



20 25

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE



**Manhattan
Institute**



Manhattan Institute works to improve the quality of life in America's cities, expand economic opportunity, promote educational excellence, and overcome ethnic and cultural divides.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2025: What Civilization Demands

Dear Friends and Supporters:

I recently had the pleasure of reading Lionel Shriver's *The Mandibles*, a novel published in 2016 that I found newly resonant in 2026. Set in the near future, the novel chronicles the rapid, agonizing descent of a multigenerational American family as a sovereign debt crisis transforms the world's lone superpower into a hyperinflationary wasteland. While we are not, thankfully, living through the full-blown economic calamity the author imagines, many of the cultural and political tendencies she describes are uncomfortably familiar.

For one, Shriver portrays a feckless political class that is always making grand promises unmoored from any sense of limits or trade-offs. When disappointment inevitably sets in, these tribunes of the people stoke ethnic resentment and class envy to evade responsibility for their failures. In the book, going after the supposedly greedy and privileged makes for gratifying mass politics, but it does not solve anyone's problems. It turns out that expropriating wealth is no substitute for creating it, and that soak-the-rich crusades can have the nasty side effect of undermining faith in institutions and the basic habits of public order. Without spoiling the plot, suffice it to say that the promise of a democratic socialist utopia doesn't quite pan out, and things do not go well.

What *The Mandibles* represents, to me, is the fragility of civilization. Shriver puts it starkly: "As the urban crime rate escalated across the nation, Florence marveled that it had ever been possible to walk down the road with a wallet, or to wear a fancy watch. Late in the day, she appreciated the miracle of civilization." Civilization is a miracle precisely because it is made of intangibles—trust, restraint, legitimacy,





Reihan Salam
President

reciprocity—that are as hard to rebuild as they are easy to destroy. And it is often urban disorder, more than any abstract argument, that forces people to recognize how modern life depends on social trust. Cities are civilization in concentrated form, and when norms break down there, the loss is immediate, concrete, and contagious.

“Civilization is a miracle precisely because it is made of fragile intangibles—trust, restraint, legitimacy, reciprocity—that are as hard to rebuild as they are easy to destroy. And it is often urban disorder, more than any abstract argument, that forces people to recognize how modern life depends on social trust.”

— Reihan Salam

We cannot wait until it is so “late in the day.” Leadership matters: competent, grounded leadership that can grapple with hard choices, think several steps ahead, and defend what works even when it isn’t fashionable. But leadership alone is not enough. A free society also depends on a shared commitment to equality before the law, meritocracy, and ordered liberty. If we are not vigilant in defending these ideals, we will descend into social breakdown sooner than anyone imagines. We saw flashes of our post-values world in the riots and disorder of 2020; we saw it later in the lawless encampments that terrorized our elite universities; and we see it today in the mobs targeting houses of worship.

If we measure the success of our institutions by the virtues they profess instead of by their actual outcomes—safety, literacy, solvency—we have already begun the descent into the disorder that Shriver describes. Fulsome professions of compassion and generosity have their place, but they are no substitute for the quiet, unglamorous work of maintaining public order and instilling a sense of personal responsibility.

That is why Manhattan Institute exists and why I’m proud to share what we accomplished in 2025, and to invite you, now, to help us carry that work forward in 2026. We exist to translate durable principles into



practical policy. Merit matters; it is how we reward pro-social behavior, encourage excellence, and preserve the legitimacy of institutions that our fellow Americans are asked to trust. The rule of law matters; equality before the law is not a slogan but the essential answer to grievance in a pluralistic democracy. And the balance of freedom and responsibility matters because freedom without shared norms of decency and respect will dissolve into disorder.

In 2025, those principles needed defending. Badly. We answered that call. Throughout the year, Manhattan Institute advanced investigations that exposed corruption, scholarship that moved policy, and fundamental arguments, bolstered by public-opinion research, that helped shift the culture. We didn't retreat to safer ground or convince ourselves that our job was merely to "convene conversations." We fought to win.

In New York and other great American cities, we stood against the rising tide of socialism and against the creeping normalization of disorder. Our work helped clarify where soft-on-crime governance and fiscal fantasy actually lead:

not to a more humane city but to a less functional one, hardest on the working people who can least afford it. Our scholars briefed governors, members of Congress, and transit and municipal officials on what it takes to restore basic competence and public order to our urban centers.

Nationally, we didn't just talk about policy solutions. We saw them through. Our work helped inform executive action to roll back DEI mandates across federal agencies, to restore the recognition of biological sex in key areas of policy, and to challenge the use of disparate-impact frameworks that have too often been wielded to dismantle merit-based standards across American life. Our model legislation has advanced in several states, and MI scholars have helped write governing agendas, sometimes literally, for leaders who want to curb wayward cities' worst excesses and reestablish the link between rights and responsibilities.

And through *City Journal's* investigative journalism, we pursued stories that certain powerful people hoped would remain unexamined: large-scale welfare fraud, extremist



networks probing the vulnerabilities of America's supply chains, and the mechanics of ideological capture at institutions that should be dedicated to truth-seeking. *City Journal* doesn't publish fan service or opinions you've heard a thousand times before. It sparks investigations, hearings, and reforms, which is exactly what serious journalism is supposed to do in a self-governing republic.

The pages that follow detail that fight. You'll see how Manhattan Institute pursued and won concrete victories that made Americans safer, freer, and more prosperous. The work is urgent, but it is also intellectual, patient, and, when done honestly, humbling. It requires research, persuasion, coalition-building, and the willingness to say what is true even when it is unpopular. We can't outsource that work to politicians, and we can't assume that it will take care of itself. That work is what our scholars endeavor to do, day after day, and I hope you will find their efforts as inspiring as I do.

I also want to express my gratitude for the Board's leadership and, above all, for Paul Singer's years of

stewardship as Chair. Paul's vision and resolve have been indispensable to everything Manhattan Institute has accomplished. With Betsy DeVos now at the helm, a leader who has never flinched from a fight worth having, we are built for what comes next.

I hope you will join us in defending that miracle.

Sincerely,

Reihan Salam

President, Manhattan Institute

IN FOCUS

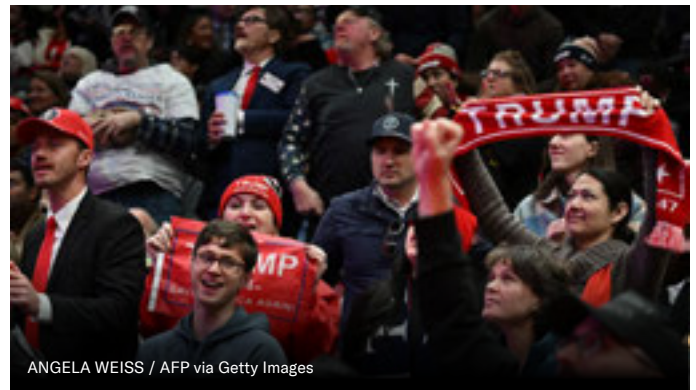
The Fight for American Conservatism

The American Right is up for grabs. A multiethnic, anti-woke, working-class coalition elected President Trump, providing broad support for his conservative policies and offering a glimpse of the future with new and exciting coalitions in American politics. Yet a strain of right-wing grievance politics now threatens to sink this movement with its resentment of legal immigrants and conspiracy theories that malign Jews and other ethnic groups.

At MI, we remain committed to our winning principles: ordered liberty, colorblind meritocracy, and the rule of law. These are not just good ideas; they are America's founding principles. They offer a proven and unifying platform that can be the basis for a durable political majority. And they are the best chance that we have for preserving and advancing the American experiment in self-government. These are lofty ideals, but they are also the true means by which Americans can rise above the fringe fixations of ideologues. As our scholars translate ideas into executive action, legislative reform, and institutional change at every level of government, we sense the culture shifting in our favor. In our fight to counter grievance politics on the left and on the right and to offer policymakers an alternative, we lead with results. Our hard-hitting journalism exposes wrongdoing, bad ideas, and corruption. Our scholars fashion the policy solutions to fix these problems across government and culture.

Our new polling initiative is quickly establishing MI as a go-to source of information on public opinion, especially when it comes to understanding the new landscape of the American Right. Vice President of External Affairs **Jesse Arm** led a [focus group](#) of young Trump voters, finding that they are not characterized by ideological consistency

or economic anxiety but that they view politics as something more like entertainment. Both the polling and the focus group received significant attention from media and elected officials.



Arm also led a December 2025 [polling study](#) examining the policy preferences and attitudes of young right-wingers toward identity politics, populism, and more. The new Republican base “contains a sizable contingent of people more progressive on policy, more conspiratorial, and more bigoted than the old base,” Arm [summarized](#) in *City Journal*. “They are numerous enough to matter. But they are not the median Republican voter. The coalition’s beating heart remains ... older, more churchgoing, more hawkish, more pro-Israel, and uninterested in burning the country down.” Understanding and identifying this new Republican base is only half the battle. This group is particularly vulnerable to right-wing grievance politics, and the Republican Party needs to convince them that a “politics of order, prosperity, and national strength” will make them and the country flourish.



Senior fellow **Christopher F. Rufo**'s reporting and activism continue to change the facts on the ground in American culture. Early in the year, Rufo was instrumental in informing the Trump administration's approach to fighting the racist diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies that had taken hold in important American institutions. Rufo's work informed President Trump's day-one [executive order](#) abolishing the "diversity, equity, and inclusion" bureaucracy in the federal government and helped to shape the administration's response to similarly caustic programs in higher education, as well as the administration's [actions](#) to reverse Biden-era promotion of pornographic material in elementary schools. In August, President Trump [ordered](#) the U.S. Department of Education to collect racial admissions data from universities—essential to monitor schools potentially flouting the Supreme Court's ruling against the use of racial preferences in admissions. This action draws heavily on the work of former fellow **Renu Mukherjee**, who proposed the [policy](#) in *City Journal* and also met with White House officials in March 2025 to discuss persistent racial preference schemes in higher education.

