THE GOAL OF MEETING 100% OF U.S. energy demand through zero-emission sources is among the central tenets of the proposed Green New Deal. Though America currently gets just 3% of its energy from solar, wind, and batteries, it has been said that just as computing has become exponentially more efficient (a smartphone today has thousands of times the power as a mainframe in 1980s), so, too, are renewables on the cusp of disrupting the energy sector and making hydrocarbons irrelevant. But as MI senior fellow Mark Mills demonstrated in his March report, “The ‘New Energy Economy’: An Exercise in Magical Thinking,” such decarbonization is ruled out by the laws of physics. A former physicist and development engineer, Mills explained that, contra many renewable-energy enthusiasts, the energy needed to accomplish tasks like moving people, heating steel, and growing food is determined by properties of nature whose boundaries are set by laws of gravity, inertia, friction, mass, and thermodynamics—not clever software.

Published on the same day the U.S. Senate voted 0–57 to reject a resolution advancing the Green New Deal, Mills’s report has been part of a broader MI effort to educate policymakers and the general public about how best to meet domestic energy needs and address environmental regulation. This effort, involving Mills, as well as fellows Robert Bryce and Jonathan Lesser, has entailed a series of more than a dozen op-eds, 30 TV and radio interviews, and editorials and earned mentions of MI research appearing in the Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, and other publications. In April, MI released a video, “The Green New Deal’s Bad Science,” produced...
by veteran newsman John Stossel and part of our “Broadcasting City Journal” series. Featuring interviews with Mills and writer James Meigs, author of a recent City Journal essay on nuclear power, the video has so far been viewed more than 1 million times.

Invariably, energy and environmental regulation will be one of many issues to become more salient in the run-up to the next election, and it will be important to inject facts such as those found in Mills’s latest report into public discourse. To that end, MI will soon be launching Issues 2020, the third iteration of a project that we began two presidential-election cycles ago. Under the direction of senior fellow Oren Cass, who served as domestic-policy director of Mitt Romney’s presidential campaign in 2012, MI will marshal our scholars’ research in the form of short issue briefs, educating policymakers

For scholars of public policy, campaign season often seems to take place in a strange universe where data does not exist and logic does not apply.

Manhattan Institute’s Issues 2020 series will apply the depth and breadth of the think tank’s expertise to the critical topics of debate—offering a dose of reality to misguided arguments from across the political spectrum and outlining the tough questions that major proposals must address before they can be taken seriously.
and citizens about policy questions that arise in the course of the campaigns. These issue briefs provide rapid-response commentary; refute misinformation spread by candidates, pundits, and other influencers; and educate the public about the policy choices that we face as a nation.

Postsecondary education, too, has become a prominent issue, with several presidential candidates calling for “free” college and student-debt forgiveness. Yet as senior fellow Beth Akers has argued, policymakers should be concerned primarily with reforms that can help those students who struggle the most in the current system, such as the 60% of students who start a degree program but do not finish in six years. As Akers explained in testimony before the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee and in op-eds for the New York Daily News ("Lessons of Warren’s Free College Plan: One Size Doesn’t Fit All") and the New York Post ("A Universal Bailout Is the Wrong Fix for Student Loans"), candidates’ proposals would constitute a giveaway to many students from middle-class and affluent families who do not need taxpayer assistance. To refocus the conversation, Akers has convened a series of working groups to develop solutions from “Beyond the Beltway,” inviting scholars and practitioners whose ideas are often neglected in the policy discourse inside the nation’s capital. Working group members will author a series of MI papers, the first of which was released in March: “The Future of Income-Share Agreements: Policy and Politics,” by Sheila Bair and Preston Cooper. Unlike a student loan that requires fixed payments, an income-share agreement (ISA) requires that a student’s payments be based on earnings. As Bair argued in a Financial Times op-ed based on the report, ISAs would make schools more accountable for the value of the degrees they confer, since the money they get back would be tied to graduates’ success.

At the same time, according to Cass, it is urgent that the country reconsider the goal of “college-for-all” that has long guided U.S. education policy. Despite a more than doubling of per-pupil K–12 spending in real terms since the 1970s, standardized test scores have remained flat, SAT scores have declined, and most Americans still do not earn college degrees. Cass the author of the widely acclaimed 2018 book, The Once and Future Worker: A Vision for the Renewal of Work in America, has
1. Beth Akers hosts a working group in Park City, UT on new business models for higher education.

2. Oren Cass offers his vision for the renewal of work in America at the U.S. News STEM Solutions Workforce of Tomorrow summit in Washington, D.C.

3. Journalists, practitioners, and scholars join Akers in Chicago to discuss college affordability.

4. Sheila Bair appears on CNBC to discuss the future of income-share agreements, based on MI’s March 2019 report.
written and spoken extensively with policymakers about the need to improve vocational education. This March, he testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship and briefed members of the administration on his ideas to strengthen the labor market. In May, MI was honored to convene a salon with Cass and U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta to discuss how to better align the U.S. education system with the needs of the economy and American workers.

