



Providing solutions during a difficult year

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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C E N T E R

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This year, America was hammered by three profoundly transformative events: the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, the worst economic collapse since the Great Depression, and a mass uprising (the largest in our nation's history) against police brutality and racial injustice. Separately, any of these developments would have shaken the nation to the core. The collision of all three made 2020 one of the most consequential years in American political history.

And I am proud to say that in the face of these generationally transformative events, the Niskanen Center rose to the occasion.

As the novel coronavirus ripped through the country, the Niskanen Center partnered with Harvard's Safra Center for Ethics, the Rockefeller Foundation, and several other NGOs to promote the bipartisan *Roadmap to Pandemic Resilience: Massive Scale Testing, Tracing, and Supported Isolation (TTSI) as the Path to Pandemic Resilience for a Free Society*. While disregarded by the White House and ignored by Congress, this detailed roadmap offers the most well-thought-out blueprint for tackling the pandemic in the United States to date. It would save lives and help the economy return to some semblance of normalcy. As I write this, there's every reason to think that it will heavily inform the Biden administration's forthcoming pandemic management plan.

While the state and federal public health response to COVID-19 was desultory, the economic response — largely thanks to the Niskanen Center — was better. The CARES Act, which Congress passed in March, was one of the most consequential pieces of economic legislation in American history. Our policy staff provided early input on both the \$600 supplemental unemployment cash grant and the SBA grants to small businesses that maintained their payrolls. Early Republican support for the \$1,200 stimulus payments to low- and middle-income Americans derived in large measure from our ongoing outreach to conservatives in support of fully refundable tax credits. And while they didn't ultimately come to pass, Senator Hawley's proposal to directly subsidize employer payrolls, and Senator Romney's proposal to provide hazard pay for front-line workers, were both drafted with the help of Niskanen Center scholars.

Working with our legislative allies, Niskanen Center staff repurposed our pre-pandemic policy expertise around issues like the Child Tax Credit, foreign health care workers, immigrant benefits, and SBA modernization to directly shape the pandemic response. Just as importantly, we continue to facilitate the coalition-building needed to move an additional relief package across the finish line.

The horrific murder of George Floyd and the brutal police response to the mass protests that followed finally woke much of White America to the full extent of racial injustice in general, and the systemic racism of the U.S. criminal justice system in particular. As a think tank, we kept our heads while others were (quite understandably) losing theirs, and responded with a series of sharp, heterodox commentaries and white papers about how best to reform our approach to crime and law enforcement in the United States. We will build on that work in 2021 as we launch a new Niskanen Center department on criminal justice. Demonstrations aren't enough. Concrete reforms *must* be passed at the federal, state, and local levels.

As these seismic political shifts rattled the nation, our climate, immigration, welfare reform, and regulatory reform policy teams continued the critical work of preparing the political terrain for the windows of opportunity that might open for our policy agenda in the next Congress. Niskanen's ability to positively shape that terrain during the pandemic stemmed from the relationships we have built over five years on Capitol Hill — relationships that made all the difference when the Hill locked down, and political business-as-usual came to a halt in Washington.

If there's an upside to any of this, it can be found in Milton Friedman's observation that "only a crisis — actual or perceived — produces real change." And real change is screamingly necessary on a number of fronts. "When that crisis occurs," Friedman continued, "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." And that, my friends, describes, in part, what we do at the Niskanen Center.

“Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew,” novelist and essayist Arundhati Roy wrote in April. “This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.” The Niskanen Center means to lead that march to a newer, better world.

Conventional wisdom has it that bitter partisanship and legislative gridlock are foreordained in the 117th Congress, but I’m not sure. Ambitious Democratic policy initiatives are probably off the table for now, and the likely Republican majority in the Senate (I write this before the two Georgia runoff elections) ensures that the GOP will, to some extent, politically “own” federal policy outcomes through the 2022 midterm elections. If there *is* to be a governing coalition in Washington under that scenario, it will likely be built upon a Biden-Schumer-Pelosi entente in partnership with responsible, moderate Republicans in the Senate. If the Democrats manage to take the Senate with two victories in Georgia, however, their narrow margin means any discomfited Senate Democrat can put a stop to anything. While nothing is certain, under either scenario, the political table is well set for a revival of moderation in American politics, and the Niskanen Center is uniquely positioned to both inform and direct it within both political parties.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you who have supported our work. As I hope you’ll agree, this year’s annual report demonstrates that we have accomplished a great deal together in extremely challenging circumstances. I’m confident that, with your continued support, our tomorrow will be brighter than our present.

JERRY TAYLOR

Co-founder and President,
Niskanen Center

President’s Letter



Chairman's Letter

The past year was one largely marked by uncertainty, anxiety, and despair. The COVID-19 pandemic upended our plans and forced us to restructure our lives and reassess our priorities. And in such unprecedented times, it is easy (and understandable) to lose focus of the big picture and let our innate anxieties get the better of us.

I am immensely proud to say that the Niskanen Center not only resisted that siren call but emerged from the chaos wrought by the pandemic as a beacon of pragmatic action and nimble adaptability in the face of unexpected circumstances. This reputation has been hard-earned in the few short years since Niskanen's inception, and manifested in full force over the turbulent past few months.

In the face of so much upheaval, Niskanen didn't waver. Instead, it readjusted and adapted quickly to the new reality, making a seamless transition to remote working without missing a beat. Our work output, relationship-building, and subsequent influence not only continued apace, but accelerated, culminating in a bevy of legislative successes and public endorsements.

Between our tireless behind-the-scenes work in shaping the CARES Act, advocacy for additional protections for DACA recipients on the front lines of the COVID-19 response, and push for measures pairing economic relief with programs to control methane emissions, Niskanen has proven adept at re-envisioning long-held goals in light of unprecedented circumstances.

And I am also happy to point out that 2020 is ending on a cautiously optimistic note. With Joe Biden poised to occupy the White House starting January of 2021, and with many of Niskanen's Republican friends set to remain in Congress, we are in the enviable position of being poised to

exercise tremendous influence on the future of American politics.

In fact, the election results may well turn out to be the best of possible worlds for the Niskanen Center. We are in the unique position of enjoying credibility with all factions likely to make up our next governing coalition, which presents us with an invaluable opportunity to weave our brand of moderation and pragmatism into American politics for years to come.

Of course, there is still much hard work to be done — specifically in addressing the glaring vacuum of serious Republican policy discussion from the past four years. But the Niskanen Center is ready and equipped to make up for lost time and step up to fill that void. We are uniquely situated to right the course of the GOP ship and steer away from the destructive populism that it has foundered on during the Trump years.

After all, as succinctly stated by Jonathan Chait, the Niskanen Center is the premier alternative for “those who want a Republican government capable of appealing to a majority of the country and devising real solutions to social problems and not collapsing into corruption.” As a champion of moderation in politics, if there's any institution that is poised to redefine and repurpose conservatism from its current, alarming iteration, it is the Niskanen Center.

I invite you to read on, and learn about the Niskanen Center's expansive, hard-won achievements during this difficult and tumultuous year. As chairman of the board, a financial supporter, and an admirer, I encourage you to sign up for Niskanen's newsletters, join us at our upcoming events, and get to know who we are, what we do, and why we are worthy of your attention and support. I look forward to what the next few years will hold for the Niskanen Center and watching our community grow — and I hope you will be a part of it.

BOB LITTERMAN

Chairman, Niskanen Center

Chairman, Risk Committee, Kepos Capital



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Co-founder and President, Niskanen Center

“Niskanen Center scholars have managed to do two things at once: They’ve risen to the moment and have participated vigorously in the essential public and civic debate of 2020. And they’ve also contributed in important ways to the longer-term discussion of what can and should be done in the future. It’s hard to do justice to either the present or the future in a serious way. Niskanen scholars have done both.”

BILL KRISTOL

Founder and director of Defending Democracy Together

About the Niskanen Center

The Niskanen Center is a nonpartisan public policy think tank that works within the governing networks of American politics to advance policies and politics animated by a spirit of moderation. We do so because we are deeply committed to an open society, which requires political compromise, respect for pluralism, and a resistance to ideological extremism. In short, it requires a spirit of moderation.

Beyond providing for public goods and correcting for market failures, we believe that government should reduce the extremes of human suffering, protect people from being dominated by arbitrary or uncontrolled power, but otherwise leave the largest number of people alone to live as they wish. We are not doctrinaire in our policy work because we are not convinced that any one ideological creed offers a reliable blueprint for achieving those ends in every single policy arena.

