



Providing solutions to the most daunting challenges

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

NISKANEN
C E N T E R

President's Letter

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I admired the Niskanen Center's work long before becoming its President. I was intrigued by its consistent ability to transcend ideological tribalism and the false choices perpetuated by partisan battles, and instead offer creative and practical policy ideas that recognized that an innovative economy and an effective government can work together to improve opportunity, prosperity, and human flourishing.

This drew me to the Niskanen Center as an outsider; now, after a little over a year as Niskanen's President, I am consistently impressed by the creativity, curiosity of spirit, and underlying optimism woven through our work. It is a dynamic and vibrant place, brimming with ideas and collaboration, and fundamentally adaptive and responsive to new information, ever-evolving technological advancements, and shifting political landscapes.

As President, I am dedicated to moving the institution forward with intentionality and an unwavering focus on policy impact. With that in mind, I have guided the team in establishing a strategy that achieves our vision, further solidifying Niskanen's position as an indispensable hub of ideas and action.

This strategy integrates theory, policy, and practice. Theory—supported by research findings—is where we formulate and articulate our vision for society, markets, and government. This lays a foundation for us to develop policy: ideas for specific government actions to advance prosperity, opportunity, and human flourishing. Practice constitutes our efforts to build political coalitions and enact our policies through the three branches of government. Each component of our strategy is self-reinforcing—that is, our theory informs and is informed by our practice.



The 2023 annual report demonstrates this strategy's effectiveness in achieving our vision of advancing opportunity, prosperity, and human flourishing, and upholding the principles of a pluralistic and open society that encourages engagement, cooperation, discussion, and learning. It showcases the work through which we have earned our reputation as a vanguard of unorthodox ideas and intellectual integrity, directly resulting in our outsized influence.

I believe that a healthy and effective institution is one with a clear vision and a strategy for achieving that vision." I hope you will read on to see the tangible results in the following pages.

Wishing you all the best,

TED GAYER

President
Niskanen Center

Chairman's Letter

As Chairman of the Board, I am attuned to the fact that achieving ever-higher performance and subsequent impact is our responsibility to you, our supporters, whose generosity and commitment make our work possible. It is your support that fortifies us so that we are best prepared to scale what often seem like insurmountable challenges.

When I penned my 2022 annual letter, I noted that the Niskanen Center was in the midst of perhaps the most pivotal moment since its founding in early 2015, marked by Ted Gayer's new tenure as President. Also in that letter—and all the preceding annual letters—I had made a point of underscoring how far the organization has evolved from a scrappy ideological oddity to the established, respected, and impactful organization it is today. That context is no longer required when articulating our reach and influence.

Time magazine's March profile of the Niskanen Center proclaimed it "the most interesting think tank in American politics." Each of the attributes that make Niskanen singular—from its ability to "[cook] up unconventional proposals to address intractable problems", to the dexterity with which it works "outside, or between, the partisan silos in which most D.C. advocates are enmeshed",—are neatly encapsulated. The takeaway from the article is that Niskanen stands apart from its peers thanks to its vision, mission, and influence—and that U.S. society is all the better for it.

Needless to say, we agree.

These successes developed and flourished under Ted Gayer's pragmatic and collaborative guidance. He is clearly articulating Niskanen's vision, the strategies with which this vision can become a reality, and the importance of each and every Niskanen staff member understanding and working towards realizing these common goals. Clarity of

purpose has become a hallmark of Ted's leadership. He did not merely assume a comfortable mantle and signal "business as usual" to an already effective operation. Rather, he challenges the staff to assiduously identify and articulate, "What we are trying to accomplish? What does success mean to us?"

The remarkable work produced by Niskanen staffers this past year underscores our success. Our prolific output and relationship-building are steering us to critical legislative successes and long-term strategic partnerships.

The immigration department's research and advocacy in popularizing private refugee sponsorship policy was instrumental in launching the Welcome Corps. This initiative will bolster the U.S. refugee resettlement program by creating a complementary private sponsorship program.

Our tireless criminal justice efforts culminated in the development and advancement of crucial legislation—most notably the VICTIM Act and the SOBER Act, which received strong bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.

The social policy team, helmed by its new director Joshua McCabe, successfully tackled a bevy of ambitious initiatives, ranging from supporting state efforts to expand their refundable child tax credits to developing a clear vision for reforming our broken unemployment insurance program to further elevating its housing policy niche through its widely-circulated "An Agenda for Abundant Housing" paper.

The climate department also maintained its coveted position at the forefront of national and international policy discourse through a series of high-profile initiatives and engagements. From Ted's testimony on fossil fuels to the Senate Budget Committee to the team's expertise in developing the bicameral BIG WIRES Act, our work continues to make inroads into the most consequential climate policy conversations. This year we were also excited to welcome our new director of climate policy, Kasey White.

Our governance work has long been woven through Niskanen's vision and work. This year, it was formalized under



the banner of the newly launched Governance program led by Soren Dayton. Between his Congressional testimony on the National Emergencies Act in May and his incisive commentary on the House speakership (which was featured in the Washington Post), our governance program made an immediate impact.

I encourage you to read on and learn about the Niskanen Center's many hard-won achievements this past year. As Chairman of the board, a financial supporter, and an admirer, I hope you join us at our upcoming events, sign up for our newsletters, and get to know who we are, what we do, and why we are worthy of your attention and support. Without you by our side, none of our work would be possible. We hope you continue alongside us on what has been an enriching, exhilarating journey.

