate Board is planning to roll out a Discord server on March 30. Stay tuned for more information and news!

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW COMMS COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR OPEN

The Out to Innovate Board wants to ensure we're doing our very best to communicate our work to you, the members, as well as the public. As such, a new position as the Vice Chair of the Communications Committee has opened up. If you would be interested in this role, it's a great opportunity to learn new written, visual, or analytical skills, or flex the skills you already have, all while helping Out to Innovate carry out our mission. Some example projects might include:

- Renewing our annual report
- Soliciting for and developing material for member spotlights
- Aggregating scientific literature and helpful advocacy resources for our website
- Developing social media posts for recurrent events
- Your own ideas!

If this sounds like something of interest, please reach out to Dane at [ds-board@noglstp.org](mailto:ds-board@noglstp.org)

## SOCIETIES CONSORTIUM TO END HARASSMENT IN STEM MEETING

On October 28-29, Board Members Ben Gerstner and Dane Samilo attended the Societies Consortium to Prevent Harassment in STEM meeting, with Board Member emeritus Shelley Diamond attending virtually. Several topics were discussed including navigating the legal framework of a post-Students for Fair Admissions Supreme Court ruling world, the backlash to diversity/equity/inclusion/accessibility initiatives, and the future of what a Trump administration would look like. Philanthropic organizations

and government agencies discussed their roles in preventing harassment. And a tool that has been in development was announced to be starting its pilot phase, where participating organizations will enter award-winners into a database requiring self-reporting of misconduct investigations. Out to Innovate remains active in this consortium to ensure the voices of LGBTQ+ STEM professionals are included in these discussions.

## ASSOCIATED PRESS JOURNALIST INQUIRY

A reporter for the Associated Press has solicited for scientists affected by the recent administration's withholding of funding, indirect funding cuts, and ban on research related to sex and gender. If you would like to talk to the journalist please email [ds-board@noglstp.org](mailto:ds-board@noglstp.org), and we will get you in contact with the journalist.

## OPEN CALL FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

We are in the midst of a renewed attack on the LGBTQ+ community by lawmakers, one that uses rhetoric antithetical to science and targets a particularly vulnerable group: trans youth. If you or someone you know would like to get involved in Out to Innovate's mission, we are always looking for help to organize and run our programs. We are an entirely volunteer-based organization and rely on your help to carry out our work.

Apply to become a Board member here: [www.outtoinnovate.org/volunteer-for-board-leadership](http://www.outtoinnovate.org/volunteer-for-board-leadership)

For volunteering opportunities reach out to any of Board members or committees here: [www.outtoinnovate.org/contact](http://www.outtoinnovate.org/contact)

## SURVEY OF POSTDOC EXPERIENCES IN STEM

Dr. Evelyn Valdez-Ward is partnering organizations that include [DisabledinSTEM](#), [OutToInnovate](#), the [National Postdoc Association](#), [Minority Postdoc](#), and her co-advisors Dr. Sunshine Menezes and Dr. Bruno Takahashi. Together, we aim to use the findings from this study to better understand and improve the postdoctoral training landscape. Through interviews, we will collect baseline data from postdocs to understand their STEM identities, self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and career trajectories.

To be eligible to participate in this study:

- You must be 18 years of age or older.
- You must currently be (or within the last 2 months have been) in a postdoctoral position in a U.S.-based academic institution.
- You must be in a STEM field (broadly defined).

More details here: [docs.google.com/document/d/1D4FCNg41mNcjlvjiCdWqCSalVWF4HbB\\_i5oN4cnjux0/edit?tab=t.0](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D4FCNg41mNcjlvjiCdWqCSalVWF4HbB_i5oN4cnjux0/edit?tab=t.0)

Link to schedule an appointment:

[calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0/appointments/schedules/AcZssZ2heslu7zsC09nSB10Cm6ddePw9ayaiNDO\\_IQd9t6nuAGP\\_96T0oFAF-GjhWI57nsmY9juuNqf4?gv=true](https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0/appointments/schedules/AcZssZ2heslu7zsC09nSB10Cm6ddePw9ayaiNDO_IQd9t6nuAGP_96T0oFAF-GjhWI57nsmY9juuNqf4?gv=true)

Please schedule an interview by March 24th. Interview dates can be scheduled until April 25th!