Our policy advocacy is informed by a commitment to equality, freedom, community, and justice. Unlike most ideologues — who elevate one of these considerations above the others — we believe that each is important. We appreciate, however, that they cannot all be fully realized at the same time in every policy context. Simple, principled answers to policy problems are thus elusive. Ethically difficult tradeoffs are necessary, and those tradeoffs should be transparently weighed and considered on a case-by-case basis.

“Niskanen isn’t just standing up for liberal values with unusual bravery; in the process, it is also working hard to place those values on a firmer foundation.”

YASCHA MOUNK
Johns Hopkins University


We seek not to displace principled disagreement, but to temper it. Sharp clashes of ideologies breed mutual contempt, while democracy demands trust and affection for one’s fellow citizens and a decent respect for those who disagree about the relative weight of values and the best means to achieve agreed-upon ends.

We thus seek to counterbalance ideological extremism and intolerance while opposing policies that aim to silence, suppress, or disempower other communities or perspectives, no matter how morally just the cause might appear to be. The moderation we embrace is not a synonym for moral relativism or political timidity; it is a fearless, nonconformist creed that emphasizes empiricism and places the health of the republic above party or cause.

A large crowd of people is walking on a city street, likely in Washington, D.C., as the Washington Monument is visible in the background. The crowd is diverse in age and appearance, with many people wearing face masks. In the foreground, a woman in a red and white patterned dress is walking towards the camera, holding a small bottle. Behind her, a man in a white t-shirt and blue jeans is also walking. To the right, a man in a red t-shirt and black shorts is walking away from the camera. In the background, a traffic light is visible, and a person is kneeling on the ground. The scene is set on a sunny day with green trees lining the street.

Open Society Project

Defending Democracy



“Niskanen scholars have shown an extraordinary ability to think outside of partisan grooves and promote creative, practical ideas for addressing public problems. This is a moment perfectly suited to their strengths.”

YUVAL LEVIN
editor of National Affairs

The Niskanen Center's biweekly Meetings of the Concerned — established following the 2016 presidential election — are the Open Society Project's primary instrument for building and maintaining our center-right network. By holding these meetings regularly, ensuring that they are well-attended, and making them informative and useful for attendees, we have transformed the scattered and demoralized ranks of prominent "Never Trumpers" into an active and vital community that shares information and collaborates on joint activities.

Keeping this flame alive hasn't been easy. During the first three years of the Trump administration, most of those Republicans who had been critical of Trump before his election chose to keep silent or even actively abetted the party's transformation into an instrument of Trump's will. But as the 2020 election drew closer, every day brought bountiful media coverage of Never Trumpers' hard-hitting and effective efforts to rally the center-right against Trump and his enablers — efforts in which the Meeting of the Concerned has played a critical role.

Over the past year, we have added some 75 new members to the core group of well over a hundred, plus another two dozen occasional participants. Among the new participants in the Meetings of the Concerned are well-known television contributors such as MSNBC's Shermichael Singleton and Rina Shah, and podcasters including "Femspainers" co-host Danielle Crittenden.

They also include former Republican Congressman Thomas Petri of Wisconsin, who joins our other Republican former members, Thomas Coleman of Missouri, Mickey Edwards of Oklahoma, Bob Inglis of South Carolina, David Jolly of Florida, and Claudine Schneider of Rhode Island.

We also have welcomed former heads of state Republican parties Chris Vance (Washington state) and Jennifer Horn (New Hampshire) to our group, along with political candidates and officeholders Martin Linsky (Massachusetts), Jenifer Sarver (Texas), and Neal Simon (Maryland). Among the many prominent leaders and activists who have joined in the past year are Mario Lopez of the Hispanic Leadership Fund, Nilmini Rubin of Fix the System, Trevor Potter of the Campaign Legal Center, and Debilyn Molineaux of the Bridge Alliance.

"The most interesting conversations about conservatism—or whatever replaces conservatism—are now taking place at the Niskanen Center."

ANNE APPLEBAUM
Pulitzer Prize-winning historian

The Meetings of the Concerned were also the vehicle through which we connected with people who have become full-time staff or senior fellows of the Niskanen Center, including Kodiak Hill-Davis, Laura Field, Gabriel Schoenfeld, and Chris Vance.

We have built upon the Meetings of the Concerned tradition of bringing in outside speakers to present on a wide variety of subjects of relevance and interest to activists on the center-right. Over the past year, we have been fortunate to bring in many authors of notable new books, including Anne Applebaum, David Frum, E. J. Dionne, Yuval Levin, Ben Wittes, Ilya Somin, Michael R. Strain, Daniel Drezner, and Steven Teles.

At moments when particular national issues took on burning relevance, we have also been fortunate to have heard from some of the country's foremost experts on those issues. These have included: the Washington Post's Radley Balko on police militarization and misconduct following the Black Lives Matter protests sparked by the death of George Floyd; the Cato Institute's Walter Olson on the constitutionality of state and local government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic; and former Pentagon official Michael Rubin on U.S.-Iranian relations after the assassination of Qasem Soleimani. In October 2019, we heard from a senior strategist for leadership about the potential impeachment

proceedings. We were able to put the proceedings into context by hearing from the University of Missouri's Frank Bowman — the country's leading authority on the history of impeachment.

We spoke with Princeton University's Aaron Friedberg at a critical moment in U.S.-China trade relations. We also went back and forth with sometime Niskanen admirer and critic Oren Cass shortly after the founding of his American Compass project. We heard from Reason senior editor Robby Soave about campus cancel culture, New York Times contributing writer Pete Wehner about the death of politics, and the University of Maryland's Steven Kull, media strategist Julie Anbender, and executive director Jillian Youngblood on their work with the anti-partisanship group Common Ground Solutions.

While participants appreciate the educational side of the meetings — one wrote this year to say that he'd found the discussions “interesting, provocative, and relevant” — the gatherings' political intelligence and networking aspects took on even greater significance as the elections approached. Members of the group received regular briefings during impeachment from the founders of Republicans for the Rule of Law, all of them Meeting of the Concerned participants: Sarah Longwell, Bill Kristol, Mona Charen, Linda Chavez, and Andy Zwick. More recently, Meeting of the Concerned members were among the first to hear about the election project led by Kristol and Longwell, Republican Voters Against Trump, and several participants became critical contributors to that effort.

Meeting of the Concerned members continue to be involved in ongoing counter-Trump efforts. These include: Checks and Balances (an organization of conservative and libertarian lawyers who want to defend the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary and law enforcement) and Republicans for Integrity (the Claudine Schneider-led effort to bring together former Republican members of Congress to write and speak out against current congressional Republicans who aid and abet Trump's misdeeds). Meeting of the Concerned member Jennifer Horn briefed the group about what is now one of the highest-profile anti-Trump organizations, the Lincoln Project, shortly after its founding. In March, the group also heard from another

Lincoln Project co-founder, Reed Galen, well before the organization's anti-Trump ads garnered millions of views and became front-page news. We also spoke with the founders of “43 Alumni for Biden,” which brought together former George W. Bush administration officials who supported President-elect Joe Biden against Trump.

In March, as the pandemic took hold of the country and upended our day-to-day routines, we had to shift our meetings from in-person to virtual. Although we have missed our in-person get-togethers, the upside is that Zoom has facilitated greater meeting participation by people outside of Washington (and even outside the country), and has provided an integral piece of normalcy during an otherwise tumultuous time.

The Meetings of the Concerned were launched in response to Trump's election, but we intend to continue the series into the Biden administration. Trump may be leaving, but the threats posed by Trumpism and authoritarian populism remain — and these meetings provide a vital forum for diverse voices on the center-right opposed to these dangerous tendencies. We look forward to continuing the meetings, in whichever format best suits the times, in the months to come.

“When it comes to swaying people with ideas, Niskanen has been one of the major players with intellectuals, young people, and on the think tank stage. We live in a time of rethinking, and Niskanen has been leading the charge on that.”

