



# Independent

NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE

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## No More Excuses for FDR's Concentration Camps for Japanese-Americans

By David T. Beito

Also published in *The Orange Country Register* on August 30, 2023.



Something significant is missing from the recent official apology by the office of the California attorney general for culpability in the World War II Japanese-American internment. The wording leaves out the name of the man who made it all possible: Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In this respect, it has similarities to the 10 most widely used American history texts, which, in contrast to California's targeted apology, focus on the more general context. While the texts agree that Executive Order 9066 was a gigantic black mark for Roosevelt, most also subtly mitigate his blame, both in the phrasing and presentation of facts.

A typical treatment is that internment (FDR called them "concentration camps") was a "glaring" or "painful" exception to an otherwise good civil liberties record of the architect of the Four Freedoms speech of 1941. The overall impression is that of an otherwise great president blindsided, like so many other Americans, by momentary hysteria. Almost entirely absent is a discussion of Roosevelt as a determinative historical actor who shaped or created events. To most of these historians, there were two very distinct Roosevelts.

The first was the author of the New Deal and World War II foreign policy: decisive, bold, humane, and dedicated to advancing the four freedoms. The second was the Roosevelt of internment: a passive, reactive, and somewhat clueless prisoner of events.

The uncomfortable truth is that Roosevelt played a hands-on role and was fully aware about what he was doing. Even before the war, he had given this issue much careful thought. In 1936, for example, he stated that if Japan attacked the United States, Japanese-American citizens should be put into a "concentration camp" if they had had contact with Japanese ships visiting Hawaii or "any connection with their officers or men." Roosevelt had long considered Japanese-Americans to be a suspect group. Defending state bans on land ownership by Japanese noncitizens during the 1920s, for example, the future president concluded that any traveler to "the Far East knows that the mingling of Asiatic blood with European or American blood produces, in nine cases out of ten, the most unfortunate results."

Moreover, internment followed a general pattern of riding roughshod over the Bill of Rights when it conflicted with Roosevelt's other priorities.

(continued on page 7)

DR. PHILLIP W. MAGNESS

## Letter from the David J. Theroux Chair in Political Economy



*Phillip W. Magness*

PHIL MAGNESS  
David J. Theroux Chair in  
Political Economy

Dear Friend of Liberty,

First of all, let me express my pleasure at being named the **David J. Theroux Chair in Political Economy**. I am thrilled to join such a great team at the Independent Institute.

As we enter into 2024, there is great concern for liberty, but great opportunity as well. I like to say I'm a short-term pessimist and a long-term optimist.

What is going on in our higher education system and in our government, and how

COVID was exploited to centralize power—these things and more cause me great concern.

And behind these dynamics lies a collapse in public trust in institutions of expert opinion. The academy and journalism, in particular, have squandered the public trust by wedding themselves to political activism.

Yet, here lies an opportunity. Where will people turn for good information? Good information will always be needed and desired. As scholars and citizens rightly turn away from the academy and journalism, we are there to fill the gap.

We show that classical liberal ideas are indeed well-founded and we communicate this to increasingly large and influential audiences.

This is why I was drawn to the Independent Institute and why I am so excited to join.

I know well its reputation for scholarly rigor and its widely-known publications—books and *The Independent Review*—which consistently publish scholarship of great explanatory power. Bob Higgs's *Crisis and Leviathan* and Rich Vedder's *Restoring the Promise* on higher

education reform are just two of many important works sparking key intellectual conversations.

In 2024, the Independent Institute is well-positioned to address and put forth solutions to our most pressing challenges: international peace and security, higher education, K-12, and politically correct activism in academic disciplines.

It is an honor to advance the cause of liberty at this crucial time.

Thank you for your continued support and passion. I wish you and your family a Happy New Year and I look forward to working with you throughout 2024.

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**Phillip W. Magness** is a Senior Fellow at the Independent Institute and the David J. Theroux Chair in Political Economy. He has served as senior research fellow at the American Institute for Economic Research, and as academic program director at the Institute for Humane Studies and Adjunct Professor of Public Policy in the School of Public Policy and Government at George Mason University. He received his PhD in history from George Mason University.

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VIDEO PODCAST

# Independent Truths with Dr. Scott Atlas

Dr. Scott Atlas continues to investigate the role of government and the private sector in health care quality and access, global trends in health care innovation, and key economic and civil liberty issues.

by government, public health bureaucrats, and university scientists in the COVID pandemic. They discuss COVID's origins, NIH funding gain-of-function research in Wuhan, conflicts of interest, and more.



## Richard Corcoran: The Crisis of Free Speech on Campus November 20, 2023

Dr. Atlas interviews Richard Corcoran, President of New College of Florida. They have an important and timely conversation about university education in the United States, including merit, free speech, and today's campus environment to develop the next generation of leaders for our country.

