

# THE HEARTLANDER

## QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

# WE CHOOSE TO RESIST



By James Taylor  
President

Once again, Americans face a time for choosing, and the stakes could not be higher.

In 2020, Americans endured some of the worst attacks on freedom in our nation's history. Personal liberties were stifled. Businesses were shuttered. Trillions of dollars were "printed" out of thin air. Dissenters were silenced. Homes were raided. And after the questionable reported results of the 2020 elections, the outlook appears even bleaker in 2021.

In the face of these assaults on freedom, some are staying silent, waiting for the storm to pass.

But not us. Like so many others throughout America's Heartland, we have made our choice, and *we choose to resist*.

The Declaration of Independence states that all people are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Further, state constitutions give legislatures, not governors, the power to create laws. Governors may only *enforce* the laws passed by legislatures.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

None of these foundational documents contain an “except” clause permitting the trampling of our basic freedoms and the assumption of dictatorial powers in the wake of a virus. Nor are there “except” clauses granting radical expansions of authority to fight climate change or pursue social justice causes. Our state and federal constitutions were designed to protect the people against such abuses. And yet, in their endless pursuit of power, leftists in both major political parties have tossed aside our rights and demanded the people cower in the face of government agents.

The Heartland Institute refuses to accept these unlawful infringements on our basic freedoms. All people are essential. All people’s livelihoods are essential. All people’s freedoms are essential. And contrary to the beliefs of so many in the ruling class, Walmart is *not* more essential than small businesses, and Starbucks is *not* more essential than family-owned restaurants.

When government actors assume unlawful and dictatorial powers to impose mandatory cower-in-place orders and shut down people’s livelihoods, cronyism, corruption, and tyranny inevitably result.

I wish I could tell you that things are poised to get better on their own, but they are not. The forces that stripped away so many of our freedoms in 2020 have even bigger plans in 2021. More than 100 members of the U.S. House and Senate have cosponsored a resolution to declare climate change a “national emergency.”

Similarly, Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)

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expressed his desire for the Biden administration to circumvent Congress to impose permanent, COVID-19-like restrictions on our freedoms in the name of climate change.

“The climate crisis is an emergency,” Merkley said, adding that Biden should use “every tool available to him, including declaring a national climate emergency and using emergency powers to take unilateral executive action.”

When Americans sit idly by while government actors take away their “small” freedoms, those government actors soon take away “larger” freedoms, too, and invent new justifications for doing so.

So, we here at The Heartland Institute choose to resist, and we are starting by launching our “Governors, Not Gods” program, which is aimed at empowering state legislators to defeat governors’ unlawful lockdown orders and election rules.

Our monthly *Health Care News* publication, which is mailed to every federal and state legislator, regularly provides the truth about coronavirus-related medical issues.

We will soon be mailing to hundreds of thousands of teachers our *Climate at a Glance* teacher’s manual, which will provide concise, lesson-oriented facts about climate realism. And these activities are just the tip of the iceberg.

The Heartland Institute chooses to resist, and in so doing, we choose individual rights over government tyranny, small businesses over crony corporations, and freedom over fear.

I ask you now to *choose* to join us in this worthy endeavor. Your support has never been more important.

The Heartland Institute is an independent source of research and commentary founded in Chicago, Illinois in 1984. It is not affiliated with any political party, business, or foundation. Its activities are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Heartland’s mission is to discover, develop, and promote free-market solutions to social and economic problems. Such solutions include parental choice in education, market-based approaches to environmental protection and health care finance, tax and spending limitation, and deregulation in areas where property rights and markets do a better job than government bureaucracies.

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# Podcast featuring Heartland's staff and fellows on news and policy

**Heartland's Podcasts were downloaded 6.6 million times in 2020!**

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By subscribing to the *Heartland Daily Podcast*, listeners gain access to great content featuring the country's leading public policy experts, who regularly discuss America's most important problems and news events across all of our issue areas.

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*School Reform News Podcast*

*In the Tank Podcast*

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# THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE

## BY THE NUMBERS

During the fourth quarter of 2020, The Heartland Institute ...

APPEARED IN THE MEDIA

**846** TIMES WITH AN AD VALUE OF

**\$39.3**  
**MILLION**



PUBLISHED

**425**

STORIES ON THE NEW *HEARTLAND DAILY NEWS* WEBSITE.