BOB LITTERMAN

Chairman, Niskanen Center

Chairman, Risk Committee, Kepos Capital

Niskanen Board of Directors

DANIEL DREZNER

Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University

JULEANNA GLOVER

Ridgely Walsh

ROBERT LITTERMAN

Kepos Capital

R.J. LYMAN

ML Strategies

HON. CLAUDINE SCHNEIDER

Claudine Inc.

JOHN WOLTHUIS

Twilio

About the Niskanen Center

The Niskanen Center is a nonprofit public policy organization dedicated to strengthening liberal democratic governance and promoting widespread prosperity, opportunity, and human flourishing. Our vision of market liberalism is rooted in an effective public sector and a competitive private sector and is committed to upholding the principles of a pluralistic and open society that encourages engagement, cooperation, discussion, and learning.

Our policy agenda and advocacy are committed to equality, freedom, progress, and justice. We don't elevate one of these considerations above the others but recognize that they cannot all be fully realized simultaneously in every policy context. Simple, principled answers to policy problems are often elusive, and ethically difficult trade-offs are necessary. These compromises should be transparently weighed and considered on a case-by-case basis.

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 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. The transpartisanship we seek is not a synonym for moral relativism or political timidity; it is a fearless, non-conformist creed that emphasizes empiricism and places the republic's health above party or cause.

Climate

With climate and energy at the forefront of national and international policy agendas, Niskanen's expertise remains central to these crucial discussions.

In May, the Senate Budget Committee sought Niskanen President Ted Gayer's insight at a hearing titled, "Who Pays the Price: The Real Cost of Fossil Fuels." Gayer testified that fossil fuel subsidies hinder efforts to reduce carbon emissions and that a border-adjusted carbon tax to create market incentives to account for the costs of energy use is a better approach.

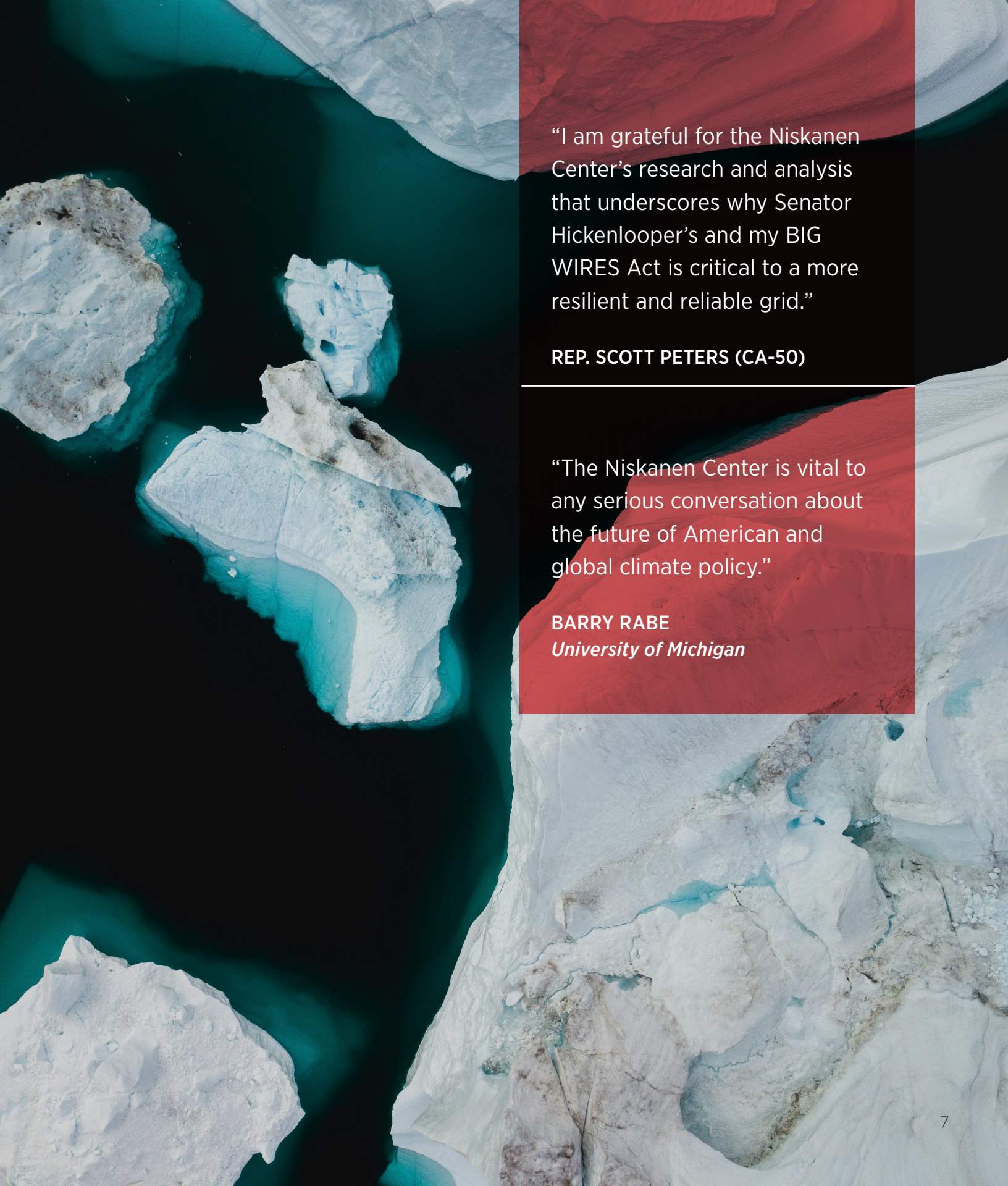
His testimony is also a high-profile showcase for the climate team's prolific work in building support for an economy-wide, border-adjusted carbon tax in the U.S. For example, a recent research paper examines how the American economy's industry-level carbon-intensity performance compares to that of global peers and competitors. The report finds the U.S. occupying a space squarely in the middle, despite claims hailing it as the global leader. The team granted Time magazine exclusive advance access to these pivotal findings, which were subsequently featured in an article highlighting the implications of Niskanen's analysis.

