

# EPOCH INSIGHT

## Tracking the Unvaccinated

*By Zachary Stieber*



# New CDC Codes Track Vaccination Status

**THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL** and prevention (CDC) implemented new medical codes in 2022 that track Americans' COVID-19 vaccination status. One code is used for "unvaccinated for COVID-19."

The CDC says the goal is "to track people who are not immunized or only partially immunized."

But experts say the codes aren't in line with the standards of the International Classification of Diseases.

"They're treating nonvaccination as if this is a hazardous exposure that therefore merits being recorded as a medical exposure," Dr. Harvey Risch, professor emeritus of epidemiology at the Yale School of Public Health, told Epoch Insight.

"That's never been done, to my knowledge."

Read Zachary Stieber's report for Epoch Insight on page 46 about the CDC's new tracking system and why experts are concerned.

JASPER FAKKERT  
Editor-in-chief



**ON THE COVER**

In 2022, the CDC created new medical codes to track the COVID-19 vaccination status of Americans.

TANJA IVANOVA/GETTY IMAGES

## EPOCH INSIGHT

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**THE LEAD 46 | CDC Tracking**

A medical code for unvaccinated status raises concerns among experts.

A man walks during a snowstorm in Bde Maka Ska Park, against the backdrop of the Minneapolis skyline, on Feb. 22. More than 1,700 U.S. flights were canceled while 6,705 flights were delayed on Feb. 22.

CRAIG LASSIG/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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# SPOTLIGHT

## In the Countryside

**A WOMAN PETS HER HORSES**, with solar panels in the background, at her residence in Hjallerup, Denmark, on Feb. 21. The small village of only 12 households will be home to Northern Europe's largest solar farm, which is currently being built by Danish European Energy.

PHOTO BY MADIS CLAUD RASMUSSEN/RITZAU SCANPIX/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



# The Week

*Kfar Blum's gate under construction in the early days.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF KFAR BLUM



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*“Our subcommittee will be performing a comprehensive review of how the vaccines were developed, approved, and mandated.”*



Rep. Rich McCormick, on Congress members preparing to probe COVID-19 vaccine development.

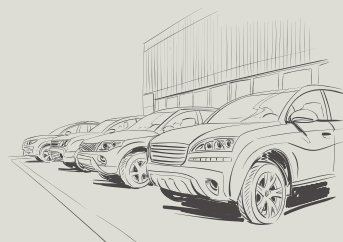
**“We will defend literally every inch of NATO, every inch of NATO.”**

President Joe Biden, in a speech, about continued support for NATO’s security after Russia suspended its participation in a major nuclear arms control treaty.



**\$4.5 BILLION**

Multinational carmaker Stellantis has revealed that its annual net profit rose 26 percent to a record \$17.9 billion in 2022. It announced a \$4.47 billion dividend payout, pending approval by shareholders.



**\$1 Billion**—Home Depot has said it will spend \$1 billion more in annualized compensation for its front-line hourly workers in the United States and Canada.

**7%**  
Mortgage applications plunged as the 30-year fixed mortgage rate inched toward 7 percent as of Feb. 17, the Mortgage Bankers Association says

**50%**  
Influenza vaccine effectiveness was less than 50 percent this season, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**48 Arrested**  
A multi-agency, anti-human-trafficking task force has arrested 48 individuals in a total of 17 recent operations conducted by state, city, and federal officers, the San Diego district attorney announced.

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: BOBBY SANCHEZ FOR THE EPOCH TIMES; OMA RIMARQUES/GETTY IMAGES; SHUTTERSTOCK; RIGHT PAGE FROM TOP: JOE RADELE/GETTY IMAGES; JACK WANG/THE EPOCH TIMES

**VACCINE**

**NFL Players Association Urged to Screen for Heart Issues Over Vaccine Side Effects**

**THE NFL PLAYERS ASSOCIATION** is being urged to offer players cardiac screening in light of the growing concern over COVID-19 vaccines causing heart inflammation.

The Health Freedom Defense Fund urged the association in a letter to implement screening because the vaccines can cause myocarditis, a form of heart inflammation. Young males are the most at risk.

Most NFL players received a COVID-19 vaccine under pressure from teams and the league.



Illegal immigrants board a bus to be driven to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection station in Marathon, Fla., on Jan. 5.

**BORDER CRISIS**

**Biden Administration Unveils Most Restrictive Border Control Measure**

**THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION** has unveiled its most extensive attempt to date to restrict illegal immigration by those claiming asylum in the United States.

Migrants who enter the United States illegally, or who fail to seek protection in countries they pass through en route to the United States, would automatically be considered ineligible for asylum, unless they qualified for certain exceptions, according to the Department of Homeland Security website.

The policy is much more restrictive than current laws, which allow people claiming persecution in their home country to apply for asylum in the United States, regardless of how they enter.

**HEALTH**

**Popular Sleep Aids Increase Dementia Risk: Study**

**RECENT DATA** show that nearly one-third of Americans have insomnia, with many self-medicating to treat the condition. New research finds the price they pay for a good night’s sleep might be very high.

The study followed about 3,000 older white and black adults without dementia over an average duration of nine years, to find that white participants who frequently used sleep medications had a 79 percent increased risk of developing dementia compared to those who rarely used them.

During the study, 20 percent of participants developed dementia, and researchers discovered that whites were three times as likely as blacks to take sleep medications often.

Whites were also much more likely to use sleep aids such as benzodiazepines, trazodone, and “Z-drugs,” which include zopiclone, eszopiclone, zaleplon, and zolpidem (Ambien).

**ELECTION 2024**

**Vivek Ramaswamy Announces 2024 Presidential Bid**

**VIVEK RAMASWAMY**, a biotechnology entrepreneur and author of “Woke, Inc.: Inside Corporate America’s Social Justice Scam,” has thrown his hat into the ring for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

Filings with the Federal Election Commission indicate that Ramaswamy, 37, is registering as a Republican. The political newcomer joins former President Donald Trump and Nikki Haley, former South Carolina governor and United Nations ambassador during the Trump administration, as declared GOP candidates.



Vivek Ramaswamy, author of “Nation of Victims” and “Woke, Inc.”



The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, on Feb. 7, 2019.

**EUROPE**

### European Human Rights Court Rules Russia's Ban on Falun Gong Materials Is Illegal

**THE EUROPEAN COURT** of Human Rights has found it unlawful for Russia to ban publications of the spiritual practice Falun Gong and materials shedding light on the ongoing persecution targeting the faith in China.

In the ruling, the Strasbourg Court held that Russia's ban—imposed on four Falun Gong informational materials, including its main book “Zhuan Falun”—violated freedom of expression as defined in the European Convention on Human Rights.

A district court in Krasnodar, Russia, first issued the ban in August 2008, around the time Beijing was hosting its first Olympic Games. It applied the extremist label on the Falun Gong book, two pamphlets serving to introduce the practice and promote a worldwide Olympic torch protest meant to highlight the human rights abuses targeting the faith, as well as an investigative report on the Chinese regime's state-led forced organ harvesting.

The Strasbourg Court found that the Russian legal authorities, in their 2008 decision and subsequent hearings, didn't conduct their legal analysis of the publications' texts and didn't substantiate the claimed harms of disseminating the materials.

**CHINA-RUSSIA**

### China's Top Diplomat Meets With Putin, Vows to 'Deepen' Russia Partnership

**COMMUNIST CHINA** is pledging to deepen its cooperation with Russia, further cementing the ties between the authoritarian powers.

On Feb. 21, China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, met with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, and the two expressed a desire to evolve the nations' strategic partnership.

The two powers are currently holding joint military exercises off the coast of South Africa. Some NATO leaders believe China is also providing support for Russia in Ukraine.

**AUSTRALIA**

### Spies Pose as Diplomats to Win Over Journalists: Intelligence Agency

**FOREIGN SPIES** are posing as diplomats or reporters to engage and influence journalists, Australia's domestic spy chief Mike Burgess says.

In his wide-ranging Annual Threat Assessment speech, the head of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation also revealed that his agency recently disrupted a “hive of spies” that had operated in Australia for many years.

**UK**

### UK Companies Testing 4-Day Workweek Plan: Report

**A LARGE MAJORITY** of companies in the United Kingdom that took part in a test of a four-day workweek say they plan to continue the arrangement, citing increased productivity and business performance.

A total of 61 companies and about 2,900 workers took part in the trial of a reduced workweek from June to December 2022.

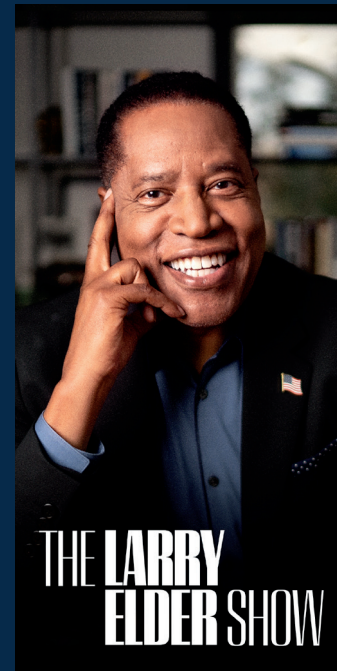
The pilot was organized by the not-for-profit organization 4 Day Week Global, in collaboration with the think tank Autonomy and researchers at Boston College and the University of Cambridge.

Ninety-two percent of organizations that took part in the trial say they will continue with a four-day week while of the other five companies, two have opted to extend the trial and three are pausing for the moment, according to a published report from the study's organizers.



The pandemic has shifted people's working preferences in the United Kingdom.

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# The Week in Photos



**1.** A ski participant competes in the second run of the men's slalom at the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Courchevel, France, on Feb. 19.



**2.** A young Viking re-enactor prepares to march during the Yorvik Viking Festival in York, England, on Feb. 18.



**3.** Participants of the Betong 50 trail race reach the sea mist of Jarohkanga during the "Amazean Jungle by UTMB" event in Betong, Thailand, on Feb. 18.

1.

2.

3.

**4.** A parrot perches on a tree branch on the outskirts of Guwahati, India, on Feb. 21.

**5.** A car drives past collapsed buildings in Antakya, Turkey, on Feb. 20, after a 7.8-magnitude earthquake hit the country on Feb. 6.

**6.** A man stands in front of the Heavenly Hundred Heroes Memorial to pay tribute to participants killed during a 2014 demonstration against the government, in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Feb. 20.



6.



4.

5.



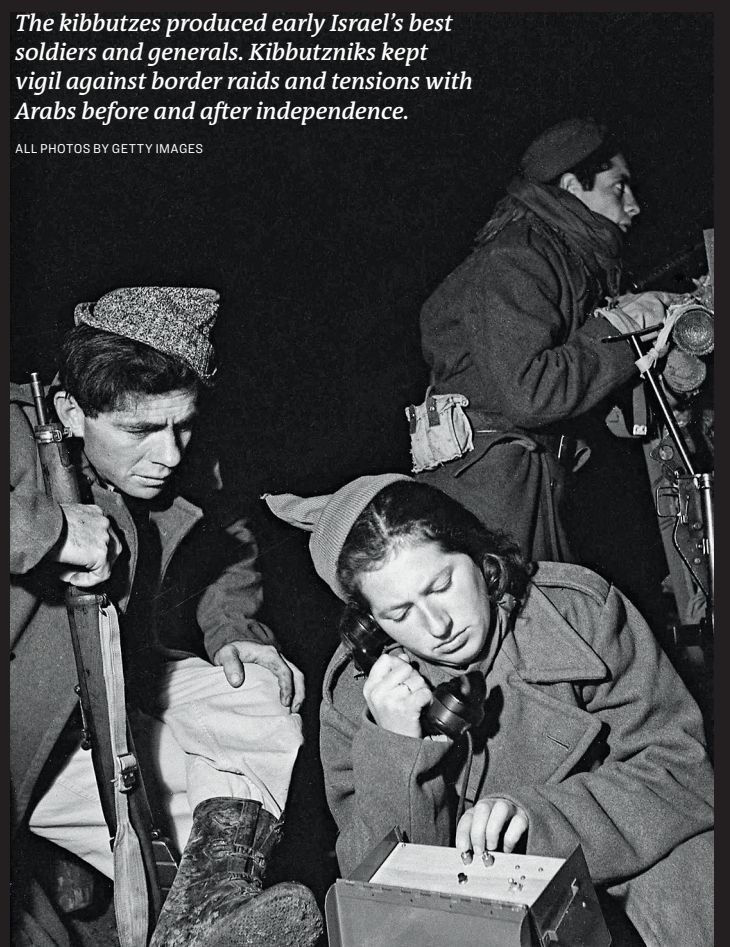
# FROM FAILED SOCIALISM

KIBBUTZES

BY DAN M. BERGER

MOST OF ISRAEL'S COLLECTIVE FARMS OPTED FOR CAPITALISM AFTER MARXISM DIDN'T WORK

# TO CAPITALISM



*The kibbutzes produced early Israel's best soldiers and generals. Kibbutzniks kept vigil against border raids and tensions with Arabs before and after independence.*

ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES



**L**AURIE RIMON FELL IN LOVE WITH THE Israeli collective farm of Kfar Blum after spending a high school year there in 1969–1970. She emigrated from the United States to Israel as soon as she graduated from high school in 1971. She's now a dual citizen.

Rimon remembers a crucial change in her outlook toward the Jewish state's distinctive voluntary collective farms, called kibbutzes.

She told *The Epoch Times* that when she was 40, she still had to ask her mother in the United States for money for plane tickets to visit her in western New York, where she grew up.

Kfar Blum, a kibbutz in the extreme north of Israel near the Lebanese and Syrian borders, kept most of the members' salaries, even when, like Rimon did, they began working offsite.

It was a hard lesson to learn.

Early kibbutzniks often subscribed to Marxist notions like “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

Later generations, not so much.

The kibbutz movement has become less socialist and more capitalistic over time. Today, about 270 kibbutzes remain.

Members of Kfar Blum—named after Leon Blum, France's socialist prime minister who served three terms in the 1930s and '40s—and other kibbutzes found out through hard experience that socialism doesn't work.

Rimon, now 68, went to work offsite in about 1988 for an education tech firm. The kibbutz took her entire paycheck. There was money in her name in an account. But Israel suffered from bad inflation, and Kfar Blum, like most other kibbutzes, was in debt. She wasn't allowed to tap her savings account to book the flight to New York.