PUBLISHED

**93**



STORIES ON THE NEW *CLIMATE REALISM* WEBSITE AND TWO POSTS ON *CLIMATE AT A GLANCE*.

PRODUCED

**45**



*RESEARCH & COMMENTARIES* ADDRESSING ISSUES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

TESTIFIED OR  
SUBMITTED  
COMMENTS

**1**



TIME IN FRONT OF  
LEGISLATORS.

SIGNED

**5**



COALITION LETTERS WITH ALLIES IN  
THE FREE-MARKET MOVEMENT.

CONTACTED ELECTED OFFICIALS

**67,785**

TIMES, INCLUDING  
**131** ONE-ON-ONE  
CONTACTS BY PHONE,  
EMAIL, OR IN PERSON.



WROTE AND PLACED

**106**

OP-EDS IN  
OUTSIDE  
PUBLICATIONS.



GENERATED AT LEAST



BROADCAST,



ONLINE,

AND **134** PRINT MEDIA HITS REACHING MORE THAN **25 MILLION** SUBSCRIBERS.

ADDED **74** VIDEOS TO OUR

**You** **Tube**

CHANNELS,

ATTRACTING A TOTAL OF **415,328** VIEWS.

OUR VIDEOS WERE VIEWED **1,001,237** TIMES ON FACEBOOK

RELEASED

**66**



PODCASTS, ATTRACTING A TOTAL LISTENING AUDIENCE OF **1.7 MILLION** PEOPLE, AND ADDED **109** BLOG POSTS TO *FREEDOM PUB*.

REACHED

**5.1 MILLION**

PEOPLE ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGES.



PUBLISHED

**3**



PRINT AND DIGITAL MONTHLY ISSUES OF *HEALTH CARE NEWS*.

PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED

**3**



POLICY BRIEFS AND **ONE** POLICY STUDY ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE, SOCIALISM, AND OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES

SENT OUT **73** EMAILS HITTING THE INBOX OF OUR AUDIENCES



MORE THAN **756,000** TIMES. THE EMAILS WERE OPENED MORE THAN **180,000** TIMES AND GENERATED **20,000** CLICKS TO HEARTLAND CONTENT.

DISTRIBUTED

**31** ISSUES OF OUR CORE WEEKLY



E-NEWSLETTERS – *CLIMATE CHANGE WEEKLY*, *HEARTLAND WEEKLY*, AND *THE LEAFLET* – HITTING THOSE AUDIENCES A TOTAL OF **338,832** TIMES.

# The Presidential Transition, From Realism to Alarmism

The incoming Biden administration has signaled that climate change will be one of its top priorities. Biden plans to make it a central focus of each of his federal administrative departments. Seemingly irrelevant departments, such as the Department of the Treasury, are expected to form their policies with climate change in mind.

This strategy is completely nonsensical if we assume their intention is to govern well. Heartland is exposing how mistaken that assumption is.

In this final quarter of an eventful year, The Robinson Center got the climate realism message out to great effect, in traditional media and especially online, reaching nearly ten million people with our articles.

In addition to these numerous media hits, Heartland's *Environment and Climate News* included 45 articles that touched on the most pressing topics for policymakers. Heartland analysts



Photos Courtesy: Gage Skidmore/Flickr

covered good news such as new pipeline approvals that will add to the \$48 billion industry in Texas and a new rule at the EPA that will require cost-benefit analyses of regulatory policies. Our coverage also included cautionary stories such as Michigan Gov. Meg Whitmer's (D) authoritarian executive order to mandate carbon neutrality by the year 2050.

Of course, such plans would be disastrous to a state with an already troubled economy, but tyrants like Whitmer show little concern for the plight of working people. Heartland has embarked on a major project to rein in

## CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

the power of governors like Whitmer, which you can read more about in the Health Care section of this report.

To win the day on environmental and climate policy, it is not enough to convince only policymakers. The new battlefield is the public square. Heartland has always been effective at reaching concerned Americans with our popular in-person conferences and publications, and The Robinson Center's online reach has expanded dramatically this year with the addition of its Climate At A Glance and Climate Realism websites, as well as its many online videos and podcasts.

