

## **Editor's Letters in Intellectual Ammunition 1999-2001**

*From September 1999 until September 2001, I served as an editor of "Intellectual Ammunition." IA, as it was known, was an opinion magazine published by The Heartland Institute. It focused on states and public policy. Over half of the material came from contributing editors, while the balance came from guest columnists. Each issue also featured an excerpt of a policy report, whether from Heartland or another organization. My job included soliciting new authors, managing the contributing editors, and doing the first line of editing. I also wrote the editor's letter for each issue. This file is a compilation of those letters.*

*Shortly after I left Heartland, one of the contributing editors to IA, Morgan Reynolds, left his post to take a job with the U.S. Department of Labor. Within a month or so, the U.S. suffered the attacks of 9-11. Several years later, I learned to my horror that Mr. Reynolds had embrace a conspiracy theory that the attacks were an inside job of the U.S. government. Rather than expunge his name from these letters, I have left it in. His ideas about criminal justice may have been controversial, but they were not part of the delusional fringe of American life.*

*I have found that working on the magazine was a good way to meet many fine people who work in the area of public policy. In particular, I wish to thank contributing editor Murray Weidenbaum.*

*Approximately two years after I left Intellectual Ammunition, the Heartland Institute ceased publishing the magazine.*

## **September/October 1999: News from the Heartland**

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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Vouchers rock.

That's the message parents gave to researchers who investigated the Cleveland Scholarship Program--the first in the country to offer state-funded scholarships for use at both secular and religious schools. As [George Clowes](#) explains in this issue's education column, parents who receive the scholarship funds are overwhelmingly positive about the program. They "are more likely to be 'very satisfied' with almost every aspect of the choice schools their children attend than are parents of students in the Cleveland public schools."

Unfortunately, advocates of this most promising reform have had to battle entrenched interests all the way through the Ohio court system, until the Ohio Supreme Court ruled recently that the program does *not* violate constitutional provisions for the separation of church and state. On the day before the start of the new school year, however, a federal judge issued an injunction against the program, shutting it down temporarily. Such opposition to choice will ultimately hurt Cleveland, predicts [Doug Munro](#), whose cover story calls school vouchers a boon for the cities, whose poor school systems often drive young families to the suburbs.

Crime columnist [Morgan O. Reynolds](#) praises U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno for recognizing that many factors have led to recent drops in crime rates. But according to Reynolds, Reno misunderstands the role of government in continuing this decline. The most effective role for government, says Reynolds, is to do a few things, and do them well: Enforce the law, and then get out of the way.

While not many people expect Washington to usher in a society of peace and prosperity, the federal government still gets credit as the place to turn to for environmental protection. Not so fast, says our environment columnist, [Jonathan H. Adler](#). When it comes to protecting wetlands, the U.S. government is a latecomer, and too often it relies on unconstitutional regulatory approaches. Fortunately, the courts are beginning to recognize this fact. And not surprisingly, the proper thing to do--in this case, respect property rights--is also the most effective thing to do. Non-regulatory approaches are more effective, and less invasive.

This issue of *Intellectual Ammunition* also offers an [excerpt](#) of Heartland's latest policy study, "Extending Affordable Health Insurance to the Uninsurable." Private insurers are ill-equipped to serve the 2.5 million people with serious medical problems; 28 state governments play a positive role by chartering nonprofit health insurance plans, or HIPs, for this population. Conrad F. Meier, a health policy advisor for Heartland, offers ways the remaining 22 states can best integrate a HIP into the private insurance market. These plans, Meier concludes, "are a targeted response to a specific problem: a government-sponsored program that really works, helps people, does so with a minimum of bureaucratic interference, and costs very little for everyone involved."

Other columns address "[comparable worth](#)," [Medicare HMOs](#), the [CFTC's attack on free speech](#), [airport privatization](#), and [federal taxes](#). David Mulhausen makes his first appearance in these pages as a co-author with [Robert Rector](#), the respected expert on welfare. Guest columnists [Stephen A. Moses](#) and [Eric Montarti](#) report on long-term care insurance and tax increment financing, respectively.

Dan Miller, who previously wrote in this space as Heartland's publisher, has left to assume duties as the business editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times*. We wish him well.

