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Cato Policy Report

MAY/JUNE 2022. VOL. XLIV NO. 3

A Libertarian Is the Only Real Egalitarian

BY DEIRDRE NANSEN MCCLOSKEY

A libertarian—which means a true “liberal” in the original sense of the word—wants a society with no human-made, involuntary ups and downs, no masters and slaves. That’s all there is to it.

But what about equality?

One reply is that the libertarian admires the varied gifts of humans: some have athletic prowess, some have wisdom in religion, and some have insight into commercially tested betterments, such as a new app or a new hip replacement. The libertarian therefore wants people to exchange their gifts for mutual advantage and mutual enlightenment. It amounts to free trade and free speech among free adults. Lovely.

You know it works in rock music and friendship and the English language. Let’s have equal liberty of *permission* to venture, says the libertarian. Let’s not have governmental intervention in rock music, friendship, language . . . or the economy. Equality of permission. No masters with a clipboard or a regulation and the threat of a fine or impris-

onment to back them up.

The libertarian doesn’t think that the usual ideas about equality—equality of income or equality of opportunity—make a lot of sense. Instead, the libertarian wants that liberty of *permission*.

The scientific fact is that equality of permission works, and it pretty quickly creates greater equality of incomes and opportunities. What the libertarian’s hero Adam Smith called

in that revolutionary year 1776 “the obvious and simple system of natural liberty” lets anyone venture equally as an adult. Economic history shows that the new liberty of permission, which gradually widened during the two centuries after 1776, did in fact lead to other equalities—much better consumption and better parenting. The vastly more prosperous people alive now—30 times more

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DEIRDRE NANSEN MCCLOSKEY is the Distinguished Scholar, Isaiah Berlin Chair in Liberal Thought at the Cato Institute, distinguished professor emerita of economics and of history, and professor emerita of English and of communication at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



Gov. CHRIS SUNUNU of New Hampshire addresses a Cato seminar in Naples, Florida, in February, where he discussed the policies that have made New Hampshire the top-ranked state in the 2021 edition of Cato’s *Freedom in the 50 States*.

Cato's Champion of Liberty

Throughout the year we have staff forums for all Cato employees. A highlight of the spring meeting is the honoring with tenure awards of all the “Cato-ites” who are celebrating milestone anniversaries of service to the institute and our mission.

It was at this event on March 31, 2015, when I was introduced to the team as Cato's new president. On that day, Alan Peterson, Cato's director of management information systems, was honored for 30 years of service to the institute. It blew me away. I'd come to Cato from Wall Street, where many firms don't survive 30 years—let alone being staffed by 30-year veterans.

Such passion and dedication are even more extraordinary when one considers that Alan, who has since entered a well-deserved retirement, isn't an outlier. Cato maintains a high standard of accountability for individual performance, in contrast to so much of Washington, DC, where most jobs, both in and out of government, seem to be lifetime sinecures. No one stays at Cato for decades unless their sustained contributions merit it. So what a measure of devotion to our cause it is that so many Cato-ites—in addition to *deserving* to serve such a long tenure—*choose* to do so. I can't thank them enough.

This year we had to design a new version of the loyalty award, as for the first time we were honoring Cato leaders—two of them!—who were marking 40 years with the institute. For four decades, Jim Dorn has steadfastly been one of Washington's leading voices for monetary reform. Jim manned the helm of the *Cato Journal* from 1982, shortly after its inception the year prior, until the final issue was published last fall. And this September, Jim will quarterback Cato's 40th annual monetary conference, an event he founded.

And with 41 years of service, David Boaz is the longest-tenured employee in the history of Cato. Like Cal Ripken's record-setting 2,632 consecutive games, I can't conceive of anyone exceeding David's record of service and dedication.

David is a foundational figure of the libertarian movement, and without him Cato wouldn't be the influential and respected voice of liberty it is today. For 41 years he's been immersed in nearly every aspect of Cato's work and operations and has made as important a contribution as anyone to keeping Cato sharp, principled, independent, nonpartisan, and libertarian. His commitment to excellence is infectious. David's book *The Libertarian Mind* is a brilliant

articulation of our philosophy. He has made substantial contributions to rolling back the war on drugs, putting school choice on the map, and promoting the struggle for marriage equality. More than that, he's had a hand in everything Cato has done as well as cultivating a real libertarian presence on the national stage. In short, David has spent decades pushing back against the state and pushing for the largest possible space for civil society. Along the way, he's been a persuasive spokesman for our mission and values. When David spoke at last autumn's Cato Club Retreat about “Why We Are Here,” I saw more than a few tears in listeners' eyes.

In recognition of these contributions, it's with pride that I announce David will join F. A. Hayek, James Buchanan, and José Piñera as a **Distinguished Senior Fellow** of the Cato Institute.

In connection with this appointment, David will help secure the Institute's future. He'll focus his efforts on writing, speaking, and intellectual leadership as opposed to management, paving the way for a new generation at Cato. Emily Elkins, Gene Healy, Scott Lincicome, Norbert Michel, Clark Neily, Alex Nowrasteh, and Ian Vásquez have accepted expanded responsibilities for management of the Cato policy staff within their respective areas and will each play a growing role in charting Cato's future.

When David began his career at Cato, the Iron Curtain still divided Europe, the Supreme Court would soon uphold anti-sodomy laws, economic liberalization in China had barely begun, the school choice movement was yet to be ignited, the war on drugs was nearing its peak, and the largest country in South America was still ruled by the military. We're ever conscious of the threats to liberty and the areas in which it's been in retreat. But by any objective measure, the world is freer than when David arrived at Cato. And I'm confident in the knowledge that our emerging generation of leadership—in the face of today's grave challenges—will make every effort to ensure it's freer still when they're ready to pass the torch to their successors.

“
His
commitment
to excellence
is infectious.”



PETER GOETTLER



Cato News Notes

PAPER OF RECORD

Ryan Bourne, R. Evan Scharf
Chair for the Public Under-
standing of Economics at Cato,



will be moving
his weekly
newspaper
column to the
Times (London),
one of Britain's

most prestigious newspapers. The
feature, set to run every Thursday,
will continue Bourne's public les-
sons and explainers of important
economic concepts as applied to
current events.

FRONT LINE OF FREEDOM

Tom Palmer, Cato senior fellow
alongside his work with the
Atlas Network, has recently been
in Ukraine and Poland helping to
organize aid and supplies amid the



humanitarian
crisis. Palmer's
work with other
libertarian
volunteers,
including physi-

cian Kyle Varner and numerous
former Cato interns, was exten-
sively covered in two articles on
March 11 and April 3 in the
Spokesman-Review, in Varner's
hometown of Spokane, Washing-
ton.