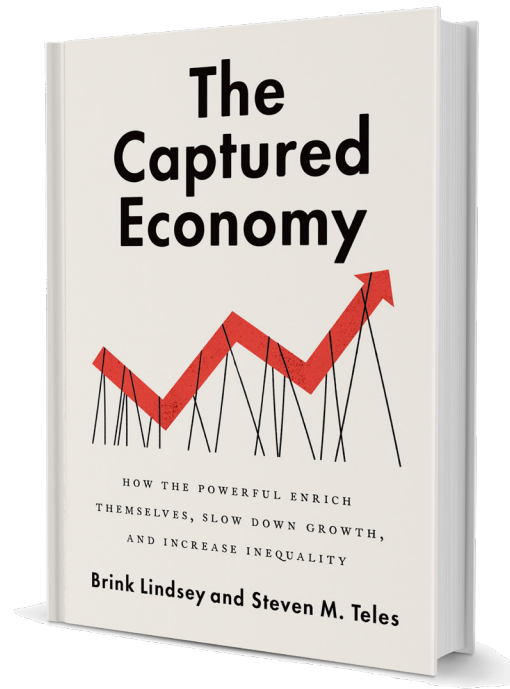
TYLER COWEN
George Mason University

Captured Economy

Resisting Regulatory Capture

Following the success of Brink Lindsey and Steven Teles' 2017 book *The Captured Economy*, the Niskanen Center launched CapturedEconomy.com, a companion website to the book, in June 2018. The Captured Economy project is changing the narrative surrounding economic growth, inequality, and government regulation. We aim to highlight the many areas where government regulation and other forms of intervention result in lower growth *and* higher inequality. To address these problems, CapturedEconomy.com promotes ideas that make the market fairer by making it freer. Regulatory policy fellow Daniel Takash runs and maintains the website.

The reference library housed at CapturedEconomy.com now contains over 1,500 pieces of academic research on intellectual property, financial regulation, occupational licensing, and land-use regulation. This research has been covered in regular posts and updates on the website's blog, Rent Check, and Twitter. Our weekly "Rent-Seeking Roundup" newsletter also has a dedicated following, including congressional staffers, academics, journalists, and other opinion leaders, who receive the content produced by authors on the site.



In these ways, we have kept the site's followers informed on news, research, and legislation related to the Captured Economy project's policies.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Captured Economy project has focused on the regressive regulations that have hampered effective response and may make a recovery more difficult if not addressed. These include licensing regulations on health care practitioners, overly cautious drug and medical-device approval regulations at the Food and Drug Administration, patent rights granted on top of subsidies for research and development, and overbroad copyright laws that impede the dissemination of information. In particular, the Captured Economy project has emphasized the inappropriateness of regarding patents and copyrights as "intellectual property," arguing that analysis focused on the actual consequences of current policy is superior to the moral framework of "property" in evaluating the merits and shortcomings of these laws.

Sometimes, rent-seeking and regulatory capture problems can be dealt with by merely eliminating or dramatically

scaling back bad regulations. In other cases, however, regulation is unavoidable, and the challenge is to ensure that policy serves the public interest and not the narrow interests of the regulated industry. In the policy areas covered by the Captured Economy project, financial regulation is the paramount example of the latter category. The case that the financial sector is a creature of policy with no “neutral” free-market design was made by Takash in his essay “Libertarians Need Government — In Finance as in Public Health.” Our agenda for financial regulatory reform focuses not on “deregulation” but instead on moving from a regulatory system that subsidizes excessive indebtedness and risk-taking to one that aims for a smaller, safer financial sector through greater reliance on equity financing.

In addition to the Captured Economy website, the project has assembled a group of eminent scholars to affiliate with Niskanen and contribute to its research and education efforts. Affiliated scholars include Anat Admati, professor of finance and economics at Stanford University (member of the Niskanen advisory board; expertise on financial regulation); James Bessen, executive director of the Technology and Policy Research Initiative at Boston University School of Law (senior fellow; expertise in intellectual property); John Cochrane, senior fellow at the Hoover Institution (member of the Niskanen advisory board; expertise in financial regulation); Brad DeLong, professor of economics at the University of California, Berkeley (member of the Niskanen advisory board; expertise in economic history and financial regulation); Nathan Jensen, professor of government at the University of Texas, Austin (senior fellow; expertise on company-specific economic development incentives); Monica Prasad, professor of sociology at Northwestern University (senior fellow; expertise in political economy of financial regulation); and David Schleicher, professor of law at Yale Law School (senior fellow; expertise in land-use regulation).

“For curious minds interested in fresh, eclectic, and evidence-based analyses, the Niskanen Center is a lungful of fresh air.”

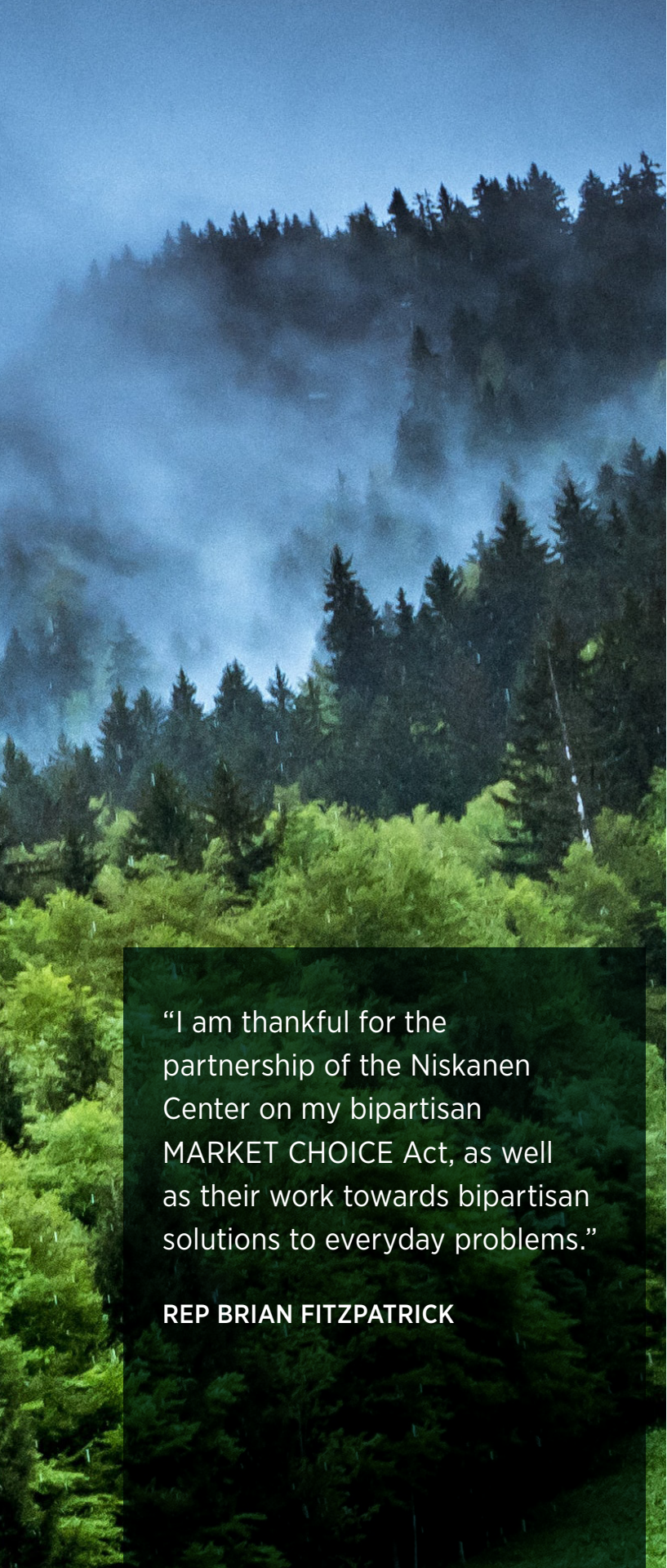
STEVEN PINKER
Harvard University





Climate

Opening Minds to
Action on Climate
Change



“I am thankful for the partnership of the Niskanen Center on my bipartisan MARKET CHOICE Act, as well as their work towards bipartisan solutions to everyday problems.”

REP BRIAN FITZPATRICK

Through public engagement and an active Capitol Hill presence, the Niskanen Center has established itself as a leading voice for climate action and a source of expert analysis, insightful commentary, and innovative policy design.

