

THE DEATH TAX | By driving out wealthy citizens, it results in a loss of net revenue for the state's coffers.

THINKING MINNESOTA

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The Vanishing Minnesota Worker

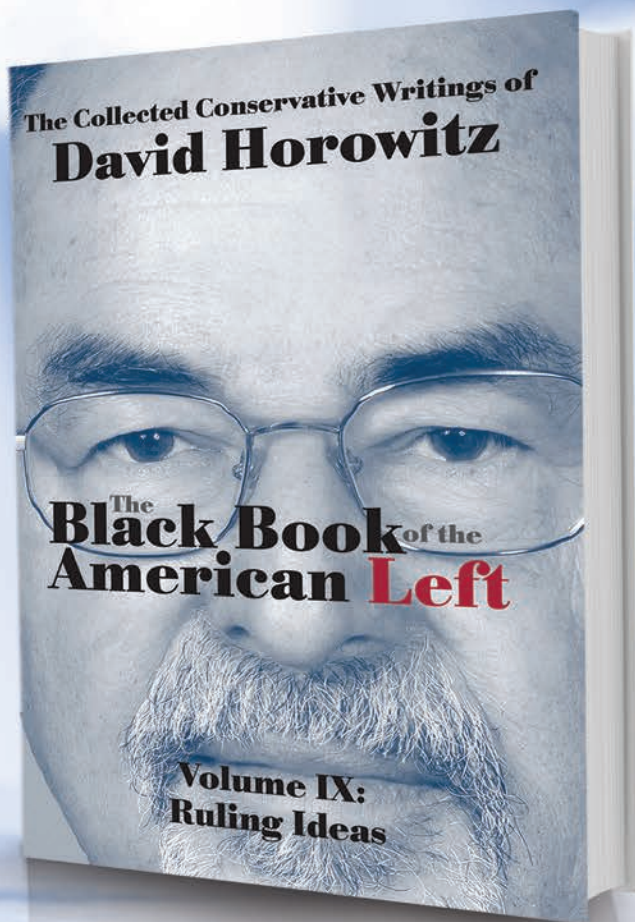
As Boomers retire, the number of unfilled jobs in Minnesota is expected to explode from **60,000 to as much as 280,000** in just five years.

Katherine Kersten explains why it's time to hit reset on 'vocational' education.



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THE VANISHING MINNESOTA WORKER

As Boomers retire, the number of unfilled jobs in Minnesota is expected to explode from 60,000 to as much as 280,000 in just five years.



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STAFF

John Hinderaker
President

Mitch Pearlstein
Founder and American
Experiment Senior Fellow

Kim Crockett
Vice President and Senior Policy Fellow

Katherine Kersten
Senior Policy Fellow

John Phelan
Economist

Catrin Thorman
Policy Fellow

Isaac Orr
Policy Fellow

Tom Steward
Communications Director

Kristen Sheehan
Development Director

Pari Cariaga
Donor Relations & Events Coordinator

Peter Zeller
Director of Operations

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Tom Mason
Publisher & Editor

Scott Buchschacher
Creative Director



NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

GEORGE PEPPARD WOULD BE PROUD

This is not your grandpa's think tank.

A recent five-day flurry of activity from Center of the American Experiment put me in mind of *The A-Team*, the old '80s TV show. More on that in a minute.

Let's start on Thursday, when a SRO crowd of more than 200 people attended our quarterly speaker series at the Minneapolis Hilton to hear economist Stephen Moore's impressive riff on the remarkable—and remarkably unreported—turnaround in the U.S. economy. Moore has been an outside adviser to President Donald Trump since the days of the campaign. We all know about the overall rise in stock prices, but Moore also showed how the country's current 3-plus percent economic growth can provide an elixir to a long menu of society's needs. He described the ongoing benefits of America's oil boom; the benefits of

the tax cut; the unmistakable growth in manufacturing, mining and construction; surging employment among blacks and Latinos; escalating growth in consumer confidence and small business optimism, and declining inflation. John Hinderaker, our president, sat down with Steve later that day to conduct the Q&A interview "The Triumph of Trumponomics" that begins on page 42.

The next day Hinderaker took off

for Washington, D.C., to represent the Center at CPAC, the massive annual weekend gathering of conservative activists and elected officials, sponsored by the American Conservative Union. The Center hosted its first-ever booth in CPAC's exhibitor hall that featured some of our research products plus copies of our magazine. He used part of his Friday to guest-host Laura Ingraham's nationally syndicated daily radio program, something he does frequently from a remote studio in the Twin Cities. This was his first opportunity to work from Ingraham's home studio.

On the following Monday, while Kim Crockett and Catrin Thorman were lending the Center's support for Mark Janus on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court (see sidebar nearby), Hinderaker and John Phelan, our

economist, spent two hours communicating some hard truths about Minnesota's economy to the Minnesota House Ways and Means Committee. They based their testimony on Phelan's report "The State of Minnesota's Economy: 2017—Performance Continues to be Lackluster," which noted that our GDP growth and private-sector productivity both lag the nation, and that personal

continued on page 4



Ron Eibensteiner

continued from page 3

income growth is keeping pace with the national average, but only because it's been driven by government transfer payments. You can see a video of their testimony at AmericanExperiment.org. Phelan's quiet analysis has been consistently outstanding since he joined the Center's staff last year. You'll see why when you read, "Why Minnesota Should Pull the Plug on the Death Tax" on page 36. Phelan uses economic modeling to demonstrate that Minnesota probably loses money on its arcane death tax.

That Monday night, we began phone interviews for our *Thinking Minnesota Poll*. We retained one of America's top political pollsters for the first of what will be a credible quarterly snapshot into policy issues that really matter to Minnesota's citizens. The results can be found on page 26. Hinderaker provides more detail in his column on page 48.

The long weekend of activity demonstrates the impressive evolution of Center of the American Experiment. This is not your grandpa's think tank. Under Hinderaker's leadership, American Experiment is not satisfied to merely "think big thoughts." We've recruited impressive people who are creative and are encouraged to use their research to make a difference. We never forget that we're a state-based think tank, but we're ready to help tackle national issues when they will help local communities. And we're not afraid to speak objective truth to power, even if it's unpopular.

It all puts me in mind of something actor George Peppard used to say at the conclusion of an episode of *The A-Team* (c'mon you remember the A-Team... Mr. T?) *The A-Team* chronicled the exploits of a clandestine team of special forces outlaws who would regularly perform heroic exploits on behalf of underdogs. Each week Peppard, their leader, would consider their success and say, "I love it when a plan comes together." Don't remember him? Your grandpa would. ★

➔ EDUCATED TEACHERS MN

Thorman and Crockett travelled to D.C. to support Mark Janus.

Up next: A project to 'inform and empower' newly liberated teachers.

American Experiment's Policy Fellow Catrin Thorman spoke on behalf of Mark Janus in late February on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court, as the justices heard oral arguments in *Janus v. AFSCME*, the case that might free public employees from paying mandatory dues to government unions.

"We are here today standing up for the freedom of all government employees to exercise the same rights as every other person in this country," she said, "the rights to free speech and freedom of association—rights that have been restrained for 40 years.

"Restoring these rights and giving all public employees a voice and a choice when it comes to union representation should not be a divisive issue. Government workers should be empowered to make choices for themselves, not silenced for pushing back against the status quo. Silencing these voices does not support worker freedom. It stifles it.

"The power to say NO to a union is just as important as the power to say YES to one."

Thorman joined Vice President and Senior Policy Fellow Kim Crockett in her long-time effort to bring right-to-work to public unions.

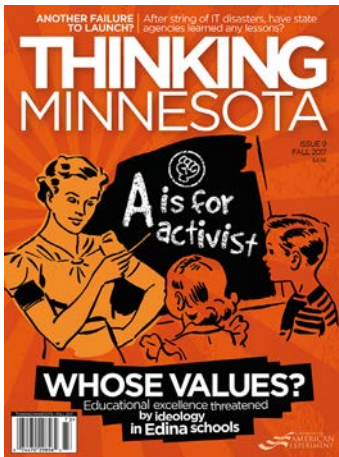
Crockett and Thorman are spearheading an aggressive new effort from American Experiment called "EducatedTeachersMN." The project will launch an information-rich website that will show teachers how their dues are being spent and, if Janus prevails, an easy way to opt out.



Catrin Thorman

Diversity

I have been wanting to tell you how much I appreciate *Thinking Minnesota* ever since I received my first issue. I at first thought it was another liberal-forced-labor-union junk publication that we fair-share union employees are continually subjected. They always get thrown away in our house. Luckily, I let it sit on the top of my desk for a couple days and



Some of the things going on in the Edina schools really hit home because of things coming from MNSCU.

actually looked into it. I was shocked to find it filled with common-sense conservatism.

I am a self-employed farmer, and I also work for a MNSCU institution teaching classes. Some of the information shared about the things going on with teachers in the Edina schools really hit home because of the things happening and coming from MNSCU. We have so many people now employed with no other things to do but research what they call “diversity” and “people of color.” At one training session we were supposed to sign up for inclusion training where some chose to apologize to people of color for

being born white. After reading about people in the Edina area standing up for themselves, I might reconsider in the future and start attending again just to be involved and stand my ground on these rewrites of history and not allow color only to be how we are judged.

I hope to see more from your organization. Please know that even though there are huge forces stacked against you, there are many, many of us who would drop our

union dues in a heartbeat and fully support your organization. I appreciate what you are doing and will share your articles, like the one about wasting tax dollars on green energy – Love that one, too!

Todd Stencel
Waseca

Journalistic Professionalism

Although I am originally from Iowa, I admire the work at Center of the Ameri-

Edina

‘FREE MARKET OF IDEAS’

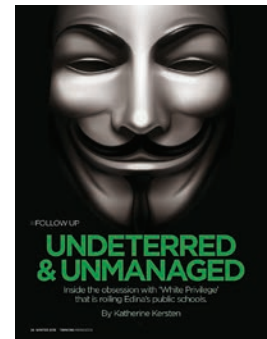
I’m a student at Edina High School. Recently, my high school has been very divided. This may not be a new issue, but it is a constant distraction from learning. Students’ views clash with the views of other students and even teachers. I believe that it’s very important to value other people’s opinions. In an education environment, I believe there should be a free-market of ideas, where people can express their views and have civilized conversations or disagreements. Unfortunately, this is not happening.

I recently saw a video on YouTube where [American Experiment President] John Hinderaker spoke about liberal indoctrination within the EPS system, and I can’t thank you enough. I know many students who feel oppressed, like their opinions aren’t valid. I hope this soon changes. I’ve had great teachers, who have respected students and allowed them to have their own opinions. Some of my peers have not had this same experience.

Some of my classes are trying to force a certain way of thinking, a certain agenda in students. Regardless of my own opinion on such matters, I think everyone is entitled to their own view on issues such as immigration, gender identity, gun control, etc. They pushed the ideas that we don’t have enough gun control, that Trump is ridiculous, that all immigrants are good, that all gender identities are valid. I understand they’re trying to create an inclusive community, and I’d rather not express my own opinions. What I do know is that many of my fellow students do not share these opinions, and they feel suppressed by the teachers, they’re made to feel as if their opinions are ridiculous.

You mentioned that anonymity was a common theme among those you spoke to. I too, would not feel comfortable expressing my opinions in school. I’m not racist, I’m not a Nazi, but my school has not created a welcoming environment for independent, libertarian, or conservative students. I just want you to know that I appreciate you speaking about the issues within my school system and I hope change happens soon.

—Name withheld by request



“I believe there should be a free-market of ideas, where people can express their views and have civilized conversations or disagreements. Unfortunately, this is not happening.”



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can Experiment. As a former journalist, I have come to appreciate Katherine Kersten's tenacity and journalistic professionalism.

Steven Schweers
Marietta, GA

A Very Big Iceberg

What Katherine Kersten has described in Edina is merely the tip of a very, very big iceberg. I have been harping for years that we conservatives need a publication in Minnesota to confront local media bias. Kudos to you all for *Thinking Minnesota*. We need some more information to combat what is out there.

David M. Schreiber, MS
Big Lake

Very Impressed

I am very impressed with the work of Katherine Kersten and frankly all of the Center, and I don't impress easily. Keep up the great work in helping us working citizens of Minnesota and the USA.

Don Hanlon
Burnsville

Shocking

Totally shocking! Keep up the good work! Can't wait to hear whether the good citizens of Edina rise up.

Marcia K. Wolf
Olympia, Washington

Half the Story

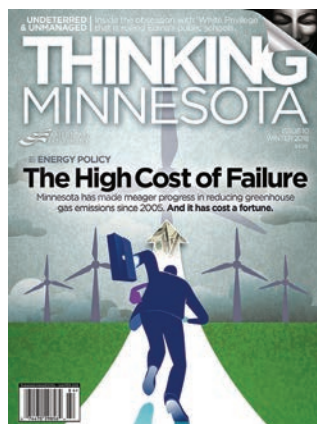
I truly appreciate *Thinking Minnesota*. I consider myself a pragmatic conservative and am offended by articles, liberal or conservative, that tell only half the story. That is my reaction to Tom Steward's article, "Subsidies Squandered: Maplewood dismantles solar project after getting \$310,000 from taxpayers and Xcel Energy ratepayers." The subtitle implies that the project was a failure but the article does not support this conclusion. The project may not have met cost-saving projections, but there was a small energy cost-saving and perhaps more

importantly, clean energy generated. The real problem with the project was the decision to install the system on a roof, not that the solar panels didn't work. I don't like subsidies in general and I'm not sold on solar, but sometimes we have to try.

Keith Lightfoot
Grand Rapids

A 'Hyperbole Heimlich'

I read *Thinking Minnesota* each quarter cover to cover. Your organization and your publication are important for the future of our state and nation. But, I was disturbed by a "Think About



This" box in the winter issue that listed corporate departures from Minnesota, which was somewhat misleading. First of all, even though company headquarters may have moved, a substantial amount of people and capital remained in Minnesota. Also, other companies have moved in or grown or been acquired by stay, offsetting the "net negative effect" of all those outbound companies. You've shown us only one side of the story and even misled us a bit with the implication that whole businesses have moved. Give me the facts. Don't try to lead my thinking in any direction. We're choking on hyperbole out here. Give us a place we can go for a hyperbole Heimlich.

John Christoffel
Coon Rapids

Events

'The Future Can't Wait'

Industry expert to headline American Experiment forum about the future of jobs.

Kyle Hartung, an expert in workforce preparedness will headline an event, "The Future Can't Wait," 7:30-9 a.m., Tuesday, April 24th at the DoubleTree by Hilton Minneapolis-Park Place, located on 1500 Park Place Boulevard in Minneapolis.

Hartung is director of Boston-based Pathways to Prosperity at Jobs for the Future. His work focuses on creating public/private partnerships and policies that help young people transition into the labor market. A Harvard Ph.D., Hartung has 20



years of experience in career readiness.

His presentation is titled "The Future Can't Wait: The Imperative of Industry/Education Partnerships to Meet the Needs of the Future Workforce." He will describe the vision behind the dual-training, work-based learning approach to building the talent pipeline and highlight successful examples around the nation of where these innovative initiatives are actually moving the needle on workforce development.

Tickets cost \$25. Register at AmericanExperiment.org. ★



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For 27 years, Center of the American Experiment has been Minnesota's leading voice on behalf of freedom and conservative common sense. Most often, that voice has been that of Center staff and Senior Policy Fellows.

Sometimes, it has been that of honored guests and world leaders such as Bill Bennett, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Charles Krauthammer, George Will, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Margaret Thatcher.

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UP FRONT

Energy

RESIDENTS REVOLT

National media report the growing backlash against gigantic wind farms in Freeborn County.

The media finally appear to be picking up on the growing backlash against the proliferation of gigantic wind turbines over huge swaths of farmland. A national AP story recently focused on the fierce opposition to a proposed wind farm in Freeborn County in southern Minnesota.

But when a developer sought to put up

Much of the opposition is centered in the Midwest, which has the greatest concentration of turbines.

dozens more of the 400-foot towers in southern Minnesota, hundreds of people in the heart of wind country didn't celebrate. They fought back, going door-to-door to alert neighbors and circulating petitions to try to kill the project. They packed county board meetings, hired a lawyer and pleaded their case before state commissions.

The criticism has worked so far, stalling the development. Although opposition to wind power is nothing new, the residents of Freeborn County are part of a newly invigorated rebellion against the tall turbines. These energized opponents have given fresh momentum to a host of anti-wind ideas and successfully halted projects across the country.