JENNIFER J. SCHULP (1), director of financial regulation studies at Cato’s Center for Monetary and Financial Alternatives, moderates a Cato Policy Forum on financial privacy in the digital era with **PAUL BELONICK** of the University of California Hastings College of the Law (2); **MARTA BELCHER**, president of the Filecoin Foundation (3); and **MICHAEL MOSIER**, general counsel at Espresso Systems (4).



Left to right: Cato’s **ERIC GOMEZ** and **JORDAN COHEN** host a panel discussion on the latest update to Cato’s *Arms Sales Risk Index*, on the hazards of arms sales to foreign governments, with **JEFF ABRAMSON** of the Arms Control Association and **REP. SARA JACOBS** (D-CA).



NEAL MCCLUSKEY, director of Cato's Center for Educational Freedom, participates in a policy forum on how school choice can lessen cultural conflicts and social tensions with **CHARLES GLENN** of Boston University and **ASHLEY ROGERS BERNER** of Johns Hopkins University.



IAN VÁSQUEZ, vice president for international studies, hosts a luncheon with Peruvian writer and political commentator **ÁLVARO VARGAS LLOSA**, author of the award-winning book *Liberty for Latin America: How to Undo Five Hundred Years of State Oppression*.



RICARDO LÓPEZ MURPHY, an Argentine economist and legislator who previously served as both economy minister and defense minister, speaks to a Cato luncheon in April.



CARYN ROSSITER, manager of Cato's Sphere Education Initiatives, interviews **IRSHAD MANJI**, a Canadian author, journalist, and educator who founded the Moral Courage Project, at a Cato seminar in New York City in April.

Continued from page 1

prosperous, it turned out—end up reasonably equal in that they at least have the essentials of life, such as food and a roof over their heads and the like. Maybe they are not all equal in their ownership of jewelry and fast cars, but they are much more equal to the rich in the basics than in olden days. And the liberal equality of permission implied a spreading reluctance to beat children and neglect their educations, on the understanding that children, too, are equal persons whose custody is a trusteeship rather than a piece of property.

If we try to get the other nonpermission equalities directly, we don't get them at all. Robbing Peter to pay Paul turns out to make us all poorer by driving Peter out of business, corrupting Paul, and giving Helen, the bureaucrat who runs the redistribution, such powers that she is tempted to misuse them in very nasty fashion. And equality of opportunity, which sounds nice, is impossible to achieve if you take it literally. You had better parents than Bobby, say. Should we forbid your parents from being better, or should we intervene to coerce Bobby's parents to be better—or at least better in the opinion of Helen the bureaucrat? Say one person is smarter than another and speaks Spanish as well as English. So to make them equal at the starting line, should we drive nails into that first person's head until they are as stupid as the second person, and they forget Spanish?

You see the problem. The metaphor of an exactly equal starting line for a foot race is not the sensible, practical, doable, fair proposal. The sensible proposal is to let people race as they will. That way you get more runners, and immense innovation in the economy. It's a fact of history after 1776.

In the 1700s, this notion of letting people do what they want so long as they didn't hurt others looked completely crazy. *Everyone* had a master and the master told you what to do. Eat your spinach. Stand still for a beating

“ Do your own thing, without force or fraud against others. ”

with a knout. No, Jews can't go to law school. No, blacks can't get a house loan after serving in World War II. The new libertarians/liberals like Frederick Douglass (1818–1895), Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797), and Adam Smith (1723–1790) denied that a white owner should be the black slave's master, or that a husband should be the wife's master, or that the officials from the king or the Congress should be masters over us all. Each adult is to be their own master.

As Adam Smith put it, a person should be “left perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way.” Do your own thing, without force or fraud against others. You help others by doing carpentry or moviemaking or doctoring for pay.

You again get the point: no artificial, involuntary masters are to order you about. Every adult should be free and should have equal dignity. Everyone is to be treated as having equal permission to try out things. New religions. New machines. New relations between men and women. That's true liberalism. And you can see that it is strongly egalitarian, more egalitarian in fact than the impossible or unwise equalities that our good friends on the left propose.

TREATING ADULTS AS ADULTS

A six-year-old child of course needs a parent to make decisions. If the child decides to eat only potato chips, her mother needs to step in and make her eat her spinach. But as an adult, you are liberated to eat potato chips or spinach as you please. Good. True

liberalism could therefore be called “adulthood,” in just the sense we all declared angrily to our parents at some point, a little bit before actually becoming adults: “You're not my boss!”

Yet voluntary, temporary parents or bosses are indeed necessary to get some good things done such as raising children to responsible adulthood or getting a hamburger made and sold. When you're paid to cook or sell or bus tables at McDonald's, you follow whatever lawful order the boss issues. That's the deal. You might tolerate a little jerky behavior from the boss if it's not too bad. But if you really don't like how you're treated, or the wage that you are being paid, you can quit and go find another boss who will pay you adequately and who is not such a jerk. Or you quit and start your own business and, as a boss, you pay others to do carpentry or movie-making or doctoring.

That happens tens of thousands of times a day. The good result of all this *voluntary* bossing and paying and leaving and entering is that hamburgers get served to people at reasonable prices. Carpentry and movies and doctoring are all available, too, as they are not in economies run on principles of non-permission and involuntary service. We say to the soldier in uniform at the airport, “Thank you for your service.” We should say it to you and your boss at McDonald's too. The obvious and simple system of natural liberty of permission is the most altruistic one, everyone busily doing services for others.

So a boss under liberalism is not a master in the old, nasty, slavish, involuntary sense, the sense that every human society adopted before liberalism. Richard Rumbold was hanged at Edinburgh in 1685 for being a fierce liberal and plotting against the tyrannical king. Under British law he was permitted to make a statement from the scaffold before the executioner yanked the trap door open. “I am sure,” he said, “there was no man born marked of God above another, for none comes

into the world with a saddle on his back, neither any booted and spurred to ride him.” To “no man” we can now add “no woman, no teenage child, no black, no colonial person, no sexual minority,” and on and on.

Liberalism is different from every other political philosophy in just this way. A non-liberal socialist society, for example, elevates the central planners to positions of coercive bossiness over others. An old aristocratic society, likewise, elevates the dukes and barons. A coercively theocratic society (unlike, for example, a voluntarily conservative society of religion, such as you can see among the Mormons or the Amish) elevates the priests or ayatollahs. But a liberal society doesn’t elevate anyone at all, unless for temporary purposes of winning the football game or getting hamburgers made and sold, and only when that someone has shown that he or she deserves to be the quarterback or the boss—for the time being, or as long as enough people consent.

THE ALLURE OF COMMAND AND CONTROL

In view of all this, why do young people keep saying, “Let’s try socialism”? They talk as though 1917 in Russia and the horrors after 1945 of a third of the world’s population being ruled by hideous socialist tyrants never happened. I do wish they wouldn’t.

