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THE MISES WAY



FOUR SECRETS THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS KEEP FROM YOU

Dr. Paul F. Cwik

WHY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAN'T AFFORD TO TEACH ECONOMICS

Dr. Tate Fegley






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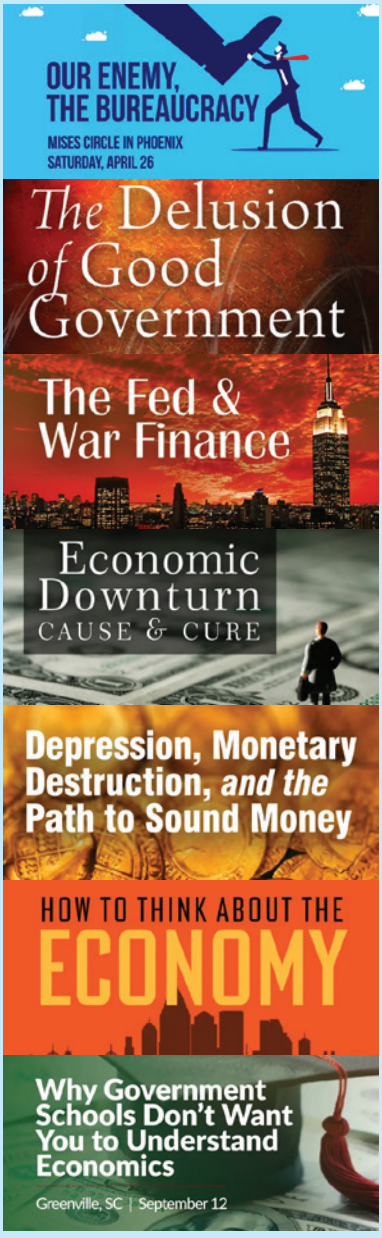
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From the Editor

The mission of the Mises Institute is to promote teaching and research in the Austrian School of economics, individual freedom, honest history, and international peace. Sound economics is at the center of all this, and it's not a coincidence that our founder, Lew Rockwell, built up the Institute's faculty around economics and economists. A keen understanding of economics has always been at the center of understanding the state, its socialism, and its wars. The twentieth century's great freedom fighters, like Ludwig von Mises and Murray Rothbard, pursued economics in part because it provides key insights into how freedom is both destroyed and preserved.

Sometimes I am asked why we focus on economics. Why study it at all? Some claim that it's too boring a topic to attract many people to the cause of freedom and free markets. My response is that understanding economics is the way to understanding how the state's ruling class is ripping us off. For example, without a basic understanding of money and inflation, it is impossible to see the many ways that the regime is impoverishing us through easy money and through the banking cartel. Knowledge of economics reveals to us the countless ways that the productive class is continually impoverished by the parasite class. Otherwise, how are we to understand the ways we are being ruined by interventions like inflation, bailouts, healthcare cartels, income taxes, wars, and much more? An education in economics reveals the mechanisms through which the state exploits us.

Nor should we think that sound economics does not resonate with a great many people. With his message of economic freedom—which focused heavily on opposing the Federal Reserve—Ron Paul became a household name. His "End the Fed" campaigns greatly wounded the Fed's prestige, and it has never fully recovered. Thank goodness.

But the state of economics education in our schools and universities has done nothing to help. This reflects the generally declining quality of our educational institutions. Unfortunately, this decline in quality is exactly what we'd expect from decades of state-subsidized "education," which exists to push government-approved curricula and ideologies. Not even the ostensibly private institutions are exempt. These are now so heavily reliant on federal grants and loans that only a small handful of financially independent schools, such as Grove City College, escape the federal funding trap.

In this issue of *The Misesian*, two of our scholars, Paul Cwik and Tate Fegley, discuss how our colleges and universities have been failing students, both generally and specifically in economics. The way economics is taught at most government schools tends to be especially problematic. After all, if economics reveals the problems with the state's countless schemes to rob us, we should not be surprised that the regime is not exactly wild about sound economics instruction.

This is why the Mises Institute focuses so much on providing an alternative to economics as taught in government schools. Few will learn the insights of the Austrian School from the standard education. So we must provide a place for students to learn from our own faculty, and we must continue to publish the books and journals which preserve and expand that knowledge. We must also continue to support budding teachers and scholars by giving them a place to write and learn freely.

We certainly cannot rely on the state-controlled schools to teach sound economics. It isn't just an oversight. The regime doesn't *want* us to understand economics. It's our job to teach what the regime doesn't want us to know. ■



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FOUR SECRETS THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS KEEP FROM YOU



Dr. Paul F. Cwik

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This article is adapted from a talk presented at the Mises Circle in Greenville, South Carolina, September 12, 2026.

There is an old saying, "When you send your child to Rome, don't be surprised that he comes back Roman." Or as Delano Squires said more recently, "You can't sow Snoop Dogg and reap *The Cosby Show*."

A free and prosperous society is maintained by transmitting sound cultural values and knowledge to the next generation. Frédéric Bastiat said that the twin evils facing society are the fatal tendency of mankind and false philanthropy. The fatal tendency of mankind is to try to live at the expense of others—to make others provide for our wants and desires. We do this directly by supporting wealth redistribution programs and indirectly by lobbying for special business privileges. False philanthropy is the use of the force and power of government to address the moral failings we see in others. Bastiat was right to warn against using the power of the government to reach into our neighbors' pockets to relieve poverty, cure the sick, and educate the young.

We need to teach the importance of private property rights, free markets, and entrepreneurship, and that personal responsibility and freedom are what allow us to succeed or fail. The consequences of failing to educate through our schooling system cannot be overstated. Our society survives only if our children understand the difference between a system based on authoritarianism and one based on contracts and individuality. It is critical to learn Mises's lesson of markets as he articulated it in *Economic Freedom and Interventionism*: "In the market economy the consumers are supreme. Consumers determine, by their buying or abstention from buying, what should be produced, by whom and how, of what quality and in what quantity." Those entrepreneurs who fail to efficiently please consumers lose their status as entrepreneurs. In the free market, the best minds serve the

Bastiat was right to warn against using the power of the government to reach into our neighbors' pockets to relieve poverty, cure the sick, and educate the young.



average person by making phones, cars, food, and every other good and service better. All businesses, regardless of size, must conform to the wants and desires of consumers. In contrast, the authoritarian system reflects the valuations of the few and the elite. Unfortunately, it is no secret that our educational system is failing to transmit the foundational values and precepts of a free and prosperous society. Those graduating from today's high schools think that socialism and other authoritarian systems of social cooperation are the better path forward.

To start with a personal observation, I can attest that the students the government K-12 system produces today are not as advanced as those who graduated before covid. In fact, the problem extends beyond the past five or six years. There is a qualitative difference between my economic-principles students today and those of 1993, when I taught my first college-level course. And the problem did not start in the 1990s either. Before the government took over education, the United States had the most literate and educated population in the world: In the 1880s and 1890s, literacy rates were between 85% and 90%. Today's students are learning less, yet somehow we see GPAs increasing.

Now we come to the first secret: The takeover of education was not to make us more knowledgeable; it was to make Americans more collectivist. It is common knowledge that one of the founders of our government school system, Horace Mann (1796–1859), favored the Prussian model of common schools. It emphasized uniformity and conditioned the students to become good subjects of the state. Later, the educational Progressive movement (1890s–1930s) was spearheaded by people such as John Dewey, Charles W. Eliot, and Richard T. Ely. They viewed the school system as a tool for creating social change and raising "social consciousness." In 1892, Eliot, who was then president of Harvard, chaired the National Education Association Committee of Ten, which recommended a standardized curriculum and the organization of students into grade levels based on age rather than on achievement or mastery of the subjects.

