

Enterprise Report

Restoring Liberty, Opportunity, and Enterprise in America



Americans on Our Side

By Robert Doar

Across the country, students, parents, teachers, and administrators are launching into another school year. For many, this is the first time in a physical classroom since March 2020. This is a welcome development as we know that remote and hybrid learning are no replacement for in-person instruction. If pandemic conditions again prompt widespread district closures, AEI Senior Fellow **Nat Malkus** will resume regular updates to the Return to Learn Tracker, which has provided the most comprehensive and timely information on how districts have operated throughout the pandemic. Malkus has also updated the Return to Learn Tracker to show how much federal COVID-19 relief funds each district received and how much in-person schooling they offered. AEI is the only place that has made these nationwide district-level data available to the public, and we continue to provide invaluable insight for parents and education leaders to better understand nationwide trends and their district's performance.

Parents are not just on alert to see if students remain in school but also are anxious to see what kind of ideas their children will encounter in the classroom. Public and private schools across the country are adopting divisive curricula and programs that pit young people against each other. An increasing number of Americans are rightly alarmed at



Robert Doar
AEI President and
Morgridge Scholar

“At AEI, we know that regardless of whatever new trend or ideology threatens to divide us, most Americans are on our side. They want to see the values that have made our country strong passed down to the next generation. We have made it a priority to fight for those ideals.”

the prospect of their children learning ideas in school that undercut core values of equality, fairness, and the pursuit of excellence. **Karlyn Bowman** recently explored the polling from 25 years ago, when the nation was debating similar issues. Historically, parents of all races have overwhelmingly said they would be upset if a teacher taught that America is a fundamentally racist country. The vast majority of parents know it is essential for schools to describe the greatness of the American experiment and our shortcomings and teach students that we are all individuals first and foremost and not defined by our ethnic or racial background.

At AEI, we know that regardless of whatever new trend or ideology threatens to divide us, most Americans are on our side. They want to see the values that have made our country strong passed down to the next generation. We have made it a priority to fight for those ideals. Scholars including **Thomas Chatterton Williams, Max Eden, Robert Pondiscio,** and **Ian Rowe** are pushing back against illiberal ideologies that are corrupting American education. **Frederick M. Hess** and the AEI education team are empowering leaders nationwide through the Conservative Education Reform Network. Beyond our education team, I am encouraging all our scholars to lean in to this fight.

Naomi Schaefer Riley is one such scholar. As you will read in our Q&AEI, ideas such as critical race theory are not only bad in theory but also putting our most vulnerable children in harm’s way. Her new book, *No Way to Treat a Child: How the Foster Care System, Family Courts, and Racial Activists Are Wrecking Young Lives* (Bombardier, 2021), will help policymakers and practitioners take actions necessary to protect children.

Other AEI scholars are releasing major books this fall. **Scott Gottlieb’s** book, *Uncontrolled Spread: Why COVID-19 Crushed Us and How We Can Defeat the Next Pandemic* (HarperCollins, 2021), will help our country better prepare for the next pandemic. And new AEI Senior Fellow **Howard Husock’s** book, *The Poor Side of Town: And Why We Need It* (Encounter Books, 2021), uses real stories to explain how inclusive, low-cost housing can contribute to the revitalization of our civil society. In recent months, AEI has also added new fellows in foreign policy, constitutionalism and administrative law, and political philosophy.

This newsletter goes to press in the days after America’s disheartening departure from Afghanistan. We are struck by the courage of the American servicemen and women who were killed by terrorists as they tried to safeguard the passage of those seeking freedom. They represent the best of our military and our country: brave, patriotic, willing to serve and sacrifice—and so young. Our nation will miss them, and our prayers are with their families.

AEI scholars have provided the best analysis of what this ignoble retreat means for our country. They have published and commented widely, but two lines from pieces by **Danielle Pletka** and **Dalibor Rohac** especially hit the mark. From Pletka: “Once we won, we chose to lose.” And from Rohac: “Things unravel quickly when America renounces its leadership role.”

Our community of scholars and supporters plays a vital role in guaranteeing that America remains a beacon of freedom and opportunity. Thank you for joining us and for reading this *Enterprise Report*.