But here’s why. We are used to little families in which Mom and Dad ensure that hamburgers and educations and medical care are made and distributed among the children fairly. In other words, a family is a little socialist economy. Usually a good one. It sounds strange to say so, but consider: the socialist motto is supposed to be “from each person according to their ability, to each person according to their need.” Sweet. And in a family, that’s how things go. A good family, in the style of the *Little House on the Prairie*, is fair, equal, and as centrally planned as Russia was under communism. No wonder, in other words,

“ The Great Enrichment flattened out the inequalities of safety and comfort.” ”

that people coming to political consciousness around age 16 or 20 reach for socialism. Their little socialist families were all right. Why not try it in the society as a whole?

But big societies can’t be organized like a sweet family. That’s a sad truth, like rain when you don’t want it. But there you are. Yes, a society can and should help out poor people and the disadvantaged, the way a father helps his little children. One of the five religious duties of a Muslim is to offer charity, and the same is true in Christianity and Hinduism, as well as for simple justice in any human society. It’s depressingly easy for a ruler in a boss society, like a tribe’s chief or a town’s mayor, to divert the nice charity collected by taxes to their own family. Most governments in the world—on the actual evidence as against wishful thinking—are more like the mafia than *Little House on the Prairie*. Think of Russia or Saudi Arabia.

It would be wonderful if a big economy could be organized like a sweet family. Your mother didn’t make you go out at age six to earn money to pay for lunch, thank God. Markets should not be applied everywhere. But you can see that expecting farmers to provide beef for the hamburger at McDonald’s without payment, simply out of the goodness of their hearts, as though in a sweet family, isn’t going to work. Nor will you show up at McDonald’s to cook the hamburgers or bus the tables for free. And if McDonald’s starts offering hamburgers for free, the lines will be miles long.

And, of course, the business will promptly close for good.

St. Paul heard from the early Christian community he had set up in Thessaloniki that many people were not doing their jobs. They believed that the Second Coming of Christ and the end of history were about to happen any day, so you can understand their lack of interest in doing the dishes or baking the bread. St. Paul was annoyed and wrote to them pointing out indignantly that when he was with them he did his share of the work and declaring that “one who does not work, should not eat.” That’s how a large society in which free riding is possible has to work, if anyone is to eat. Put your shoulder to the wheel, and we’re all better off. Food and housing and education do not fall on people free from the sky. They have to be made by work. The pseudofairness in the old communist East Germany from 1949–1990 resulted in half the amount of work productivity of West Germany. The bitter joke in Eastern Europe under Russian-imposed socialism was, “They pretend to pay us, and we pretend to work.”

CAPITALIST FAIRNESS

Yet isn’t capitalism unfair? Doesn’t it have a tendency to make the rich richer and poor poorer?

No. In actual fact, the liberalism that spread after Douglass and Wollstonecraft and Smith was explosively good for the poor. The poor have been the main beneficiaries of the Great Enrichment since 1800. The rich got richer, true. But meanwhile, the poor went from having little to eat to now having adequate—even excessive—food, from living in hovels to living in apartments with central heating and hot running water, from being almost entirely illiterate to being able to read instruction manuals and a billion websites, and from dying of cholera to having penicillin. In 1960 even a billionaire couldn’t buy a smartphone or a drug to fend off his clinical depression. Now poor people can have both. In other

words, the Great Enrichment flattened out the inequality of safety and comfort. The poor, who were your ancestors and mine, got vastly richer. They are not, as Jesus claimed in a society of actual zero sum, always with us.

But shouldn't we now equalize incomes? No. Coerced equality of outcome, making the pay of a gifted surgeon or musician or entrepreneur the same as that of an unskilled worker, merely yields less for all of us. If inequalities in pay don't encourage people to become surgeons or rock musicians or the next Sam Walton (founder of Walmart, from one little store in Bentonville, Arkansas), we don't get those services. Without the signal a market gives—"For Lord's sake, make more of this stuff that rose so much in price!"—we would remain as poor as people were in 1800.

Want to see unfair? Go back to the divine

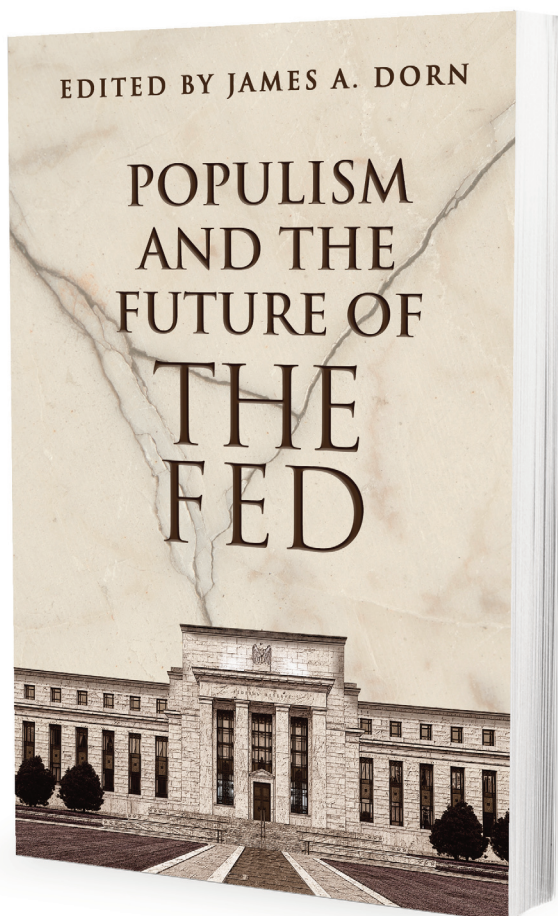
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Envy is not
a good basis for
social policy.
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right of kings, before liberalism. And if you seek the poor who are always with us in the modern world—although their absolute number is falling almost every year—look to the wretchedly poor in the wretchedly governed countries, such as Zimbabwe. Liberal markets slowly expanding in permissions after 1776 inspired people to try new things, causing worldwide income to rise from \$2 a day per person in 1800 at present-day prices to, on average, \$45 a day now. That's equality

of real comfort.

In the Slavic lands there is a traditional story about Jesus and St. Peter wandering in disguise at a poor peasant village, where they asked for an evening meal and a place to sleep. After many rejections, a generous couple helps them. The next morning Jesus reveals himself, and says to the husband, "For your charity I will grant you anything you wish." The husband and wife consult with each other in whispers, and then the husband comes back to Jesus and says, "My neighbor has a she-goat that gives him milk every day..." Jesus anticipates, interjecting, "And you want me to give you a goat, too?" "No. We want you to kill the neighbor's goat."