MI's [model legislation](#) promoting colorblind meritocracy in state university systems, written by Rufo and senior fellow and Director of Constitutional Studies **Ilya Shapiro**, informed legislation in Iowa, where Governor Kim Reynolds signed a wide-ranging [anti-DEI bill](#) into law.

The left-wing identitarianism fueling campus anti-Semitism is compounded by universities' noxious habit of accepting funding from America's adversaries—countries that are all too happy to press their interests, sow discord, and foster extremism among students, faculty, and administrators. MI Paulson Policy Analyst **Neetu Arnold** led the charge for greater vigilance concerning foreign influence in our universities. In May, Senator Ted Cruz introduced [federal legislation](#) on foreign-funds transparency based on Arnold's [research and recommendations](#).

In September, the U.S. Department of Education [announced](#) that it will end discretionary funding to several Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI) grant programs that exclusively fund institutions based on racial quotas. The announcement draws heavily on the work of adjunct

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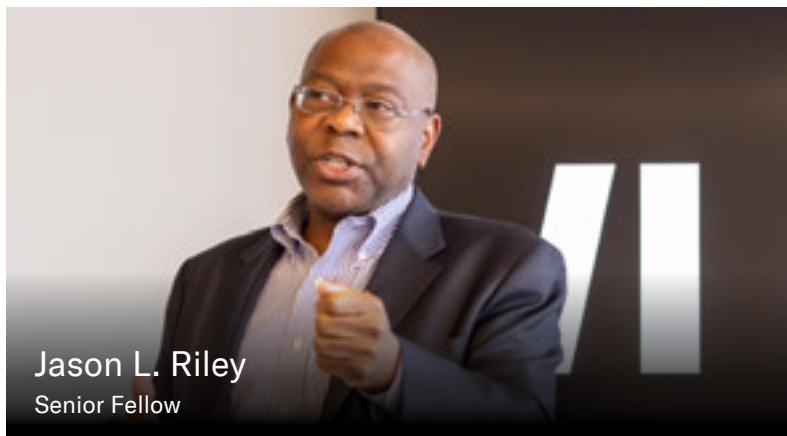
fellow **Dan Morenoff**, whose [report](#) “Enforcing the Law on Colorblind Admissions: Stop Unconstitutional Discrimination and Fund Better Alternatives” called for abolishing MSI grants and replacing them with need- and merit-based alternatives.

Beyond the campus, senior fellow and Director of Research **Judge Glock** aims to restore merit to government contracting, which costs American taxpayers billions of dollars each year. Glock’s [research](#) on racial favoritism in minority contracting demonstrates that the practice raises costs and generates fraud while doing little to help disadvantaged minorities. His work informed a [bill](#) from Senator Mike Lee that would put an end to racial preferences in federal contracting. In 2026, Glock will continue to press the case for ending race-based contracting at the federal and state levels.

MI’s fight against state-sanctioned racism and DEI is built on the foundational work of Thomas W. Smith Fellow **Heather Mac Donald**. Her widely circulated piece “[Disparate Impact Thinking Is Destroying Our Civilization](#)” anticipated an April 2025 [executive order](#) from President Trump that ended the use of disparate-impact liability throughout the federal government. The

premise of disparate impact is the false belief that any measurable racial disparity at all is necessarily the result of illegal racial discrimination. The order dispenses with this anti-meritocratic legal theory, which has prevented the use of cognitive tests for teachers, SAT requirements for college admissions, and countless other standards. The U.S. Department of Justice followed up with an [announcement](#) that disparate impact would no longer be considered in civil rights enforcement for federally funded programs.

To combat polarizing racial grievance on both the far left and the far right and to present an alternative to pernicious theories like disparate impact, MI scholars make the case for colorblind meritocracy across the country. In May, senior fellow **Jason L. Riley** published [The Affirmative Action Myth](#), arguing that equal treatment under the law is the most promising way forward for black Americans. Throughout 2025, Riley brought a hopeful and appealing message of the opportunity created by equality to mass media, with appearances on [Fox News](#), [C-SPAN](#), and [PBS](#). Furthermore, as John A. Paulson Fellow **Roland Fryer** has repeatedly shown, all Americans flourish when our education system eschews empathetic fads and embraces evidence-based teaching methods. In a *Wall Street Journal* [op-ed](#) in September, Fryer drew on his years of experience studying education gaps to admonish school administrators to abandon “the soft bigotry of low expectations.” This straightforward work drew praise from education writers across the political aisle, including in the [New York Times](#).



Jason L. Riley
Senior Fellow



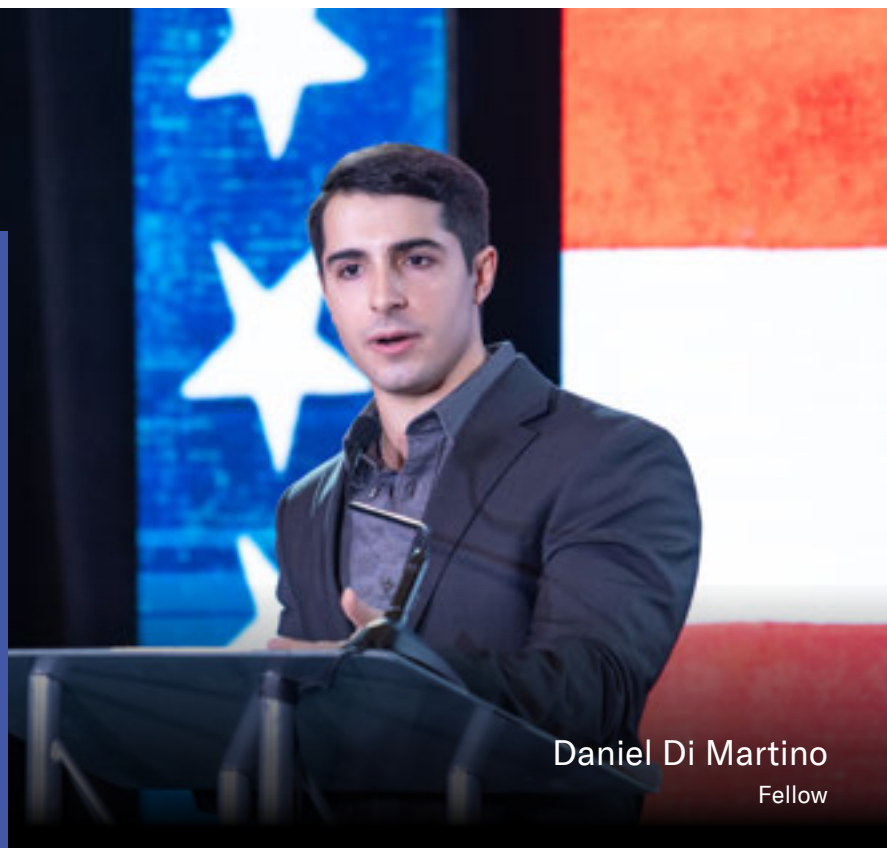
Just as MI scholars have worked to hasten the retreat of destructive racialism from American society, so too have they worked to undo the institutional grip of radical and scientifically ignorant gender ideology. President Trump’s day-one [executive order](#) restoring the recognition of two sexes in the federal government included a crucial definition written by fellow **Colin Wright** in consultation with other evolutionary biologists. Wright is a leading defender of the concept of the sex binary, publishing an influential [article](#) on the topic in the November issue of the *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. Thanks to Wright and the other intrepid MI scholars working on restoring scientific accuracy to American debates around sex and gender policy, “sex” is now formally defined by the executive order as “an individual’s immutable biological classification as either male or female,” and it is “not a synonym for and does not include the concept of ‘gender identity.’”

Early in his second term, President Trump signed an [executive order](#) prohibiting federal dollars from funding or otherwise sponsoring gender transition surgeries for minors. The order was informed by senior fellow **Leor**

Sapir’s years of tireless work across popular publications and professional scientific outlets exposing the dangers of ideologically driven medical interventions that modify the sex traits of minors with gender dysphoria. Sapir joined a politically diverse group of authors to write an important evidence-based [review](#) of pediatric gender medicine for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—demonstrating the lack of evidence for interventions such as puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgeries. Analysis of this issue published by *City Journal* went megaviral internationally in 2025, when a [column](#) by a board-certified plastic surgeon, describing how his industry colleagues are performing unnecessary, disfiguring, and permanently damaging mastectomies on minors, was shared by author J. K. Rowling on social media.

Radical gender ideologues continue to advocate for invasive procedures on children, but thanks to MI’s work—including Sapir’s efforts to inform state-level restrictions on such practices—the tide is beginning to turn.

Di Martino's issue brief advocating for increased appropriations for immigration court staffing was incorporated into the Senate version of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which subsequently passed in the House.



Daniel Di Martino
Fellow

No less contentious than matters of race and gender, immigration policy remained the subject of intense debate in 2025. Fellow **Daniel Di Martino** stood out as a voice of reason, making the case for more effective immigration enforcement as well as reforms to high-skill immigration that will strengthen prosperity and social cohesion in the United States. Di Martino's [issue brief](#) advocating for increased appropriations for immigration court staffing was incorporated into the Senate version of the [One Big Beautiful Bill Act](#), which subsequently passed in the House. The law nearly triples funding for immigration courts, allowing the federal government to deal more efficiently with the extensive asylum-case backlog that feeds illegal immigration. Di Martino has also lent his [expertise](#) on Venezuela, which he left as a teenager, to ongoing debates about Nicolás Maduro's arrest and the failures of socialism in a once-prosperous nation.

