

# AEI Enterprise Report

Restoring Liberty, Opportunity, and Enterprise in America



## What's Right with America

By Robert Doar

Many people today are quick to tell you what's wrong with our country, and being honest about our faults is important. But we don't often enough remind ourselves how much is right about it, how much we agree, and how important those agreements are.

You realize this when you look at America from the outside. I recently returned from a trip with AEI scholars to Warsaw, Poland, where we were on the edge of the war in Ukraine. There we came face-to-face with two facts.

First, the people of Ukraine are making a historic and courageous stand for freedom. And they—like all of Europe, from Poland to Germany to the United Kingdom—are looking to America for leadership. Second, Americans—including political leaders from both parties to be sure but, citizens, and soldiers as well—are providing that leadership and playing an essential role in the battle for a free and independent Ukraine.



AEI group at Warsaw City Hall

Those facts should come as no surprise to all of us. As Ronald Reagan would say:  
**“Fighting for freedom is what we do, because, after all, we are Americans.”**

Here at home, we have recently completed a free and fair election. We at AEI congratulate the victors and console the defeated, but most of all, we offer our help as we together turn to the essential tasks of self-government.

These include:

- **Protecting the rule of law**—on our borders, in our elections, and in our cities;
- **Managing our resources** in a way that protects future generations from bankruptcy; and
- **Promoting work, innovation, and creativity** by making our markets as free and open as possible and showing that the way out of poverty is through earnings, not government benefits.

We must also strengthen those essential institutions of family, church, and community that have always been the key to our success as people.

Finally, we need to celebrate our founding documents and the protections they provide. They make our contentious, boisterous, and sometimes unpleasant and frustrating democracy work as a republic.

In all of this, AEI will be there, providing research, analysis, and ideas that will show the way forward. Too often, people in Washington assume you have to choose between having integrity and having influence. But at AEI, we prove that is a false choice—our influence is a direct result of our independence and integrity.

**Bruce D. Meyer’s** important work showing how the proposed child tax credit (CTC) would significantly reduce workforce participation rates is a good example of independent, rigorous research informing the national debate. Meyer’s work explaining how an expanded CTC would hurt workforce participation prompted the *Wall Street Journal* editorial board to say, “God bless Bruce Meyer” in a recent editorial.

Other examples include **Nat Malkus’s** continued work on the impact of extended school closures and mask mandates and **James W. Coleman’s** scholarship on the negative effects of overly onerous energy project permitting requirements.

Thank you for your support and involvement with the AEI community, which makes all our scholars’ work and impact possible.

# AEI Honors Arthur C. Brooks with Irving Kristol Award at Annual Dinner



On November 15, more than 1,500 AEI supporters, scholars, and friends gathered at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC, for AEI's Annual Dinner. AEI President **Robert Doar** presented the Irving Kristol Award to AEI President Emeritus **Arthur C. Brooks** in recognition of his work that "has so profoundly shaped America's political culture for good." Doar also praised Brooks as "one of the most influential social scientists and public intellectuals of our time."

In his remarks, Brooks commented on the happiness crisis in America, which he posited stems from a lost sense of personal and shared meaning. To combat this, Brooks encouraged attendees to "share your secrets of meaning" and "to celebrate faith, family, friends, and work openly and recommend them to other people without embarrassment." He closed exhorting those in the audience,

"To be great, we must be good. To be good, we must start by being good to each other, even when we disagree. No, especially when we disagree. Anything less is un-American."

To read or watch remarks from the evening, visit [www.aei.org/2022kristolaward](http://www.aei.org/2022kristolaward).



# AEI Hosts First FREE Forum in Birmingham



On November 2–4, more than 150 leaders from across the country gathered in Birmingham, Alabama, for AEI’s inaugural FREE Forum.

FREE Forums—part of AEI’s larger FREE Initiative—are sparking a renewed focus on youth agency and the most promising pillars of upward mobility in targeted regions across the nation. They aspire to catalyze regional change through a four-pronged approach:

- **Inspire** participants to think differently about the pillars of upward mobility,
- **Educate** about the behaviors that lead to upward mobility and human flourishing,

## Post-Forum Survey

Participants **rated** the conference an **8.7 out of 10**.

**89%** indicated that the forum’s intellectual content was valuable to their work.

**86%** reported that the conference exceed their expectations.

**77%** reported that they were more likely to promote the FREE framework’s principles in their community.

- **Connect** policy and business executives with social entrepreneurs in a unique forum that fosters knowledge sharing, and
- **Provide** participants living and written examples of successful intervention strategies and bridge philanthropic and civil society communities in a region.