Envy and its accompanying talk about inequality is not a good basis for social policy. That's if we want everybody to have goats. ■



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— JEB HENSARLING, FORMER CHAIRMAN,
HOUSE FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

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What We Can Learn from the History of Free Speech

Is free speech under threat? What do we even mean when we talk about free speech? **Jacob Mchangama**, a Danish lawyer and human rights advocate, tackles those questions in his new book, *Free Speech: A History from Socrates to Social Media*. In February, Cato hosted a book forum in which Mchangama explained what he found in the history of this important concept, with commentary from **Jonathan Rauch**, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and author most recently of *The Constitution of Knowledge*.

Jacob Mchangama: I was born in cozy, secular, liberal Denmark, and in my youth, free speech was taken for granted. It was the air that we breathed in the '90s and early 2000s. So I didn't really think about it, and I think most people didn't, because it was not under threat. It was just part of daily life.

Then Denmark became the epicenter of a global battle of values over the relationship between free speech and religion. Someone who later became a good friend of mine, Flemming Rose, the editor of the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, published a number of cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad, which led to a global crisis. Flemming and many others still live with around-the-clock security because of threats from extremists. But that forced many Danes, and I think many in Europe and around the world, to really think: What is this principle that we hail as an Enlightenment value and the foundation of democracy? Is it really that important?

A lot of people said, maybe it's not so important; these cartoons are punching down on a vulnerable minority, and this is not what free speech was supposed to be about. That surprised me; it shocked me a little bit. What I also saw was that, generally, people on the right were free speech absolutists when it came to the cartoons. Then we had several

governments that adopted a number of restrictions on religious free speech, and even though it was formally neutral as to which religion, everyone knew it was targeted at extremist Muslims. That limited free speech, and I was saying this goes against the very principles that we defended during the cartoon affair. But a lot of people on the right said, well, free speech is important, but to safeguard our fundamental values, we have to limit the free speech of these particular extremists.

That led me to investigate the whole history of free speech. What's at stake? What does it mean? What does it mean when a society is based on free speech? What does its absence mean? Is this principle really worth all the fuss? I found that it was. But by looking at past debates about free speech, you can have a more detached attitude, rather than the culture war tainting everything when you look at it through the prism of the present.

I locate the origins of free speech in Athenian democracy some 2,500 years ago. The Athenians had two concepts of free speech, one of them being *isegoria*, equality of speech, which was exercised in the assembly where all freeborn male citizens had a direct voice in debating and passing laws.

But perhaps of even more consequence was the second concept, called *parrhesia*, which

means something like uninhibited speech, a culture of tolerance and free speech. So if you were Plato, you could set up an academy and you could teach a philosophy that was not particularly fond of the democracy that allowed you to philosophize. You could have foreigners like Aristotle, who wasn't from Athens, come and set up shop. And until the tolerance wore a bit thin, Socrates could heckle people and roast them in the agora, the marketplace in Athens. The Athenian statesman Demosthenes observed that in Athens, you were free to criticize the Athenian constitution and praise the Spartan constitution but that in Sparta, home of the Athenians' bitter enemies, you could *only* criticize the Athenian constitution and praise the Spartan constitution.

I think that really still is the litmus test of free speech. Are you able to criticize the political system under which you live? The Athenian system obviously by our standards was not radically egalitarian, but for its time, it had very much an egalitarian free speech idea. I contrast this with the Roman Republic, where there was a much more elitist, top-down approach to free speech. You would have senators like Cato the Younger and Cicero who believed in free speech, but it was mostly for the senatorial elite, not the plebeians. Roman citizens did not have a right to address assemblies the way Athenian citizens did.

These two concepts, leadership-elite free speech and egalitarian free speech, have been in tension throughout the history of free speech. You see it especially when the general public's sphere has been expanded, either through technology—be it the printing press, the radio, the telegraph, and today social media—or through a change in the political environment. It could be democracy giving the vote to women, to the poor and propertyless,

and to religious and racial minorities. There has always been an elitist pushback against this idea and a dread, an existential dread, that the unwashed mob was unfit to be given access to information. That it had to be filtered by the elites, because otherwise everything would go to hell, basically. So that's a very important thesis in the book.

Another one is related to that. I argue that many today see free speech as entrenching unequal power relations. I argue that free speech in fact may be the most powerful engine of human equality that human beings have ever stumbled upon. Every single oppressed group or minority has relied on free speech, the practice and principle, to further their cause and stake a claim for equality and tolerance. In this country, I spent a bit of time on how Southern states in the 1830s adopted the most draconian censorship laws in American history to counter abolitionist literature and ideas.

Take Virginia, for example. In 1776, Virginia became the first state to adopt a bill of rights, even before the Declaration of Independence. The Virginia Declaration of Rights included a statement that freedom of the press was "the great bulwark of liberty." But then in 1836, Virginia passes a law that says it's a crime to deny that white masters have a right to property in their black slaves and that it's also a crime to inculcate resistance to slavery, among a whole laundry list of ways to try to counter abolitionist ideas.

On the other hand, you had abolitionists like Frederick Douglass, who was himself of course born a slave, who argued for a universalist idea of free speech, which he said would destroy slavery. He argued that free speech does not depend on the color of your skin or the size of your wallet, and that the right of free speech is a very precious one, especially to the oppressed. I would say that that is another theme that runs through the book.

I'm staying at a hotel very close to Lafayette Square, and you'll see a plaque there showing how in 1917, a number of women's rights

advocates were burning an effigy of President Woodrow Wilson. They were arrested and fined for demonstrating for their right to vote. I remember thinking about that in 2018, when I was living on the Upper West Side with my family and I took my son to a museum. Outside, tens of thousands of people were protesting, most of them women, wearing these pink "pussyhats" and shouting ob-



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The health of free
speech depends
more on a culture
of free speech
than on laws.
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scenities at the president of the time. The NYPD was there to safeguard their First Amendment rights to criticize the president, in terms that were probably more aggressive than those of many who went before them. I thought that was really a sign of how free speech has furthered the rights of groups that had previously been persecuted.

Jonathan Rauch has also written very eloquently about how that was also the case for the gay rights movement, for instance. When

you see the huge increases in acceptance and tolerance of interracial and gay marriage, that was not achieved through censorship and putting bigots in jail. It was to a large degree won by people using the First Amendment rights to do activism, to appeal to our common humanity, and so on.

The last thing I might want to highlight is that ultimately I believe the health of free speech in any given nation depends more on a culture of free speech than on laws. The First Amendment was ratified in 1791. It hasn't changed in its wording, but in 1798, you could go to jail for criticizing President John Adams. That was supported by people like Alexander Hamilton and the Federalists, whereas Jefferson and Madison were on the other side of that conflict. Then, as I mentioned, there were laws prohibiting abolitionist literature. During World War I, the Supreme Court was completely fine with sending people to prison for 10 or 20 years for opposing American involvement in the war. Then you have the Red Scares and so on. You really have to get into the 1950s before free speech is consistently protected and reaches our modern threshold by the end of the '60s with *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, which set a very, very high bar for restricting speech.