Expanding transmission infrastructure to achieve a robust grid is another long-term, multifaceted endeavor. Niskanen Center analysis uncovered one aspect of grid reform that could provide immediate benefits and lay a foundation for the future grid: addressing the lack of interregional transfer capability across the U.S. The team's research helped visualize the need for increased interregional transmission, demonstrating that a power grid with strong transfer capacity would be more reliable, cost-effective, and resilient in extreme weather.

We also continue to work closely with Congress and federal agencies to move our research to action. For example, Niskanen endorsed bicameral legislation, The Building Integrated Grids With Inter-Regional Energy Supply (BIG WIRES) Act, to improve interconnectivity between regional electric grids. BIG WIRES, introduced by Senator John Hickenlooper (D-CO) and Representative Scott Peters (D-CA), designates a minimum electricity transfer capacity between regions, paving the way for increased efficiency and reliability in power market operations. We also continue to provide expertise and insight to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Department of Energy as they implement new federal transmission siting authority established in the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

The climate team's expertise remains a central fixture in the most influential news outlets, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Atlantic, Time, Bloomberg, Politico, Axios, E&E News, Utility Dive, and InsideClimate Newsreaching the most prominent experts, policymakers, journalists, and stakeholders and cementing Niskanen's place at the center of climate policy discourse.

After a year rife with increasingly fraught climate-related disasters, addressing climate change is more urgent than ever. The Niskanen climate team's proven expertise in developing solutions that can effectively and reliably decarbonize the economy and bring seemingly abstract ideas to fruition will remain critical in moving policymakers ahead to solutions.

An aerial photograph of several icebergs floating in dark teal water. The icebergs are white and blue, with some showing signs of melting and cracking. The water is a deep, dark teal color. The icebergs are scattered across the frame, with some larger and more prominent than others.

“I am grateful for the Niskanen Center’s research and analysis that underscores why Senator Hickenlooper’s and my BIG WIRES Act is critical to a more resilient and reliable grid.”

REP. SCOTT PETERS (CA-50)

“The Niskanen Center is vital to any serious conversation about the future of American and global climate policy.”

BARRY RABE
University of Michigan

Criminal Justice



With crime and public safety remaining critical issues nationwide, criminal justice will play a pivotal role in the 2024 elections. As such, state and federal lawmakers are eager to implement effective, efficient, evidence-based public policies. Niskanen's criminal justice department is committed to answering the call. In the program's second year, the team took significant steps toward its goal of a criminal justice system rooted in liberalism and guided by evidence.

Niskanen continued to work closely with members of Congress in both parties to develop and advance crucial legislation. The VICTIM Act, which would provide grants to hire, train, and retain detectives and victim services personnel to investigate shootings, was reintroduced in both the House and the Senate with bipartisan support. The SOBER Act, which would help expand "24/7 Sobriety" programs nationwide, was also reintroduced in the House and Senate with strong bipartisan support. Finally, the team worked to fund and adequately implement the Law Enforcement De-escalation and Training Act, which passed Congress last year. Additional federal legislation is expected in early 2024.

This year, Niskanen continued to publish impactful papers and commentaries that resonated with lawmakers

"The SOBER Act offers a more effective way to combat alcohol-related offenses and save lives. The Niskanen Center's expertise and support has led to commonsense legislation that empowers states and individuals to address the root cause of the issue."

REP. DUSTY JOHNSON (R-SD)

and other stakeholders, including a policy brief advocating for the permanent expansion of a successful federal home-confinement program. Niskanen also worked with the American Academy of Political & Social Science to develop summary essays of 14 original papers related to gun violence prevention. The Niskanen criminal justice and legal departments also joined forces to file an amicus brief on behalf of a defendant in a voting fraud case in Florida.

Other timely topics the criminal justice department wrote about this year include law enforcement de-escalation, focused deterrence and community violence intervention, and how investments in civic goods can reduce crime and violence. The team also published several op-eds, including a compelling framework for ending the opioid epidemic.

The criminal justice team remains committed to developing and advancing our vision of a just, legitimate, effective, and efficient criminal justice system. It continues to build and promote a bold criminal justice policy agenda to prevent violence; minimize crime and substance abuse; deliver sanctions swiftly, predictably, and humanely; and ensure successful rehabilitation.

Against a backdrop of a consistently fraught political climate and the increasing urgency of crime as a national issue, Niskanen's criminal justice work is vital. We helped shape the national conversation around criminal justice, which earned us more new champions for our vision. The criminal justice department's goal for 2023 was to continue moving forward while building a strong foundation for the future. We can confidently assert that we achieved this goal, and we look forward to building on our success and capitalizing on our momentum for an even more consequential 2024.

“Partnering with the Niskanen Center has been critical in our efforts to advance the VICTIM Act, legislation that provides law enforcement agencies with the tools necessary to keep our communities safe and ensure victims and their families are supported in the wake of a violent crime. Their expertise supports lawmakers on both sides of the aisle as we develop and enact policies to make our country safer and more just for all.”

SEN. CORY BOOKER (D-NJ)

“The Niskanen Center has an excellent reputation as an organization that is dedicated to evidence-based criminal justice reform.”

