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Andrew Yang holds rally in Cambridge following Thursday's Democratic Debate

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by Daily Free Press Staff

By Angela Yang and Matthew Sensabaugh

Supporters of presidential hopeful Andrew Yang, who dub themselves the “Yang Gang,” crowded Cambridge Common Monday night to see and hear the candidate speak.

Greeting supporters near Harvard University, Yang spoke on his Freedom Dividend plan, in which the government will provide every American citizen with \$1,000 every month to help offset the loss of jobs to computer automation.

The event was Yang’s first campaign rally after Thursday’s Democratic candidate debate.

Yang told The Daily Free Press after the rally that he thinks his campaign has been successful despite the comparatively limited coverage it has received from the media.

“One of the great things about the campaign now is we make maximal use of whatever time we’re given,” Yang said. “I got a



Presidential candidate Andrew Yang speaks to a crowd of his supporters, dubbed “The Yang Gang,” at a rally held in the Cambridge Common on Monday evening. GABRIELA HUTCHINGS/DAILY FREE PRESS STAFF

lot of work done in eight minutes.”

During his speech, Yang spoke specifically to Massachusetts students hoping to work in technology, repeating the need for a \$1,000 universal basic income to support residents as Americans continue to lose their jobs to more cost-efficient alternatives, such as computers.

“How many of you all work in technology or study tech?” Yang asked. “I just spoke to a group of 70 CEOs, I asked them how many of you are interested in having AI and software get rid of your back office workers. Guess how many hands went up out of 70? All 70.”

Yang also interacted with the audience during his speech, as many of his proposals were met with enthusiastic responses from the crowd, who were told to raise signs displaying the acronym “MATH [Make America Think Harder]” every time Yang mentioned a statistic or number.

“Guess the effectiveness rate for federally funded [manufacturing] retraining programs,” Yang asked the audience, referring to the federal government’s inability to combat the loss of jobs to automation.

“15 percent!” attendees yelled in response.

Citing various polls and studies, Yang said he had a higher chance of defeating President Donald Trump in the general election, due to his diverse voter base.

“I am peeling off tens of thousands of disaffected Trump voters, of libertarians, independents ... we can build a much larger coalition,” Yang said.



Yang, a former entrepreneur, touched on the core tenets of his campaign such as the “Freedom Dividend,” a universal basic income for all American adults. GABRIELA HUTCHINGS/ DAILY FREE PRESS STAFF

Daniel Ayerzon, 43, of Tucson, Arizona attended the rally as part of a personal mission to follow Yang’s campaign trail on the road. A registered Republican, Ayerzon said he was persuaded to support Yang after realizing that automation posed a real threat to Americans’ jobs.

“Andrew was the only one talking about [automation],” Ayerzon said. “And I was like, ‘finally somebody’s out there and he’s running for president.’ So at that point, I decided to follow him around the country and start a YouTube channel doing that.”

Conor Jednak, 24, of Melvin Village, said that he first heard Yang’s proposals during the first

Democratic debate, and that his support the candidate grew after reading one of Yang's books.

“His book is really what changed my mind. He goes really in depth on a lot of his ideas, really shows you the background of why he believes in the long range things. Since then, I've started volunteering for him and I come out to all these events, whenever I can.”

Thomasina Hare, 16, of Somerville, attended the rally despite being unable to vote, as Yang's policy ideas include lowering the voting age to 16 years old.

“I just came here because I really like Andrew Yang as a candidate,” Hare said. “And that's mostly because I think that most politicians propose the same variations on solutions to the same problems. And I really liked how he's going at everything from a different approach. And I think that we need that right now.”

Gabriel Ciociola, 48, of Salem, said he followed Yang since his first rally at the Boston Common, as the earlier event left him very impressed.

“When I heard about this rally, it was a quick subway ride on the Red Line, so I jumped right on it,” Ciociola said. “I've seen Andrew speak a lot online, on TV and once live before. And he is a consistently excellent speaker. He lights up the crowd.”



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