

GEORGE W. BUSH INSTITUTE

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# BUSH INSTITUTE BRIEFING



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



*A woman in Tel Aviv, Israel, pays tribute in memory of the civilians and soldiers killed by Hamas. (Photo by Amir Levy/Getty Images)*

## A NOTE FROM DAVID J. KRAMER

The Oct. 7 barbaric terrorist attacks against the people of Israel left us horrified and devastated. Nothing justifies the brutal and inhuman onslaught by Hamas, whose stated objective is the extermination of Israel and Jews. We mourn for Israelis and Palestinians who are suffering as a result of Hamas' actions.

We have subsequently seen outbreaks of evil and hate elsewhere, including here at home. They are dangerous and destabilizing, and we must condemn them unequivocally. We are also seeing a surge in disinformation, which is playing a role in the crisis in Gaza, in Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine, and in our own politics.

My colleague William McKenzie, Senior Editorial Advisor at the George W. Bush Institute, [recently wrote](#) about the need for us to remain vigilant about the source of the information we consume.

The Bush Institute has redoubled its efforts to strengthen our own democracy in the United States. We led a coalition of 13 presidential centers and foundations in the release of a first-of-its-kind joint [statement](#) reaffirming a commitment to American democratic principles. We outlined the roles citizens can play in a healthy democracy and the dedicated leadership needed in our communities.

I'm pleased to share that our Stand-To Veteran Leadership and Presidential Leadership Scholars are rising to the challenges mentioned in the statement. We hosted a reunion of [90 Stand-To Veteran Leadership Scholars at the Bush Institute](#) in early September and welcomed Presidential Leadership Scholar program alumni here in October. It's wonderful to hear how they are making a difference in communities both small and large and breaking barriers.

As our Scholars find solutions to some of the most pressing challenges our nation is facing, we explored a similar topic in *The Catalyst: A Journal of Ideas from the Bush Institute*. The most recent [issue](#) highlighted how governments and organizations have addressed – or made progress tackling – problems that the rest of the world still struggles with.

As we strive to ensure opportunity for all, strengthen our democracy, and advance free societies, I want to express my gratitude to you. Your continued interest in our work and commitment to the values that guide us have allowed us to make great strides. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



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

## POLICY IN FOCUS

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### STRENGTHENING OUR DEMOCRACY

In early September, *The New York Times* broke the story that 13 presidential foundations and centers had issued a [joint statement](#) calling for a renewed commitment to American democratic values, civil responsibility, and respect for different viewpoints. The statement was featured in more than 750 articles, including pieces by the Associated Press and *The Washington Post* and discussed on C-SPAN, *Morning Joe*, CNN, and other programs and outlets.

For several months, the Bush Institute's [Chris Walsh](#), Director of Freedom and Democracy at the George W. Bush Institute, and [William McKenzie](#) have explored the nature of pluralism and how it's working in our country. The series continued with a new feature on free speech, especially on [college campuses](#).

### ADVANCING FREE SOCIETIES

In September, President Bush wrote an [op-ed](#) published in *The Washington Post* that called for members of Congress to set aside their differences and reauthorize the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

*"We are on the verge of ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic. To abandon our commitment now would forfeit two decades of unimaginable progress and raise further questions about the worth of America's word."*  
-President Bush

President and Mrs. Bush [welcomed](#) 14 North Korean refugees to the Bush Center in early September. Participants included recipients of the Bush Institute's [Lindsay Lloyd North Korea Freedom Scholarship](#) and the newest cohort of Liberty in North Korea's Advocacy

Fellowship. During the conversation, the refugees shared their concerns about the situation in North Korea and their hopes for the future. They also participated in training to help support them as they raise awareness about the situation for North Koreans back home and advocate for the improvement of human rights.

The Bush Institute continues to condemn the human rights abuses by North Korea, which is aided by China and Russia. A panel of government and nongovernment experts convened by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Bush Institute, and the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, resulted in the publication [of a paper](#), "How China and Russia facilitate North Korea's human rights abuses." Written by Bush Institute Senior Fellow [Dr. Victor Cha](#) and co-authored with Dr. Katrin Fraser Katz, former director of Japan, Korea, and Oceanic Affairs at the National Security Council, the document outlines recommendations for the United States and international partners to advocate for North Korean human rights.

## ENSURING OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE

The North America Workforce Initiative, a partnership of the George W. Bush Institute and North American Strategy for Competitiveness (NASCO), released a new study titled "[Bolstering North America's competitiveness via a coordinated approach to workforce development](#)." The study addresses how the United States, Canada, and Mexico can standardize their labor practices and credentials to compete in the global economy.

[Matthew Rooney](#), Senior Advisor at the Bush Institute, and [Jenny Villatoro](#), Program Manager of the Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative, co-authored a report on the not-so-visible drivers of migration titled "[The root causes of Central American migration: Toward a holistic approach](#)."

Accountability tools such as Texas' standardized test, the STARR, are critical to ensuring our students are equipped for their next steps in life. [Anne Wicks](#), the Ann Kimball Johnson Director of Education and Opportunity at the Bush Institute, spoke with [CBS 11 News](#) about whether Texas students are equipped for life after high school.

Research on income migration by [Cullum Clark](#), Director of the Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative, found that the trend is reshaping North Texas, with income moving out of Dallas County and into Dallas suburbs. An [Axios Dallas](#) article shared the highlights.



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