ANTHONY BRAGA
University of Pennsylvania

Governance

Niskanen has always been centrally concerned with how well our democratic institutions are governed. This year, we expanded our contributions in this area with the launch of our new governance program, helmed by Soren Dayton.

The program ultimately aims to increase our collective capacity for self-government. The initial focus is twofold: at the federal level, the continuation and expansion of Niskanen's work on reforms to the national emergency system. At the state level, we aim to increase confidence in election administration by speeding up the counting of election results.

One of our most high-profile initiatives under the new Governance banner is Niskanen's work to get national emergency reform passed in the 118th Congress likely the last issue of the post-Trump institutional reform agenda with a significant chance of passing.

The National Emergencies Act (NEA) was passed in 1976, allowing the president to take necessary actions and ensures Congressional involvement and decision-making over authorities that presidents claimed. That balance was altered in 1983 by the Supreme Court's decision *INS v. Chadha*. The decision invalidated Congress's primary tool

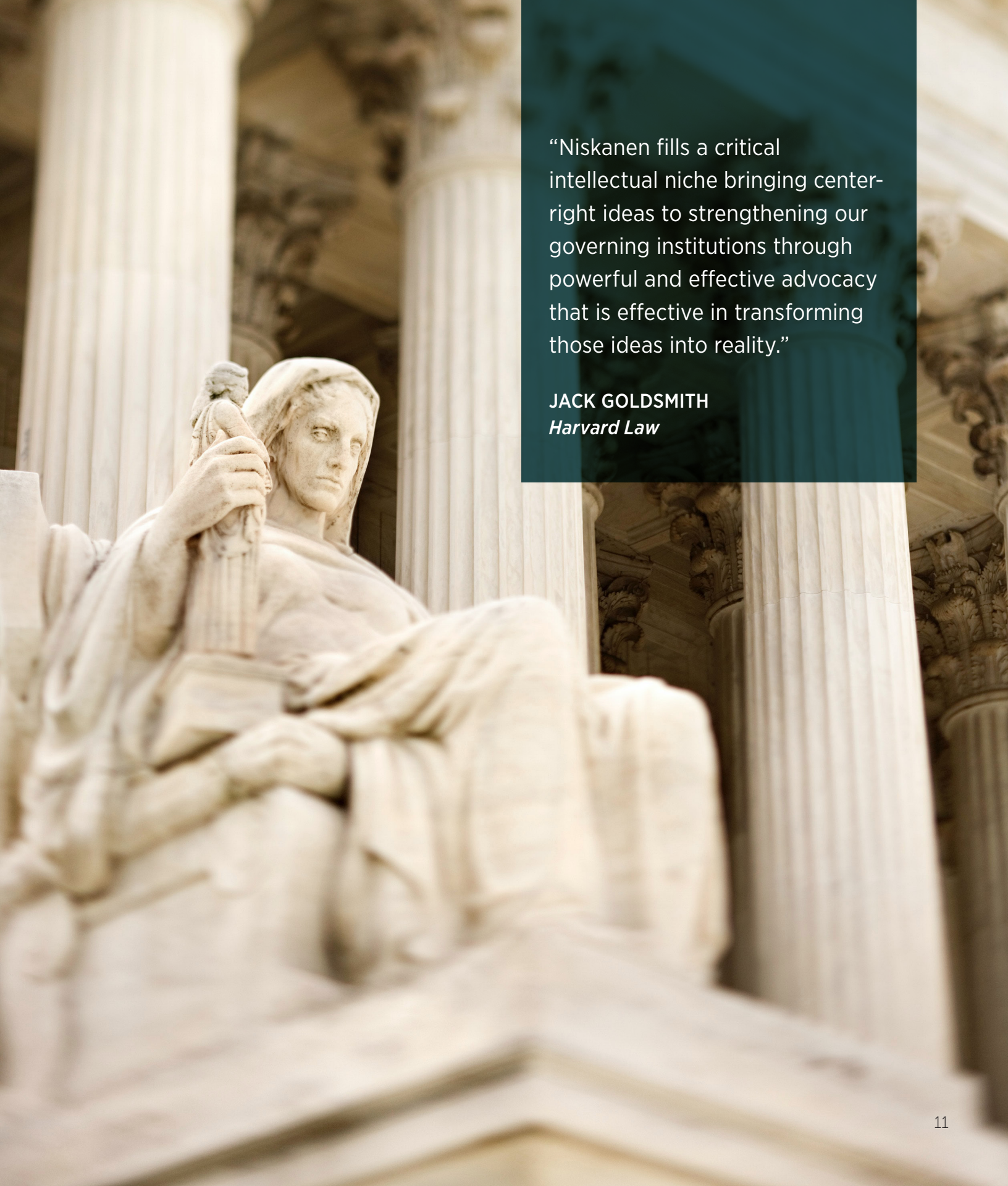
under the NEA. Niskanen's work focuses on building a new balance appropriate to today.

In May 2023, Dayton testified on this issue at a hearing of a subcommittee of the U.S. House's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. The hearing concerned "never ending emergencies", and the need to reform the national emergency system in the U.S. Dayton's testimony described how Congress established a clear framework in the 1970s to give presidents the power to act in cases of emergencies but also ensured that Congress could be a restraint and check that power.

Also in May, Dayton testified in a hearing of the Nevada Assembly in favor of a bill that would have allowed the state to "pre-canvass" early voting ballots, treating them the same as mail ballots and reducing the work that election administrators have to do on Election Day.

Niskanen has identified other states that could make similar reforms before the 2024 election a key focus for the governance department in the upcoming year and beyond at the state and federal levels.