## November/December 1999: News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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Tip O'Neil once observed that "all politics is local," and with this issue of *Intellectual Ammunition*, we examine the most local of all political issues: a person's place of residence.

In many metropolitan areas, including here in Chicago, government officials, environmental activists, and urban planners decry "urban sprawl." In order to offset the costs of building new roads, schools, and other public amenities to service newly developing areas, municipalities are turning to "impact fees." Are such fees justified?

In *Heartland Policy Study #92*, excerpted here, Brett M. Baden, Don L. Coursey, and Jeannine M. Kannegiesser examine the effects of impact fees in eight Chicago suburbs. They find that these fees--which actually *understate* the costs that local governments impose on developers, and ultimately, home buyers--may have many adverse effects. Impact fees are regressive, raise housing prices, and have the potential to reduce the economic vitality of the region.

"Setting impact fees at the appropriate levels," the researchers note, "requires considerable research into the accounting and budgetary structure of a municipality." Unfortunately, such careful research is only rarely done. As Baden and his colleagues conclude, all too often "frequent changes to fee structures and ad hoc assessments and exactions imposed on a project-by-project basis increase building costs without generating any offsetting revenues or benefits for municipalities."

**Featured column.** As Internet commerce grows--have you starting clicking your way through your shopping list?--states ought to consider Bill Ahern's lesson. As our Tax columnist explains, when taxes on cigarettes become too high, especially when compared with the taxes levied by nearby states, people move to avoid the tax system--either by smuggling or shopping out of state. Just as people avoid businesses that charge too much for their goods or services, so too they avoid governments that charge too much.

**Exciting new Web presence.** Devoted readers of *Intellectual Ammunition* know that we fit each of our regular columns onto a single printed page, giving you the quick-but-essential read of the key policy questions of the day. Alongside each column, we suggest materials for further reading: an expanded version of the column, statistical information that could not be fit into one page, or a companion piece. To date, you've been able to order these documents, free of charge, using Heartland's *PolicyFax* research service and your fax machine.

Now, *PolicyFax* has a full-featured Internet companion: *PolicyBot*. *PolicyBot* gives you extensive search-and-retrieve capabilities and 24/7 access to over 7,000 documents stored as Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) files.

To try the *PolicyBot* service, visit Heartland's Web site at [www.heartland.org](http://www.heartland.org). If you already know which document you wish to retrieve--such as any featured in the columns in this issue--you can also go directly to that document by directing your Web browser to the specific URL noted in the column.

**Correction.** In the September/October issue, we attributed to George Washington the following quote: "Firearms stand next in importance to the Constitution itself." The quote apparently is bogus; we regret the error.

# January/February 2000: News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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The fact that you are reading this publication means that yet another scare was overblown.

Last year, much ink was spilled over the "What if" game of Y2K. Would we really see The End The End Of The World As We Know It? Some pundits predicted a recession. More alarmist prognosticators advised that we head for the hills, away from the riots and the collapse of civilization that were sure to come.

We're still standing, but, unfortunately, so is the tradition of fear-mongering. Scary possibilities make for more interesting headlines, after all. They also make it easier for those seeking government power to restrict business and personal conduct to justify their plans.

Lately, there's been a lot of fear-mongering about the planet's food supply, even when we should be rejoicing in ever-expanding production. As companies turn to genetically modified (GM) techniques to produce sturdier food, such as cold- or insect-resistant crops, the technophobes and romanticists appeal to fear of the unknown, calling such foods "Frankenfoods." Romanticists longing for an earlier age appeal to a fear that the world will be subsumed to corporate giants.

Guest contributor Martin Zelder explains why fears of GM foods are overblown, offering suggestions on how public policy should respond to these concerns. Jonathan Adler, meanwhile, reports that the news about the environment is actually quite good when compared with the dire predictions of groups and individuals who still, after being discredited time and again, are given entirely too much credibility.

## **Technology Focus**

One major contributor to America's continuing prosperity is the information technology sector, where computing power, telephone service, television, and commerce are mixing together to provide new avenues for business, education, and creativity in ways that we can't yet imagine. Even in this fascinating and liberating sector, though, fear remains.

Heartland policy adviser Jim Johnston takes on the fear of monopolies in our lead story. In an excerpt from a recent *Heartland Policy Study* on Internet access, David B. Kopel contends we have little to fear from the possibility that cable companies will dominate residential broadband Internet access. And I address a concern raised by many state and local officials: that e-commerce will cause a meltdown of government budgets.