Education became industrialized. Students were processed along an assembly line. They were the clay that the teachers shaped and molded. As Murray Rothbard points out in his essay "Education: Free and Compulsory," "The effect of progressive education is to destroy independent thought in the child, indeed to repress any thought whatsoever. Subjects are taught as little as possible. . . . This program is being carried forward into high school, as well as grammar school, so that many high-school graduates are ignorant of elementary spelling or reading, and cannot write a cogent sentence."

If you think this is an exaggeration, it's not. Perhaps you have seen the viral Instagram video of Darius Williams, a high school teacher in the Houston Independent School District in Texas. He is a relatively new teacher. On his second day at Wheatley High School, he asked his class of seniors to read two paragraphs and answer a question by filling in four words in a couple of sentences. His video went viral because he was literally in tears. His testimonial was heartbreaking because these 17- and 18-year-olds could not do it. Williams truly cares about their future. These students are supposed to graduate in May 2027, and they are completely unprepared to be good citizens. Nevertheless, the Houston Independent School District said it is "proud of the progress the students are making." I hunted around Williams's Instagram a little more and saw the building and the classroom. It was a very nice classroom, nicer than where I work. Too often, we judge the quality of a school by the appearance of its facilities and the ivy on its walls. However, the real quality is found in the results. It may come as no surprise that in 2023, Wheatley High School was taken over by the state for failing its academic evaluations for seven consecutive years.

The second secret I want to share is that the most important factor in student success is the family, not the schools, not the teachers, and not the curriculum. The impact of parental involvement is substantial and significant. The Annie E. Casey Foundation is based in Maryland and focuses on at-risk children. Its research demonstrates the importance of parental involvement. When parents are involved in their kids' lives, the outcomes are significantly better. This research is corroborated by nonprofits across the political spectrum, such as the Sutherland Institute (based in Utah), which states, "Research shows that parental involvement has crucial impacts on a student's education outcomes like better rates of attendance, motivation and graduation." The academics agree. In their 2020 article "Family Structure Stability and Transitions, Parental Involvement, and Educational Outcomes," published in the journal *Social Sciences*, Pribesh et al. write, "Researchers studying family structure have found that children who live with two married, opposite-sex, biological parents, on average, have better educational outcomes than children living in alternate family structures." If we are serious about improving education, we should strengthen its foundation—the traditional family—and encourage parental involvement.

However, the educational establishment rejects this secret. In his education article, Rothbard recorded that in 1898 The Public Education Association of Philadelphia "resolved that as long as there are ignorant or selfish parents, compulsion must be used in order to safeguard the child's rights." The problem the educational establishment focuses on is the parents. And they are amazingly consistent. Today, we need only look to Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, and her stance on who should control students. Who should determine what subjects the students learn? Who should determine what is and what is not important? Not the parents. Furthermore, Weingarten advocates allowing teachers to withhold students' "true names" from their parents. She opposes parents' right

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to choose which school to send their children to. We see that nothing has changed since the nineteenth century. The teachers' union and the government school system claim superiority over parents. After all, they are the experts. Parents and the traditional family are obstacles to be overcome.

Our tragedy is even deeper. With the rise of the welfare state, we have seen the decline of the traditional family. The science of economics informs us that incentives are very important in shaping societal trends. In 1960, 9% of households were single-parent homes. According to US Census data, in 1970, the year I was born, single-parent households jumped up to 12.8%. Each year thereafter the family structure has eroded. By 1982, the share of single-parent homes doubled to 24.6%. The share climbed to 32% by 1997 and has fluctuated between 28% and 31% since. And 40% of the babies born in 2022 were born to unmarried mothers.

The family has been destroyed by the welfare state and the expansion of government. Welfare incentivizes the breakdown of the family. It actively discourages fathers from being in the household. With the father not in the home, there is a lack of a male role model, and the connection between generations is lost. Inflation, caused by perpetual deficits, has made it necessary for mothers to join the workforce. Children are sent to daycare and raised by non–family members.

The educational establishment believes that the government school system can and should fill this void. The welfare state and Progressive educational reform did not cause one another, but they are synergistic. Eliminating or reducing one will have spillover effects on the other. As an Austrian economist, I can say that the welfare state could not be sustained if we had a balanced federal budget. If we want to go even deeper, we can see that the federal deficits are perpetuated by fiat money. They are a fundamental support of the welfare state. Thus, a return to sound money is a cure for many of our social evils.

The third secret is that high teacher salaries are *not* necessary for good educational outcomes. It seems that with every budget cycle in Raleigh (the capital of North Carolina, where I live), we hear the same chorus, "If we don't pay our teachers more, we will lose all the good ones." Obviously, to some extent this is true, but we are missing the bigger question: What is the right amount to pay teachers? Every time I ask it, I get the same answer: More. But this is not an answer.

In the private sector, wages are tied to what economists call the value marginal product of labor. It basically says that, in equilibrium, a person should earn the value he adds to the product. Of course, this is never exact. And technically, the employee is subjectively valuing his wage relative to his opportunity cost of working. Meanwhile, the employer is also comparing subjective valuations. But for the purposes of this talk, we can consider

Members of the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers rallied in Lansing, Michigan, June 18, 2019, demanding the state legislature increase funding for public education. Photograph: Jim West / Alamy.



this a rough estimate. Here is a simple example. If an employee adds value to the company at a rate of $15 per hour, can it afford to pay him $20 per hour? No, or at least not for long. And if the company pays this employee $10 per hour, what will happen? The employee will look for alternative employment and leave the company. Thus, in a free market, the wage rate tends toward the value the employee creates for the company.

When the employee generates more value, his wage rate should rise. Suppose the company buys a new machine that increases the employee's productivity. Certainly, the value marginal product of labor increases and wages rise, but I want to draw your attention to who purchased the new machine. Yes, the owner bought the new machine. Do I mean to say that the owner will spend a large capital sum on a new machine and then be forced by market forces to pay his employees more? Absolutely. That is precisely what I mean. How can this work? For our answer, we need to take a step back and see the bigger picture. The employer buys the machines, and the employees become more productive. As output expands, the employer's per-unit cost falls. He lowers the price and draws new consumers away from his competitors. Revenues increase so much that he has the funds to pay for the increased value marginal product of labor. In other words, he is able to give the employees a cut from his success. Thus, the owner wins. The employees win. The makers of the new machines win. Consumers win. And the competitors need to rise to the challenge or suffer losses. This process is how companies grow and living standards rise.

My question to all those who answered that teachers should get "more" is: What new technique or new process have educators come up with that has increased their value and productivity? In other words, what is the educational equivalent of the new machine that increases workers' value marginal product of labor? I am not looking for a quantitative number, such as how many students are processed per teacher, but I think we should be able to ask what they have done to improve educational outcomes. And if we base teacher salary on recent student outcomes, teachers might need to take a pay cut rather than receive a raise.

North Carolina recently passed its state budget. For the 2026–27 school year, the salary for a new teacher with zero experience is $48,000 for a 10-month contract (this does not include nonpecuniary benefits such as health insurance). As experience, certifications, and higher degrees accumulate, the salary increases, reaching a maximum of $74,510 for a 10-month contract. Additionally, principals are paid up to $120,000 per year, and superintendents can receive more than $167,000 annually.