Also at the state level, Niskanen is coordinating a group of center-right think tanks and advocacy organizations to identify ways states can take action to increase confidence in election results. In many cases, these reforms will allow election administrators to tally results more quickly and accurately so more are counted by the end of Election Day. Often, this depends on how mail ballots are handled. If Republican elected officials have confidence in the voting systems and take deliberate actions to increase confidence, they will improve overall trust in the voting systems among Republican voters.

A photograph of a classical building's interior, featuring a large, seated marble statue of Lady Justice. She is blindfolded and holds a scale of justice in her right hand. The background shows tall, fluted columns and ornate architectural details. A dark teal rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

“Niskanen fills a critical intellectual niche bringing center-right ideas to strengthening our governing institutions through powerful and effective advocacy that is effective in transforming those ideas into reality.”

JACK GOLDSMITH
Harvard Law



Immigration


Years of work have culminated in an incredibly successful year for Niskanen's immigration department. The team informed and influenced many of the Biden administration's key initiatives and new policy programs, underscoring that creativity, innovation, and consistent engagement are vital to becoming a leader in immigration policy.

The administration's launch of the Welcome Corps this year is directly linked to Niskanen's work popularizing private refugee sponsorship policy that began in 2015. Welcome Corps is a transformational initiative that will bolster the existing U.S. refugee resettlement program by creating a complementary private sponsorship program that allows Americans to sponsor certain refugees. Niskanen co-hosted an event marking the program's launch with the American Enterprise Institute featuring Assistant Secretary of State Julieta Valls Noyes and other key governmental leaders. Director of Immigration Kristie De Peña also co-wrote a widely circulated New York Times op-ed calling for increased resettlement efforts and more coordinated state involvement. In 2024 and beyond, we will continue promoting refugee resettlement efforts and private sponsorship by providing strategic and policy guidance.

To address the second-largest displacement crisis in the world, the Biden administration launched an expansion of the Venezuela parole program by adding Haiti, Cuba, and Nicaragua. Niskanen was proud to be an architect of the Venezuelan program — we were the first policy group to propose the idea of parole for Venezuelans. We launched the initial lobbying effort that resulted in 40+ Venezuelan-American groups urging Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to act on the Niskanen proposal. Despite pending litigation, expanding the parole program reduced border crossings, helped countless migrants, and demonstrated the need for more legal pathways into the U.S. outside of asylum — an evident policy success.

The administration also announced its Safe Mobility Office (SMO) initiative to provide physical and digital infrastructure in the Western Hemisphere to screen, process, and refer migrants for protection and non-protection (labor) pathways. For many years, Niskanen has touted the need for this kind of infrastructure to build the flexible, responsive apparatus necessary to respond to changing migration needs. The ambitious initiative is in its infancy, but Niskanen mobilized quickly to support it. We published original analyses, spoke to mainstream outlets, briefed coalition partners, and worked closely with the White House, DHS, USCIS, USAID, and international partners like UNHCR and IOM. We even sent a team member to Guatemala to visit the first office's location and provide on-the-ground observations.

We also worked tirelessly to address the labor shortcomings plaguing every U.S. industry and most Americans. A Time magazine op-ed, co-authored by De Peña, highlighted the need for more care workers, ranging from childcare to eldercare to healthcare providers. Niskanen helped spotlight the need to update the Department of Labor's Schedule A list, which offers expedited immigrant processing for sought-after professions. After publishing an influential research paper last year on the topic, we followed up this year to co-lead a Schedule A reform coalition, spear-



headed a coalition letter to Department of Labor with over 30 experts and organizations calling for an update to the list, and called attention to the issue in a letter to the editor for the Washington Post and an op-ed in The Hill. We were also instrumental in informing several critical pieces of bipartisan legislation to make the visa processing system more efficient and effective. In December, we co-led a letter to the Biden administration with 66 partner organizations and associations calling for the extension of interview waiver authorities, which have significantly reduced processing delays for international students, workers, and travelers, helping the travel economy rebound after COVID-19 and streamlining visa processing.

Even as we design solutions to meet labor demands at home, competitor countries create increasingly attractive pathways that could undermine those efforts. From artificial intelligence to semiconductors, immigrant talent is essential to many of the cutting-edge fields necessary for growth and innovation, and our competitors have designed their immigration policies accordingly. Niskanen continues to draw attention to the outsized role of immigrants in maintaining the American competitive edge and our innovative potential. We were the first to unveil new statistics quantifying the effects of Canada's talent-siphoning efforts. We repeatedly highlighted administrative and legislative actions that could prevent further "brain drain", some of which were highlighted in a Boston Globe editorial.

Niskanen laid the groundwork for the most consequential immigration proposals introduced this year from private sponsorship to parole, rebuilding the refugee resettlement structure to ambitious new initiatives like the SMOs. As the team's influence continues to grow, it will play an increasingly critical role in the debates that will determine the success of American immigration policy in both the near-and-long term.

"The Niskanen Center has been a fantastic partner for our work on immigration policy, providing expertise on a wide range of topics from the minutiae of labor market certification requirements to new programs like the Welcome Corps."

STAN VEUGER
Senior Fellow, American Enterprise Institute

"[Niskanen's] immigration team has become one of the most consequential and influential voices on this issue in recent years."

CARLOS GUEVARA
Director of Policy at the Immigration Hub

Legal

ENSURING GRID RELIABILITY, STABILITY, AND RESILIENCY

Niskanen's legal team works to establish a carefully defined governmental role in the siting and development of vital electricity transmission infrastructure without sacrificing community interests. Our approach includes robust participation in administrative rulemaking, crafting and analysis of proposed legislation, and impactful legal interventions such as amicus briefs and litigation.