Foreign and Defense Policy

AEI Scholars Respond to Afghanistan

In April when President Joe Biden announced his intent to withdraw troops from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021, AEI scholars responded quickly and have remained at the forefront, offering commentary, cautioning against this approach, and warning about the disastrous unraveling that has since taken place.

As the situation intensified in early August, the media turned to AEI as an authoritative voice to inform coverage of the situation. Scholars including **Hal Brands, Elisabeth Braw, Sadanand Dhume, Frederick W. Kagan, Elaine McCusker, Neil Narang, Danielle Pletka, Dalibor Rohac, Michael Rubin, Kori Schake, Marc A. Thiessen, and Paul Wolfowitz** published more than 20 op-eds in outlets including the *Atlantic*, *Foreign Policy*, the *Hill*, the *National Interest*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*. Rubin, Thiessen, Wolfowitz, and **Katherine Zimmerman** have made several media appearances to discuss events, including on ABC Radio, Bloomberg, Fox Business, Fox News, and Yahoo Finance. Follow AEI scholars' coverage of Afghanistan at www.aei.org/tag/afghanistan/.

Without effective government plans to evacuate people from Afghanistan, AEI's



"After the U.S. surrender to the Taliban, it will be hard for anyone to take seriously the Biden administration's posturing about promoting human rights and defending democracy—which are supposedly central features of Biden's foreign policy."

—KORI SCHAKE, *Foreign Affairs*, August 25



"Afghanistan will return to brutality, and the world will have to cope with the consequences."

—SADANAND DHUME, *Wall Street Journal*, August 5



"A disastrous Taliban takeover wasn't inevitable. President Biden said his hands were tied to a withdrawal given the awful peace deal negotiated between the Trump administration and the Taliban. But there was still a way to pull out American troops while giving our Afghan partners a better chance to hold the gains we made with them over the last two decades. Mr. Biden chose otherwise."

—FREDERICK W. KAGAN, *New York Times*, August 14

Critical Threats Project (CTP) Program Manager Jacqueline Derks led her team, with help from the Institute for the Study of War, in supporting ground evacuation efforts. AEI established CTP in 2009 to provide continuous assessments of threats to the US and our allies and provide concrete plans for action.

CTP's work informs policymakers, the intelligence and military communities, and citizens who need to understand the nuance and scale of threats to America's security. You can follow all of CTP's work at www.criticalthreats.org/.

Defense Futures Simulator Informs Budget Debates

The Defense Futures Simulator (DFS)—which allows users to see how various defense strategies and choices would alter the Defense Department budget—incorporated a new data science algorithm in July to reflect how the user's strategy and budget choices would affect such things as mission, composition, and posture. When users modify their strategic preferences, the simulator adds or cuts according to each option's relationship with the user's strategic preference inputs. Users can repeatedly test, compare, and revise defense strategies and choices to see how they would alter the Defense Department budget.

To learn more or to use DFS, visit www.defensefutures.net/.

Since May:



DFS has been used more than 18,000 times and averages **1,220 users per week**.



A dozen congressional offices have used DFS, with one senior Senate staffer commenting, *"It has the promise of becoming a transformational product here in DC."*



More than **3,500 users have accessed DFS** in the month **since the new algorithm launched**.

AEI Community Member Spotlight

Academic Programs Student Audrey Xu



“AEI Academic Programs has been crucially formative in my intellectual development as an aspiring policy researcher and crucially formative in my development as a person. I am endlessly grateful to the Academic Programs team for creating opportunities to learn from so many scholars and produce engaging policy events at my university. I know the ethos of civility and consideration that AEI nurtures in its students will follow me throughout the rest of my life, and I will continue to work toward a culture of thoughtful and rigorous civil discourse in anything I do in the future.”

—AUDREY XU, chair of AEI’s Executive Council at Rutgers

Audrey Xu is the winner of AEI’s inaugural Award for Civil Discourse in Public Policy. This award is given to undergraduate participants in AEI’s Academic Programs who demonstrate and uphold the program’s key values: academic excellence, outstanding leadership, a passion for public policy, and engagement in civil discourse. A senior at Rutgers University, Xu studies economics and philosophy and hopes to work at a think tank researching welfare policy.

What compelled you to first get involved in AEI Academic Programs?