American Experiment has helped lead the battle to inform Minnesotans

about the enormous costs and paltry results since the state imposed a renewable energy mandate a decade ago. The Center's report, *Minnesota Energy Policy: The High Cost of Failure*, revealed at least \$15 billion in Minnesota has been squandered on wind turbines and transmission lines without achieving environmentalists' goal of significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In fact, Minnesotans spent more than the national average on their power bills for the first time in 2017, wiping out what used to be an 18 to 20 percent price advantage before the imposition of green energy mandates.

Much of the opposition is centered in the Midwest, which has the nation's greatest concentration of turbines. Oppo-

nents have banded together to block wind projects in at least half a dozen states, including Nebraska, South Dakota, Indiana and Michigan. Disputes are still being waged in Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois and Maryland. Intense opposition also exists in parts of the Northeast, including Maine, New York and Vermont.

For many critics, their opposition starts with a simple disdain for the metal towers that support blades half the length of a football field. They want the views from their kitchen window or deck to be of farmland or hills, not giant wind-harnessing machinery.

Others claim the turbines make them dizzy, irritable and unable to sleep. The whooshing noise and vibration from the blades, they say, forces them to close windows and blinds and use white noise to mask the mechanical sounds.

Still other homeowners fear for their property values, as fewer people will want to buy a home overlooking a wind farm. ★

—Tom Steward



Center of the American Experiment has also placed billboards in the area and launched a statewide radio campaign to highlight the results of its report. The radio ad notes that Minnesotans' cash is "gone with the wind" and that "frankly, my dear, they (the environmental and corporate special interests behind the costly mandate) don't give a damn."

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UPFRONT

Economic Development? Or Government Waste?

The Legislative Auditor criticizes DEED's fund for failure to show results.

Just one line from the Legislative Auditor's recent critical evaluation of the Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF) tells you everything you need to know about the taxpayer-funded program.

"The MIF program's impacts are unclear because businesses do not have to demonstrate they need the assistance in order to expand," it said.

Translation: There's no evidence the state program needs to exist. But that hasn't stopped the spigot of state subsidies from flowing to Minnesota companies, which banked \$51 million from the program between 2014 and 2017. MIF is administered by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to encourage businesses to invest and create jobs.

While businesses receiving state "financial assistance" have added jobs, they aren't even required to prove they need the public "loans" to increase their workforce in order to get DEED to rubber stamp their applications for free taxpayer money.

Consequently, it's anyone's guess as to the effectiveness of a program that appears to be more about doling out dollars than creating economic development.

The report's executive summary detailed a veritable laundry list of problems:

- DEED has overstated the amount of private investment leveraged by the MIF program, and its public reporting on the outcomes of MIF projects is

incomplete.

- DEED allowed some businesses to meet their MIF commitments by counting hiring and expenditures that occurred before they received their MIF award approvals.
- DEED does not use consistent criteria to determine the amount of MIF loans or whether the loans will be forgiven.

- DEED often does not require businesses to pay workers at the wage levels listed in their approved MIF applications.

- A statute requiring MIF businesses to pay workers at least a minimum level of compensation is ambiguously worded.

- Local governments sometimes receive money for local revolving loan funds as an outcome of the program, but these funds' purposes and value are unclear.

**There's no evidence
the state program
needs to exist.**



In addition to concluding that DEED be more transparent in its administration of the MIF program, the report recommended that the legislature tighten assurances that MIF funding is necessary for individual projects.

What are the chances lawmakers will follow up on the Legislative Auditor's recommendations to tighten up the program and demand more transparency in who gets grants and why?

Better yet, why not just zero out a crony capitalism program that delivers little bang for the taxpayers' buck and even less reason to exist in a free market economy in the first place. ★

—Tom Steward

Follow-up

Edina Parents Confront their School Board

Classroom indoctrination stirs an emotional exchange.

A standing room only crowd showed up for a February session of an Edina School Board meeting to protest political indoctrination in their kids' classrooms, first revealed last fall by American Experiment. But a "technical glitch" in the school district's video means that no one can see or hear what attendees call an emotional event that captured the essence of the controversy that's attracted national attention.

Nine parents and two students addressed the board, taking advantage of a public forum instituted after the contentious 2017 school district elec-

tion. Here's what happened, according to one Edina parent in the room:

"Our unified concern was over the Pre-AP English 10 class offered at Edina High School, and in the presentations [before the board] we exposed what the truth of that class is. They gave one message to parents about what this class is and then our kids for years have been coming home and telling us all kinds of crazy stories."

Several school board members appeared to be moved by the personal stories of the impact of the ideological bullying of students who questioned the white privilege race theory and leftist activism imposed on them in class.

"It felt electric, that was the atmosphere in the room," the parent said. "Those speeches were not given in anger. They were read, they were well-prepared, they were truthful, they were testimony and there was power in that."

Yet photos of Superintendent John Schultz show him appearing uninterested in the testimony, paying more attention to his paperwork than the two students a few feet away from him.

The last impassioned parent to speak received a standing ovation from the audience.

Ultimately, the school board voted 6 to 1 to reject an alternative class the parents viewed as a way to avoid restructuring the controversial Pre-AP English 10 course. The outcome of a review of the English 10 course currently underway remains up in the air.

Edina Schools vows the technical problem will not be repeated. ★

—Tom Steward



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IT'S NOT JUST EDINA
Kersten's investigation sparks a nationwide debate

Katherine Kersten's ongoing *Thinking Minnesota* investigations into indoctrination in Edina Public Schools continues to spark a national discussion. Her latest piece titled "Inside a Public School Social Justice Factory" was recently published by the *Weekly Standard*. Numerous online news outlets shared the article and it has received significant attention on Twitter, as well. Tucker Carlson, host of *Tucker Carlson Tonight*, tweeted out the article and elicited over 5,000 "likes," nearly 3,000 retweets, and more than 700 comments.

—Catrin Thorman

TOM STEWARD

NO GREEN LIGHT

Blaine homeowners reject America's 'first certified green neighborhood.'

Solar power farms generally get built in rural areas, due to aesthetic and property value considerations. So, Blaine residents were caught off guard last fall when Connexus Energy and city planners hyped a huge solar installation proposed next to their suburban subdivision as “the country’s first certified green neighborhood.”

“If the project proceeds, the entire Sanctuary neighborhood will be powered by clean, renewable solar energy. That will be a first!” Connexus Energy Vice President Brian Burandt said in a November 30 letter to residents. “How will this benefit you? Your home will be served by 100 percent green energy for 25 years.”

From the start, City Hall threw its clout behind the proposed field of solar panels with a capacity to power about 760 homes, giving the project an aura of inevitability.

“It’s an alternative energy and limits the use of coal, which everyone wants,” Blaine Mayor Tom Ryan said at a December public meeting. “It limits the carbon footprint.”

But what started as a feel-good project for the environment went awry when residents got wind of the project’s size and scope—nearly 14,000 solar panels to be installed in a nearby 23-acre field just out their windows.

Homeowners determined there’d never been a big solar farm placed so close to a residential neighborhood anywhere in the country. When residents spot checked zoning regulations in other jurisdictions, they learned that none of the nine cities and three counties



Tom Steward

allowed big solar farms near residential neighborhoods like theirs.

Yet residents got the feeling city officials were more interested in rubber-stamping the project than in listening to their concerns over safety, aesthetics and property values.

“Cities should put their citizens first because that’s who they are there to serve,” said Chris Hildrum, a Blaine resident who led the opposition. “They should not put energy companies, government entities or anything above the people they are there to serve. And when they do that, they create problems for everybody and everything.”

At the same time, a well-connected environmental advocacy group named Fresh Energy joined the discussion to sell neighbors on green energy’s

environmental and financial benefits. In a letter sent to residents, the St. Paul-based environmentalists went so far as to claim the project could increase their property values.

“A certification proving your ownership of the solar energy credits will be provided to you for the entire life of the project,” states the letter from Fresh Energy Executive Director Michael Noble and Director of the Center for Pollinators in Energy, Rob Davis. “Recent studies are increasingly demonstrating the new reality of our modern lives—homes with green energy features are in demand and, with the right real estate agent, are able to command a price premium over other homes.”

Days before city officials were set to amend the city code to allow solar farms in Blaine in late December, residents finally got through to City Councilor Julie Jeppson.

“I’m guessing this is not the last time we’re going to hear about it. Let’s prepare ourselves so when the right opportunities come up we’re ready for them,” said Jeppson, a supporter of prudent solar development.

Connexus Energy officially withdrew its proposal in a January 5 letter that confirmed residents’ concerns over the vetting process.

“To achieve our goal, time is of the essence,” Connexus Vice President Brian Burandt said in the letter. “The site and design issues raised by the City, as well as the neighborhood, will require more due diligence and time in order to properly move forward and likely cause us to miss the 2018 opportunity.” ★

Sharing Economic Reality

Phelan tells the legislature that Minnesota's economy since 2007-2008 is slumping down to the average.

Two American Experiment policy experts told legislators that Minnesota's economy is not nearly as robust as its press clippings indicate. In almost two hours of testimony, President John Hinderaker and Economist John Phelan told members of the House Ways and

Means Committee that the state's economic performance is only mediocre.

They based their testimony on Phelan's report, "The State of Minnesota's Economy: 2017—Performance Continues to be Lackluster."

Minnesota's GDP growth, Phelan said, "has not compared all that favorably" relative to the nation as a whole, showing an overall downward trend. "We seem to be losing the lead we



had before 2007-2008 and seem to be slumping down to the average." He added that private-sector productivity in Minnesota also lags national levels.

Their testimony can be viewed online at AmericanExperiment.org. ★

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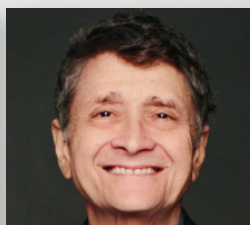
Hugh Hewitt
5am-8am



Mike Gallagher
8am-11am



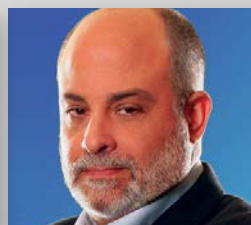
Dennis Prager
11am-2pm



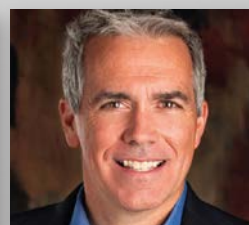
Michael Medved
2pm-5pm



Larry Elder
5pm-8pm



Mark Levin
8pm-11pm



Joe Walsh
11pm-2am

Note to Snobs

Phelan: Mining is Vital to Minnesota's Economy

American Experiment Economist John Phelan argues for mining jobs and against jerks.

What matters most for the economic health of a state or a nation is the GDP (gross domestic product) per capita, or GDP per population. To increase individuals' incomes, the GDP needs to grow faster than the population.

As Center of the American Experiment demonstrated in its report, "The State of Minnesota's Economy: 2017—Performance Continues to be Lackluster," our state is facing some challenges.

Minnesota's population is aging. As a result, its labor force participation rate is projected to fall from 69.1 percent in 2016 to 64.6 percent in 2035. A smaller share of the population will be working, producing goods and services and contributing to GDP growth. This will lead to lower GDP per capita unless the remaining workers can become more productive. There is pretty broad agreement that increased productivity is what Minnesota's economy needs in the coming decades.

Where can productive jobs be found? According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, each job in mining and logging generates an average of \$447,603 annually in gross value. This is the second-best-performing industrial sector after financial activities. In leisure and hospitality, on the other hand, each job generates an average of just \$47,986 in gross value, making it the worst-performing sector.

Yet, since 2000, Minnesota has lost 23.5 percent of its mining and logging jobs and increased the number of jobs in leisure and hospitality by 18.9 percent.



Mining jobs aren't just important for northern Minnesota, they are important for people all over the state, including those in the Twin Cities. These higher productivity jobs are key to the state's economic future. A way must be found to tap into the resources of northern Minnesota so our children can have the more-prosperous future we have come to take for granted.

Of course, there are valid environmental concerns that must be addressed if mining is to go ahead. I have written about the immense ecological harm

caused by the Silver Bay refining plant in the 1960s. This must not be allowed to happen again.

But not all opposition to new mining is as valid. Recently, *New York Times* magazine carried a lengthy, very good article on mining in northern Minnesota. In it, former Minneapolis lawyer Reid Carron, the husband of former lawyer and Ely native Becky Rom, vice chairwoman of the pressure group "Save the Boundary Waters," was quoted as saying, "Resentment is the primary driver of the pro-mining crowd

here—they are resentful that other people have come here and been successful while they were sitting around waiting for a big mining company. ... They want somebody to just give them a job so they can all drink beer with their buddies and go four-wheeling and snowmobiling with their buddies (and) not have to think about anything except punching a clock.”

I should declare an interest here. My mum’s side of the family was filled with miners back in England. They were, by all accounts, short, hunched men who coughed black dust and were

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, each job in mining and logging generates an average of \$447,603 annually in gross value. This is the second-best-performing industrial sector after financial activities.

blind in anything more than moderate light. They worked hard and died young. If, along the way, they had a pint with their friends once a while, they earned it. What they hadn’t earned—like the mine workers of northern Minnesota—were snobbish sneers like the one expressed by Carron.

A way can be found to undertake the necessary industrial activity in northern Minnesota without ruining the environment. Our state needs it, whatever the snobs might say. ★

—John Phelan

This was adapted from an op-ed that first appeared in the Duluth News Tribune.



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A 'FOREVER ADVENTURE'

Millennial-focused movement to create 'marriage champions.'

I'm enthused to report the kickoff of a potentially invaluable project that aims to do for marriage in Minnesota what a brilliant and brave NYU political scientist, in a recent American Experiment essay, urges for the nation.

The Center essay is entitled "Restoring a Marriage Norm" by Lawrence M. Mead, an old friend who spoke at American Experiment's first event ever in 1990. It is an uncommonly strong and assertive essay about what must be done if we are to reverse marriage's fragmentation and its resulting ills. Here's a quick sample.

"Marriage is still honored in theory, but this value is no longer morally binding. For marriage to recover it must again become a norm that young people feel they have to observe." And making that happen, Mead argues, is politically more possible than most people assume. "A revival of marriage," he goes on, "should seek a middle between today's *laissez-faire* attitude and a blanket condemnation of all who offend the norm."

As for the potentially invaluable project, I'm enthused and grateful that another old friend and colleague, Tom Prichard, who led the Minnesota Family Council for many years, is shepherding a new non-profit, Forever Adventure. Its goal is strengthening marriage in and via Minnesota churches and "sparking a marriage movement" across the state. "Forever Adventure is a Millennial-focused movement aimed to create Marriage Champions" who will talk "unashamedly" about the institution.



Mitch Pearlstein

The project is undergirded and propelled by both survey and focus group research, conducted specifically for it, concerning what young Minnesota men and women in their 20s think about marriage, commitment, children, cohabitation and the like. Here's another quick sampling, this time of findings from the telephone survey of 700 randomly selected people residing in Minnesota between the ages of 18 and 39, 62 percent of whom were not married at the time. It was conducted in 2015 by QEV Analytics.

The survey confirmed what was discerned in the two preceding focus groups: that marriage is, in fact, "regarded with a certain reverence," as reflected in "fundamental attitudes" expressed by interviewees.

- "My marriage is/will be for life." (96 percent)
- "I have a positive opinion of marriage." (87 percent)
- "My kids deserve to have two parents" (meaning being married is the only appropriate situation for having children). (80 percent)

A good question at this point is how do strong results like these fit with the ways in which marriage has been battered?

The two earlier focus groups were composed of a total of 17 never-married, men and women, all between the ages of 24 and 29. Based on what those participants said, a particularly insightful QEV analyst wrote, "I do not think we need to spend our effort selling marriage in the abstract as a life goal. Rather [here's the key] we need to focus . . . on messaging which will address the impediments, misconceptions, and hesitations we have identified." Obstacles such as fear of divorce. And (jumping around again) how more than 70 percent of survey respondents concurred with the statement: "Marriage is kind of a scary prospect, because it means making a commitment which is supposed to be forever."

If I were to critique what I've written over the years, one soft spot might be leaving the impression I assume finding someone to marry, and then actually marrying him or her, tends to be uncomplicated. No, I don't think it's simple for a second, as there is no 1-800-MARRIAGE out there, and not just because it's one number too long. ★

WHY I SUPPORT Center of the American Experiment

“The American Experiment asks questions to elevate and invite debate which causes us all to ask how we can help.”

Name: Brian Hedberg

Occupation: Executive and Officer

Office: Ready Credit Corporation,
Eden Prairie, MN

Alma Maters:

University of St. Thomas, MBA;
University of MN, B.S.B,
Former Edina Public School
Board Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer
and Clerk (2001-2008)



Campus Speech

Freedom Fighter

Undaunted by radical campus bullies at the University of Minnesota—which included some members of its administration—Madison Faupel is plotting a career in politics.