Furthermore, Cities policy analyst **Santiago Vidal Calvo's** August [column in *City Journal*](#), arguing that Congress should not repeal universities' student-visa exemption, predicted policy changes in the [H-1B approval process](#) released by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services that same month.

Preserving the prosperous American economy and virtuous yet ambitious American character necessitates preserving individual liberty as well. Senior fellow **Nicole Stelle Garnett** has been a leading advocate for eliminating legal provisions at the state and federal levels that discriminate against faith-based service providers, particularly in the education sector. Together with groups representing several faith traditions, Garnett established [ReligiousEquality.net](#), a site showcasing the egregious persistence of religious discrimination in state and federal law.



Analysts have noted the “Ilya Shapiro Effect”—crediting Shapiro as one of the most productive writers of briefs in the nation.

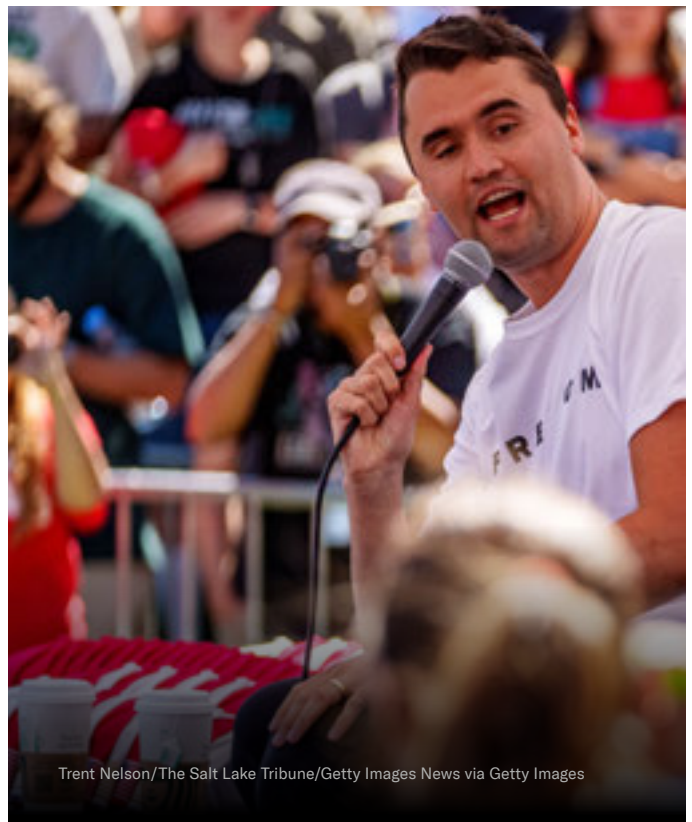
Photo by Nathaniel Johnston Photography

MI continues to be a significant presence in the legal world as well. MI’s amicus program, led by Director of Constitutional Studies and author of *Lawless* **Ilya Shapiro**, defended liberty, equality, and the rule of law in court. Analysts have [noted](#) the “Ilya Shapiro Effect”—crediting Shapiro as one of the most productive writers of briefs in the nation. The numbers speak for themselves: under Shapiro’s leadership, MI submitted 39 [briefs](#) in 2025 on First Amendment rights, criminal justice, gender ideology, and more, including 16 briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court in support for a petition for a writ of certiorari; 9 briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court on the merits of cases; 13 briefs in federal courts of appeals; and 1 in a state supreme court.

Director of Legal Policy **James R. Copland** continues to fight against stifling regulatory overreach and ideological distortions of the free market. In September, Copland [testified](#) before the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services on proxy voting, focusing on the threat posed by shareholder proposals advancing social or political agendas.

Beyond policy, our scholars serve as role models for young Americans seeking guidance on how to counter a prevailing cultural sense of cynicism and nihilism. In *The Free Press*, senior fellow **Rob Henderson** wrote about [“downwardly mobile” elites](#) who seek to destabilize our political coalitions with divisive envy. And Henderson had the solemn distinction of being the last person to sit down for a recorded long-form [interview](#) with Charlie Kirk, before the young activist and political organizer’s assassination. Like Kirk, who was especially committed to reaching out to young men and giving them a productive, pro-American alternative to hateful ideology and morally bankrupt grievance politics, Henderson produces incisive social commentary that gives the language for his significant following to articulate—and reject—the temptation of worldviews fueled by resentment.

Shaping the future of American conservatism and taking back the Right from conspiratorial and racist grifters starts with successfully advancing timeless American principles in the arenas of policy and culture. We are immensely grateful for the opportunity to preserve and perpetuate America’s founding ideals and are confident of their enduring truth and value as we seek to build a new conservative governing coalition. To this end, MI will continue building on our successes in the year ahead, fortifying bedrock principles of ordered liberty, meritocracy, and the rule of law in 2026 and beyond.




Trent Nelson/The Salt Lake Tribune/Getty Images News via Getty Images




Ryan Thorpe, Christopher F. Rufo

The Largest Funder of Al-Shabaab Is the Minnesota Taxpayer




Jesse Arm

The Rise of Luigism



Stu Smith

The Radical Group Backing the Palestinian Youth Movement



Christopher F. Rufo, Hannah Grossman

The NSA's Secret Sex Chats

IMAGE CREDITS

"The Largest Funder of Al-Shabaab is the Minnesota Taxpayer" photo by Abuukar Mohamed Muhidin/Anadolu via Getty Images, "The Rise of Luigism" photo by Leon Neal/Getty Images News via Getty Images, "The Radical Group Backing the Palestinian Youth Movement" photo by KEREM YUCEL/AFP via Getty Images, "The NSA's Secret Sex Chats" photo by BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP via Getty Images

IN FOCUS

City Journal Investigates

The year 2025 was a banner year for Manhattan Institute’s flagship publication, *City Journal*. A hub for investigative journalism, sharp analysis, and informed opinion, *City Journal* shapes the discourse and drives federal action, catalyzing policy reform across multiple fronts.

City Journal has earned its reputation for fearless writing. Its explosive exposés force mainstream institutions to pay attention to sources and stories that they would rather ignore—or that their ideological blinkers cause them not to see in the first place.

In November, **Christopher F. Rufo** and investigative reporter **Ryan Thorpe** uncovered massive welfare fraud in the state of Minnesota, with millions of dollars allegedly funneled by members of the Somali community back to the Somalia-based terrorist organization Al-Shabaab, which takes a cut of informal money transfers. The [story](#) was picked up by the [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [Associated Press](#), [CBS News](#), and [Reuters](#). Fox News host Laura Ingraham credited Rufo and Thorpe with breaking the news of the scandal. The story further was amplified on social media by [President Trump](#), [Vice President Vance](#), [Speaker of the House Mike Johnson](#), [Elon Musk](#), and many others.

This attention quickly translated into action. Thorpe met with staffers from the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the office of U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. The Trump administration is actively investigating whether tax money went to Al-Shabaab, according to Secretary Bessent, and the U.S. Department of Justice has already charged 78 individuals with fraud, for what White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller [called](#) “the single greatest theft of taxpayer dollars in American history.” House Oversight Committee

Chairman Rep. James Comer [launched an investigation](#) into “widespread fraud in Minnesota’s social services programs,” and Governor Tim Walz [announced](#) that he will not seek a third term—all after Rufo and Thorpe broke the story nationwide.

Earlier in the year, Rufo and former investigative reporter **Hannah Grossman** cultivated sources inside the federal government to [expose](#) sexually explicit and ideologically driven employee chat logs within the National Security Agency. Activists inside the agency had limited access to the taxpayer-funded internal messaging system and claimed shelter through LGBTQ+ “employee resource groups” under the banner of DEI. The same day that *City Journal* published the report, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard condemned the conduct and pledged accountability. Rufo and Grossman’s investigation ultimately resulted in the administration firing more than 100 intelligence officers and revoking their security clearances for participating in the chats.

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In July, *City Journal* published Rufo’s “[Manhattan Statement on Higher Education](#),” a road map for reform in higher education. It demands that our universities advance truth, colorblind equality, freedom of speech, the highest standard of civil discourse, and full transparency as a precondition for federal funding. The statement, signed by Jordan Peterson, Victor Davis Hanson, Carol Swain, Ben Shapiro, and more than three dozen other leaders in education reform and pedagogy, has been endorsed by Secretary of Education Linda McMahon. It continues to guide education policy at the federal level and in states committed to educational excellence.

“Congratulations @realchrisrufo and @ManhattanInst for envisioning a compelling roadmap to restore integrity and rigor to the American academy!”



— Secretary of Education
Linda McMahon

Senior fellow and Director of Higher Education Policy **John Sailer**’s investigative work routinely unearths outrageous and unconstitutional university policies and programs. After Sailer’s *City Journal* reporting [exposed](#) the University of California President’s Postdoctoral Fellowship Program as a recruitment vehicle for scholars who “embrace positions on the fringe of leftist politics,” including, in the words of one fellowship recipient, “on the need for ‘dismantling’ the ‘carceral state;’” the UC system announced that it would [shut the program down](#). Sailer, policy analyst **Santiago Vidal Calvo**, and other MI scholars continue to hold public universities accountable by using a variety of investigative methods to expose behind-the-scenes corruption. Their dogged pursuit of public records informs original fact-based reporting that has revealed the mechanics of ideological capture

at America’s universities—from secret DEI mandates to discriminatory hiring practices that violate civil rights law. This work has armed policymakers, university trustees, and the public with critical evidence for legal action and policy reform.