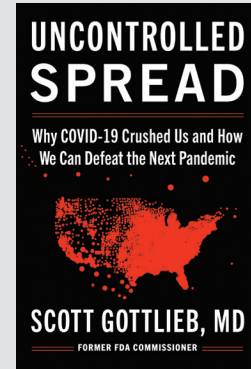
Why would you recommend getting involved to your peers?

My first experience with AEI Academic Programs was through the Summer Honors Program the summer after my freshman year; I was looking to get involved with the Washington, DC, policy world at large after an internship with a senator. It only took the duration of the weeklong program, but I fell in love with the think tank culture, and that experience solidified my decision to spend my career working in public policy. Since then, I’ve founded and grown the Executive Council on my campus and interned at AEI. Any college student interested in policy or political science should try to get involved here; it’s a wonderful opportunity to have some really engaging discussions with passionate and intelligent scholars and students.

How have your experiences with AEI deepened your knowledge of policy issues?

AEI has given me the opportunity to hear from a variety of impressive policy experts, both in and outside AEI, and develop professional relationships with many of them. Getting to talk to these experts allowed me to discuss interesting and timely policy topics with the people whose job it was to move the needle on those very topics. You get to be “on the inside,” so to speak, and having access to this information just makes you want to learn even more.

AEI’s Academic Programs engages thousands of college students each year through the Summer Honors Program, scholar campus visits, reading groups, on-campus Executive Council student groups, and more. To learn more, visit www.aei.org/academic-programs/.



Charting a Path Forward for a Post-Pandemic World

As the COVID-19 pandemic begins to shift from an acute crisis to an endemic pathogen, AEI Senior Fellow **Scott Gottlieb** is releasing a new book to help leaders and policymakers better understand this complex issue as the country begins to return to a new normal. In *Uncontrolled Spread: Why COVID-19 Crushed Us and How We Can Defeat the Next Pandemic* (HarperCollins, 2021), Gottlieb identifies the reasons the United States was caught unprepared for the pandemic and how the country can improve its strategic planning to prepare for future viral threats.

For more information or to preorder the book, visit www.uncontrolled-spread.com/.

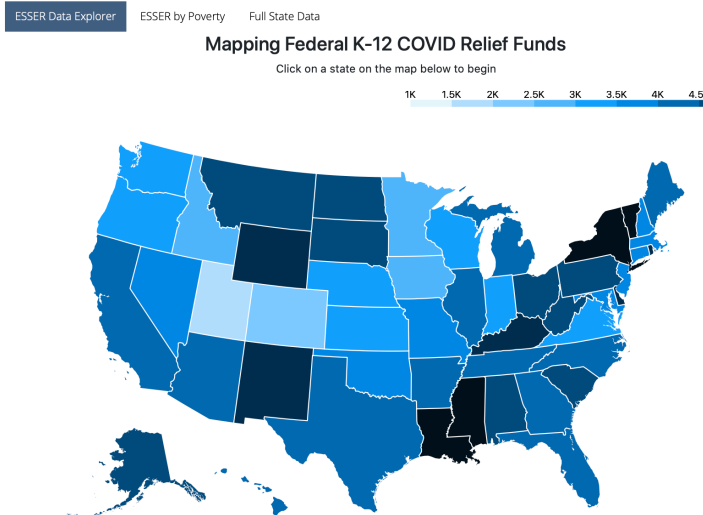
NATIONAL AFFAIRS

The summer edition of *National Affairs* is now available online. Essays span a range of topics including college financing, immigration, industrial policy, reforms to the House of Representatives, and the state of political rhetoric in the United States. To read these essays or past editions, visit www.nationalaffairs.com/.

National Affairs is a quarterly journal that aims to help Americans think a little more clearly about our public life.

Education Policy

Return to Learn Tracker Provides Invaluable Insight on School Operations and Spending



Over the past year, AEI's Return to Learn (R2L) Tracker, run by **Nat Malkus**, provided the most comprehensive and timely source of information on how schools operated during the pandemic. Now, Malkus has updated the R2L Tracker to include a data explorer tool that shows each school districts' allocations of federal COVID-19 relief funds and how they rank in terms of how much in-person schooling

they offered last school year. These invaluable data will help parents and other stakeholders compare how school districts responded to the pandemic. If district closures increase throughout the fall, Malkus and his team will resume regular updates to show changes in instruction status across districts. Follow updates from R2L at www.returntolearntacker.net/.