BUILDING SUPPORT FOR A CARBON TAX

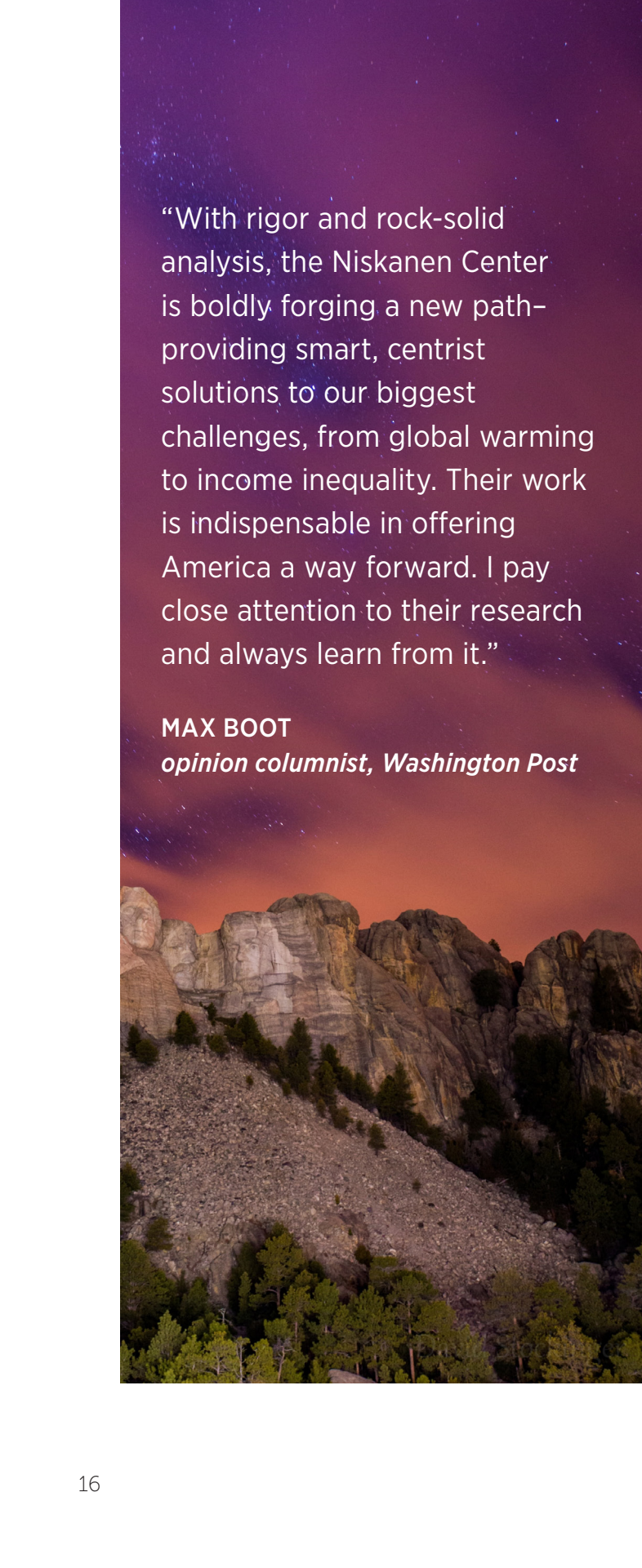
Our long-term objective is to convince legislators that economy-wide carbon taxes are the best policy available to address greenhouse gas emissions. Carbon pricing must be the centerpiece of mitigation strategies if economy-wide decarbonization is to prove effective and affordable. As the recipient of the 2018 Nobel Prize in economics, William Nordhaus, put it: “If we don’t have carbon pricing, we will never solve this problem.”

The depth of the Niskanen Center’s analytical work — combined with the breadth of staff experience in science, law, and economics — offers policymakers much-needed information and insight on proposals for establishing a carbon tax in the United States. Our work on carbon taxation has attracted media attention, prompted responses from activists and scholars, and influenced the design and promotion of carbon tax proposals introduced in Congress by members of both parties.

As our allies on Capitol Hill and in civil society embrace carbon pricing, the Niskanen Center is working to help lawmakers understand the tradeoffs involved in levying a carbon price. We are also guiding lawmakers on examining how particular design choices (e.g., the rate of the carbon tax, how revenue is spent, how imports and exports are assigned or rebated a carbon price at the border, or how regulatory authority will be used in the presence of the carbon price) will affect the efficacy, efficiency, and durability of any carbon pricing regime. We frequently publish research and commentary in this area on our website and in the media, and we continue to lead educational efforts on Capitol Hill.

MAKING THE CASE FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Since the inception of our climate program, educating policy elites on the nature of climate risks has been one of our top priorities. We are especially focused on changing attitudes about climate science on the right, where there has



“With rigor and rock-solid analysis, the Niskanen Center is boldly forging a new path—providing smart, centrist solutions to our biggest challenges, from global warming to income inequality. Their work is indispensable in offering America a way forward. I pay close attention to their research and always learn from it.”

MAX BOOT

opinion columnist, Washington Post

been a large gap between scientific opinion on the causes of recent global warming and elite opinion. Encouragingly, we are beginning to see cracks in the wall of skepticism. Throughout 2019 and 2020, elected Republicans in Congress started to shift their rhetoric on climate change from skepticism of the science to an expressed desire to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Through persistent educational activities and direct engagement with policy elites, the Niskanen Center and our allies have been at the heart of these changes. As our work in this area continues, we have partnered with the Woods Hole Research Center to help policymakers understand the complex relationships among climate change, extreme events, and particular climate hazards.

We acknowledge that global warming can produce a wide range of possible outcomes — ranging from modest to catastrophic — but we believe that any reasonable risk-management exercise points toward rapid decarbonization as the best response. Accordingly, we aggressively argue that decarbonization of the economy is more feasible and affordable than many policymakers appreciate and opponents of climate action claim. And while we prepare for a moment of opportunity for more comprehensive legislation, Niskanen has worked to increase the ambition of near-term actions to cut greenhouse gas emissions. We are engaged in making the case for aggressive government support for low-carbon energy innovation, deployment subsidies for early-stage technologies, and infrastructure and labor-market reforms that can foster investment and innovation in the low-carbon economy.

Following the upheavals of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have argued for measures that would pair economic relief with programs to control methane emissions, deploy low-carbon infrastructure, and position the United States for a clean recovery. As we continue to aim for recovery, we are focused on interventions that will reduce decarbonization costs and help make the economic growth and benefits of the energy transition widely distributed.

EVERYONE IS

Immigration

The Path Towards
Recovery

WELCOME

Our elections this November reflected deep fissures in America. The Biden/Harris administration will inherit a profoundly unsettled country struggling to respond to social justice movements, widely recognized racial and economic disparities, and an ongoing and increasingly deadly pandemic.

For the past four years of the Trump administration, the only constant has been tumult; this year proved no different. We cautiously, yet optimistically, ended 2019 with plans of developing a new and innovative policy framework that would break from traditional comprehensive immigration-reform narratives. We quickly learned that the immediate challenges of 2020 would have to take precedence. But Niskanen rose to the challenge.

There is little doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affects our immigrant communities. We recognized an opportunity — a need — to capitalize on our long-standing relationships with trusted partners on Capitol Hill to inform critical inflection points on immigration and health care policy for lawmakers developing emergency responses and formulating historical relief packages.

Niskanen was at the forefront of highlighting immigrant contributions to our COVID-19 response. We were among the first to call for admitting additional health care workers to the United States and for offering protections for DACA recipients — those temporarily protected from deportation because they were brought here as children — on the health care response's front lines. Niskanen engaged heavily in promoting the bipartisan Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act, which recaptures unused visas and directs them towards physicians and nurses. We supported the American Citizen Coronavirus Relief Act, introduced by Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Thom Tillis (R-NC), to help ensure that certain immigrant families were eligible to receive relief funding. Additionally, Niskanen called for the expansion of those benefits to all U.S. citizen children, regardless of their parents' immigration status; for Medicaid coverage for testing and treatment of COVID-19 for legal immigrants; and for the expansion of disaster SNAP (formerly food stamp) benefits.

“Immigration can be a divisive topic, but the efforts and expertise of groups like the Niskanen Center help bring us together to find consensus and develop policies on everything from international students to refugees and the naturalization process.”

REP STEVE STIVERS
(R-OH)

Niskanen published original research on the increasing cost and decreasing rate of naturalizations and how U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) can (and should) continue to have naturalization ceremonies safely during the pandemic. Niskanen was instrumental in building bipartisan support for remote naturalizations and was recognized widely for our leadership role on the issue. The New York Times, Washington Post, and Wall Street Journal cited our work on the subject. Niskanen engaged closely with critical advocates and leading organizations involved in lobbying efforts, talked with journalists, and recruited think tanks to engage in the naturalization space.