**Featured Columns**

Sometimes, of course, fear can be a useful emotion, if accompanied by steel-eyed realism in looking at potential dangers. Health columnist Twila Brase and Regulation columnist Murray Weidenbaum demonstrate that we are quite right to fear the damage that government-first programs and ways of thinking can cause. Efforts to rein-in rising health care costs--a problem itself the product of government policies--are gradually stripping each of us of medical privacy. Unnecessary and even arbitrary regulations, meanwhile, threaten our supplies of reliable electricity.

Other columns this month look at privatizing parole and probation, suburban schooling and school choice, property taxes, and the unreported rise in welfare spending.

## March/April 2000: News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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There is no such thing as a free lunch . . . and no such thing as a free road, either.

While roads are often considered, quite literally, the textbook case justifying government, even "free" roads have their costs.

In Chicagoland, everyone loves to hate the toll roads, an integral part of the transportation system of the area. It came as little surprise, then, when newly elected Governor George Ryan announced his desire to abolish the tolls. The driving public, irked by the nickel-and-diming it faces throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, is inclined to applaud. Some, thinking "the roads have already been paid for," wonder why they must continue to pay tolls.

Roads, of course, need to be maintained, and that maintenance must be paid for somehow. Transportation expert Peter Samuel, writing in *Heartland Policy Study* #94 "[The Illinois Tollway: An Opportunity for Reform.](#)" reports that "the current 19 cents/gallon gas tax would have to be increased by 6.4 cents if tolls were to be abolished and no other changes were made." Consider also that approximately two-thirds of the Illinois tollway system needs to be completely rebuilt, and you begin to appreciate the cost of a reliable road system.

For reasons of efficiency and equity, Samuel recommends that the toll authority raise, not lower tolls, and aggressively move to electronic tolling. In this issue of *Intellectual Ammunition*, we provide an excerpt of this study, which has drawn substantial attention from major newspapers and leading government officials.

In response to Samuel's suggestion that the tollroads be turned over to private management or even ownership, the new chairman of the tollway's board demurred, offering that privatization meant someone would make a profit. *Exactly!* Profit--along with the fact of competition--is why we expect so much of, say, UPS and FedEx, and so little of the Postal Service.

**Elsewhere in this issue:** White state governments across the country are awash in budget surpluses, few think of returning money to taxpayers. The settlements between major tobacco companies and many of the states will produce huge windfalls--some \$90 billion over the next ten years, supposedly as compensation for the costs of providing health care for smokers.

Every interest group imaginable wants to tap into the new money pot for its pet project. Robert J. Franciosi Ph.D. argues on behalf of a prominent yet neglected figure in the debate over the money: the taxpayer. Specifically, he calls for an income tax rebate.

Other columns address the legitimacy of capital punishment, the record of the MinnesotaCare program, the recent legal record of the EPA, the efforts of teacher unions to kill a merit pay plan, environmental and economic objections to free trade, and several successful efforts to reduce teenage sexual activity.

**Update.** In the March/April 1999 issue, Matthew Berry of the Institute for Justice described the FCC's policy of clamping down on small-scale radio broadcasters. These entrepreneurs serve segments of the market sometimes neglected by large firms. We are pleased to report that the FCC has now approved a proposal to allow community groups, churches, and schools to establish and run 1,000-watt FM radio stations. (Currently, FM stations run from 6,000 to 100,000 watts.) FCC Chairman Bill Kennard spoke well of the proposal when he declared, "The airwaves can accommodate lots of voices." Well said.

# May/June 2000: News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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It may turn out that what we need to fear is not Big Brother, but Big Daddy.

Last year, federal regulatory officials sought to impose "know your customer" rules on banks. Intrusive, many said, and the thousands of angry letters to Congress and the FDIC led to a quiet withdrawal of the rules. More recently, the Census has been criticized as too nosy.

In both these episodes, the threat to freedom is said to come from above: government officials, especially in Washington DC, are poking around where they ought not, trying to run our lives for us.

