

A new series from the Institute

Economic Research

This May, the Cato Institute unveiled a new publication series called Research Briefs in Economic Policy. Edited by Jeffrey A. Miron, director of economic studies at the Institute, each issue features noted academic economists summarizing their recent research on key policy matters. While the topics will be highly focused, the publication is aimed at a wide audience. “As such, we will minimize jargon and unnecessary complexities,” Miron says.

In the first brief, Andrew Samwick of Dartmouth College looks at an alternative tax treatment for private school enrollment. In the United States, parents send about 10 percent of elementary and secondary school-age children to private schools. By paying out of pocket, these families relieve a financial burden on taxpayers, who would otherwise have to fund the public education of these children. Samwick suggests one way to offset this positive externality. By allowing a federal—and possibly state—tax deduction for these parents, in the amount of the per pupil expenditure in their local public schools, any resources saved would be available for other programs or reduced taxes.

With topics ranging from immigration to the impact of the Affordable Care Act on full-time employment, upcoming issues will be released twice every month. “Our goal is to inform, clarify, and enhance economic policy analyses and discussions,” Miron adds.

In addition to his responsibilities at the Institute, Miron is director of undergraduate studies in the economics department at Harvard University, currently splitting his time between the two organizations. As such, he is in a unique position to engage leading academics in the world of higher education. “The incredible stream of research that is produced and discussed in the economics department forms a great foundation for my role at Cato,” he says. Miron received his PhD from MIT in 1984 and has published in many leading economics journals, including the *American Economic Review* and the *Journal of Political Economy*. He has written several studies on the economics of drug prohibition, and in 2010 Basic Books published his tour of libertarian thought, *Libertarianism, from A to Z*.

The Institute is pleased to add Research Briefs in Economic Policy to its collection of timely and accessible research publications.

YOU CAN FIND THE INSTITUTE'S RESEARCH BRIEFS IN ECONOMIC POLICY, ALONG WITH ALL OTHER PUBLICATIONS, AT WWW.CATO.ORG/PUBLICATIONS.



CATO NEWS NOTES

GUN BAN SHOT DOWN

The nation's capital has long had among the most restrictive gun rules anywhere in the United States. But in July, a federal judge ruled in *Palmer v. District of Columbia* that D.C.'s “complete ban on the carrying of handguns in public is unconstitutional.” It is no longer illegal, in other words, for Washington residents to leave their homes with firearms for personal protection.

As Tom G. Palmer, the lead plaintiff in the case and a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, wrote following the decision, “If the constitutional approach of the D.C. government were applied to the First Amendment, they would interpret the power to regulate the time, place, and manner of its exercise to include banning all churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues in the District. That cannot be right and the court has set them straight on that matter.”

“This was the last law of its kind in the United States,” Alan Gura, the attorney on the case, said in a Cato Daily Podcast. “There is nowhere else in the country that has a complete ban—a simple, flat prohibition—on the exercise of this particular fundamental right.” In its coverage of the case, *Slate* cited this decision as “the second example in just a few days of libertarian lawyers dunking on the liberal state.” The first, of course, was *Halbig v. Burwell*, which ended Obamacare subsidies in states that did not set up their own health care exchanges.

WELCOME BACK, KIRBY



David Kirby has been hired as vice president of development and senior fellow at the Institute. Kirby has long been part of the Cato family. In 2001 he joined Cato as a government affairs associate. He went on to senior positions at

America's Future Foundation, the Institute for Humane Studies, and Freedom Works. But, in a sense, he never really left Cato. After earning a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University in 2005, Kirby became an associate policy analyst, coauthoring a book and three studies on the libertarian vote. In his current role, he will be in charge of continuing to build the Institute's development efforts.