How does the state of North Carolina set wages for teachers? Yes, there is a political process that includes lobbying, but let's set that aside for a moment and assume we are all honest bureaucrats, really trying to get the price right. We are facing F. A. Hayek's knowledge problem. There is no market price for government schoolteachers. We could look at private schools, but since the public sector controls over 80% of the students, private schools' salaries are based on the legislators' actions, not the other way around. What really happens is that the budget writers in North Carolina look at salaries



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in neighboring states such as South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. They then compare cost-of-living indices and other metrics to justify a "fair" salary. If these other states had completely private educational systems, this could be a close approximation of market rates, but no state has a robust private educational system. Government schools dominate in every state. The system is one in which our bureaucrats are adjusting to what other bureaucrats are doing in other states, all the while the other states' bureaucrats are adjusting to us and everyone else. Without a market process, there is no mechanism to determine the correct height of teacher wages.

There are other secrets that I could add, like experts are terrible at delivering good education. While it is assumed that a person with a master's degree is a better teacher than someone with just a bachelor's degree, the evidence shows this isn't true. The outcomes are the same. While the education professionals have tried to improve student outcomes by creating "new math," rejecting phonics, and pursuing several other loony tangents, they have actually worsened them. But I want to end on a more optimistic note.

Let us take a look at the fourth secret: Homeschooling is not that hard, and it produces the best results. I have three children, and my wife and I homeschooled each of them. We started with homeschooling the oldest through the first grade. Then we got nervous and enrolled him in a private religious school. It was expensive, and the results were no different. In fact, they were less than what I was hoping for. For two years he asked to return to homeschooling. My oldest daughter was a little different. She really liked interacting with other girls her age, but again the educational outcomes were underwhelming. It was too costly to send her to school just to socialize. Our third child has only been homeschooled.

When we started homeschooling, we had all the same questions and fears as everyone else. We discovered that homeschooling is amazing. We did not have to be up at a certain time waiting for a bus. We knew exactly what the kids were learning and how well they were progressing. When one of them wanted to learn something I knew nothing about, like chemistry, we outsourced it! (How many homeschoolers are learning their economics from the Mises Institute?) The most surprising thing I discovered is that learning doesn't have to take all day. From kindergarten through eighth grade, the kids were basically done by lunchtime. We changed the curriculum when we needed to. Because my kids are different people, they learn differently. One needed more tactile lessons, so we changed the way we taught math. Another was more interested in music and languages. We could easily adjust because there are so many tools at our fingertips. At one point, I realized that my son was absolutely lost in math. What did we do? We backtracked to a point where he knew the material. Then we started again from that point. What government schoolteacher would or could do that?

Additionally, we are not tied to any one location. We have traveled around the Carolinas and walked through the battlefields of Guilford Courthouse, Alamance, and Bentonville. We have visited Bennett Place, Kitty Hawk, Tryon Palace, Kings Mountain, the historic state capitol, and Colonial Williamsburg. The museums in Raleigh even host homeschool days that offer homeschoolers behind-the-scenes access to labs and experiments.

In North Carolina, there are more homeschoolers than students enrolled in private schools. Here are the numbers: For the 2025–26 school year, there were 1,381,437 students enrolled in government schools. Private schools enrolled 143,998 students, about a tenth of that number. In North Carolina, we do not have to report to the government the number of students in our homeschools. What is recorded is the number of homeschools, which stood at 95,190. The nonprofit group North Carolinians for Home Education says the most reasonable estimate is that, on average, there are two students per homeschool. This places the number of homeschooled students at just under 200,000. Thus, the government system has about 80% of the students; the homeschoolers account for approximately 12%; and private school students make up the remaining 8%. The North Carolina homeschooling community is large. And because it is so large, there are many, many businesses that cater to it. Each year there is a homeschool conference in Winston-Salem. Over 35,000 people attend and fill the city's entire conference center. The dozens of vendors fill an entire floor. And despite the community being so large, it feels small. The children have their own events and independently explore the vendor hall. What is amazing is that they are

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comfortable integrating with people of all ages and not just those in their cohort. The older kids look after the younger ones.

Closer to home, we have several co-ops, which are networked together. Co-ops utilize parents with specific talents or skills and allow them to teach the group's children. For example, my children have taken classes in literature, Latin, painting, and archery at our local co-op. I have taught economics to some high schoolers and also to elementary schoolers. Parents freely join these groups and leave as their needs change. Experienced families help newcomers and welcome them in.

It is obviously not a perfect system, but it is far better than the alternatives. Colleges and universities, especially the private ones, greedily seek out homeschoolers. They know the value these students bring to campus.

And one final note on homeschooling: Homeschooling does not "steal" from the government schools. Government education is either the first- or second-largest budget item in every state. If I withdraw my kids from the government system, I do not receive a tax refund compensating me for the difference. The school budget is just divided among fewer students.

Overall, our educational system is a mess, and we need to do better. Only a few political issues



have shifted to the right over the past 40 years: We have seen an improvement in Second Amendment issues and with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. But the shift in the Overton window on school choice is new and unexpected. I think that covid forced parents to confront what was actually being taught in their local schools. The current system, which assigns students to specific schools, is the worst possible system we could have. And yet it is the most common. Allowing parents to choose which school to send their kids to is an improvement, but it is not a solution.

If we want a free and prosperous society to continue, we need full educational freedom. Today's students are sliding toward socialism because they are ignorant of history and economic theory. We keep sending our kids to Rome, and they are returning as Romans. We cannot expect a government employee to teach children the value of the free market. There is no single magic bullet that can save the day. There is no central plan for freedom. What is required is that all of us do what we can to pull in the direction of free markets, private property rights, and sound money. Sometimes we need to be the example. Other times, we need to confront the errors of socialism when attending city council and school board meetings. And still other times, we need to put a book in a student's hand, look them in the eye, and tell them about the impact that Rothbard, Mises, and the other Austrians have had on our lives. When I do this, I find that the students will actually read the book. Whether they become Austrian economists or not is beyond my control, but what is needed is action. Don't look at today as the end of a successful Mises Institute event; look at it as just the beginning of a much longer and more fruitful journey that we can take together. ■



WHY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAN'T AFFORD TO TEACH ECONOMICS



This article is adapted from a lecture presented at the Mises Circle in Greenville, South Carolina, September 12, 2026.

I prepared for this talk by looking at headlines about the state of government schools.

I saw that in Montgomery County, Maryland, the public schools are accused of having a policy of hiding from parents that children are transitioning genders if those parents are considered insufficiently supportive of such transitions. In my home state of Idaho, the government has recently been involved in a case trying to separate school sports by sex, and I think they've achieved some success with their lawsuits (such as *Little v. Hecox*). Parents in multiple states have sued school districts over not being able to opt their children out of LGBTQ-inclusive story time. Another issue is that the current presidential administration is reversing a policy of previous administrations that encouraged schools to reach racial parity in terms of disciplinary actions against students—not without controversy.

Checking in on how the three R's are going: There's no shortage of sad statistics there.

In multiple school districts and cities (Chicago and Detroit) many high school seniors are not testing at grade-level proficiency in reading and math. In certain schools, none of them are. An estimated 20% to 30% of students entering four-year institutions of higher education need remedial training in these areas. Perhaps you've seen a recent viral TikTok of a male high school teacher weeping over the fact that none of his students are able to read.

Dr. Tate Fegley



Dr. Tate Fegley is a Fellow of the Mises Institute, Chair of Business and Economics at Montreat College, and Research Fellow at the Independent Institute. He received his PhD in economics from George Mason University, and he has an MA in criminal justice, BA in economics, and a BS in criminal justice from Boise State University. He was a Mises Institute Fellow in Residence in 2015, 2016, and 2018, and winner of the 2018 Grant Aldrich Prize for Best Graduate Student Essay at the Austrian Economics Research Conference.