Participants in Birmingham heard from a variety of speakers on key topics including economic dynamism, the role of faith communities in community renewal, and the importance of character education. Programming also included site visits to innovative nonprofits that are helping people develop a sense of agency in their lives.

We look forward to hosting additional FREE Forums in 2023 and beyond. To learn more about the FREE Initiative or FREE Forums, visit [www.aei.org/free](http://www.aei.org/free).

“Communicating great ideas to a few people in Washington and on the coasts is not enough. . . . **We need to bring those ideas to communities across America.**”

—AEI President **Robert Doar**

“I’m fairly new to the civic engagement arena, so building my network of leaders was a great asset. **The sessions opened my mind and provided tools for future discussion and greater understanding.**”

—FREE Forum attendee

**“I appreciated the call to action and potential for organizations to work together to solve problems** in one specific city as a proof of concept that could then be incorporated nationwide. It wasn’t just a conference where attendees are ‘talked at,’ but encouraged to take action in real time.”

—FREE Forum attendee

## What Is the FREE Initiative?



Building on the ideas contained in Ian Rowe’s new book, *Agency: The Four Point Plan (F.R.E.E.) for All Children to Overcome the Victimhood Narrative and Discover Their Pathway to Power* (Templeton Press, 2022), AEI launched the FREE Initiative

to establish a movement of leaders committed to reinvigorating the essential institutions—family, religion, education, and entrepreneurship (FREE)—that help develop agency in young people.

To learn more about the FREE Initiative, visit [www.aei.org/free](http://www.aei.org/free).



# AEI Scholars Lead the Discussion on Entitlement Reform, Tech Issues

## American Renewal

In November, AEI released a new volume of policy proposals edited by **Paul Ryan** and **Angela Rachidi**. *American Renewal: A Conservative Plan to Strengthen the Social Contract and Save the Country's Finances* offers policymakers a sweeping set of proposals to ensure the nation's long-term prosperity and fiscal health. Amid the enormous economic challenges of our age lies an opportunity for renewal, and the impressive group of scholars assembled by Ryan and Rachidi offers first steps to chart a course for a healthy and prosperous America for generations to come.

To promote the volume to policymakers, Ryan and Rachidi hosted a book event at AEI, briefed members of Congress, and addressed more than 50 congressional staffers, including key staff from the House Ways and Means Committee. Contributing scholars also adapted their chapters to be printed as stand-alone pieces in key outlets such as *National Review*, *the Hill*, and *Washington Examiner*.



AEI's Robert Doar and Ryan Streeter moderated panel discussions between Ryan and Rachidi and among Ross Douthat, Kay Cole James (Commonwealth of Virginia), and Maya MacGuineas (Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget) at the book launch event on November 17.

*American Renewal* has already received significant attention in the press:

- A long-form interview with Jon Karl for the ABC Sunday show *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*; and
- Op-eds in the *Washington Post*, *RealClearPolitics*, *Insider*, and a

feature piece by Ryan in the *Wall Street Journal*.

To read the volume, visit [www.americanrenewalbook.com](http://www.americanrenewalbook.com). To watch the book event, visit [www.aei.org/americanrenewalevent](http://www.aei.org/americanrenewalevent).



Over the past two years, **Adam J. White** has convened leading scholars working at the intersection of technology, law, politics, and culture to discuss some of the most pressing policy debates that can help answer the question: How should policymakers think about the digital platforms that have become embedded in our social and civic life?

To share findings, they authored a series of reports, *Digital Platforms and American Life*, offering multiple perspectives on key topics to clarify

the points of debate and possibilities for agreement and reform on the role and scope of technology as we navigate our increasingly digitized world. In September, White hosted several of the contributing scholars for a conference to discuss key takeaways and next steps.

Panelists discussed: the future of content moderation on digital platforms, the challenge of regulating in an era of transformative innovation, and the role of the federal government in expanding digital access.



AEI's Christine Rosen addressed the civic responsibilities of social media platforms on the panel about content moderation.

Continuing on these themes, **Christine Rosen** is working on a book, *The Extinction of Experience*, that examines the broader way technology is transforming our experience with the world and, ultimately, who we are.

To learn more or read reports in the series, visit <https://platforms.aei.org>. To watch the event, visit [www.aei.org/digitalplatforms](http://www.aei.org/digitalplatforms).