If you have any further questions, comments or concerns about the project, you may email: Evelyn Valdez-Ward, Postdoctoral Scholar at University of Rhode Island, [evaldezward@uri.edu](mailto:evaldezward@uri.edu), or message her on Signal app ([eveward.79](https://www.signal.me)); or Sunshine Menezes at [sunshine@uri.edu](mailto:sunshine@uri.edu).

## OUT TO INNOVATE RECOGNIZES ITS 2024 SCHOLARS

Out to Innovate is proud to announce the winners for the 2024 Out to Innovate scholarships. These scholarships recognized LGBTQ+ students who have achieved academic excellence in a STEM field. Eleven community college, undergraduate, and graduate students were recognized. The scholarships were funded by individual and corporate donors. Congratulations to this year's winners and thank you to the contributors!

Motorola Solutions Foundation supports Out to Innovate scholarships for students in technology and engineering fields. This year, these funds supported Eliana Rokeach, Maanas Sharma, Tabitha Floess, Kyle Kosuda, Malachi Steward, and Cristina Tamburro. All are presented below:



*Eliana Rokeach*

**Eliana Rokeach** (she/her) is our Motorola Solutions Foundation first place winner and a

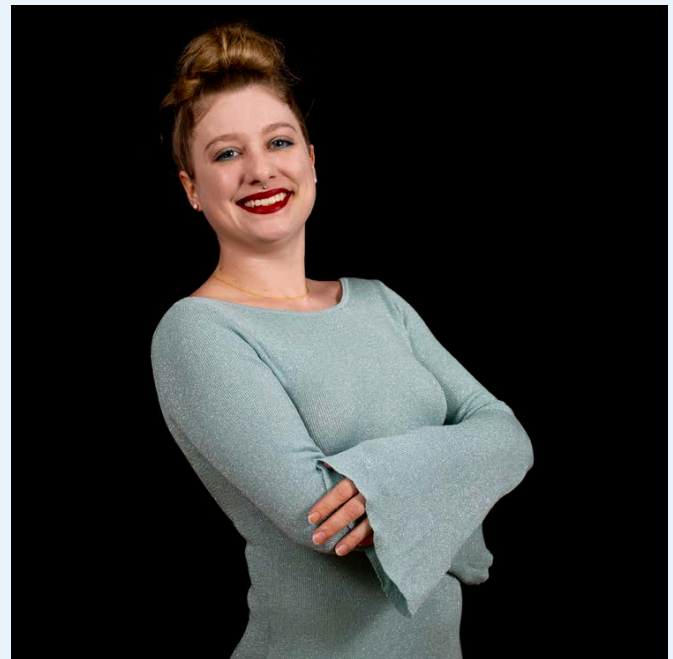
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fourth-year student at Pomona College studying computer science. Rokeach wants to use machine learning and big data analysis to develop innovative solutions to the sustainability challenges driving the global climate crisis. Rokeach said, “[This award] will significantly support me in continuing to pursue my educational and career goals in sustainable technology. I feel proud to be a queer woman in this field in which we are so underrepresented, and I'm so grateful to receive such tangible support.”



*Maanas Sharma*

**Maanas Sharma** (he/him) is our Motorola Solutions Foundation second place winner and a third-year computer science student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he works to advance research and develop policy for fair and ethical machine learning. He believes that it is imperative that advanced technological systems are steeped in human rights and support the equitable treatment of all. Sharma said of the award, “I am humbled to receive the support of Out to Innovate to continue my education. I am deeply indebted to my LGBTQ+ community for its continued support, and am eager to continue my education in pursuit of a better future for us all.”



*Tabitha Floess*

**Tabitha Floess** (she/her) is our Motorola Solutions Foundation community college transfer scholarship winner and is a fifth-year student at Wake Technical Community College, NC where she studies computer programming and development. Floess stated her career goal is to work in artificial intelligence engineering and user interface/experience development. Floess said, “I am thrilled to receive the Out to Innovate Engineering & Technology Scholarship and eager to contribute as a leader in LGBTQIA+ spaces! This scholarship is a crucial step toward becoming a skilled programmer, engineer, and designer, empowering me to inspire and uplift others in their identities and lifelong learning, while supporting my transition to a four-year degree. Thank you for supporting my aspirations!”