Jeffrey A. Rosen Joins AEI



Jeffrey A. Rosen, former acting attorney general, joined AEI's Social, Cultural, and Constitutional Studies research division in July. Among the topics he will focus on at AEI are deregulation, administrative law, executive power, law enforcement and policing, the US Department of Justice, and tech regulation. Rosen previously served as deputy attorney general, deputy transportation secretary, and general counsel of the Office of Management and

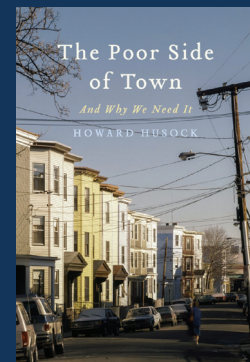
Budget in the George W. Bush administration. His work is part of AEI's Center for American Constitutional Governance, which has been created to restore the integrity and order of the American constitutional system, with an emphasis on the proper roles of Congress, the executive, and the courts; a renewal of federalism; and a rekindled understanding of citizenship, civil society, and republican virtue. Rosen has long been one of the foremost experts in administrative law and regulation and a key player in the effort to relieve the regulatory burden on the American economy. Follow Rosen's work at www.aei.org/profile/jeffrey-a-rosen.

R2L Impact Highlights

The Associated Press, the Dispatch, the Federalist, Fox News, the *Hill*, *National Review*, the *New York Times*, *Politico*, *US News & World Report*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and multiple local outlets have cited R2L data.

Throughout spring 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and US Department of Health and Human Services, as part of the COVID-19 Federal Interagency Response, featured R2L data prominently in weekly COVID-19 briefings with the Department of Education and the White House.

The Poor Side of Town: And Why We Need It



Howard Husock is releasing a new book, *The Poor Side of Town: And Why We Need It* (Encounter Books, 2021). In the book, Husock assesses the impact of more than a century of housing reform policies, including public and other subsidized housing and exclusionary zoning, and highlights how simple, low-cost housing—a poor side of town—can help those of modest means build financial assets and participate in the local democratic process. To learn more or order the book, visit www.aei.org/husock-book.

Q&A

with Naomi Schaefer Riley



Naomi Schaefer Riley is a resident fellow at AEI, where she focuses on child welfare and foster care issues. She also frequently writes about parenting, higher education, religion, philanthropy, and culture for outlets including the Atlantic, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and the Washington Post. She is concurrently a senior fellow at the Independent Women's Forum and was previously a columnist for the New York Post and an editor and writer

for the Wall Street Journal. Riley cohosts the AEI podcast *Are You Kidding Me?* with AEI Resident Fellow Ian Rowe. Together, they offer a close look at the public policies and cultural agendas driving child welfare and education. New episodes are released every other week and can be found at www.aei.org/are-you-kidding-me-podcast/

Your work draws on the experiences of foster parents, judges, adoptive families, and other practitioners. What does the policy community in Washington, DC, need to learn from those on the ground in the child welfare system?

Unfortunately, the child welfare system in this country seems to revolve around the needs of adults, not children. It is true that the parents of children who have been caught up in the system are often victims of poverty and racism, and many may even have spent time in foster care themselves. But I don't think that means we should consider their needs first when they have been abusing or severely neglecting their children. In DC, I think the policy community needs to understand how often the laws around child welfare are flouted. The timelines written into federal law that seek to limit the years kids can spend in foster care are routinely ignored, for instance, in an effort to give parents another chance. But the kids are the ones who suffer.

In October, you are releasing a new book, *No Way to Treat a Child*, that highlights the ways we can find safe and loving homes for our nation's most at-risk children. What is one common misconception about adoption and foster care that you seek to dispel through the book?

