

GEORGE W. BUSH INSTITUTE

QUARTER THREE 2024

# BUSH INSTITUTE BRIEFING



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



*The Stand-To Veteran Leadership Program Scholars during their fourth module in Washington, D.C.  
(Photo by Grant Miller for the George W. Bush Presidential Center)*

## A NOTE FROM DAVID J. KRAMER

This month, our nation displayed one of its greatest strengths: our ability to hold peaceful elections. We saw Americans volunteer to be poll workers and election officials and work tirelessly to ensure all votes were counted. We saw one side declared the winner and the other graciously concede. And as in every election, some are happy with and others disappointed by the results. Regardless of where you fall, it's important to remember that our country is made up of people with differing viewpoints – a reminder that disagreement and debate, along with elections, are essential to our democracy.

I was reminded of the importance of freedom when we [welcomed](#) 12 North Korean refugees in early September to participate in the third annual North Korean Human Rights Workshop. Many shared their stories of living under Kim Jong Un's repressive regime and of escaping a country that doesn't value them or human freedom in general. The refugees – who are [recipients of the Lindsay Lloyd North Korea Freedom Scholarship](#) and [Liberty in North Korea \(LiNK\) advocacy fellows](#) – were at the Bush Center to hone their leadership and advocacy skills. They have lived successful lives in the United States in part because of the North Korean Human Rights Act signed into law by President George W. Bush.

North Korea has joined China, Russia, and Iran in their efforts to topple the U.S.-led world order. Global experts discussed how the United States and the world should tackle this growing axis during the *Engage* NexPoint [Lecture](#) in September. Moderated by Kryss Boyd of KERA's *Think*, the conversation centered on the particular threats and challenges posed by Russia and China.

Despite North and South Koreans [taking selfies](#) together at this year's Paris Olympic Games, their countries are still very much at odds. *The Catalyst: A Journal of Ideas from the Bush Institute* explored [Sports and Power](#) and how sports can impact a nation beyond the field of play. The issue also highlighted domestic challenges such as race relations in the locker room and spotlighted individuals such as Melissa Stockwell, a Team 43 member and veteran, and her inspirational journey to the Olympics.

The Bush Institute continues to grow its Veteran Wellness Alliance and welcomed [ROGER](#), the wellness service of Stop Soldier Suicide, as a clinical provider and official member. ROGER will help connect veterans and their loved ones to mental and brain health care via the Veteran Wellness Alliance's [Check-In](#) tool.

Along with expressing my gratitude to those who play an important role in achieving our goals, I'd also like to thank my friend Ken Hersh, President and CEO of the Bush Center, for leading the organization for the past eight transformative years. Ken [recently announced](#) that he will be transitioning from his role but will stay on as President and CEO until a successor is named. I'm glad that he will remain on the organization's Board of Directors. His mentorship and leadership have been invaluable in advancing our work.

Sincerely,



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

### STRENGTHENING OUR DEMOCRACY

The Bush Institute held listening tours in September with congressional staffers from different political parties in Washington, D.C. The sessions covered topics including the duties of citizenship, leadership, trust in institutions, pluralism, and civic responsibility. It also helped inform the Bush Institute's perspective on how to bridge divides across the political aisle.

[Chris Walsh](#), Director of Global Policy at the Bush Institute, and [William McKenzie](#), Senior Advisor at the Bush Institute, continued their work exploring a more pluralistic nation. McKenzie [published an op-ed](#) in *The Dallas Morning News* on new groups tackling polarization, and Walsh wrote a piece challenging people to [think about unity](#) differently. Together, McKenzie and Walsh created a [pluralism glossary](#) and showed how [news organizations can mirror local communities](#).

### ADVANCING FREE SOCIETIES

The [third annual North Korean Human Rights Workshop](#) occurred in September, during which a group of 12 North Korean escapees participated in powerful sessions with leaders and activists to hone their skills as part of the next generation of leaders. Following the workshop, three North Korean experts joined [Andrew Kaufmann](#), Director of Communications and Marketing at the Bush Institute, on *The Strategerist* podcast to discuss how the United States can support North Koreans. Highlights of the gathering were shared on [NBC 5](#).

Continuing the theme of freedom, the Bush Institute [welcomed Pashtana Durrani](#) on *The Strategerist* to discuss the importance of educating Afghan girls living under Taliban rule. [Natalie Gonnella-Platts](#), Director of Global Policy at the Bush Institute, led the conversation.

In a *Dallas Morning News* op-ed titled "[China is catching up to us](#)," Igor Khrestin, the Bradford M. Freeman Managing Director of Global Policy at the Bush Institute, argued that America cannot let Beijing impose its version of global order upon the world.

Former U.S. Senator Cory Gardner of Colorado, who served as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's East Asia, the Pacific and International Cybersecurity Policy Subcommittee, published a [report](#) in August with [Igor Khrestin](#) that called on the next U.S. administration to fully implement the *TAIPEI Act*. Published by the Global Taiwan Institute, the piece argued that this would strengthen Taiwan's international relationships, support its global presence, and counteract isolating efforts by China.

### ENSURING OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE

Laura Collins, Director of the Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative, was [quoted](#) in *The New York Times* describing what it would take to deport millions of immigrants. Collins was also quoted in pieces from the [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation](#) and [News Nation](#).

[Waters of the West](#), a new four-part series from the Bush Institute, launched in September. It aims to answer key questions surrounding urban development, such as whether water availability will hinder growth in Western U.S. cities. To answer this question, and more, Bush Institute experts spent months speaking with policy experts and stakeholders.

The [National Association of Charter School Authorizers](#) invited [Anne Wicks](#), the Don Evans Family Managing Director of Opportunity and Democracy at the Bush Institute, to appear on a panel promoting assessment and accountability to help understand school quality for charter school authorizers.

[Cullum Clark](#), Director of the Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative, published an op-ed in *The Dallas Morning News* [discussing ways that Frisco, Texas, has solved the housing crisis](#) facing American cities. Clark also released an article in the national publication *City Journal* on how [fertility rates differ between red- and blue-run cities](#).



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*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.*

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