The Robinson Center is now taking a page from the successful launch of Stopping Socialism's online video and advertising campaign. This last quarter saw massive online growth, as Heartland added a total of 56,091 fans to its various Facebook pages, now totaling 314,414 and reaching 5,092,525 people just last quarter.

Robinson and the other centers added a flurry of videos to YouTube and other platforms, with a total of 74 added this quarter, 415,328 views, and a new record of 1.5 million minutes consumed. That final number is especially important in an online environment where the average page view is less than three minutes.

The public debate on climate has never been fiercer, and the public policy implications have never been more dangerous to freedom in America. Heartland will continue to invest in the growth of this important topic online and make a real impact in public policy as we square off against the destructive policies advocated by the Biden administration and others.

**Heartland's environment and climate policy experts appeared on television and radio a total of 86 times, in newspapers and magazines 26 times, and in online news outlets 131 times, just in the fourth quarter.**

**Heartland's environment and climate writings reached a total print circulation of 9,787,453, leading the way for the institute to achieve a total media circulation footprint of 25,858,358.**

***The Wall Street Journal* (circ. 2,834,000) published an op-ed by Heartland Director Steve Milloy on "How to Stop the Paris Climate Accord."**

***The Washington Post* quoted Heartland President James Taylor and mentioned The Heartland Institute five times in November.**

**Heartland's environment and climate videos added 6,078 new subscribers, now totaling more than 40,000, and generated 5.1 million impressions.**

## Read My Lips: No New Bankruptcies (or Taxes)

State and federal budgets are under extreme strain from the COVID-19-related lockdowns and tax revenue shortfalls. In response, many states and municipalities are falling into the trap of raising taxes to make up the difference. Tax hikes not only destroy productive capital, they also erode the tax base as businesses and individuals move out of high-tax regions. It becomes a vicious circle that destroys the quality of life for everyone.

In the fourth quarter, Heartland's budget and tax policy work aimed to stave off tax hikes and help states reopen safely in the wake of COVID-19. Some of our most consequential work came from Heartland advisors Art Laffer and Steve Moore.

Their names are likely to be familiar to Heartland's supporters and allies. Both Laffer and Moore have served U.S. Presidents Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump on economic policy, and their analysis creates an impact.

Heartland worked with them to create and publish a research paper decrying a progressive income tax hike proposed for the state of Illinois. We followed up their paper with a press briefing, two op-eds—one of which was printed in the *Chicago Tribune*—two podcasts, a policy study summary, and an online distribution



campaign.

The results were dramatic. This tax hike was voted down by the state's taxpayers by a 10 percent point margin, even though Donald Trump lost the state by 13 points on the same day.

*Heartland Daily News* covered this story and published a total of 190 articles on budget and tax issues in the fourth quarter. The lockdowns featured prominently, as our writers focused on the fiscal aspects of COVID-19, as well as intellectual property issues, government spending, other proposed taxes, antitrust cases, unemployment, and other related issues. These subjects all tie back to Heartland policy recommendations and communications with policymakers.

On October 26, the *Epoch Times* (circ. 1,314,375) posted an op-ed by Heartland Government Relations Manager Christina Herrin titled "Lockdowns Leave Americans Worse Off Than Ever."



## CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

“Keeping communities locked down has resulted in several unintended consequences, including more suicides, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, etc,” Herrin writes.

Unemployment decreased from 7.9 percent to 6.9 percent, led by the states that followed Heartland’s reopening recommendations. Even New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo recently expressed softening views toward reopening and began to see the light, at least temporarily. Heartland led the effort to send a coalition letter to his state’s Department of Labor which expressed united opposition to his proposed job-killing minimum wage hike.

Beyond these state level policy battles, Heartland was active in budget and tax policy from the municipal level all the way up to the federal level.

Our Government Relations Department testified before the Phoenix City Council against a proposed tobacco and vaping flavor ban, which has thus far not been adopted. We also worked with members of Congress from multiple states to draft a letter urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to roll back recommendations that would harm small businesses, farmers, and other related industries.

According to third party polling, Heartland’s budget and tax policy work is among the most valuable we provide to policymakers. As the government response to COVID-19 continues to slow the economy and decimate state and federal budgets, you can count on Heartland to develop policy ideas that will win the day for freedom and get them in the hands of the decision makers who need them.