After **Judge Glock**’s *City Journal* reporting on “harm reduction” programs that provide paraphernalia to drug users by way of federally funded vending machines, White House officials took notice. On the heels of Glock’s briefing to the president’s Domestic Policy Council, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services committed to ensuring that federal funds are never used for such programs again.

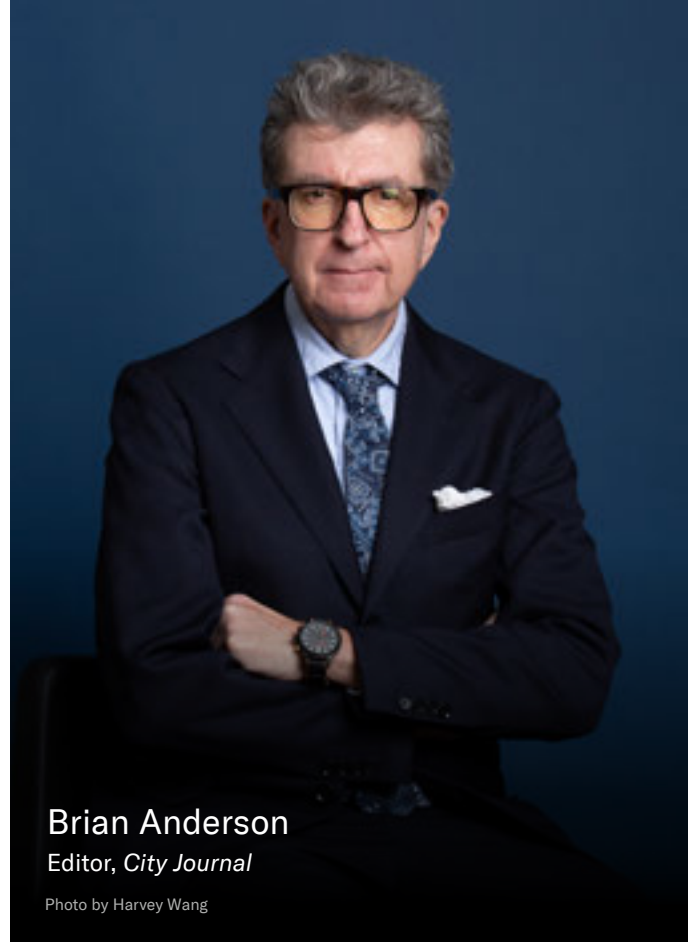
Investigative reporter **Christina Buttons**’s *City Journal* [feature](#) on youth residential treatment centers in Utah, “Havens for the Troubled,” used data and hard evidence to push back on the deeply misguided narrative that such facilities do more harm than good for teens and should be shut down—a narrative pushed by celebrities like Paris Hilton and accepted uncritically by the mainstream press. On the contrary, Buttons demonstrated that residential treatment is one of the few settings capable of stabilizing troubled young people who can’t be safely served elsewhere. These facilities have always been a vital part of the mental-health-care continuum available to teens with serious emotional distress. Her reporting directly resulted in personnel and policy changes to the Utah state committee that advises on rulemaking and minimum safety requirements for such programs.

Investigative analyst **Stuart Smith**, an expert in infiltrating radicals’ events and publicizing videos of their remarks, is emerging as a leading voice in the effort to expose extremism. Smith’s methods don’t require any editorializing; he simply reveals what ideological extremists say among themselves about their real goals and motivations for undermining American society. For example, after a conference organized by the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) in August, Smith published a [piece in *City Journal*](#) on how far-left networks are targeting the F35 Lightning II program’s global supply chain as part of a broader anti-Western subversion campaign. He and *City Journal* senior editor **Charles Fain Lehman** met with staff from the Office of Senator Tom Cotton to discuss Smith’s findings and their implications for U.S. military

readiness, allied operations, and industrial-base resilience. Cotton, who is chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, [sent a letter](#) to FBI Director Kash Patel, urging an investigation into a PYM member for endangering U.S. national security, citing Smith's work.

Exposing and countering domestic extremists was an MI priority in 2025, as organizations dedicated to undermining the West gained traction. In September, President Trump signed an executive memo, "[Countering Domestic Terrorism and Organized Political Violence](#)," which established a strategy to investigate and disrupt extremist networks. The memorandum was heavily influenced by the work of legal policy fellow **Tal Fortgang** that was [published in *City Journal*](#). Fortgang has written extensively on the challenge of civil terrorism—so-called direct actions involving unlawful activities like property destruction, harassment, and impeding traffic—and the legal tools available to confront it. Fortgang's work can help cities exit what senior fellow Douglas Murray called in *City Journal* the "[gray zone](#)" of political violence—when intimidation and disorder are neither fully condoned nor fully condemned. In a year when political violence took center stage, MI scholars like Fortgang, Murray, and **Jesse Arm** have taken to *City Journal's* pages to push back—helping Americans understand phenomena such as "[Luigism](#)," Arm's term for "the idea that violence is a legitimate response to the perceived injustices of capitalism." Helping policymakers and the public understand what is really going on is crucial for developing a battle plan against the disturbing trend of leftists celebrating violence.

Throughout 2025, Fortgang led a working coalition of researchers, analysts, attorneys, and journalists focused on combating domestic extremism. He facilitated their sharing of information and launching action-item projects. One such project, reforming the IRS's fiscal sponsorship program, was the subject of a Fortgang [op-ed](#) in the *Wall Street Journal* in December. Fortgang subsequently met with a range of state and federal officials to discuss legislation and regulation that will push extremist outfits out of the shadows—work that he will continue in 2026. Observing how lawbreakers cover their faces to evade accountability and create the conditions for extremist unrest, MI scholars writing in *City Journal* have



Brian Anderson
Editor, *City Journal*

Photo by Harvey Wang

led a successful campaign to modernize anti-masking laws across the country. [Model legislation](#) composed by MI's former Director of Policing and Public Safety, **Hannah Meyers**, and **Ilya Shapiro** has been adapted into law in five states, with several more currently debating MI-designed mask bans.

City Journal continues to innovate, reaching a wider and more influential audience than ever before. In autumn 2025, we launched our [City Journal College Rankings](#), a new data-driven rating system of 100 noteworthy American colleges and universities. The rankings, which score prominent schools on a 0–100 scale, serve as a necessary corrective to legacy rankings that tell families far too little about educational substance, campus environment, and institutional priorities. The project quickly garnered national attention, including a feature in a [Wall Street Journal editorial](#). In addition to assisting untold numbers of parents, it garnered the notice of key university administrators, who have held conversations about the methodology and implications with MI's Director of Higher Education Policy, John Sailer. This is an ongoing initiative that *City Journal* will update every fall.



IN FOCUS

Safety and Affordability in America's Cities

Zohran Mamdani's mayoralty will be a defining challenge for New York City in 2026. At Manhattan Institute, we remain committed to our home city and its flourishing. We will continue to expose, counter, and halt the spread of urban socialism. We will welcome and educate policymakers who are curious about our perspective and solutions. With socialism advancing, our work spans three critical fronts: we understand and distill the views and priorities of the electorate through groundbreaking polling; we partner with city, state, and federal officials to thwart the collectivist agenda and propose productive alternatives; and we define rhetorically and advance practically the cause of urban conservatism—a vision of thriving cities built on safety and security, economic growth, and public accountability.

Mamdani may reside in Gracie Mansion, but he is far from having a mandate. In an [October poll](#) of likely New York City voters, **Jesse Arm** found “a striking dissonance between Mamdani’s electoral strength and support for his progressive policy platform.” Despite his victory, which he won by garnering a mere 50% of the vote, Mamdani remains out of step with most New Yorkers, especially in policy matters central to MI, including public safety, transit, and education. This is a vulnerability that MI and *City Journal* will attack as Mayor Mamdani pursues his radical objectives.

Where hostile public opinion doesn't keep the mayor in check, state and federal laws inspired by MI proposals may offer effective alternatives—particularly where the Mamdani administration is failing to protect New York City residents. In July, President Trump signed an executive order, “[Ending Crime and Disorder on America's](#)

[Streets](#),” to tackle the public safety and humanitarian challenges of the seriously mentally ill and homeless. This executive order is the first real checkmate on the destructive Housing First approach to homelessness, which prioritizes getting people into housing without addressing their underlying addiction and health struggles that make stability difficult. Crucially, MI scholars **Stephen Eide**, **Carolyn Gorman**, **Rafael A. Mangual**, and **Judge Glock** informed the work of the White House team at each stage of the order's drafting and review processes. They have also been sought out by the [New York Times](#) for their insights into the flawed Housing First policy.

Nick Ohnell Fellow Rafael A. Mangual continues to dismantle destructive ideas about criminal justice, and give local, state, and federal lawmakers blueprints for keeping American cities safe. In May, Mangual's work culminated in a U.S. Department of Justice [announcement](#) that it would move to dismiss lawsuits filed by its civil rights division against the police departments of Minneapolis and Louisville. The department further announced that it would cease investigations launched—or retract findings of violations made—against law-enforcement agencies in six other jurisdictions. Informed by Mangual's work, the Trump administration is making it clear to officers that it won't undermine police readiness or morale for the sake of ideologically motivated witch hunts. This also reassures law-abiding residents of all colors, creeds, and income levels that the police will be there to respond to crime when it hits their communities.