As America became a global hotspot, the administration instituted sweeping bans against foreigners entering the United States under the guise of public health concerns. Our widely-cited original research found that over a quarter of a million legal immigrants could be kicked out of the country due to the administration's actions, to say nothing of those arbitrarily prevented from entering to attend school, see family, and work. Conditions deteriorated quickly at our southern border once the ban on

asylum seekers took hold. Niskanen advocated for early preventive immunizations and for allowing the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to designate the camps on the U.S.-Mexico border refugee camps.

This year, we encouraged lawmakers to demand consultation with the administration before deciding on the FY 2021 refugee resettlement plan. In a September letter organized jointly by the Niskanen Center and Refugees International, seven former leaders of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program — who served Republican and Democratic presidential administrations — called on U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to increase refugee resettlement, expressing alarm over reports that the Trump administration considered suspending all refugee admissions. We organized voices from the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation and former Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) to support refugee resettlement. Our calls to admit Hong Kong refugees — and our resultant work on the bipartisan, bicameral bills to designate Hong Kongers as refugees — and to reform resettlement went unheeded.

“Niskanen is an enormously consequential resource for me in my work. I use Niskanen’s work to find the data to build my arguments. I very much admire the advocacy work Niskanen does on behalf of refugees.”

KORI SCHAKE
Director of Foreign and Defense Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI)

“I have long appreciated and relied on the great work the Niskanen Center does on immigration among many other issues.”

DOUG RAND
former Assistant Director for Entrepreneurship at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (Obama)

Niskanen also spearheaded efforts with our coalition partners to take on the increasingly problematic processing delays and case backlogs plaguing the immigration system. Our work informing lawmakers about the deleterious inefficiencies and lack of transparency in the system helped garner the signatures of 36 senators on a bipartisan oversight letter drawing attention to worsening delays and disruptions. Working with our partners at the American Immigration Lawyers Association, Niskanen was heavily engaged in introducing the Case Backlog and Transparency Act. This bicameral, bipartisan bill called for more transparency and accountability at USCIS.

Niskanen also developed affirmative immigration reforms that consider tomorrow’s political realities. We pushed original research on sanctuary cities, the happiness of immigrants in America, how to rebuild refugee resettlement, and in defense of constitutionally-protected citizenship.

A new administration necessarily cracks the window of opportunity for reform. It’s time for a unique, modern, sophisticated, and moderate defense of legal immigration, and Niskanen is asking big questions and reconsidering decades-old norms to pave the way for needed reform.

Litigation

Holding Power to Account

HOLDING FOSSIL FUEL COMPANIES RESPONSIBLE FOR CLIMATE DAMAGES

Niskanen continues to represent Colorado's Boulder and San Miguel counties and the city of Boulder in their climate nuisance case against the fossil fuel industry. It is the first such case focusing on impacts beyond sea-level rise, such as drought, increased wildfires, flooding from extreme precipitation, and other climate effects.

After we filed our case in state court, the defendants "removed" it to federal district court; the district court then ordered the case back to state court, and on July 7, 2020, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed that decision. We are now proceeding in state court, where defendants have filed a raft of motions to dismiss; those have been briefed and argued, and we were awaiting the judge's decisions. However, she has put everything on hold pending a decision by the Supreme Court in a case that would affect one of the personal jurisdiction issues relevant to our matter..

PROTECTING PROPERTY OWNERS FROM PIPELINE EMINENT DOMAIN

Niskanen currently represents landowners along pipeline routes throughout the country, fighting the taking of their property by private companies via eminent domain's extraordinary power. These efforts include three novel claims: a D.C. Circuit challenge to a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) decision authorizing the Pacific Connector Pipeline in Oregon, on the grounds that a pipeline carrying gas that will be exported as liquefied natural gas provides no "public benefit" under the U.S. Constitution's Takings Clause or the Natural Gas Act; a D.C. Circuit challenge claiming that FERC's failure to adequately notify Atlantic Coast Pipeline landowners of their rights violates the Constitution's Due Process and Takings Clauses; and a federal district court case in Texas concerning the Permian Highway Pipeline, which asserts that using state eminent domain authority to take land for a pipeline permitted under state law is invalid because the pipeline is subject to FERC's exclusive jurisdiction as an interstate pipeline. We are also representing landowners before FERC against the PennEast 'Phase 1' pipeline and are preparing to challenge FERC's forthcoming authorization of the pipeline in court.

MAKING GOVERNMENT MORE TRANSPARENT

Our government transparency project has ramped up considerably. Niskanen successfully sued FERC for a full release of documents concerning the Pacific Connector Pipeline, which will show whether landowners potentially affected by a proposed pipeline receive adequate notice of their rights from FERC (or rather the pipeline companies to which FERC delegates this responsibility.) We also sued FERC over this issue regarding the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and had a partial win in D.C. District Court, and our appeal for full production of documents is pending in the D.C. Circuit. From the documents received to date, it appears that pipeline companies, having no incentive to provide landowners with the required notice, routinely fail to do so.

Niskanen also works to protect landowners' First Amendment rights by shedding light on the relationships among pipeline companies, the federal government, and local law enforcement in the potentially unlawful monitoring of pipeline opponents. We are seeking relevant documents



from the FBI, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and the Department of Transportation. We are also seeking documents from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative concerning its influence on FERC's approval of the Pacific Connector Pipeline, which will carry Canadian gas for export.

On the Hill, we have continued to shop our proposed amendments to the federal Natural Gas Act, which would eliminate many of the worst abuses by gas pipelines exercising eminent domain authority under that statute. In February, David Bookbinder testified at a House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing on pipeline eminent domain issues. We have also assisted staff for the various House and Senate members who have recently introduced legislation addressing individual eminent domain issues.

Fighting the President's Illegal Actions

THE BORDER WALL CASE

We continue to represent Texas' El Paso County and the Border Human Rights Network in their case against the Trump administration over building the border wall with funds that Congress expressly appropriated for other purposes. On November 11, 2019, the district court ruled for us and enjoined the defendants from using billions of dollars of pilfered funds to build the wall. Unfortunately, the Fifth Circuit stayed that decision pending the defendants' appeal; that appeal has been briefed and argued, and we await a decision. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court has decided to review a Ninth Circuit decision concerning similar border wall misappropriations. We have asked the Court to also review our case at the same time, even though the Fifth Circuit has not yet issued a decision.

THE EMOLUMENTS CLAUSE CASES

Niskanen filed amicus briefs in the three Emoluments Clause cases filed against the president on the grounds that he is accepting illegal "emoluments" from foreign governments through diplomats patronizing his Trump International Hotel in Washington. Because the Justice Department has taken the outrageous position that the Emoluments Clause does not apply to *any* of Mr. Trump's private business dealings — but only to his actions as president — we pointed out the consequences of an approach that would allow the Russian government to pay \$5 million a month for a broom closet at the Trump International. Two of the three appellate courts have issued favorable decisions: On May 14, 2020, the full Fourth Circuit refused to intervene in district court proceedings that had denied the president's motion to dismiss, and on September 13, 2019, the Second Circuit reversed a district court decision dismissing the complaint. But on February 7, 2020, the D.C. Circuit held that individual members of Congress do not have standing to sue the president for Emoluments Clause violations.

THE PRESIDENTIAL PRIVILEGE CASES

In March, Niskanen submitted an amicus brief to the Supreme Court in the *Trump v. Mazars* case, dealing with federal court enforcement of subpoenas to the president from the

"The Niskanen Center is performing a uniquely vital role in the national policy discussion by providing innovative, evidence-based solutions to modern challenges amid a political environment shaped by tribalism, extremism and rote ideological orthodoxy."

EVAN MCMULLIN

Executive director of Stand Up Republic

House of Representatives, and in April, we filed a similar brief in *House of Representatives v. McGahn*, then pending before the full D.C. Circuit. In both, we argued that both parties had exercised Congress' power to investigate the president's actions (using Whitewater as an example of Republicans investigating Democrats), and that hamstringing this authority by refusing to enforce such subpoenas would undercut Congress' constitutional oversight abilities. In *Mazars*, the Supreme Court rejected the president's claim of absolute immunity from congressional oversight and remanded the case to district court for further consideration. In *McGahn*, the *en banc* D.C. Circuit held that the House Judiciary Committee had standing to pursue judicial enforcement of its subpoena. It remanded to the three-judge panel, which on August 31 held that the committee had no legal right to seek enforcement. The Judiciary Committee has asked the Circuit for *en banc* review of this decision as well.