“All the kibbutzes were in a bad financial situation then,” she said.

Israel's kibbutzes had been symbols of a new country plunging into the future. And many Israelis wanted to break ties to an unhappy past.

Many members had risked their lives or undergone harrowing journeys to get there before Israel became independent. They were enthusiastic about building new lives and a new nation and “making the desert bloom,” as the saying went.

They became tanned, rugged outdoor workers—a different image of Jews from, say, stereotypes of the impoverished and intimidated Jew of Eastern Europe, the pious Orthodox one patiently awaiting the Messiah, the bourgeois businessman, and the proper professional.

The kibbutzes produced early Israel's best soldiers and generals. They had to be; they were more isolated. Kibbutzniks kept vigil against border raids and tensions with Arabs before and after independence.



Kibbutzniks liked the communal life, though, with children growing up in collective children's homes. That freed their parents to participate in kibbutz life. They enjoyed getting three meals daily in the dining hall plus free allotments of groceries to take home.

Rimon remembers getting eggs, oil, flour, and fruit to take home. But she usually got a large amount of a single in-season fruit. “You couldn't make a fruit salad,” she said.

“When they changed the system, it was strange having to pay for all that. ‘What? I have to pay for flour?!’ But then you get used to being able to buy what you want. Now I can make the cake I want to make.”

Founding kibbutzniks tended to be socialists. Right-wing Zionists preferred individual farming ventures called moshavs. These farmers shared certain functions as American farmers might with co-ops.

Not all kibbutzes have flipped, Rimon's husband, Avner Rimon, told *The Epoch Times* at their house at Kfar Blum.

*Sheep graze at Kfar Blum in its early days. The early kibbutzes devoted themselves almost entirely to agriculture.*

**Kfar Blum was named after Leon Blum, France's socialist prime minister who served three times in the 1930s and '40s.**

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF KFARB LUM

Avner Rimon mentioned two kibbutzes that remained socialist. He said that they could afford it, though, because they've been prosperous. “They're still living to the original kibbutz ideals. You can find idealistic explanations, but the economy is the motor behind it,” he said.

Most other kibbutzes shed socialism reluctantly over the years as they struggled financially. Agriculture didn't pay well, and not all new business ventures panned out.

“A kibbutz is a small entity,” Avner Rimon said. His parents were American. He was born in Haifa, and the family moved to Kfar Blum when he was 6 months old. He's spent his whole life there.

“The difference between the successful and the non-successful were the industries they managed to have on the kibbutz. The chances that you picked something good were not very good.

“It became obvious we couldn't make it on agriculture alone. Like all of the world, we weren't making money in agriculture.

“So many kibbutzes went to plastic factories. It's a low-tech industry. It worked for a while.

“Whether plastics were a good deal depended on what you were doing. Some plastics are still good today. But people were wise enough to realize we can't put all our eggs in one basket.”

### Kibbutzes Led in Early Israel

Kibbutzes were central to Israel's early development, before and after Israel's 1948 independence. Their story is laid out in a candid 2005 monograph by Kfar Blum's Dubi Benari.

Benari wrote that early Jewish settlers, starting in the 1880s, tended to form moshavs, private farms that cooperated in production and marketing. The rise of the socialist movement in the early 20th century, though, brought settlers who preferred a socialist model.

In some ways, it was better suited to their task.

*Kfar Blum began as a collective farm run on socialist principles. As times changed, the kibbutzes found they had to become less socialist.*



In this Ottoman Empire backwater, private farms had to turn a profit to survive. Kibbutzes didn't seek profit, which is perhaps why so many found themselves in debt later.

Early on, though, it gave them an opening while the moshavs struggled. Their disdain for what they saw as bourgeois comforts served them well when few such comforts were available.

Kibbutzes were necessary for the entire Jewish settlement in Palestine. They provided food. They established that the land was Jewish and defended it.

Because they could host military training away from British eyes and had ample hiding places for arms, they were where the Haganah, the underground Jewish army, trained.

The Palmach, the elite fighting force later forming the core of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), allied early with the kibbutzes.

Kibbutzniks, despite representing only a small percentage of the population, would generate a disproportionate number of Israel's military leaders.

In many countries, country boys—who weren't spoiled by soft city life and thus could build, fix things, live outdoors, and use guns—had a strong presence in the army. Kibbutzniks were no exception, and the collective ethos served them well in the military.

The United Nations' 1947 partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states left the Jews with pockets of land barely connected and tough to defend.

The Arabs didn't accept the partition and invaded immediately upon Israel's independence on May 14, 1948.

Israeli leaders deemed the partition map void and realized the borders would be whatever they could seize or defend.

After the June 1949 truce, new kibbutzes started in lands Israel had gained during the fighting—to put the countryside to work, bridge gaps between Jewish areas, and join Jerusalem to Jewish-majority areas along the Mediterranean coast.

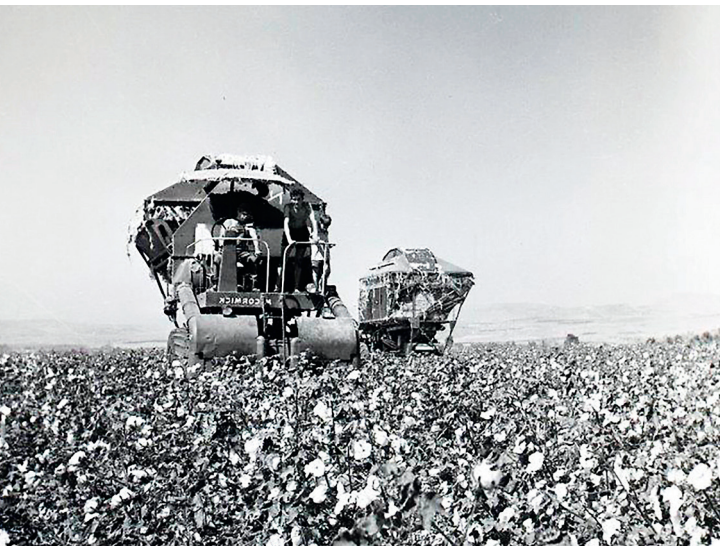
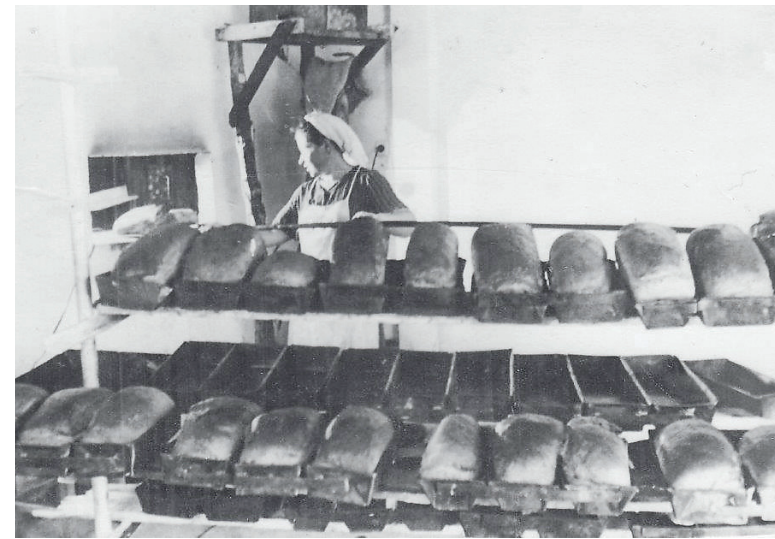
The kibbutzes were the first line of defense against the fedayeen, Arab fighters who infiltrated at night. The IDF was still young and weak.

But the first years of independence delivered a fresh challenge. New immigrants, refugees fleeing North African or Middle Eastern countries, didn't warm to European socialism. If they were going to farm, they preferred the moshavs.

Kibbutzes no longer served as the first home for refugees.

The next challenge would be the 1967 Six-Day War, in which Israel—preemptively attacking as its neighbors prepared to invade—won a stunning victory. It conquered the West Bank from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the Gaza Strip and Sinai peninsula from Egypt.

Kibbutzes were no longer on the frontier. Nor ❖



were they central to Israel's military ethos; the IDF showed it was a modern military force, the strongest in the Middle East.

Outside investment began to flow into Israel. It became a U.S. ally. Roads, bridges, the power grid, ports, and airports were all improved. Agriculture, the kibbutzes' primary undertaking, was no longer the economy's primary focus.

As Israel changed, kibbutzes became less popular. Menachem Begin, a one-time right-wing terrorist whose election in 1977 marked a sea change in Israeli politics, famously denounced them.

At a 1978 speech at Kibbutz Manarah, Benari writes, Begin pointed his finger at the kibbutzniks and called them "the millionaires living beside their well-tended swimming pools."

As a politician, Begin wouldn't have dared say that, Benari observes, if he hadn't noted public opinion already shifting. Kibbutzes had lost their hold

on the popular imagination. The romance was gone.

There were also generational changes. Early settlers were idealistic. Kibbutzes were often populated before World War II almost entirely by young people. They didn't think much about child-rearing or elder care issues.

Their role, though, was what Israel needed then. These communities got their values from three things, Benari writes: their youth, their idealism, and their poverty.

The second generation, born on kibbutzes, were indoctrinated in the ideals but somewhat skeptical. But by the early 2000s, half of Kfar Blum's second generation still lived there.

It was with the third generation that the erosion happened in earnest. Second-generation members, writes Benari, didn't indoctrinate their own children much. The third generation grew up questioning more.

*(Clockwise from top L) A view of the Kfar Blum kibbutz in the early days. An office building that doubled as a guard post, as the kibbutz was close to the Lebanese and Syrian borders. An early photo of the on-site bakery. The old clothespin factory; over time, kibbutzes began operating low-tech businesses to supplement their income. Kfar Blum children studying outdoors. Kibbutzniks pick cotton before Kfar Blum stopped growing it due to the high cost of water.*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF Kfar Blum, DAN M. BERENI/THE EPOCH TIMES

Their family life often suffered. They were exposed to public criticism, and they often burned out.

At the other end of the spectrum, some people didn't work as hard.

They seemed most interested in what they got from the kibbutz—the food, goods, and opportunities to socialize, Benari writes.

Most were in the middle. Work rotation practices—moving people out of jobs to give everyone a chance—often replaced competent managers with incompetent ones.

The leaders found that working offsite would earn them more money with fewer headaches. Many left.

Getting food, clothing, and other necessities for "free"—which is to say, paid for by the kibbutz—led to more waste.

As kibbutzes like Kfar Blum were privatized, they had to do it sensitively. Early kibbutzniks often experienced hunger during poor childhoods or during the Holocaust. Having to pay for food—and facing the prospect of not having enough—proved terrifying for some.

Benari notes Marxism itself moved away from the ideal of "absolute equality" once it came up with the axiom "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."

On the kibbutzes, leaders were asked to give more, and did, but were paid the same as shirkers who did little. Leaders and shirkers weren't giving the same amount.

So the kibbutzes changed further. It had rankled over the years, the Rimons said, that everyone was paid equally.

"Some would work more, and some were lazy," Laurie Rimon said. "Some, maybe 20 percent, were lazy and didn't work at all. But they still got as much as everyone else."

The older generation who had built the kibbutzes were more motivated than the younger generation, born there but not having chosen it for themselves.

"They may have been believers [only because] it was an easy life for them," Laurie Rimon said.

A miraculous thing happened, Benari writes. Once kibbutzes paid members more—and differently—they wasted less of the community's dime.

The kibbutzes' own balance sheets improved. Members who worked offsite were often underpaid but had shrugged it off, living as they did in a place that paid for their necessities. Now they demanded and got raises from their outside employers.

"The main change," Avner Rimon said, "was to put more responsibility on kibbutz members, not to think the kibbutz was responsible for everything."

It had been an idealistic movement born in adversity: the poverty or persecution members had known elsewhere, perilous journeys to get there, and strife-torn early years. "Things were so difficult it was easy to motivate people. You overcame

It was easy to motivate people. You overcame

They were exposed to a wider world through media and the internet. They often traveled for a year after their military service, and only 5 to 10 percent returned to the kibbutz.

Kibbutzes' receding economic importance revealed structural weaknesses.

They paid everyone equally, but different personalities approached this life differently.

Leaders worked hard, took responsibility, showed initiative, and worried about the entire kibbutz.

problems together,” Avner Rimon said.

“But as things got easier, you found all kinds of people saying, ‘I’m sick.’ Or, ‘I don’t want to do this.’ It wasn’t the majority ... [but] the cracks were there from day one. There were always people who didn’t want to pull their weight.

“If they don’t have to do it, and they get the same thing, then why do it?”

As they diversified, kibbutzes set up boards of directors and executive directors, often outsiders.

The kibbutz still had a stake and could fire board members if it saw fit, but otherwise it could no longer meddle in the business’s affairs. Businesses, unsurprisingly, became more efficient and profitable.

One difficult step was privatizing the kibbutz’s assets, something still underway at Kfar Blum when Benari was writing. It involved difficult questions of how to value the contributions of founders, living or dead.

Yonatan Porat, Kfar Blum’s archivist, has strong feelings about this: He voted for Kfar Blum’s asset distribution plan but later saw it as depriving him of an inheritance. He said his parents died before the program came about and didn’t count in the asset calculation formula used.

Other things helped change the Rimons’ view toward private property. Apartments with mediocre construction let neighbors’ noise through thin walls and allowed the smells of their cooking to waft in. That grated on them. The Rimons built a house about 15 years ago.

They still live in the comfortable three-bedroom, two-bath dwelling today. The founders of the kibbutz movement would have thought homeowning bourgeois.

Today, the opportunity to build a house in a small and crowded country where land is expensive is a kibbutz selling point. It helps attract new members and draw former ones back.