All of this reflects a change in cultural attitudes and in norms among Americans because the wording of the First Amendment hasn't changed. You see that also in famous works like *On Liberty* by John Stuart Mill. He was as concerned with the stifling norms in Victorian England as he was about censorship by the magistrates. He warns that society's tendency to impose its values on dissenters is a danger to free speech. George Orwell made some of the same points. So that's why I worry for this country, because in my view, both sides of the political spectrum are eating away at the culture of free speech in the hyperpolarized, partisan nature of American politics. This will ultimately have downstream effects that might affect how the First Amendment is constitutionally protected, whether in 10 or 20 or 30 years.

Jonathan Rauch: I have three points. The first is about the book, the second is about what I learned from the book, and the third is about the environment we're in right now. The first thing about the book is that you should get it. Buy it. Read it. It's not only readable and comprehensive, it's the only thing like it. Unbelievably, until this book came along, there was nothing to read that took you from the very beginning of the ideas of free speech right up to social media. It's all here: the ancient Greeks; medieval times, where there were occasional outbursts of very interesting thinking only to be suppressed; the Enlightenment; and the long history of seditious libel, which reappears again and again. It's a fantastic book. I just can't say enough about it. It's a service. It will be a touchstone for years to come, and it's also a lot of fun.

Second thing, what I learned—or maybe relearned—from the book is the idea that the government should not only allow but actively protect speech and thought that is seditious, vulgar, offensive, wrongheaded, bigoted, or just plain wrong. The government should actually protect this most crazy, counterintuitive, wacky social idea of all time, bar none. If you put that proposition to someone on the street, they'll ask what's the matter with you. But it's this principle that is the single most successful social idea of all time. It gives us the peace, the freedom, and the knowledge that build this society. But because it is so deeply counterintuitive, it took 2,500 years to build in the form we know it. As Jacob just said, the current form of free speech in the United States is extremely young. The environment in which the Founders wrote the First Amendment was much more restrictive than today's.

So what I remind people of and what I hope they take away from this book is that defending and protecting this radical, wacky proposition requires getting up every morning and explaining it from scratch to a whole new generation. Then our kids will have to do that and their kids and their grandkids every single day, and we just need to be cheerful about that. Because as this book shows you, we're doing

incredibly well, actually. I'm not sure Jacob would agree with that. But for example, in my grandfather's time the greatest novel of the 20th century, *Ulysses*, was banned by the government and confiscated on the docks. That couldn't happen today in the United States and most other democracies.

Right up to the present, however, we have a couple of challenges that really bend the



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environment.”

paradigm and challenge Jacob and me and all of us, because they're quite unconventional. We're used to thinking of free speech as something that we protect against intrusion by censors, primarily the government. Free speech in terms of legal protections is stronger in America right now than I'd say it's ever been anywhere in the world. And I think it may be about to get stronger with the current Supreme Court.

The kinds of challenges we face, however, don't really fit that box. One is disinformation,


and the other is what's often called cancel culture, the systematic use of social coercion to chill and silence. Disinformation is not about censorship. It's actually about, as Steve Bannon, Trump's former adviser, very aptly and accurately put it, “flooding the zone with shit.” Putting out so many lies, half-truths, conspiracy theories, and exaggerations that no one knows which end is up. It turns out that platforms like social media are tailor-made for this because their business model is to maximize eyeballs for revenues, and the way you maximize eyeballs is outrage, which is addictive.

When the internet got going, we thought it would be a big open forum and marketplace of ideas and that the best ideas would rise to the top. We did not realize how easy it would be to manipulate this environment to make it epistemically toxic. It's now well known that false stuff travels much faster and much further online than true stuff, which is much more expensive to make and much less fun to click on. That is not a problem you can tackle with traditional free speech doctrines. In fact, it does the opposite. It harnesses free speech and turns it into a weapon of epistemic destruction, a weapon of mass confusion and chaos.

Jacob and I may have something of a disagreement on that, because I think he's a purist and wants platforms like Facebook to essentially adopt the morality, though not the law, of the First Amendment. I think that's impractical and unsustainable and it actually betrays a lot of the rest of their mission, which has to do with being a community, a business, and a publisher. So I think there is going to have to be content moderation; it's a hard problem, but getting it right is a lot more complicated than just saying we should have absolute free speech online.

The second area that Jacob did allude to and that is awfully important is so-called cancel culture. The weaponization of social coercion, that's always been around. Tocqueville came to the United States in 1835 and warned that the biggest threat to liberty in America was not from the government but

Continued on page 19

A photograph of an elderly woman with long, light-colored hair, wearing a black top with red floral embroidery and white gloves. She is sitting on a red sofa and holding a large, ornate, gold-colored book. The background is a softly lit room with a window and a lamp.

“What will matter in 50 years in economic history is poverty and its ending, and in political history what will matter is tyranny and its ending. If poverty and tyranny are ended, the rest follows.”

— BETTERING HUMANOMICS: A NEW, AND OLD, APPROACH TO ECONOMIC SCIENCE

Deirdre McCloskey with a first edition of Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations, on loan to the Cato Institute from the family of Roberto Salinas Price.



The Virtue of Fellowship

Deirdre McCloskey Named Distinguished Scholar

Deirdre Nansen McCloskey has been named Distinguished Scholar and Isaiah Berlin Chair in Liberal Thought at the Cato Institute. She spent March in residence at Cato and plans to visit about two months a year. This chair was made possible by a generous gift from longtime Cato board chairman Robert A. Levy. It honors both its holder and the great liberal philosopher and historian Isaiah Berlin, who is perhaps best known for his essays “Two Concepts of Liberty” and “The Hedgehog and the Fox,” but more widely was an eloquent defender of liberty.

McCloskey has long been recognized as one of the world’s eminent economic historians and theorists of classical liberalism. She is currently a distinguished professor emerita of economics and history and a professor emerita of English and communication at the University of Illinois at Chicago. For many years after receiving her PhD at Harvard University, she taught economics at the University of Chicago and the University of Iowa. Her impressive career has included authoring two dozen books and some 500 academic and popular articles on economic theory, economic history, philosophy, rhetoric, statistical theory, feminism, ethics, and law.