**Heartland’s *Budget & Tax News* published 190 articles on critical issues such as the economic recovery; the fiscal and economic damage done by the new round of government COVID-19 lockdowns; massive urban unrest, riots, violence, and destruction; what was at stake in the 2020 elections; social media bias; and other breaking stories on fiscal matters, governance, rights, and justice.**

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***The Hill* posted an op-ed by Justin Haskins titled “Mail-in ballot problems have America headed for a catastrophic election crisis” and an op-ed by Chris Talgo titled “Mail-in ballot rejection rate could cast doubt over election results.”**

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***Townhall* posted a Haskins op-ed titled “America is Headed for a Voter-Fraud Nightmare in November.” *The Hill* posted an op-ed by Talgo titled “Americans voted in person during the 1918 pandemic—as they should in 2020.”**

# 14<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

THE  
HEARTLAND  
INSTITUTE



## THE GREAT RESET: CLIMATE REALISM vs. CLIMATE SOCIALISM

The global climate agenda, as promoted by the United Nations, is to overhaul the entire global economy, usher in socialism programs, and forever transform society into one in which individual liberty and economic freedom are crushed.

This will be the most important event of the year countering

climate alarmism. It will feature the best scientists and experts from around the world. Join us as we take a stand against those attempting to exploit climate change fears as part of a larger effort to obtain even greater power over all of us.

**GET YOUR TICKETS**  
BEFORE JANUARY 31 AT THE  
EARLY BIRD RATE OF  
**\$199**

**APRIL**  
**16-17**  
2021

PARIS  
HOTEL &  
CASINO  
**LAS VEGAS, NV**

# CONFIRMED SPEAKERS INCLUDE:



**Myron Ebell**  
Competitive Enterprise Institute



**Kevin Dayaratna, Ph.D.**  
The Heritage Foundation



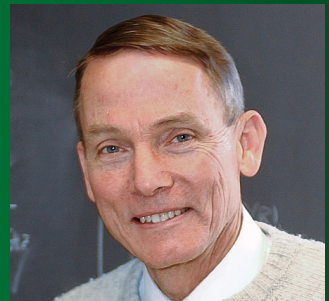
**Neil Frank, Ph.D.**  
National Hurricane Center



**Anne Jordan**  
CFACT Canada



**Amy Oliver Cooke**  
John Locke Foundation



**William Happer, Ph.D.**  
CO2 Coalition



**Anthony Watts**  
The Heartland Institute



**Derrick Hollie**  
Reaching America



**James M. Taylor**  
The Heartland Institute

For more information or to buy tickets, go to  
**CLIMATECONFERENCE.HEARTLAND.ORG**

# Lockdowns versus Liberty in Health Care Reform

Heartland's work on health care policy has never been more important. The debate on what to do about COVID-19 dominates the national policy conversation. At the state level, legislators are making literal life and death decisions about lockdowns and regulations on medical treatments and the availability of care.

These policymakers look to Heartland for advice and dependable research, based in fact, not politics. At the federal level, the FDA and other regulatory bodies have struggled to strike the balance between drug safety and regulatory reform.

Heartland has quickly established itself as the premier organization pushing back against the most draconian lockdowns. State legislators are the only ones with the governmental authority to fight back against authoritarian governors.

In the fourth quarter, Heartland worked directly with policymakers from many states to reassert the proper balance of power. Our staff continues to promote the research and analysis provided throughout the year, which offered scientific evidence for the limited effectiveness of lockdowns and strict mask mandates and the benefits of safer treatments such as hydroxychloroquine



and ivermectin.

The lockdown debate has been perhaps the fiercest. As policymakers prepared for 2021's legislative sessions, Heartland's Government Relations team consulted directly with policymakers in many states. They helped to craft legislation and insert specific language into two states' constitutions to increase the accountability standards for their governors' executive powers under a state of emergency.

This preparatory work has paid off as bills are now being filed in multiple states that follow Heartland's recommendations. In Ohio, for instance, five legislators are sponsoring a bill to prevent Gov. Mike DeWine (R) from shutting down Ohio's businesses, and four of them are members of Heartland's Legislative Forum. Many other states are following suit and saving the local

## CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

businesses that are the bedrock of America's economy.