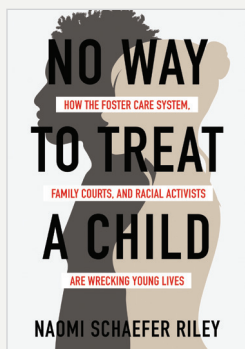
I think people have a deep misunderstanding of what we mean by child neglect. Activists often talk about how we are punishing families for being poor and that we are calling it neglect. The truth is that we have a pretty large safety net in this country for families that need food or housing or other material support. The parents who are charged with neglect don't have the wherewithal to ask for help. When we say neglect, what we really mean much of the time is that the parents have substance abuse or mental health issues. And neglect is really dangerous, especially with young children. When you think about how much attention and supervision children under age 3 need, it's almost impossible to provide that level of care while suffering from addiction. Maltreatment deaths are more likely to be the result of neglect than physical abuse, and most of those victims are young children.

Another theme of your work is philanthropy and philanthropic freedom. Do you have any advice for people seeking to make a smart investment with their philanthropic dollars?

I could hardly improve on the words of Sir John Templeton, one of the greatest philanthropists of the 20th century: "If you're giving while you're living, you're knowing where it's going." But these days it's not just that people want to redirect your money after you've died. They want to do it now. The pressure on donors to give to trendy political causes is immense. And the government wants to get in the game, trying to tell people how much to give and where and who should be on a foundation's board and who shouldn't. The smartest thing is to find a cause you like and people you trust and then stick to your guns.

You have documented how ideas such as critical race theory are taking root in systems from foster care to philanthropy. Why are identity-based ideologies corrosive to these and other key institutions and the individuals they are meant to serve?

I think the poor effects of critical race theory were obvious first in schools. Why are we telling young kids to obsess about their differences and engage in collective blaming rituals? But the effects are devastating in the world of child welfare, which has become obsessed with race. Not only do we have caseworkers and judges leaving Black children in homes when they would never leave White children, but some are even engaged in discrimination based on race when it comes to placing children for foster care or adoption. This is illegal by the way, according to the Multiethnic Placement Act. But there are advocates who want to change the law. Since the '90s when it was passed, tens of thousands more Black children were able to exit foster care and find loving, permanent homes. Undoing this progress would be devastating.



No Way to Treat a Child

Naomi Schaefer Riley will release *No Way to Treat a Child: How the Foster Care System, Family Courts, and Racial Activists Are Wrecking Young Lives* (Bombardier, 2021) in October. The book makes the case that the child welfare system in the United States privileges the protection and rehabilitation of adults over the well-being of children. To make meaningful changes to the system, Riley encourages reformers to put aside abstract concerns of social justice and instead focus on identifying the stable, loving, and permanent homes where children can thrive. To learn more or preorder the book, visit www.aei.org/foster-care-reform.

Unlike most AEI scholars, you have a background in journalism. What makes AEI, rather than a newspaper, a great professional home for you?

A lot of journalism these days is just one hot take after another. There is not much room to go out and do extensive on-the-ground reporting and research. Few newspapers even have someone covering child welfare at all, let alone doing it almost full-time. The freedom that AEI has given me to go out to states across the country and get an up-close view of what is going wrong in these systems (and what policymakers and community members can do about it) has been invaluable.

To follow all of Riley's work, visit www.aei.org/profile/naomi-riley/.

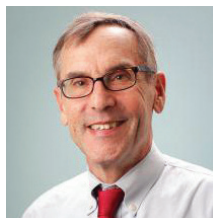
AEI Welcomes New Fellows in Constitutional Law, Urban Housing, and Political Philosophy



J. Joel Alicea, law professor at the Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law, joined AEI as a nonresident fellow and will focus on constitutional theory and constitutional law. Alicea served as a law clerk for Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. on the United States Supreme Court and for Judge Diarmuid F. O'Scannlain on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. His scholarly work focuses on constitutional law and judicial philosophy and has appeared in the *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, *National Affairs*, *Public Discourse*, and the *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law*, among other outlets. Follow Alicea's work at www.aei.org/profile/j-joel-alicea/.



William Haun recently joined AEI as a nonresident fellow to work on issues related to constitutionalism, religious liberty, the First Amendment, and self-government. Concurrently, he is counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a nonpartisan, nonprofit law firm dedicated to defending religious freedom for all. In his years in private practice, he litigated constitutional, administrative, and antitrust law cases before the US Supreme Court and federal appellate courts. Follow Haun's work at www.aei.org/profile/william-haun/.