Now, this may be a biased sample of things. This doesn't describe the state of all government schools. I am the product of government schools. I went to school in Bismarck, North Dakota, and my experience wasn't that bad. Perhaps I just don't know what I'm missing, not having directly experienced anything else. But if there was some shortcoming, it'd be more in terms of what was omitted rather than my being directly indoctrinated in some kind of ideology.

My argument for this talk is that we do not have to assume that there is any kind of intentionality by those in charge of government schools to keep their students ignorant of good economics. Rather, this is going to be the natural result of a government school. It takes careful effort to teach good economics, and government schools not only don't have a strong incentive to teach a proper economic understanding, but in fact have good incentives not to. That's what I want to point out.

That invites the question: What would a good understanding of economics involve?

Well, for Austrian economists especially, you start with human action: Individuals engage in purposeful behavior, using scarce means to attain ends. A close corollary is that a frequent action people take is exchange. When people engage in voluntary exchanges, both parties expect to benefit. This includes the case of voluntary, private schools. Parents exchange money for the school to help cultivate education within their children—and certainly schools aren't the sum of education—but with government schools, there's not really an exchange occurring on the same level. Governments take money from taxpayers, and some of that ends up being spent on school-related expenses. Parents and students are certainly not the customers of government schools. A good understanding of economics should lead us to be skeptical of any coerced behavior imposed on individuals: Why wasn't it the case that they chose this for themselves?

Another aspect of understanding economics is understanding the role of competition, the importance of which is hard to overstate. Hayek calls competition a discovery procedure, by which entrepreneurs discover what consumers want. They provide goods and services, and consumers, through their decisions to buy or abstain from buying, demonstrate whether they really want what entrepreneurs have provided, compared to alternative uses of their money. Even those without a sophisticated understanding of economics understand that competition is important for consumers: that when competition is hindered, where there's a monopoly, as in the case of government schools, that's bad for consumers.

When we understand monopolies as government privileges, as Rothbard does, we can easily see that government schools have strong monopoly privileges. They don't participate in anything close to a free market in education. Their revenue does not come from consumers demonstrating that they want the service. They don't lose money when students leave. They also have a territorial monopoly vis-à-vis other government schools: In most cases, parents aren't able to send their kids to a government school outside the district their address is in.

Another important aspect of competition is that it's a necessary ingredient for economic calculation, and the importance of economic calculation is one of the most important Austrian insights that non-Austrians seem to ignore. Economic calculation is necessary for developing meaningful prices for the factors of production, including teachers.

On my way here, I came across some billboards that said, "Want better schools? Then pay the dadgum teachers more." There's this perennial claim that teachers are underpaid, and I'm not sure on what basis it is made. The basis I would find most justifiable is this: How much do consumers value this factor of production? We can only know that when there's a competitive market for those factors of production. In a free market, factors tend to get paid their discounted marginal revenue product: How much does hiring an additional unit of this factor contribute to the firm's bottom line? For teachers, there's not this competitive environment; it's very much government dominated, so this information doesn't exist.

Government schools are bureaucracies. The defining feature—or maybe the defining bug, for Ludwig von Mises—of bureaucracies is that they cannot engage in profit-and-loss calculation. They can calculate their revenues, but since those revenues come from taxes rather than from consumers buying their goods and services, there's no necessary relationship between revenues and how much consumers value government outputs. There is no marginal revenue product to speak of.

As for their expenses, bureaucracies can calculate those too; and to the extent that their inputs—such as paper clips, which both government schools and private firms buy—have a robust private market, you could say that bureaucracies' prices more or less accurately reflect the economic costs of their inputs, in terms of their alternative uses. But the greater the extent to which certain inputs, such as schoolteachers, are specific to a government bureaucracy, the less confident we can be that the prices actually reflect the opportunity cost of the services.

When we're talking about government employees, we know that the minimum they must be paid has to be greater than their opportunity cost in the private sector—otherwise they'd be employed elsewhere; the government has to pay at least enough to bid them away. It's a bit harder to say what the upper bound is; at the very most it's whatever the government budget constraint is.

So government employees' wages fall somewhere between these two bounds, and it's hard to determine whether they're being overpaid or underpaid. Since governments are more of a monopsony buyer of teacher services, all else equal, that would lead to lower wages. But there are also countervailing factors that tend to increase teacher pay. So I have to remain agnostic on whether teachers are overpaid or underpaid.

I think this insight lets us say some things about teachers' unions. Over the last several decades, private-sector union membership

Government schools are bureaucracies. . . They cannot engage in profit-and-loss calculation.



has significantly declined, which means a growing portion of the unionized labor force is in government. Why does that decline exist?

In the private sector, there's a check on unions when there's competition: If they demand compensation greater than the marginal product of their labor, the firm that agrees to pay it will be at a competitive disadvantage against other firms—the entrepreneur will be losing money on that factor of production. But in the government sector, this competition doesn't exist, so teachers' unions are able to demand greater compensation without facing that competitive pressure.

Unionization is often justified on the basis of this idea that teachers are underpaid. This analysis applies to more than just wages; it also applies to working conditions. Thomas Sowell, in his book *Inside American Education*, is very critical of the state certifications teachers are often required to have to teach in government schools. He notes that to get these certifications, they often have to go to teachers' colleges, and their training isn't focused so much on subject-matter expertise to help students learn a subject as on certain pedagogical fads. He also notes that education majors tend to have lower average test scores than most other majors—and these are the ones teaching your kids.

Now, I don't think there's anything wrong per se with certifications in a competitive environment: A school entrepreneur can decide that the teachers he hires will have a certain certification, and in that environment consumers can ultimately decide whether those certifications are worth having. But in a monopolized, unionized environment, certifications mostly serve as a barrier to entry.

Incumbents are protected from competition from would-be teachers who lack these certifications, and the certifications also create more demand for these teachers' colleges than would otherwise exist.

So, thinking about what a good understanding of economics would entail, I don't think it's surprising that students in government schools are not taught these things. It would be

I would argue that a good understanding of economics would lead us to be skeptical of such justifications for government subsidies or taxes because we really can't measure these things.



awkward for the unionized schoolteacher to really emphasize the results of this monopolistic situation. Again, I don't think that schools are intentionally keeping this knowledge from students, but rather that they don't really have a reason to teach these things—because imparting this understanding would lead to less justification for the desirability of government schools as such.

Thinking more specifically about the economic justifications for government involvement in schooling, one well-known article that comes to mind is Milton Friedman's in favor of school vouchers. Though Friedman is often thought of as a free-market advocate, at least in some areas, he thought the government had a role in education—not by directly providing government schools, but by subsidizing education. His argument was that someone being educated benefits their neighbors; it's better for you if your neighbors are more educated rather than less, for various reasons. He called these effects "neighborhood effects," but they're now more commonly called positive externalities—or, maybe with public schools, negative externalities.

The idea is that you want to subsidize the things with positive externalities and tax those with negative externalities such that private marginal benefit equals marginal social benefit. I would argue that a good understanding of economics would lead us to be skeptical of such justifications for government subsidies or taxes because we really can't measure these things.

We can't measure marginal social benefits. They're not demonstrated by action; they're mostly imagined. They really just function as a justification for basically anything we want: We can say that just about anything has a social benefit and therefore should be subsidized. The only limit is our imagination.