And yet . . . While people rightfully fear the danger of over-intrusiveness by government, they also continue to demand that government "do something" to ameliorate problems great and small. Want to take time off work to care for a sick family member, but you've run out of vacation time? Press for a law to mandate paid family leave. Bothered by the fact that your community isn't as small and quaint as it was when you moved in 20 years ago? Agitate for restrictive zoning codes to keep out "big box" retail stores or condos.

Of course, almost every new "right" imposes an obligation on someone else. Worse still, such efforts establish the pattern that the way to achieve what you want is to use, of all the institutions in society, the one with the legal monopoly on force.

## **Automobility and Elections**

Some folks don't care for cars; the noise over sprawl is in part an anti-auto campaign. Perhaps it's because I'm originally from Michigan, but I love cars. They offer unparalleled flexibility in scheduling (just try to get from suburb to suburb on mass transit), expand our educational opportunities, enhance our choices as consumers, and protect us against those who would limit civil and economic freedoms.

In their new *Policy Study* for The Heartland Institute, excerpted on page 16 of this issue, Joseph Bast and Jay Lehr remind us that cleaner and safer automobility

technologies are already in use, and more good news is on the way. "Only misguided public policies," they warn, "threaten to derail this market-driven progress."

The purpose of *Intellectual Ammunition* is to give you the tools you need to promote sound public policy. Usually, we do that with tightly written essays addressing the topics most likely to come before you as a policymaker. This issue's cover story offers an angle more direct than most, offering tips on how to write an effective speech. While aimed at the candidate for political office, the article should prove useful to all of us who want to improve our speech-making skills.

If you'd like to see more of these "hands-on" articles, please let me know what topics would be of most interest to you.

### **Featured Columns**

In a guest appearance in the Welfare column, Dr. Amy L. Sherman reviews the "Charitable Choice" provisions of the landmark welfare reform law. "The traditional social services network," she writes, "is being broadened with the inclusion of 'new players.' As importantly, these new players are doing new things." John Kramer's Law column recounts the plight of a Las Vegas limousine driver who is denied a license to work by the opposition of other companies, who have a right to select their competition-- their life made just a little easier by Big Daddy.

## July/August 2000: News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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The American desire for equality, combined with the public's growing impatience with the slow and uncertain nature of the legislative process, are beginning to add "school budget chief" to the résumés of judges across the country.

Advocates of equalized school spending, dissatisfied with their lack of success in state legislatures, are turning to state courts--and getting results. Relying on various doctrines of equality, judges from coast to coast have told legislators how to structure school-funding mechanisms. Richard Komer, writing in this issue's law column, and education columnist George Clowes examine this phenomenon.

"Judges," Komer writes, "are ill-suited by either temperament or training to administer school districts or make funding decisions." Clowes notes that in Ohio, the state's highest court recently "assumed authority to veto further action by state lawmakers on education funding."

In a Point of View column, Cato Institute fellow Doug Bandow addresses the issue of policy-through-litigation more generally, and concludes: "Politics is a bad way to make policy. Litigation is worse."

### New Columnists

We welcome two new columnists with this edition of *Intellectual Ammunition*.

**Bartlett Cleland** is the columnist for our new technology department. In coming months he will write about the policy questions relating to changing technology, including data privacy, the Internet, and intellectual property. Cleland directs the Center for Technology Freedom at the Institute for Policy Innovation. He was formerly Technology and Policy Counsel for Americans for Tax Reform, and earlier, counsel to Missouri Senator John Ashcroft. He welcomes your comments at [Bcleland@IPI.org](mailto:Bcleland@IPI.org). In this issue, he questions the need for taxpayer-funded efforts to close the so-called digital divide.

Jonathan Adler, our long-time columnist on environment issues, has left the think-tank world for the legal one. In his stead, his former colleagues from the

Competitive Enterprise Institute take over. **David Riggs**, CEI's director of land and natural resource policy, comments in this issue on the recent wildfires ravaging federal lands near Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Riggs, who earned a Ph.D. in applied economics from Clemson University, was previously a senior fellow at the Center of the American Experiment, a state-based think tank located in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

### **Be Careful What You Ask For**

In our cover essay, Dave Kopel dissects the political strategy of AOL, America's most popular way to connect to the Internet. AOL, now owning the kind of property it once wanted subjected to federal regulation, is a late convert to the principle of private property rights. Too late. Federal regulators have turned their attention to AOL itself.