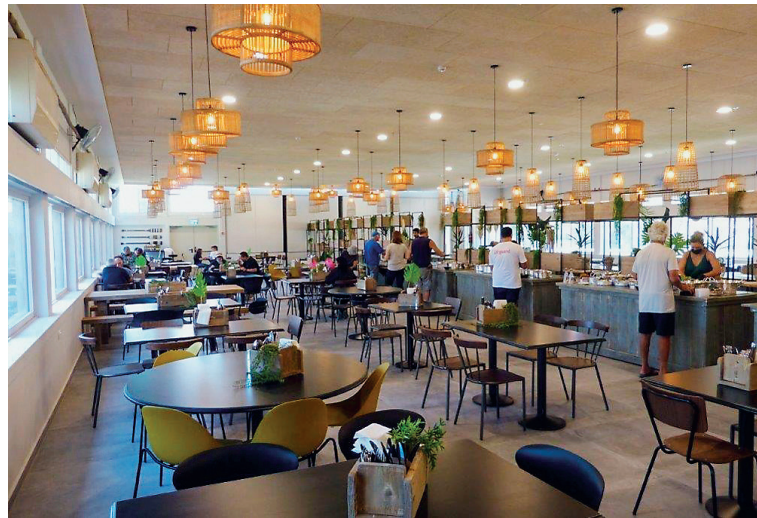
Lior Peretz, who lives in Rishon Letzion, south of Tel Aviv, with his wife, Yaar, and their baby son, Yuval, said they plan to move to the kibbutz Ein Carmel, south of Haifa, where Yaar grew up.

The opportunity to have a house—they’ve already begun buying land through the kibbutz and arranging water and electric hookups—is part of it.

Owning a small apartment in a metropolitan area can cost 3 million shekels, about \$1 million. “For that, you get about 100 square meters of apartment space,” Peretz said. That’s less than 1,100 square feet. Young Israelis generally need help from their parents to afford even that.

“We could try to find houses elsewhere,” Peretz said. But to be in a community and have a community life, in a place that is not Orthodox, adds to the kibbutzes’ appeal.

He said Orthodox Jews in Israel, who cluster tightly in small communities, have achieved that



sense of community.

“Here,” Avner Rimon said of Kfar Blum, “you can build a one-story house for what it would cost you to have an apartment in the city.”

Kfar Blum shifted into areas of business other than agriculture over the years. The kibbutz still farms, but the work is done by Thai workers who rotate in and out.

The kibbutz started a hotel. Regional schools are located there. It has a factory making control systems for sprinklers.

Kfar Blum has faced various culture shocks over the years, Porat said. He was born on one of the kibbutz’s predecessors at a different site and has lived in Kfar Blum his whole life.

*Kfar Blum still has a collective dining hall, but members eat more of their meals in their own homes now than they used to.*

## Out of the third generation of settlers, who often traveled for a year after their military service, only 5 to 10 percent returned to the kibbutz.

### Collective Child-Rearing

One shock was the departure of immigrants, notably from South Africa or the United States. They found kibbutzes too collective. They regretted losing privacy and control of their children. Porat, whose mother was American, lost friends during these departures.

Another shock was ending the children’s home. Some kibbutzniks who grew up, married, and had their own kids didn’t want to give them up to the children’s home.

A move to end the system failed to get enough votes in 1969 but succeeded the following year, Porat said. Now 78, he was then a young married



*A general meeting of the Kfar Blum kibbutz’s members in the conference room of the kibbutz’s hotel.*

man without children.

He helped lobby reluctant members of the older generation to permit the change. Under the new system, children were raised by their parents. They could choose whether to move to the youth dorms when they turned 16.

The kibbutz at first didn’t make it easy for parents to take their children home, Porat said.

“We said, ‘It’s your decision. You can move. But we won’t make your house bigger.’ But they moved even without accommodations,” he said.

“My brother lived with three children in 40 square meters,” less than 500 square feet, Porat said. “It was very small. They knew the price, but they did do it.”

Over time, the kibbutz did give larger quarters to those with larger families.

Porat had grown up in the children’s home and liked it.

“I didn’t think of going to live with my parents. It was enough to see them in the afternoon for tea time,” he said. “There was no TV. We were always outside, playing games. Everyone together. We liked it very much.”

Children’s homes were considered an essential feature since the first kibbutz, Degania, opened on the Sea of Galilee in 1910. Children grew up together and lived so closely, Porat said, and that bonded them to each other as the kibbutz’s next generation.

But it didn’t work for everyone, he said. His wife, Jeri, who moved there at age 4 from Brooklyn, was very unhappy in the children’s home. She ran away home to her mother, and her mother didn’t make her go back, Porat said.

The kibbutz still has a children’s home, but the children don’t live there. It’s for after-school and child care programs.

As time passed and the generations changed, the kibbutz lost members.

“It was almost like an old people’s home 15 years ago,” as young people left for their military service and didn’t come back, Laurie Rimon said. “We had to reach a critical mass. When people started coming back, then others would come back.”

The kibbutz rebounded through several moves. It established an allied community, a neighboring subdivision. Homeowners there pay a kibbutz fee and use some services but are not full members.

Only children of members may join Kfar Blum as full members, Avner said, but some kibbutzes accept outsiders.

Kfar Blum has about 300 full members who live on the kibbutz and almost 500 in the subdivision. Benari writes that many of the third generation like living near the kibbutz without the rights or responsibilities of full membership. They like living near friends and family.

Over time, Kfar Blum has become less of a collective farm and more of a community supported by members’ tax dollars, the Rimons said. It’s still something more than an American town, Laurie Rimon said.

“There’s a sense of community that you don’t get living in a city,” she said.

Laurie Rimon said that none of the couple’s three grown children and their families live there.

Their son lives in the United States, one of their daughters lives in another kibbutz, and their other daughter lives in Tiv’on, near Haifa. She said that she hopes her son and his wife will move back from the United States.

“They’ll come back,” she said, “when my granddaughter brings home a boyfriend her mother doesn’t like.” ■

ESPIONAGE

# NOT JUST SPY BALLOONS

*Inside the CCP's expansive spy campaign against America*

News Analysis **BY ANDREW THORNEBROOKE**

**N** EWS OF THE CHINESE communist spy balloon tracked by the Pentagon as it hovered over the United States in early February has raised concerns about the extent of the Chinese regime's espionage efforts against the United States and its citizens.

But just how far is the regime willing to go to spy on and undermine the United States?

The espionage efforts of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which rules China as a single-party state, go much broader and deeper than mere sensor balloons. Such efforts include human intelligence gathering, transnational repression schemes, cybertheft and hacking, intellectual property theft, and even the harvesting of Americans' genetic material.

In the words of one retired Air Force general, "If [the CCP has] any access to American society, then they'll use that access to undermine American society."

## **HUMINT and Transnational Repression**

Key among the CCP's efforts to spy on the United States are its traditional human intelligence (HUMINT) efforts, which rely on person-to-person exchanges of information, witting and otherwise.

The CCP's HUMINT network permeates U.S. society at many levels, with many such efforts being overseen directly by the regime's top intelligence agency, the Ministry of State Security (MSS).

One of the most infamous such cases is that of Christine Fang, or "Fang Fang," the alleged Chinese spy who posed as a university student and fostered relationships with numerous politicians in California and elsewhere, including Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.) when he was a city council member, and used

that access to collect intelligence on up-and-coming politicians. Fang reportedly targeted at least two Midwestern mayors and engaged in romantic or sexual relationships with them.

Politicians aren't the only targets of such espionage, however. Many everyday Americans, particularly those of Chinese descent, are frequently the preferred targets of the CCP's spy and harassment campaigns.

In such efforts, MSS agents and their U.S. proxies have allegedly stalked a U.S. Olympic figure skater and her family, conspired with New York police officers to gather intelligence on the Asian American community, and even plotted to attack a U.S. Army veteran running for Congress in a bid to silence and intimidate people holding critical views of the CCP.

FBI Director Christopher Wray testified that Chinese agents and their proxies actively stalked U.S. residents and planted bugs in their cars and homes.

## **Cybertheft and Hacking**

Similarly, the regime has used cyberattacks and misinformation campaigns to illicitly collect U.S. defense information and sow division among American citizens.

U.S. intelligence leaders have identified the CCP as the world's largest malicious cyber actor. The Chinese regime and its affiliated hackers have stolen more data from Americans than all other nations combined.

Such efforts are often aimed at stealing vital technological secrets, such as when suspected state-backed agents hacked into a U.S. government department last year and stole sensitive defense information. Likewise, CCP-sponsored hackers have penetrated and stolen sensitive information from multiple U.S. telecom firms.

The incidents highlight what U.S. defense officials have long warned: that the regime is studying how the United States fights ❖

*A Chinese People's Liberation Army soldier uses binoculars to survey the perimeter of the PLA Hong Kong Garrison barracks on Nov. 17, 2019.*

PHOTO BY PHILIP FONG/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

with the intent to develop technologies capable of toppling its military and forcibly transferring cutting-edge American technologies to China.

Americans' sensitive personal information is also a valued target, as evidenced by multiple massive hacks by Chinese actors over the years, including the breaches of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, credit-reporting agency Equifax, Marriott hotels, and insurer Anthem. These hacks resulted in hundreds of millions of Americans' personal data being stolen.

Officials and experts have said the regime is using this massive trove of Americans' personal data to aid in its espionage and overseas influence operations and to feed its artificial intelligence technology.

### Social Media and Telecommunications

The CCP also uses its control over the data of Chinese companies to leverage Chinese-owned social media and telecommunications giants against an unsuspecting American populace.

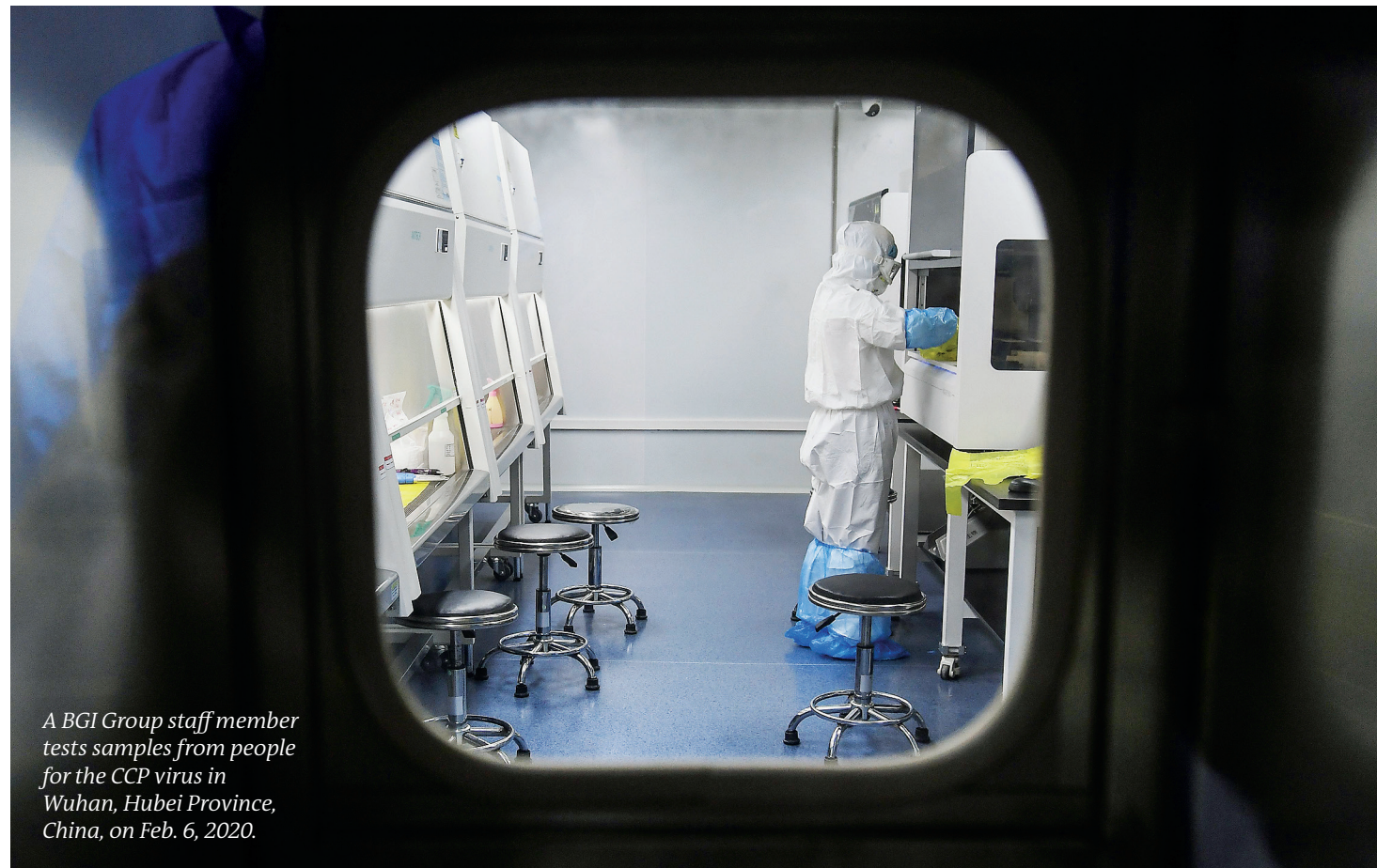
TikTok, a popular short video app owned by Chinese tech giant ByteDance, is perhaps the most telling example of this.

Described by intelligence leaders as a "national security threat" and labeled by security experts as a "weaponized military application," social media giant TikTok has censored stories at the request of the CCP and has allowed its Chinese engineers access to U.S. user data. Officials have repeatedly sounded the alarm about the app because CCP law mandates that Chinese companies provide data to the regime upon request.

Relatedly, employees at ByteDance used geolocation data from TikTok to illicitly stalk American journalists believed to be reporting on the company.

The national security risks posed by Chinese social media apps also apply to other tech firms, including telecommunications. In recent years, Washington has cracked down on Chinese telecom firms, including Huawei and ZTE, for this reason.

Huawei and its employees have been found to have deep links with Chinese military and intelligence. Federal prosecutors have charged the company



*A BGI Group staff member tests samples from people for the CCP virus in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on Feb. 6, 2020.*

with conspiracy to steal trade secrets, while the Canadian government alleged that the company actively employed CCP spies. The firm also reportedly actively engaged in covert attacks on Australian and U.S. networks as far back as 2012.

## U.S. intelligence leaders found that CCP-affiliated hackers have stolen more data from Americans than all other nations combined have.

### Biodata

The CCP's efforts to glean every last bit of information from the United States go further than intellectual property and surveillance balloons. Indeed, the assault goes down to the bone, and then down deeper: to Americans' genetic material.