Poverty and Welfare

The COVID-19 pandemic and concurrent economic crisis presented the Niskanen Center's Poverty and Welfare Policy program with a new set of challenges — and once-in-a-generation opportunities. With Capitol Hill working remotely, multiple congressional offices turned to us as a trusted source for policy expertise, requiring us to shift focus in some areas while doubling down on others. As a result, our Poverty program had an outsized influence on multiple facets of coronavirus relief legislation.

Our work is helping build bipartisan momentum toward long-overdue modernizations to our social insurance system. These include: comprehensive upgrades to our Unemployment Insurance system, permanent expansions to paid leave and family benefits, and investments in the employment and training programs necessary to accelerate a robust economic recovery for lower-income workers. The work of our Struggling Regions Initiative has also proven increasingly relevant, with COVID-19 inspiring interest in reforms to make our supply chain more resilient while supporting distressed communities. As a result, Niskanen's Poverty program is emerging from this crisis stronger than ever, with our sights set on growing our reach and increasing our impact.

COVID-19 RECOVERY REBATES

Our Poverty program has been a staunch advocate for fully-refundable tax credits since its inception, employing research and advocacy strategies designed to simultaneously appeal to “pro-family” conservatives and anti-poverty progressives. With many of these same conservatives lining up behind Recovery Rebates in the CARES Act—direct relief payments to adults and children—years of work came to a head virtually overnight.

Offices we work with, including those of Senators Mitt Romney (R-UT), Josh Hawley (R-MO), and Tom Cotton (R-AK), were all early in voicing support for direct, cash payments to families and children. We worked directly with Senator Hawley to draft his “Family Relief Plan,” a proposal to provide families with fully-refundable, monthly payments that would be recurring until the public health crisis is declared over. His proposal was not enacted as such, yet provided the impetus for what became the \$1,200 Recovery

“We’ve been pleased to work in partnership with the Niskanen Center on a number of issues related to poverty and human needs, especially this year in response to the pandemic and recession and the widespread hardship they’ve cause.

Niskanen’s work is first-rate, and its contributions to the policy process are important.”

ROBERT GREENSTEIN

founder and President of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Rebate program shortly thereafter. We continued to work with Senator Hawley’s office to advance an amendment that struck the means test from the initial rebate provision. After the CARES Act passed, we partnered with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities to issue joint recommendations designed to ensure low-income households received their Recovery Rebates, including steps for automatic payments where administrative data allowed.

SHIFTING THE DEBATE ON WAGE SUBSIDIES

COVID-19 created an employment crisis on par with the Great Depression. The \$600 per week boost to Unemployment Insurance for displaced workers thus proved essential for supporting the economy. When conservatives became concerned about the potential work-disincentive effect of

these benefits, we addressed these concerns by advancing wage and employment subsidies as a proactive approach to promoting reemployment.

When the Paycheck Protection Program ran into implementation issues, we worked with Senator Hawley's staff to develop a proposal to rebate business payrolls. Although it generated heated debate in conservative circles, a version of the proposal ultimately made it into the House-passed Heroes Act. We were even asked to generate cost estimates of the plan to meet a request from the White House. Shortly thereafter, we worked with Senator Romney's office to develop Patriot Pay, a proposal to boost front-line workers' wages directly through subsidized hazard pay. Patriot Pay garnered widespread media coverage while helping signal Republican openness to a national wage subsidy program in the future.

SUPPORTING STRUGGLING REGIONS

Our work on reemployment policy overlapped with our Struggling Regions Initiative. This year, we joined the American Compass project as members and blog contributors, beginning with an essay for their inaugural symposium on manufacturing reshoring. Our essay focused on workforce development and Active Labor Market Policy (ALMP), based on the argument that skills training is essential to reindustrialization. We thus proposed building support for vocational and on-the-job training directly into the federal-state Unemployment Insurance system, providing dislocated workers with access to retraining and subsidized jobs if they do not find new employment before their UI benefit runs out.

One of the key ideas from our Struggling Regions Initiative even made it into the Phase IV COVID-19 relief bill known as the HEALS Act. Based on our prior work on the Small Business Administration reauthorization, the bill proposes landmark reforms to the Small Business Investment Company program. These are designed to fuel a robust recovery for small businesses impacted by COVID-19 while providing an indefinite boost to capital access for small and medium manufacturers.

"The Niskanen Center has been a blessed oasis of principle at a crucial moment in American history."

MONA CHAREN
The Bulwark

EXPANDING HEALTH CARE COMPETITION

COVID-19 has brought many of the shortcomings of America's health care system to the fore. In particular, the research and writing of Robert Orr, the Niskanen Center's welfare policy associate, has shed light on how health care worker licensing and educational requirements increase costs and reduce access to basic medical care. His work is helping advance reforms that widen nurse scope-of-practice laws and encourage health care workers' geographic mobility across state lines.

The pandemic also drew attention to the need for accelerated biomedical research. This made our work advancing compensation for blood and organ donors particularly timely. In the paper *Bloody Well Pay Them: The Case for Voluntary Remunerated Plasma Collections*, Georgetown professor and Niskanen Center adjunct fellow Peter Jaworski argues that the world's reliance on the U.S. for blood plasma is unsustainable given growing demand for plasma-derived therapies (including as a treatment for COVID-19). Jaworski calls upon our peer Canzuck countries (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom) to allow plasma donors to be remunerated, just like donors in the U.S. To maximize its reach abroad, we proudly co-released the paper with the Australian Taxpayers' Alliance and the Adam Smith Institute in the U.K.

A man with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is seated and gesturing with both hands as if in conversation. He is looking slightly off-camera to the right. The background is an office setting with a computer monitor visible. A yellow rectangular overlay is positioned on the left side of the image, containing the word "Podcast" in white, bold, sans-serif font. The overlay has two thin white horizontal lines, one above and one below the text.

Podcast

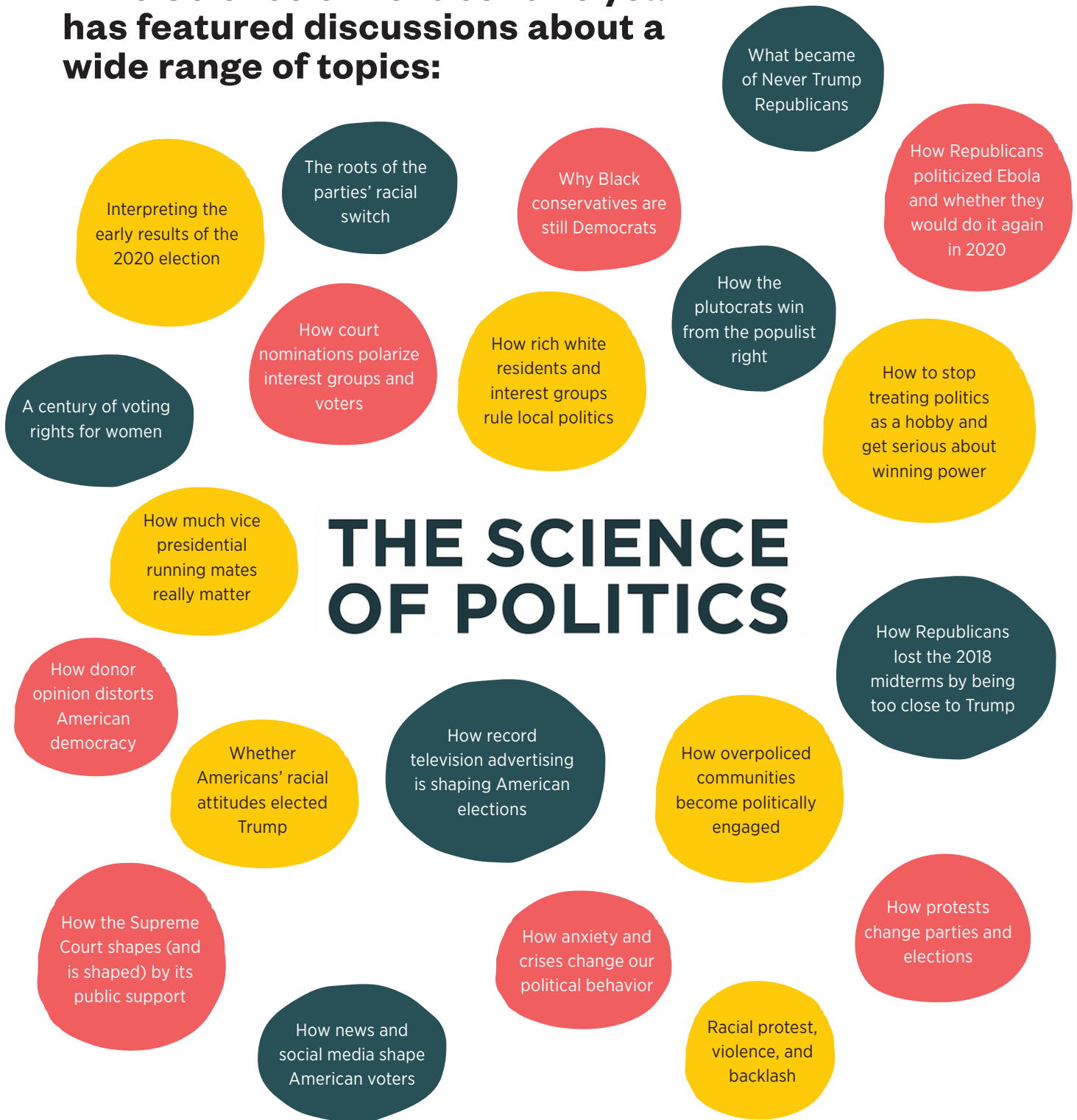
The Niskanen Center’s strategy is rooted in social-scientific evidence about how politics really works. Our biweekly podcast, “The Science of Politics” — hosted by political scientist and Niskanen Senior Fellow Matt Grossmann — seeks to inform our understanding of what’s going on in American politics, and how we might best advance our agenda on a constantly evolving political terrain.