Featuring Nonresident Fellow Tunku Varadarajan, Senior Fellow Elaine McCusker, Senior Fellow Daniel A. Cox, Senior Fellow Robert Pondiscio, and Senior Fellow M. Anthony Mills

**What is the best book or long-form article you read this year?**

**Tunku Varadarajan:** *The Amur River: Between Russia and China* by Colin Thubron and *Come to This Court and Cry: How the Holocaust Ends* by Linda Kinstler.

**Robert Pondiscio:** Ian Rowe’s book *Agency* is a crucial contribution to the education reform canon. I’ve long thought of Rowe as the bravest man in education; he unflinchingly advocates for addressing the role of family formation in education and valorizes the “success sequence” in schools.

**M. Anthony Mills:** *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* by Daniel Bell. One of those classics that is often cited, less often read, and frequently misunderstood or caricatured. But it repays a read (or reread) today, almost 50 years later.

**How long have you been at AEI? What is your favorite thing about working here?**

**Varadarajan:** Coming up to two years. The sane and sensible leadership of Robert Doar.

**Elaine McCusker:** Two years. Freedom and incredibly smart, inspirational people.

**Daniel A. Cox:** My four-year anniversary is coming up in January. Even after nearly four years, I’m still amazed at how much

support and freedom scholars are given to pursue their work.

**Pondiscio:** I joined about 18 months ago. I will always feel dressed in borrowed robes compared to some of AEI’s intellectual giants, past and present. The credibility and authority that comes with being an “AEI scholar” is an unequalled platform—and an awesome responsibility to live up to.

**What upcoming or recently completed work of yours are you excited about?**

**Varadarajan:** I will be at Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh in January and will report on them for the *Wall Street Journal*.

**McCusker:** I am excited about my recent report on defense budget transparency, which confronts federal priorities and the impacts of diffusing defense resourcing and attention from its core function.

**Cox:** I’m putting the finishing touches on a new questionnaire that explores how politics is affecting Americans’ dating lives and what this means for the future of marriage and families in the US.

**Mills:** My forthcoming book: a history of the federal scientific establishment, which chronicles the rise of the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation in response to national crises brought on by war and disease.

**What is something from an AEI scholar that caught your eye this year?**

**McCusker:** I would have to pick a topic on which many AEI scholars wrote informative, inspirational, and compelling pieces this year—Ukraine—including those by Giselle Donnelly, Frederick Kagan, Dalibor Rohac, and Kori Schake.

**Cox:** Ruy Teixeira’s work on political demography has become essential reading. And I very much enjoyed his data-rich commentary in the *Atlantic* detailing the Democratic Party’s ongoing problems appealing to working-class Americans. I’m also very excited for Christine Rosen’s forthcoming book, *The Extinction of Experience*.

**Pondiscio:** Late last year, Yuval Levin wrote an eye-opening piece for the *Dispatch* on the changing face of social breakdown. With this piece, Yuval added a new phrase to my vocabulary: “disordered passivity,” which implies the failure to launch that leaves too many of us, in his telling, “on the sidelines of life, unwilling or unable to jump in.” Those of us who work in education have a role to play in combating the trend that Yuval has cited and named.

To follow AEI scholars’ work, visit [www.aei.org](http://www.aei.org).

# AEI Welcomes New Cohort of Leadership Network Members



From October 19 to 21, AEI hosted the 19th cohort of Leadership Network members at AEI headquarters for a kickoff summit. The fall summit brought together 63 leaders for three days of in-person programming. Highlights from summit panels include:

- **Ian Rowe**, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Kmele Foster, and Delano Squires on how we can best help young people—particularly those from underprivileged communities—build their lives in a way that sets them on a path to success,
- **Yuval Levin** on renewing American institutions, and
- **Frederick M. Hess** on the importance of rethinking our models of education.

To learn more about AEI’s Leadership Network, visit [www.aei.org/leadership-network](http://www.aei.org/leadership-network).

“I’ve been to many conferences and summits during my career in government work. AEI’s Leadership Network Summit was head and shoulders above the rest! **Insightful, thought provoking presentations by some of the nation’s premier thought leaders, authors, and presenters.** I left the summit inspired, encouraged, and better able to define and work towards free enterprise in my own life, my career, and my community.”

—**Brendon Wold**, deputy communications director, Washington State House of Representatives

## Post-Summit Survey

Participants rated the summit a **9 out of 10**.

**95%** of respondents would recommend this program to their peers.

**88%** of respondents would like to help AEI spread its mission principles of freedom, opportunity, and free enterprise in their community.