Her most recent work has included the book *Why Liberalism Works: How True Liberal Values Produce a Freer, More Equal, Prosperous World for All*, expanding on her ideas about how the rise of free markets and economic prosperity went hand in hand with moral progress, egalitarianism, and tolerance. She may be best known for the “bourgeois” series—*The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce* (2006); *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can’t Explain the Modern World* (2010); *Bourgeois Equality: How Ideas, Not Capital or Institutions, Enriched the World* (2016); and most recently *Leave*

Me Alone and I’ll Make You Rich: How the Bourgeois Deal Enriched the World (2020), coauthored with Art Carden.

A central theme of McCloskey’s writing has been what she terms the Great Enrichment, the massive explosion in standards of living and levels of wealth in the modern era. Unlike others who see this as a result of accumulated wealth from centuries past, McCloskey identifies the prime mover in this revolution as being innovation: how it was unleashed and became accepted starting in northwestern Europe. “Ideas of human dignity and liberty did the trick,” she explains, “making the inventions and then investments profitable for entrepreneurs and the nation.”

In addition to her academic and intellectual accomplishments, McCloskey is also noted for her *Crossing: A Memoir*, which recounted her decision to transition to female in 1995 at the age of 53. Her poignant and forthright honesty about the experience as a trans woman was an early milestone at a time when transgender identity was not yet widely understood and accepted.

During her time at Cato, McCloskey met extensively with Cato scholars, participated in Cato forums, and provided lectures on topics including statistics and economic history to Cato’s interns as part of the John Russell Paslaqua Intern Seminar Series. On March 21, she discussed the future of Western liberalism at a policy forum titled “Weltschmerz: How the West Lost Its Mojo and What Liberals Can Do to Fix It” alongside noted conservative commentator Jonah Goldberg, currently with the American Enterprise Institute and editor in chief of *The Dispatch*. The forum was moderated by Marian L. Tupy, Cato senior fellow and editor of *HumanProgress.org*, and can be viewed at cato.org/events. ■



A Flood of Good Intentions

How to Fix the National Flood Insurance Program

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) seems like a program built on reasonable motives, explains Peter Van Doren in “The National Flood Insurance Program: Solving Congress’s Samaritan’s Dilemma” (Policy Analysis no. 923). It is difficult for private insurers to cover the risks of flooding, where a single highly clustered event can cause immense damages, either bankrupting insurers or requiring very high rates. On the other hand, subsidizing encourages building in flood-prone areas, offloading the risk onto taxpayers.

After a long history of ad hoc congressional appropriations, in 1968 Congress attempted to strike a balance with the National Flood Insurance Program. As Van Doren notes, policymakers “face the Samaritan’s dilemma: either render aid after a catastrophe or else withhold aid to encourage people in calamity-prone areas to purchase disaster insurance, take preemptive measures to reduce losses, and build robust private charity systems.” The NFIP was supposed to solve this problem while ensuring that insurance was available but also charging actuarially fair rates, intended to avoid taxpayer subsidies and eventually discourage building on frequent floodplains.

That was the idea. In practice, political incentives have made it difficult for Congress to avoid doling out subsidies. Some buildings were grandfathered in at discounted rates, with the intent that this

accommodation would be phased out over time, but rules have been creatively interpreted to stretch these discounts long beyond their intended time frame. Requirements that localities adopt certain zoning restrictions and building codes for high-risk flood zones have proven to be an inapt counterbalance. And the rules of the program

itself require actuarial rates based on only floods with a 1 percent or greater annual chance, leaving much of the risk not reflected in the rates charged and in effect backstopped by the Treasury. The result is that taxpayers remain on the hook and development has not moved away from flood-prone areas as intended.

In 2012, Congress attempted to address some of these problems with the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act, with the goal of phasing out taxpayer-subsidized discounts and charging rates closer to what is required by the real actuarial risks. That reform soon became

untenable when later that same year, Hurricane Sandy ravaged New York and New Jersey, with property owners facing a sharp increase in rates because of both the reform and the recalculated flood risks. So Congress relented under the political pressure, passing another law to partially restore the cheaper taxpayer-subsidized rates with the 2014 Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act.

How much do federal taxpayers subsidize flood insurance?

Continued on page 19

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How much
do federal
taxpayers
subsidize flood
insurance?
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Cato policy analyst **COLLEEN HRONCICH** (1) moderates a policy forum on the status of homeschooling two years into the pandemic with **BERNITA BRADLEY** of Engaged Detroit (2), **AMBER BROWN** of Barefoot University (3), and **ERIC WEARNE** of Kennesaw State University (4).



Cato senior fellow **MARIAN L. TUPY** hosts a discussion with **DEIRDRE MCCLOSKEY**, Cato Distinguished Scholar and Isaiah Berlin Chair in Liberal Thought, and **JONAH GOLDBERG**, editor in chief of *The Dispatch*, on the future of Western liberalism.

Justice for All

Cato Scholars on Ketanji Brown Jackson's Confirmation

On April 7, the Senate confirmed Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve as the next associate justice on the Supreme Court, to replace Justice Stephen Breyer on his retirement later this year. It is a historic occasion, the first time an African American woman will serve on the nation's highest court. Cato scholars, however, have focused attention on another historic aspect of Jackson's appointment. Clark Neily, Cato's senior vice president for legal studies, published a landmark study in 2019 (with updates in 2021) analyzing the background and prior experience of federal judges ("Are a Disproportionate Number of Federal Judges Former Government Advocates?"). Through a new method of analysis and comprehensive research on every current federal judge, Neily showed that former prosecutors and other government advocates outnumbered judges with any experience as defense attorneys or in litigating against the government. These results did not go unnoticed, and they have since been cited during the confirmation of a number of former defense attorneys and public defenders in particular to the federal bench.

One of those former public defenders will now join the Supreme Court. Jackson's background offers other reasons for hope for civil libertarians and criminal justice reformers. Among other firsts, she will also be the first justice to have authored a brief for the Cato Institute. In 2009, she submitted an amicus brief in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of Cato, the Rutherford Institute, and the Constitution Project regarding the rights of a detainee at the Guantánamo Bay prison. The question that brief addressed was "whether the Executive's use of military power inside the United States to detain, without charge or trial, a person who is lawfully in the United States violates the Constitution where Congress has not expressly authorized such detention."

While some Republican opponents criticized her work for detainees in the war on terror, others saw a principled commitment to the Constitution's guarantees of due process of law. As far back as her college thesis, she was addressing a topic that is currently a priority for Cato's criminal justice efforts: the problem of coercive plea bargaining, where defendants are threatened with much harsher sentences to dissuade them from exercising their constitutional right to trial by jury.

Cato commentary on Jackson's nomination, as well as her past work with Cato, was repeatedly referred to during the hearings by both senators and Jackson herself, as well as in media coverage ranging from Fox News to the *New York Times*. On March 18, Neily offered his own views in a statement submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee and also posted on the *Cato at Liberty* blog.