## Victor Davis Hanson Interview: The Real and Imaginary "Threats to Our Democracy" September 18, 2023

Dr. Atlas interviews Victor Davis Hanson, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and world-renowned historian and scholar of classics and military history. They discuss the phrase "Threat to our democracy" — who uses it, what it means, and what the real threats to democracy actually are.



## Rand Paul: Unraveling Government Lies and Cover-ups During the COVID Pandemic October 12, 2023

Dr. Atlas interviews Senator Rand Paul on exposing the egregious malfeasance and cover-up

## Riley Gaines: Preserving the Integrity of Women's Sports July 28, 2023

Dr. Atlas interviews competitive swimmer Riley Gaines. Gaines is one of the leading voices for women's rights, most notably in preserving women's sports for biological females.

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## The Independent Institute in the News

### Center on Entrepreneurial Innovation

“Inflation often accelerates during wars—given that wars are associated with heavy government spending, increased debt issuance and significant monetary accommodation. But inflation is a secondary consideration. The Fed’s first priority will be to ease market disruptions and provide foreign central banks access to U.S. dollars.”

— **Judy Shelton** in *The Wall Street Journal*, 10/31/23



JUDY SHELTON ON  
THE FOX NEWS CHANNEL, 8/16/23

“If you actually look at FDR’s record, before and during World War II, he had one of the worst if not the worst civil liberties records in American history. Often, people single out Woodrow Wilson for that category, but I would say that FDR was more hostile to civil liberties than Woodrow Wilson.”

— **David Beito** on *National Review’s The Book-monger* podcast



DAVID BEITO ON  
ONE AMERICA NEWS NETWORK, 10/26/23

### Beyond Homeless

“So long as San Francisco maintains a regulatory environment that restricts access to private housing development, graft will almost certainly continue to be systemic.”

— **Christopher Calton** in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8/2/23

“Punitive approaches to combating homelessness can never produce humane, long-term solutions. But under the right policies, law enforcement can help homeless addicts begin the road to recovery.”

— **Mary Theroux and Christopher Calton** in the *Miami Herald*, 9/17/23

### Center on Health Choices

“In the last two sessions of Congress, Democrats had an opportunity to reverse some of the worst aspects of Obamacare. Instead, they added \$30 billion of ‘enhanced subsidies,’ which will make health insurance cheaper for healthy people making as much as several hundred thousand dollars a year.”

— **John C. Goodman** in *The Wall Street Journal*, 9/12/23

### Center on Educational Excellence

“Announcements of increased aid to students at the big three Ivies has been a tradition beginning earlier in this century. I believe it’s in response to growing criticism of the Ivies as being sort of like medieval academic villages, complete with their lords and rather affluent aristocratic vassals—the students.”

— **Richard Vedder** in *The Wall Street Journal*, 9/26/23

### Center on Global Prosperity

“Elections still mean something to most Latin Americans and offer at least the possibility of change according to the rule of law and affirming individual rights. It’s a miracle that more than half (but not much more) of the region’s population still lives under liberal democracies, though many of the countries stretch the meaning of ‘rule of law.’ For optimists, the coming election cycle offers the promise of something better.”

— **Alvaro Vargas Llosa** in *National Review*, 10/8/23

### Center on Peace and Liberty

“The immense expense of aiding two informal allies during wartime now should make American taxpayers reevaluate alliance commitments and extensive overseas foreign military aid.”

— **Ivan Eland** in *The National Interest*, 11/5/23

THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW

Fall 2023

The Independent Institute is delighted to present another issue of *The Independent Review*, one of the only academic publications bold enough to analyze the most pressing intellectual, political, and controversial issues of our time with unparalleled candor and rigor. Just as importantly, our authors redirect readers' attention from economic luminaries we all know well—Smith, Hayek, Friedman, and Mises—to those economists who haven't been as widely appreciated, but should have been. This issue is a fascinating exploration of economists who may not be household names, but whose work deserves our full consideration and admiration.

Of course, this is by no means an exhaustive list. No one denies this issue could be extended at least a hundredfold. Still, names such as Friedrich Lutz and Karl Mittermaier receive worthy and lengthy attention from scholars up to the analytical task. Other names such as Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Sowell—certainly more well known than the former two—have their reputations reconsidered. Full of insight, intrigue, and little-known information, this issue has something for everyone.