Chinese biotechnology companies' acquisition of clinical and genetic data of U.S. citizens through the companies' partnerships with U.S. institutions poses national security risks, a top U.S. counterintelligence agency warned in 2021.

The mass DNA collection performed by companies such as genome-sequencing firm BGI could be used in myriad ways against the United States, according to congressional reports.

These include allowing the CCP to blackmail individuals with the threat of exposing embarrassing medical infor-

mation and even using data on health conditions such as allergies to conduct targeted biological attacks against diplomats, politicians, high-ranking federal officials, and military leaders.

Some experts have warned that the CCP could use this rich genetic information to create bioweapons to target certain groups of people.

Importantly, while BGI is a private company, it has definite ties to the CCP. In January 2018, China's state-run media Xinhua reported that Du Yutao, the Party secretary of BGI's research institute, spoke of the importance of learning and putting into action of "the spirit behind the 19th National Congress," referring to a twice-in-a-decade CCP meeting.

BGI maintains concrete ties to the CCP, and its scientists have expressed their interest in the regime's efforts to develop biochemical weapons, which experts suggest may link the company's efforts to harvest the genetic mate-

rial of Americans to a darker interest in developing weapons to be used against Americans.

### Nuclear and Hypersonic Research

Beyond active efforts to spy on the United States, the CCP also uses state-sponsored talent programs to give itself a long-term edge in critical research.

By recruiting experts and scholars from abroad to study or work in China, such talent programs aim to develop a new generation of researchers in areas crucial for China's technological and military development.

The most telling case of this phenomenon concerns the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), the United States' most advanced nuclear research center.

According to a report, to date, at least 162 researchers from the LANL, at least one of whom had a top-secret security clearance in the United States, now work for China, where many of them now assist the regime's development of its most cutting-edge weapons, including hypersonic missiles.

Many of the researchers who worked at the LANL came to the United States to be trained and work in areas critical to national security and were involved in the CCP's talent programs. For example, at least 59 of those who worked at the LANL and subsequently returned to China to do research were part of the regime's "Thousand Talents Program" or its youth branch.

One report on the issue found that "[Chinese] talent programs are ever-expanding recruitment networks" with which the regime continuously usurps knowledge from the United States.

### Strategic Purchases of Farmland

Chinese companies with links to the CCP are also purchasing strategic parcels of land in the United States, which has sparked concern that the regime could conduct espionage or otherwise sabotage U.S. national security interests.

In recent years, Chinese land purchases near U.S. military bases in Texas and North Dakota raised alarm among locals and policymakers in state and federal governments.

In one instance, a Chinese billionaire purchased 140,000 acres of Texas land. The billionaire in question is one Sun Guangxin, who maintains extensive ties to the CCP and has reportedly employed numerous government and military officials.

Chinese investors purchased more than \$6 billion in U.S. real estate between March 2021 and March 2022, according to the National Association of Realtors, making it the largest foreign buyer in terms of dollars spent.

A controversial Chinese corn mill project in Grand Forks, North Dakota, on land that's within 15 miles of a U.S. Air Force Base housing sensitive drone, satellite, and surveillance technology, is now set to be terminated following warnings from the U.S. Air Force that the project posed a "significant threat to national security."

Many state officials have also sounded the alarm about Chinese ownership of U.S. farmland. As a result, some states are creating legislation to prohibit or restrict Chinese entities from buying U.S. agricultural land and businesses. These states include South Dakota, Florida, Texas, Virginia, Missouri, and Iowa. ■



*Huawei and its employees have been found to have deep links with Chinese military and intelligence.*

ALL PHOTOS STR/AFP/VALETTY IMAGES



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

# THE COST OF LITHIUM MINING

By Mark Tapscott & Madalina Vasiliu

**Electric vehicle conversion will bring wide environmental damage, study says**

**C**ONVERTING AMERICA'S FLEET OF privately owned cars and trucks from internal combustion gasoline- and diesel-fueled engines to electric vehicles (EVs) will cause critical shortages of lithium—a must-have for batteries—and prompt more environmental damage because of increased mining, according to a new report.

The report was produced by a team of scholars from Providence College and the University of California–Davis, working in conjunction with researchers associated with the Climate and Community Project.

It states that avoiding the lithium shortages and dramatically increased environmental demand will require all but eliminating privately

owned vehicles, concentrating the U.S. population in big cities, requiring the use of smaller batteries, and making Americans rely on public transportation.

“A crucial aspect of electrified transportation is new demand for metals, and specifically the most non-replaceable metal for EV batteries—lithium,” the report reads.

“If today’s demand for EVs is projected to 2050, the lithium requirements of the United States’ EV market alone would require triple the amount of lithium currently produced for the entire global market. This boom in demand would be met by the expansion of mining.”

The Climate and Community Project is an environmental advocacy group that describes itself

*Electric cars recharge at a Tesla charging station in Corte Madera, Calif., on Feb. 15.*

JUSTIN SULLIVAN/BETTMANN

as “fiscally supported by the Tides Center, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.”

The San Francisco-based Tides Center is an extension of the Tides Foundation, which originated the use of nonprofits to give liberal donors who don’t wish to be identified with projects they help fund an anonymous, or “dark money,” means of doing so.

“Large-scale mining entails social and environmental harm, in many cases irreversibly damaging landscapes without the consent of affected communities. As societies undertake the urgent and transformative task of building new, zero-emissions energy systems, some level of mining is necessary,” the report reads.

“But the volume of extraction is not a given. Neither is where mining takes place, who bears the social and environmental burdens, or how mining is governed.”

What enables the conversion to an electric-powered transportation system, according to the report, is “limiting the amount of lithium mining necessary by reducing the car dependence of the transportation system, decreasing the size of electric vehicle batteries, and maximizing lithium recycling.”

“Reordering the U.S. transportation system through policy and spending shifts to prioritize public and active transit while reducing car dependency can also ensure transit equity, protect ecosystems, respect Indigenous rights, and meet the demands of global justice,” it reads.

The new report comes as President Joe Biden is pushing forward with his 2021 executive order mandating that at least half of all cars and trucks sold in the United States by 2030 be EVs. Biden’s order requires building 500,000 electric charging stations across the country to replace gasoline and diesel service stations.

The Biden program also provides massive new spending, such as the recently announced \$2 billion guaranteed loan by the Department of Energy to EV battery maker Redwood Materials. Biden also wants to expand federal tax credits for EVs.

The Epoch Times asked multiple Democrats on the House Science, Space and Technology (SST),

and Energy and Commerce (E&C) committees for comment on the report’s projection of spiraling demand for lithium and increased environmental damage caused by mining for the precious element, but none of them responded.

However, Democrat strategist David Carlucci told The Epoch Times that he doesn’t think

Biden should rework his 2030 EV mandate as a result of the study.

“Taking into account the chance of innovation of smaller batteries, our increased production in lithium is critical before rethinking the plan. President Biden has prioritized green alternatives, and investing over \$3 billion into a domestic lithium supply chain is critical to his mission,” Carlucci said.

“Yes, there will be hurdles to this goal, but that does not mean it cannot

happen. The president should not think about reworking his 2030 plan until it is clear whether production will increase by then. This is a booming industry with endless possibilities for the prosperity and sustainability of our country.”

Carlucci also questioned the likelihood of private transportation having to be limited or eliminated.

“Although this report suggests limiting or outright banning transportation, I do not believe that this is a feasible or realistic action the government will take. Instead, the federal government will most likely invest more in lithium production and consciously keep watch of the 2030 goals,” he said.

But energy industry advocates and congressional Republicans interviewed by The Epoch Times said the study provides solid grounds for limiting or eliminating Biden’s EV mandate altogether.

“This has always been the agenda, in the same way they want to ban gas stoves,” said Daniel Kish, senior vice president of the Institute for Energy Research (IER).

“The American Dream is under attack and the elites and central planners are using climate change and energy as the means to make us all ride on the back of the bus. What is most extraordinary is that they are now admitting it.”

Kish also pointed to an IER report on grow- ❖

**Avoiding the lithium shortages and dramatically increased environmental demand will require all but eliminating privately owned vehicles, a report claims.**

ing restiveness and opposition at the state level to an EV conversion.

Six Wyoming state legislators have introduced a measure to ban EVs from throughout the state by 2035.

The IER report also pointed out that a recent study produced for Canada's Alberta Province government projected severe and widespread economic damage resulting from an EV conversion, including the loss of 13.5 percent of all jobs in multiple sectors.



**“The energy ‘transition’ to electric vehicles by 2030 will ultimately end up costing Americans even more and increase our dependency on China.”**

Rep. Randy Weber



House Republicans contend that the study should put the brakes on the Biden mandate, and they suggested that consumer choice driving market innovation will result in a better result.

Rep. Rich McCormick (R-Ga.), a member of the SST panel, told The Epoch Times: “The idea that the president should force Americans to use one mode of transportation instead of another was always crazy and unconstitutional, but never underestimate the desire of the radical left to control our lives through government intervention.

“Real progress toward efficient and cleaner technology will come from private-sector innovation, not mandates.”

Rep. Randy Weber (R-Texas) said: “President Biden’s energy ‘transition’ to electric vehicles by 2030 will ultimately end up costing Americans even more and increase our dependency on China.

“Instead of forcing EVs on Americans, the

government should always let the market and consumer choice drive the adoption of EVs. The last thing the government should be doing is taking away people’s mobility and livelihoods by limiting options for affordable and reliable vehicles.”

Weber is a member of both the SST and E&C committees.

Rep. Stephanie Bice (R-Okla.), a member of SST, told The Epoch Times that lithium isn’t the only mineral that presents huge obstacles for an EV conversion.

“Biden’s plan to force half of all new vehicles to be EVs is massive government overreach and should never have been implemented in the first place. We’ve known for a while that we don’t have the mineral capacity to make this feasible,” Bice said.

“In addition to lithium shortages, we are also running into issues with cobalt and nickel, too, which are essential for electric vehicle battery

*A Controlled Thermal Resources drilling rig in Calipatria, Calif., on Dec. 15, 2021. The company provides lithium products and renewable energy.*

FROM LEFT: KEVIN DIEZSCH/GETTY IMAGES; ROBIN BECK/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; STRAEP VIA GETTY IMAGES

production. When we don’t address these issues, businesses face adverse impacts.

“We are also forced to rely on corrupt adversaries, such as China, which accounts for roughly 70 percent of global EV battery production capacity.”

She also sees problems resulting from an EV conversion in related fields.

“Due to mineral constraints, it would be a terrible decision to pick winners and losers and get rid of internal combustion engines in the first place. Far too often, this administration seeks to solve problems such as these by increasing government spending,” Bice said.

“This doesn’t encourage U.S. innovation over the long term, solve recent restrictive permitting issues, or address essential mining projects which are being held up because of sue and settle cases. We need to increase our advanced recycling capabilities through research and development, and mining of these critical min-



erals, increase domestic refining technologies and operations, and reduce red tape that will inhibit the speed and availability of access to these minerals.”

Another SST committee member, Rep. Scott Franklin (R-Fla.), said the Biden mandate is unachievable and “anti-science” in its conception.

“Dismantling the nation’s current fossil fuel-based energy industry while simultaneously going ‘all in’ on green initiatives that are demonstrably unachievable in the proposed timeframes suggests either an administration that is hopelessly out of touch with reality, or worse, scarily embracing a scheme to control individuals’ choices regarding private transportation,” Franklin told The Epoch Times.

“What they propose is factually anti-science, which is ironic, considering their past demands to ‘follow the science.’ It’s unrealistic, unachievable, and a slap in the face to real science.”

Rep. Mike Collins (R-Ga.), told The Epoch Times that the study illustrates a basic obstacle in the way of EV conversion.

“The left can’t have it both ways. It takes coal mining to produce electricity and hard-rock mining to obtain lithium for batteries, both of which the Biden administration makes difficult,” Collins said.

“His plan to force expensive electric vehicles on Americans will only drive-up transportation costs and make it harder for working families to make ends meet. As a member of the House Natural Resources Committee, I will fight against America-last energy policies that dictate to Americans what kind of energy they can consume and how they can travel.” ■

*Workers at a factory for Xinwangda Electric Vehicle Battery Co. Ltd., which makes lithium batteries for electric cars and other uses, in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China, on March 12, 2021.*

VIRGINIA

# FAMILY DEMANDS \$3.6 BILLION REFUND FROM UNIVERSITY

Descendants want donation back after T.C. Williams's name removed from law school

By Darlene McCormick Sanchez

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND has removed the name of donor T.C. Williams from its law school, citing student complaints that he allegedly owned slaves more than 175 years ago.

The Williams family now wants the Virginia university to give back donations they've made throughout the years, with interest, in the amount of \$3.6 billion.

Robert Smith, who graduated from the law school that formerly bore his great-great-grandfather's name, told The Epoch Times that if the family name is no longer good enough for the university, neither are the family's financial contributions.

Smith wrote in a Jan. 30 letter to university President Kevin Hallock that he arrived at the \$3.6 billion figure by adding together the contributions from Williams, his sons, and other relatives, then calculating 150-plus years of compounded returns.

"It might be worthwhile for you to require every woke activist to take a course in finance to appreciate [the numbers] for whom they want to cancel," Smith wrote in his January letter to Hallock.

Smith—founder of the legal and financial firm Chartwell Capital Advisors in Richmond, Virginia—said the university has yet to respond to his demand for a refund.

## Erasing Slave Owners

The fight began during the 2021–22 school year. The university formed a commission of students, staff, faculty, alumni, and trustees that recommended naming guidelines for buildings, programs, and professorships, according to a Sept. 23, 2022, notice on the university's website.

Many universities either renamed or removed

**"It might be worthwhile for you to require every woke activist to take a course in finance."**

**Robert Smith,** great-great-grandson of T.C. Williams



Robert Smith, an attorney who graduated from the University of Richmond, says the university needs to repay donations because it canceled his family name.

statues of historical figures after the death of George Floyd in 2020. Left-wing groups across the country demanded racial justice and called for the removal of historical statues of priests, Christopher Columbus, and even Abraham Lincoln.