Heartland's health care policy analysis generated significant attention in the fourth quarter in print newspapers, online publications, television and radio, and the popular Heartland Daily Podcast. On December 23, *The Hill* posted an op-ed by Chris Talgo titled "Inflated COVID-19 death counts could cause vaccine trepidation." Talgo writes, "In other words, when governments are not honest and transparent about how they are counting COVID-19 deaths, public trust in government declines."

Heartland's monthly printed newspaper, *Health Care News*, was sent to more than 12,000 policymakers and thought leaders three times last quarter, featuring 90 articles that made a difference. In addition to extensive coverage of the lockdowns, Heartland's health care articles promoted vital reforms including the expansion of telehealth, direct primary care, certificate of need reform, medical billing reform, and other stories that translated into real reforms throughout the quarter and into 2021.

Heartland has taken a leadership role in shaping these policy debates throughout the country. Lockdowns and the regulation of health care service availability are properly state-level policy issues, and Heartland has taken the lead on educating legislators on how to expand free-market health care policies in response to COVID-19.

The big-government Left has falsely accused conservatives for years for supposedly lacking free-market health care reform ideas, and this year Heartland proved them wrong, conclusively.

**Heartland generated five broadcast, 234 online, and 83 print media hits reaching well over six million people on health care issues.**

**Heartland produced 14 new health care podcasts, attracting 237,552 listeners, and placed 36 op-eds on health care issues, with numerous publications running our criticism of Medicare for All.**

***Health Care News* produced 90 articles for print and/or online publication on important topics such as the COVID-19 vaccines, mask and lockdown mandates, COVID-19 drug treatments being undermined by the federal government, federal legislation to stop surprise billing, and the advantages of direct primary care, telehealth, and other innovative health care delivery options.**

**Heartland had 18,279 contacts with elected officials on health care issues during the quarter.**

# School Choice Continues the March to Victory

Education policy reform took a backseat to COVID-19 in many states last year, but Heartland fought and won the campaign to make sure that America's school choice momentum is not lost. Many more states are considering school choice expansion in 2021, following these efforts. Teachers unions and other opponents of free-market education reform would like nothing more than for school choice to go away, but Heartland has proven why that is not going to happen.

Heartland's coverage of education reform revealed that teachers unions are behind many school districts' unpopular decisions not to reopen. They are also responsible for the rise in left-wing curricular standards and the promotion of Black Lives Matter indoctrination of our children on the taxpayer's dime. Heartland's *School Reform News* covered all these stories and more, revealing why public support for school choice is on the rise. We also produced popular podcast episodes, *Research & Commentary* publications for state legislators, and numerous op-eds.

In the fourth quarter, Heartland's researchers ensured that America's



policymakers knew that public support for school choice is growing and test scores are down. In fact, only 24 percent of American high school seniors are grade-level proficient in math, and only 37 percent are proficient in English. Lockdowns have caused a massive spike in at-home learning, with very poor results.

The good news is that many states

## CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

are expanding and adding new school choice programs to address these problems that Heartland has been talking about for decades. Charter school funding is up, and K-12 scholarship programs are expanding every year. For instance, Ohio expanded its Education Choice Scholarship program in the fourth quarter, offering school choice scholarships to more than half of the student population of the state.

Ohio's school choice reform bill followed soon after Heartland sent all of Ohio's legislators two *Research & Commentaries* on education policy: "Seven in Ten Ohioans Support Education Choice" and another that covered Heartland's signature Child Safety Account plan. In total, Heartland sent 31 *Research & Commentaries* to state legislators across the country this quarter.

With your support, Heartland is breaking new ground on school choice and broader education policy reform. Heartland's education policy experts reported that 77 percent of Americans now support school choice, and that number is growing. This year, Heartland will build on this success by adding COVID-19 provisions to its Child Safety Account model legislation. With these new tools, Heartland expects continued progress on this critical front.

There is no issue more important to the future of the American republic than education policy. The government still enjoys a near-monopoly on education, and the poor results are not a surprise to those of us who understand the nature of monopolies and of government bureaucracies. The days of that monopoly are numbered.