“The Science of Politics” features top researchers delivering fresh insights on major trends influencing American politics and policy. By moving beyond superficial punditry

to data-driven understanding, the podcast serves as a vital bridge between academia and political elites, illuminating the dynamics of democratic policymaking and the political landscape upon which the struggle between open and closed societies is fought.

“The Science of Politics” has featured discussions about a wide range of topics, including:

“The Science of Politics” this year has featured discussions about a wide range of topics:



Communications

The Niskanen Center continues to establish itself as an increasingly influential voice shaping the conversation about American politics and policy. Over the past year, we have been featured in print, online, and broadcast media outlets over 850 times. Among the outlets in which Niskanen and its policy experts have been cited: The New Yorker, The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, The Atlantic, New York magazine, Bloomberg, the Associated Press, and Reuters. Niskanen also maintains its strong presence in key Capitol Hill publications, including National Journal, Roll Call, Politico, The Hill, and Axios.

Niskanen Center policy experts have written over 14 opinion pieces for many prominent publications in the past year, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The Guardian, Bloomberg, and Washington Monthly.

Vice President for Research Will Wilkinson continues to be a prolific contributing opinion writer for The New York Times, bringing Niskanen's perspective to the pages

of America's newspaper of record each month. Niskanen Center senior fellow Linda Chavez also became a regular New York Times opinion contributor this year, and Geoffrey Kabaservice has continued penning his highly successful column for The Guardian.

In 2020 the Niskanen Center also saw its broadcast media presence grow exponentially, with over 150 appearances on TV, radio, and podcasts. Niskanen policy experts have been interviewed in the widest range of outlets to date, making regular appearances on CNN, MSNBC, the BBC, CBS, NPR, and Al Jazeera.

What's more, this year, Will Wilkinson also launched a new Niskanen podcast, Model Citizen. The podcast hit the ground running, securing high-profile guests such as Elizabeth Cohen and Matthew Yglesias, and coverage in the Washington Post and Bloomberg. In the coming year, Niskanen looks forward to adding more in-house podcasts to its roster.

Niskanen's relevance and reputation continue to be trumpeted by prominent journalists and columnists, who endorse our work in their widely-read and often syndicated pieces. Such writers include: Isaac Chotiner of The New Yorker, David Brooks and Thomas Edsall of The New York Times, Greg Sargent, Jennifer Rubin, and Jonathan Capehart of The Washington Post, and Jonathan Chait of New York magazine.

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Our relationships with media outlets are supported and amplified by our growing digital and social media footprint. In particular, Twitter has become an important vehicle for reaching journalists, policymakers, and other thought leaders with our ideas and commentary.

The last year saw our most significant spike in Twitter followers to date. Among our most visible new followers are Stacey Abrams; Steve Case (co-founder of AOL and author of The Third Wave); Scott Dworkin (co-Founder of the Democratic Coalition); Armando Iannucci (creator of HBO's "Veep"); Joyce Alene (NBC/MSNBC News); Greg Sargent (Washington Post); and Juan Williams (Fox News).



The New York Times

The Washington Post

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

THE
NEW YORKER



The
Atlantic

ALJAZEERA

NEW YORK

Bloomberg

AP

The
Economist



The
Guardian

MSNBC

CBS



“Niskanen’s thoughtful, accessible work has been very valuable in my reporting...They have often helped me better understand both technical policy issues, as well as the political/legal constraints surrounding them. My own journalism is better for it.”


CATHERINE RAMPELL

Opinion Columnist, Washington Post

With the pandemic, we pivoted our messaging and strategy very quickly, using quote tweets and threads to share our research on trending topics and news. As a result of this and our expanded election analysis, we saw exponential growth in our reach and engagement, manifested by a marked uptick in high-quality retweets, impressions, replies, and link clicks over the past year.

An important aspect of our strategy on Twitter is to break long, complex research papers down into a few tweets. For instance, our thread marking the release of Michael Fortner’s paper on policing reached over 150,000 people and was praised as a “must-read” thread by German Lopez (Vox), Tanya L. Domi (Columbia University), Jeff Spross (formerly of The Week), and many others.

Our Facebook page has also enjoyed growth in followers over the past year. Our continued success on the platform speaks to both the quality of our content and the quality of the audience that we have cultivated. Our growing

A hand holding a smartphone is visible in the lower right corner of the page. The background is a soft-focus bokeh of various colored lights, including pink, orange, yellow, and blue, creating a vibrant and artistic atmosphere.

Instagram presence has continued to be highly engaged, allowing us to use visual posts and stories to drive traffic to our website. We now have over 1,000 followers, many of whom are in the public policy and media spaces.

Finally, our web traffic nearly tripled from last year, reaching over 1.6 million sessions. In large part, this is thanks to the increased output of our policy experts, our growing presence on social media, and our increased search engine optimization efforts. Google queries such as “why are rural areas republican,” “why do cities vote blue,” “the great Barrington declaration,” “DACA news 2020,” and “What Is a sanctuary city?” have driven thousands of people to our research.

“The Niskanen Center regularly serves up a unique blend of intellectually ambitious political theory and serious policy analysis, with an eye towards breaking out of the stale liberal-vs.conservative framework that often renders our national debate so counterproductive.”

GREG SARGENT

Opinion Columnist, Washington Post

Call to action

In the course of advancing our agenda, the Niskanen Center has demonstrated that we can appeal to, and work productively with, just about every faction in American politics. That's partly because we believe there is genuine merit to the concerns forwarded by each of the disparate ideological camps in America today. Progressives are right to be deeply concerned about social justice and economic inequality. Liberals are likewise right to worry about civil liberty and to defend pluralism and empiricism. Economic conservatives are correct about the critical importance of wealth creation and the merits of creative destruction. Conservatives are right to give weight to concerns about culture and social cohesion. And libertarians are right to value individual liberty and be skeptical of "the pretense of knowledge" that ill-informs many proposed governmental interventions.

We are moderates because, rather than embracing any one of those worthy considerations as first and foremost in every single policy debate, we believe that they are all important. Which consideration is more important than another depends on the issue in question and historical context. In short, we are moderates because we appreciate

the complexities and tradeoffs of life and eschew fanaticism in pursuit of any one of the (worthy) causes that animate engagement in politics. And we are moderates because we labor to live in the world as it is, not as we wish it were. Politics is the art of the possible, not the exhortation for the impossible.

However, we are radical moderates because sometimes the ship of state is so unbalanced that it threatens to capsize. That, unfortunately, is where we find ourselves today. In such a case, moderation demands a radical political rebalancing to keep the ship of state afloat. If we are about to capsize because everyone is crowded on the ship's starboard, moderation does not mean we should put ourselves in the middle of that crowd. It means we need to advance — and lead others — to the unoccupied port.