After an internship with Morgan Stanley, Madison Faupel had once planned to use her business degree to pursue a career as a stock broker on Wall Street. The outgoing president of Minnesota’s College Republicans—and battle-tested combatant in the fight for on-campus free speech—now plans on a career in politics.

“I can’t stop fighting,” she says. “I can’t sit here and watch this loud, obnoxious, crazy group of people try and take away our constitutional rights. It has completely shifted my future. I want to continue the fight for freedom and liberty.”

Her passion, she says, “lies completely in preserving freedom and liberty, because I feel like for the last four years I have been fighting so hard just to be able to say what I want. People don’t realize how bad it is.”

Faupel does. In late September 2016, the College Republicans responded along with other campus organizations to an annual invitation from the university to paint three promotional signs on panels that line the covered pedestrian walkway over the Washington Avenue bridge between the U’s east and west bank campuses. They were heady days for the campus group. By the time Faupel became chair of the College Republicans in 2016, the student organization was enjoying “massive turnouts” at campus events and membership consisted of a variety of young conservative activists. Trump people, “never Trumpers” and “quite a few” libertarians. Members convened on the bridge to create three hand-painted signs. One said, “College Republicans: Best Party on Campus;”



Madison Faupel at the American Experiment booth at the CPAC convention, the massive annual weekend gathering of conservative activists and elected officials, sponsored by the American Conservative Union. It was the third convention for the outgoing president of Minnesota’s College Republicans. This year she was joined by 90 College Republicans at the event, a record number. “It was awesome,” she says.

another, “Trump-Pence 2016;” and a third said, “Build the Wall.”

It was the last one that unleashed a campus ruckus that tested Faupel’s resolve as a leader and exposed the university’s embarrassing inability or disinclination to reign in the bullying behavior of protesters.

Faupel recalls that vandals had defaced their signs even before the paint was

dry, covering them with “Stop White Supremacy” and Black Lives Matter fists. University officials joined in the criticism of signage, some using their official email to call it “xenophobic” and “racist.”

When university officials announced a campus “conversation” about the controversy, Faupel jumped at the chance to promote reasonable dialogue. “I think the



Campus protests blew up over a University-sanctioned hand-painted panel on the covered pedestrian bridge over Washington Avenue that said, “Build the Wall.”



best and the healthiest approach, and the thing that can bring us together, is open dialogue and debate, understanding and hearing out the other side in a respectful manner, and maybe gaining insight that you didn’t have before,” she says. She wrote up some talking points, and prepared to “listen respectfully, which I did.”

“I feel like for the last four years I have been fighting so hard just to be able to say what I want. People don’t realize how bad it is.”

Her optimism quickly dissolved as 150 protesters hijacked the event and took over the podium for 90 minutes of insults and attacks on the College Republicans and others. When the demonstrators realized Faupel was still in the room, they physically surrounded her and personalized their taunts and name-calling. “People were saying the most absurd things, like, ‘Why are you racist?’ Or ‘Why do you want us dead?’ A group of Somali women came after me and asked, ‘Why do you hate the Somalis?’”

“It was scary,” she recalls, “but I

wasn’t going to let this crazy, fascist behavior intimidate me. I just kind of owned it. I’m never one to back down or hide from what I believe in.”

Her determination earned kudos from national media that covered her predicament including Fox News and the *National Review*. American Experiment’s President John Hinderaker also described her courage in his *Power Line* column.

Months later, while celebrating a friend’s birthday in Uptown, she received a text threat from someone who recognized her. “We’re on to you, Madison Faupel,” it said. “We will not let you continue your leadership of bigotry and hate. We are on your ass. We won’t stop until you’re done.” It caught Madison off-guard. “Oh my gosh. Okay, this is not a joke. This is not someone messing with me. This is really scary.”

She later received random Facebook threats with links to a Minnesota-based Antifa group. The website included a description of Madison, her phone number, her parents’ phone number, her campus address, her home address, and other personal information and pictures of her. “It’s one thing to have people, like protesters, yelling at you on campus, but it wasn’t until this Antifa situation where I was like, I am not safe here, nor am I safe

in my apartment. I’m not safe at home. They have all my information.”

“I don’t think people realize that this is happening on every college campus,” Madison says now. “The students learn that they can shut down ideas if they scream loud enough, or throw a big enough fit.” And protesters are encouraged by media coverage, she says.

“Any media we get is about the protesters,” she says, citing a recent campus event that featured conservative commentator Ben Shapiro. The sold-out venue held 400 people and the waiting list for tickets exceeded 1,000 people. But the news coverage of the event revolved around 25 protesters.

Faupel vows to continue her fight, and is weighing options about her future. The Rochester native is working with hometown Senator Carla Nelson on a free speech bill to help protect students’ free speech rights on campus.

“I want to kind of just keep doing things like that,” she says. “I don’t see being elected to office in my future, but you never know. Never say never.” ★

5 QUESTIONS

WITH
AARON
BENNER

St. Paul educator Aaron Benner spoke on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court in February to support Mark Janus on the day justices heard arguments regarding *Janus v. AFSCME*, a case that could prohibit public-sector unions from collecting mandatory “fair share” fees.



Why do you teach?

I have a B.A. in sociology and criminal justice from the University of St. Thomas. After college I worked in a halfway house in St. Paul. On my off days, I would volunteer in elementary schools because I was bored. I fell in love with the students on day one. I eventually went back to school and acquired my teaching license through a program at the University of St. Thomas.

I teach because we need to help our students become better citizens. I didn't get into teaching because I am a black male, but being black and a male was an advantage in the classroom. I connected with students in ways that some teachers couldn't. Even though the narrative now is we need more black, male teachers, I would say beyond that we just need good, quality teachers.

Why did you leave the St. Paul school district?

It was a free-for-all in my school regarding violence—and I'm not talking about little things, I am talking about things like heads being smashed against walls. I found out the lack of discipline revolved around race. I believed the St. Paul Public Schools were setting black students up for failure by having different racial behavioral guidelines.

I disagreed with the district's racial equity policy and was forced out of my job after I spoke at a school board meeting. I was suddenly accused of numerous infractions after having zero infractions throughout my entire teaching career. These frivolous infractions were clearly out of the ordinary and were the result of me speaking at the meeting. I had no idea

I would be considered a whistle blower when I voiced concern over the district's new equity discipline policies.

Why do you support Mark Janus's case?

I love the fact that there may come a day when teachers and other employees will have a choice if they want to pay union dues. When I was going through my

With 21 years in the classroom, Benner has received considerable praise for his efforts to restore discipline and order in St. Paul schools. Currently an administrator at Cretin-Durham Hall, he is suing St. Paul Public Schools for racial discrimination. His case will be heard in July.

battles with the St. Paul Public Schools, my union—the St. Paul Federation of Teachers—did nothing to support me. They wasted my time and still took my union dues. I would have never paid union dues for 15 years in SPPS if I knew I would not be properly represented. When the time came for the union to support me, my union representative tried to have me plead to an offense I didn't do so she could “plead the other charges down.” Then, the union president told me she was forced by the school district to write

New Staff

Policy Punchlines

Isaac Orr honed his communication skills at comedy clubs.

a public statement about me after I made an appearance on national television. The union was working against me and working behind my back. When I needed their support, their silence was deafening. My union supported the racial equity policies implemented by the school district, and I was just a dispensable employee. I predicted the chaos St. Paul schools experienced in the fall of 2015 due to these new racial equity policies.

How would you describe your experience of appearing on the Court steps on behalf of Janus?

It was an experience of a lifetime. I think I was supposed to be there. I had no clue what to expect. Were protesters going to throw things at me? In my heart I knew I had to support Mark Janus because his case speaks to my heart. I told people, I'm not for the elimination of unions. I want a choice. Here's my story. It was a blessing from God to participate in something so historic, on the steps of the Supreme Court. If Janus wins, unions will have to actually deliver on the promises they tell their members. Unions will have to actually listen to their members, and work for them.

Any advice for teachers?

My advice to new teachers: If teaching is what you love to do, don't let one bad year, school, or principal derail your dreams. I was fortunate to work with many great teachers in St. Paul Public Schools, and I wish them the best. Unfortunately, their union and district claim to have students' best interests at heart, but that's not true. ★

As a young staffer for the Wisconsin State Senate, Isaac Orr had a front-row seat for the political war that erupted Governor Scott Walker's 2011 historic effort to close a \$3.6 billion budget deficit by renegotiating concessions in public-sector contracts, a negotiation that one day even resulted with Democratic members of the Senate escaping to Illinois to deny Republicans the quorum they needed to convene.

Orr, 29, is Center of the American Experiment's newest policy fellow.

"I was just getting used to the capitol, and then all of a sudden, we have all these people that are protesting and sleeping in the capitol," he recalls. "Nobody went home for weeks. It was a mess, but it was also kind of cool to be there. It was like a Forrest Gump moment."

Inspired by that experience, he did what you'd expect of an up-and-coming policy analyst: He went on the road for four years as a part-time standup comedian. Splitting his time between the Senate and the road, he took his 20 minutes of material and toured the country, including clubs in Portland, Seattle, New York, Phoenix, and Atlanta.

He thinks that experience has helped him along his prolific path as an analyst. "If you can find the right analogies in public policy that get people to understand more complex things, they just know it on an intuitive level," he says. "I try to bring enough good analogies to the table so people can understand something without having to know all the details."

Orr admits that even his early attraction to public policy grew from comedy, as he and his father would watch Saturday Night Live from their dairy farm in Waupaca, Wisconsin. "Part of



Isaac Orr

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE McDONALD

it was learning enough about politics to get those jokes and understand why they were funny. It was something my dad and I were able to bond over."

After retiring from comedy, he eventually finagled a full-time research fellowship telecommuting from his home in Minneapolis to the Heartland Institute, a prestigious think tank located near Chicago.

At Heartland, he became a prolific contributor, giving speeches, producing policy videos and writing papers and op-eds.

His first assignment at American Experiment will be about energy policy, immediately tackling a project about mining due for release in July. He's eager for others. At one point in his tenure at Heartland, he says, he wrote four 30-plus page policy papers in five weeks. "I like being a workhorse." ★



≡ THE VANISHING MINNESOTA WORKER

Why it's time to hit reset on 'vocational' education

As Boomers retire, the number of unfilled jobs in Minnesota is expected to explode from **60,000 to as much as 280,000** in just five years.

For decades, Minnesotans have thought of our state as having one of the nation's most dynamic economies. But this complacency is misplaced. Today, Minnesota faces an economic crisis that will pose a serious threat to our prosperity unless we act quickly.

The problem is a worker shortage that is forecast to balloon from the current 60,000 to between approximately 240,000 to 280,000 by the end of 2022. Most unfilled jobs will be skilled technical positions in sectors that make up the backbone of our economy, including manufacturing, construction, medical

BY
KATHERINE
KERSTEN



devices, health care, agriculture, energy and mining.

Absent sufficient improvements in productivity, this workforce shortfall will likely constrain state GDP growth by roughly \$33 billion, reduce local tax revenue by about \$2.2 billion, and lead to about \$12 billion annually in unrealized personal income, according to Scott Peterson, board chair of RealTime Talent, a business-led cross-sector collaborative that uses data to improve the alignment of the workforce ecosystem in Minnesota. Not only will per capita income fall, but it will become much harder to attract new industries.

Our state faces a perfect storm in its talent development pipeline. In recent years, employers have struggled to find enough workers with in-demand technical skills. But now—as the exodus of retiring baby boomers begins—it’s becoming clear that relatively few young people are prepared (or desire) to take their places. Out-migration is exacerbating the problem. Each year, domestically, 8,000 more workers leave Minnesota than migrate here. Including foreign immigrant workers, workforce growth is essentially flat.

Bruce Peterson, executive director of the Minnesota State Energy Center of Excellence, explains what all this means for his industry: “More than 40 percent of technical workers in the utility industry are eligible to retire in the next five years,” he says. “But if you take 40 percent of the people out of the power plants, how do you keep them running? None of us can function without electricity.”

The heart of the problem is a serious misalignment between labor force supply and demand. Today, about 50 percent of Minnesota high school graduates start on a four-year college road—often because they mistakenly believe a baccalaureate degree is vital for success. Yet only 22 percent of jobs in the state require a four-year degree or more, according to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. As a result, some who earn such a degree end up underemployed. Others drop out,

without in-demand skills and saddled with student debt.

At the other end of the spectrum, many young people leave high school today without any post-secondary aspirations or marketable skills. They will find it hard to achieve a middle-class way of life. Meanwhile, ironically, financially rewarding jobs in in-demand industries are going begging.

The workforce shortfall will likely constrain state GDP growth by roughly \$33 billion, reduce local tax revenue by about \$2.2 billion, and lead to about \$12 billion annually in unrealized personal income.

Minnesota does have a number of advantages in confronting its workforce challenges. These include the nation’s third-highest workforce participation rate—69 percent—and a relatively high average education level. In addition, many organizations—including educational institutions, non-profits and state agencies—are taking steps to address our workforce development crisis. Unfortunately, coordination is lacking. We need a comprehensive workforce strategy whereby employers, educators, policymakers and nonprofits pull together to

address our challenges.

But success will be elusive unless Minnesota’s employers take a strong leadership role, notes Peterson. Today, educators and state agencies strive to anticipate the skills that will be in greatest demand in the future, but they have generally lacked hard data and long-term forecasts from employers. Going forward, a comprehensive workforce plan must ensure that employers in key sectors like manufacturing, medical devices and construction clearly articulate their short and longer-term skills needs, so educators can more effectively translate these into programs and curricula that will produce the workforce Minnesota requires.

Efforts are underway to make that happen

Later in 2018, RealTime Talent, in collaboration with four major Minnesota business organizations, will release a statewide strategic plan to reignite our state’s talent engine and bring workforce demand and supply into closer equilibrium.

To help set the stage, on April 24, 2018, Center of the American Experiment will sponsor a forum on industry-education partnership featuring Kyle Hartung, director of Boston-based Pathways to Prosperity (PTP). (More on that below.)

What’s clear today is this: To succeed in the dual goal of solving our workforce crisis and ensuring a path to the middle class for all students, we must rethink how we deliver education at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels. In place of the cultural message that success requires a four-year college degree, we should encourage young people and their



About the Author: *Katherine Kersten, a writer and attorney, is a senior policy fellow at Center of the American Experiment. She served as a Metro columnist for the Star Tribune from 2005 to 2008, and as an opinion columnist for the paper for 15 years between 1996 and 2013. She was a founding director of the Center, and served as its chair from 1996 to 1998.*

parents to think in terms of *academic and career pathways* that span grades 9 to 14. These should be framed as “career ladders,” and should include the diverse positions to which pathways can build five to ten years after post-secondary training is complete.

This new approach will require dropping the outdated language of “vocational education,” generally interpreted as second-best. Employers must also work to counter the image of manufacturing, energy, construction and similar fields as dirty and dangerous, and present them as the highly skilled and technically sophisticated enterprises they are.

Finally, we should ensure that young people know these in-demand careers can be financially rewarding. Center of the American Experiment’s September 2017 report entitled “No Four-Year Degree Required: A look at a selection of in-demand careers in Minnesota” can be a valuable resource here. The report, by labor economist Amanda Griffith, reveals that young people who choose alternatives to a four-year college—including two-year degrees, apprenticeships and occupational certificates—often have higher median lifetime earnings than four-year degree holders.

Work-based learning is key

Minnesota has much to learn from other states as it confronts its workforce challenges. One approach that is bearing fruit elsewhere is the concept of “work-based learning.”

Work-based learning, which integrates academic and workplace training, is a “sequenced and coordinated set of activities through which students gain increasing exposure to the world of work,” according to Pathways to Prosperity. It begins as “career awareness” in the middle grades, with guest speakers, robotics camps or field trips. In high school, students move on to “career exploration,” pursuing mentorships or job shadowing that connect to their emerging interests. The final stage, “career preparation,” takes place in high school or post-secondary, and includes compensated internships, apprenticeships or on-the-job training in specific occupations.

Successful models from other states

Colorado’s innovative approach to workforce development includes “CareerWise Colorado,” a non-profit, public-private partnership dedicated to “building the middle class by closing the skills gap through experiential learning.”

The initiative grew out of Gov. John Hickenlooper’s Business Experiential-Learning (BEL) Commission, composed of business and government leaders. The Commission’s mission is to develop a skilled talent pipeline for hard-to-fill positions in the state.