When I tried to search for economic justifications for government schools specifically, most of what I found was justified in economist-y language—that fully private education results in some kind of "market failure." But none of what was described in these arguments was actually a market failure as it's commonly understood, where private action leads to a situation in which individuals would unanimously agree to an alternative state of affairs and an alternative allocation of resources. Instead, market failure meant that the author's preferences wouldn't be realized: They



didn't think leaving people to their own freedom, their own private decision-making, would result in what the author wanted, whether that was a more democratic mindset, or civic feeling, or more egalitarianism. A major concern was that if people aren't forced into government schools, there will be social stratification, where wealthier individuals will choose better schools. They called these would-be results market failures, but really it's just a failure of people to have the same preferences as these social planners.

A good understanding of economics would lead us to be very skeptical of, if not to outright reject, these so-called economic justifications for government schools.

To conclude, I want to offer some final thoughts.

Even though I think understanding economics is important, if our goal is to decrease state involvement in education and work toward more private alternatives, I think perhaps even more important than economic understanding is people being able to see the alternatives.

For most people, the default mindset is to accept what they see; if it's tolerable, then that's good enough—especially if they think the alternative is nothing. When I ask students whether the government should have a role in education, a number of them seem to think the alternative to state involvement is that there would be nothing, especially for lower-income families.

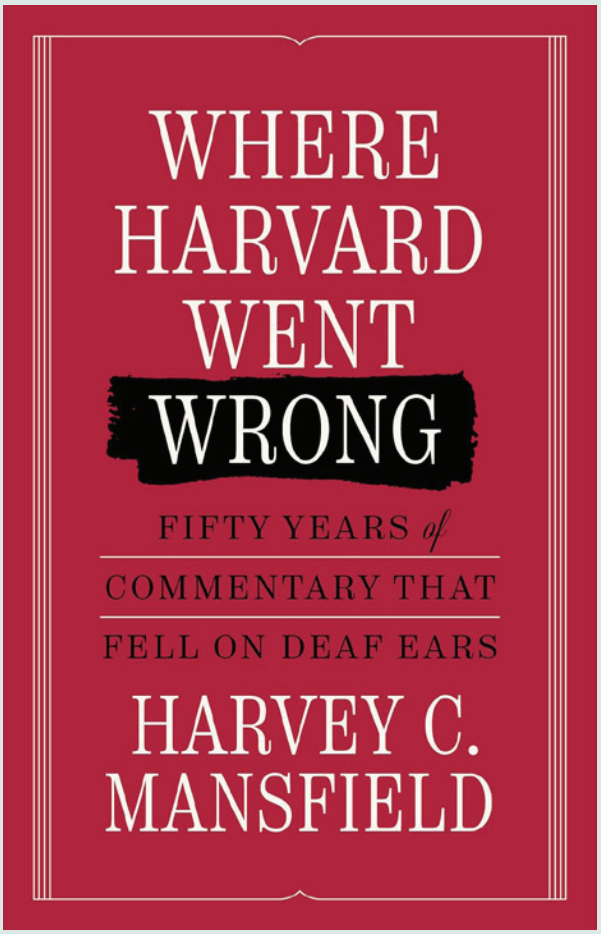
That mentality—"well, it's better than nothing"—can lead one to justify a very poor quality of government schooling, because no matter how bad it gets, it still seems better than nothing. So, to the extent that people directly or indirectly experience private alternatives to government schools, I think that will be the most effective teacher, in terms of getting people to consider those alternatives feasible: "Look, it exists."

For this reason, I want to encourage any educational entrepreneurs, homeschoolers, and so on—thank you for your efforts. ■

OUT IN RIGHT FIELD

WHERE HARVARD WENT WRONG: FIFTY YEARS OF COMMENTARY THAT FELL ON DEAF EARS

Harvey C. Mansfield
Encounter Books, 2026; 144 pp.



Use this QR code and the Mises Institute gets credit for the purchase of this book.

David Gordon is a Senior Fellow at the Mises Institute, Editor of the Mises Review, *and Editor of the* Journal of Libertarian Studies.

Harvey Mansfield, who was for decades a professor in the Harvard University Department of Government, bemoans the lack of diversity on his campus, and by "diversity," he does not mean the woke slogan, so much in vogue today, which he vehemently opposes. Quite the contrary, he wants Harvard to be more politically diverse—to have more people like him, to put it bluntly.

Where Harvard Went Wrong collects his columns for the *Harvard Crimson* and his remarks at faculty meetings. Mansfield scores some effective blows against left-wing shibboleths. He challenged the faculty on support for Harvard divestiture of the stocks it held in the apartheid government of South Africa. Why, he asked at a faculty meeting in May 1979, didn't the faculty likewise condemn Communist genocide?

"Professor Harvey Mansfield said that the faculty was being asked by its friends on the left to take a symbolic action, or to make a speech—a kind of speaking out—against an undoubted evil, the evil of apartheid. Apartheid, however, was not as evil as genocide. There had been recent instances of genocide in Cambodia, so Harvard speaking out on the question of apartheid would be in the context of its silence on the question of genocide. What could justify this? He did not think that the mere lack of stock ownership could justify its silence on Cambodia."

Though he was right to note the failure of the faculty to denounce Communist genocide, he failed to point out that the campaign against South Africa was the product of Communist propaganda, most definitely including that liberal icon Nelson Mandela, a member in good standing of the South African Communist Party.

Mansfield supports freedom of speech, and he effectively criticized efforts by feminists to deplatform those who challenged their dogmas, but on this too his challenge to what prevails has its limits. On the one hand, he says:

"Feminism is a kind of liberalism, and liberalism has an inherent dilemma regarding diversity. With its respect for liberty, liberalism promotes diversity of opinion, believing with John Stuart Mill that opposition to your view keeps you awake and does you a favor. But liberalism also believes in progress through liberation from prejudice such as is found, allegedly, in sexism. From this aspect liberalism sees no reason to answer challenges from reactionaries and to refight battles already won. In the spirit of progress, feminism feels justified in dismissing its critics—another reason for refusing to argue with them. Yet the strongest cause of intolerance comes from the multiculturalism that the feminists have taken on board. Multiculturalism is a strange combination of relativism and moralism. All cultures are equal and none can be privileged—that's the relativism. But because some people claim privilege and use it to oppress others, they must be excluded from power and status—there's the moralism."

On the other hand, free speech must be "responsible," and it transpires that an example of that responsibility is another left-wing icon with Communist connections, Martin Luther King Jr.:

"Free speech prospers when great speakers show the value of speech as opposed to

[Harvey Mansfield] wants Harvard to be more politically diverse—to have more people like him, to put it bluntly.

expression. To illustrate this, consider two great men disagreeing over a question vital for us: Should one obey an unjust law? Abraham Lincoln said yes; Martin Luther King Jr., more influential today, said no—one should engage in civil disobedience instead. In his famous 'Letter from Birmingham Jail,' King took responsibility for his actions. No mask to hide him; no lawyers to excuse him."

I do not think that my readers will regard the reference to Lincoln as a "great man" as altogether unproblematic.

Mansfield finds that even responsible speech has its limits, as it turns out. In wartime, everyone must close ranks in support of the government, and civil liberties must be limited as needed for the duration of the conflict. A faculty minute





Rally against blocking foreign students' enrollment at Harvard, May 25, 2025. Chuck Nacke / Alamy.

Mansfield finds that even responsible speech has its limits, as it turns out. In wartime, everyone must close ranks in support of the government, and civil liberties must be limited as needed for the duration of the conflict.