### **Other Columns**

No state, perhaps, has done more to carry out the vision of a single-payer health care system than Tennessee. As Patrick Poole writes for the Tennessee Institute for Public Policy, the Volunteer State is suffering from rising budget pressures and declining quality in health care as a result of its TennCare program. Poole's study, which is our featured excerpt, offers a warning to other states on the perils of one-size-fits-all and government-driven approaches to health care.

In her column, Twila Brase notes that Americans are of two minds on the Internet as a tool of health care: excited about its usefulness as a source of general information, but wary of potential abuses that might accompany the use of personal medical information.

Other columns address rehabilitation of criminals, infrastructure development, regulatory policy, state tax rates, and racial discrepancies in child poverty rates.

# September/October 2000: News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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The fall elections are only a few weeks away, and disappointingly few races are expected to be competitive. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, only 40 or so Congressional seats could plausibly switch hands. The situation is little different in many states legislatures.

In our cover story, political consultant Jim Knoop reports that during the last election, nearly half of Indiana's legislature ran *unopposed*.

While that's good news for officials who wish to return to office, it's bad for the cause of good government. Innovation, low prices, and productivity in the business world all depend on competition--the threat of being replaced. While it's tough on businesses, consumers benefit. Likewise, accountability, integrity, and innovation in government require competition--the threat of being replaced.

Knoop lays the blame for uncompetitive elections on the weak condition of Indiana's--and by extension, many other states'--political parties. He offers suggestions for making political parties and political activism meaningful again.

Knoop's suggestions do not necessarily represent the views of The Heartland Institute, its staff, directors, or donors, but they are worth discussing. A longer version of his essay is available on the Web at [www.inpolicy.com](http://www.inpolicy.com).

## New Contributors

With this issue, we welcome **Myron Ebell** to the environment department. Ebell, who focuses on global warming and international environmental issues for the Competitive Enterprise Institute, concludes that the National Assessment on Climate Change is based on "a scientific fraud."

Ebell, who holds degrees from Colorado College and the London School of Economics, will periodically appear in the environment column along with colleagues from the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Also with this issue, we inaugurate a different kind of column--one that focuses on providing the elected official or candidate with practical tools for conducting

political campaigns. We will be bringing you tips from *Campaigns & Elections* magazine, the premier trade publication for candidates and campaign managers. In this issue, *C&E* editor-in-chief Ron Faucheux points out that candidates too often neglect the most ordinary--and most valuable--communication tools, in favor of television.

## **New Feature**

*Intellectual Ammunition* has long provided its readers with a Contacts section, which provides you with information about other public policy organizations offering interesting proposals on the concerns of the day.

In every other issue, starting with this one, we will use the Contacts pages to identify Heartland's Legislative Advisory Committee, an unpaid, bipartisan panel of officials who advise The Heartland Institute on its *PolicyFax* and *PolicyBot* information services. You can use this list to quickly identify fellow legislators familiar with, and actively participating in, Heartland's work.

For information about joining the Legislative Advisory Committee, call Heartland Public Affairs Director Lee Alan Lerner at 312/377-4000.

## **Also in this Issue**

Scott G. Bullock, writing in the law column, exposes the coercion that underlies Arizona's latest proposal for raising money for funding campaigns: levying extra fees on certain lobbyists, and on parking ticket violators, speeders, and other civil and criminal defendants.

Bartlett D. Cleland, in our technology department, explains why he applauds recent legal action against Napster. The involves something more important than the mere distribution of music, he writes, reaching to the health of the economy and the sanctity of our Constitution.

Other columns tackle the estate tax; the Supreme Court's recent *Miranda* decision; worker's rights; high school scholars; the history of Medicare, and welfare enrollment.

# November/December 2000: News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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While conservatives often accuse liberals of being susceptible to the "political temptation"--the belief that politics can solve any problem--it's actually an equal-opportunity malady. If only we could . . . (fill in the blank with a program to enact, or kill; a tax to cut, or raise).

One plan for which conservatives had too much hope was welfare reform. Lisa Oliphant, whose work we feature in this issue's Excerpt, examines welfare four years after the landmark 1996 reform. While much good has been accomplished, she finds, the results have been oversold.

Caseloads have in fact declined by nearly half from 1996 to 1998, and those who leave welfare for work are generally better off. Yet two-thirds of former welfare recipients still rely on various tax credits and non-cash benefits.