Our expertise in the federal energy siting regime has made us a go-to resource for federal agencies and Congressional offices. We advised senior officials on the implementation of the bipartisan infrastructure bill's transmission siting provision, where we advocated for streamlined yet inclusive processes. Our input on the Energy Department's regulations implementing the Coordinated Interagency Transmission Authorizations and Permits Program sought to accelerate federal permitting processes by balancing efficiency with transparency, ensuring expedited reviews without sacrificing stakeholder engagement. These efforts extended to FERC's proposed rules on federal backstop siting authority for transmission projects, where we similarly advocated for efficient and effective transmission buildout processes while upholding fundamental fairness and equity in the process.

"Niskanen's legal expertise is unparalleled, and its work plays a crucial role in preventing the expansion of unnecessary fossil fuel infrastructure."

TOM GILBERT

*Co-Executive Director, New Jersey
Conservation Foundation*

Our legal team also provides critical support to developing and drafting of bills to expedite interstate transmission siting, permitting, and approval, and analyzing policies that hinder urgently needed grid development. This includes the Streamlining Interstate Transmission of Electricity (SITE) Act, which dramatically improves the process by which high-voltage interstate transmission lines are sited and built.

Our legal team is also conducting a comprehensive analysis of transmission policies relative to “Rights of First Refusal” (state sponsored monopolies that adversely impact market dynamics). Niskanen’s work in this area will serve as the bedrock for future policy advocacy to foster a competitive and efficient energy market that ensures consumer choice and affordability.

CHALLENGING A CAPTURED REGULATORY REGIME & UNNECESSARY FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

Developing unneeded fossil fuel infrastructure thwarts the clean energy transition, drives up consumer energy costs, and harms landowners and communities. FERC reviews applications to construct and operate new interstate gas pipelines under an archaic regulatory regime. FERC is supposed only to approve projects necessary to serve the public interest. Still, in recent years, it has served as a rubber stamp for approving nearly all projects, regardless of whether the infrastructure is needed. Niskanen fights approval of unnecessary gas infrastructure projects by representing landowners and organizations nationwide in the courts, administrative proceedings, and advocacy efforts.

One example of how our work challenges skewed economic incentives is our challenge to the Regional Energy Access Expansion project. After a comprehensive study of existing gas capacity, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities found there is no need for any new gas capacity in the state (where over 70% of the project’s capacity is destined). Niskanen submitted additional data and analyses to FERC that showed how the project would be subsidized and ultimately paid for by New Jersey ratepayers. Still, FERC approved the project. We are now challenging FERC’s approval in the DC Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of our clients, and our lawsuit has generated much support.

“Niskanen’s legal team is absolutely vital in our ongoing dealings with the most powerful energy company in Virginia. It fights for [landowner rights] with a level of expertise not found elsewhere.”

VIRGINIA FULLER
Impacted Landowner, West Virginia

New Jersey’s Rate Counsel, the agency responsible for protecting the interests of New Jersey ratepayers, intervened in support of our lawsuit, and eight other states filed an amicus brief in support of the challenge. If successful, this litigation will set a critical precedent requiring FERC to consider credible evidence before it on a lack of any demonstrated market need when considering approval of a project.

MAKING GOVERNMENT MORE TRANSPARENT

Our commitment to good governance, transparency, and public interest is unwavering. Our legal team learned that the developer of the (now canceled) interstate gas pipeline and LNG export facility was funding local and federal law enforcement agencies in exchange for those agencies’ surveillance of groups lawfully opposed to the proposed project. We submitted requests under the federal Freedom of Information Act to several federal agencies, including the FBI, seeking documents related to this monitoring program. When those agencies refused to respond to our request, we sued them in federal court. We successfully negotiated with the FBI and secured the release of thousands of documents revealing the industry-government nexus.

Social Policy

As the COVID-19 pandemic wound down and prospects for significant structural change diminished, the Niskanen social policy team deftly pivoted to a strategy of relentless incrementalism.

At the end of 2022, competing visions for expanding the Child Tax Credit led to a Congressional stalemate. Niskanen's family economic security analysts used this as an opportunity to redouble outreach on the various reform components of the Family Security Act 2.0. This can serve as a template for bipartisan negotiations over a smaller set of reforms that can still yield significant progress in supporting families.

This year also marked the team's first foray into supporting state efforts to expand their respective refundable child tax credits. February's "The State of Our Families" report served as the primary resource for these efforts, describing the current landscape and providing guidance to state advocates and policymakers. The paper quickly gained momentum, establishing our reputation as crucial experts with valuable insight, leading to productive collaborations with advocates and policymakers in nearly a dozen states. Early successes in Massachusetts and Maine provided a


template for future work on policy design. In linking theory, policy, and practice, Niskanen expects this state-level work to ultimately inform its federal Child Tax Credit work by making similar reforms more tenable.

Niskanen's employment analysts continued supporting efforts on Capitol Hill while preparing for the release of several significant projects. The announcement of the bipartisan, bicameral SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act was the culmination of the team's work building broad support for common sense reforms to raise the program's asset limits after four decades of decline. New efforts to help SSI reach its full anti-poverty and pro-family potential will build on this work in 2024.

The pandemic laid bare the shortcomings of America's broken unemployment insurance system. In September, we released "An Unemployment Insurance System That Works" laying out a vision for reforming the system so that it provides adequate benefits to protect families from economic shocks; administrative changes to ensure access and prevent fraud; and active labor market policies that help get breadwinners back into good-paying jobs faster. A corresponding microsite complements this report, demystifying complex unemployment insurance system issues into straightforward explanations and visuals that convey the urgency for reforms. The report and the microsite are crucial material for any policymaker, staffer, or journalist seeking concise, straightforward information on what has gone wrong with unemployment benefits and offers practical, forward-thinking proposals.

