



*Excerpts from recent commentary on the crisis*

## Cato Scholars on the COVID-19 Pandemic

### FEDERALISM AND THE CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN

In America's constitutional design, while federal law is supreme, the national government is confined to enumerated powers. It has no general authority to dictate to state governments. Many of the powers that government holds, in particular the "police power" invoked to counter epidemics, are exercised by state governments and the cities to which states delegate power.

**Senior Fellow WALTER OLSON**

*Wall Street Journal, March 30, 2020*

### DECARCERATION IN THE FACE OF A PANDEMIC

America's jails and prisons are now among the deadliest environments on the planet. Most of them are desperately over-

crowded, understaffed, unhygienic, and utterly unable to provide even minimally adequate medical care to those who contract COVID-19, which is now spreading like wildfire through those facilities, endangering not only the lives of prisoners, but also of guards, staff, and the communities to which they all return at the end of their shifts....

As a result, all but the most obtuse proponents of mass incarceration now recognize that it has become morally indefensible to continue holding at least some fraction of the roughly 2.3 million people currently behind bars in an environment where we can neither adequately protect them from nor treat them for COVID-19.

**Vice President for Criminal Justice**

**CLARK NEILY**

*Cato at Liberty, April 30, 2020*

### LIBERTARIANISM AND THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Government has a role to play in responding to the pandemic in much the same way it is the government's job to prosecute murderers or defend the country from invasion.

At the same time, libertarian principles and insights can provide some guideposts for how to respond in this unprecedented global emergency.

**Staff Writer ANDY CRAIG**

*Cato at Liberty, March 25, 2020*

### CORONAVIRUS PROTESTS AGAINST 'STAY AT HOME' ORDERS RAISE AWARENESS OF PEOPLE'S SUFFERING

Restarting the economy is not just about going to the movies again, it's about the people. When assessing these questions,

we must think about those hit hardest by the shutdown. The protesters help bring a human face to these issues. Just make sure that face is 6 feet away.

**Research Fellow TREVOR BURRUS**  
*USA Today, April 23, 2020*

## IN SWEDEN, WILL VOLUNTARY SELF-ISOLATION WORK BETTER THAN STATE-ENFORCED LOCKDOWNS IN THE LONG RUN?

Why has Sweden done so much better than many predicted? Because others failed to see that society could respond voluntarily to the pandemic.



**NORBERG**

For example, the influential Imperial College model estimates a higher reproduction rate of the disease in Sweden than in other countries, “not because the mortality trends are significantly different from any other country, but as an artefact of our model. . .because no full lockdown has been ordered.”

In other words, the model could only handle two scenarios: an enforced national lockdown or zero change in behavior. It had no way of computing Swedes who decided to socially distance voluntarily. But we did.

**Senior Fellow JOHAN NORBERG**  
*Reason.com, April 17, 2020*

## THE GOVERNMENT'S COVID-19 FAILURES ARE AN ARGUMENT AGAINST MEDICARE FOR ALL

Some have said the failure of America's medical system to handle the surge in demand caused by COVID-19 is proof that the country needs Medicare for All. They couldn't be more wrong.

Many countries with nationalized, single-payer schemes, including England, France, Italy, and Spain, have seen their health care systems stretched past the breaking point by the pandemic. More importantly, the responsibility for America's lack

of preparedness lies squarely with our dysfunctional government. The real lesson to be learned from our botched response to COVID-19 is that giving the government control of the entire health care system would be an enormous mistake.

**Adjunct Scholars CHARLES SILVER and DAVID A. HYMAN**  
*National Review Online, April 14, 2020*

## THERE ARE MORE LIBERTARIANS IN A PANDEMIC

To cite one salient example: had Americans been free to choose who certifies the diagnostic tests we use, then U.S. labs, health systems, consumers, and arbitrageurs could have spent the first two months of this pandemic purchasing any of the many reliable SARS-CoV-2 tests that have been available in other countries since January. Testing would have been widespread. Epidemiologists would have a better handle on the virus's prevalence and progression. Containment measures could have been narrower in scope. Health professionals would be better able to target care to those who need it.

Instead, the Food and Drug Administration created a shortage of tests by blocking Americans from purchasing those or any other tests for two months. Losing that freedom made us more vulnerable by allowing this disease to spread unchecked across the country.

**President & CEO PETER GOETTLER**  
*The Hill, April 10, 2020*

## COVID-19 SHOULD MAKE US GRATEFUL FOR TECHNOLOGY

There has never been a better time for humans to face and defeat a global pandemic. The world is richer than ever before, and money is what enables us to sustain a massive pharmaceutical industry and pay for highly sophisticated medical research and development.

**Senior Fellow MARIAN L. TUPY**  
*National Review, May 18, 2020*

## TO HELP SOLVE THE SURGICAL MASK SHORTAGE, GET THE FDA OUT OF THE WAY

Given that demand for surgical-grade masks has spiked, why hasn't supply followed suit? While this may sound at first like a failure of the market, the blame for this crisis lies with a set of onerous regulations enacted by the Food and Drug Administration. The FDA just took steps to fix this problem, but it took far too long.

**Libertarianism.org Technology and Innovation Editor PAUL MATZKO**  
*New York Daily News, April 1, 2020*

## WHY WE SAY 'NO THANKS' TO A CARES ACT LOAN

We wouldn't criticize others for taking aid. In our communities and across the nation, millions have lost jobs and paychecks, while vital needs persist. Small-business owners struggle to preserve their



life's work and to sustain their employees. And we can't say these loans wouldn't help us right now. We're wholly funded by private donations, the overwhelming

majority of which come from individuals who will suffer material losses from the pandemic. Financial pressures and difficult choices lie ahead.

Why, then, are we not applying for a Cares Act loan? Because doing so would undermine the principles that underlie the Cato Institute's mission and animate its policy work. Central to this mission is our view that the scope and power of government should be limited. Our ability to make that case with credibility and integrity would be irreparably compromised if we accepted a loan right now. We've never taken money from any government.

**President PETER GOETTLER and Chairman of the Board ROBERT A. LEVY**  
*Wall Street Journal, April 15, 2020*