Students and faculty at Harvard rally against defunding higher education, April 17, 2025. Rick Friedman / Alamy.

from April 2003, just after George W. Bush invaded Iraq, noted:

"Professor Harvey Mansfield, Department of Government, wished for peace as soon as possible. He said a victorious peace could be anticipated, and he also wished to express his support for America's troops, for its government, for President George W. Bush, and for the country as a whole. With regard to the USA PATRIOT Act, he would point out that civil liberties consisted of principles and circumstances, and that the circumstances of war were different from those of peace. The United States was at war with terrorists who had killed three thousand Americans in attacks on the homeland, and whose malice was limited only by their means. During times of war, the government was the American population's protector, and the majority of the population was more at risk than the minority. Although civil liberties would continue, the way in which they were defended changed during wartime."

Never mind that the war was unconstitutional and that the "victorious peace" turned out to be a quagmire from which we have not fully extricated ourselves to this day. The notion that the way civil liberties are defended changes during wartime is Orwellian.

As his glowing reference to Lincoln suggests, Mansfield accepts the anti-South view of the War Between the States. How can people accuse Harvard of having colluded with slavery, when Union soldiers died to free blacks from slavery? he wonders:

"Recently my university issued a report titled 'Harvard's Legacy of Slavery.' It listed minor incidents inflated to claim that slavery was a misdeed of Harvard, requiring that all Harvard should adopt the measures of woke as contrite repentance for its legacy of white supremacy. This report is effectually contradicted by the most prominent building on the campus, Memorial Hall, completed in 1878 to enshrine the memory of Harvard graduates who died in the Civil War on the Union side."

Never mind the fact that the war was not fought to end slavery, that it caused immense loss of life, and that it ended the limited confederation on which the American Republic had been founded.

We have not yet gotten to the essence of Mansfield's sort of conservatism. He is an elitist who sees Harvard as a meritocracy that has led



We have not yet gotten to the essence of Mansfield's sort of conservatism. He is an elitist who sees Harvard as a meritocracy that has led America to greatness and can do so again if leftist attempts to undermine elitism are defeated.

America to greatness and can do so again if leftist attempts to undermine elitism are defeated:

"Today the tension between equality and excellence is shown in attacks on 'elitism.' This aversion would naturally arise in people who believe that they gain no advantage from a system rewarding excellence because they do not have it themselves. They share the spirit of democratic ostracism in the Athenians, who exiled Aristides because he was too just. In this view excellence is a source of danger to the people because it will be used to exploit them rather than benefit them. Or if excellence is not a danger, it is an irritation and its mere existence a slight to average folk. Anyone better than you has a claim on your admiration that your vanity may find irksome. 'Elitism' means taking the side of the elite against the rest. Those opposed to elitism alternate between denying the worth of any elite and alleging that people suffer under an unjustified existing elite that is harmful. These anti-elitist folks are at present in charge of American education. They are themselves an elite, an elite united against elitism. . . .

"An earlier generation of liberals thought and acted otherwise. They came on the scene after World War II and included in their number many Jews who for the first time were getting the university admissions and appointments they deserved. . . . This generation in academia was conscious of being an elite and proud of having replaced an inferior elite. They understood that the principle of excellence that they had espoused, and which of course benefited them, was one that had to be applied to their own students and to their own families."

Mansfield concludes that "our democracy needs an elitism of merit, of Jefferson's 'virtue and talents,' in combination with its relentless drive toward equality." I do not think that the sort of nationalist elitism Mansfield favors is what Jefferson had in mind. ■

MU ALUMNUS SPOTLIGHT



JP CORTEZ

Jp Cortez is the executive director for the Sound Money Defense League, a national public-policy organization working to promote and defend gold, silver, and sound money policy at the state and federal levels. He is the coauthor of the *Sound Money Index*, and editor in chief of the *Sound Money Review*. He received a degree in economics from Auburn University and attended Mises University each year he was enrolled at Auburn. Jp also participated in AERC in 2014 and 2015.

***The Misesian* (*TM*): Jp, it was great having you as a speaker at our Mises Circle in Albuquerque. Can you explain for our readers the Sound Money Defense League and your work in promoting sound money efforts across the country?**

Jp Cortez (JPC): The Sound Money Defense League is a national nonpartisan policy group working to remonetize gold and silver. We do that at the state and federal levels, primarily by advocating legislation that removes the legal disincentives to actually using gold and silver.

At the state level and at the federal level, there are taxes and regulations and other impediments that keep people from not only buying and selling gold and silver to store as an asset, but also from functionally transacting with it.

Since 2014, we've worked on hundreds of pieces of legislation. Just this past year, there were more than 115 pieces of legislation that were being considered across 35 states in the country. The vast majority of these states are actively considering policies to allow people to readopt their own gold standard.

The financial system today is largely one of surveillance. It's used not only to spy on individuals and citizens, but also as perhaps the primary means or lever with which the government pursues its policies. That is the urgency around restoring sound money, some sort of handcuff to a government that has shown that it will continue spending, continue fighting wars, continue growing despite not having the means or the financial capacity to really do so responsibly.

***TM*: Inflation has been one of the biggest political topics for several years now. Nothing's being done about it at the federal level. What kind of reception have you gotten from state capitols on this issue?**

JPC: We understand that inflation is largely a problem that starts at the federal level. It's an ineffectual Congress. It's an executive branch that will continue to grow and grow past its constitutionally permitted powers. But that doesn't mean that there aren't things that states can do to mitigate some of this damage.

At the state level, the growth and the interest in these policies have been tremendous. We started in 2014, and at the time, there were not many states considering this. There were no states eager to remove taxes on precious metals to reaffirm them as constitutional legal tender or even to establish their own gold reserves. Today, that has completely changed.

We've seen that this topic has become more and more pertinent in part because inflation is no longer deniable. There is this giant problem that once was relegated to economics classrooms that has now permeated dining rooms and living rooms. And these very real problems are no longer able to be hand waved away with "Leave it to the experts," "The Federal Reserve knows what it's doing." I think more and more we're seeing that Americans are not as open to this idea that "experts" know what's best.

***TM*: Last year there was a moment of renewed interest in auditing Fort Knox, but that has clearly died down. You wrote an article criticizing Rand Paul for dismissing the need for a true audit after taking a tour with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent at Fort Knox. Can you explain why this issue matters and where Senator Paul was wrong?**

JPC: The United States purportedly holds 261 million ounces of gold. This is supposedly the largest stockpile of gold in the world, and it's been an American asset for decades.

Recently, Secretary Bessent has been going on TV, talking about potentially remonetizing that side of the balance sheet. He was talking about getting creative or clever about doing things to enable these kinds of windfalls, such as revaluing the gold, which today is statutorily priced at $42.22 an ounce, to the current market price, which is currently around $4,500 an ounce. In doing so, the United States would free up trillions of dollars that it potentially could use to pay down the debt or "stimulate the economy."

For many years now, there have been legitimate questions surrounding the quality and even the presence of the gold that's supposedly stored at Fort Knox and in other vaults around the country. The gold that's stored at Fort Knox and in Denver and in New York, this is America's gold. This is the gold of American taxpayers, not the gold of the United States government. To that end, American taxpayers deserve transparency and deserve answers to some of these questions.

The issue is that for decades, the United States government has been less than forthcoming about the standard or the quality of American gold. There are questions as to whether the gold is physically there. That in itself is a legitimate question. But on top of that, even if the gold is physically present, there are questions surrounding ownership of America's gold. Who owns it? Has it been pledged or leased or swapped or financially encumbered in any way? Has it been used in interactions or transactions with the IMF or the Bank for International Settlements or the World Bank?