In February, Mangual [testified](#) before the Tennessee House of Representatives in support of a proposed law that would keep dangerous repeat criminal offenders



Rafael A. Mangual
Nick Ohnell Fellow
Contributing Editor, *City Journal*

off the street. In September, the North Carolina General Assembly [passed “Iryna’s Law”](#) in the wake of a brutal murder on Charlotte’s light rail. The law tightens North Carolina’s pretrial release laws and draws heavily on the work of Mangual and fellow and *City Journal* senior editor **Charles Fain Lehman** concerning repeat offenders.

The future of America’s cities can be found today in America’s schools. After a staff briefing by Arm and senior fellow and Director of Cities **John Ketcham**, New York Governor Kathy Hochul [signed a bill](#) banning cell phones in K–12 public schools from bell to bell. Ketcham and Arm’s [model legislation](#) for a K–12 cell phone ban also informed reform efforts in other states. In 2025, we saw 15 states enact cell phone prohibitions to keep students focused during the school day, with early empirical work suggesting positive effects on student performance and engagement. School districts are also seeing a drop in absenteeism and more student engagement. That includes Spokane, Washington, home to the third largest school district in that state. In commenting on Spokane, Ketcham told reporters, “Once we get kids off the habitual use of smartphones, that will open new worlds for them, new ways of socializing and making friends. Exploring those avenues after school can certainly help in giving kids healthy alternatives.”

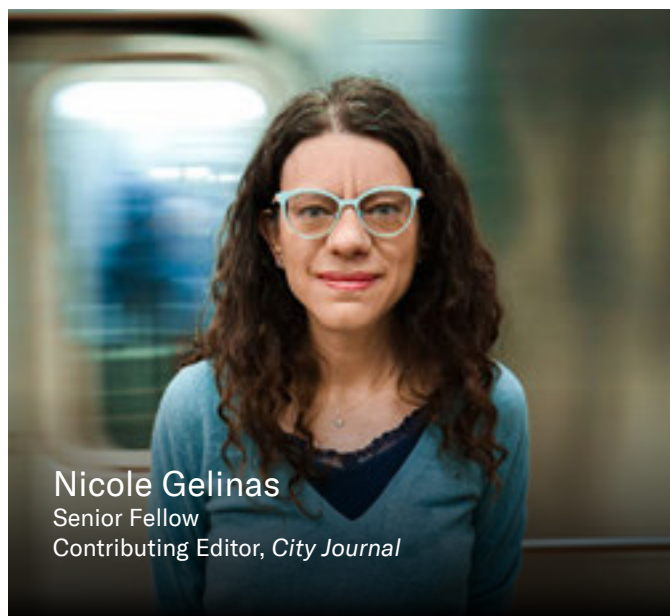
Whether briefing the administration of a Republican president or a Democratic governor, MI works to inform policymakers across political lines—a must as MI advances its brand of pragmatic urban conservatism against the

rising socialist tide. In New York and elsewhere, MI will continue to fight for urban life that is safe, prosperous, and free.

Housing costs are the crux of the affordability problem on which Mamdani so deftly ran his campaign, even if his solutions will make matters far worse. Senior fellow **Eric Kober** consistently has provided concrete, actionable, and sometimes surprising [ideas](#) for urban housing reform, including changes to zoning policy, affordability mandates, and even [parking requirements](#) for new construction. Given that government permitting for new construction is a central driver of development delays, senior fellow and Director of Research Judge Glock is on a mission to streamline costly permitting processes—including [allowing builders to opt for private contractors](#) rather than government bureaucrats.

Another threat to affordability is bloated and ineffective state and local governments—governments that, captured by public-sector unions, extract ever-higher tributes from working Americans.

Reforming public-sector unions is vital to unlocking growth and affordability in cities. Fellow **Ken Girardin**, new to MI in 2025, understands the politics of public-sector union influence and is working to curtail their power nationwide. Girardin submitted [comments](#) to the U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee explaining how the U.S. Department of Labor can strengthen rules meant to curb the improper financial activities of public-employee unions. Girardin will keep the pressure on in 2026, insisting that civil servants work *for* the American people, not against them.



Nicole Gelinas
Senior Fellow
Contributing Editor, *City Journal*



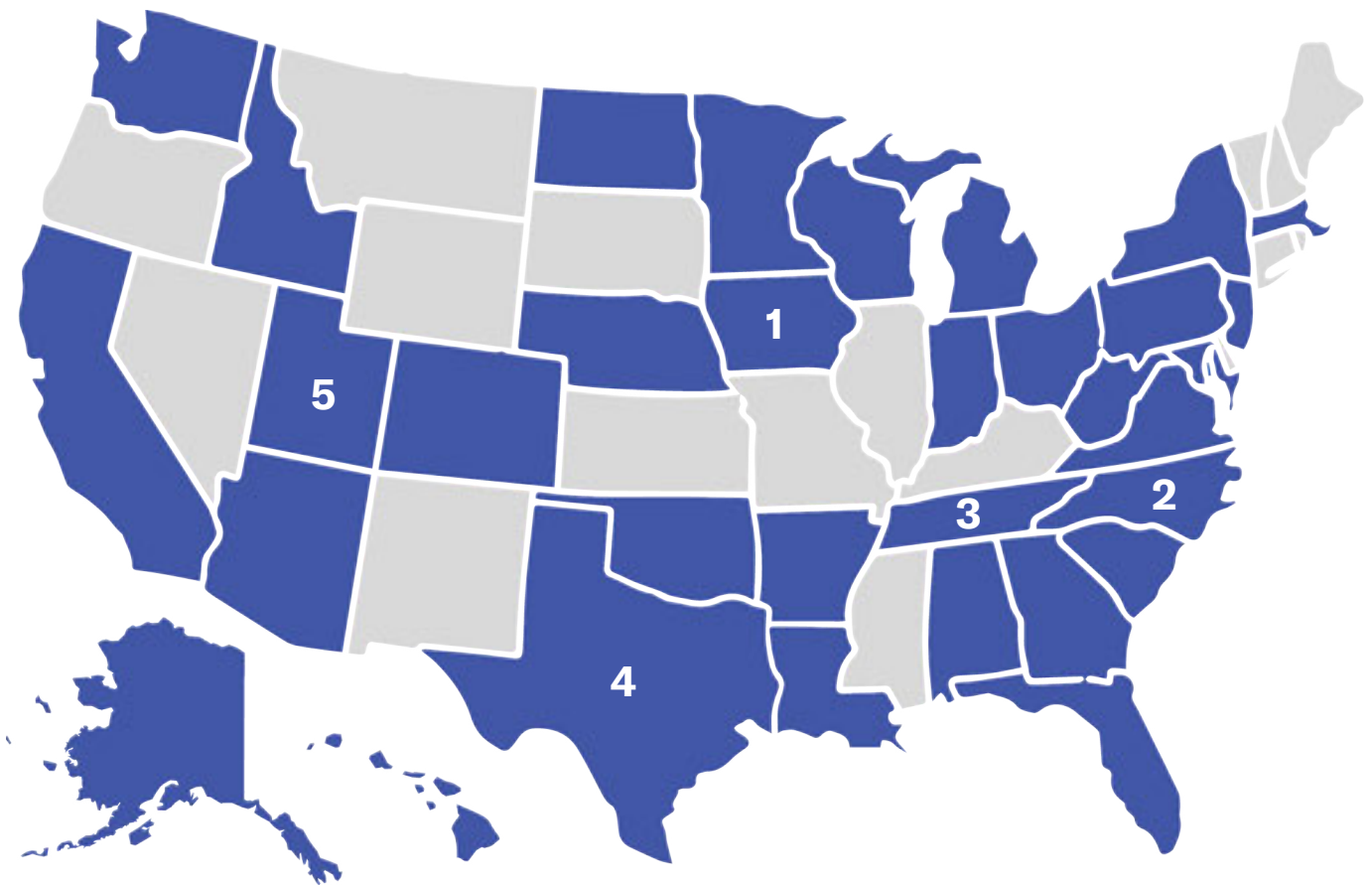
Housing costs are the crux of the affordability problem on which Mamdani so deftly ran his campaign, even if his solutions will make matters far worse.

An essential part of serving urban residents is keeping them moving: in a city like New York, local government and state agencies have a huge impact on the quality, speed, and safety of public transit. As one of the nation's most influential urban policy voices, senior fellow and *New York Times* contributing opinion writer **Nicole Gelinas** is especially incisive on the issue of transportation policy. Her analysis attracts the attention of federal officials and has had an impact in major urban centers across the country. For example, in September, Gelinas met with Federal Transit Administration administrator Marc Molinaro to discuss her *City Journal* piece "[Four Seconds on a Charlotte Train](#)," about the murder of 23-year-old Ukrainian refugee Iryna Zarutska. Gelinas

shared recommendations on the federal government's role in improving public safety on American transit systems. With the Mamdani administration poised to change course on successful crime-control strategies in and out of New York City's subway system, Gelinas's commentary will remain an important means of holding the mayor responsible in 2026.

When New York and America's cities thrive, so does the country. As we head into 2026 with a self-described democratic socialist in the New York City mayor's office, MI's brand of metropolitan, multiethnic, and meritocratic conservatism has never been more critical. Our scholars are prepared to hold Mamdani accountable, expose the hollowness and counter-productiveness of socialist policies, and defend the principles of free enterprise, law and order, and individual responsibility that make America and its cities safe, prosperous, and free.