The Commission regards the following elements as central to effective work-based learning programs: 1) businesses view themselves as producers, not just consumers, of talent; 2) career education is competency-based, not course-based; and 3) career exploration begins as early as elementary and middle school.

CareerWise Colorado helps employers set up three-year, paid apprenticeships in skilled fields such as advanced manufacturing and information technology. Each week, participating high school students combine two to three days of classroom learning with two to three days of on-the-job training. They can also learn soft skills such as workplace expectations and etiquette in a “professionalism boot camp.” Students earn credits toward high school graduation, as well as post-secondary credits or industry credentials. A third year of apprenticeship after high school prepares them to begin work immediately, or go on to complete a two-year or four-year post-secondary degree.

CareerWise Colorado’s work includes recruiting students for apprenticeships, training supervisors and apprentice-coaches, and leading outreach to statewide trade associations. The organization also advises employers and schools as they create career competencies and align goals.

CareerWise Colorado’s apprenticeship program began in 2017 with 250 students. As the program grows, additional career pathways will be added. By 2027, the goal is to have 20,000 young people—10 percent of students in their last two years of high school—involved in apprenticeships.

Kentucky is another state with an innovative work-based learning model. There,

the grassroots “KY FAME” (Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education) initiative was launched in 2008 by a handful of frustrated employers who resolved to “grow their own talent.”

The employers partnered with a nearby technical college to design a two-year Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) program to meet their greatest skill need. Students in the dual-track, apprentice-style program include recent high school graduates, veterans and full-time workers seeking to improve their skills.

AMT students spend two days a week in college classes, and work for their

In place of the cultural message that success requires a four-year college degree, we should encourage young people and their parents to think in terms of academic and career pathways that span grades 9 to 14.

employer-sponsor three days a week. Their course of study includes academic subjects like English and math; technical skills like pneumatics and welding; and soft skills like teamwork and timeliness.

Graduates earn an industry-recognized Associate of Applied Science degree, and most finish debt-free since employers usually pick up all costs while a student works. To date, about 250 Kentucky students have earned AMT degrees, and more than 650 are currently enrolled in FAME-endorsed programs.

Thanks to the KY FAME initiative’s resounding success, today the association has ten regional chapters and about 250 employer members throughout the state. Each chapter partners with a nearby community and technical college to customize the AMT program to meet its own members’ talent needs, and several have launched other dual-track training programs.

Beyond this, regional FAME chapters

are now promoting manufacturing to local students in grades 8 through 12. In 2017, its employer members offered summer externships to 135 high school teachers of subjects like English and social studies. The goal was to acquaint teachers with 21st-century manufacturing, and equip them to encourage their students to explore a manufacturing career.

In Indiana, a post-secondary institution—Ivy Tech Community College—is leading the way in workforce development. With 45 campuses and site locations, Ivy Tech is the largest single-accredited statewide community college system in the nation.

Ivy Tech is a national leader in coordinating academic programs with on-the-job training, to ensure that experiential learning is valued and can lead to an academic certificate or degree. The goal is to make sure the institution is offering exactly what employers need, and that all credentials are “stackable,” that is, can be applied toward more advanced certificates or degrees.

For example, Ivy Tech collaborates with construction-trade unions to offer an Associate of Applied Science degree. This credential incorporates the on-the-job training required for a journey person’s card with the general education classes required for an associate’s degree. It is available to workers in 15 trades, from electricians and bricklayers to operating engineers and iron workers. The college offers a similar interdisciplinary associate’s degree in advanced manufacturing.

Ivy Tech works hard to attract more young people to skilled, high-demand careers. For example, the college is piloting three-to-five-day summer camps for 13- to 14-year-old middle-school students. Local employers provide pizza and T-shirts for the kids, and plan fun, engaging activities like using computer-assisted design and 3D printing to make a cup.

In Ivy Tech’s two-year pilot programs for high schools, students split their time between academic courses at school and a manufacturing lab at the college. The first year, they do job shadowing. The second year, they cycle through four businesses, doing “real work” for eight to 10 hours a week. They graduate from high school with a certificate or technical credential

from Ivy Tech that stacks into an associate’s degree.

Indiana policymakers have determined that 60 percent of their state’s workforce must have post-secondary credentials to be competitive in the future. Ivy Tech’s five-year plan requires the college to assess progress on two key goals: First, at least 80 percent of the institution’s programs in key economic sectors will be at equilibrium with the market to meet the needs of employers; and second, 80 percent of Ivy Tech graduates will be at or above Indiana’s median income one year after graduating.

Minnesota’s future plans

On April 24, 2018, Kyle Hartung of Pathways to Prosperity will bring a national perspective on successful workforce development to Minnesota. His Center-sponsored presentation will be entitled “The Future Can’t Wait—The Imperative of Industry/Education Partnerships to Meet the Needs of the Future Workforce.” Hartung will discuss what’s at stake in getting workforce development right, and describe principles for effective design and implementation and hurdles to be overcome.

Created in 2012, PTP—a project of Jobs for the Future and the Harvard Graduate School of Education—has a network of 14 states and 60-plus regions. The organization collaborates with partner institutions on demonstration projects around the country. Its expertise includes setting up grades 9 to 14 career pathways; aligning academic curricula and work-based learning; advising intermediary institutions; creating metrics and analytics to ensure alignment with employers’ real needs; and encouraging favorable public policies.

In Minnesota, PTP has supported the Greater Twin Cities United Way’s (GTCUW) work in building regional infrastructure and capacity for the design, implementation, and scaling of 9-14+ college and career pathways in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Bloomington, White Bear Lake, and Burnsville. It has also coordinated with GTCUW to support a Bush Foundation grant to expand this work to Southwest and South Central Minnesota.

A state-wide workforce initiative for Minnesota

For the people of Minnesota, the best news is this: A ground-breaking state-wide strategic workforce development plan is now in the works.

Commencing in early 2018, four major business roundtables—the Itasca Project, the Minnesota Business Partnership, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and Greater MSP—have been meeting under the auspices of convener RealTime Talent to devise a long-term strategic framework to enhance Minnesota’s economic growth.

The framework will include analytics, metrics and tools to identify short- and long-term workforce needs in key industry sectors. It will likely take the form of a five-year plan that will improve these sectors’ ability to coordinate their efforts across school districts, higher education institutions, state government agencies and philanthropy, to enable more effective cross-sector talent development solutions. Later in 2018, the business leaders involved anticipate holding public forums to engage key stakeholders in action planning. They will also potentially engage with state policymakers, heading into the 2019 legislative session.

“We’re not talking about some centrally planned economy,” emphasizes RealTime Talent’s Peterson. The purpose is “to strengthen coordinated efforts to support the talent market, including both small and large employers,” he says. The end goal is to better align business-led workforce efforts with existing initiatives to improve the attraction, retention and development of workforce talent.

“If you give decision-makers the information they need, they will act in their own best interests,” Peterson points out. “This should result in better alignment between the demand and supply of talent—driving more efficient use of human capital, creating better-paying jobs for all, stimulating more strategic philanthropic investments, and substantially accelerating Minnesota’s economic growth.”

Enhanced prosperity, more effective use of our young people’s talents, and a solid career route to middle-class status? All Minnesotans should be in favor of that. ★

≡ EDUCATORS TAKE NOTE

TIME FOR CHANGE

Amid profound partisan rifts, Minnesotans upend conventional wisdom with a strong and universal preference for the value of a tech school education.



As the state's employers prepare to absorb the economic consequences of an unprecedented drop in the number of available workers (see page 22), a large majority of Minnesotans agree that young people are better served by obtaining skills for specific jobs than by earning a four-year degree. Just 25 percent of the respondents in the first-ever *Thinking Minnesota Poll* preferred advising young people to get a four-year college degree (Figure 1). A whopping 66 percent preferred "obtaining specific skills."

Meeting Street Research interviewed 500 registered voters between February 27 and March 1, 2018, through a mix of landline and cell phone calls. The margin of error is + or - 4.38 percent.

In a survey that in other ways revealed dramatic partisan disagreements, the "pro-skills" sentiment strikingly prevailed among every political, demographic and geographic category:

- Republicans (73 percent pro-skills-19 percent pro-degree), Independents (67-23), Democrats (59-31);
- Men with less college (70-20), men with college-plus (66-23), women with less college (67-22), women with college-plus (60-33); and
- Minneapolis/St. Paul (62-32), Suburbs (60-30), Northeast (75-21), West/Northwest (74-8), South (66-21).

Only one in four Minnesotans believe a four-year college degree "is necessary to achieve the American Dream."

Similarly, only one in four Minnesotans believe a four-year college degree "is necessary to achieve the American Dream." This opinion also prevailed among political, geographic and demographic categories.

Most Minnesotans (56 percent) say their job does not require a college degree. Men and women who achieved a college degree say otherwise, 64-35 and 61-36, respectively.

Respondents agreed by a wide margin that apprenticeships

About the pollster

Rob Autry, founder of Meeting Street Research, is one of the nation's leading pollsters and research strategists.

FIGURE 1: OBTAINING SKILLS FOR A SPECIFIC JOB IS VALUED MORE THAN EARNING A FOUR-YEAR DEGREE AMONG MOST VOTERS OVERALL

"Next, if you had to choose, which do you think is more important for young people to succeed today?"

	Overall
Earning a four-year college degree from a well-respected college or university	25%
Obtaining the knowledge or skills needed to do a specific job in today's economy	66%
Not Sure/Don't know	8%

FIGURE 2: VAST MAJORITIES OF THOSE WITH AND WITHOUT COLLEGE DEGREES AGREE THAT SKILLS MATTER MORE THAN DIPLOMAS

Earning A Degree vs. Skills Needed For Specific Job By Gender/Education

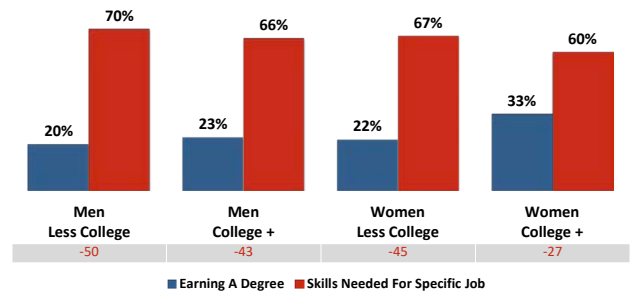


FIGURE 3: ONLY ONE OUT OF FOUR MINNESOTANS SAY A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE DEGREE IS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM

"Do you believe that a four-year college degree is necessary to achieve the American Dream?"

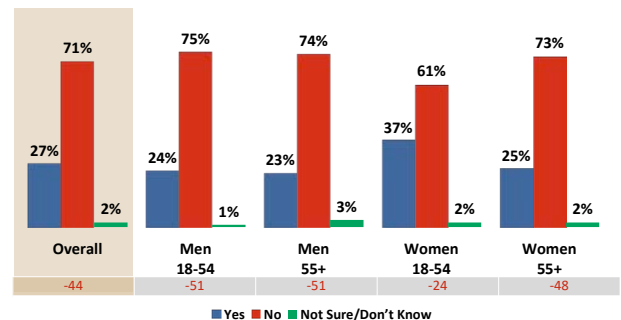


FIGURE 4: APPRENTICESHIPS AND AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE OR INDUSTRY CERTIFICATION ARE SEEN AS THE BEST VALUE FOR THE MONEY

"Next, I am going to read you a few different phrases, and, after I read each one, please tell me if you think that is a good value for the money or not?"

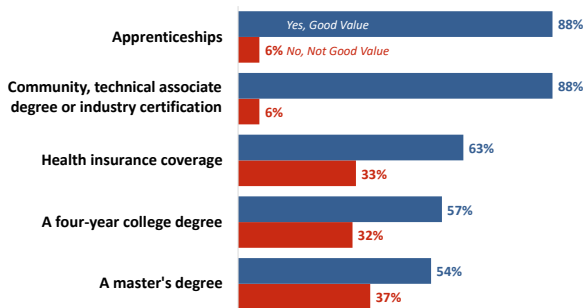


FIGURE 5: REPUBLICANS AND INDEPENDENTS FAVOR ELIMINATING THE STATE'S ESTATE TAX, WHILE DFLERS ARE SPLIT

"As you may know, there is currently a Minnesota state estate tax, which is a tax on the property and money people leave when they die. Do you favor or oppose eliminating this tax, or do you not know enough to say?"

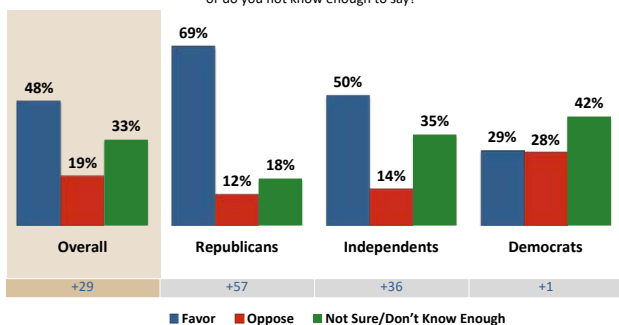
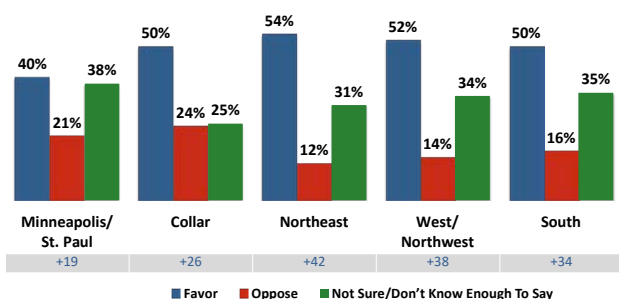


FIGURE 6: SUPPORT FOR GETTING RID OF THE ESTATE TAX IS ABOVE 50% OUTSIDE THE TWIN CITIES METRO AREA

Favor/Oppose Eliminating State Estate Tax Data By Region



and a technical associate's degree or industry certification present a superior value for the money, over a four-year college degree or a master's degree (Figure 4).

THE ESTATE TAX

Minnesotans favor eliminating the state's estate tax by 29 points, with wider margins from Republicans and Independents (Figure 5).

Older voters and younger men solidly favor eliminating the estate tax, but younger women are unsure. Men age 18 to 54 favor elimination by 59-18; men age 55-plus favor elimination 51-25; and women age 55-plus favor it 52-16. Women age 18 to 54 favor elimination 29-19, with 52 percent undecided.

A majority of Minnesotans outside Minneapolis/St. Paul all favor elimination: the Suburbs (50-24), the Northeast (54-12), the West/Northwest (52-14), and the South (50-16). Minneapolis/St. Paul residents support elimination of the estate tax 40-21, with 38 percent unsure.

THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Minnesota voters are much more positive about the direction of their state than they are of their country (Figure 7). But the breakdown of opinions inside those numbers exposes a sharply divided electorate. Democrats and Republicans describe the health of their nation and their state in dramatically different terms.

In what are commonly described as "right track/wrong track" questions, just six percent of Democrats view the nation as going in the right direction, while 93 percent say wrong track. They view the state in opposite terms, with a 79-10 right track/wrong track ratio.

Republicans, on the other hand, report a 57-34 positive view of the nation, while 43-45 ratio for the state.

The numbers are equally dramatic when viewed by geography. Residents of the Twin Cities report a 21-66 ratio for the nation and 67-19 for the state. Voters in the south are

Minnesotans favor eliminating the state's estate tax by 29 points.



even more unhappy, with a 16-73 ratio for the nation, and 68-21 for the state.

These differences are just as stark with opinions about President Donald Trump. Overall, 36 percent of Minnesotans approve of the job the president is doing, 53 percent disapprove. His approvals are worse in the Twin Cities (26-64) and the South (27-61). He performs better in the Suburbs (41-52) and the Northeast (46-48), and his approval shows a 15 percent

Respondents agreed by a wide margin that apprenticeships and a technical associate's degree or industry certification present a superior value for the money, over a four-year college degree or a master's degree.

positive margin in the West/Northwest (48-33).

It will surprise no one that the president's highest support comes from Republicans (75-15) and conservatives (71-16), while his harshest critics are among Democrats (4-92) and liberals (5-90).

There is a pronounced gender gap in the president's approval, most notably among women, age 18 to 54, where it is 15-67. It is slightly better among women 55-plus, where it is 34-56. ★



FIGURE 7: MINNESOTA VOTERS ARE MUCH MORE POSITIVE ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF THEIR STATE THAN THEY ARE OF THEIR COUNTRY

"Would you say that things in [the country/Minnesota] are going in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track?"