"I believe Judge Jackson would lend an important perspective to the Court's work that is currently missing and has been historically underrepresented," Neily wrote. "Among the nine sitting Supreme Court justices there are two former prosecutors, and all of the justices save one—Justice Barrett—served as courtroom advocates for government at some point during their legal careers. By contrast, there are no public defenders on the Supreme Court, no civil rights lawyers, and none of the justices has ever done significant criminal defense work. Indeed, there has not been a Supreme Court justice with real experience representing criminal defendants since Thurgood Marshall retired from the Court more than thirty years ago."

Jackson is not the only justice to have participated in Cato Institute activities. In 1992, future justice Neil Gorsuch coauthored a Cato policy analysis on term limits. Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas, and Stephen Breyer all spoke at Cato conferences before their nominations to the high court. ■





Cato senior fellow **MUSTAFA AKYOL** speaks at Boston College (top) and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (bottom) about liberty, tolerance, and Islam.

FEBRUARY 15: Fresh Approaches to the Overdose Crisis

FEBRUARY 17: *Free Speech: A History from Socrates to Social Media*

MARCH 21: Weltschmerz: How the West Lost Its Mojo and What Liberals Can Do to Fix It

MARCH 22: Peace through School Choice: Examining the Evidence

MARCH 23: The Status of Homeschooling Two Years into the Pandemic

AUDIO AND VIDEO FOR MOST CATO EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON THE CATO INSTITUTE WEBSITE AT [CATO.ORG/EVENTS](https://www.cato.org/events).

Cato Calendar

SPHERE SUMMIT: TEACHING CIVIC CULTURE TOGETHER

Washington • Cato Institute
July 10–14, 2022

Speakers include Jonathan Rauch, Nadine Strossen, Irshad Manji, and Yuval Levin.

SPHERE SUMMIT: ITEACHING CIVIC CULTURE TOGETHER

Washington • Cato Institute
July 24–28, 2022

ALTERNATIVE MONEY UNIVERSITY

Washington • Cato Institute
August 7–10, 2022

THE STATE OF MONETARY POLICY AFTER 40 YEARS

40th Annual Monetary Conference
Washington • Cato Institute
September 8, 2022

Speakers include Lawrence H. Summers, Thomas Sargent, and Eswar Prasad.

21ST ANNUAL CONSTITUTION DAY

Washington • Cato Institute
September 16, 2022

CATO CLUB RETREAT

Bluffton, SC • Montage Palmetto Bluff
September 29–October 2, 2022

Updated information on Cato Institute events, including cancellations, can be found at [Cato.org/events](https://www.cato.org/events).

Pandemics and Borders

Restrictions on border crossings have been widely implemented to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, but do they actually do any good? There are reasons to be skeptical, as Ilya Somin explains in “**The Case against COVID-19 Pandemic Migration Restrictions.**” These measures actually do little to stop the spread of disease, but they impose severe harms on those caught up in them.

LEGAL AND HEALTHY

Marijuana legalization has swept the country, with either medical marijuana laws or general adult “recreational” legalization having been adopted by most states. In “**The Public Health Effects of Legalizing Marijuana**” (Research Briefs in Economic Policy no. 285), D. Mark Anderson and Daniel I. Rees undertake a comprehensive review of the literature. They find that legalization does not appear to increase marijuana use among underage teenagers but that there is some substitution from alcohol to marijuana among young adults, producing real benefits for road safety and reducing drunk driving.

CONSUMER CONVENIENCE

Do tech companies unfairly advantage themselves by integrating various products and so-called self-preferencing? It’s a common complaint going back to the antitrust case against Microsoft at the turn of the century. But it’s an ill-founded complaint, as Ryan Bourne and Brad Subramaniam explain in “**The ‘Big Tech’ Self-Preferencing Delusion**” (Briefing Paper no. 136).

SELF-SANCTIONED

American home prices have been skyrocketing. One contributing factor is America’s protectionist policy for many of the materials used in construction, such as lumber.

These tariffs are a needless barrier to housing affordability, according to Alessandro Barattieri and Matteo Cacciatore in “**American Protectionism and Construction Materials Costs**” (Briefing Paper no. 133).

KEEPING REGULATORS ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW



In November 2021, the President’s Working Group on Financial Markets released a report on stablecoins, a kind of cryptocurrency, summarizing its recommendations for regulating them. Those recommendations go further than is necessary and there is a more restrained alternative, as outlined by George Selgin in “**A ‘Narrow’ Path to Efficient Digital Currency**” (Briefing Paper no. 134).

BAD APPLES

Invented by the Supreme Court in the late 1960s, qualified immunity is a judicial doctrine that shields state actors from liability from their misconduct, even when they break the law. This doctrine has deeply pernicious effects, including for the police themselves, since it severely undermines public trust and confidence when bad cops face no accountability. These effects are explored in a new comprehensive study of the available data, “**How Qualified Immunity Hurts Law Enforcement**” by James Craven, Jay Schweikert, and Clark Neily.

CONGRESS COUNTS THE VOTES

What is the appropriate role for Congress in certifying the results of a presidential election? With reform discussions under way, some critics have said Congress should scrap the Electoral Count Act altogether on the theory that Congress has no real role to play

at all. Thomas A. Berry responds and defends the need for a reformed Electoral Count Act statute as both proper and constitutional in “**The Legitimate Role of Congress in the Electoral Count**” (Briefing Paper no. 135).

THE REAL PROBLEM

Was the 2008 financial crash the result of unregulated free markets? The conventional wisdom is widespread, but it has a dubious factual basis, as explained by Norbert Michel in “**Systemic Risk Regulation and the Myths of the 2008 Financial Crisis**” (Brief-

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ing Paper no. 132). Expanding bank-like regulations to non-bank institutions, as many have advocated, would not have actually addressed the root causes of the financial turmoil.

INEFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

The collapse of the U.S.-backed government in Afghanistan after two decades of war felt like a catastrophic defeat for the U.S. policy of nation-building and military intervention. But was Afghanistan an outlier? In **“When Interventions Fail: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Latin America”** (Research Briefs in Economic Policy no. 289), Leticia Arroyo Abad and Noel Maurer consider a number of U.S. interventions in the Western Hemisphere, analyze their long-

term effects, and find a sober lack of beneficial gains to be had.

GET HOME SAFE

Ridesharing apps like Uber have long been defended on the intuitive basis that they reduce drunk driving accidents. In **“Uber and Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities”** (Research Briefs in Economic Policy no. 288), Michael L. Anderson and Lucas W. Davis conduct a first-of-its-kind study using proprietary Uber ridership data to estimate the effect. They find that ridesharing reduces total U.S. alcohol-related traffic fatalities by 6.1 percent and reduces total U.S. traffic fatalities by 4 percent.