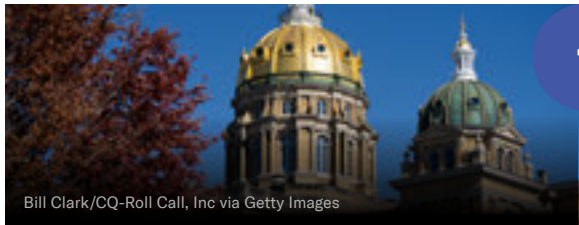
Our Influence Across America



Even in a year with heavy federal engagement, MI's impact was national in the most practical way: state by state. In 2025, MI engaged with lawmakers, local officials, and key stakeholders in 33 states. Through briefings, testimony, presentations, and policy discussions, MI scholars left an unmistakable mark on state policy across the country, spearheading efforts to restore meritocracy, improve public safety, remove cell phones from classrooms, and more.

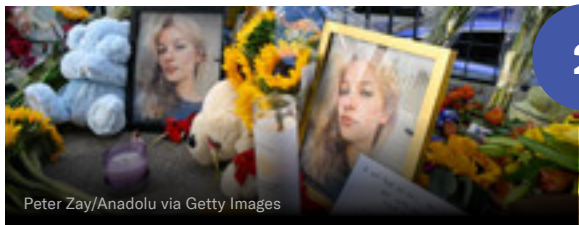
33
STATES ENGAGED
WITH MI IN 2025

Five Standout Examples of State Engagement



IOWA

Governor Kim Reynolds (R) signed three bills restricting DEI initiatives in state institutions and other recommendations featured in MI’s [“Abolish DEI Bureaucracies and Restore Colorblind Equality in Public Universities”](#) model legislation.



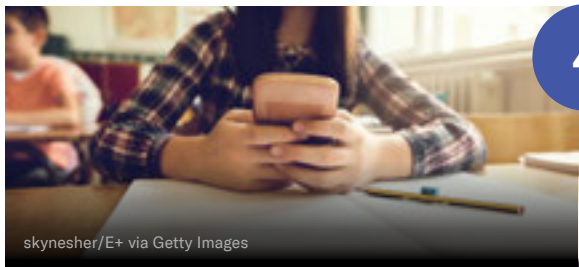
NORTH CAROLINA

The North Carolina General Assembly passed [“Iryna’s Law”](#) in the wake of the tragic killing on Charlotte’s light rail. The law tightens NC’s pretrial releases and draws heavily on the work of MI senior fellows Charles Fain Lehman and Rafael A. Mangual.



TENNESSEE

Tennessee General Assembly passed a [constitutional amendment](#) to expand pretrial detention of offenders charged with a serious violent offense. Rafael A. Mangual [testified](#) before the Tennessee Senate and House in support of the amendment, which will appear on Tennesseans’ ballots for final adoption in 2026.



TEXAS

Governor Greg Abbott (R) signed a bill mandating bell-to-bell bans on smartphones in public K–12 schools, largely mirroring MI’s [“Model Legislation to Restrict Smartphone Use in K–12 Public Schools.”](#) John Ketcham met with and provided feedback to the bill’s sponsor during Texas’s 2025 legislative session.



UTAH

At the invitation of Rep. Tyler Clancy (R), who is the [state homeless coordinator](#), MI scholars Rafael A. Mangual, Carolyn Gorman, and Charles Fain Lehman were appointed to serve on Utah’s Recovery & Justice Transition Team, which will address homelessness, substance abuse, mental illness, and incarceration.



UNIVERSITY CAMPUS RADICALISM: WHEN WILL IT END?



2025-2026 SCOTUS Preview

with Judge Michael Park, Saritha Komatireddy, Ilya Shapiro, and James R. Copland

SCOTUS PREVIEW: 2025-2026

Photo: Richard Sharrocks / Moment via Getty Images



AND PROTEST CULTURE



AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES, TWO YEARS AFTER OCTOBER 7

Photo by KENA BETANCUR/AFP via Getty Images



MAYOR ADAMS DROPS C

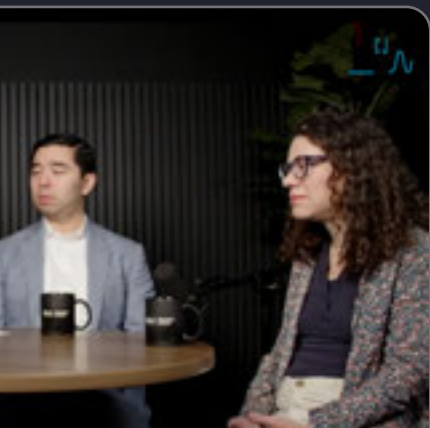


MASCULINITY UNDER FIRE: RECLAIMING STRENGTH & RESPONSIBILITY

Photo by ARIC BECKER / AFP via Getty Images, Stewart F. House / Stringer / Getty Images News



DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM'S RISE (FEAT. REIHAN SALAM)



Capturing and Engaging New Audiences

Today, Americans increasingly consume ideas in modular, targeted ways. To expand Manhattan Institute and *City Journal*'s reach in the modern media and digital information environment, MI leveraged our marketing team's multimedia capabilities to translate our scholars' rigorous research to new platforms.

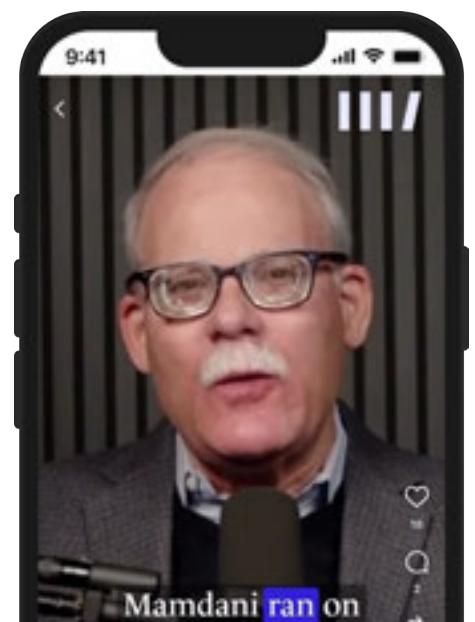
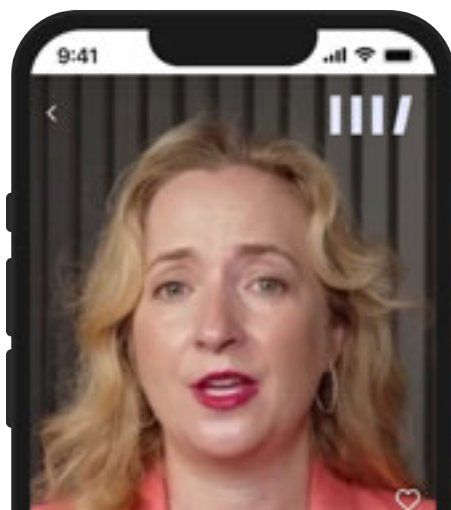
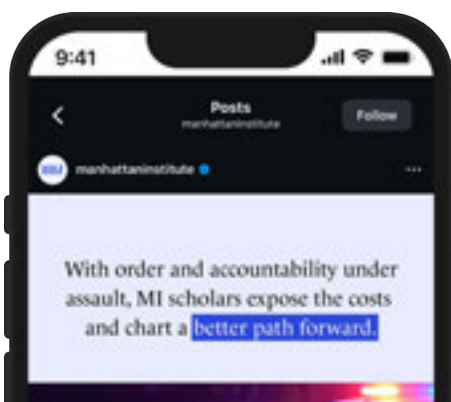
A consistent stream of short-form videos delivered key takeaways from our research to social-media channels in digestible and shareable one-minute segments, while maintaining the rigor and eloquence that define MI's work. Beyond increasing awareness of our ideas and familiarizing viewers with our scholars, short-form videos equip audiences with the arguments that they need as they engage their own communities.

MI's pursuit of educating and persuading new audiences led us to embrace new platforms. In April, we launched the *City Journal Podcast*, which is poised not only to increase its core audience via YouTube and audio

platforms but also to multiply its reach through organic and paid social-media strategies. In October, MI established the *City Journal Substack*. Substack is home to its own native audience, and we are excited to bring *City Journal*'s analysis to this new segment of readers.

In addition to expanding our reach to new viewers and readers, MI is committed to sustaining and improving our existing relationships. By continuing to invest in the content and design of e-mail products, our two flagship newsletters—*MI Weekly* and *City Journal Daily*—saw their net

subscriber counts grow by 106% and 57%, respectively, in one single year. This was achieved while consistently maintaining superior open rates, indicating the engagement level and quality of our lists. New and informative products that appeal to large audiences across age ranges and geography, such as the *City Journal College Rankings*, were also instrumental in driving visits and sign-ups through effective campaigns.





Ilya Shapiro

The Supreme Court Is Poised to Restore the President's Executive Power

Legal challenges to Trump's firings open the door for a shift in the Court's jurisprudence.

Photo by Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images News via Getty Images

Christopher F. Rufo, Hannah Grossman

The NSA's Secret Sex Chats

Intelligence officials maintained a chatroom to discuss polyamory and transgender surgeries, internal documents reveal.



Sanjana Friedman

Urban Anarchy

A San Francisco nonprofit's rise illustrates the unaccountable growth of homeless services.

Photo by Tayfun Coskun/Anadolu/Getty Images



Abigail Shrier

Cabinet of the Canceled

Trump has chosen people who understand the threat of government coercion—because they have experienced it firsthand.

Photo by gremlin/Getty Images



Ryan Thorpe, Christopher F. Rufo

"The Largest Funder of Al-Shabaab Is the Minnesota Taxpayer"

How some of the state's welfare funds ended up in the hands of a terror group

Photo by Abuukar Mohamed Muhidin/Anadolu via Getty Images



Christopher F. Rufo, Ryan Thorpe

Whistleblower: Lockheed Martin Awarded Bonuses Based on Race

The company allegedly required managers to reward employees "on the basis of their skin color alone and contrary to documented performance."