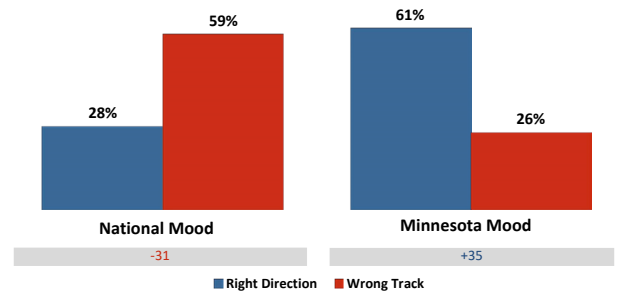


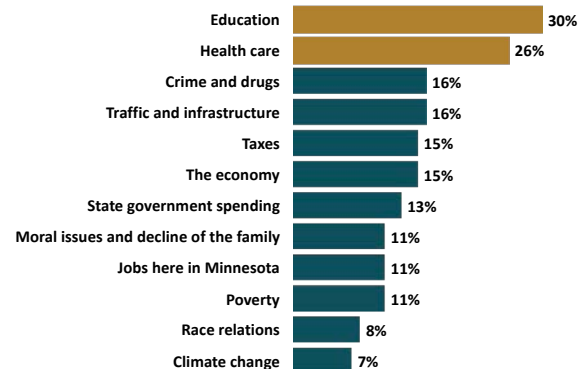
FIGURE 8: DEMOCRATS AND LIBERALS ARE MUCH MORE INCLINED TO DESCRIBE THE NATION AND STATE IN DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT TERMS

Country Mood and State Mood By Party

	National Mood		State Mood	
	Right Direction	Wrong Track	Right Direction	Wrong Track
Republicans	57%	34%	43%	45%
Independents	28%	44%	58%	26%
Democrats	6%	93%	79%	10%
Conservatives	53%	30%	41%	44%
Moderates	23%	66%	66%	20%
Liberals	4%	90%	83%	8%

FIGURE 9: EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE ARE THE TOP TWO PRIORITIES FOR MINNESOTA VOTERS TODAY

"Thinking now about some issues, which TWO of the following issue areas do you believe should be the top priorities for the Governor and State Legislature here in Minnesota?"



A FAIR SHARE

The unions are right to be nervous. If the Supreme Court rules in favor of Mark Janus this spring, more than five million public employees in Minnesota and 21 other states won't be forced to pay 'fair-share' union fees to keep their jobs. Could it restore civility to Minnesota's politics and classrooms?

**BY
KIM CROCKETT**

Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The ancient Romans worshiped a god named Janus, the god of beginnings and transitions. He was usually depicted as having two faces, not because he was perceived as deceitful, but because the Romans imagined he could see the past and the future. Janus was also thought to preside over the beginning and the end of conflict, so he was invoked at the start of war and as peace returned.

It is entirely fitting then that a man named Mark Janus would have the honor of bringing the most consequential case before the U.S. Supreme Court in decades, *Janus v. AFSCME*.

Janus, a social worker employed by the State of Illinois, is asking the Supreme Court to look back at a decision made by the Court in 1977 (*Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*) that upheld legislation forcing public-sector employees to

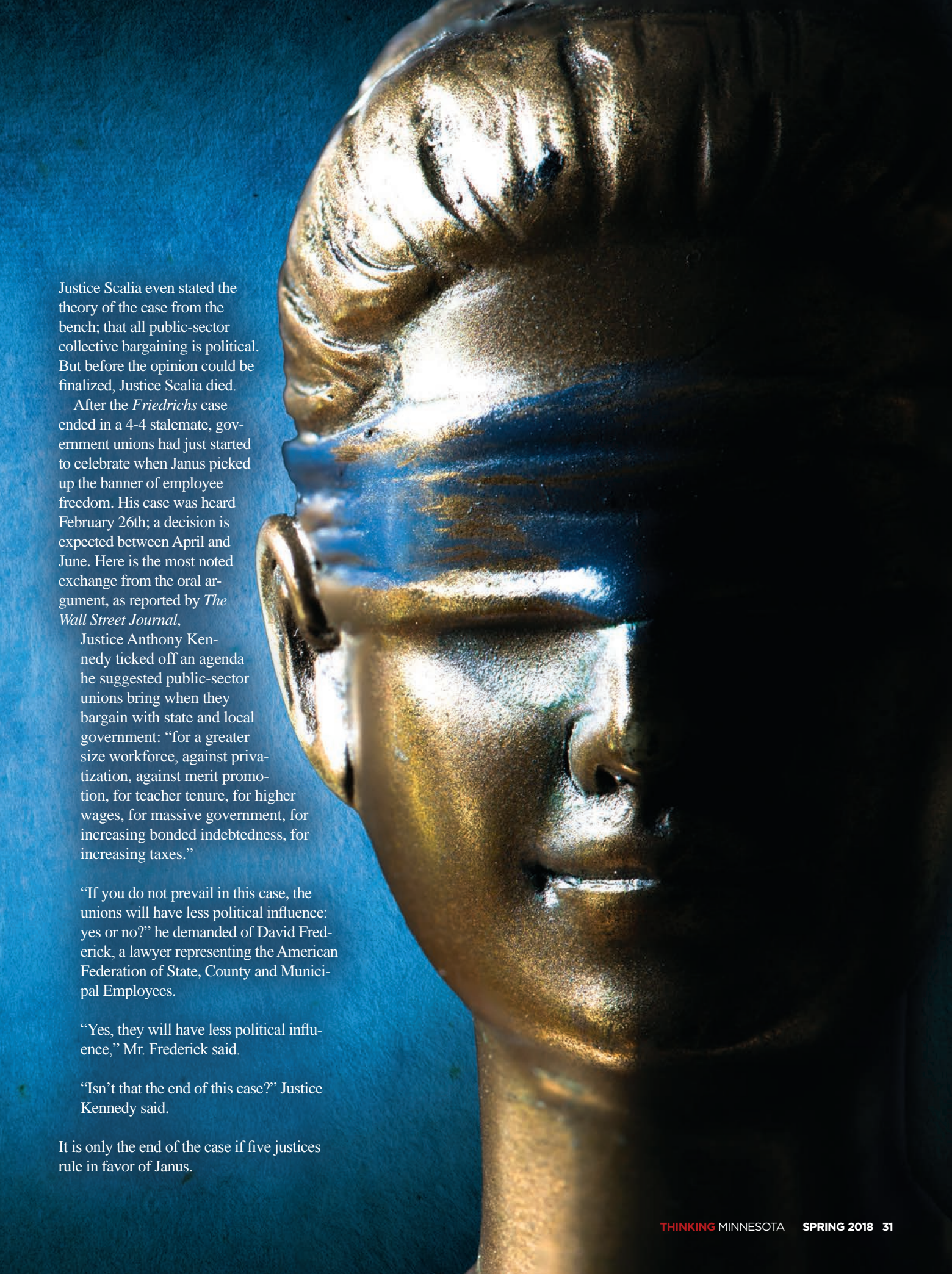
pay “agency” or so-called “fair-share” fees to government unions.

The Court in 1977 recognized that forced fair-share fees were an “impingement upon associational freedom” but it justified downgrading the civil rights of public employees in the name of “labor peace.” The decision was made in the wake of decades of labor unrest.

If Janus is successful, more than 5 million public employees in Minnesota and 21 other states will no longer be forced to pay fair-share fees to a union to keep their jobs. Right-to-work will once again govern the public sector. (The case does not impact private-sector unions.) Wouldn't it be ironic if the *Janus* case ushers in a new era of political discourse, if not labor peace?

The legal argument is simple and compelling: all public-sector collective bargaining is political because it directly affects the cost, size and nature of government. As you will read below, the teachers' union, Education Minnesota, makes the case for overruling *Abood*.

If the *Janus* case sounds familiar it is because the same argument was made in 2016 by Rebecca Friedrichs, a California school teacher (*Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*). After oral argument, court observers from all sides, including government unions, agreed that she had won a 5-4 majority decision.



Justice Scalia even stated the theory of the case from the bench; that all public-sector collective bargaining is political. But before the opinion could be finalized, Justice Scalia died.

After the *Friedrichs* case ended in a 4-4 stalemate, government unions had just started to celebrate when Janus picked up the banner of employee freedom. His case was heard February 26th; a decision is expected between April and June. Here is the most noted exchange from the oral argument, as reported by *The Wall Street Journal*,

Justice Anthony Kennedy ticked off an agenda he suggested public-sector unions bring when they bargain with state and local government: “for a greater size workforce, against privatization, against merit promotion, for teacher tenure, for higher wages, for massive government, for increasing bonded indebtedness, for increasing taxes.”

“If you do not prevail in this case, the unions will have less political influence: yes or no?” he demanded of David Frederick, a lawyer representing the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

“Yes, they will have less political influence,” Mr. Frederick said.

“Isn’t that the end of this case?” Justice Kennedy said.

It is only the end of the case if five justices rule in favor of Janus.

The Center has reviewed state and federal disclosure documents from Education Minnesota, limited as they are, to report to teachers how union expenditures and activities prove the theory in the *Janus* case: that everything this union does is political. This spring we will launch a project, EducatedTeachersMN, to inform and empower teachers across the state to evaluate the union's performance, and decide for themselves, whether the union is doing a good job. Here are some of our findings.

Are "Fair-Share" Fees Really Fair?

The so-called "fair-share" fees, sanctioned by the Court in *Abood*, are only supposed to cover the cost of "collective bargaining." The fees, however, are set by unions with little or no oversight from the state. Not surprisingly, fees in Minnesota are nearly the same as full union dues (about 85 percent). After a careful and repeated examination of union documents, the Center was unable to comprehend how Education Minnesota could justify charging almost full dues to "fair-share" fee payers.

To calculate fair-share fees, the union is supposed to report "chargeable" and "non-chargeable" union activities to teachers who "opt out" of union membership. This is called a "Hudson" statement. Yet, look at what Education Minnesota reported spending \$763,176 on as "chargeable" activities:



Kim Crockett is vice president, senior policy fellow & general counsel at Center of the American Experiment. She has worked closely with Rebecca Friedrichs and a national coalition in support of employee freedom.

Kim's research, writing and advocacy focuses on public-sector unions and labor law, public pensions, refugee resettlement, and the Metropolitan Council (regional government and transit).

- Conducted the Minority Leadership Training Program and Women's Leadership Training Program.
- Provided diversity, social justice, LGBTQ, bullying, sexual harassment, cultural competency, and ELL training to assist Association, leaders, and members.
- Coordinated the engagement of Human and Civil Rights State Coordinators to support greater connection to the human and civil rights and social economic justice work occurring at the national, state, and local level.

If this is what passes for "collective bargaining" it is no wonder that many of our K-12 schools, like Edina and St. Paul, are marked by increasing chaos, violence and achievement gaps. And that teachers, unhappy with their work environment and compensation, are leaving the profession at increasing rates. According to the

Minnesota Department of Education, 15 percent of teachers leave after the first year of teaching, and 32 percent are gone within five years.

Rebecca Friedrichs and other teachers argue that the profession of teaching and the K-12 educational system have been harmed by pervasive leftism and

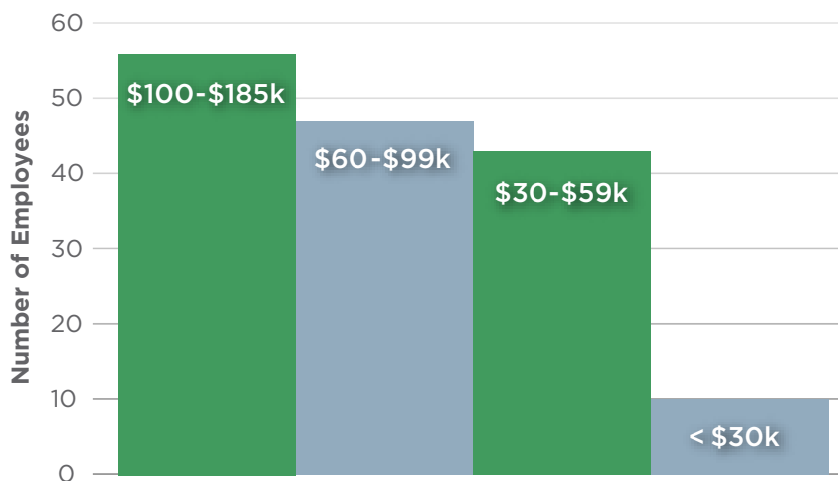
[Mark] Janus, a social worker employed by the State of Illinois, is asking the Court to look back at a decision made by the Supreme Court in 1977 (*Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*) that upheld legislation forcing public-sector employees to pay "agency" or so-called "fair-share" fees to government unions.

its obsession with identity politics, so aggressively espoused by the teachers' union. Here is more union spending data to prove it.

Union Spending: The Union as an Enterprise and Powerful Political Player. Education Minnesota files disclosure forms with information about its revenues. Unfortunately, these disclosure forms provide very limited and often confusing data about how the revenues are spent.

According to California Policy Cen-

FIGURE 1: 2016 SALARY RANGES FOR 156 EDUCATION MINNESOTA EMPLOYEES



ter’s union expert Ed Ring, “In general, public-sector unions have very few reporting requirements when it comes to disclosing their financial positions to their members and to the public... Under state law, the financial reporting requirements of the public-sector unions are more scant than under federal law. In fact, they are almost non-existent.”

The data that is available supports the conclusion, however, that the entire enterprise of Education Minnesota is devoted to the preservation of the union, its power and the advancement of a distinctly leftist political agenda.

Education Minnesota collected about \$57 million in dues or fees (between \$800 and \$1,400 per teacher) in 2015-2016 and reported total disbursements of \$60,356,998 with only \$2.7 million going toward “Representational Activities” as

defined by Education Minnesota.

The data about the union as an enterprise should be of special interest to teachers.

Education Minnesota’s federal financial report detailed the salaries of 156 employees, from the president Denise Specht who earned \$184,000, to dozens of employees paid \$90,000 to \$180,000 and dozens of operatives who earn much more than teachers in the classroom. Education Minnesota spent approximately \$21 million on salaries and benefits for its own employees in 2016.

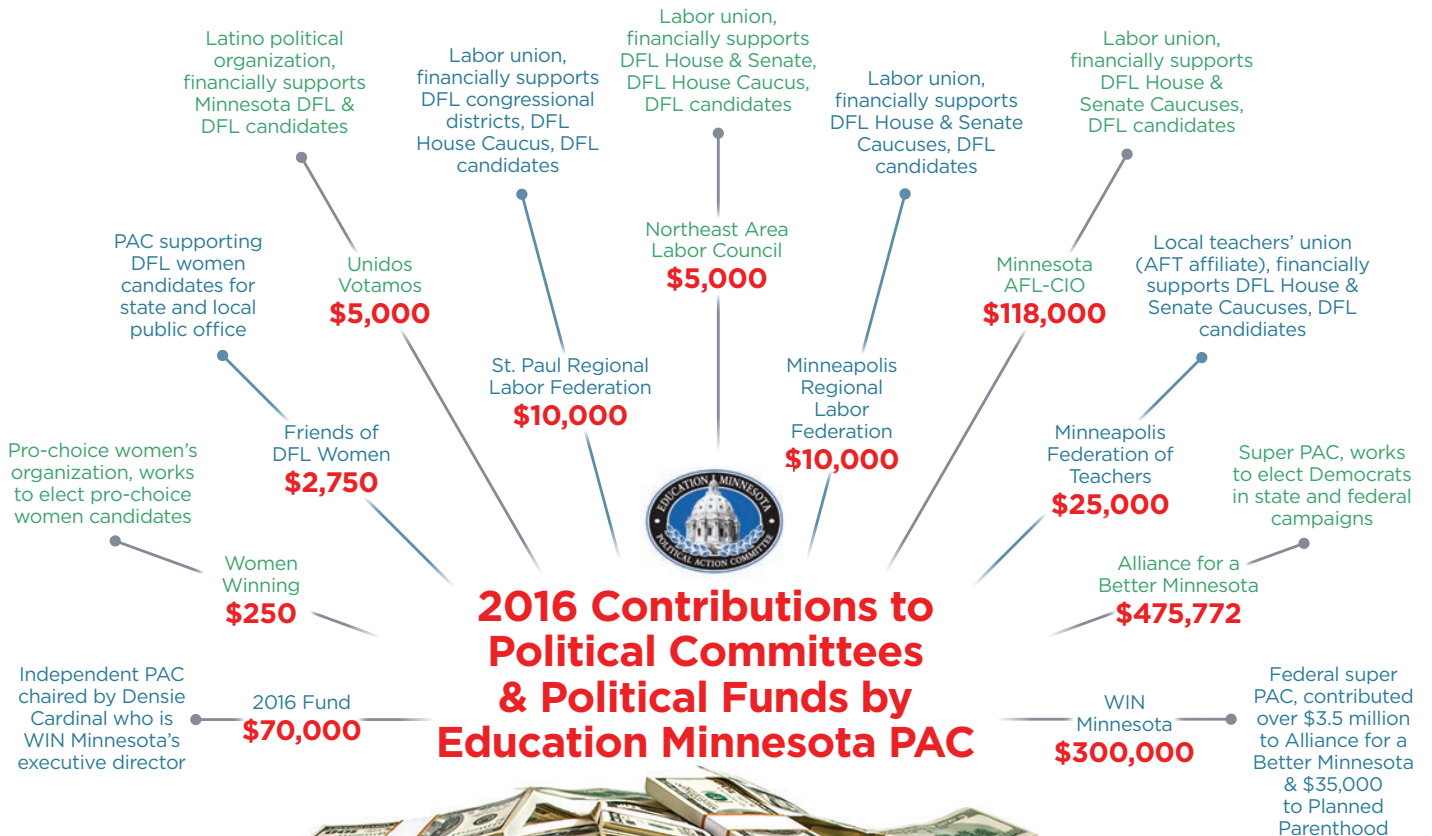
The union also reported spending \$1.3 million on “Political Activities and Lobbying” but detail was only provided for \$534,691 of those disbursements. Two notable transactions include: \$25,000 to Women Winning—a women’s advocacy organization “more dedicated than ever”

following Hillary Clinton’s defeat to “electing pro-choice women to all levels of public office”—and \$20,000 to Minnesota Voice—a nonprofit devoted to getting out the vote among the “under-represented” and grassroots “democracy.”