On top of the constant in and out at these vaults, it is known that the auditing standards for Fort Knox and other American vaults would not pass muster at private depositories. They're saying, "We checked it in the 1970s. We don't need to check it again because we know the box has still been closed." But anyone who is in the depository space, or even the financial auditing space, knows that audits are not one and done. These are ongoing checks.

So the Gold Reserve Transparency Act, which is legislation we've been working on at the federal level with Congressman Thomas Massie and Senator Mike Lee, among others, would call for a full audit and accounting of America's gold.

This recent episode with Senator Rand Paul was incredibly disappointing because Rand Paul, who was a sponsor of the Gold Reserve Transparency Act, has a special relationship with Ron Paul, who is a sound money champion and hero. To have him then go to Fort Knox and, within a few hours, say, "All the gold is there. Don't worry. I checked," is a slap in the face to anyone who has given any attention to this issue at all. The worst part now is the steam and the excitement and the energy behind getting one of these audits actually done—all of the wind was completely

If given the choice, people might prefer a money that holds its value, that is inflation-proof, and that is politically neutral. And we're giving people that choice.

pushed out of its sails because now any Treasury or administration official is going to look and say, "What are you talking about? Ron Paul's kid was in there nine months ago, and he said it's all good. You guys need to calm down with these conspiracy theories."

That is not acceptable or sufficient as an audit.

***TM*: You graduated from Auburn University and attended several Mises Universities during your time there. Can you speak to the impact those experiences had on your work now?**

JPC: It was a life-changing experience for me. I remember my very first Mises U, sitting at the introductory lecture that was given by Tom Woods, where he said, "This will be the intellectual experience of a lifetime." At the time, I didn't really know what that meant.

But many years later, I can look back and pinpoint this experience as the one that launched me on this now more-than-a-decade-long career fighting for and advancing the principles of sound money. The experience that I had at Mises University, getting to have one-on-one time with legends, with heroes that I'd been reading for years, those late-night discussions—it was an environment that lent itself to learning in a way that was so different from what I was doing literally across the street while I was paying tens of thousands of dollars every year to attend Auburn University.

Looking back, these are still to this day some of my best friends, some of my greatest colleagues, some of my professional resources, the people that are out there fighting for ending the Fed or restoring sound money or reducing the bureaucratic state or ending wars. These are people that were sitting next to me a dozen years ago while I was at Mises U. I can't thank the Mises Institute enough for undeniably setting me on this path.

***TM*: Any brief thoughts on the future of the sound money debate?**

JPC: I think that there is definitely reason to be excited about the future of sound money at the state level. There are literally dozens upon dozens of pieces of legislation to remove sales and capital gains taxes on metals, to establish gold reserves, to empower treasurers and state pension fund managers to invest in gold, and to establish gold-based state pension funds. And we're seeing more interest in sound money at the state level because of these efforts.

The political reality is that you're never going to get Congress to pass a law saying, "We're establishing a gold standard." You're never going to get President Trump to issue an executive order saying, "We're returning to sound money." But I think, and I know this because of the time I spent at the Mises Institute, that more important than these top-down, one-size-fits-all efforts is the Hayekian idea of bottom-up approaches. I don't need the federal government to establish a gold standard. Instead, what I can do is go around and remove the impediments and the disincentives keeping people from readopting their own gold standard or even ultimately creating more of a market for money.

Competition in money is something we haven't seen in decades. And when we remove the briar and the thistle that stand in the way, we can see an innovative future for money. The hope is that we're creating a market for alternatives or competition in money. Then, of course, what follows is the hypothesis that if given the choice, people would prefer a money that holds its value. People would prefer money that isn't used as a political cudgel. People would prefer money that isn't used to bomb kids overseas in places most Americans can't find on maps.

If given the choice, people might prefer a money that holds its value, that is inflation-proof, and that is politically neutral. And we're giving people that choice. ■

TRANSLATIONS

The works of Mises, Rothbard, Hazlitt, and many other authors of the Austrian School tradition are not just being read in English throughout the world; they are being translated into many languages. In the last month or two, we have received requests for permission to translate various works into Japanese, Italian, Turkish, Danish, Norwegian, Chinese, and Arabic.

You can even find a translation in Farsi of Dr. Per Bylund's popular book *How to Think About the Economy: A Primer* in Iran bookstores thanks to the dedication and efforts of Amir Alavifar. He reports that it has sold about 1,000 copies.



NEW IN THE MISES ACADEMY

Hayek for the 21st Century is a collection of Hayek's most influential essays. In the new Mises Academy course of the same name, students explore why intellectuals are drawn to socialism, why the worst people rise to power under central planning, how prices pass along knowledge no planner could gather, what real competition looks like, why "manufactured" wants are still wants, and how competing currencies could stop inflation.

Each lesson pairs a chapter with a short video lecture by a Mises Institute scholar and concludes with a brief quiz. The course is designed for high school students and is available free at mises.org/hayek21st.

ASK AN AUSTRIAN

On September 24, Mises Institute Senior Fellow Dr. Mark Thornton held the fall quarter's Ask an Austrian. These exclusive student-member-only events offer students the opportunity to listen to a presentation by one of our Mises scholars and then ask questions. They are small-group virtual discussions offering direct access to the lecturer and are similar to faculty office hours.

MISES BOOK CLUBS

Dr. Patrick Newman is conducting a virtual book club on his *Cronyism: Liberty Versus Power in Early America, 1607–1849*, the first installment of his cronyism series about the early economic development of the US.

Dr. Tate Fegley's book club at Montreat College is discussing chapters from *The Great Austrian Economists* and Mises's *Omnipotent Government*.

Dr. Jeff Degner chose Mises's *The Anti-Capitalist Mentality* for his book club at Cornerstone University discussing capitalism as a voluntary, consumer-directed system.

Felicia Jones is conducting a virtual book club for high school students that is reading Per Bylund's popular book *How to Think About the Economy: A Primer*.

Dr. Paul Cwik is conducting a fall book club at the University of Mount Olive. This semester his club is reading Mises's *Economic Freedom and Interventionism*. It is a primer discussing inflation, socialism, and the role of government, and how economics affects all interactions.

Dr. Mark Brandly is covering *How to Think About the Economy: A Primer* and *What Has Government Done to Our Money?* at Ferris State University for an undergraduate book club.

Thanks to the Dean and Cam Williams Foundation for sponsoring the Mises Book Clubs.



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"The Dangers of Fractional-Reserve Banking," by Henry Hazlitt Research Fellow Dr. Jonathan Newman, was published in *The Wall Street Journal* on September 21.



GOLD AND SILVER: PROSPECTING FOR LIBERTY

MISES CIRCLE IN **ALBUQUERQUE, NM** AUGUST 15

Since the creation of the Federal Reserve, the value of the US dollar has steadily fallen. Now it is a tiny fraction of what it was in the days of our great-grandparents. Americans for the past century have been subject to a boom-bust cycle fueled by monetary inflation. This has enriched the government and its friends while impoverishing the productive classes.

This was all made possible by turning the dollar—once a sound money backed by gold and silver—into fiat currency that the regime can inflate at will. The cutting of the dollar's ties to gold and silver has been at the center of the government's destruction of so many of our freedoms.





