

Can't Afford to Live

Cato senior fellow Michael D. Tanner examined the causes and consequences of rising housing costs in North Carolina and offers policy recommendations to increase housing affordability in **“Keeping North Carolina’s Housing Affordable”** (Policy Analysis no. 938). Tanner shows that restrictive zoning policies, excessive regulation, and supply constraints have led to an inadequate supply of affordable housing.

“Poll: 87 Percent of Americans Worry about the Cost of Housing; 69 Percent Worry Their Kids and Grandkids Won’t Be Able to Buy a Home” (survey report). Vice



president and director of polling Emily Ekens presents the findings of a national survey that underscores the urgency of addressing the housing affordability crisis in the United States. A majority of those polled would support building more houses if they knew it could lower the cost of housing and make it easier for people they know to move in.

LEGALIZE GUEST WORKERS

Associate director of immigration studies David J. Bier found that guest worker programs can be effective in reducing illegal immigration by providing legal channels for temporary labor migration, but that poorly designed programs have unintended consequences, such as exploiting guest workers. **“How Guest Workers Affect Illegal Immigration”** (Policy Analysis no. 937) concludes that government restrictions on migration cause illegal immigration, and a guest worker program is one way to relax those restrictions.

DOWNSIDES OF SMART TECH

“The Human Perils of Scaling Smart Technologies: Evidence from Field Experiments” (Research Briefs in Economic Policy no. 312) found that although smart technologies can increase workplace efficiency, they can also result in negative outcomes, such as decreased motivation and reduced job satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of considering the human impacts of smart technology implementation and calls for further research on how to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of such technologies.

FATAL DRUG POLICY

Death rates from opioid poisoning tripled between 2000 and 2014 and the more recent surge in deaths has been attributed to illicit opioids, such as heroin and fentanyl. **“Behavioral Responses to Supply-Side Drug Policy during the Opioid Epidemic”** (Research Briefs in Economic Policy no. 313) by Simone Balestra, Helge Liebert, and Nicole Maestas is a comprehensive investigation of the direct and indirect effects of prescription drug monitoring programs. The study highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to drug policy that includes harm reduction strategies and prevention and treatment programs.

CRYPTO CLARITY

Director of financial regulation studies Jennifer Schulp and policy analyst Jack Solowey argue that the lack of clear and consistent regulation has created uncertainty and hindered the growth of the cryptocurrency industry. In **“Regulatory Clarity for Crypto Marketplaces”** (Working Paper no. 71), they detail the challenges facing the cryptocurrency industry in the United States and recommend a principles-based approach to regulation that fosters innovation while

addressing the risks associated with cryptocurrency trading and investment.

MORE DEMAND FOR SCHOOL CHOICE

“Survey: 55 Percent of Private Schools See Enrollment Rise” (survey report). A majority of private schools surveyed saw about a 5 percent increase in students in the 2022–2023 school year. Center for Educational Freedom director Neal McCluskey suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to greater demand for private education, potentially due to concerns about the quality and safety of public school options.

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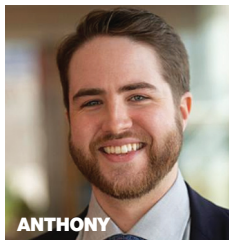
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FANTASTIC FEDERAL FAILURE



The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) has been plagued with issues since its inception. In **“Fintech Fraud or Federal Failure?”** (Briefing Paper no. 147), policy analyst Nicholas Anthony found that the issues in the PPP resulted from a failure of federal oversight for the government program. Anthony recommends that Congress should carefully consider what is at stake when crafting such bills rather than rush billions of dollars in taxpayer money out the door.

AUTHORITARIANISM DOESN'T FIX CHAOS

The assumption that authoritarian regimes in the Middle East serve as the only bulwark against chaos is misguided and overlooks the political and social realities in the region. In **“A Shaky Foundation: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability in the Middle East”** (Policy Analysis no. 939), Jon Hoffman concludes that America should end its complicity in the crimes and atrocities committed by authoritarian governments and recognize the destructiveness of these partnerships by ending weapons sales to their regimes and removing the expansive U.S. military footprint in the region.

MEDICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

“Cops Practicing Medicine” (white paper) suggests that the increasing involvement of law enforcement in medical care is a symptom of broader systemic problems in the health care system and highlights the need for comprehensive, evidence-based solutions to the opioid crisis. Senior fellow Jeffrey Singer and former research fellow Trevor Burrus show that neither the practice of medicine nor the act of self-medication belongs in the realm of the criminal legal system.

THE PART-TIME LOOPHOLE

Marcus Dillender, Carolyn Heinrich, and Susan Houseman found a significant increase in part-time employment following the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), particularly among industries with a high proportion of low-wage and low-skill workers. **“Effects of the Affordable Care Act on Part-Time Employment: Early Evidence”** (Research Briefs in Economic Policy no. 314), shows that this increase in part-time work was likely due to the ACA's employer mandate.

ADVICE FOR CONGRESS



Director of budget and entitlement policy Romina Boccia provides a set of policy recommendations for improving the federal government's fiscal situation in **“Fiscal Agenda for the 118th Congress”** (Briefing Paper no. 144). Boccia suggests reducing government spending, implementing entitlement reform, reforming the tax code, and promoting economic growth through deregulation and trade.

INVASION OF DIGITAL PRIVACY

“Central Bank Digital Currency: The Risks and the Myths” (Briefing Paper no. 145) examines the potential implementation of a central bank digital currency (CBDC) and its implications for monetary policy, financial stability, and privacy. Vice president and director of the center for monetary and financial alternatives Norbert Michel and policy analyst Nicholas Anthony caution that a CBDC poses substantial risks to financial privacy, financial freedom, free markets, and cybersecurity.

SELF-SERVICE REDUCES COST OF GAS

In 2018, Oregon permitted citizens of rural counties to pump their own gas, ending a decades-long ban. This change provided a natural comparison for Vitor Melo in **“Self-**

Service Bans and Gasoline Prices: The Effect of Allowing Consumers to Pump Their Own Gas” (Research Briefs in Economic Policy no. 315), where he found the price of gas for Oregon's rural counties fell by 4.4 cents per gallon on average.

ENSURING THE SUPPLY OF INFANT FORMULA

In **“Formula for a Crisis”** (Briefing Paper no. 146), Cato's Scott Lincicome, Gabriella Beaumont-Smith, and Alfredo Carrillo Obregon outline the risks of restoring protectionist regulations on baby food. They conclude that policymakers should eliminate all tariffs and quotas on infant formula, permit imports of foreign formula that is approved by competent regulators abroad, and streamline approval for new companies.

WHO USES WELFARE?

Native-born Americans consume more welfare and entitlement benefits than immigrants, and this pattern has held for several years, according to director of economic and social policy studies Alex Nowrasteh and research associate Michael Howard. **“Immigrant and Native Consumption of Means-Tested Welfare and Entitlement Benefits in 2020”** (Briefing Paper no. 148) updates previous Cato policy briefs and found that immigrants consumed 27 percent less welfare and entitlement benefits in 2020 than native-born Americans.

SEGREGATION UNDER WOODROW WILSON

Until the historical analysis of Abhay Aneja and Guo Xu in **“The Costs of Employment Segregation”** (Research Briefs in Economic Policy no. 316), the Woodrow Wilson administration's policy of resegregating the federal workforce had not been fully examined. Studying the careers of 1.3 million civil servants revealed that the wage gap between comparable black and white employees increased by 3.4–6.9 percentage points over the duration of Wilson's presidency. ■