**81%** of respondents said their knowledge of poverty alleviation increased as a result of the summit programming.



## AEI Launches New Fellowship

AEI recently announced the creation of the Civic Renewal Fellowship. The fellowship will bring together 20–30 exceptional professionals who, over one year, will gather virtually and in person to learn more about the principles of civil discourse and strong institutions and how to help rebuild our nation’s institutions starting at the local level. Participants will be expected to take what they have learned from the theoretical to the practical and deliver a project in their community that fosters civil discourse and strengthens a local institution.

For more information, visit [www.aei.org/civic-renewal-fellowship](http://www.aei.org/civic-renewal-fellowship).





# AEI Housing Center Promotes Research to the Community



Ed Pinto moderates a panel in Los Angeles with Major Ethan Frizzell of the Salvation Army, Michael Andersen of Sightline Institute, Emily Hamilton of the Mercatus Center, and Nolan Gray of California YIMBY.

Following the passage of two new laws in California—a duplex and lot-splitting bill (California SB 9) and a light-touch density bill (California SB 10)—the AEI Housing Center, led by **Edward J. Pinto**, launched a project to track the execution and success of the bills. Through case studies, natural experiments, and data analysis, the Housing Center is assessing if these laws can help solve California’s housing supply crisis.

In September, the Housing Center hosted six meetings throughout California to share insights on using SB 9 and SB 10 to address California’s housing supply crisis. These conferences allowed AEI’s research team to solicit input from industry leaders, builders, developers, local policymakers, and community leaders on what they are experiencing in their communities and areas of influence.

**“The event introduced me to many organizations working in my area to address California’s acute housing shortage, which was very helpful.”**

—California conference participant

## Post-California Conference Survey:

- Participants and speakers rated the conference a **9 out of 10**.
- **91%** of respondents said the content presented at the conference was either “extremely useful” or “very useful.”

For more information or to view conference highlights, visit [www.aei.org/california-housing-conference](http://www.aei.org/california-housing-conference).



## 11th Annual AEI Housing Conference

From November 30 to December 1, the AEI Housing Center hosted the 11th Annual AEI Housing Conference. Two hundred fifty industry leaders, academics, policymakers, and others gathered virtually to discuss challenges, opportunities, and new tools to assess current housing market trends. Panel sessions covered topics such as the intersection of housing and socioeconomic status, systemic disadvantage in the housing market, and how to expand the housing supply through light-touch density.

To view conference videos, visit [www.aei.org/events/11th-annual-housing-conference](http://www.aei.org/events/11th-annual-housing-conference).



## New Economics Scholar Joins AEI

**Jesús Fernández-Villaverde** joined AEI in November as the John H. Makin Visiting Scholar. Concurrently, he is professor of economics at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is director of the Penn Initiative for the Study of Markets, which aims to share the philosophical foundations and history of markets to University of Pennsylvania students. He is also codirector of the Business, Economic, and Financial History Project. While at AEI, he will conduct work on macroeconomics, econometrics, and economic history.

To follow all of Fernández-Villaverde’s work at AEI, visit [www.aei.org/profile/jesus-fernandez-villaverde](http://www.aei.org/profile/jesus-fernandez-villaverde).

# AEI Hosts Fall Summit for College Students



Ninety students from AEI’s Executive Council Program gathered for a three-day Fall Summit in September at AEI headquarters in Washington, DC. Executive Councils are small groups of students on nearly 90 campuses across the country who organize AEI events, host reading groups, and participate in AEI’s flagship Summer Honors Program and other programming. These students gain a greater appreciation for free enterprise and the principles that animate AEI and are equipped with the ideas and skills they need to develop into effective and skilled leaders after college.

At the summit, students heard from several AEI scholars including:

- **Benjamin Storey** and **Jenna Silber Storey** on the art of choosing what to do with your life;
- **Klon Kitchen** and **Christine Rosen** on technology, social media, and civic life; and
- **Dan Blumenthal** and **Elisabeth Braw** on China, Ukraine, and gray-zone warfare.

Participants also received practical training about how to be effective Executive Council members, including hosting successful meetings on college campuses and contributing to AEI’s student blog series and podcast.

Feedback on the Fall Summit was overwhelmingly positive. Participants rated the summit a 9 out of 10, and each session was rated an 8 out of 10 or higher.

For more information on AEI’s Executive Council Program, visit [www.aei.org/executive-councils](http://www.aei.org/executive-councils).

**“I think the most valuable takeaway from this conference is a better understanding of what civil discourse looks like.** Regardless of what topic was being covered by the panels, there was a good diversity of opinion, and it was easy to engage in a healthy way. I would like to bring that mentality back to my campus.”