Photo by Orjan F. Ellingvag/Corbis via Getty Images

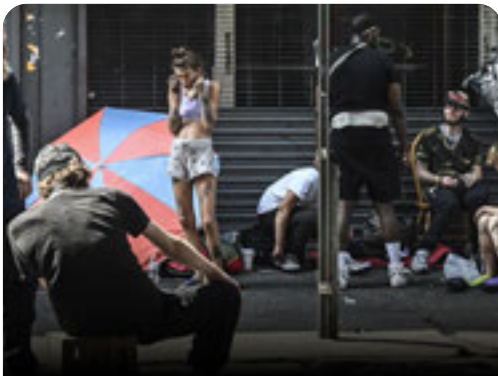


Heather Mac Donald

Trump's Unapologetic Defense of the Rule of Law

The president is right to activate the National Guard amid the lawless mayhem in California, which is being excused and dismissed by the state's leaders.

Photo by RINGO CHIU/AFP via Getty Images

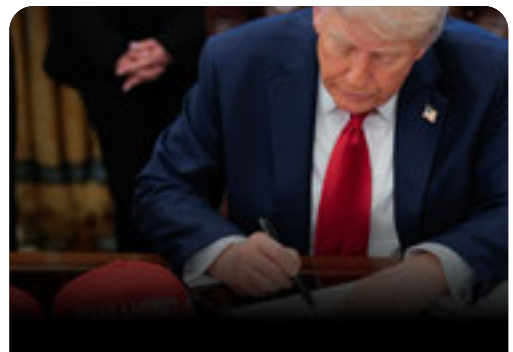


Charles Fain Lehman

Inside the East Coast's Largest Open-Air Drug Market

Can Philadelphia clean up Kensington's squalor?

Photo by Fatih Aktas/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images



Heather Mac Donald

Trump Takes His Biggest Step Yet Toward Restoring Meritocracy

The administration's executive order eliminating disparate-impact theory restores the 1964 Civil Rights Act to its original meaning.

Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images News via Getty Images

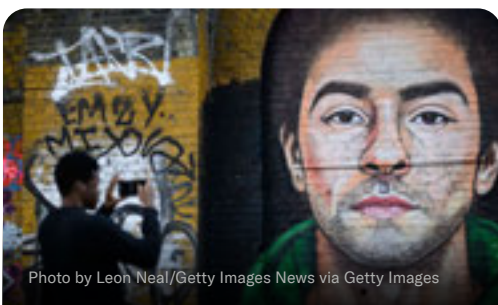


Photo by Leon Neal/Getty Images News via Getty Images

City Journal: Our Biggest Stories

City Journal's steadily growing investigative reporting came into its own in 2025 and made its impact felt across the country.

Senior fellow **Christopher F. Rufo** used *City Journal's* reach to blow the doors off several major scandals. The year started when he and former investigative reporter **Hannah Grossman** surfaced [“secret sex chats”](#) on a private NSA forum, reporting that led to a full-scale [investigation](#) from the Director of National Intelligence. Working with reporter **Ryan Thorpe**, Rufo helped a whistleblower show that defense contractor [Lockheed Martin “awarded bonuses based on race.”](#) Rufo and Thorpe closed the year with a [blockbuster report](#) on welfare fraud tied to Minnesota’s Somali community, a scandal that saw some taxpayer dollars end up in the hands of the terrorist group Al-Shabaab.

City Journal expanded its political reporting by telling the story of America’s changing electorate. We published detailed accounts of focus groups—a first for *City Journal*—featuring [regular New York City voters](#) and [young Republicans in Tennessee](#). The Tennessee poll reverberated online for capturing the tensions and aspirations reshaping the GOP base.

Alongside this new reporting, *City Journal* kept delivering sharp, high-impact commentary. Nationally, Thomas W. Smith Fellow **Heather Mac Donald** drew major attention for [defending](#) President Trump’s deployment of the National Guard in

[The NSA’s Secret Sex Chats](#)

Christopher F. Rufo, Hannah Grossman

[“The Largest Funder of Al-Shabaab Is the Minnesota Taxpayer”](#)

Christopher F. Rufo, Ryan Thorpe

[Whistleblower: Lockheed Martin Awarded Bonuses Based on Race](#)

Christopher F. Rufo, Ryan Thorpe

[The Supreme Court Is Poised to Restore the President’s Executive Power](#)

Ilya Shapiro

[Inside the East Coast’s Largest Open-Air Drug Market](#)

Charles Fain Lehman

[Cabinet of the Canceled](#)

Abigail Shrier

[Urban Anarchy](#)

Sanjana Friedman

[The Rise of Luigism](#)

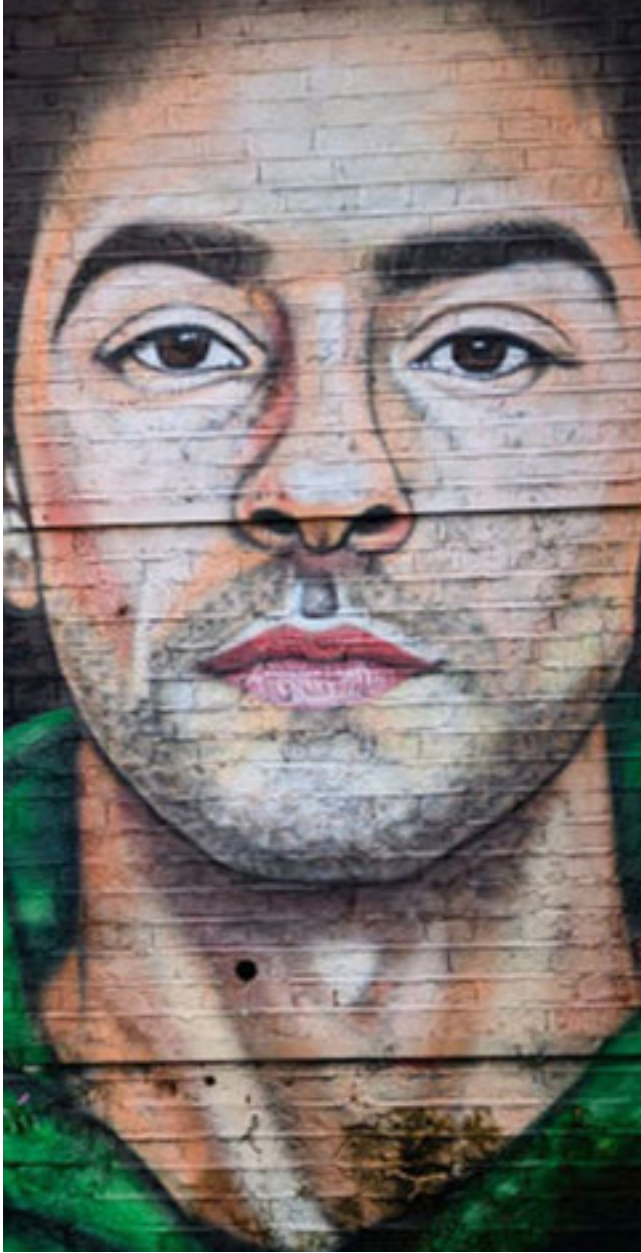
Jesse Arm

[Trump’s Unapologetic Defense of the Rule of Law](#)

Heather Mac Donald

[Trump Takes His Biggest Step Yet Toward Restoring Meritocracy](#)

Heather Mac Donald



Washington, DC, and for arguing that an executive order marked “his biggest step yet toward restoring meritocracy.” Senior fellow **Abigail Shrier** [spotlighted](#) the president’s “Cabinet of the Canceled.” And senior fellow **Ilya Shapiro** became the go-to voice on legal questions, including [analysis](#) of the Supreme Court’s executive-power rulings.

Urban affairs remained at the heart of the magazine. Senior editor **Charles Fain Lehman** published a vivid [exposé](#) of Kensington, a neighborhood in Philadelphia with an open-air drug market. Fellow **Sanjana Friedman**—a new addition to MI in 2025—produced a definitive [case study](#) of Urban Alchemy, the San Francisco homelessness nonprofit that “illustrates the unaccountable growth of homeless services.” And Vice President of External Affairs **Jesse Arm** explored the radical left’s favorite terrorist in “[The Rise of Luigism](#).”

New Scholars



Josh Appel
Policy Analyst



Christian Browne
Adjunct Fellow



Trevor Burrus
Legal Policy Fellow



Santiago Vidal Calvo
Cities Policy Analyst



Jarrett Dieterle
Legal Policy Fellow



Scott Dziengelski
Adjunct Fellow



Danyela Egorov
Fellow



Sanjana Friedman
Fellow and Contributing Editor, *City Journal*



Ken Girardin
Fellow



David Goldhill
Senior Fellow



Daniel Gollhofer
Fellow, Cities



Brad Hargreaves
Senior Fellow



Michael Hartney
Senior Fellow



Adam Lehodey
Investigative Reporter



Robert Miller
Adjunct Fellow



Shawn Regan
Senior Fellow



Jack Santucci
Adjunct Fellow



Stu Smith
Investigative Analyst,
City Journal



Ryan Thorpe
Investigative Reporter



Kevin Wallsten
Adjunct Fellow



Jennifer Weber
Adjunct Fellow



Ilan Wurman
Adjunct Fellow



FEATURED NEW SCHOLAR

Danielle Sassoon Senior Fellow

Danielle Sassoon is a senior fellow at Manhattan Institute. She is the former U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, serving in that role until early 2025. As a member of the Violent and Organized Crime Unit and as a member of the Securities and Commodities Fraud Task Force, she investigated and prosecuted many high-profile cases, including Samuel Bankman-Fried, for multibillion-dollar fraud.