**Kyle Kosuda** (he/him) is our third place Motorola Solutions Foundation scholarship winner and is a third-year electrical engineering student at University of Central Florida. Kosuda’s career goal is to pursue ride control systems engineering for one of the major theme parks in Central Florida such as Walt Disney World or Universal. Kosuda said of this award, “I am incredibly

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thankful to have received the Out to Innovate Engineering/Technology Scholarship. This scholarship means so much more to me than I could ever encapsulate in just a simple quote. I am absolutely committed to being a positive role model for LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM, both during my studies and throughout my career. Truly thank you for this investment into my academic and professional potential in this community."



*Kyle Kosuda*

**Malachi Steward** (he/him) is our third place Motorola Solutions Foundation scholarship winner and is a physics major and mathematics minor in his fourth year at Southern Methodist University in Texas. Steward's goal is to become a leading researcher in particle physics, contributing to our understanding of the fundamental laws that govern the universe. Steward said, "It is extremely humbling for me to be honored with the Out to Innovate Engineering and Technology Scholarship. I hope that I can continue to inspire other members of the LGBTQIA+ community to continue to pursue education in engineering and science. Furthermore, I believe as a joint effort, we will be able to disrupt the industry and truly create groundbreaking discoveries in science and



*Malachi Steward*

engineering that will benefit both our local communities and communities around the world."



*Cristina Tamburro*

**Cristina Tamburro** (she/her) is our Motorola Solutions Foundation community college transfer scholarship winner and is an information technology major in her third year at Franklin University in Ohio.

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Tamburro's career goal is to leverage her training in Information Technology to deepen state services to all communities. Tamburro said, "Thank you to Out Innovate and Motorola Solutions Foundation for this incredible opportunity. With this scholarship I will continue my education and proudly represent the LGBTQIA+ community in tech. My family and I are truly grateful."



*Emma Kutcher*

**Emma Kutcher** (she/they) is the winner of our Amy A. Ross Scholarship in Bioscience and is a third-year majoring in neuroscience and psychology at Carleton College in Minnesota. Kutcher's career goal is to earn a doctorate in cognitive and behavior studies and will use this as a gateway to pursue research in cognition and neuroscience. Kutcher said, "I'm honored to be a recipient of the Amy Ross Bioscience Scholarship. As a queer individual and future neuroscientist, these identities are deeply important to me. This support allows me to continue advocating for queer communities on campus and proudly become the first in my family to attend college and pursue biosciences."

**Eliot Cummins** (she/her) is the winner of the ESA scholarship and is a third-year environmental science major at California State Polytechnic University Humboldt. Her career goal is to contribute towards the rehabilitation and conservation of our dwindling ecosystems through study of birds as indicator species that can signal early signs of change and needs in natural environments. Cummins said, "I am so proud and grateful to have received a scholarship from Out to Innovate and the Environmental Science associates. I look forward to using my education at Cal Poly Humboldt for the restoration of our planet and support of LGBTQ+ members in STEM."



*Eliot Cummins*

**Maria Owino** (she/her) is the second winner of the ESA scholarship and is an epidemiology and biostatistics graduate student at Drexel University. Maria aspires to leverage her expertise in epidemiology, biostatistics, and information technology to enhance public health initiatives through data-driven insights and innovative technological solutions. Owino said, "I am deeply honored to receive the Out to Innovate Scholarship, which will significantly

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*Maria Owino*

ease my financial burden and allow me to focus fully on my research at the intersection of health and technology. This support empowers me to dedicate more time to advancing my work, especially in addressing health disparities through AI/ML-driven solutions. I am excited to continue contributing to innovative research and representing diversity in STEM fields."

scholarship and is a third-year chemical engineering major at University of Pittsburgh. Her career goal is to make significant contributions to help with global climate change and increase energy sustainability. I want to be at the forefront of transformative technologies, driving innovation and pushing the boundaries of what is possible. Keenan said, "I am incredibly honored to receive this scholarship. This recognition is incredibly special to me and empowers me to pursue my academic and professional goals in chemical engineering with greater focus. The support strengthens my commitment to making a positive impact in my field and this wonderful community."