**Richard M. Salsman (Duke University)** debunks Alexander Hamilton's reputation as big government's #1 fan. Far from Hamilton's being an unmitigated champion of public debt and fiat money, his legacy has been misused by statist and abused by classical liberals alike. A fair verdict shows he was an astute synthesizer of principles and policies—correct ones. **Art Carden (Samford University)** and **Brian C. Albrecht (International Center for Law & Economics)** write on Thomas Sowell's uncommon and underappreciated perspectives on not just economics, but also culture and society as a whole. No doubt the reading public deeply appreciates Sowell—author of four of the top 100 economics books on Amazon—but academic economists too often give him the short end of the stick. Perhaps this comes as no surprise, considering Sowell's impatience and contempt for the “rampaging presumptions” of intellectuals who think themselves fit to rule.



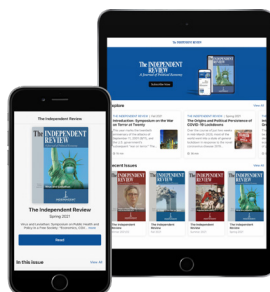
Learn about the most underappreciated economists—some you probably know, others you've likely never heard of!

Hamilton and Sowell are names most people know. But other names, such as Karl Mittermaier, fall under most people's radar. **Michael C. Munger (Duke University)** explains why this should not be so. Mittermaier's insightful work explores how there are many different invisible hands—indeed, as many as there are forms of the “visible hand” in an institutional context. Friedrich A. Lutz is another economist known to few, but whose work bears striking relevance to today's economic reality. **Lachezar Grudev (University of Applied Sciences, Zwickau, Germany)** presents Lutz's monetary economics, mone-

tary policy, and international monetary theory in a new light. Former students of Lutz, twice president of the Mont Pelerin Society, went on to do great things in the world of economics—Federal Reserve Chair Paul Volcker described his former teacher's ideas as greatly influential to his career.

To learn more, please visit [www.independent.org/tir](http://www.independent.org/tir).

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## INDEPENDENT EVENTS

## From Crisis to Opportunity: COVID Lockdowns and Educational Freedom

September 27, 2023

This Capitol Hill event focuses on one of the most pressing topics of our time—the COVID lockdowns and the future of educational freedom in the West.

It was an honor and a delight to host such a lively, informative, and hope-filled discussion at this pivotal moment in American life.

Hosted by **Senator Rand Paul**, healthcare expert and author **Dr. Scott Atlas**, and education expert and author **James Tooley**, the conversation shed much-needed light on the harms inflicted on our children through the lockdowns and mandates, how the virus exposed the deep-rooted problems in America's state-run education system, and, most importantly, the opportunities for enterprising educational alternatives resulting from these. These valuable insights shared by three of the most influential and original thinkers of our time are of vital importance to the public discourse. We hope their message will continue to change hearts and minds.



We are especially grateful to Senator Rand Paul for his stirring opening remarks; to Dr. Scott Atlas for his courage and candor; and to Dr. James Tooley for his research in the world of education and the conviction that we can—indeed, must—do better for our students.

We are committed to ensuring a crisis like this never happens again. To learn more about our work on and passion for this topic, please visit our website [www.independent.org/fromcrisis](http://www.independent.org/fromcrisis).

## Beyond Homeless: Solutions Convening

October 3, 2023

The Independent Institute organized and co-hosted a landmark convening of the leaders of some of the Bay Area's key civic organizations, brainstorming solutions to homelessness and its attendant issues. Participants ranged from the largest employer associations to grassroots activist organizations, sharing a commitment to devising private sector-led initiatives. The resulting coalition affirms Independent's important role at the forefront of the homelessness issue.

At the heart of the homeless epidemic are human lives. Many of these unique individuals are suffering from addiction, mental illness, depression, or unemployment in addition to being homeless. An intervention must be staged to save their lives, save our cities, and provide a model of hope for people across the nation.

Our solution to the problem provides transformational housing along with ongoing individualized 360-degree care. The goal is to help individuals resolve the issues underlying their homelessness to achieve their full potential. Haven for Hope, in San Antonio, Texas, a transformational campus that provides shelter while individuals



work on issues that led to their homelessness, provides living proof that this approach moves those experiencing homelessness beyond homeless.

But to move from the status quo to a more enlightened and effective approach, we need all the help we can get. So please, get involved! Your support and shared passion is absolutely crucial to our mission.

You can learn more about our work by visiting [www.beyondhomeless.org/about](http://www.beyondhomeless.org/about).

## INDEPENDENT BOOKS

## The New Deal's War on the Bill of Rights

Featured on *National Review's The Bookmonger Podcast*, *Power Line*, American Institute for Economic Research, *The American Conservative*, Matt Kibbe's *Free the People* Podcast, and more, David T. Beito's *The New Deal's War on the Bill of Rights: The Untold Story of FDR's Concentration Camps, Censorship, and Mass Surveillance* has taken the world by storm.