**Heartland published 96 education policy stories at *School Reform News* on our *Heartland Daily News* site in the quarter. These stories were also sent directly to policymakers, parents, and other leaders.**

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***Fox News* published an op-ed by Justin Haskins and Chris Talgo titled "Haskins & Talgo: Coronavirus School Closings Are Hurting Students — It's Time to Reopen."**

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***American Thinker* posted an op-ed by Heartland Research Fellows John Merrifield and Barry Poulson titled "Student Loan Forgiveness Would Turn Citizens into Zombies."**

# STOPPING SOCIALISM



## Overcoming The Social Media Blackout to Expose Socialism

Heartland's Stopping Socialism Project concluded a very successful fourth quarter despite facing repression from hostile leftist social media companies. The Stopping Socialism team dauntlessly exposed the truth about socialism and its newest iteration, the Great Reset.

The Great Reset would transform the entire global economy by putting elites and international institutions in charge of economic activity and expanding the power of government through massive new social programs and regulatory schemes. And unlike many other left-wing movements, the Great Reset enjoys the support of numerous large and powerful international corporations.

Since its inception in mid-2020, our Stopping Socialism team been at the forefront of the fight against this radical movement. We believe Stopping Socialism was the first group critical of the Great Reset to devote significant time and resources toward fighting it and the first to expose it to millions of people on

FoxNews.com, FoxBusiness.com, and the *Glenn Beck Radio Program*.

In the fourth quarter, the Stopping Socialism team appeared on television and radio 24 times, including appearances on *Tucker Carlson Tonight*, *Glenn Beck Radio Program*, *Fox & Friends*, *One America News*, and SiriusXM.

We published 61 articles on Stopping-Socialism.com, amassing 738,000 page views, a record high. FoxNews.com published 14 articles by Stopping Socialism's Justin Haskins, popularizing the fight against the Great Reset among one of the highest-trafficked websites on the right.

StoppingSocialism.com hosted a series of articles about the team's in-depth research on the shocking success of socialist candidates for public office this quarter. The study found that socialist candidates for public office won 90 percent of their races, gaining 239 seats, up from 40 percent and 86 seats in the 2018 election cycle.

Perhaps the most important article was Justin Haskins' December 3



@StoppingSocialism  
@StoppingSocialismTV



@StoppingSocialismTV



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

article in *The Hill* which proved Joe Biden and John Kerry's fealty to the Great Reset and even drew the attention of the World Economic Forum.

Heartland's original research on the subject, conducted during the summer of 2020, long before other think tanks ever heard of the Great Reset, still serves as the foundation of most of the articles, videos, and television segments produced today in the United States about the Great Reset.

This December, a new Rasmussen/Heartland survey asked American voters about socialism and the Great Reset. It was the first of its kind and gained significant media attention from *Fox & Friends*, which covered the survey more than once, *FoxNews.com*, *Breitbart*, *Newsmax*, the *Washington Times*, the *Washington Examiner*, *The Blaze TV*, and the *New York Post*, among many others.

Our Stopping Socialism team continued to expand its online footprint. In addition to significant growth of YouTube and Facebook followers, Stopping Socialism also launched successfully on Parler, the new free speech social media outlet, gaining 12,700 followers and 920,000 views in just a few months. Leftist tech giants have since colluded to shut down Parler, but Heartland will continue to invest in the platform at the earliest opportunity.

Socialism is on the rise in America, and Heartland's Stopping Socialism Project is quickly becoming the greatest bulwark against it online. With your help, we will continue to teach more young minds about the horrors of socialism.

**Haskins and Kendal partnered with Glenn Beck, nationally syndicated radio host and founder of The Blaze TV, to produce a new book about the Great Reset, further solidifying Stopping Socialism's role as a leader of the anti-Great Reset movement. The book is scheduled for publication in early 2021.**

**Haskins published 14 articles about socialism and related topics on FoxNews.com and in other leading media outlets. Talgo authored 32 articles.**

**Produced 7 Stopping Socialism TV videos, which received more than 342,700 views on Facebook and YouTube (a new record).**

**Viewers watched more than 17,400 hours of Stopping Socialism TV in the fourth quarter (also a new record).**



@StopSocialists



@StoppingSocialism

# Government Relations

THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE 

## Fighting for Main Street in 50 State Capitols

**By Cameron Sholty**

**Government Relations Director**

As clichéd as it is, 2020 was an incredibly challenging year for America: culturally, socially, economically, and politically. By the end of the year, with nearly half the country feeling disenfranchised from the political process, the Left was ascendant throughout our major institutions.

