



BY JOHN A. ALLISON

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Progress Report on the Cato Institute

As we approach the end of the year, it is appropriate to give you an update on Cato. Fortunately, Cato is doing very well and has positive momentum on all fronts, although there are always opportunities for improvement.

Commentators on both the left and the right are discussing the “libertarian moment.” While it’s obvious we do not have the current president’s ear, libertarian ideas are being taken very seriously, in part as the result of 37 years of Cato scholarship. There is a rapidly rising libertarian student movement where Cato has played a critical role in training future student leaders and providing the intellectual ammunition for students to challenge their left-leaning professors.

The Cato brand has also been rising. As a number of our fellow think tanks have become visibly politically partisan, we have maintained a reputation for objectivity in a politically charged environment. Of course, since we have plenty of disagreements with both Republicans and Democrats, this is relatively simple to do.

Cato’s financial position is strong, with our second year of significant increases in contributions. Thank you! However, our budget is tiny compared to the billions of dollars in resources controlled by the statists. We have many opportunities to use additional funding to productively communicate the libertarian message. As we approach the end of the year, I hope you will put Cato high on your list for financial support so we can maintain and accelerate the libertarian momentum.

The list of Cato’s recent accomplishments is impressive. Largely because of a great effort by Cato’s Michael Cannon, the court battle to undo Obamacare continues, with two recent victories in an uphill fight. Cato’s Constitutional Studies team’s record was 10–1 for amicus briefs filed at the Supreme Court this past session and 15–3 for the previous session. This is the result of over 30 years of effort to persuade the Court to limit Congress to its constitutionally enumerated powers.

Since 1999 Cato has been discussing the danger of police militarization. Finally, the public is becoming aware of this issue and its threat to innocent citizens (bring back Barney Fife). The Herbert A. Stiefel Center for Trade Policy Studies has started an invitational dinner program for business and government leaders to discuss trade liberalization and its many benefits. Participants have included Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Google; Russ Girling, president and CEO of TransCanada Corporation; Greg Page, executive chairman of Cargill; and former U.S. trade representative Susan Schwab.

Harvard’s Jeff Miron, who has joined Cato as director of economic studies, has commissioned a series of economic briefs from top scholars. The scholars are typically not libertarian, but their research supports libertarian policy positions. The willingness of these high-level scholars to publish under the Cato brand is very encouraging.

We also took our ideas into the world’s hot spots this year: we cosponsored a conference in Ukraine with approximately 500 policymakers, businessmen, and journalists, as well as a student conference for freedom in Venezuela.

In the 12 months ending in August, Cato’s scholars were mentioned in 5,622 news stories, published 849 op-eds, and made 442 major broadcast appearances. We published approximately 100 academically credible articles; held 30 conferences, 38 policy forums, 41 book forums, and 14 Capitol Hill briefings; and testified 18 times before congressional committees. Over 1,300 students participated in various Cato educational programs and our scholars made many presentations to student organizations such as Students for Liberty, Young Americans for Liberty, and the Federalist Society.

We just launched the Cato Center for Monetary and Financial Alternatives, which is the first serious challenge to the Federal Reserve in its 100-year history. The quality of scholars and business leaders who have agreed to participate is extraordinary and reflects the increasing concern by even mainstream economists about both the Fed’s monetary and regulatory policies.

The Cato Center for the Study of Science is growing rapidly to take on the increasingly politicized climate-change movement. Climate change is the religion of the Progressives and as their models have continued to fail they have become more irrational in defending their detached-from-reality positions.

We have launched a campaign to help independent thinkers truly grasp that big government is failing across the board. We are in the process of hiring two civil-liberties scholars to take on the NSA, the IRS, and the many other agencies and policies (including the drug war) that are a serious threat to your individual liberties.

We are a voice of reason in an increasingly politicized and irrational environment. Cato is committed to creating a free and prosperous society based on the principles of individual liberty, free markets, limited government, and peace—a noble endeavor. Your support makes our work possible.

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