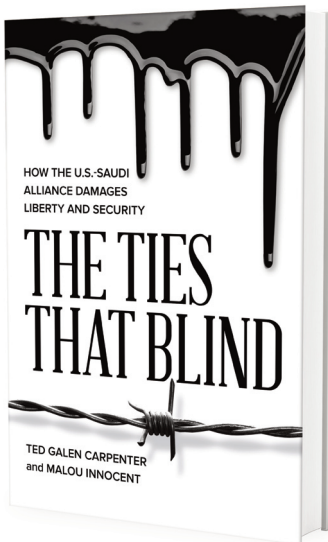


Cato scholar makes case against toxic U.S. romance with Riyadh

Senate Reclaims War Powers, Rebukes U.S.-Saudi Alliance

Discussing the role of libertarian advocacy, Milton Friedman once explained that “When [a] crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable.”

Advocating a more restrained and peaceful foreign policy often seems futile, with hawks and interventionists in both parties dominating the discussion. But by steadily making the case over many years through policy analyses, books, and events, and in the media, the Cato Institute has been able to lay the intellectual groundwork for major policy shifts in this arena. One example has been the work of Cato’s foreign policy scholars on one of America’s most problematic allies: Saudi Arabia.



In late November, the Senate took an extraordinary step in reasserting its powers over war and foreign policy. For the first time, the chamber adopted a resolution under the 1973 War Powers Act to end U.S. involvement in a foreign war. The resolution would have the effect of ending U.S. support and assistance for Saudi Arabia’s war in Yemen. The Senate had rejected a nearly identical proposal in April, but the murder of *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul has given new momentum to critics of the U.S.-Saudi alliance. This time, the Sanders-Lee-Murphy resolution was passed with

56 senators in favor and 41 opposed, despite the last-ditch lobbying campaign by secretary of state Mike Pompeo and then secretary of defense James Mattis. Even before the vote, the administration announced that it was stopping the practice of refueling Saudi warplanes en route to airstrikes in Yemen.

It’s a remarkable rebuke to the Saudis, whose privileged place in America’s foreign policy doctrine has long made them effectively immune from accountability and criticism on Capitol Hill. But it’s not a new stance for Cato, whose scholars have long questioned the wisdom of an American commitment to the oppressive theocracy. Thanks to their efforts, these ideas were ready and waiting when the politically impossible suddenly became the politically inevitable.

Ted Galen Carpenter has two chapters on U.S.-Saudi relations in his 2015 book *Perilous Partners*. In light of the sudden developments in late 2018, Cato was able to quickly bring these chapters to print in a special stand-alone volume with a new introduction by Carpenter, *The Ties That Bind: How the U.S.-Saudi Alliance Damages Liberty and Security*. As Carpenter explains in the introduction, “The reality is that the United States has no truly vital interests in the Middle East that warrant the kind of distasteful moral compromises that are inherent in maintaining an alliance with Saudi Arabia.”

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Cato News Notes

CATO SCHOLARS’ BOOKS FEATURED IN YEAR’S-BEST ROUNDUPS

Books by Cato scholars have received praise in end-of-the-year roundups by leading periodicals. Former congressman James Bacchus, an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute, was included in the *Financial Times* list of “Best Books of 2018” in the category of economics for his recent release *The Willing World: Shaping and Sharing a Sustainable Global Prosperity*. Another Cato adjunct scholar, Timothy Sandefur, was noted in the *Wall Street Journal’s* “Who Read What in 2018” for his biography *Frederick Douglass: Self-Made Man*, released last year to coincide with the bicentennial of Douglass’s birth. Sandefur’s book was selected for inclusion by the noted Lincoln scholar Allen C. Guelzo.

CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION RELIES ON CATO RESEARCH

In November, the United States Commission on Civil Rights released a landmark report, *Police Use of Force: An Examination of Modern Policing Practices*. The report repeatedly cites both the testimony and the research of Cato’s Jonathan Blanks on issues such as the need for better data on police use of force and the ways in which excessive use of force hinders community relations. In addition, the commission cited and expressed agreement with the concerns raised by Cato’s Clark Neily, vice president for criminal justice, on the need to roll back the doctrine of qualified immunity, which shields police from civil liability for violations of constitutional rights.