"The Niskanen Center is on my short list of sources for smart, unbiased analysis of public policy."

PETER PASSELL
Editor, Milken Institute Review



The success of the 2021 white paper “Cost Disease Socialism” and the rise of “supply-side progressivism” has catapulted Niskanen’s health and housing policy analysts into the spotlight. Their work on medical practitioner shortages and obstacles to increasing the supply of physicians continues to receive consistent, positive media coverage in outlets including the Washington Post, the Atlantic, and NPR. This coverage directly resulted in several invitations to present or write further on the topic for stakeholders and policymakers.

Niskanen’s housing analysts also released their much-anticipated white paper “An Agenda for Abundant Housing,” establishing the team’s innovative and crucial vision for housing policy. The report highlights the benefits of preemption as a method of internalizing spillovers, planning for necessary infrastructure, and increasing democratic accountability. The team quickly established itself as a trustworthy resource on Capitol Hill, providing expertise on matters ranging from Affirmative Fair Housing guidelines to modernizing rules around manufactured housing, and in state capitals, providing technical assistance to advocacy groups working nationwide to liberalize state zoning codes.

The addition of our first social policy government affairs manager and two new policy analysts will only supercharge an already powerhouse team as it builds on its success in pairing market reforms with robust income supports that undergird a free and fair economy in 2024.

“The Niskanen Center has deep expertise in social policy and is an incredibly valuable partner in supporting evidence-based policy solutions for families.”

CYNTHIA OSBORNE
*Executive Director, Prenatal-to-3
Policy Impact Center*

Communications

The Niskanen Center's steadfast and thorough work on Capitol Hill and beyond has earned an array of high-profile accolades in the eight years since its founding, culminating this year into arguably the most resounding prominent endorsement of our vision: a nuanced, thoughtful profile by acclaimed political journalist Molly Ball for Time Magazine.

Ball spent several weeks getting to know Niskanen staff and interviewing influential individuals familiar with the organization, who spoke glowingly of our work. The profile's takeaway is aptly encapsulated in the title: that the Niskanen Center is "The Most Interesting Think Tank In American Politics."

Niskanen's accelerated media imprint in 2023 underscored Ball's conclusion. From widely-cited and circulated New York Times op-eds to Washington Post letters to the editor to citations of our data analysis on prime-time CNBC, Niskanen's work maintained and expanded its prominence within the most influential media channels.

Among the many outlets that cited Niskanen's work or quoted its experts in 2023 are The Washington Post, The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, The

Atlantic, the Economist, the Associated Press, and Reuters. Niskanen also maintained its formidable presence in key D.C.-based publications, including Politico, Roll Call, Axios, and The Hill.

Niskanen Center policy experts also reaffirmed their robust presence in the opinion pages of many prominent publications, with op-eds published in outlets including The New York Times, The Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, Time, and Politico.

Niskanen also maintained high visibility in some of the most viewed and listened to podcasts, radio, and television outlets, with appearances on NPR, Bloomberg, MSNBC, CNBC, CBS, and France24, among others.

Niskanen's influence and timely work continue to be highlighted by prominent journalists, columnists, and academics who endorse our work in their widely read pieces. These include Jamelle Bouie, Ezra Klein, Catherine Rampell, Thomas Edsall, Greg Sargent, and Jonathan Capehart.

"Niskanen played a role in many of last year's bipartisan successes and has gotten traction with proposals on climate, immigration, and criminal justice."

MOLLY BALL
writing for Time Magazine

SOCIAL MEDIA

Despite a turbulent year thanks to Elon Musk's rapid-fire changes to X (formerly Twitter), we maintained a robust online presence, attracting an impressive roster of followers including the Atlantic's Jennifer Senior, the Washington Post's Ishaan Tharoor, NYT bestselling author and columnist Connie Schultz, and the New York Times' David Gelles. Our digital and social media footprint continued to support and amplify our relationships with journalists, policymakers, academics, and thought leaders. Two examples stand out:

- Last December, we published a piece arguing that both the left and right had blind spots in addressing America's violence problem. Our social media promotion around the report caught the attention of Megan McArdle (Washington Post), Thomas Abt (Violence Reduction Center), Howard Pollack (University of Chicago), and other prominent voices in the criminal justice space.
- In March, we released new research showing that from 2017 to 2021 Canada had attracted 45,000 U.S.-trained graduates with a newly developed high-skill visa program. Our social media activity brought awareness to how the U.S. was falling behind in the global race for talent - driving media attention to the problem and helping to spark conversation around the paradigm shift needed if the U.S. wants to retain its place as a leading global innovator.

Our Facebook presence has enjoyed steady growth in followers over the past year and our Instagram account grew by about 10% to 2,500 followers (many of whom are in the public policy and media spaces). Our Instagram engagement rate remained steady at about 5%, more than double that of nonprofits' average engagement.

This year, web traffic was up almost 20% at over 1 million page views, thanks to high-quality social media interactions and increased efforts to rank for keywords relating to our issues. This year, if an individual searched for "data reform," "prove it act" "state capacity," and other timely topics on Google, our work was easily found.



The
Guardian



The
Atlantic

POLITICO

NEW YORK

The New York Times

NATIONAL
REVIEW

AP

Bloomberg



The Washington Post



TIME

Podcasts



Niskanen's first biweekly podcast, "The Science of Politics" — hosted by political scientist and senior fellow Matt Grossmann — celebrated its sixth year of helping listeners make sense of the ever-evolving terrain of American politics.