Cass was one of several speakers to headline the seventh annual Adam Smith Society National Meeting, held in New York in April. The event brought together hundreds of students and young business professionals, hailing from more than 30 of the top U.S. MBA programs, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and our growing number of city-based professional chapters. The agenda was built around educating business students about the moral and philosophical foundations of capitalism, especially as exemplified in the thought of Smith; fostering debate about economic-policy issues; and inspiring members to think about how they can advance free-market ideas as they grow in professional prestige and influence. In that last vein, we were honored to present the 2019 Principled Leadership Award to Daniel S. Loeb, founder and CEO, Third Point LLC.

At the conclusion of the National Meeting, we presented awards for chapter excellence, including the award for Best New Student Chapter, which went to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Our first international student chapter, Hebrew University has had a most productive inaugural year, hosting a series of on-campus events including a debate over the role of labor unions, lectures on economic regulation and blockchain technology, and a screening of a documentary on the thought of Adam Smith, which drew hundreds of students. The chapter at Hebrew University is part of a broader Adam Smith Society Israel initiative, through which we are seeking not only to educate future Israeli business leaders about the concept of free enterprise as a moral system but also to build relationships between future free-market-minded business leaders from Israel and the United States. To that end, in March, we sponsored a trek that sent U.S. MBA students to Israel, where they met with leaders from the realms of entrepreneurship, government, media, policy, technology, and venture capital, as well as with Adam Smith Society members at Hebrew University.

With the Adam Smith Society having grown to more than 40 chapters and having had more than 11,000 participants since its inception, MI recently hired the Society’s first-ever executive director, Greg Menken, to

“We’re thrilled to be a part of spreading free-market ideas across the globe. I am thankful for the opportunity to deliver classic liberal ideas to the Israeli audience.”

Diana Goldenberg
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

“I was honored to participate in the Adam Smith Society’s 2019 National Meeting in NYC—a unique space to join journalists, VCs, CEOs, and other Manhattan Institute fellows debating the greatest challenges of 21st-century capitalism.”

Paola Richter
Jones Graduate School of Business, Rice University
continue to enhance its influence on campus and steer the next phase of program development. Menken brings two decades of experience in membership and donor development, coalition building, event management, and public affairs. He will build on that experience in working to grow the student and alumni membership, increase alumni engagement, and help future business leaders craft compelling stories and messaging about capitalism.

Recently, the Adam Smith Society’s local professional chapter in New York hosted MI’s Thomas W. Smith fellow, Heather Mac Donald, to discuss her latest book: The Diversity Delusion. Earlier this year, Mac Donald spoke about the book’s themes at a “Free Speech on Campus” panel at the 2019 South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference in Austin, Texas. The panel featured policy experts from across the ideological spectrum weighing in on recent controversies related to free speech, victimhood ideology, and intellectual freedom in higher education.

Just as the Adam Smith Society draws inspiration from its namesake, the Manhattan Institute considers one of its lodestars to be economist and philosopher F. A. Hayek—who himself played a role in MI’s founding. When Sir Antony Fisher, a British World War II fighter pilot turned poultry magnate, told Hayek of his interest in running for Parliament, the latter advised him instead to advance the cause of freedom on the battlefield of ideas. Fisher then founded several think tanks, MI being one of them. To celebrate and promote Hayek’s legacy, the Institute presents an annual award to an author whose book, published within the last two years, best reflects Hayek’s vision of economic and individual liberty. Conceived and funded by MI trustee Tom Smith, the MI Hayek Prize, with its $50,000 award, is among the world’s most generous book prizes. This year’s winner, who delivered the fifteenth annual Hayek Lecture on June 6, is Dartmouth professor of economics Douglas A. Irwin, author of Clashing over Commerce:

Limited government and the rule of law, along with competitive markets, are essential bulwarks of a free society. Yet over the past 150 years, Supreme Court decisions at variance with the original meaning of the Constitution have undermined both principles. In his latest book, Clarence Thomas and the Lost Constitution, City Journal editor-at-large Myron Magnet contends that Justice Thomas’s jurisprudence presents a unique path forward for restoring America as a free, self-governing nation made up of independent-minded, self-reliant citizens. Former U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey offered high praise for the book: “Written for the lay reader, this brief volume makes a compelling case for originalism. With the light it shines on culture, character, race, and liberty under law, though, the book is about more than just Clarence Thomas and originalism, in the same sense that Moby Dick is about more than just whaling. A great read.”

MI was pleased to give copies of Clarence Thomas and the Lost Constitution to all those who attended the Institute’s nineteenth annual Alexander Hamilton Award Dinner, where we honored U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and retiring Manhattan Institute president Larry Mone. With her characteristic grace and good humor, DeVos issued a clarion call on behalf of giving students, parents, and teachers greater freedom from government to pursue educational...
excellence—and singled out MI senior fellow Max Eden for his watershed research on the

Mone, reflecting on his 24 years as president, noted that no argument is ever permanently won. As the emergent affinity for socialism among younger generations demonstrates, backsliding is an ever-present danger. In addition to winning new arguments and breaking new ground, it is necessary to keep re-winning old arguments, too.

We are grateful for all those who supported MI through the Hamilton Dinner—and to those who help sponsor our work from cities and states across America. As the Institute enters a new era in its history, we continue to depend on your generosity to advance MI’s core principles of economic choice and individual responsibility. I wish you and your loved ones a happy summer.

Sincerely,

Reihan Salam