*Theo Nash*

**Theo Nash** (he/him) is one of the winners of the Berkshire Hathaway Energy scholarship and is a first-year graduate student at Stanford University. His focus will be on climate technology, catalyzing industrialization in developing nations through sustainable, cost-effective solutions. Nash said, "I am deeply honoured to receive the BHE Foundation Engineering Scholarship. This support will play a crucial role in my engineering journey

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*Mikalya Keenan*

**Mikalya Keenan** (she/her) is one of the winners of the Berkshire Hathaway Energy



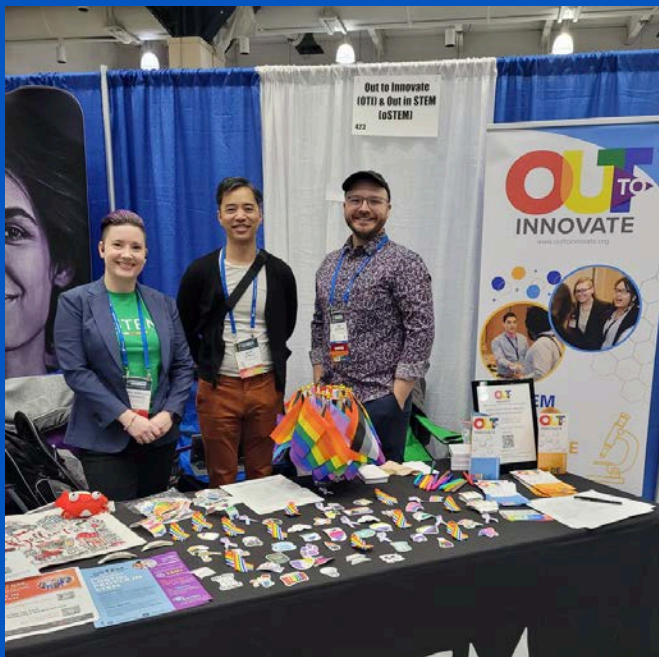
as I work to develop innovative solutions to the world's most pressing climate challenges."

## OUT TO INNOVATE ATTENDS AAAS 2025

Board members Benjamin Gerstner and Dane Samilo attended the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting in Boston, MA February 13-15. Out to Innovate co-hosted a booth alongside oSTEM in the Expo Hall. The booth drew in curious passersby and supporters. And we debuted our new pins, brochures, and badge ribbons.

Ben also hosted an LGBTQ+ networking event at Dani's Queer Bar near the conference. Several conference attendees and local STEM students attended. Out to Innovate also had a presence at the Pride coffee hour hosted by AAAS ISEED's SOGI Data Project.

AAAS is now accepting submissions for panel and workshop proposals for the 2026 meeting in Phoenix, AZ.



*Left to right: Jamie Gonzales, Dane Samilo, and Ben Gerstner*



*New Out to Innovate swag!*

## KENT STATER INTERVIEW REQUEST

Ruby Rainey is a writer for the Kent Stater and looking for potential interviewees for a story. The story is about students and people in the STEM field who are part of the LGBTQ+ community and the rise in this field and how they are addressing being in what seems a male-dominated field. Also, how they address handling their gender identity or sexual orientation. You can reach Ruby Rainey by email: [jrainey5@kent.edu](mailto:jrainey5@kent.edu)

## OUT TO INNOVATE OP-ED ON THE SCIENCE OF SEX

Out to Innovate submitted an op-ed titled, "The messy reality of biological sex can't be defined by executive order" in The Hill on February 18. The article pushes back on Executive Order 14168's attempts to define sex and gender using a narrow, unscientific definition.

Read more: [thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/5149125-trump-executive-order-biological-sex-definition/](https://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/5149125-trump-executive-order-biological-sex-definition/)

## OUT TO INNOVATE HOSTS OPEN MEMBER MEETING

On March 1, 2025, the Out to Innovate Board hosted an open member meeting to address concerns of the membership. Eighteen members dialed-in to discuss concerns and strategy around our response to the Trump administration's repeated attacks on the LGBTQ+ community and STEM in general.

Board Chair, TJ Ronningen, outlined plans and actions currently being taken by Out to Innovate and facilitated discussion among the members. Topics ranged from concerns about non-profits being targeted and anti-trans sentiment within groups to ideas for supporting trans students and postdocs and sharing stories about the impacts of these federal policies. Future meetings are planned on a regular basis.

