

GEORGE W. BUSH INSTITUTE

QUARTER TWO 2024

BUSH INSTITUTE BRIEFING



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



KEN HERSH

President and CEO, George W. Bush Presidential Center

GEORGE W. BUSH
PRESIDENTIAL CENTER
**FORUM ON
LEADERSHIP**

FORUM ON LEADERSHIP

*Ken Hersh, President and CEO of the George W. Bush Presidential Center, and Indra Nooyi, former Chairman and CEO of PepsiCo and recipient of the 2024 George W. Bush Medal for Distinguished Leadership, in conversation at the 2024 Forum on Leadership.
(Photo by Grant Miller for the George W. Bush Presidential Center)*

A NOTE FROM DAVID J. KRAMER

At the Bush Institute, we've seen how Americans are acting in big and small ways to improve their communities, even as we work through a period of intense polarization on many issues. Our country has been through a lot in 248 years, as my friend Ken Hersh, the Bush Center's President and CEO, reminded us in a series of op-eds for *The Dallas Morning News*. Despite our trials and tribulations, we've always come out stronger. Ken underscored the importance of [investing in our institutions](#) for future generations and [persisting when things get hard](#).

To this end, our work and convenings continue to focus on the timeless values of freedom, opportunity, accountability, and compassion. We hosted our [seventh annual Forum on Leadership](#) in April, which spotlighted freedom around the world and why U.S. global leadership remains vital. CIA Director William J. Burns was our keynote speaker and discussed how the agency assesses challenges facing the United States from Russia and China to the Middle East.

We explored similar topics throughout the quarter. In *The Catalyst: A Journal of Ideas from the Bush Institute*, top foreign policy experts examined the role of U.S. leadership across the globe – from Russia and Latin America to Afghanistan and beyond.

Through extensive research and in-depth interviews with dozens of Afghan experts and advocates, a Bush Institute [series](#) examined how the Taliban are amassing their wealth, the foreign governments supporting their mafia-like rule, and the horrific human rights abuses committed against the Afghan people. The three-part series received notable attention from members of the Biden Administration, Congress, and the international community.

[The Laura Bush Book Club](#) welcomed Heather Morris, the author of *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*, in May for a special *Engage at the Bush Center* event presented by NexPoint and supported by H-E-B, pictured below. Mrs. Bush shared childhood memories of her father who served in the U.S. Army during World War II, and Morris delivered an inspiring and moving message about finding hope in tragic times. The conversation was a reminder of what can happen if the West pulls away from the rest of the world and how evil can seep through the cracks.

We were once again reminded of the incredible leadership of our veterans. The American Adventure pavilion at EPCOT, located at Walt Disney World Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, is currently hosting *Portraits of Courage: A Commander in Chief's Tribute to America's Warriors*. The special art exhibit displays more than 60 full-color portraits painted by President George W. Bush of service members and veterans who have served our nation with honor since 9/11 and whom the president has come to know personally since leaving office.

We remain committed to moving our nation forward and shining a light on those dedicated to strengthening our democracy. I want to express my gratitude to you for your continued support and commitment.

Sincerely,



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



POLICY IN FOCUS

STRENGTHENING OUR DEMOCRACY

Participants in our leadership programming are bridging divides in their communities, and we remain in awe of their humanity. We were proud to welcome the ninth class of Presidential Leadership Scholars into the alumni network at the end of June. This quarter, 34 new [Stand-To Veteran Leadership Program Scholars](#) joined us at the Bush Center for their first session.

Our country is [less divided](#) on core American values than many may think, according to [Chris Walsh](#), Director of Global Policy at the Bush Institute. He recently shared that these unifying values allow pluralism to work in the United States.

ADVANCING FREE SOCIETIES

[The Captured State](#), a new three-part series from the Bush Institute, exposed the Taliban for raking in \$2.2 billion in revenue in 2022 without providing any accounting for how this money was spent. The series also highlights how the terrorist organization is actively looting Afghanistan of its wealth while innocent Afghans suffer. The reports provide policy solutions to prevent the Taliban from accessing their assets, and the authors were prominently featured in media outlets around the country.

[Albert Torres](#), Program Manager of Global Policy at the Bush Institute, was [interviewed](#) by a prominent Afghan news outlet, Rukshana Media, to explain how the United States, its allies, and the international community should target illicit and corrupted cash flows that the Taliban abuse for personal gain.

[Natalie Gonnella-Platts](#), and [Jessica Ludwig](#), Directors of Global Policy at the Bush Institute, were [interviewed](#) on another respected Afghan news outlet, Amu TV. They discussed the Taliban's embrace of barbaric and extremist ideology to consolidate power in Afghanistan.

Gonnella-Platts was also featured on [Lynne O'Donnell's podcast series, Insights](#), where they talked through the Taliban's "state capture" of Afghanistan and what this means for the people of Afghanistan, the security of the region, and the safety of the world.

In early June, the Bush Institute [announced](#) it was awarding a total of \$50,000 in 2024 Lindsay Lloyd North Korea Freedom Scholarships to nine North Korean recipients to pursue educational opportunities in the United States. The scholarship was established in 2017 and is designed to help North Korean escapees and their children pursue higher education and build productive, prosperous lives.

ENSURING OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE

The Greater Houston Partnership published a [notable article](#) about the latest report in the [Blueprint for Opportunity](#) series, "[Engines of Opportunity: How Eds and Meds Institutions Can Become More Powerful Drivers of Prosperity in America's Cities](#)" by [Cullum Clark](#), Director of the Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative at the Bush Institute. The report ranks Houston among top U.S. metros for innovation.

Following the publication of the report, Clark spoke at several events regarding innovation work, eds and meds, reimagining universities, and building innovation ecosystems. The speaking opportunities occurred throughout Texas, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania.

To celebrate National Immigrant Heritage Month, [Laura Collins](#), Director of the Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative, [discussed how America benefits from immigration](#) and shared five inspiring immigrant stories. [Margot Habiby](#), Deputy Director of Communications at the Bush Institute, [published a piece in the Tulsa World](#) about how America should welcome immigrants, as it did with her family decades ago.

Two hundred school libraries across the country were awarded grants in May from the [Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries](#). The funds, totaling \$1 million, will be used to update and diversify book and print collections. The grant received notable mentions from schools in Texas, Georgia, Virginia, Tennessee, and Hawaii.

Following the announcement of the LBF grant recipients, Mrs. Bush unveiled her [2024 summer reading list](#), which includes recommendations for young readers through middle schoolers.



GEORGE W. BUSH
INSTITUTE

Located on the SMU campus in Dallas, Texas, the George W. Bush Presidential Center is a nonpartisan institution advancing the timeless values of freedom, opportunity, accountability, and compassion. The Bush Center comprises the George W. Bush Presidential Museum and the George W. Bush Institute, a solution-oriented policy organization focused on ensuring opportunity for all, strengthening democracy, and advancing free societies through policy solutions and public engagement. The Bush Center also houses the George W. Bush Presidential Library, operated by the National Archives and Records Administration, which provides access to official documents and artifacts from the George W. Bush Administration.

Learn more about the Bush Center at

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