Critics contend that removing statues is part of a neo-Marxist cultural revolution that seeks to portray the United States



FROM L: COURTESY OF ROBERT SMITH; COURTESY OF STUART SMITH

## 200 YEARS

**ROBERT SMITH SAID** his family's extensive givings to Richmond and the university for almost 200 years are ignored by those who want to "virtue signal."

*T.C. Williams Sr. was instrumental in establishing what came to be known as the T.C. Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond.*





as a systemically racist country founded on slavery. The movement's ideology sometimes goes by other names, including critical race theory (CRT); diversity, equity, and inclusion; and progressivism.

These ideologies promote portraying history with a focus on racial justice, as in The 1619 Project, an initiative by The New York Times and The New York Times Magazine that states that its aim is "to reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of the United States' national narrative."

Proponents of CRT say America shouldn't whitewash history and that white Americans should repent by giving minorities preference in areas such as hiring and college admittance to make up for acts of racism committed throughout the country's history.

### Building a Case

According to the university's notice, the rules on how to rename buildings were adopted "after an extensive and inclusive process" with input from 7,500 university and community members.

The notice details the history of T.C. Williams Sr., born in 1831, who operated tobacco businesses in Richmond and elsewhere in Virginia, including Patterson & Williams and Thomas C. Williams & Co.

The university cited records from the 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule, which shows 35 enslaved men and boys under the name of Patterson & Williams in the Richmond area.

The notice went on to say that personal property tax records show that Williams's businesses were taxed on 25 to 40 slaves. A newspaper account placed by Thomas C. Williams & Co. advertised a reward for the return of two company slaves, Todd and Alex, who escaped a Danville-area farm.

Williams attended the university, then named Richmond College, from 1846 to 1849. He served as a college trustee from 1881 until his death in 1889 and became a benefactor of the university, according to the notice.

In 1890, the Williams family made a memorial gift of \$25,000 to the university, creating an endowment that established a strong foundation for the law program's development, the university statement reads.

Several of Williams's children—one of whom succeeded him on the school's board of trustees and remained on the board until 1929—also provided generous support to the university and the law school. And in 1920, when Richmond College was rechartered as the University of Richmond, the law school began consistently using the name T.C. Williams School of Law, according to the notice.

Smith originally calculated that the T.C. Williams Sr. contribution alone would amount to \$51 million with interest, which he outlined in an October 2022 letter to Hallock.

"Because these woke people, they hate people like my family. They hate people who are upright, religious, and who are wealthy," Smith said, comparing the case built against his an-

*(Left) Protesters gather at Lincoln Park to demand the Emancipation Memorial be taken down, in Washington on June 23, 2020.*

*(Above) The Williams family provided generous support to the university and the law school. In 1920, the law school began consistently using the name T.C. Williams School of Law.*

*(Right) The decapitated Christopher Columbus statue outside of Waterbury's city hall, in Waterbury, Conn., on July 5, 2020.*

FROM L-T: ASO/KATOPROD/GETTY IMAGES, SHAPPERTAMIS/CC BY-SA 4.0 VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, SPENGER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

cestor to a mob-style assassination. "I mean, they're jealous."

Smith, who maintains a "Rob is Right" Facebook page catering to conservatives, has asked the university to provide documentation about the research.

Officials haven't responded, he said.

"One of the most basic tenets of our Judeo-Christian heritage is gratitude, a concept that is apparently unknown to you and the Board of the University of Richmond," he wrote in his January missive to university officials.

People should be able to have civil conversations about the history of the United States, and that includes discussions on slavery, according to Smith. But the perspective of that era has been ignored, he noted.

He said his family has given extensively to causes in Richmond and the university for almost 200 years. The good his family has done is ignored by those who want to "virtue signal," he said.

### 'Give It All Back'

Jesse Williams, father of T.C. Williams, donated building materials to the First Baptist Church, Smith said. The family patriarch also donated masonry and other materials for the neighboring First African Baptist Church, he wrote in his January letter.

Jesse Williams also contributed to the building needs of the University of Richmond when its campus was started, he said.

It's only right for the university to turn over its \$3.3 billion endowment to Williams's descen-

dants, Smith said. The remaining \$300 million owed should be secured with a note using the campus buildings as collateral, he wrote.

"All your woke faculty" should pledge their assets to secure the loan, Smith wrote.

"Since you and your activists went out of your way to discredit the Williams name, and since presumably the Williams family's money is tainted, demonstrate your 'virtue' and give it all back," he wrote.

Smith said the family hadn't yet filed a lawsuit.

### A Problematic History

The university takes issue with slave ownership but owned slaves in the 1840s, according to Smith.

And the college was founded by a Baptist preacher but now embraces LGBT culture, he said.

The University of Richmond didn't respond to requests from The Epoch Times for comment.

However, the university's website noted that it recognized "the role the Williams family has played" and respected the "full and complete history of the institution."

The university could have changed the law school's name without negatively portraying his family's legacy, according to Stuart Smith, the nephew of Robert Smith.

"It's easy to take a plaque off a building and issue a press report," Stuart Smith said. "It's easy to just nod your head and agree to do whatever your student population, paying \$77,000 a year, wants you to do." ■

**People should be able to have civil conversations about the history of the United States, and that includes discussions on slavery, Robert Smith says.**

# SPOTLIGHT

## Drifting Into the Dusk

**SMALL BOATS MAKE THEIR WAY** along a canal as the sun sets in Samut Songkhram, Thailand, on Feb. 19.

PHOTO BY JACK TAYLOR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



COVID-19

# Natural Immunity Trumps Vaccination: Study

*Post-infection immunity is similar or superior to efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, study says*

By Zachary Stieber

**P**OST-INFECTION immunity is similar or even superior to the protection bestowed by COVID-19 vaccines, according to a new study published by The Lancet.

In the study, post-infection protection—known widely as natural immunity—was strong and remained significant over time, researchers found.

Against the Wuhan, Alpha, and Delta variants, the protection against reinfection was 85 percent at four weeks, 78 percent at 40 weeks, and 55.5 percent at 80 weeks.

That protection dropped more quickly against the Omicron BA.1 subvariant, declining to 36 percent by 40 weeks, and protection against symptomatic disease also waned to below 50 percent.

But shielding against severe disease was strong against all strains, including the BA.1 subvariant, researchers found. The naturally immune

enjoyed 88.9 percent protection against BA.1 at 40 weeks, which was actually higher than against earlier strains.

“Our analysis found significantly reduced protection against re-infection from the omicron BA.1 variant but that levels of protection against severe disease remained high,” the authors, led by Dr. Stephen Lim of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington’s School of Medicine, wrote in the study.

Dr. Brett Giroir, a former Trump administration health official whose post on natural immunity was censored by Twitter on behalf of Pfizer board mem-

ber Dr. Scott Gottlieb, said the study “demonstrates [the] robustness of natural immunity.”

Dr. Vinay Prasad, an epidemiologist at the University of California–San Francisco, said that the paper made a “compelling case that we can effectively stop boosting average risk individuals (most adults) who have had COVID.”

“Vaccine policy should have been different in people with prior illness,” he said.

Public health officials have repeatedly said that vaccination is better than natural immunity, or that the naturally immune should still get vaccinated despite the protection they have. Some other countries have acknowledged natural immunity by lowering the number of recommended doses for the population.

for studies on natural immunity conducted through Sept. 31, 2022. Studies were included if a group of naturally immune, unvaccinated people were compared with unvaccinated people who had not been infected. Studies that also included vaccinated people were included if the research also included unvaccinated and naturally immune people. Studies that only had results for natural immunity in combination with vaccination, or hybrid immunity, were excluded.

Researchers performed a modeling technique called Bayesian meta-regression to reach pooled estimates of protec-

tion by time since infection.



## Vaccine policy should have been different in people with prior illness.

Dr. Vinay Prasad, epidemiologist, University of California–San Francisco

### Comparison to Vaccination

The paper’s researchers performed a review and meta-analysis by looking



*People gather in Central Park in New York on May 22, 2021. U.S. public health officials have never acknowledged natural immunity in their recommendations on vaccination.*

tion by time since infection.

In total, 65 studies were included in the meta-analysis from 19 different countries. Just 30, though, included information on time since infection, and a subset of those included information on one or more of the outcomes—reinfection, symptomatic disease, and severe disease—during the BA.1 era.

One of the researchers’ main conclusions was that the study showed that natural immunity “is at least equivalent if not greater than [immunity] provided by two-dose mRNA vaccines,” or the Pfizer and Moderna messenger RNA vaccines.

That conclusion was supported by references to just two studies—one unpublished paper and one published paper from Qatar that found natural immunity was more protective than the mRNA vaccines. A graph in the study also showed natural immunity confer-

ring better protection against infection, symptomatic disease, and severe disease than three vaccine doses or a primary series and a booster.

While the researchers emphasized that COVID-19 can cause problems including death, they did not mention that the side effects of vaccination may also cause long-term issues, including death.

The low number of studies that were analyzed and the reliance on observational studies were limitations of the study published by The Lancet. Researchers received funding from several sources, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, has repeatedly promoted vaccination during the pandemic.

### Previous Research

Previous studies primarily found that natural immunity is superior to vaccination, including a study published

in January. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported in 2022 that natural immunity was better against Delta. Research has also shown that previous infection doesn’t protect as well against infection over time since Omicron displaced Delta but remains strong against severe disease.

Protection from vaccines drops sharply within months against Omicron and doesn’t even start very high, according to studies from the CDC and others, and the shielding against severe disease also wanes considerably over time. That has prompted authorities to recommend multiple booster shots, in a bid to restore the protection, but the protection from boosters also doesn’t last long. Boosters provided little added protection for the naturally immune against BA.1, one study showed.

Updated shots have been introduced in the United States and other countries, but no clinical data for the new vaccines are available, and observational data are mixed. Federal authorities are trying to move toward a system in which a shot is an annual occurrence, but antibody data indicate that may not be enough for everybody.

Researchers in the Lancet study wrote that policymakers should take into account the protection from prior infection, saying it “supports the idea that those with a documented infection should be treated similarly to those who have been fully vaccinated with high-quality vaccine.”

The United States has never acknowledged natural immunity in its recommendations on vaccination, though top health officials did consider doing so, in a closed-door meeting held in October 2021. Attendees at the meeting, which The Epoch Times independently confirmed took place, included White House adviser Dr. Anthony Fauci, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, and CDC head Dr. Rochelle Walensky.

## Previous studies have shown that protection against COVID-19 from vaccines drops sharply within months, which has prompted authorities to recommend multiple booster shots.

The Lancet study’s researchers were not able to provide protection estimates against newer strains, like the BA.5 subvariant, because of a limited number of studies. They wrote that further assessments of natural immunity should be conducted in the future. ■



Natural gas flares off during an oil-drilling operation in the Permian Basin oil field in Stanton, Texas, on March 12, 2022. Ninety-six percent of the products Americans use every day are derived from petroleum likely from the Permian Basin, according to Midland mayor Lori Blong.

PERMIAN BASIN

# BIDEN'S WAR ON OIL AND GAS HITS WEST TEXAS HARD

*Declared phase-out of oil and gas sends ripple effects through the Permian Basin*

By John Haughey

**W**HEN PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN openly advocates for phasing out oil and gas as primary energy generators in the United States within a decade, what appears as a news scroll blip for most Americans is a clap of thunder across the rolling West Texas sage of the Permian Basin.

“The messages, virtue signaling, and rhetoric that have come from the federal level lately tell us oil and gas is evil or not on the side of the average American or on the side of caring for our environment,” Midland Mayor Lori Blong told congressional lawmakers during a Feb. 16 field hearing in her city, which she called “the energy capital of Texas and, arguably, the energy capital of the United States.”

Forty percent of U.S. oil and natural gas production and 7 percent of global output comes from the Permian Basin, which also spans southeastern New Mexico.

Being the scapegoat for controversial U.N.-led predictions of “catastrophic” climate change is demoralizing enough, but businesses and people in “energy-producing communities” such as Midland are now facing financial and family challenges fostered by the Biden administration’s “rush-to-green energy” policies and by his own January 2023 words claiming that oil and gas

ALL PHOTOS BY JOE RADELE/GETTY IMAGES

would be needed for only 10 more years.

Blong, in addition to serving as Midland's first female mayor, is a founding partner in Octane Energy, an oil and gas exploration and production company that manages more than 300 wells across 35,000 square miles of West Texas and southeast New Mexico.

Biden's call for an end to her industry "has made it difficult to access capital" and fostered a "decrease in investment" in new exploration and new wells, Blong said.

### Uncertainty Plagues Permian

With the administration tying pipelines up in regulatory knots and "the SEC-driven [Environmental, Social, and Governance] movement" pushing investors away, Blong said the future is hazy in West Texas, and that uncertainty is "creating growing market distortions" that "need to be reversed."

"These policies prevent individual Americans and American businesses from growing as we otherwise could, prevent us from creating jobs as we otherwise could, and—most importantly—prevents our country from being energy secure as it otherwise could," she said in her witness testimony.

Midland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Chair Adrian Carrasco, who's also president of Premier Energy Services in Midland, said in his witness testimony that the city's 6,200 businesses are no longer confident about the future, which places strains on community organizations and families.

Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) Board Chair Steven Pruett, also president and CEO at Elevation Resources in Midland, said local oil and gas producers can no longer rely on banks to get needed loans.

"It's a whole new game" under the Biden administration, Pruett said in his witness testimony, noting that two to three years ago, there were 20 capital equity groups investing in oil and gas companies with only "five or six" now "that can raise capital."

"My peers and I know we have to survive on our own cash flow," he said, noting that less than half as much money is invested in developing new wells now as there was two years ago.

Because of this, Pruett said there will be a shortage "of oil and gas in the next

two years and it will be very damaging" to the global economy.

Blong said the administration seems to forget that 96 percent of the products Americans use every day, such as pharmaceuticals, clothing, electronics, and cosmetics, are derived from petroleum, likely from the Permian Basin.

Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-Texas) agreed. "If we took away petroleum products ... look around the room, you'd pretty much watch everything disappear," he said. "It is places like [Midland] that help us to maintain the reality we now live in."

40%

OF U.S. OIL AND NATURAL GAS production and 7 percent of global output comes from the Permian Basin.

6,200

BUSINESSES

The business community in Midland is no longer confident about the future, one company president says.