More importantly, welfare reform has not moved the long-term unemployed and difficult-to-place individuals off cash assistance. Certainly some further government measures--most importantly, perhaps, improving the education system--could help encourage self-sufficiency. But that's not enough.

The primary precursor to long-term dependence, Oliphant writes, is out-of-wedlock childbearing. While we can alter the incentive system--Oliphant encourages Congress to prohibit new, single mothers from signing onto the rolls--the building of a self-sufficient and responsible individual lies beyond politics, in the spheres of religious institutions, families, and voluntary associations.

## Featured Columns

Jay Greene, our guest education columnist, presents exciting news about how to improve academic achievement, especially among African-Americans.

Less expensive than reducing class sizes, more effective than rigorous testing, the answer is allowing parents to choose where their children go to school. *Theory* has told us that for quite some time; now we have solid, controlled experiments to prove it.

Clink Bolick, whose Institute for Justice has spearheaded the defense of school choice efforts across the country, uses this issue's law column to explain why vouchers are constitutional.

Environment columnist Jennifer Zambone, commenting on new cases of the mosquito-borne West Nile virus reported in the U.S. this year, describes the value of pesticides for reducing this threat. Health columnist Twila Brase explains why the World Health Organization recently ranked U.S. health care system worse than health care in 36 other countries: not because our system serves *patients* poorly, but because it poorly serves the political goals of the report's authors.

### **In Other Columns**

There's been good news on the crime front lately, and columnist Morgan Reynolds chalks it up to the simple act of locking up bad guys. John Hewitt offers valuable advice for sending effective press releases, and Adrian Moore explains the benefits of contracting out highway construction projects. Technology columnist Bartlett Cleland warns that attempts to outlaw online gambling won't work, but *will* undermine the rule of law.

Murray Weidenbaum laments the fact that his business friends support competition only in industries other than their own; Bill Ahern unpacks the inland waterways fuel tax; and Robert Rector reports on the successes achieved by nurse home visitation programs.

# January/February 2001: News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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We may live in one nation, but not in one national democracy. And that's a good thing.

As the controversy last year over the Electoral College reminded everyone, states, and state governments, matter. And as Ray Haynes explains in his cover essay, they should.

Though "some find it easier to enact social and economic policy at the national level rather than on a state-by-state basis," Haynes argues "this is shortsighted reason for abandoning the principle of federalism." Yes, it's more difficult to fight 50 battles across the nation than one in Washington, but the cause of good government--"not to mention the even more important cause of liberty"--is better served by this arrangement.

## Excerpt

Antitrust law, always of questionable value, was a favorite tool of the last Presidential administration. The Heartland Institute has recently published a new policy study--a book, really--that questions the practicality of antitrust law in the digital age. David Kopel, whose last study for Heartland laid to waste the justification for "open access" regulations, argues in *Antitrust after Microsoft* that antitrust simply cannot keep up with the "Internet time" on which the New Economy operates.

## New Columnists

Adrian Moore has taken on new responsibilities at the Reason Public Policy Institute (RPPI), and so turns over the privatization column to Robin A. Johnson. Johnson is a senior policy analyst with RPPI and serves as an elected alderman in his community in rural Illinois. He has earned an M.P.A. from Western Illinois University and has authored articles in *Government Finance Review* and other publications. In his inaugural essay for *Intellectual Ammunition*, Johnson details how a poorly executed contracting scheme threatened the Christmas of thousands of Illinois residents. Johnson can be reached by email at [robinj@reason.org](mailto:robinj@reason.org).

Angela Logomasini joins us as one of the several occasional contributors to the Environment column. Logomasini, who serves as director of risk and environmental policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, has had her work published in such major newspapers as the *Houston Chronicle* and important journals, including the *Journal of Regulation and Social Costs*. She earned an M.A. in politics from Catholic University of America and has served as a legislative assistant to Senator Sam Brownback. In her first column for us, Logomasini tells the story of one state official who fought the U.S. EPA--and won. She can be reached at [alogomasini@cei.org](mailto:alogomasini@cei.org).

### **In Other Departments**

Writing in this issue's Health department, guest columnist Merrill Matthews admits that prescription drug prices are high, but asserts that drug company profits are not out of line with those of other "New Economy" businesses.