Howard Husock recently joined AEI as a senior fellow to work on issues related to municipal government, urban housing policy, civil society, and philanthropy. Before joining AEI, he was vice president for research and publications at the Manhattan Institute for over a decade and director of case studies in public policy and management at the Harvard Kennedy School. He was a former broadcast journalist and documentary filmmaker for WGBH Boston, and his work there won three Emmys, including a News and Documentary Emmy. A prolific writer, Husock is regularly published in policy journals and the popular press, including the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, *City Journal*, the *Hill*, the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *National Affairs*, *New York Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Follow Husock's work at www.aei.org/profile/howard-husock/.



Ben and Jenna Storey, both professors at Furman University, joined AEI as visiting fellows in August to focus on political philosophy, civil society, higher education, and K-12 classical schooling. In April, they published *Why We Are Restless: On the Modern Quest for Contentment* (Princeton University Press, 2021), a provocative book that makes the case that finding true contentment requires rethinking our most basic assumptions about happiness. While at AEI, the Storeys will work on their next book project that addresses the deep divisions in America, arguing that it is often through such conflicts that the common good emerges. Follow Ben's work at www.aei.org/profile/ben-storey/ and Jenna's at www.aei.org/profile/jenna-storey/.

New Foreign and Defense Policy Studies Scholars Join AEI



Jason Blessing is a Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Research Fellow at AEI, where he focuses on cybersecurity, US cyber defense policy, NATO, and broader strategic challenges to transatlantic relations. Blessing began his career as a fraud operations analyst in the financial

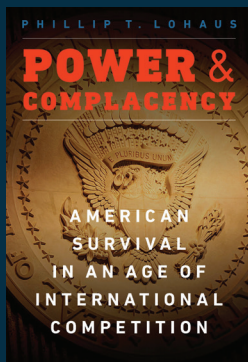
sector and has since served as a postdoctoral fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, a consulting fellow with the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and a US Institute of Peace–Minerva Peace and Security Scholar. Follow Blessing’s work at www.aei.org/profile/jason-blessing/.



Dan Slater, director of the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies at the University of Michigan, recently joined AEI’s Foreign and Defense Policy Studies research division. At AEI, he will focus on Southeast Asia and questions of democracy and authoritarianism globally

and specifically across Asia. Slater has taught at several leading institutions and publishes frequently in popular and academic presses. Follow Slater’s work at www.aei.org/profile/dan-slater/.

New Book Assesses US Foreign Defense Strategies



How might America’s leaders reconsider the application of power to ensure a favorable place on an increasingly crowded global stage? This is the question AEI Visiting Fellow

Phillip Lohaus considers in his recent book, *Power and Complacency: American Survival in an Age of International Competition* (Potomac Books, 2021). Lohaus traces the geographic and historical development of four global actors—China, Iran, Russia, and the United States—to highlight four equally distinct approaches to competition outside of warfare, offering the US a way forward in the amorphous and unscientific landscape of 21st-century competition. Learn more or buy the book at www.aei.org/power-complacency.



IRVING KRISTOL AWARD

AEI is honored to present the 2021 Irving Kristol Award to Mary Ann Glendon. Glendon is the Learned Hand Professor of Law, emerita, at Harvard University; a former US ambassador to the Holy See; and, most recently, chair of the State Department’s Commission on Unalienable Rights. We are pleased to highlight her contributions that have been a consistent and unrelenting force for good.

For a list of past recipients of the Irving Kristol Award, visit www.aei.org/irving-kristol-award/.

Make Free Enterprise Your Legacy

For more than 80 years, AEI scholars have been tackling our nation’s greatest challenges by producing work that bolsters free enterprise and innovation, strengthens our communities, defends our nation’s founding values, and revitalizes America’s leadership in the world. One of the best ways you can ensure that AEI can carry out this mission far into the future is by including AEI in your life and estate plans. Planned gifts provide AEI with long-term financial stability, guaranteeing the Institute has the means to continue our important work for years to come. You can make a planned gift a number of ways, including will or trust provisions, charitable remainder trusts, and charitable lead trusts.

For more information, please visit

www.aei.org/donate-about/planned-giving

or contact **Nicole Ruman Skinner** (nskinner@aei.org; 202.862.7189).

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