

GEORGE W. BUSH INSTITUTE

QUARTER ONE 2024

BUSH INSTITUTE BRIEFING



The Bush Institute is focused on ensuring opportunity for all,
strengthening democracy, and advancing free societies.

Engage

Presented by **NEXPOINT**



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KERA's Kryss Boyd, Utah Governor Spencer Cox, and Kansas Governor Laura Kelly took the stage for a conversation on healthy disagreement at our Engage at the Bush Center event presented by NexPoint on Jan. 22

(Photo by Grant Miller for the George W. Bush Presidential Center)

A NOTE FROM DAVID J. KRAMER

The Bush Institute's efforts to advance free societies, ensure opportunity for everyone, and strengthen our democracy got off to a strong start in the first quarter of 2024.

Hannah Johnson, Program Manager for Global Policy at the Bush Institute, spoke at the [White House](#) in February on the global impact of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). In March, Congress [reauthorized](#) the program, which has saved more than 25 million lives and helped 5.5 million babies be born HIV free since its inception 20 years ago. While the reauthorization was just for one year, we hope that lawmakers will return to a five-year reauthorization next year and continue important congressional oversight of the program.

The Bush Institute continues to stand with democracies around the world. Igor Khrestin, our Bradford M. Freeman Managing Director of Global Policy, [traveled](#) to Taiwan as part of a delegation led by the Global Taiwan Institute and met [President Tsai Ing-wen](#). They discussed the threat to Taiwan from China, particularly against the backdrop of Russia's war in Ukraine.

We continue to draw attention to the Taliban's mafia-like behavior. A new series titled the [Captured State](#), authored by my Bush Institute colleagues Natalie Gonnella-Platts, Jessica Ludwig, and Albert Torres, was released this past quarter outlining ways the international community should confront this challenge, particularly by targeting foreign enablers. We know the series is hitting its mark since Taliban-linked entities criticized some of the findings. Additionally, Chairman Michael McCaul submitted a statement for the record at a House Foreign Affairs Committee [hearing](#) in January and U.S. Representative Joe Wilson submitted two of the papers into the record at a [hearing](#) in March.

Here at home, we explored how universities and academic medical institutions are driving economic prosperity in

America's cities. J.H. Cullum Clark, Director of the Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative, released a report outlining how cities can leverage "eds and meds" institutions to grow their metros.

We also remain committed to showcasing pluralism in action. Utah Republican Governor Spencer Cox and Kansas Democratic Governor Laura Kelly took on "The Art of Disagreeing Better" in January at an [Engage at the Bush Center event](#) presented by NexPoint. Cox also appeared on the same topic on an [episode](#) of [The Strategerist](#) podcast. We also welcomed our ninth class of 60 diverse and accomplished leaders to the [Presidential Leadership Scholars](#) program in January as they make a difference in their communities, our nation, and the world.

The Catalyst: A Journal of Ideas from the Bush Institute explored "[The State of American Democracy](#)" – how we got here and how we move forward. The issue features interviews with President George W. Bush and Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT) and articles by Governor Kelly and Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin.

Lastly, my friend Ken Hersh, the Bush Center's President and CEO, kicked off a series in *The Dallas Morning News* with a piece titled "[A survival guide for a moderate conservative.](#)" He shared tips on navigating the 2024 election cycle and how he remains optimistic.

Thank you once again for your support advancing President and Mrs. Bush's timeless values of freedom, opportunity, accountability, and compassion.

Sincerely,



David J. Kramer
Executive Director, George W. Bush Institute

POLICY IN FOCUS

STRENGTHENING OUR DEMOCRACY

Making space for people of different faiths is important in a strong democracy, as the Bush Institute's William McKenzie and Chris Walsh [wrote](#) in the fourth installment of the [Pluralism Challenge](#) series. In addition, *RealClearReligion* shared the essay on its platforms. Walsh and McKenzie joined podcasts and radio shows, including [Good God](#), [The Common Bridge](#), and [Point of View](#) for in-depth conversations on the topic.

In a *Religion News* op-ed titled "[Americans accept people](#)

[of other faiths, but there's room to grow.](#)" Walsh and McKenzie called on readers to collaborate on common projects, effectively lead fellow believers away from any bigotry, develop relationships including business ties, and recognize the citizenship of others.

As a follow-up to the September 2023 statement signed by 13 presidential centers reaffirming democratic principles, David J. Kramer joined [Valerie Jarrett](#), CEO of the Obama Foundation, for a *Strategerist* podcast [episode](#). The pair discussed how the Bush Center, the Obama Foundation, and the other presidential centers are working together.

ADVANCING FREE SOCIETIES

In March 2024, the [U.K. Inquiry on Gender Apartheid](#), a nonpartisan committee examining systemic gender persecution in Iran and by the Taliban, cited a submission authored by Directors of Global Policy Natalie Gonnella-Platts and Jessica Ludwig. The submission drew from *Captured State*, the Bush Institute's three-report [series](#) on the Taliban, written by Gonnella-Platts, Ludwig, and Albert Torres, Program Manager of Global Policy. You may have also seen the series mentioned in [Foreign Policy](#), [The Hill](#), [American Purpose](#), and [RealClearWorld](#).

The Bush Institute continues to shed light on anti-corruption measures the United States and others should take. Torres outlined those recommendations in "[How Russia continues to evade sanctions – the West must stop it](#)" and "[The U.S. is taking steps to tackle corruption in 2024](#)."

Applications [opened](#) in January for the Bush Institute's Lindsay Lloyd North Korea Freedom Scholarship, which helps North Korean escapees and their children pursue educational opportunities and build prosperous lives in freedom. Two of the former recipients discussed their journeys in an accompanying [article](#).

Regarding NATO, the most successful military alliance in history, "There's only been one time Article 5 has been invoked, that was after the terrorist attacks on 9/11 here in the United States. We want to make sure we never have to invoke Article 5 ever again," Kramer [reminded us](#) in a recent Two-Minute Take.

ENSURING OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE

Anne Wicks, the Don Evans Family Managing Director of Opportunity and Democracy at the Bush Institute, and Advisor Amanda Wirtz published a [policy brief](#) highlighting why strong state data systems that connect K-12 education, higher education, and the workforce matter and how they should be governed. It was released in conjunction with [updated scores for each state's longitudinal data system](#) (part of the Bush Institute's Education and Workforce Pipeline tool). Wicks and Wirtz also published a case study about the legislative and executive actions that created the Texas Tri-Agency, the state's data system that helps measure which Texans are prepared for – and accessing – good jobs.

Together, these three tools provide information, analysis, and examples for leaders around the country seeking to improve access to opportunity for people living in their state.

The George W. Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative released a [report](#) ranking U.S. metros alongside the universities, colleges, and academic medical centers that have successfully transformed research and development dollars into [innovation](#).

Cullum Clark, Director of the Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative, who authored that report, also testified before the Dallas City Council addressing the benefits of deregulating housing and land-use policies. Clark previously took part in a City Council-led working group on related topics. He also spoke with the local CBS affiliate in March on housing [trends](#) in Dallas.

Stand-To Veteran Leadership Program Scholar Jennifer Barnhill wrote an [essay](#) discussing the impact the program has had on her and how to improve the public's understanding of veterans. She highlighted a dinner conversation with President George W. Bush.



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