We are also radical moderates because we appreciate that the 21st century's challenges are radically different from those we faced in the 20th. Politics and policy today, however, is still grounded in conventional wisdom derived from a world that no longer exists. Abraham Lincoln's message to Congress in 1862 couldn't be more apt: "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."

While the Niskanen Center is engaged in the hard work of concrete policy change (the proverbial "sausage-making" that is required to produce politically viable legislation), we are equally committed to offering a vision of what "thinking and acting anew" might mean at a time when political and social dysfunction threatens to tear this nation apart. We think it means a new synthesis of ideas that defies the comfortable dogmas of both the left and right. Our many books, white papers, and essays are offered with that task in mind: forwarding a new vision for America that meets the needs of our turbulent times. And that vision, I'm pleased to say, is beginning to resonate with public intellectuals who are exhausted with the illiberal zealotry on display everywhere in American politics.

We suspect that, in the aftermath of the 2020 elections, we'll see the emergence of organized factions of moderates in both political parties. The Republicans will likely have a predominantly Trumpist, populist-nationalist faction rooted in rural


America, and a smaller “liberal-conservative” faction in the suburbs where orthodox Trumpism cannot compete. Meanwhile, the Democrats are likely to fracture into an intensely mobilized democratic-socialist faction grounded in large cities and academic centers, and a moderate faction where the democratic-socialist faction cannot exert much power.

If this comes to pass, neither party’s leaders will be able to marshal enough intraparty support to insist upon the kind of ruthless control of the legislative agenda we have seen in the last few years. As a consequence, Congress will become more chaotic, and factions more autonomous. We’ll see more policy initiatives advanced by one-off coalitions driven by political entrepreneurs, rather than leadership-mandated, top-down coalitions.

The Niskanen Center will be especially important in this emerging world because we can provide the ideas and the networks spanning multiple party factions that will be necessary to piece together the strange-bedfellow coalitions that can pass legislation. We can also provide the animating political philosophy that will tie together both the moderate wing of the Democratic Party and the liberal-conservative wing of the Republican Party — just as the Progressives tied together their factions in the two political parties in the early decades of the 20th century.

Our ambitions are great, but so are the nation’s challenges. With your support, I’m optimistic that the Niskanen Center will see that America rises to the occasion.



A dramatic photograph of a large wave crashing against a rocky shore. The wave is a massive, white, frothy plume of water that dominates the center-right of the frame. The ocean is a deep blue-grey, and the sky is a pale, hazy blue. The foreground shows dark, wet rocks and some green seaweed. On the left side, there is a dark teal rectangular box containing white text.

“A powerful voice for moderation
& data-driven decision-making,
the Niskanen Center offers a
unique combination of incisive
policy analysis, advocacy, and
pragmatism. With so many
organizations beholden to one
or another extreme, it’s truly
refreshing to see Niskanen
organize in support of policies
that aren’t driven by ideology,
but by a dedication to moving
our nation away from the brink.”

GARRY KASPAROV
*Chairman of Renew Democracy
Initiative*

Financials

While the IRS allows 501(c)(3) think tanks such as the Niskanen Center (and 501(c)(4) organizations such as the related Niskanen Center for Public Policy) to keep the sources of their financial support confidential, we've decided to embrace donor transparency (the case for which is well made by, among others, On Think Tanks and Transparify). We are disclosing all donations of more than \$5,000 per year on our website, and which policy departments or operations those donations are meant to support (if any). This list includes all donations that contribute to our current operating budget and will be updated on our website as new donations arrive. Exceptions are made for those donors who wish to remain anonymous.

There are good reasons for donor transparency. Think tanks' reputations are gradually degrading due to suspicions that they are deliberate lobbying operations for corporate interests. And those suspicions are not always unwarranted. Related concerns about foreign governments buying think tank influence are also rising. With the increasing unease about foreign money flooding the U.S. political system — money that may serve as a means of political entry for foreign governments — transparency is in the public interest.

A lack of transparency also suggests that a think tank might have something to hide. We don't.

Obviously, donors who give to the Niskanen Center do so because they agree with what we stand for, what we're arguing in the policy arena, and how well we're advancing our case. While transparency does not necessarily extinguish suspicions that a think tank is taking position X because of money from donors A or B, it is certainly the case that transactional relationships are easier to execute without financial transparency. And if you've been following the Niskanen Center and its staff members for a while, you'll probably have a hard time believing that our opinions can be bought.

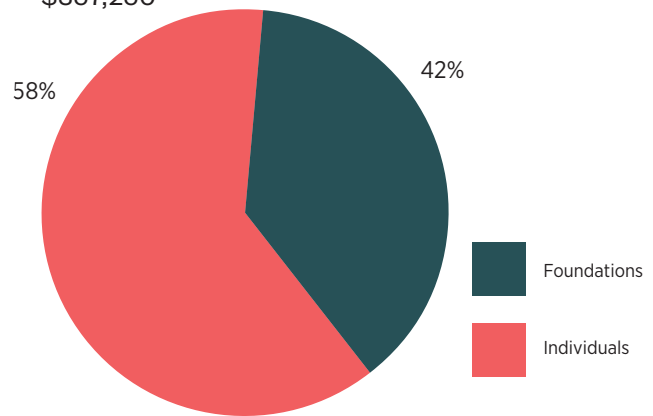
The Niskanen Center is proud to be associated with the individuals and foundations that provide the financial resources necessary for us to do our work. We invite you to join them.

“If the Republican Party is to have a future, it will be heavily informed by the work of Niskanen policy scholars.”

TREVOR POTTER
President & founder of Campaign Legal Center

NISKANEN CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY 2019 REVENUE

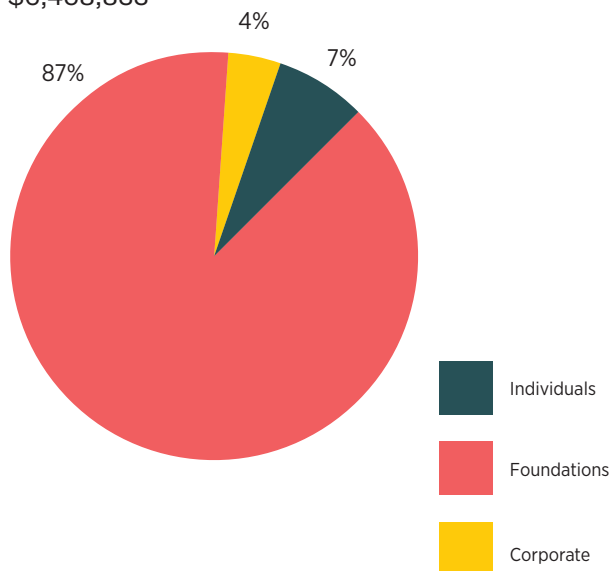
Total Revenue:
\$357,250



The Niskanen Center for Public Policy is an affiliated 501(c)(4) organization that engages in even more direct political action to advance our agenda.

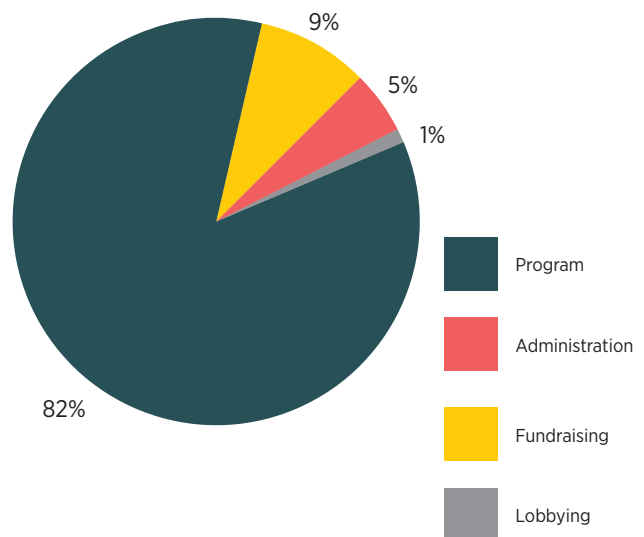
NISKANEN CENTER 2019 REVENUE SOURCES

Total Revenue:
\$6,458,833



NISKANEN CENTER 2019 EXPENSES

Total Expenses:
\$4,421,324



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“In a hyper-polarized time, the Niskanen Center has shown intellectual independence, respect for empirical data and a devotion to reason. May their tribe increase!”

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