### GOP 'Unleashes' Bill Package

The field hearing was the third staged in Texas recently by Republican-led committees. On Feb. 13, the House Natural Resources Committee's Energy & Mineral Resources Subcommittee held a hearing in Odessa, Texas, on how federal energy production supports local communities.

On Feb. 15, the House Energy & Commerce Committee's Energy, Climate & Grid Security Subcommittee (ECGS) held a hearing on the border crisis in Weslaco, Texas, in the Rio Grande Valley.

The ECGS subcommittee also orchestrated the Feb. 16 Midland hearing titled "American Energy Expansion: Improving Local Economies and Communities' Way of Life," which emphasized the fiscal and socioeconomic benefits of the Permian Basin's oil and gas industry and how it's threatened by the Biden administration's "rush to green energy" policies.

Of particular interest in the Midland hearing were seven proposals relating to

oil and gas regulation, permitting, taxation, infrastructure, and exportation within a 17-bill "Unleash America's Energy" package introduced into the House since January.

The seven bills mandate 30-day federal approval of "cross-border energy infrastructure," or pipelines; call for removal of "public interest" as a categorical review when the U.S. Department of Energy weighs natural gas export proposals; repeals the federal Natural Gas Tax; prohibits a president from banning fracking by executive order; and requires the National Petroleum Council to research U.S. refinery capacity and needs.

Two resolutions among the measures express that there should be "no restrictions" on oil and gas exports and express disapproval of Biden's revocation of the Keystone XL pipeline permit.

Other proposals in the 17-bill package, which will dominate the House Natural Resources and Energy & Commerce committees agendas when Congress returns to Washington on Feb. 27, include the Securing America's Critical Minerals Supply Act and permitting/regulatory reform amendments to the Clean Air, Toxic Waste, Solid Waste, and Inflation Reduction acts.

### Texas Leads in 'Green Energy'

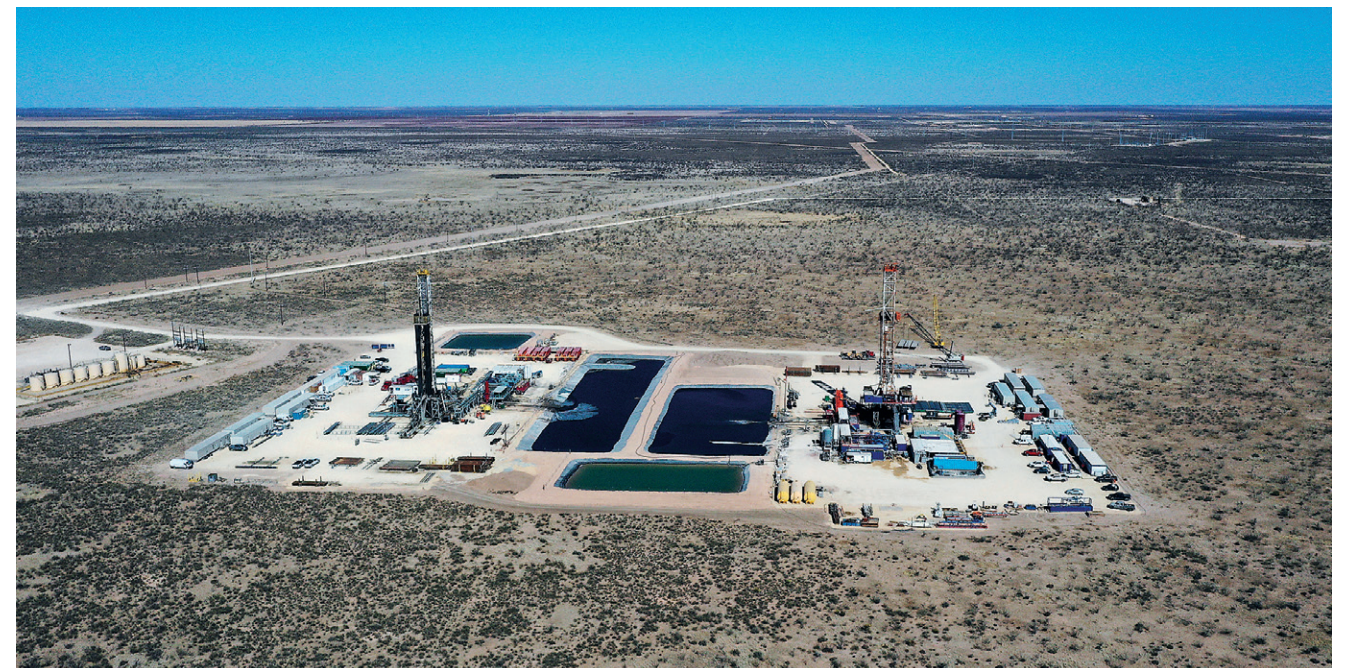
As in previous hearings, the witnesses—even those advocating for alternate energies—lobbied for regulatory reform and an overhaul of federal permitting systems.

Biology and geosciences professor Michael Zavada, who chairs the University of Texas Geosciences Department, said the headlong dive into green technologies is foolish.

"It is prudent for the United States to diversify our energy portfolio as the safest, most reliable way to maintain long-term energy independence," he said, calling support for American oil and gas projects for at least 50 years "a good strategic move in a hostile world."

Zavada advocated for a diverse array of energy sources, claiming that the Permian Basin will remain in "any new [energy] paradigm that emerges in at least the next 50 years" because it's also "an ideal environment for solar, wind," and other renewable energies.

He said equitable investments "to



Oil drilling rigs work in the Permian Basin oil field in Midland, Texas, on March 13, 2022.

all components" in the energy toolbox could ameliorate boom and bust cycles in "oil patch" cities but that investments shouldn't favor renewables "at the expense of" oil and gas.

"We all agree oil and gas aren't going away anytime soon, but the U.S. can embrace 'all of the above' without pitting one against the other," Rep. Scott Peters (D-Calif.) said, noting that Texas leads the nation in alternate energy development as well as in oil and gas.

"Texas also is the national leader in clean energy development. It is first in wind power, second in solar and storage. Forty percent of the state's power comes from wind, solar, and nuclear sources. Picking winners and losers is failed strategy."

All options are viable and should be pursued with equal gusto, Rep. Tony Cárdenas (D-Calif.) said.

"Texas is doing it bigger and better with many different energy sources," Cárdenas said. "That shows we can do all of that, and we have been doing all of that. We can move forward in a way that we can have it all."

But as a series of recent oil pipelines show, "We can do things better, we can do things right, and we have to make sure we hold people accountable to do it right," he said.

**"These policies prevent individual Americans and American businesses from growing as we otherwise could."**

Lori Blong, mayor, Midland

### Oil and Gas Get Grant Shaft

Blong, Pruett, Carrasco, and Zavada each recounted examples of how new regulations and rules encoded into the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act favor alternate so-marketed green technologies when issuing grants for innovation and good practices that Permian Basin oil and gas producers have practiced for decades.

The new bills and federal agency emphasis "have given benefits to solar and wind that are not afforded to oil and gas," Blong said, noting that oil and gas producers are "not opposed" to alternate energies being participants in federal grant programs and that they want to participate as long as the government is even in evaluating submissions from oil

and gas producers.

"If the federal government truly wants to work with energy companies to positively impact the environment, one tangible suggestion is to significantly invest in technologies for beneficial reuse of produced water from oil and natural gas extraction."

She said Midland-based innovators have developed technology for the reuse of water used in oil and gas sites, but the federal government apparently isn't interested in anything except investments in "renewables."

"Federal efforts in this case could help to accelerate our beneficial reuse efforts, rather than the federal efforts we have seen to restrict our industry but which do not ultimately benefit our communities," Blong said.

There's a reason that oil and gas innovation isn't getting the grants and investment money some alternate energies are, Peters said.

The grants are for new energy sources, such as carbon capture, direct-air capture, geothermal, and nuclear, he said—for advancing new technologies, not sustaining an industry that just recorded record profits.

"The goal is to drive up domestic energy production using all these sources and to allow the world to do the same," he said. ■

Adriana Kuch of near Bayville, N.J., committed suicide two days after a video of her being bullied was posted on social media.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MEREDITH



BULLYING & SOCIAL MEDIA

# ‘Wonderful’ Girl Commits Suicide After Bullying

New Jersey teen takes her own life after video of school beating is posted online

By Jackson Elliott

**A**DRIANA KUCH SAVED a girl from drowning in a swimming pool, her 15-year-old friend Meredith told The Epoch Times.

“Adriana was one of the most wonderful people I’ve ever met. We went to grade school together when she first moved here,” Meredith said. “She was awesome. She would do anything for anyone.”

On Feb. 1, four students at Central Regional High School (CRHS) in Bayville, New Jersey, beat up Adriana and filmed the event. They posted the attack on social media during school hours.

Two days later, her parents discovered the 14-year-old’s lifeless body.

According to those close to Adriana, the school bears some responsibility for her death because it failed to discipline bullies.

The school superintendent alleged that Adriana had a drug problem and a poor relationship with her father. But a friend says those statements aren’t true.

## Bullying Problems

According to Meredith, CRHS has a vicious bullying problem that school administrators won’t tackle.

“A lot of the kids are very violent,” Meredith said. “If you say the wrong thing to the wrong person, you’ll get your head smashed into a locker, or you’ll get beat up in the hallways, or have horrible things sent to you on any social media that you’re on.”

Teachers do nothing to stop the bullying, she added. Often, students who report bullying get suspended for “antagonizing” bullies, she said.

“The teachers tell you, ‘Maybe you should go make better friends,’ and tell you to block the people on social media,” Meredith said.

But these strategies don’t work, she said.

Bullies seek out their victims in school and online, Meredith said. If they’re blocked, they make dummy accounts and harass their victims again. If that doesn’t work, they recruit friends to message victims. Sometimes they even make fake social media pages to destroy victims’ reputations.

“There have been situations at my school where people have made profiles about people bullied, like spreading their name and posting horrible pictures of them,” said Meredith.

Meredith said that even while grieving her friend’s death, she was eager to talk to The Epoch Times because the high school acted cruelly, and she wants people to know.

“This is what she would want,” said Meredith of her friend. “The school getting what they deserve.”

## A Vicious Attack

In the attack, four girls set upon Adriana while she walked through the school with her boyfriend.

The beating lasted less than a minute but left her with bruises all over her body. They beat her with a water bottle.

Her boyfriend tried to fight back but was outnumbered. A teacher also intervened to stop the attack.

A photo taken afterward shows Adriana with wide eyes, swollen lips, and a bruised nose.

“That’s what you get, you stupid [expletive],” one attacker says in the video.

Then the bullies broadcasted Adriana’s humiliation. During school hours, they posted a video of their attack on social media.

As the video spread, the bullies used it to intimidate her again. On Feb. 3, one girl messaged Adriana to mock her for being beaten, according to the New York Post.

**33%**

**OF HIGH SCHOOL** girls considered suicide in 2021, according to the CDC.

A few hours later, Adriana killed herself.

After Adriana died, CRHS punished the four girls with suspension, according to NBC. But the report didn’t go to the

police. It would be unjust to charge the bullies when they already faced school punishment, the school said.

“I don’t believe a police report was done. We normally just suspend. If a parent wants to press charges, they can with the police. But we’re not going to double-whammy a kid where they are suspended and then [get] police charges

“A kid is assaulted with a weapon, and it’s not their policy to call the police, or file a report?”

**Michael Kuch,**  
father of Adriana Kuch

as well,” Superintendent Triantafillos Parlapinides told local news outlet News 12 New Jersey.

Police later charged Adriana’s attackers with aggravated assault, another with harassment, and two others with conspiracy to commit aggravated assault.

## Ignoring Brutality

According to Adriana’s father, Michael Kuch, the school failed to stop bullies from threatening his daughter.

“A kid is assaulted with a weapon, and it’s not their policy to call the police, or file a report?” Kuch told NBC News.

His daughter lived under harassment from bullies for “a couple of years,” he said. School administrators did nothing, he added.

He’s not the only one to bring such complaints to the school.

Olivia O’Dea, a former student at CRHS, left for a new school to escape bullies.

Olivia was also beaten, and her assailants put the video online. She currently is suing the school.

“It’s actually rather remarkable how many fights occur. There’s been Instagram pages devoted to fights occurring in Central Regional School District,” Olivia’s lawyer, Jonathan Ettman, told The Epoch Times.

He added that CRHS has a “culture of violence” that its administration has tolerated.

“Unfortunately, it has now resulted in a young girl’s death,” he said. ♦

A former teacher at CRHS, Daniel Keiser, said on social media that the school had a massive bullying problem but officials ignored it. He said intense bullying has plagued the children at the school for decades.

“It is tragic that this kind of thing had to happen to wake people up. There were days where I would break up three fights before homeroom even started,” he wrote in a post on Facebook.

“As a teacher there and a parent there who dealt with intense bullying, we would often plead with [the] administration to get things under control, and only one of them ever tried.

“They were notorious for brushing things under the carpet.”

After Adriana’s death, hundreds of students skipped class to protest against the school’s handling of bullying problems.

“Silence is compliance,” they’re heard chanting in audio recorded by NBC. Many of them held signs bearing exhortations that the school fix its bullying issues.

### Blaming the Family

CRHS had a different take on the issue. Superintendent Parlapanides blamed Adriana’s father for taking actions that mentally destabilized her.

“After her mother’s suicide ... her grades and choices declined in 7th and 8th grade. We offered her drug rehab and mental services on five occasions, but her father refused every time,” Parlapanides told the Daily Mail.

Meredith said these statements were all untrue. Adriana was extremely close with her father and never mentioned doing drugs, she said.

“She wasn’t like that. And the fact that people are spreading that around is really grossly disgusting,” she said.

Meredith said it’s not the first time the superintendent had commented about a bullied student.

“Our ex-superintendent Parlapanides goes to attacking the families relentlessly because he is heartless,” she said. “Our school just pushes all of this stuff under the rug when anything PR-wise happens.”

Parlapanides resigned a few days after his comments about Adriana and her family went public.



Adriana Kuch visits a store with her friend near Bayville, N.J. According to Adriana’s father, her school failed to stop bullies from threatening her.



(Above) Meredith holds a sign demanding justice for her friend Adriana “Age” Kuch, in Bayville, N.J., on Feb. 5. “We want to be able to go to school and not be nervous in the hallways,” says Meredith. (Right) Students protest outside Central Regional High School in Bayville, N.J., on Feb. 5.