In Crime, Morgan Reynolds makes the case for conceal-carry laws. Education specialist George Clowes predicts that a recent federal appeals court decision will make it more likely that the U.S. Supreme Court will rule definitively on the constitutionality of vouchers. Bill Ahern reveals some of the hidden costs of the federal income tax system, Bartlett Cleland surveys the four top policy issues of the year in the technology arena, and John Kramer gives an update on the licensing troubles of a Las Vegas entrepreneur.

# March/April 2001: News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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Advocates of limited government long have been concerned about judicial activism. They have worried that judges, frustrated with developments in the legislative arena, impose their own policy preferences on the public. Equally dangerous, though, is "executive activism."

One area where executive activism might be seen is in the flurry of "midnight regulations" that accompanies the end of each Presidential administration. Susan E. Dudley, our new columnist for the Regulation department, argues that while it may be coincidental that some regulations are issued at the end of an administration, some are hurried into existence without the usual checks and balances in order to appease certain interests. Sound anything like judicial activism?

Writing in the environment department, Robert H. Nelson and David W. Riggs examine the harmful effects of one specific kind of regulation: the Presidential creation of more lands devoted to wilderness status as "national monuments."

The significance of executive activism was also brought to light, indirectly, during the Senate confirmation hearings of the new Attorney General, John Ashcroft. The charge against him was that he would not enforce laws he fought as a member of the legislative branch. Perhaps this charge was hurled because his critics are well-informed in the practice of executive activism. After all, we've seen plenty of it in the last eight years.

## **In the Departments**

Crime columnist Morgan Reynolds explores the possibilities of restorative justice, a "good intentions" proposal that just may work. In the education department, guest columnist Dr. Alan Bonsteel offers another reason for supporting school choice: Under the status quo, one of every four students drops out before high school graduation. Public schools, he reports, often have dropout rates more than ten times higher than achieved by schools of choice.

Health columnist Twila Brase warns that bureaucratization and increasing state control over the field of medicine is increasingly discouraging people from entering medical school, which could affect the quality of future physicians.

Writing on law, Marni Soupcoff cites several examples of people whose property rights have been trampled by the abuse of eminent domain powers.

President Bush has made a lot of news about his plans to expand the use of the non-government sector in the delivery of social services. Writing in the privatization department, Robin Johnson tells us that governments throughout the country are relying more and more on outside vendors-not so much for cost savings, but because there are some things bureaucracies just can't do very well.

Finally, Bill Ahern explains that anything other than an across-the-board tax cut will increase the progressivity of the federal income tax code, and Bartlett Leland provides a primer on the conflict over privacy regulations.

## **Farewell**

Murray Weidenbaum, former Presidential advisor, has written the Regulation department since its inception in *Intellectual Ammunition*. He has taken a sabbatical from his position at the Center for the Study of American Business, and has begged off his duties for *IA* as well. Godspeed, professor.

As always, I welcome your comments about this magazine, especially suggestions for improvement.

# May/June 2001:News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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If you can't stop it, at least you can regulate it and thereby make people feel more comfortable.

That seems to be the sentiment of a Calgary, Alberta council member who has proposed this Canadian city issue ID badges to beggars. Councilor Bob Hawkesworth says his proposal is meant to "reduce any potential disruptive behavior." And I thought there were already laws against assault.

Hawkesworth's proposal also called for the newly licensed beggars to undergo counseling and enroll in job-search workshops.

What a good example of a government-centered response to a problem. Rather than eliminate or at least reduce such barriers to work as licensing requirements or high taxes, Hawkesworth proposes to legitimize panhandling. Instead of relying completely on the private sector to decide who deserves charity and who deserves the cold shoulder, bring in the government to set standards of conduct by beggars.

## **CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

In another development in feel-good public policy, Congress has been debating campaign finance reform. Too much money! Corrupt politicians! Fat cats are buying favors from our political leaders.

Let me share with you a secret: Fat cats don't give to candidates for the office of township supervisor. As a general rule, the volume of campaign contributions increases with the size of the budget the prospective official will influence. U.S. Senate candidates gather more money than state senate candidates--the former have more to offer in return. Want to reduce the flow of money into politics? A good place to start would be to reduce the size and scope of government.