—Fall Summit participant

# CERN Hosts Second Annual Summit

In September, AEI’s Conservative Education Reform Network (CERN) hosted its second annual virtual summit. More than 180 educators, policy experts, elected and appointed officials, and education advocates gathered for a series of panels and breakout sessions on topics including teacher licensure requirements, the future of classical education, and alternatives to universal pre-K.

Louisiana State Superintendent of Education Cade Brumley delivered the keynote address on the future of state-based education reform, drawing on his own efforts in Louisiana to expand

school choice, launch new career and technical education graduation pathways for high school students, and rewrite state social studies standards. One attendee who serves on her state’s Board of Education was so inspired by Brumley’s efforts to pass a bill providing education savings accounts for every student with special needs that she asked for a link to the legislation so she can propose something similar in her own state.

To learn more about CERN or get involved, visit [www.aei.org/conservative-education-reform-network](http://www.aei.org/conservative-education-reform-network).

**FT Business Book of the Year Award Business books**  
**Account of the global chip battle wins FT book prize**  
 Chris Miller's 'Chip War' digs into the fight for semiconductor supremacy

**CONGRATULATIONS TO CHRIS MILLER #7 ON THE NEW YORK TIMES BUSINESS LIST!**

**The New York Times Best Sellers**  
 Business

Chris Miller won the \$30,000 prize for 'Chip War', a compelling account of what the judges described as one of the "biggest economic and business stories of our time." © Gareth Davies

## Chip War Earns Top Honors

Chris Miller’s latest book, *Chip War: The Fight for the World’s Most Critical Technology* (Scribner, 2022), is an epic account of the decades-long battle to control what has emerged as the world’s most critical resource—microchip technology—with the United States and China increasingly in conflict. To make sense of the current state of politics, economics, and technology, we must first understand the vital role chips play. Illuminating, timely, and fascinating, *Chip War* has been recognized as a *New York Times* bestseller and the *Financial Times* Business Book of the Year.

To learn more or purchase the book, visit [www.aei.org/research-products/book/chip-war](http://www.aei.org/research-products/book/chip-war).

## New Members Elected to AEI Board of Trustees

This fall, three new members were elected to join the AEI Board of Trustees. AEI staff and scholars are grateful to all board members for their leadership and service to our mission.



**Behdad Eghbali** is cofounder and managing partner of Clearlake Capital Group, a leading private investment firm founded in 2006. With a sector-focused approach, the firm seeks to partner with world-class management teams by providing patient, long-term capital to dynamic businesses that can benefit from Clearlake's operational improvement approach. Eghbali received a BS from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1998.



**Deepa Javeri** is the chief financial officer at Frank Financial Aid and serves on the boards of the Whitby School and Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now. She graduated with a BS in electrical engineering and a minor in history from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



**Will Weatherford** is the managing partner of Weatherford Capital, where he focuses on providing leadership to the firm, building a strong culture, and partnering with incredible leaders who are building businesses that are solving real-world problems with purpose and innovation. He also serves as chairman of the board of trustees at the University of South Florida and on several private-sector and civic boards. He received a BS from Jacksonville University.



## Support AEI

AEI relies on—and is deeply grateful for—the financial backing of generous supporters who share our mission. As a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) organization, AEI does not take institutional positions; does not accept funding from US or foreign governments, including state-owned or state-operated subsidiary entities; and does not perform contract research. This policy maintains our scholars' complete independence and credibility in policy debates.

To learn more or support AEI, visit [www.aei.org/donate](http://www.aei.org/donate).



## AEI Honors Madden Legacy

AEI would like to express our deepest gratitude to the late **Richard and Joan Madden**, members of AEI's Legacy Society, who designated a significant bequest to the Madden Endowment, which AEI received upon Joan Madden's passing in 2021. Established in 1978 by Richard Madden (1929–2016), who served on the AEI Board of Trustees from 1972 until his death in 2016 (including six years as board chairman), the Madden Endowment is AEI's first-ever scholarly endowment. Dedicated to supporting scholarship at the intersection of religion, philosophy, and public policy, the Madden Endowment has supported the work of Michael Novak and Leon Kass, among other AEI scholarship. The Maddens' generous bequest provides lasting support for this important scholarship. We are honored by the enduring generosity of Richard and Joan Madden.

If you would like to learn about making a planned gift, including will or trust provisions, charitable remainder trusts, and charitable lead trusts, visit [www.aei.org/donate-about/planned-giving](http://www.aei.org/donate-about/planned-giving) or contact Jason Bertsch ([jbertsch@aei.org](mailto:jbertsch@aei.org)).



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