The Epoch Times was unable to reach the Kuch family for comment.

CRHS officials didn’t respond to requests for comment.

The school’s website announced that it was working with local police “to ensure school safety” with “appropriate additional safeguards.”

The same website announcement told protesters to stay off school property during school hours.

### Bullying Rules

A letter released by the Central Regional School District announced that the district follows New Jersey state mandates on bullying. Parlapanides, board president Denise Pavone-Wilson, and board vice president George Dohn all signed the letter.

“We understand the pain and stress that our students, parents, and staff are experiencing during this difficult time. Central Regional School District and all of its administration, faculty, and staff are committed to the students to make sure they are safe and learning in their classes,” the letter reads.

Meredith shared a list of demands

made of the school by students. The list offered several measures the school could take to reconcile with students.

“The students of Central feel unseen and not cared for. We feel that the school doesn’t care about the bullying going on in the halls. We want to be able to go to school and not be nervous in the hallways,” the list began.

Their demands included printing the suicide hotline number on school IDs, providing additional anti-bullying resources, arranging visits to the school from anti-bullying groups, ensuring that hallway surveillance cameras are working, and holding a memorial service for Adriana. They urged school officials to “recognize their mistake.”

### Policies for Punishment

The school’s policies mention that it’s mandatory to report some forms of physical violence.

“Some acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying may be bias-related acts and potentially bias crimes and school officials must report to law enforcement officials either serious acts,

or those which may be part of a larger pattern in accordance with the provisions of the Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials,” the school’s policy on bullying reads.

That policy includes consequences for bullies such as detention, deprivation of privileges, suspension, expulsion, and reports to law enforcement.

But it also has several remedial options for bullies that don’t offer punishment.

These include creating a “behavioral contract” with bullies, in which the bully has a “voice in the outcome”; explaining the “long-term negative consequences” of bullying; explaining what the future consequences might be if the bully chooses to continue; receiving “wrap-around support services”; and other options.

Another method the school suggest-

“Things have gotten exponentially worse with the advent of social media and sites like TikTok and reels.”

Jonathan Ettman, lawyer

ed was to change schedules to separate bullies and victims.

### Suicide on the Rise

In 2021, about one-third of high school girls considered suicide, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, whose studies show that almost all mental health markers have worsened since 2011.

Ettman blamed social media for the increase in violence among schoolchildren he has observed. Social media fame can motivate attacks, he said.

“Things have gotten exponentially worse with the advent of social media and sites like TikTok and reels. So there seems to be a penchant for planning premeditated attacks on students, so that they can be filmed and uploaded to social media sites,” he said.

Also, constant technology use has damaged everyone’s ability to communicate in person, Ettman said. This damage extends to children.

“Everybody’s lost the ability to have a sensible conversation,” he said. “Even at the elementary level, the kids act out in such a violent, abrupt way.”

In Ettman’s experience, school violence today is especially horrible among girls. He said he sees more girl-on-girl fights than fights between boys.

Whatever the cause of fights, schools often don’t discipline kids, Ettman said. If a school admits there was a fight, it makes school administrators look bad, he said.

This system results in bullies getting away with minimal penalties.

“It seems as if it’s a revolving, revolving door,” Ettman said.

Modern bullying is worse than bullying in the past, he added. With social media, students can face nonstop harassment that doesn’t end if they fight back against bullies.

“This is just ongoing, around the clock. Every moment, they’re dealing with it, because it’s being broadcast on social media,” he said. “It’s just a constant reminder of the humiliation that they’re dealing with. And that’s something that no adults can relate to.”

The Epoch Times reached out to Michael Kuch, Keiser, Adriana Kuch’s aunt Samantha Nye, and the CRHS school system. None replied by press time. ■

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEREDITH

# CDC TRACKING VACCINATION STATUS

*New medical code for unvaccinated status raises concerns among experts*

*By Zachary Stieber*



**N**EW MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS CODES for COVID-19 immunization status have been added in the United States.

One code is for being “unvaccinated for COVID-19.”

That code “may be assigned when the patient has not received at least one dose of any COVID-19 vaccine,” the U.S. Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention (CDC), which implemented the new codes in 2022, states in a document outlining the codes.

Another code is for being partially vaccinated or having received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine but not having received enough doses to meet the CDC’s definition of fully vaccinated.

The goal of the codes is “to track people who are not immunized or only partially immunized,” according to the CDC.

*Medical professionals and volunteers work at a drive-thru COVID-19 testing site in Washington on April 6, 2020.*

Experts say the codes don’t fit with the International Classification of Diseases, which has diagnoses for diseases and other reasons for health care visits.

“They’re treating nonvaccination as if this is a hazardous exposure that therefore merits being recorded as a medical exposure,” Dr. Harvey Risch, professor emeritus of epidemiology at the Yale School of Public Health, told The

Epoch Times. “That’s never been done, to my knowledge.”

The CDC didn’t respond to requests for comment for this article.

## **Proposal**

The CDC proposed adding the codes to the international classification in September 2021.

“People have now been having immunizations for a number of months, and these provide

DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES



protection for people who are immunized, but there has been interest expressed in being able to track people who are not immunized or who are only partially immunized,” Dr. David Berglund, a CDC medical officer, said during a meeting about the proposal.

“At the current time, there can be considered to be a significant modifiable risk factor for morbidity and for mortality, and it can be of interest for clinical reasons, as well as being of value for public health reasons, to be able to track this.”

COVID-19 hospitalization and death rates are higher among the unvaccinated, according to data published by the CDC. The data do not take into account key factors such as age or prior infection, and other figures show the vaccinated being hospitalized or dying at higher rates in some states.

The proposal was backed by meeting participants during the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) Coordination and Maintenance Committee meeting.

“I definitely think we would support this,” Kristin Balint, a supervisor at Trinity Health, said. “We are currently seeing physicians documenting ‘unimmunized for COVID-19’ in our records.”

Jeanne Yoder, representing the Defense Health Agency, envisioned adding additional codes later to indicate if a person was not vaccinated against each successive variant.

The organizations of the people who backed the proposal either didn’t respond to requests for comment or declined inquiries.

### Codes Added

Three codes were added to the classification system on April 1, 2022.

Z28.310 is for being unvaccinated. Z28.311 is for being partially vaccinated. Z28.39 is for “other underimmunization status.” All fell under a new sub-sub category, “Underimmunization for COVID-19 status.”

The codes are grouped with already-existing codes related to vaccination. They include “immunization not carried out because of patient refusal.”

Another code introduced during the pan-

dem is for counseling related to “immunization safety.”

“I think it would be a good idea to be able to indicate that, for whatever reason, the vaccine was refused,” Valeria Bica, a clinical documentation specialist at Nemours AI duPont Hospital for Children, said during the meeting that featured the code proposals.

“I know that we track that for families where they’ve refused to vaccinate their children, for one reason or another. And certainly we’ve tried to re-educate and to keep trying to find opportunities to give the vaccines.”

The ICD was originally developed by the World Health Organization. U.S. authorities have their own version of the system. The COVID-19 immunization codes are not listed in the World Health Organization’s ICD.

All health care entities operating in the United States and covered by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act must use the U.S. version of the ICD. Coded ICD data from providers enable public health officials to “conduct many disease-related activities,” according to the CDC. The U.S. version is updated at least once a year.

The codes have multiple purposes. They let health care providers create a medical record, which can be used by future practitioners who take care of the patient. The system also facilitates billing.

tioners who take care of the patient. The system also facilitates billing.

### Privacy Concerns

Dr. Robert Malone, who first highlighted the codes on his Substack blog, said the new codes were concerning in light of how not being vaccinated has been used during the pandemic to deny patients health care services, such as organ transplants.

“That information will end up in the hands of insurers, who will use it to make decisions about what you’re going to have to pay for your insurance policy, whether or not you’re going to be qualified,” Malone said.

Risch said the information could be used to perform analyses on groups of deidentified data but questioned whether it would remain deidentified.

“Given how little we trust government agen-



**“They’re treating nonvaccination as if this is a hazardous exposure that therefore merits being recorded as a medical exposure.”**

*Dr. Harvey Risch, professor emeritus, Yale School of Public Health*



*A registered nurse administers a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to a woman in Corona, Calif., on Jan. 15, 2021.*

cies at this point and how stigmatizing, potentially stigmatizing this information is on individuals, nobody would rightly trust them to stay in their lane about using this in grouped information as opposed to individual,” Risch said. “What’s to stop the government from sharing this individual information with other agencies? With the FBI? With IRS? They say, ‘We don’t do that,’ and we say, ‘We don’t believe you.’

“And if they did it, what recourse would there ever be?”

### ‘Irrelevant’

The CDC in 2022 changed course and advised in COVID-19 guidelines that people were not to be treated differently on the basis of vaccination status “because breakthrough infections occur.” Breakthrough infections are infections that happen despite vaccination. The COVID-19 vaccines provide little to no protection against infection and transmission.

If any codes related to vaccine status were introduced, they should show whether a person

was fully vaccinated, because some of those people end up with vaccine injuries, Risch said.

Dr. Todd Porter, a pediatrician in Illinois, said that he uses the long-existing code for refusal to immunize only if a parent declines to get their children all the childhood vaccines. He also questioned the introduction of the new codes.

“I have a hard time clinically seeing the medical indication of using them,” Porter told The Epoch Times in an email.

He noted that there’s no code for refusal to get the vaccine for influenza, which is deadlier for children than COVID-19.

“Using these codes also disregards the contribution of natural immunity, which research evidence shows is more robust than vaccine immunity,” Porter wrote. Because of the lack of protection against transmission and infectivity, and the lack of data showing protection against severe disease in children, “an individual’s vaccination status would be irrelevant,” he added. ■

FROM L. BAO QIU/THE EPOCH TIMES; FREDERIC J. BROWN/APP VIA GETTY IMAGES

TRANSGENDERISM

# TIDE MAY BE TURNING FOR MINORS, CRUSADERS SAY

BATTLE TO HALT  
GENDER-TRANSITION  
PROCEDURES ON MINORS  
GAINS TRACTION

BY JANICE HISLE

*Protesters rally after a biological male who identifies as female was accused of frightening a teenager in the female locker room at a YMCA in Santee, Calif., on Jan. 21.*

PHOTO BY SANDY HUFFAKER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



**S**COTT NEWGENT IS FINALLY sensing a shift in the war against medical gender-transitioning of children in America.

About 4 1/2 years ago, Newgent became one of the nation's first transsexuals to voice strong opposition to gender-changing surgeries and drugs for minors.

Newgent, a 50-year-old mother of three, nearly died after a 2017 gender-reassignment surgery.

"I was sold a lie, that medically 'transitioning' would help me finally fit in and solve all my problems," Newgent, formerly known as Kellie King, told *The Epoch Times*.

"They promise you Candyland, but instead you get Vietnam. Every day, I was fighting just to survive because of the damage done to my body."

Since discovering that minors were being courted for such procedures, Newgent has worked tirelessly to prevent kids and their parents from being waltzed down the same tragic path.

The movement seems to have picked up steam lately, Newgent said, thanks partly to a whistleblower's allegations of shocking practices at a Missouri pediatric gender clinic.

Newgent has worked with a core group of parents and organizations such as Genspect, 4th Wave Now, Moms for Liberty, Gays Against Groomers, and Transgender Trend.

"And dozens more have sacrificed for over four years fighting this mess," Newgent said.

### Coalition Was Built

Newgent is probably best known for declaring "I will never be a man" despite having a masculine appearance, in the *Daily Wire's* 2022 documentary "What Is a Woman?" Newgent also drew widespread notice for writing a 2021 guest editorial in *Newsweek*, a personal account of the horrors of gender-transitioning procedures.

But before then, Newgent was helping lawmakers and giving speeches to anyone who would listen to a "stop transitioning kids" message.

Newgent's advocacy has drawn ridicule from some in the LGBT community. "Now, people who laughed at me are backing me," said Newgent, founder of TreVoices (Trans Rational Educational Voices).

A coalition of gays, lesbians, "trans" people, parents, Christians, and atheists have joined Newgent in advocating for these procedures to be banned because they can cause lifelong harm.

"It doesn't matter what backgrounds these



(Above) Scott Newgent, who regrets transitioning from feminine to masculine, prepares to testify in support of a bill that would outlaw the procedures, at the Nebraska Statehouse in Lincoln on Feb. 8.

(Left) Skin was cut from Scott Newgent's arm for a transition surgery.

FROM TOP: SCOTT NEWGENT/TREVOICES.ORG; COURTESY OF SCOTT NEWGENT

people come from. We're all coming together to save these kids," Newgent said.

The legislative advocates' efforts are bearing fruit even though they face well-funded, aggressive opponents—and a partisan divide.

Most states proposing the bans are Republican-dominated; states trying to ensure access to the procedures tend to be Democrat-controlled. But a proposed ban on the procedures has been floated in progressive Hawaii; Gays Against Groomers sent a representative there to testify.

"It's hilarious to us that we're constantly slandered as 'anti-trans' by woke outlets and radicals that don't know how to handle us," the

group said in a recent tweet, "when time and time again we come to the defense of trans people that align with our mission and want to end the medicalization of children too."

Last week, Newgent was gratified to see lawmakers approve a youth transgender-treatment ban in South Dakota, the first state Newgent tried to assist with legislation. The original bill was defeated in 2019; Republican Gov. Kristi Noem signed it into law on Feb. 13, 2023.

Chloe Cole, now 18, testified in favor of the South Dakota bill. She told her story to *The Epoch Times* last year, describing how a surgeon removed her breasts when she was 15.

Although she insisted she wanted to be a boy for several years, Cole now has become a prominent spokesperson as a "de-transitioner," one who regrets being misled into having the surgery.

Weeks before the South Dakota law's passage, Utah approved a ban, too. Many other states have similar proposals in the pipeline. Newgent is working to shore up legislation in more than a dozen states.

Notably, Newgent testified on Feb. 14 in Missouri, where state and federal authorities are investigating allegations from the nation's first whistleblower alleging a gender clinic has been harming children with unethical and immoral practices.

"The dominoes are starting to fall; it could be

game, set, match," Newgent said while preparing to speak in support of the bill in Missouri and another in Kansas.