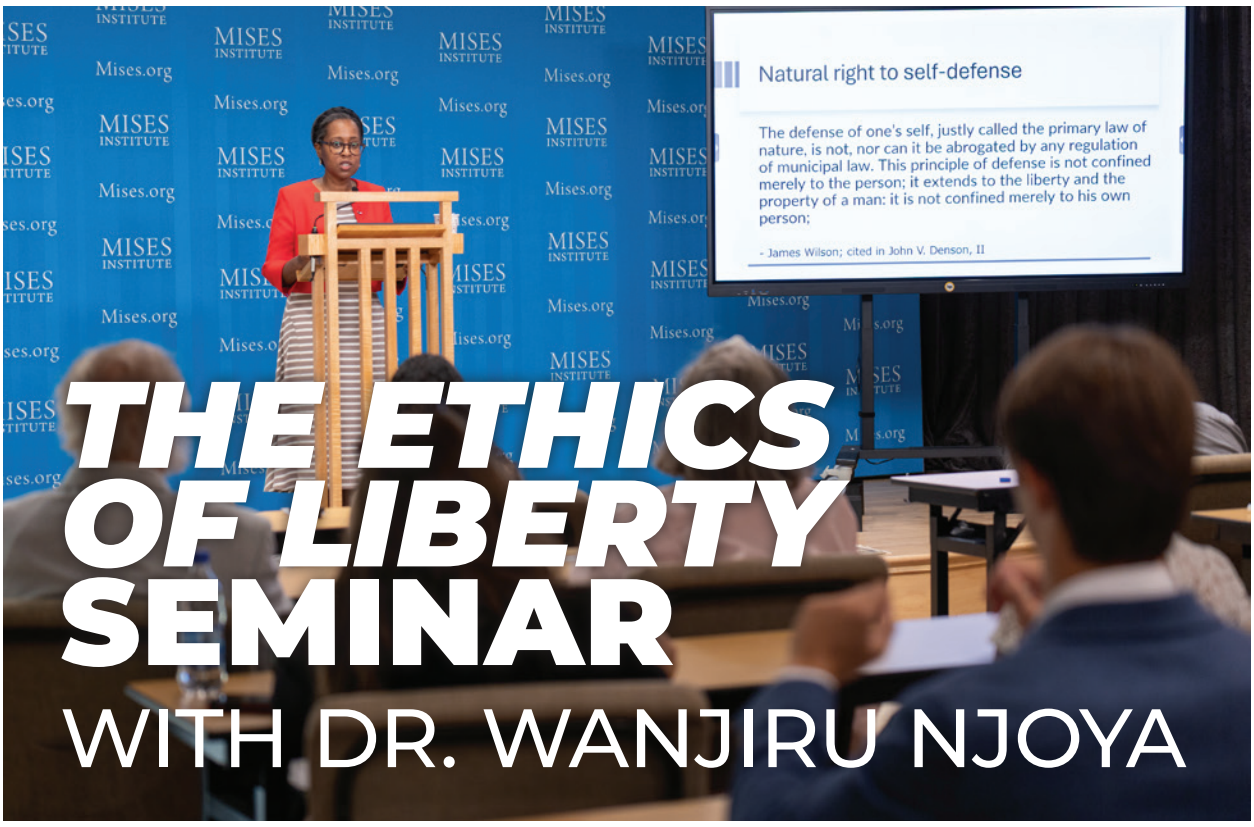
It doesn't have to be this way.

In August, Mises Institute speakers and staff returned to Albuquerque to explore how gold and silver can help us reclaim our freedom and limit the power of the state. The event was made possible by a generous gift from Albuquerque residents George and Sally Gundrey, who hosted the event at their wonderful New Mexican restaurant, Tomasita's. All attendees were treated to delicious authentic New Mexican cuisine for lunch.

At the Saturday event, Senior Fellow Mark Thornton spoke on the connection between gold and money, while Editor in Chief Ryan McMaken looked at the process by which the government took control of money. Finally, Jp Cortez, executive director of the Sound Money Defense League, explored how legislative changes at the state level can help restore sound money, and investor Kevin Duffy explained the importance of gold for investors.

After the talks, attendees had the opportunity to meet the speakers and to connect with each other, expanding the network of freedom advocates throughout the region. ■

You can listen to these talks at mises.org/nm26.



THE ETHICS OF LIBERTY SEMINAR

WITH DR. WANJIRU NJOYA

On August 27–28, the Mises Institute presented a seminar on Rothbard's *The Ethics of Liberty*. Dr. Wanjiru Njoya delivered five lectures: "Natural Law and Reason," "Private Property as the Foundation of Liberty," "The Right to Self-Defense," "The 'Just War' Doctrine," and "The Declaration of Independence and 'States' Rights.'" In these talks Dr. Njoya connected the major themes of *The Ethics of Liberty* to current events and to the destructive ideologies that are attempting to place egalitarianism and state power above individual liberty. Each lecture was followed by an engaging discussion session in which participants deepened their understanding of the philosophical foundations of liberty and the practical implications of Rothbard's ideas.

As a surprise bonus, Dr. David Gordon and Judge John V. Denson each gave a short personal talk. Dr. Gordon shared memories of his friendship with Murray Rothbard and stories about how Rothbard corresponded with other scholars like Robert Nozick. Judge Denson discussed important antiwar books and answered questions about past US presidents and their wars.

Dr. Njoya's lectures were recorded and will become a new Mises Academy course. The Mises Academy is growing. Our course offerings are expanding, and we have more students enrolled than ever before. Stay tuned for more in-person seminars like this one! ■







WHY GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS DON'T WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND ECONOMICS

MISES CIRCLE IN **GREENVILLE, SC** SEPTEMBER 12



Speakers: Mark Thornton, Paul Cwik, Greenville sponsor Bryan Lee Briggs, Jonathan Newman, Tate Fegley, and Peter Klein.











It's no secret that the state's domination of education has resulted in widespread economic ignorance. Thankfully, an increasing number of students and families are escaping the public education system to pursue private alternatives and homeschooling. On Saturday, September 12, the Mises Institute met at the Westin Poinsett in Greenville, South Carolina, to discuss why government schools don't teach sound economics. Mises Institute scholars Tate Fegley, Paul Cwik, Mark Thornton, Jonathan Newman, and Peter Klein spoke at the event, emphasizing the various failures of state-administered education and the prospects for countering it.

Tate Fegley opened with "Don't Bite the Hand: Why Public Schools Can't Afford to Teach Economics," examining the incentives facing government schools and why bureaucratic educational institutions are inherently unlikely to teach certain economic ideas. Paul Cwik followed with "Four Secrets the Public Schools Keep from You," discussing the poor quality of government education and homeschooling as the best alternative. His talk stressed the importance of parental involvement in their children's education and the possibilities created by homeschooling, co-ops, and other forms of educational choice.

Mark Thornton presented "Your Kids Are Already Communists, and College Will Make It Worse," which addressed the economic and ideological assumptions students encounter in school. Jonathan Newman's "What They Don't Teach You in Government Schools" focused on economic myths and state narratives in standard curricula. He pointed out that there are excellent educational antidotes available for free through the Mises Institute and the Mises Academy. Peter Klein concluded with "AI and the Future of the University," which considered how artificial intelligence is reshaping higher education.

In the panel discussion, the speakers answered questions from the audience, including questions about countering Keynesian myths, potential state-level reforms of the education system, and what a free market in education would look like.

Throughout the event, a recurring theme emerged: Economic understanding is the antidote to state power. A healthy skepticism toward government intervention requires a solid grasp of economics, and we obviously cannot trust the state to teach sound economic principles. ■

You can listen to these talks at mises.org/sc26.

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