But reformers, for all their righteous anger at the status quo, are usually unwilling to question the morality of progressive tax codes or the regulatory-welfare state machine. The machine, not accidently, is a great tool for promoting lifetime employment among the political incumbents reformers rail against.

While incumbents benefit from the current system, they will benefit even more from further restrictions on speech . . . that is, campaign finance reform. So the

naive reformers outside the system, in collusion with incumbents who seek to fortify their position against real and prospective challengers, make it more difficult for outsiders to move in.

Antitrust, anyone?

## **IN THE DEPARTMENTS**

Morgan Reynolds handles the hot potato of racial profiling. J.C. Bowman, a former high school teacher-turned-policy analyst, reviews President Bush's education plan. Angela Logomasini writes about the benefits of free trade in landfills.

Twila Brase previews proposed standards for medical care in Minnesota. Robin M. Brooks-Rigolosi tells us why she is suing the state of New York--and why her suit matters to you. Ron Faucheux calls for new standards of political behavior.

Robin Johnson reviews the lessons from privatization in Indianapolis. Alicia Hansen explains the difficulties of fixing the marriage tax penalty. Bartlett Cleland offers an introduction to the benefits of e-government, and Michael Barkey calls for charitable tax deductions as the next step in welfare reform.

In our guest editorial spots, Daniel Newby laments the passivity with which his fellow Utahns accept police checkpoints, and Roy Cordato identifies changes in sales tax collections in the state of North Carolina for what they are: a tax increase.

## July/August 2001: News from the Heartland

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by John R. La Plante  
Managing Editor

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Now that the Bush administration has had a chance to unpack some of its boxes, how well has it done? In this issue of *Intellectual Ammunition*, several columnists comment on recent initiatives touted by the new President and his people.

On the regulatory front, Susan Dudley is encouraged by the temperament of key Bush appointees. Twila Brase, on the other hand, faults the new administration for doing little to ensure the privacy of medical records.

While political reporter Fred Barnes has called the faith-based initiative President Bush's signature issue, welfare columnist Mike Barkey is not so sure. Concerned the initiative may lead to organizational dependency, Barkey offers a plan to build faith-based social-service groups *and* ensure their independence. I'm not sure I'm enthusiastic about Barkey's proposals, but they are worth considering, given that some form of Bush's plan likely will pass.

Speaking of signature issues, Heartland President Joseph Bast has long championed free-market reform of education, and we offer an excerpt of his recent study of tuition tax credits. While it focuses on two proposals in New Jersey, the lessons apply everywhere. George Clowes, meanwhile, points out yet another benefit competition brings to education: it should be better than the current regulatory apparatus at curbing fraud and mismanagement in schools.

Myron Ebell reviews the Bush energy plan, and finds its emphasis on increasing production of fossil fuels preferable to its nod toward demand management and alternative fuels. Guest essayist John Campbell, a California Assembly member from Irvine, offers his take on the Golden State's electricity woes.

On the legal front, Morgan Reynolds comments on hate crimes, and guest columnist Mark Hillman, state senator from Burlington, Colorado, reviews the problem of government using hired guns for class action lawsuits.

Robin Johnson tells us how state mandates limit contracting efforts by schools, and Bartlett Cleland writes about Internet taxes. Bill Ahern describes Tax Freedom Day 2001 . . . which reminds me of another Bush plan: where's my tax cut?

More encouraging than any new proposals from the administration, however, is a new structure and political culture in several states, thanks to term limits in the legislatures. In our cover story, Patrick Basham reviews the political science literature, and finds that on both substance and procedure, term limits in the states have been good.

Note to my favorite legislators: I do appreciate you, but there's something about the system that makes it in my ideological interest-and yours, as well-for even the best of officials to be turned out of office after a time.

### **Updated Contacts List**

Our job here at The Heartland Institute is not only to provide you with our own solutions, but to point you to other useful organizations. That's why *Intellectual Ammunition*, for example, is largely written by people outside Heartland.

In addition, *Intellectual Ammunition* has long carried a list of other free-market organizations. Some are focused on one or two policy questions of national importance, while others work on improving conditions in one particular state.

I've revised and updated the list, which you can find on pages 20 to 23. We don't necessarily endorse the particulars of any group listed, but we do think they will give you some useful food for thought. No list is ever final, though; please send address corrections to me.