Book takes aim at America's higher education dysfunction

The Leaning Tower of Ivory

The usual trend in a healthy economy is for the quality of products to increase while prices decrease. This sort of progress can be observed all around us, from complicated technologies such as computers and automobiles to simple consumer goods such as clothing and groceries. Yet for some reason higher education in the United States has gone in the opposite direction. In their new book *Unprofitable Schooling: America's Broken Ivory Tower*, editors Todd Zywicki and Neal McCluskey consider the causes and consequences of that failure, with contributions from leading scholars of education policy and history.

The book starts with a simple yet sobering fact: “Inflation-adjusted undergraduate tuition and fees at public four-year colleges have roughly tripled over the past 30 years. At some of the priciest private institutions they now exceed \$50,000 a year.” Despite this skyrocketing price inflation, outcomes are, at best, stagnant if not declining. For students who entered college in 2010, the six-year completion rate for four- and two-year programs was only 54.8 percent. Those who do graduate often find their degrees simply aren't worth what they've paid for them.

For decades, policymakers have shoveled increasing amounts of loans, grants, and other subsidies at higher education on the premise of making college more affordable and accessible. Yet today's students often find themselves drowning in a mountain of debt

while falling behind on both educational and career-value metrics.

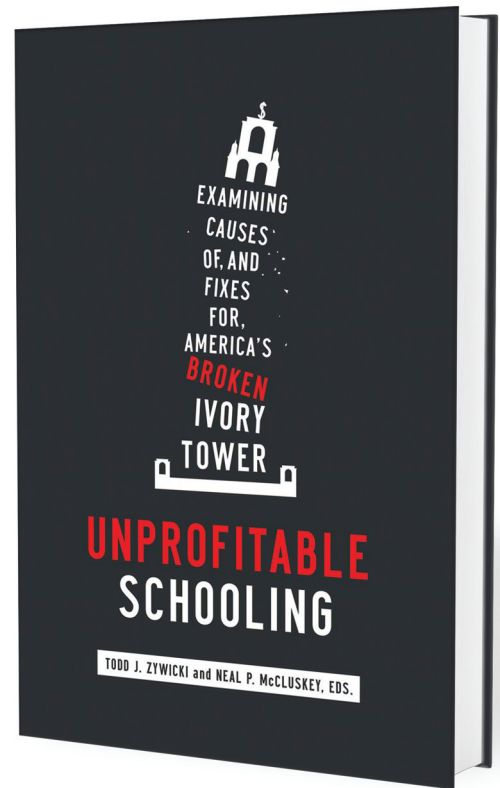
Unprofitable Schooling traces the history of higher education in America to explain how we arrived at this dismal reality and what can be done to fix it. The central lesson is simple but comes with wide-ranging implications. Subsidies have disconnected higher education from the market signals that are necessary to deliver value to students in an affordable, rational manner. Bloated administrative staff, unaccountable professors, and ever-increasing tuition are all symptoms of the same underlying dysfunction.

Each chapter of *Unprofitable Schooling* explores crucial aspects of the provision of higher education, informed by the authors' deep experiences and analyses of how higher education and many other markets work, with an eye to bringing about innovation, improved quality, and lower costs. The opening section offers a history of for-profit education before the Morrill Act—the federal legislation that funded land-grant universities. It then reviews the act's impact and concludes with an exploration of federal student aid and how it prevents new funding options from entering the market. Section two examines higher education as it stands today: factors driving up college prices, the tenure system, administrative growth, and system-

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By laying the groundwork for seemingly radical ideas like ending the U.S.-Saudi alliance, Cato has been able to provide quick, ready, and credible policy arguments when events overtake a flawed Washington consensus—in this case through numerous media interviews, public events, and meetings on

Capitol Hill. Although the Senate vote in its lame-duck session was largely symbolic, with the House refusing to take up the bill before the new Congress was seated, it sends a clear signal that the political winds have shifted. What was once unthinkable is now becoming increasingly inevitable, as public opinion turns harshly against Saudi Arabia and its



atic flaws in current university governance. The third and final section shows how robust competition in higher education can be energized and takes an in-depth look at for-profit versus nonprofit institutions. With a student debt crisis looming large over American politics, *Unprofitable Schooling* offers an important contribution to the ongoing debate about higher-education policy in the United States and how it has gone awry. ■

PURCHASE PRINT OR EBOOK COPIES OF UNPROFITABLE SCHOOLING AT CATO.ORG/STORE.

crown prince Mohammed bin Salman. Policymakers and members of the public alike should now carefully consider the warnings of noninterventionists like Carpenter, who have long pointed out the flaws in America's entangling alliance with Riyadh. ■

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