The PAC and the Foundation. Education Minnesota uses its membership card to collect revenue for a political action committee (PAC), currently a charge of \$25.00 a year. The union card also authorizes the payment of \$5.00 a year toward the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, an educational non-profit.

If a teacher does not wish to contribute to the PAC or foundation, he or she must request a refund every year. In other words, teachers must “opt out” annually. This default in favor of funding the PAC

How Does Education Minnesota Spend its PAC Money?



\$1,021,772

and the foundation makes it unlikely that teachers will do the annual paperwork required to save \$30.00.

Here are the instructions:

Members desiring a refund from either the PAC or the foundation must mail, email or hand deliver a signed original refund request form specifying the member's refund request within 30 days of submitting this membership application form. Members can request the form by calling 800-652-9073.

How is PAC Money Spent? DFL political affiliates, such as the DFL House Caucus and DFL Senate Districts, received \$873,000 in contributions (cash and in-kind donations) compared to \$1,400 that went to the House Republican Campaign Committee and the GOP

FIGURE 2:
2016 CONTRIBUTIONS TO
POLITICAL PARTIES BY EDUCATION
MINNESOTA PAC



Senate Victory fund. (See Figure 2)

The PAC also disbursed over \$1 million to political committees and political funds. These organizations and funds align with left-wing ideologies and overwhelmingly support Democratic or DFL candidates. (See illustration on page 33)

What would happen if instead of obsessing over race, gender and other

identity politics, and working so hard to divide us, Education Minnesota focused on supporting teachers as professionals so all children, no matter their zip code, learn to read, write and do arithmetic?

Teachers All Over Minnesota in 2016 were “With Her” Whether They “Felt the Bern” or “Wanted to Make America Great Again.” While the teaching profession as a group leans “liberal,” teachers in Minnesota are split

But even if all teachers were Democrats, and fully embraced the same political ideology as Education Minnesota, is it proper for the state to facilitate and collect the payment of forced union dues that are spent in support of the union’s political activities?

between the GOP and the DFL, and some are “independent.”

But even if all teachers were Democrats, and fully embraced the same political ideology as Education Minnesota, is it proper for the state to facilitate and collect the payment of forced union dues that are spent in support of the union’s political activities?

Wouldn’t it be more appropriate for teachers, and other public employees, to make a voluntary donation to the party and candidates of their choice in a transaction entirely separate from the collection of union dues? After all, within the DFL, there are hotly contested races and policy debates. Why are teachers forced to support the candidate or issue that the union prefers, in effect spending against and undermining their own political preferences?

Teachers, for example, who supported presidential candidate Bernie Sanders in 2016 were forced to support Hillary

Clinton and the DNC. And teachers who supported a Republican candidate were forced to support Clinton and the DNC.

How has Education Minnesota Responded to Janus? In the summer of 2017, Education Minnesota increased union dues by \$14. The union told members the increase would be used, in anticipation of *Janus*, to get all teachers to sign an auto-renewal union card. The union is not confident that when given a choice, teachers will remain in the union, so it plans to trap them.

Here is what the link on the front page of Education Minnesota’s website says:

Renew your membership. Show your commitment to our union. We’re asking all active members to show administration, students, communities and each other that we are committed to working together to improve public education.

But here is the fine print of the union card; the font is so small, that it is difficult to read:

I agree to submit dues to Education Minnesota and hereby request and voluntarily authorize my employer to deduct from my wages.... This authorization shall remain in effect and *shall be automatically renewed from year to year, irrespective of my membership in the union, unless I revoke it by submitting written notice to both my employer and the local union during the seven-day period that begins on September 24 and ends on September....* (Emphasis added)

If Janus wins, even if a teacher “opts out” during that narrow seven-day window, the union is expected to argue that he or she will have to do it again the following year. And every year after that.

That is why several *amicus* briefs, including the Friedrichs’ *amicus* brief, cited Education Minnesota’s “renewal card” as an example of how unions plan to undermine a decision in favor of Janus. *The Wall Street Journal* editors noted, “Rebecca Friedrichs argues persuasively that the Court should require that governments receive affirmative

consent to deduct union dues. Otherwise, governments may concoct bureaucratic obstacles to workers who want to opt out of unions...”

An Opportunity for Unions to Change. What would happen if instead of treating teachers as captives, Education Minnesota treated teachers as valued clients or potential customers? What would happen if Education Minnesota could no longer take its revenues for granted, or get dues collected by the state?

We can look to our neighbors in Michigan and Wisconsin for a range of answers.

What would happen if instead of obsessing over race, gender and other identity politics, and working so hard to divide us, Education Minnesota focused on supporting teachers as professionals so all children, no matter their zip code, learn to read, write and do arithmetic?

In states like Michigan that have recently passed right-to-work laws, about 25 percent of teachers stopped paying dues, according to the Mackinac Center. Wisconsin, which saw a more dramatic change, adopted right-to-work, but it went even further by limiting the scope of bargaining and ending the collection of dues for the unions (Act 10).

According to the MacIver Institute, “Before the passage of Act 10, the state’s largest teachers’ union had almost 100,000 members. As of 2015, the union stood at just 36,074 active members. WEAC [Wisconsin Education Association Council] also suffered the largest revenue decline among all state teachers’ unions in 2014-15. During just that time, the union’s revenue dropped

‘FOR KIDS & COUNTRY’

Rebecca Friedrichs may have lost last year’s court battle over fair-share, but she maintains her fervor for the ongoing battle.

Win or lose, Rebecca Friedrichs is looking to the future with a new movement called “For Kids & Country” (www.ForKidsAndCountry.com). She is deploying her decades of experience as an educator to tell the country about how the teachers’ union has pulled our schools, and our nation, down. “For Kids & Country” tells the stories of teachers, parents and students bullied by teachers’ unions across the country.

Says Friedrichs: “As a teacher, I have been forced for decades to fund a union whose policies and political agenda undermine the sacred ‘Education Triangle’—the relationship between teachers and the children and parents we’re hired to serve—thus damaging American schools. I hope the Court will end the practice of forced unionism by restoring First Amendment rights to Americans like me so the Education Triangle can be restored, and unions can learn to serve the needs of employees instead of serving themselves.”

more than \$3 million. Symbolizing its sharp decline as a political powerhouse propped up by coercive dues money, the union even put its lavish 51,000-square-foot headquarters up for sale in 2016.”

According to the United Federation of Teachers, a union affiliate, “The labor movement’s footprint in Wisconsin has shrunk. Last year, less than half of Wisconsin’s 464 school districts had certified teachers’ unions, the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission reported. Statewide, only 9 percent of Wisconsin workers were unionized in 2016, down from 14.1 percent in 2011.”

MacIver reports that overall public-sector union membership, however, is up. “While union membership is now confined to those workers who actually want to be in a union, the number of state and local government workers in Wisconsin has increased by 10,000 between 2013 and 2016, according to the Census Bureau. So claims by people like [AFSCME President Lee] Saunders that letting workers opt out of a union will decimate public services simply aren’t true.”

Conclusion. The *Abood* decision allows states to treat public employees as second-class citizens, and sanctioned

a massive transfer of wealth from the paychecks of teachers, cops and social workers, into the coffers of government unions. These affiliated unions quickly became the most formidable and well-funded political machine in the country.

That machine has corrupted the electoral and legislative process from local school board elections to the presidency of the United States; government unions, for almost half a century, are a major player in determining who runs for office and who wins. In effect, they elect who they will be bargaining with, and sit on both sides of the table. Is it any wonder that Americans are frustrated with our government and the tenor of politics today?

All because the Court refused to admit in 1977 that public-sector bargaining is political.

If the Court rules for *Janus*, the case will mark the beginning of a new era in Minnesota, where public employee support is not taken for granted. It will not mark the end of conflict between left and right, or the end of public unions, but over time, the most divisive forces on the left, that fuel so much division and chaos, will have a lot less money to do so. ★

Why Minnesota Should Pull the Plug on

THE DEATH TAX

By driving out wealthy citizens, it results in a loss of net revenue for the state's coffers.

By John Phelan

Britain's Prime Minister David Lloyd George is supposed to have said of the Inheritance Tax, "Death is the most convenient time to tax rich people." A century on, these taxes, known as inheritance, estate, or death taxes, remain with us. The *Economist* wrote recently that, "A permanent, hereditary elite makes a society unhealthy and unfair" and concluded that "the positive argument for steep inheritance taxes is that they promote fairness and equality."

This assumes that people will simply hand over their wealth. But the majority of the consequences of any action are unintended ones. Estate taxes do other things besides bring in revenue. Specifically, they incentivize people to take action to avoid paying them. There are a number of ways in which people can do this, so many, in fact, that, according to the 2006 report of the Joint Economic Committee, "two liberal economists have noted, 'tax liabilities depend on the skill of the estate planner, rather than on capacity to pay.'" As President Trump's former Chief Economic Adviser Gary Cohn put it more bluntly, "Only morons pay the estate tax."

One of these methods is simply to move from a jurisdiction with an estate tax or with one at a high rate to one without or with a lower rate. In the United States, where



John Phelan is Center of the American Experiment's economist. He is a graduate of Birkbeck College, University of London, where he earned a BSc in Economics, and of the London School of Economics, where he earned an MSc.

He worked in finance for ten years before becoming a professional economist. He worked at Capital Economics in London, where he wrote reports ranging from the impact of Brexit on the British economy to the effect of government regulation on cell phone coverage.



estate tax rates vary from state to state, this is a particularly important avenue of estate tax avoidance.

So, the effects of estate taxes work in two directions, from a government revenue point of view. On the one hand, they increase overall revenues by the amount due from taxable estates. We can call this the *revenue effect*. On the other, they reduce overall revenues by the amount of taxable income and wealth that people leaving the jurisdiction to avoid the tax take with them. We can call this the *incentive effect*. If the latter amount is greater than the former, then the estate tax actually lowers government revenues.

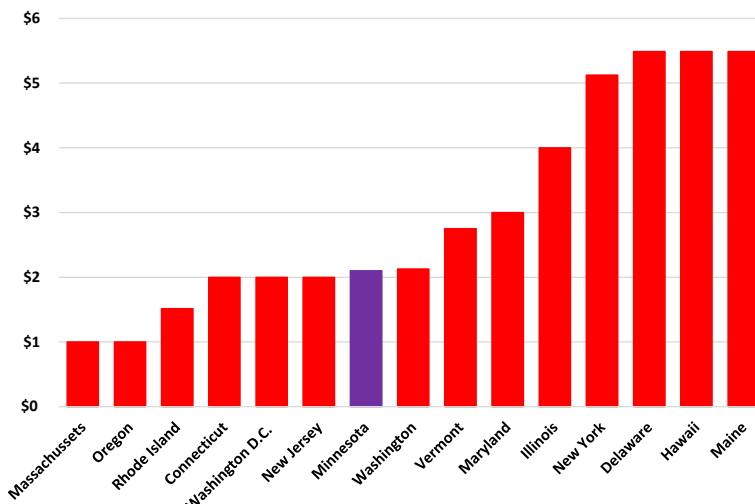
The revenue side of the equation is straightforward enough. In 2016, Minnesota's state government took in \$183.2 million in estate tax revenue. This represents just 0.8 percent of all state tax revenues. The average revenue over the ten years 2007 to 2016, was \$149.4 million. Over this period, the exemption was lower, but revenues were

Individuals seeking to avoid the estate tax have a number of options open to them. They can make gifts and charitable donations. They can switch their wealth into tax free vehicles. Or they can just leave.

still comparatively small.

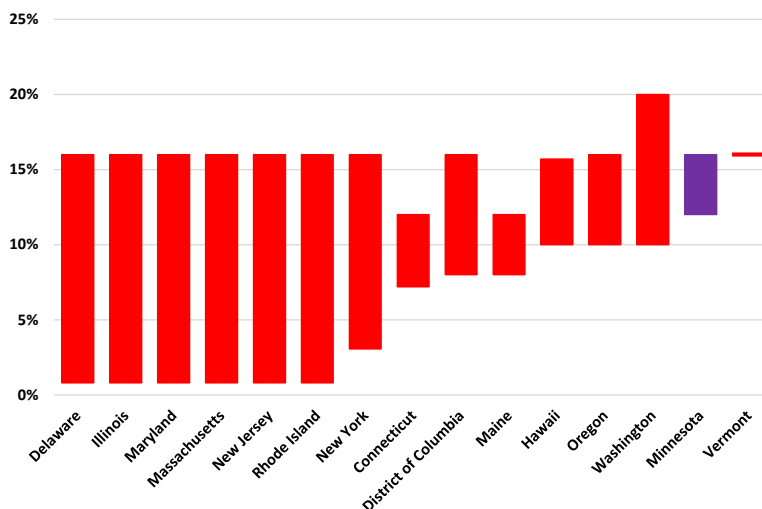
But while the dollar value of the revenue effect is known, that of the incentive effect is harder to calculate. No figures exist for the number of people who leave Minnesota because of its estate tax or what their tax liabilities might be if they stayed. However, there is information from surveys and official statistics that allows us to estimate the dollar value of the incentive effect which we can then set against the revenue effect. This enables us, for the first time, to estimate the cost of Minnesota's estate tax.

FIGURE 1: ESTATE TAX EXEMPTIONS, IN MILLIONS



Source: The Tax Foundation

FIGURE 2: ESTATE TAX HIGHEST AND LOWEST RATES



Source: The Tax Foundation

Taxes and incentives

Incentives are a large part of economics. People act to increase their welfare. They compare estimates of costs to estimates of benefits arising from given actions. Whether it is schoolteachers, realtors, drug dealers, sumo wrestlers, or bagel sellers, incentives inform people's decision-making. In the financial sphere, the decisions over whether to work, spend, save, or invest, are driven by one's estimate of the net benefits of doing so.

Taxes affect incentives. They impact an individual's estimate of his or her take-home pay, the prices they might

face, their dividends, or their capital gains. In each case, a tax will lower the estimated benefits of working, spending, saving, and investing. It is not controversial to say that taxes affect incentives. Much public policy is based on the idea that if we tax things, we get less of them (e.g. smoking and drinking alcohol). When policymakers levy such taxes, they are admitting that they believe that taxes have a disincentive effect. Curiously, however, policymakers are frequently loathe to apply this logic consistently. While they tax smoking and drinking in the belief that there will be less smoking and drinking, they tax

work and investment believing that people will go on working and investing just as before.

The estate tax in Minnesota

Minnesota taxes estates more heavily than most. It is one of only fourteen states plus the District of Columbia to levy an estate tax. The state employs a “zero bracket” to exempt estates under \$2.1 million. Eight of those fourteen states and the District of Columbia have a higher exemption. The state is currently phasing in an increase in the exemption, ultimately scheduled to reach \$3 million in 2020. Above this, Minnesota imposes a six-bracket estate tax. The state’s starting rate of estate taxation—12 percent—is higher than any of the other jurisdictions that levy one and equal to the top rate in both Connecticut and Maine. Its top rate is 16 percent. Only the state of Washington has a higher top rate. (See Figure 1 and Figure 2)

The effects of the estate tax

Individuals seeking to avoid the estate tax have a number of options open to them. They can make gifts and charitable donations. They can switch their wealth into tax free vehicles. Or they can just leave.