In addition, a survey was opened up to members who couldn't attend and is still open for your concerns and suggestions for us here: [forms.gle/bkYQ9MmpPFYeYGnE4A](https://forms.gle/bkYQ9MmpPFYeYGnE4A)

## OUT TO INNOVATE SIGNS ONTO UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS OPEN LETTER

Out to Innovate, along with 48 other scientific societies, signed onto a letter sent to members of U.S. Congress by the Union of Concerned Scientists on March 3, 2025. The letter urges Congress to take action to block and undo the firing of federal scientists and administrators, removal of data from government websites, cutting research funding, and canceling conferences and meetings.

Read more: [ucs.org/about/news/scientists-ask-congress-protect-future-science](https://ucs.org/about/news/scientists-ask-congress-protect-future-science)

## OPEN LETTER FROM THREE EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY SOCIETIES

The Society for the Study of Evolution, the American Society of Naturalists, and the Society of Systematic Biologists published an open letter to the U.S. President and Congress on February 5, 2025. The letter serves as a rebuttal to the Executive Order 14168 "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government." The letter presents the scientific consensus among their respective fields: that sex in humans is "a biological construct that relies on a combination of chromosomes, hormonal balances, and the resulting expression of gonads, external genitalia and secondary sex characteristics."

Read more: [evolutionsociety.org/news/display/2025/2/7/letter-to-the-us-president-and-congress-on-the-scientific-understanding-of-sex-and-gender/](https://evolutionsociety.org/news/display/2025/2/7/letter-to-the-us-president-and-congress-on-the-scientific-understanding-of-sex-and-gender/)

## MEMBER OR ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT

Are you interested in shining a spotlight on an Out to Innovate member, your organization, or an affiliate/partner organization? Send us your stories!

Email [editor@noglstp.org](mailto:editor@noglstp.org) or fill out the form here: [airtable.com/appbfYV9KG3yhCcgA/pagnjLEXQc7A47DRz/form](https://airtable.com/appbfYV9KG3yhCcgA/pagnjLEXQc7A47DRz/form)

## MEMBER SERVICES

The Out to Innovate member services site allows for self-serve member update and automated renewal notices. Visit our website at: [outtoinnovate.org/membership](http://outtoinnovate.org/membership) and log in to explore or update your profile, or to renew your annual dues. Of course, you're welcome to renew or join the old-fashioned way with pen, paper, and check by filling out a download-able form from our website. We're happy to have your support any way you want to give it!

## AFFILIATES

- 500 Queer Scientists
- American Astronomical Society (AAS) Committee for Sexual Orientation and Gender Minorities in Astronomy (SGMA)
- American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE)
- CSUN QueerSTEM
- gAyGU (American Geophysical Union)
- L'GASP: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists
- LAGLS: Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Scientists
- LGBTQ Chemists and Allies (ACS PROF Gay and Transgender Chemists and Allies)
- NOGLSTP at Oklahoma State University
- NOGLSTP at Purdue
- NOGLSTP at University of Nebraska - Lincoln
- Diversity and Inclusion in American Nuclear Society Committee (formerly NuclearPride)
- LBGTQ STEM at Oklahoma State University
- PrideSTEM at Texas Tech
- QSTEM of Lake Nona High School
- Queer Science (University of Minnesota)
- Queer Science Society
- Spectra: The Association for LGBT Mathematicians

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

- **TJ Ronningen** (Chair) Columbus, OH
  - [tj-board@noglstp.org](mailto:tj-board@noglstp.org)
- **Barbara Belmont** (Treasurer), Pasadena, CA
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- **Christine Bland** (Member), Denver, CO
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- **Ben Gerstner** (Member), Washington, DC
  - [bg-board@noglstp.org](mailto:bg-board@noglstp.org)
- **Dane Samilo** (Secretary), Washington, DC
  - [ds-board@noglstp.org](mailto:ds-board@noglstp.org)

## SUBMISSIONS

The **Out to Innovate Bulletin** is published quarterly, most of the time. Contributed articles are welcome and encouraged and may be emailed as plain text to [editor@noglstp.org](mailto:editor@noglstp.org). The next publication deadline (for the spring newsletter) is **April 30, 2025**. Please acknowledge the Out to Innovate Bulletin as your source if you choose to reproduce any of these articles.

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