Over the past six years, "The Science of Politics" has featured political scientists delivering new research about major trends influencing American politics and policy. The podcast is a crucial and recognized bridge between academia and political elites, illuminating the dynamics of democratic policymaking and providing a data-driven understanding of the political landscape upon which the struggle between open and closed societies is fought.

Niskanen's second biweekly podcast, "The Vital Center," hosted by Vice President of political studies Geoffrey Kabaservice, celebrated its third year. Featuring an array of accomplished guests—including economic historian Brad DeLong, The Atlantic's Ronald Brownstein, Brookings' Melissa Kearney, and author of *ReCoding America* Jennifer Pahlka—the podcast highlights current academic scholarship, political literature, and the Niskanen Center and other nonpartisan institutions' political initiatives.

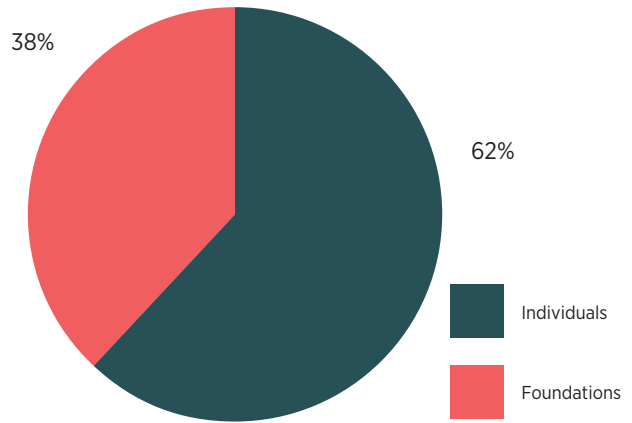




Financials

NISKANEN CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY 2022 REVENUE

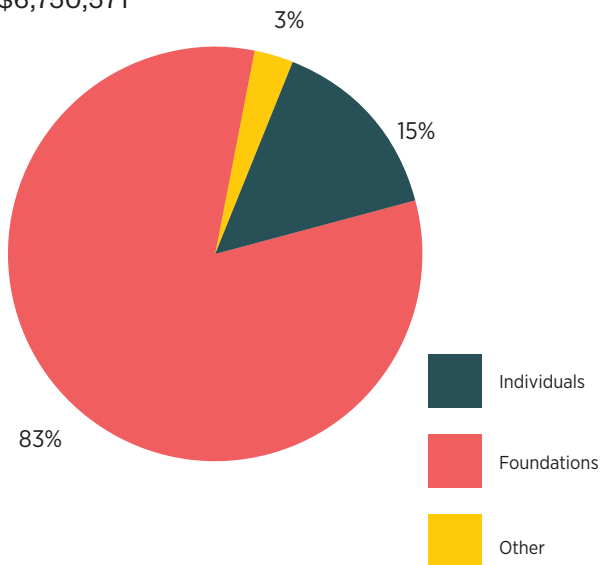
Total Revenue:
\$325,000



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.

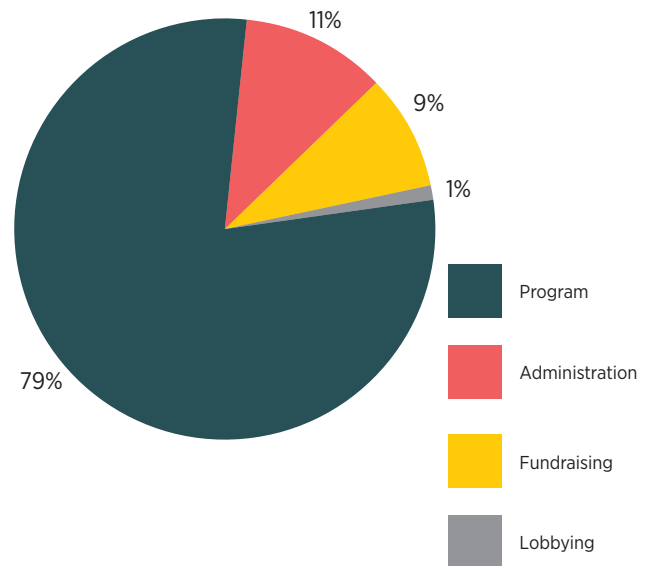
NISKANEN CENTER 2022 REVENUE SOURCES

Total Revenue:
\$6,750,571



NISKANEN CENTER 2022 EXPENSES

Total Expenses:
\$7,598,252





Call to Action

Niskanen recognizes the colossal challenges the 21st century poses and provides an alternative vision at a time when political and social dysfunction threatens to tear apart the fabric of our nation — and our democracy. We acknowledge the worthy concerns of the disparate political camps in America, dispensing with the antiquated notion that we must choose from an ideological dichotomy of the left and the right.

Instead, the Niskanen Center embraces the essential philosophies of each:

- Protecting civil liberties and defending pluralism;
- Realizing social justice and reducing economic inequality; and
- Promoting economic growth and bolstering innovation.

We appreciate the complexities and tradeoffs inherent in large-scale policy reform and eschew the tribalism that often accompanies the pursuit of singularly focused ideological priorities.



Politics is the art of the possible, but Niskanen renounces the notion that what is possible must be an uninspired, split-the-difference approach to reform. Our animating political philosophy unites unexpected bedfellows, overturns old-fashioned notions of “left” and “right” ideas, and lays the groundwork for a future for those exhausted by the illiberal zealotry on display in American politics today.

Niskanen’s ambitions are lofty — but so are the nation’s challenges. With your support, we hope to continue to animate a new vision for America that meets our growing needs in these turbulent times.

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