There is evidence that a substantial number of people do just this. In 2016, Center of the American Experiment released a report titled *Do Minnesotans Move to Escape the Estate Tax?* It found that, from 1995 to 2007, the average value of estates reported on federal returns were consistently about the same in states with and without an estate tax. But beginning in 2008, two years after the federal credit for state death taxes was fully repealed, states with no death tax began reporting higher average estate values. In 2014, the average estate value in states with no death tax was \$7.5 million, compared to \$6.1 million in states that impose a death tax. From a high of 104.2 percent in 2002, the average estate value reported on federal tax returns in states that retained a death tax declined to 81.6 percent of the value of estates in states with no death tax.

After Minnesota increased the top income tax rate, amended the estate tax, and added a gift tax in 2013, the Minnesota Society of Certified Public

Accountants surveyed their members. They found that “more than 86 percent of respondents said clients had asked for advice regarding residency options and moving from Minnesota.” Ninety-one percent said the number of clients asking about moving increased from previous years.

Another 2016 report from the Center, *Minnesotans on the Move to Lower Tax States*, found that of the ten states receiving the most taxable income from Minnesotans leaving the state, only Washington had an estate tax in 2014, although North Carolina also had one until 2013. Of those states contributing income, on net, to Minnesota, three continue to impose a robust estate tax since 2014. However, like North Carolina, Indiana and Ohio only recently repealed their estate taxes. Furthermore, Iowa and Nebraska technically impose an inheritance tax, but in the case of Iowa it does not fall on lineal heirs and Nebraska’s tax on lineal heirs is just 1 percent. Thus, over most of the 10-year period, seven of the ten states contributing net income to Minnesota imposed some type of death tax.

Whereas people can move their domicile, financial accounts and even businesses out of state to avoid estate tax, they cannot move a farm. If people are moving to avoid the estate tax, then the immobile farm assets remaining in the state will year after year account for a greater share of wealth reported on state estate tax returns. A recent study by the Minnesota Department of Revenue suggests this is exactly what is happening. When a new law was passed in 2011 permitting a Minnesotan estate to claim a \$4 million deduction for qualified farm and small business property when passed on to qualified heirs, the Minnesota Department of Revenue projected the farm property deduction would reduce estate tax revenues by only \$2.3 million in FY 2013. In fact, the revenue loss was actually around \$16.3 million, 7 times higher than projected. Without the farm deduction, estate tax collections from estates with qualifying farms would have been 11.4 percent of total estate tax collections, a surprisingly large share.

And there are also residents who

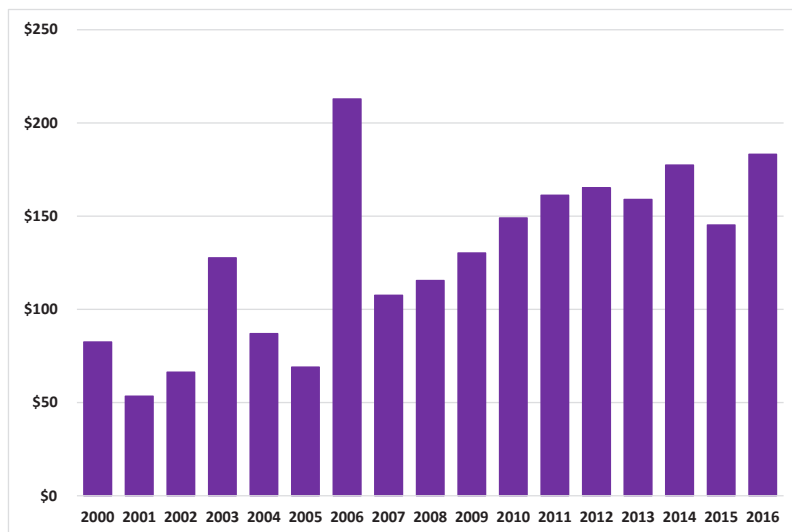


Overall, the estate tax cost the Minnesota state government \$47.3 million in lost revenue in 2015-2016.



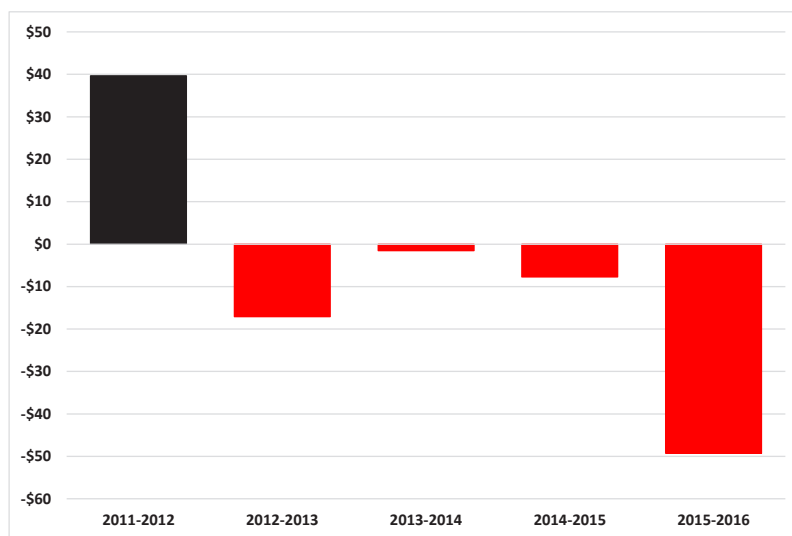
If people are moving to avoid the estate tax, then the immobile farm assets remaining in the state will year after year account for a greater share of wealth reported on state estate tax returns.

FIGURE 3: MINNESOTA'S ESTATE TAX RECEIPTS, IN MILLIONS



Source: Minnesota Department of Revenue

FIGURE 4: NET FISCAL COST/BENEFIT OF MINNESOTA'S ESTATE TAX, IN MILLIONS



Source: Center of the American Experiment

don't move to a state because of its taxes. Economists David Clark and William Hunter find that "all migrants aged 55 to 69 avoid counties in states with high inheritance and estate taxes." Karen Conway and Andrew Houtenville find that, among the elderly, "low personal income and death taxes also encourage migration." Jon Bakija and Joel Slemrod find that "high state inheritance and estate taxes and sales taxes have statistically significant, but modest, negative

impacts on the number of federal estate tax returns filed in a state." Ali Sina Önder and Herwig Schlunk find that "the elderly prefer to migrate to states with low inheritance taxes."

Individuals seeking to escape high estate and inheritance tax rates do not even have to leave the state completely. Depending on state domicile laws, it can often be possible to establish legal residence in another state without moving there full time, particularly if an indi-

Table 1: Tax revenue gain/loss resulting from Minnesota's estate tax, in millions

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Tax revenue loss resulting from the estate tax (in millions)	\$ 124.5	\$ 174.5	\$ 177.4	\$ 151.7	\$ 230.5
Estate tax receipts (in millions)	\$ 165.3	\$ 158.9	\$ 177.4	\$ 145.3	\$ 183.2
Revenue gain/loss (in millions)	\$ 40.7	\$ (15.5)	\$ 0.0	\$ (6.4)	\$ (47.3)

Source: Center of the American Experiment

vidual—often a retiree with significant flexibility—is willing to reside elsewhere for part of the year. Minnesota requires a nonresident to reside outstate over half of the year, and to have the bona fides of residency established in that outstate location. A current Minnesota resident can spend over half of the year outstate, establish residency in that outstate location through sufficient changes in

A survey of its members conducted by the Minnesota Society of Certified Public Accountants found that more than 86 percent of respondents said clients had asked for advice regarding residency options and moving from Minnesota.

driver's license, voting, homestead status on real estate taxes, etc., and yet retain a part-year residency of less than 183 days in Minnesota.

The effects of Minnesota's estate tax

So which effect of the estate tax weighs heaviest in Minnesota; the revenue effect or the incentive effect? If it's the incentive effect, then the tax represents an overall income loss to the state government. But, owing to a dearth of official data, finding out which is the dominant effect is no easy task.

The revenue side of the equation is

straightforward enough. In 2016, Minnesota's state government took in \$183.2 million in estate tax revenue. (See Figure 3)

But how do we quantify the incentive effect? To answer this, we need some estimate of the number of people who leave the state due to the estate tax and the tax revenues they take with them. When an individual leaves a state, he or she does not just take that year's tax revenue but all the subsequent years as well.

Fortunately, we have information that allows us to estimate these figures. In 2016, *Twin Cities Business* magazine published an article titled "Minnesota's Great Wealth Migration." This was based on a survey of 400 accounting, legal, wealth management, private equity/investment banking, family business consulting, and related financial services companies in Minnesota, asking them about their clients. From this we have estimates of the number of wealthy Minnesotans who moved to avoid the state's taxes generally. We also have an estimate of their median taxable income of \$677,000 annually. From this we can estimate their annual state income tax liability and, with figures from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, their state sales and excise tax liabilities. From the Census Bureau, we have data by age and income on income tax filers who left the state covering the years 2011-2012 to 2015-2016. This enables us to estimate how many earning and taxpaying years these workers had left for state income tax, or years of life for state sales and excise taxes.

Applying a present value calculation to these amounts, we can estimate the total value of income and sales tax revenues that left Minnesota in each year as a result of the estate tax. This is the incentive effect side of the equation. These are given in Table 1. Looking

only at individuals aged over 55, whom the literature suggests are most sensitive to the estate tax, we can assume that they work until they are 70 and that 67 percent of those aged 55 to 65 and 80 percent of those aged 65 and over who leave because of tax do so because of the estate tax. In this case, the estate tax was a net revenue loser for the Minnesota state government in three of the last five years. For example, while the estate tax brought a total of \$183.2 million in revenue to the state government in 2015-2016, the people who left because of the estate tax took with them an estimated \$230.5 million in forgone income and state and excise taxes. Overall, the estate tax cost the Minnesota state government \$47.3 million in lost revenue in 2015-2016, as shown in Figure 4.

Conclusion

The idea that if you tax something you get less of it is standard public policy when it comes to cigarettes or pollution. Even so, policymakers who apply this logic in these cases abandon it when it comes to things like the estate tax. In this case it is assumed that we can tax something and get just as much of it as we did before. This would seem to be unsound theory. Our estimates suggest it is likely to be the case in practice.

I opened this article with a quote from Prime Minister David Lloyd George. I'll close it with a quote from his countryman, Rolling Stone Keith Richards: "The whole business thing is predicated a lot on the tax laws... It's why we rehearse in Canada and not in the U.S. A lot of our astute moves have been basically keeping up with tax laws, where to go, where not to put it. Whether to sit on it or not. We left England because we'd be paying 98 cents on the dollar. We left, and they lost out. No taxes at all." ★

≡ INTERVIEW

THE TRIUMPH OF TRUMP *onomics*

Economist **Stephen Moore** tells American Experiment President **John Hinderaker** how the business-friendly policies of the federal government have jump-started the American economy.



Stephen Moore, who formerly wrote on the economy and public policy for The Wall Street Journal, is the Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Project for

Economic Growth, at The Heritage Foundation. He is a founder of the Club for Growth.

Tell us about your introduction to Donald Trump.

I have to say I had a negative opinion of Trump before that meeting. I had never met him before, but when I went into that meeting, he was so incredibly charming, he was gracious, he was attentive. He couldn't have been nicer. I hate the word charismatic, but he is charismatic. He has that aura about him.

The first thing I said to Donald Trump, was, "Donald, I don't know if I love you, but I sure love your voters. I love these middle class, working class

Americans who have been left behind and have not felt this so-called recovery under Obama. And I love the fact that you're reaching out to those forgotten people, the forgotten men and women of the American economy."

I've been around politicians my whole life. I've known governors, presidents, congressmen, city council members. This is the thing that I think is most interesting about Donald Trump. Ninety-five percent of the politicians I've met with are wonderful people in public, and jerks in private. Donald Trump is a wonderful person in



private and a jerk in public.

I think that he has the right perspective on how to solve a lot of the major problems that face America. As with very successful American politicians, I'd go back to Reagan, or Clinton, or Obama, he has a charisma about him that is very engaging.

One of the reasons I supported him is he's a successful businessman. He understands how to meet a payroll, how to make a profit. We've had too many presidents and politicians who don't know anything about business. I would say that Trump, more than anything else, is pro-business, and that's good.

Not everybody who knows about business also understands economics. How would you assess Donald Trump's understanding of basic economics?

You can't succeed in business without instinctively understanding the very basics. You know that you have to make a profit and that profit means that you have to be efficient in all sorts of things that are alien to government.

Look, Trump is not an economist. He's wrong on some things. I disagree with him on trade, for example. Free trade is important. The United States benefits from having markets all over the world. I disagree with him about the dollar. Trump thinks a weak dollar will make our exports less expensive and the imports into the United States more expensive. Unfortunately, that's not a good way of looking at it because if you reduce the value of your dollar all the dollars we have in our pocket buy less, by definition, and it makes America poorer.

Moreover, I've told Donald Trump that if the dollar goes down in value, the value of everything that's in dollars will fall. Like stocks. If you want to see a stock market reversal, weaken the dollar. Weak presidents have weak dollars. Strong and successful presidents, like Reagan, Kennedy, and Clinton, have had strong dollars.

The Administration has accomplished a lot of regulatory reform. What are its most important aspects, and how significant is that to the economy?

Huge. I think it's misunderstood. It's not so much that Trump has rolled back regulation, though he has, and that's important. Remember, he promised to repeal two regulations for every new one. He's repealed something like 20 regulations. I think it has to do with the fact that he's put pro-business people in charge of these agencies. People are policy. The personnel matter.

I'm having dinner next week with EPA Director Scott Pruitt. He is keeping the environment clean and safe but he's doing it in a way in which our businesses can succeed. Under Obama, it was almost like the regulators wanted to put businesses out of business. It makes a big difference to address regulations in a way that supports business rather than trying to kill it.

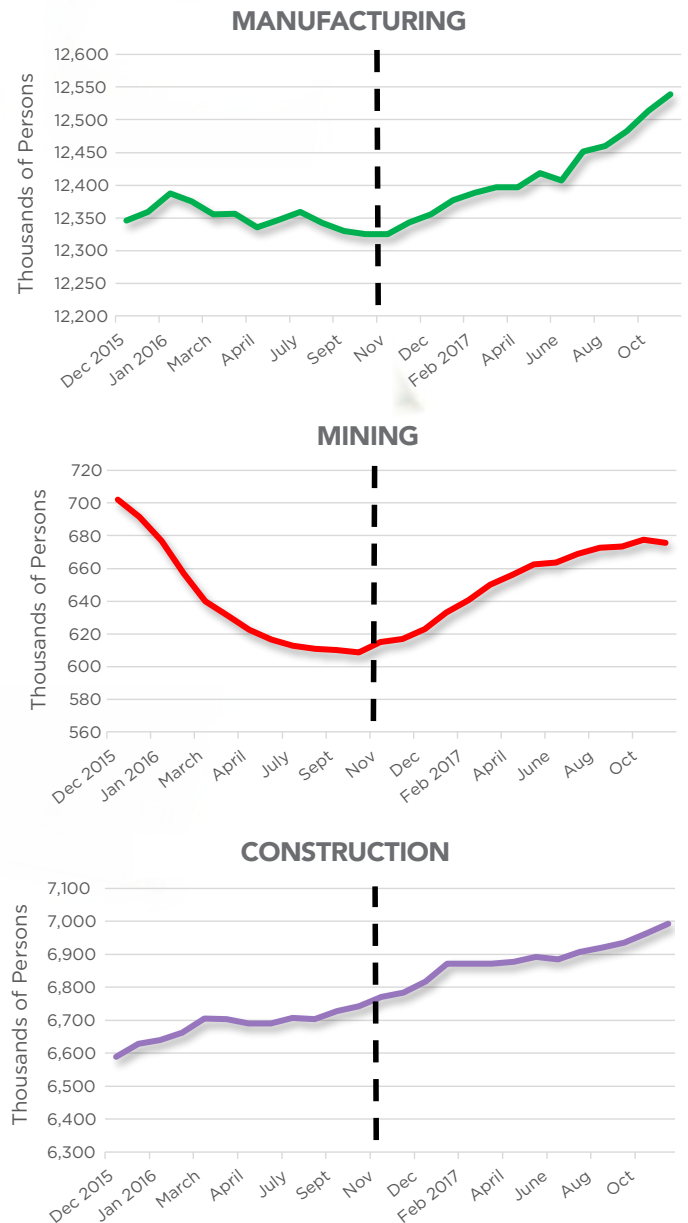
Business people can look forward to four years without having some brand new massive set of regulations imposed on them.