At the end of 2020, the cancel culture movement was moving like a freight train, without regard to political affiliation. Free-market advocates were left anxious in the wake of an election that saw a sometimes-champion for their cause lose to what will certainly be a hostile administration on nearly every issue, from climate change realism to federal spending.

It is against that backdrop that The Heartland Institute Government Relations Department looks forward to the many, many opportunities in the state capitols, where free-market ideas and advocacy have very real effects on people's lives and can serve as models for limited government and thriving economies.

Of course, after 2020, the idea that economies can thrive seems antithetical to what we see happening in our communities right now. A global pandemic and overzealous governors hit America's main streets with the force

of a thousand erupting volcanoes. Millions of people lost their jobs, and state economies are bolstered only by hope. Even so, the roadmap to restore our communities is clear.

In 2021, all 50 states' legislatures will be meeting to craft their budgets and dig out of

this economic and social malaise.

Heartland's government relations staff will continue to provide the research and leadership state legislators and our partners need to rejuvenate support for free-market policies that will certainly lead to broad-based prosperity. On issues from health care to education reform, from beating back aggressive climate change policies to controlling the ever-increasing growth of government, we have seen state lawmakers step into the gap, emboldened to return to pro-growth policies. We are excited to work with them in 2021.

HEARTLAND'S  
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS  
STAFF WILL CONTINUE TO  
PROVIDE THE RESEARCH  
AND LEADERSHIP STATE  
LEGISLATORS AND OUR  
PARTNERS NEED TO  
REJUVENATE SUPPORT FOR  
FREE-MARKET POLICIES.

### On Health Care Reform

If the pandemic taught us anything, it was that government regulation and red tape was a primary driver of a strained response by our health care systems to combat the novel coronavirus. Expansion of services and facilities bogged down in bureaucratic morass while our elderly and vulnerable were isolated and dying. In 2021, state governments must redouble their efforts to loosen the reins on market innovation. Vaccines against the coronavirus were developed with an efficiency never before seen, once government stepped aside. That model should become the rule, not the exception.

### On State Budgets and Taxes

All 50 states will meet in session this spring to craft either an annual or biennial budget and set their spending priorities and policies. A state budget is the single-most important law that state governments adopt. Heartland's government relations staff will deep-dive all 50 to identify potential pitfalls and opportunities, urge restraint on spending, fight against tax increases, and advocate for taxpayers and entrepreneurs.

Too many states were caught spending and borrowing at levels that were unsustainable in 2020, and the global pandemic and need for government services caused those systems to break down. More than a dozen states face budget shortfalls exceeding 10 percent, and those deficits must not be filled on the backs of America's taxpayers.

### On Education Reform

As with health care reform, the coronavirus pandemic laid bare a path by which parents can reassert more choice and be more empowered over their children's education. The obstinance of America's teachers unions showed us who they are and what their priorities are. Thousands of public school teachers have refused to return to classrooms for nearly a year, based not on the science of the virus but because of fears stoked by union bosses and enabled by liberal politicians. The opportunity is *now* to pass legislation that expands school choice via vouchers and education saving accounts and prepares families for a lifetime

of success on terms set by them, not liberal special interests.

### On Climate Change Realism

When uber-left politicians in Washington, D.C. failed to gain traction for their Green New Deal and their efforts to silence realists were largely thwarted, radical leftists—urged on by a global elite led by the likes of Prince Charles of England and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY)—took their zealotry to the states. Liberal governors convened “Climate Change Task Forces” to guide and inform policies that were little more than tax-and-spend initiatives and fulfillment of decades-long wishes. The Heartland Institute has been at the forefront of this ongoing battle and in 2021 will again lead the effort in state capitols to beat back and stop this creeping socialism.

THE HEARTLAND  
INSTITUTE HAS BEEN AT  
THE FOREFRONT OF THIS  
ONGOING BATTLE AND IN  
2021 WILL AGAIN LEAD  
THE EFFORT IN STATE  
CAPITOLS TO BEAT BACK  
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