Sassoon graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College in 2008 and from Yale Law School in 2011. Following graduation from law school, she served as a law clerk to the Honorable J. Harvie Wilkinson III of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and to the Honorable Antonin Scalia of the U.S. Supreme Court.

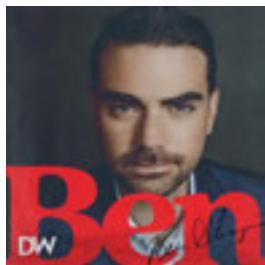
Our Scholars in the National Conversation

In 2025, MI scholars didn't just publish columns and research, or brief lawmakers and their staff. They showed up where ideas travel fastest: the podcasts and broadcast platforms that shape how civic leaders, voters, and donors think. Here we highlight some of the high-reach appearances that carried MI's arguments on law, culture, public order, and governance into the wider debate.

234 PODCAST INTERVIEWS

225 TV APPEARANCES

620 OP-EDS WRITTEN



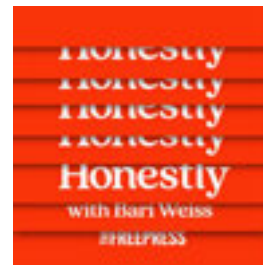
Ilya Shapiro on *The Ben Shapiro Show*



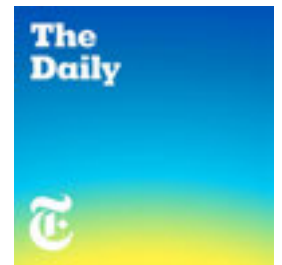
Rob Henderson on *The Charlie Kirk Show*



Douglas Murray on *The Joe Rogan Experience*



Douglas Murray on *Honestly with Bari Weiss (The Free Press)*



Christopher F. Rufo on *The Daily Podcast (New York Times)*



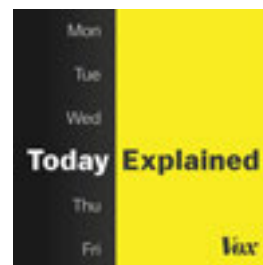
Ilya Shapiro on *The Hugh Hewitt Show*



Ilya Shapiro on *Potomac Watch (WSJ Opinion)*



Douglas Murray on *The Andrew Klavan Show*



Christopher F. Rufo on *Today, Explained (Vox)*



Jesse Arm on *The Commentary Magazine Podcast*



(HBO MAX)



DANIEL DI MARTINO ON *THE INGRAHAM ANGLE* (FOX NEWS)



DOUGLAS MURRAY ON *GUTTFELD!* (FOX NEWS)



RAFAEL MANGUAL ON *THE WILL CAIN SHOW* (FOX NEWS)



CHRISTOPHER F. RUFO ON *JESSE WATTERS PRIMETIME* (FOX NEWS)



CHRISTOPHER F. RUFO ON *JESSE WATTERS PRIMETIME* (FOX NEWS)



WOMAN ON *REILLY'S NO SPIN NEWS*



DOUGLAS MURRAY ON *LIFE, LIBERTY & LEVIN* (FOX NEWS)



DOUGLAS MURRAY ON *REAL TIME*



Prize-Winning Scholars

In 2025, MI scholars didn't just show up in the national conversation. Their work also earned recognition from institutions that still take standards seriously. The honors reflect independent validation of scholarship and reporting that sharpened public debate on law, culture, public order, and governance.



Heather Mac Donald

2025 Edmund Burke Award (*The New Criterion*)

Mac Donald was honored with *The New Criterion's* 2025 Edmund Burke Award, recognizing her influence on American cultural and civic life. Her [gala remarks](#)—on the West and the “hermeneutics of suspicion”—were later published, extending the reach of the address beyond the room.



John Tierney

Kenneth Y. Tomlinson Award for Courageous Journalism (The Fund for American Studies)

In November 2025, Tierney received the Kenneth Y. Tomlinson Award for Courageous Journalism at The Fund for American Studies Journalism Forum + Awards Dinner in New York. The award recognized a career of clear-eyed reporting and a [refusal to bend](#) under cultural or institutional pressure.

Credit: Daphne Youree



James Piereson

2025 Bradley Prize (The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation)

Piereson was selected as a 2025 Bradley Prize recipient, honoring a career that has helped “restore, strengthen, and protect the principles and institutions of American exceptionalism.” The recognition spotlighted his long-running influence as a philanthropic leader and public intellectual, including his work on philanthropy and higher education as a Manhattan Institute senior fellow.



Christopher F. Rufo

2025 Bradley Prize (The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation)

Rufo received a 2025 Bradley Prize, part of the Foundation’s annual honors for scholars and practitioners whose work advances its mission and the ideals of the Western tradition. The award marked his prominent role in shaping national debates on culture and institutional reform through writing, reporting, and public argument.



Nicole Gelinas

2025 Gotham Book Prize co-winner

Gelinas’s *Movement: New York’s Long War to Take Back Its Streets from the Car* co-won the 2025 Gotham Book Prize, a major award celebrating the best book about New York City published that year. The win positioned her as a leading public voice on the policy choices that shape how New Yorkers live, move, and thrive.



Christopher F. Rufo and John Sailer

Dao Prize for Excellence in Investigative Journalism (finalists)

Rufo and Sailer were named 2025 Dao Prize finalists for their *City Journal* investigative series, “[Unmasking DEI](#),” which spotlights the real-world mechanics and consequences of DEI regimes within major institutions.



Credit: Manning Photography

Events

Manhattan Institute hosted and participated in a full year of events in 2025, from intimate dinners to major public forums, spotlighting our scholars' work and honoring extraordinary achievement.



The Road Ahead for NYC's Next Mayor
Daniel Golliher (Fellow)



Hamilton Award Dinner
Dick DeVos, Betsy DeVos (Chairman), Terry Kassel,
Paul Singer (Chairman Emeritus)



Hamilton Award Dinner
Dan Senor, John Podhoretz, Paul Singer (Chairman Emeritus),
Cliff Asness, Douglas Murray (Senior Fellow)



Chapter Leader Retreat
Danny Crichton (Fellow)



Troubled: A Conversation
Rob Henderson (Senior Fellow), Dr. Drew Pinsky



The New Criterion Edmund Burke Award
Heather Mac Donald (Thomas W. Smith Fellow), Roger Kimball (Trustee)
Photo by Daphne Youree



Washington to Wall Street
Larry Kudlow

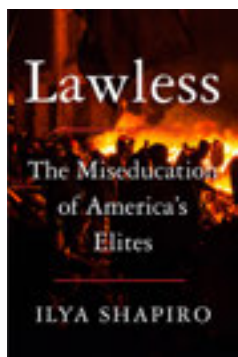


The Trouble with Social Justice
Jason L. Riley (Senior Fellow)



A Revolution of Common Sense
Reihan Salam (President), Scott Jennings

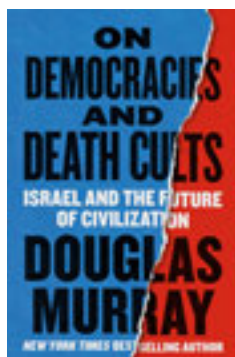
Books by Our Scholars



ILYA SHAPIRO

Lawless: The Miseducation of America's Elites

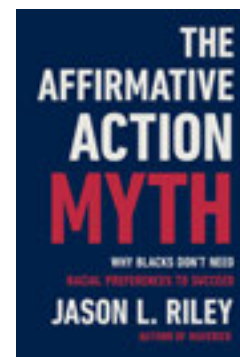
Shapiro argues that America's top law schools now reward activism over legal reasoning and punish dissent over debate. He shows how administrative bloat, ideological enforcement, and "hostile environment" norms narrowed what students can say, study, and ultimately do in public life. The *Wall Street Journal* named it one of the [best political books of the year](#), with follow-on coverage across media, including [The Ben Shapiro Show](#), [The Hugh Hewitt Show](#), and others. It was also featured on the Bradley Foundation's [2025 Holiday Reading List](#).



DOUGLAS MURRAY

On Democracies and Death Cults: Israel and the Future of Civilization

Murray's core claim is simple: democracies do not survive by confusing moral clarity with moral surrender. Drawing on reporting in Israel, Gaza, and Lebanon, he frames the post-October 7 world as a stress test for Western values. The book broke through after Murray's appearance on [The Joe Rogan Experience](#), with follow-on coverage across major outlets and broadcasts, including the [Daily Mail](#), [National Review](#), [Newsweek](#), [Daily Beast](#), [The Free Press](#), [HuffPost](#), [Washington Examiner](#), [Real Time with Bill Maher](#), and [The Hugh Hewitt Show](#). It even drew praise from President Donald Trump.



JASON L. RILEY

The Affirmative Action Myth: Why Blacks Don't Need Racial Preferences to Succeed

After the [Supreme Court's 2023 ruling on race-based admissions](#), Riley entered the debate with a data-first argument. He documents black advancement before modern preferences and argues that race-conscious policies can stigmatize achievement and distort incentives. He offers an alternative story grounded in agency, attainment, and equal treatment under the law. The book drew marquee attention in the *Wall Street Journal*, with further coverage across [Fox News](#), [C-SPAN](#), [New York Post](#), [Commentary](#), [The Federalist](#), and [The Michael Medved Show](#).

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