I'm not here to rail against Barack Obama, but his philosophy was pretty much the opposite. Whatever the problem was, we

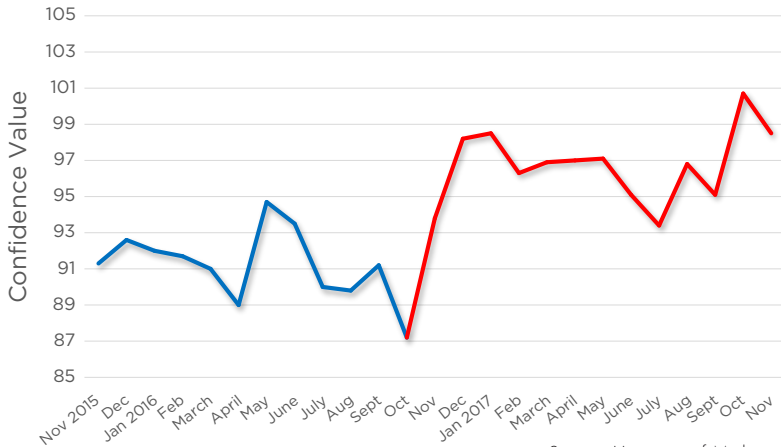
had a government solution for it. We had the \$800 billion stimulus plan. We had Obamacare. We had tax increases on the rich. We had the fed flooding the economy with cheap money and so on. Let me just put it very simply, it didn't work. We got this lousy recovery. If the economy had grown as fast under Obama as it did under the Reagan policies, we would be as a nation \$3 trillion richer today. That's a gigantic number. Three trillion dollars is the equivalent of the entire annual output of Michigan and Ohio and Pennsylvania combined.

I would submit that's why Americans were angry. By the way, there were whole areas of the country that didn't feel the

Growth in Manufacturing, Mining, Construction Since Election



CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX



Source: University of Michigan

and the coal mining jobs. Hillary Clinton, remember what Hillary said? “If I’m elected president, every coal miner will lose their job.” She wonders why she lost West Virginia and Ohio. Look at that. Policy matters. Manufacturing, mining and construction are up by 500,000 jobs in a year. That’s pretty impressive.

The Tax Reform Bill obviously is huge. I think it’s extraordinary that we saw significant benefits from that legislation even before it took effect.

It’s interesting because I was on the front line of this. By early October, the view on Wall Street really changed. Prior to that the view on Wall Street was that the Republicans don’t have their act together; they’re not going to get it passed. Then it started to change, and people started to say, “This

is probably going to pass.” Once that happened, the stock market went way, way up. People were capitalizing. Look, if you cut the taxes on businesses and cut the taxes on profits, that means, by definition, stocks are more valuable because the government is taking a smaller share of them. That means the shareholders have more of the profits.

Liberals keep saying, “Trump didn’t really need to cut taxes because the economy was doing so well already.” Number one, the economy can always grow faster. Number two, they don’t get it that the reason the economy was already doing well is businesses were anticipating the tax cut was going to happen. So, that’s one of the reasons the economy has shifted from two percent growth to three percent growth in just the last year.

You emphasize the paramount importance of economic growth. Would you elaborate on that a bit?

When it comes to financial and economic issues, every problem we face as a nation requires a faster growing economy, whether it’s our national debt, reducing our deficit, fixing our schools, paying for infrastructure improvements, reducing income inequality, reducing poverty, or fixing our cities. We’ve been in a rut now for a decade, where the economy was growing at less than two percent. Did you know, for example, it’s been almost 15 or 16 years since the average American got a pay raise? Their

recovery at all. That’s what’s so interesting about this. Yes, if you lived in Washington, D.C., things were wonderful. Yes, if you lived in Silicon Valley, things were wonderful. Yes, if you lived in Hollywood, things were wonderful.

This is not original to me, but on November 7, 2016, the beatings stopped. I talked to businessmen and women, who were afraid, especially during the later Obama years. They were afraid of what Washington was going to do to them next. Businesses lived through Obamacare, the regulatory assault, massive increases in debt, and the tax increase. They were like: “What’s coming next?” Small business optimism went straight up, literally the day after the election. People said, “Hey, the beatings have stopped.”

Manufacturing, mining, construction are up, up, and up. These are those kind of blue collar jobs that we had been losing for the last 10 or 15 years, and it’s almost like a U-turn. Look at mining. I mean Donald Trump promised that he would bring back mining

I talked to businessmen and women, who were afraid, especially during the later Obama years. They were afraid of what Washington was going to do to them next.



wages are not higher today than they were back in the year 2000, and that was one of the reasons people were so frustrated with the political system.

What we said (during the campaign) is, what if we grow at three percent, not 1.8 percent? By the way, three percent is not shooting for the moon. The average growth rate of the U.S. economy over the last 75 years is 3.3 percent. We're saying, what if we perform even slightly less well than we have over the last 75 years, what if we just get to three percent? By the way, Donald Trump believes we can get growth a lot higher than three percent. Just at three percent, look at the difference that makes. The point I'm making is growth really is critical.

Now the good news is that Donald Trump has only been in office virtually a little bit over a year, and that year that he's been in office, guess what? The economy is growing at three percent. We've already got it up to three percent. That's great. That's great news, we've already got it up to three percent. That was before this tax cut really took hold. That's really good news.

Faster growth is important, and Trump has gone from two to three percent, we hope to get to four percent this year. He has made faster economic growth a centerpiece of his economic agenda.

You have talked about how America's young people seem to be in the dark, not just about technical economic issues, but in understanding the world and world history. That's a depressing thought.

I don't know if it's unique to the Millennials, but there's a sense of entitlement among young people. Look, I'm the father of a couple of Millennials, so this has been a bit of a spoiled generation. One of the mistakes we make as a society is that we need young people working at an earlier age. There's no better way to prepare for life than to get a job when you're 15, or 16, or 17 years old, and learn how to show up for work on time, learn how to run a cash register or whatever it might be.

It troubles me that Americans are starting to begin work at a later age. I've looked at the economic studies on this. One of the predictors of how well people do in terms of their earnings over their life is to look at when they started work. If you start working at 18 and I start working at 13, all else equal, I'm going to have higher success, not from the money that I make but from the skills that I learned in those five years. Look, here's the thing that I think a lot of people don't understand: the most important skills you learn are not the stuff you learn in school, it's the stuff you learn on the job.

Despite that though, you are optimistic about America's future?

I am. Every statistic about the economy is pointing north, whether it's business confidence, business investment, or small business optimism. Unemployment is low. Our problem is not

too many workers but too many jobs, which is a nice problem to have. I think you're going to see a lot of money from abroad flowing into the United States, at least for the next three or four years. I think that we are going to see a big boost in incomes.

I said in an interview a couple weeks ago that the most important measure for Trump in terms of getting reelected in 2020 is not the stock market, not business optimism and not even necessarily the growth rate. It's going to be whether middle-class Americans feel like they're more financially secure, and their lives are better. That's why those bonuses from the Trump Tax Cut are very meaningful.

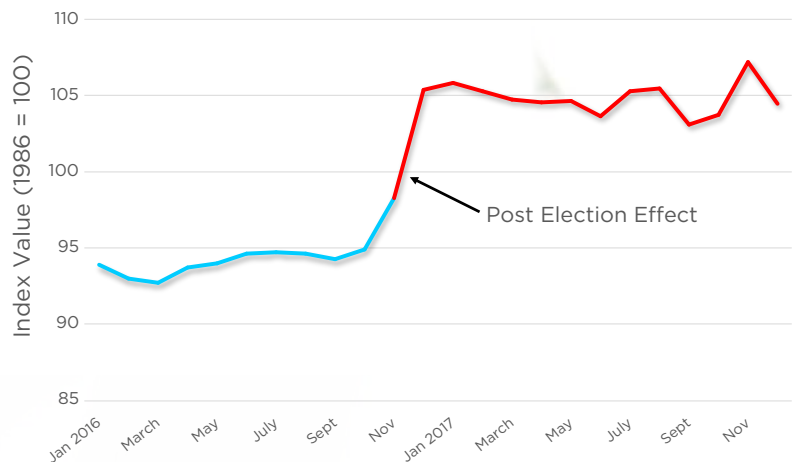
You're a Mid-Westerner by birth but a long-time denizen, if we can say, of Washington, D.C....

The Swamp. Yes.

So, you know "The Swamp" probably about as well as anyone. Are we being governed by people who have really lost touch with what most Americans are experiencing?

One thing I've really developed is an undying respect for the ingeniousness and brilliance of our Founding Fathers. They believed that the power should be in the states, that it should

SMALL BUSINESS OPTIMISM



Source: NFIB

not be concentrated in Washington. The states should compete with each other, and be, as [U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis] Brandeis said, "laboratories of democracy." They would learn from each other about what works and what doesn't. Which is why I'm surprised in Minnesota you haven't learned that right-to-work laws work very well in terms of more jobs.

The concentration of power in Washington is a very negative thing, and it's good news that the American people are rebelling against it. It was the theme that Trump used to close the argument at the end of the campaign.

Did you know that three of the five wealthiest counties in America are in or around Washington, D.C.? That tells you

everything, doesn't it? That tells you everything about how corrupt Washington is. I live in the swamp. I'm a swamp creature. We don't produce anything. All we produce is rules, regulations, agencies, bureaucrats and taxes. We're getting rich at the expense of the rest of the country, and you know what? The rest of the country kind of caught on to it, and they were very hostile to what was going on in Washington.

I've written about the catastrophic ongoing tragedy in Venezuela, which could have been one of the world's richest countries but has descended to the inevitable endpoint of socialism. You can look at North Korea, the history of the Soviet Union, East Germany—any historical instance you want to choose—and conclude that socialism is an unmitigated disaster.

This reminds me of something. One of the great things in my life is that I became great friends with Milton Friedman when he was in his 80s and 90s. Milton was probably the greatest economist of the 20th century. He used to say that the enduring lesson of the 20th century is that socialism is a failure and capitalism is a success. Then he would say that even though everyone agrees that capitalism is a success and socialism is a failure, all our American politicians keep saying, "We just need a little more socialism."

I don't know if it's the politicians, or the schools, or what it is, but that message seems to resonate with a lot of Americans including a frighteningly large number of young Americans.

You're absolutely right. Young people are uninformed, but I think once they get a taste of how the world works, and once they start paying taxes, and aren't coddled in school, their attitudes will change. It's happened with every generation. One thing that worries me about this new generation is this idea of safe spaces, that they're protected from the reality of the real world. I think that's a very dangerous thing because we're not preparing them for life. Life is not a safe zone. Right?

And there's a broader point. Peggy Noonan, who writes for *The Wall Street Journal*, puts it very well when she says that young people seem to think they have a constitutional right not to be offended. Free speech allows me to say things that might offend you or that you disagree with.

And vice versa.

Exactly. When I talk to kids, I say, "You don't have to agree with everything I say. You shouldn't agree with everything I say. You have your own mind, but you should be open-minded to things that you might not believe in and you have to make your own decisions about what's right and what's wrong, and what makes sense and what doesn't." This idea that everybody has to march to the same drummer and that I can't say anything that could possibly offend your sensibilities is ridiculous. It's a real

danger, because it's an affront to the whole idea of free speech.

I don't want to be alarmist about it, but it seems to me that we're seeing a real totalitarian impulse rearing its head on the left.

That's a good point. Again, this is not original to me, but I read somewhere that this could be the first generation in a long time that wants less freedom not more freedom. Doesn't that cheer you up?

I think there's no doubt that this totalitarian impulse is manifesting itself. The only asterisk I would add is I'm not sure they want to limit their own freedom. I'm not sure that they have thought that through.

Right. I think it's a good point, because they've grown up with the internet. Do they want the government to regulate the speech codes on the internet? I don't think they've really thought through what a lot of these things would mean. It really does lead to a 1984-type of big brotherism where everything is regulated, your speech, your looks, your behavior. That is not a path that we want to go down as a nation.

It seems ironic to me that the very same people who will tell you over and over again that President Trump is a fascist are the ones who want to give more power to the federal government.

Nobody understands what fascism is. I mean, first of all, if you look at fascism as someone who tells you that you can accomplish things that are impossible,

they're demigods. Wait a minute, we just had a president who said he could stop the rise of the oceans. I mean, who's the fascist demigod here? I mean, Barack Obama has a lot of characteristics that could be considered a lot more fascistic than Donald Trump.

Like the issuance of unconstitutional executive orders, which he did on a number of occasions.

Barack Obama didn't get passed virtually a single bill in his second four years in office. Everything he did was through the executive orders, and Trump has that tendency, too. Separation of powers is the genius of our federal system, and we're moving away from that. If liberals have control of the court, they want the court to make the decisions. If they have control of the legislature, they want the legislature to make the decisions. If they have control of the White House, then the White House should make the decisions.

It troubles me that the modern-day left believes—they truly believe—that the end justifies the means. So, because they have virtue on their side, whatever they can do to get to that point is acceptable because they are virtuous people. That's a really dangerous thing to believe. ★

We've had too many presidents and politicians who don't know anything about business. I would say that Trump, more than anything else, is pro-business, and that's good.

THE POLL

We introduce our new focus on public opinion.



John Hinderaker

Many polls focus almost exclusively on the horse race aspect of politics.

The *Thinking Minnesota Poll* will be different—and, we think, much more interesting—because it will focus on issues.

With this issue of *Thinking Minnesota*, we debut an exciting new feature: the *Thinking Minnesota Poll*. The poll is a top-notch, professional product, conducted for American Experiment by Meeting Street Research. Each poll will sample 500 registered Minnesota voters, and will ask their opinions on a variety of topics. In polling, credibility is key. So, we are delighted to be working with Rob Autry, the founder of Meeting Street Research. Before founding Meeting Street, Rob spent 20 years as a partner in Public Opinion Strategies, the prestigious Washington, D.C. pollster.

Our plan is to conduct the survey while we are preparing each issue of *Thinking Minnesota*, and publish some of the results in the magazine. Each quarter, the poll will focus in large part on the subject that is the cover story in the magazine. The cover story in this issue is on alternatives to four-year college degrees, and our poll questions on this topic generated some interesting results. Such as: 71 percent of Minnesotans don't believe a college degree is necessary to achieve the American dream. And an overwhelming majority of Minnesotans—88 percent—say apprenticeships and technical education are good investments for the money.

We used this month's survey to test Minnesotans' attitudes on other issues, as well. For example, we found that among Minnesotans who have an opinion, 72 percent favor abolishing the state's estate tax. As the Center's economist John Phelan writes in this issue, his recent study suggests that Minnesota could repeal its estate tax and probably not lose any net revenue. It might even gain more revenue, in the form of income and sales taxes paid by high net worth residents who otherwise are leaving the state. So, getting rid of the death tax, as it is popularly known, is both good

policy and good politics. What is our legislature waiting for?

We also will use the *Thinking Minnesota Poll* to find out what issues Minnesotans think are most important; to see how many Minnesotans consider themselves conservative, liberal and moderate; to identify how attitudes vary by region and by age; and so on. Another function of the poll will be to test attitudes on an issue—wind energy, say—before the Center conducts a campaign, and then re-test after the campaign is concluded, to see whether we have moved the needle of public opinion.

Many polls focus almost exclusively on the horse race aspect of politics—approval ratings of politicians, who is ahead in a particular race, and so on. The *Thinking Minnesota Poll* will be different—and, we think, much more interesting—because it will focus on issues. Politicians come and go. Much more important, in the long term, is policy. And when it comes to public policy issues, it is generally the citizens who lead and the politicians who follow. We hope that our survey of public opinion in Minnesota will help to guide politicians, no matter which set may be in office at a given time.

And we intend to have some fun with the poll, too. One of these days, for example, I would love to do a poll on sports. What do Minnesotans think of our professional and college sports teams? Who are Minnesota's favorite athletes? Which event gets more attention here, the NBA finals or the high school hockey tournament? And how about food? Am I the only one curious to know how many Minnesotans have actually ever eaten lutefisk?

Thinking Minnesota has just gotten more interesting, more valuable, and more fun than ever. Watch for the *Thinking Minnesota Poll* in future issues, and prepare to be informed, entertained and, perhaps, surprised. ★

You have 99 problems, but we're not one.

(Unless you're on the other side.)

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