And no wonder.

Spying on citizens...

Censoring critics...

Imprisoning minorities...

These are the acts of dictators, not American presidents...

**Or are they?**

The legacy of President Franklin D. Roosevelt enjoys regular acclaim from historians, politicians, and educators. Lauded for his New Deal policies, leadership as a wartime president, cozy fireside chats, and groundbreaking support of the "forgotten man," FDR, we have been told, is worthy of the same praise as men like Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln...

But is that true? Does the father of today's welfare state really deserve such generous praise? Or is there a dark side to this golden legacy?

## NO MORE EXCUSES

(continued from page 1)

During the New Deal, for example, he had backed mass surveillance of some three million private telegrams of anti-New Dealers and ordered politically targeted tax audits. In World War II, he had urged on the FBI strong-arm tactics to silence criticism from the black press.

After Pearl Harbor, FDR did nothing to tamp down anti-Japanese hysteria, though he had plenty of opportunity to do so. He ignored assurances from such top figures as FBI director J. Edgar Hoover and John Franklin Carter, who ran a trusted secret off-the-books intelligence operation for FDR, that Japanese-Americans were almost universally loyal. In his memoirs, Attorney General Francis Biddle dismissed claims that an irresistible groundswell of public opinion had forced the president's hand. Unlike some modern historians, Biddle did not try to soften responsibility by blaming a climate of hysteria. Roosevelt, Biddle concluded, "could probably have withstood the popular pressure without loss to the tenacity of his leadership—pressure of a

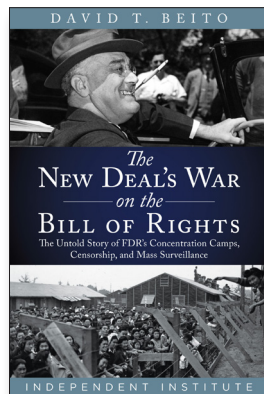
*The New Deal's War on the Bill of Rights: The Untold Story of FDR's Concentration Camps, Censorship, and Mass Surveillance* unveils a much different portrait than the standard orthodoxy found in today's historical studies.

Deploying an abundance of primary source evidence and well-reasoned arguments, historian and distinguished professor emeritus David T. Beito masterfully presents a complete account of the *real* Franklin D. Roosevelt: a man who *abused power, violated human rights, targeted dissidents*, and let his crude racism *imprison American citizens* merely for being of Japanese descent.

Here is an all too rare portrait of a man who changed the course of American history ... not for the better.

**Read it, and you'll never view the fireside president the same again.**

**To learn more and buy the book, please visit our website [www.independent.org/NewDealFDR](http://www.independent.org/NewDealFDR).**



highly vocative minority in the West." He added: "It may be even doubted whether, political and special group pressure aside, public opinion even on the West Coast supported evacuation."

FDR's Executive Order 9066 stands out as a stunning and completely inexcusable failure of presidential leadership at a crucial turning point. Had he deployed his famous eloquence, perhaps citing the Four Freedoms, he would have prevented much suffering. He did not behave like a president who was trapped by conditions or distracted (Carter kept him closely advised on the situation), but rather like a man who just didn't care.

Even without Executive Order 9066, Roosevelt fell short on upholding the Bill of Rights both during the New Deal and in World War II. When considering internment as a puzzle piece, the incarceration of Japanese-Americans was outsized in its reliance on mass institutional racism, but when assessing FDR's civil-liberties record, it was but one piece on the board among many.

## Sponsor Spotlight: David and Debra Humphreys

David is CEO of Tamko Building Products and serves on the boards of Acton Institute and Cato Institute

“At Tamko, I strive to incorporate my family’s long-held values of personal liberty and free market economics into the structure and nature of the way we operate our business. It has been important to establish the concept of individual ownership and correlative responsibilities for employees who are entrusted to have authority to do their work.

“Education has been our primary focus for many years, as we know the impact education can have providing upward mobility and opportunity. In 1992, Debra and I founded the Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School in Joplin ... Debra also founded the Compass Academy Network for underserved rural middle school students.”

***Why do you support the Independent Institute, and especially the David J. Theroux Endowed Chair in Political Economy?***

“I have known Mary Theroux for nearly my entire life, and I trust and respect her vision for liberty. She is a principled classical liberal. The research aspect of the Independent Institute



provides leaders and citizens with a framework of how perennial social and economic issues can be solved through cooperation.

“The David J. Theroux Chair is a very worthy initiative, and one that my family and I are proud to support in a significant way. It is important to honor David’s lifelong commitment to the cause of liberty.”

**To learn more, please visit [independent.org/davidtherouxchair](https://independent.org/davidtherouxchair).**

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