ON THE MARGINS

The United States has a bewildering range of transfer and welfare programs, subject to endless tinkering by policymakers. Can change, in

and of itself, harm current beneficiaries? That depends heavily on labor market factors and the nature of the programs in question, as explored by Jeffrey Clemens and Michael J. Wither in **“When Is Tinkering with Safety Net Programs Harmful to Beneficiaries?”** (Research Briefs in Economic Policy no. 290).

W IS FOR WARY



HRONCICH

Expanded preschool programs are perennially popular, but do the much-touted educational benefits stand up to scrutiny? There are reasons to doubt it, according to Colleen Hroncich in **“Universal Preschool: Lawmakers Should Approach with Caution”** (Policy Analysis no. 924). “Children are not widgets,” she reminds legislators who too often forget it. ■

Continued from page 11

from social coercion. The tyranny of the majority, he called it. Madison worried about the same thing. John Stuart Mill worried about it. Turns out, however, it can be tyranny of the minority. Even relatively small groups of people that are ready to whack you online, demolish your reputation, and flood the search engine so that you’re labeled a racist.

The first thing a potential employer sees is demands that you be fired. Even small minorities of people can make life a living hell for dissenters and cause a widespread chilling

effect. And at the moment, two-thirds of Americans say that they are chilled. That they are reluctant to state their true beliefs about politics for fear of social and professional consequences. Two-thirds, and it’s also about 60 percent of students on campus. It’s hard to compare, but from the best evidence, that’s about four times the level of 1953, the height of the McCarthy era. One reason for this is that in the McCarthy era, there were a couple of things you couldn’t say and you could otherwise be pretty safe. In the canceling era, you don’t know when

you’re safe and when you’re not, and that’s on purpose. They want to make us our own policeman so that we’re always afraid that we’ll step on a new land mine.

So we now have both the widespread chilling problem and the disinformation problem. We have severe stresses on the epistemic environment, our ability to sort truth from falsehood. And they’re not problems that are within the traditional bounds of how we think about free speech. So this book in a way is a ladder up to the next kind of conversation that is now beginning. ■

Continued from page 14

According to estimates by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, policyholders pay somewhere between 40 and 60 percent of the full-risk price. The consequence isn’t only a bad deal for taxpayers but is also the exact moral hazard Congress had been trying to avoid. When people don’t have to bear the full cost of the risk, the result is excessive building in risky places.

In recent years, for the first time in a century, private flood insurance has appeared on the market. Unfortunately, this development appears to be largely the effect of cross-subsidies from the NFIP, rather than a true market development. Unless and until a real market develops, the NFIP should refocus on its stated goals of avoiding subsidies and ensuring that the risks are internalized for property owners.

“The NFIP was an important decision by Congress to move away from providing ad hoc disaster aid to flood victims at taxpayer expense,” concludes Van Doren. “But lawmakers’ commitment to a subsidy-free system has been imperfect from the beginning, and they have backslid further from that in recent years. The NFIP needs to reembrace the goal of insureds paying actuarially fair premiums.” ■

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“To Be Governed...”

PROTECTIONIST SPUDSIDIES

At Andrew Smith's 1,150-acre potato farm and others like it, millions of pounds of potatoes are piling up in mounds—and their future is uncertain.

The culprit: a decision by Canada's federal government in November to suspend shipments of Prince Edward Island potatoes to the United States—the province's largest export market for the spuds—at the behest of U.S. officials. . . .

“We have learned how to deal with weather and market fluctuations and supply issues and logistics. We deal with that stuff every day,” said Smith, 43, whose farm has been in the family for five generations. “But you cannot plan for government intervention.”

— *Washington Post*, February 5, 2022

SO JUST A RANDOM ABBREVIATION?

Hey Karly, fortunately, DLY does not mean delay. It just means that our train prediction system is unable to predict the arrival time confidently due to trains holding longer than two minutes, trains waiting to begin trips, or during single tracking.

— *Washington Metro on Twitter*,
March 28, 2022

GOOD THING THE VOTERS CHOSE THE SOCIALIST OVER THE DICTATOR'S DAUGHTER

When demonstrators picketed roads in Peru's rural hinterland over the rising cost of fuel and fertilizer, President Pedro Castillo might have responded with empathy or dialogue.

Instead, . . . the president reacted Tuesday with a draconian move that has out-

raged and baffled almost the entire country: placing Lima, the capital of 10 million people, which had been almost entirely free of the unrest, under a strict lockdown.

— *Washington Post*, April 7, 2022

CONGRESS SEEKS TO UNDER- STAND ECONOMIC PROBLEM

The House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing is the latest effort by Democratic lawmakers and the Biden administration to demonstrate to voters that they're working to bring down prices at the pump. . . .

“We are here today to get answers from the Big Oil companies about why they are ripping off the American people,” Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), the committee's chairman, will say this morning.

— *Washington Post*, April 6, 2022

LIMITED-GOVERNMENT PARTY PASSES 841 BILLS IN 60 DAYS

Gov. Glenn Youngkin [pushed] Monday to wrap up work on the 841 bills that the General Assembly sent to his desk.

— *Washington Post*, April 11, 2022

THIS COULD BE ABOUT EITHER PARTY

After getting walloped in 2020 and now facing a flurry of departures, the party's House centrists are hunkering down to focus on ground game.

— *Politico on Twitter*, April 6, 2022

THIS IS ALSO CALLED “BUYING A HOUSE”

Small groups of neighborhood volunteers are blocking companies from buying single-family homes, rewriting homeownership

rulebooks to thwart investor purchases of suburban housing. . . .

“They're coming in, and they're basically bullying people out with cash offers,” said Chase Berrier, the association's president.

— *Wall Street Journal*, April 18, 2022

POLITICIZING EVERYTHING

Hobby Lobby and Chick-fil-A are the good guys. Disney and Twitter are the bad guys.

— *Josh Mandel on Twitter*, April 23, 2022

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ASK PRESIDENT TO USURP THEIR AUTHORITY

Liberal House Democrats realized late last year that many of their policy ideas for improving the lives of Americans had little chance of passing through the party's narrow majorities in both chambers, and they began researching ways President Biden could enact similar changes through executive orders.

Their plan now is to push Biden to issue these orders.

— *Washington Post*, March 17, 2022

BIDEN PROPOSES TO CONFISCATE WEALTH OF 700 AMERICANS

The White House will unveil a new minimum tax targeting billionaires as part of its 2023 budget Monday, proposing a tax on the richest 700 Americans for the first time. . . .

The White House plan would mandate billionaires to pay a tax rate of at least 20 percent on their full income, or the combination of traditional forms of wage income and whatever they may have made in unrealized gains, such as higher stock prices.

— *Washington Post*, March 26, 2022