Still, Newgent said the fight is fierce, with many more battles on the horizon.

### Beneficial or Harmful?

Opponents of restrictions say these "gender-affirming" procedures alleviate "gender dysphoria," which can make youths miserable, even suicidal. But research supporting that view is recent and short-term; some attack the findings as flawed.

People, including Newgent, insist that these procedures cause permanent harm and health problems that haven't been well-studied. They point to the only long-term published research on adult transsexuals, a 30-year Swedish study showing that people who undergo sex-reassignment surgery had higher mortality rates from all causes and committed suicide at a rate 19 times greater than the general population.

As the nation has debated those viewpoints and the number of gender-dysphoric youths has exploded, a pattern has emerged.

Whenever a ban or other restriction is proposed, lawmakers and their supporters, such as Newgent, prepare for the onslaught.

Almost invariably, busloads of protesters, wearing T-shirts proclaiming their stance and carrying professionally printed placards, flood statehouses.

Often, lawyers from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) will hold a news conference. Impassioned testimony follows from both sides while social media light up with commentary.

The scene was similar in Arkansas in 2021, when that state approved the nation's first such ban. It was repeated in Nebraska when Newgent testified in early February 2022. And it likely will reoccur each time Newgent and others testify.

### 'Tide Is Starting to Turn'

Newgent's voice is a strong and important ♣

"I was sold a lie, that medically 'transitioning' would help me finally fit in and solve all my problems."

Scott Newgent, detransitioner

one, said Arkansas state Rep. Robin Lundstrum, sponsor of the bill that became the nation's first law to ban transgender procedures for minors. Newgent wasn't involved with that legislation but has publicly supported it.

That law remains on hold while a judge decides whether it's constitutional.

The ACLU fought the law on behalf of several transgender-identifying youths and their parents, who attested to their belief that the treatments improve quality of life for suffering young people.

So far, court rulings haven't been favorable to the Arkansas Save Adolescents From Experimentation (SAFE) Act.

But now Lundstrum thinks "the tide is starting to turn" against transgender treatments of minors, mainly because of advocacy from people like Newgent.

She acknowledged Newgent's courage while confronting hostility. An activist pushed Newgent at a California protest last year; last week, a protester spat on Newgent's face despite heavy security at the Nebraska Statehouse.

Lundstrum told *The Epoch Times*: "It's very hard for grassroots individuals that are compassionate and caring to stand up, but it does catch on. It just takes longer."

She predicts that "more people are going to stand up" as they witness more children being harmed. She said it saddens her to think that's what must occur to get more people motivated.

Many people on the other side of the debate, favoring transitions of minors, "have great intentions, but they're just not seeing the harm that's being done," Lundstrum said.

### Lawmakers Tackle Issues

Although Lundstrum's SAFE Act remains in jeopardy of being overturned, it has been a model for bills in other states, including Missouri.

As of Feb. 13, the ACLU was tracking nearly 300 pieces of legislation involving transgender issues; 93 proposals centered on health care in at least 21 states.

"In the last few years, states have advanced a record number of bills that attack LGBT rights, especially transgender youth. The ACLU is tracking these attacks and working with our national network of affiliates to support LGBT people everywhere," its website says.

In addition to the bills in Missouri and Kansas, Newgent backs pending legislation in Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Montana, North Dakota,



Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

The ACLU says it's wrong that "these bills target access to medically-necessary health care, like Medicaid, for transgender people" while exempting identical treatments offered to non-transgender youths. The proposed bans carve out exceptions for minors with genetic disorders affecting genitalia.

Many of the proposed bans on transgender procedures for minors call for disciplinary action against practitioners who would violate those laws.

*Chloe Cole wakes up from her mastectomy operation at age 15. Cole has become a prominent spokeswoman as a "de-transitioner."*

COURTESY OF CHLOE COLE

Some of the bills would allow medical malpractice suits for years after patients reach the legal age of adulthood. Others would make it a crime for anyone to perform the procedures on minors.

### Whistleblowers in Europe, Missouri

In the mid-1990s, after Dutch researchers released a study showing that puberty blockers helped young transgender people, Europe forged ahead with the procedures while the United States lagged behind. Now, the United States and Europe have reversed roles.

In Europe, concerns about harmful effects have surfaced in recent years, causing several countries to put on the brakes as more "de-transitioners" go public with their stories of regret and as others raise concerns.

Recently, a whistleblower's allegations led to the downfall of the United Kingdom's sole pediatric gender clinic.

Last year, British authorities ordered the Tavistock Centre's gender identity clinic to close by spring 2023 after an investigation showed that the procedures performed there were causing more harm than good.

The *Daily Mail* recently reported that former clinicians are now expressing regret that they handed out life-altering medications after a single assessment with "incredibly complex" children.

That description tracks with the account given by Jamie Reed, a former Missouri clinic intake manager. She ignited a firestorm with a first-person account published in *The Free Press*, an independent publication. Millions of people viewed her story on Twitter alone.

Reed worked as an intake case manager for four years at The Washington University Transgender Center at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

She alleges that mental-health assessments were inadequate and that treatments continued even after children showed clear signs of suffering ill effects. Prescriptions were sometimes given against parents' wishes, she said.

Reed is calling for a national moratorium on the procedures.

The university said it was alarmed by Reed's allegations and was conducting an internal review.

Many people, including Newgent, think Reed is paving the way for others to blow the whistle on such clinics across the United States.

"Remember it took one whistleblower in the UK, Dr. David Bell, to spur an investigation into

Tavistock, resulting in its closure," *Daily Wire* writer Christina Buttons wrote on Twitter.

"Jamie Reed is the U.S.'s trailblazer—more whistleblowers will come forward because of her bravery. The gender industry's house of cards will fall."

### Children Are Apolitical

On Jan. 26, Reed filed a formal complaint about the St. Louis Transgender Center with Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey. He and Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) have launched investigations.

Reed appears particularly situated to share her revelations because of her personal characteristics. Reed is married to a woman who identifies as a man. She describes herself as "queer."

That makes it difficult for anyone to dismiss Reed as a bigot or a transphobe—labels often lobbed at conservatives who are against gender-transition procedures for minors.

But online critics questioned the timing of Reed's revelations ahead of the Feb. 14 Missouri Senate hearing where Newgent and others testified.

Some parents commented on social media that their children received detailed assessments at the St. Louis clinic; they were stunned to hear Reed's allegations that prescriptions were handed out willy-nilly to children with severe mental issues.

Reed, 42, is a parent of two biological children from a previous marriage and three foster children.

Yet, despite describing herself as "politically to the left of Bernie Sanders," Reed seems to have drawn little or no support from fellow progressives for her whistleblowing.

An attorney representing and advising Reed, Vernadette Broyles of The Child & Parent Rights Campaign, said on Feb. 9, "We have simply got to get past the partisanship, because our kids are not Democrats or Republicans."

Broyles said the politics of the people tasked with protecting children "frankly should not matter to us." The facts are what should matter, she said. Reed agreed.

### 'Not About Human Rights'

On Feb. 8, Nebraska heard from dozens of people on both sides of the issue during a hearing on the Let Them Grow Act, a proposed ban on medical gender procedures for anyone under age 19. ♦

**\$5 BILLION**  
MARKET RESEARCHERS predict that gender-transition treatment will generate more than \$5 billion by the decade's end.

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**\$1 MILLION**  
THE MEDICAL BILLS for Newgent's hormone treatments, breast removal, and genital alterations exceeded \$1 million.



Protesters oppose a proposed ban on gender-transition surgery for minors, the Let Them Grow Act, at the Nebraska Statehouse in Lincoln on Feb. 8.

Parents and people who identified as transgender described seeing benefits from the treatments. They said some youths “know” from a young age that they want to live as the opposite gender, and it’s cruel to allow them to suffer without access to puberty blockers that can stop them from going through unwanted bodily changes.

Supporters of the legislation say any perceived benefits would likely be fleeting, replaced with lifelong regret, after transition-related health problems cropped up or mental issues went unresolved. They say youths need counseling and time to work through gender confusion, not surgeries and hormone treatment.

Several people who testified against the legislation called it a “right” to seek this treatment.

A young girl, who appeared to be a preteen, declared that lawmakers “need to trust kids to know what’s best for themselves” and that gender-related medical treatment should be allowed when children feel “comfortable” to proceed.

But Newgent, the first witness to speak in favor of the legislation, stated: “I’m a mother and a woman who has given birth and carried life. I’m here today to put an end to the idea that medically transitioning children is about human rights. It is not. It’s about money.”

Newgent said market researchers predict that “gender-affirming” care will generate more

## As of Feb. 13, the ACLU was tracking nearly 300 pieces of legislation involving transgender issues; 93 proposals centered on health care in at least 21 states.

than \$5 billion by the decade’s end.

Medical bills for Newgent’s hormone treatments, breast removal, and genital alterations exceeded \$1 million. Newgent is convinced this will lead to an early grave because of recurrent infections and other medical issues.

“You cannot transition your pain away. You only add to it,” Newgent said. This is a concept that young people cannot comprehend because their brains typically aren’t completely developed until around age 25; Newgent proved vulnerable to transgender marketing ploys well into adulthood, beginning the transition hormones at age 42 before progressing to surgeries.

Newgent urged legislators to approve the legislation: “You will be considered a bigot. But tomorrow, you will be a hero. This is wrong on every level. Don’t do this to kids.” ■

THIS PAGE: SCOTT NEWGENT/TREVOIRS.ORG

# Perspectives



A bike messenger rides through the rain at New York’s Time Square during the pandemic on Oct. 16, 2020.

PHOTO BY TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



### WEALTHY WARNING

‘Follow the money’ and be ready for the economic recession. **58**



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INSIDE

# Thomas McArdle



## Wealthy Warning

Follow the money' and be ready for the economic recession

**“R**ICH-PEOPLE problems aren't going to tank the economy,” Wall Street Journal reporters recently assured us.

Lest anyone forget, for decades there has been a Great Wall at the Journal, which Rupert Murdoch never demolished when he added the paper to his massive media empire in 2007. While there's no denying the talent and scope found within its army of reporters, the Journal's news pages are as liberal, if not more so, as what's found in the rest of the powerful establishment, mainstream media.

Its editorial page, on the other hand, one of the most reportorial anywhere, is a beacon of free-market thought and laid much of the groundwork for the tax-cutting Reagan Revolution four decades ago.

So it smells like a rat when you read in the Journal that although “Americans have been hearing the ‘R’-word a lot”—meaning “recession”—in truth, “it's the wrong one”; that the right word is “richcession,” and since you're not rich, don't worry your poor little head. You know what's behind such assertions—the class warfare ideology that most establishment reporters have swallowed hook, line, and sinker. And it's there even among reporters whose beat is advising investors.

The Journal rattles through a whole series of facts strongly suggesting that big-money investors are battering down the hatches.

After cheerily relating how the gap between rich and poor is narrowing thanks to the federal government's COVID-19 handouts, we read of inscrutable swings in real estate investing. They may not resemble the run-up to the 2008 financial crisis, but in the years preceding that disaster, few correctly read the poisonous condition of the real estate market. The mortgage interest

deduction; Bill Clinton's \$500,000 exclusion on capital gains taxes on real estate; Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's governmental intrusion and distortion of the consumer mortgage market with implicit guarantees against default; the politicized intensification of the Community Reinvestment Act in 1995, which artificially gave advantage on mortgages based on race and neighborhood and thus weakened scrutiny of borrowers' creditworthiness; the widespread elimination of down payments on mortgages; the mutating of such dubious mortgages into new, exotic investment interests—all these factors led to a perfect economic storm that was so harmful that Marxists could be found crowing about a Time magazine cover asking if capitalism was dead. (Nothing new: Time's cover asked if capitalism was working back in 1980 before Ronald Reagan saved the economy by recognizing that “government is the problem.”)

**Something may once again be rotten in the state of high-end real estate investment in America, and the notion that it isn't an indication of economic peril because it only concerns the wealthy is ludicrous.**

Those with sizable wealth invested in the economy have been spooked by record-setting inflation, market drops, and the Federal Reserve's significant-but-inadequate interest rate hikes. Sales of the most expensive homes were down by 25 percent during the latter half of 2022, sales of luxury goods are falling, and affluent consumers are increasingly shopping at stores like Walmart. Some 35 percent of those earning an annual \$150,000 or more

told L.E.K. corporate strategy consulting firm that they were being impacted significantly by the Biden administration's 1970s-like inflation.

The Journal told its readers to look out for those at higher income levels possibly shifting their investments from equities to money markets and fixed-income funds—in other words withdrawing from the business sector into the equivalent of cash in a bank account.

Investors are seeking to liquefy their holdings, which isn't a vote of confidence in the economy. Of great note is the fact that Blackstone, KKR & Co., and Starwood Capital Group have recently limited their clients' ability to make withdrawals from their investments in real estate trusts. In Blackstone's case, a robust six-year average annual return of 12.5 percent in its Breit commercial real estate fund didn't stop investors and U.S. pension funds from wanting out of such illiquid commitments in recent months.

Again, an exact comparison with 2008 isn't appropriate, but the value of the specific real estate holdings in such innovative funds is now being questioned, and it's worth recalling that the botching of the valuation of real estate instruments was at the heart of the 2008 debacle. Last month, Blackstone announced a \$4 billion investment from the state-owned University of California, which may or may not be a disguised government bailout but contained an unusual \$1 billion guarantee by Blackstone to give the state university system a hefty return of at least 11.25 percent.

Something may once again be rotten in the state of high-end real estate investment in America, and the notion that it isn't an indication of economic peril because it only concerns the wealthy is ludicrous. Few people in this country are employed by someone who doesn't have more money than they do.

# Anders Corr



## Xinjiang's Governor Cancels Trip to Europe

Will China's foreign minister escape arrest as well?

**C**HINA IS SENDING diplomatic delegations to Europe in an increasingly desperate bid to mend fraying ties. But one trip just got canceled, and another could be.

Erkin Tuniyaz, the governor of the Xinjiang region, backed away from plans to meet officials in London, Brussels, and Paris. Perhaps he worried he would be arrested or have meetings downgraded to be with low-level officials.

He would have had good reason to worry.

Tuniyaz helps oversee Beijing's genocidal policies against the Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims. He claims to conduct “preventive counterterrorism and deradicalization measures,” but he is, arguably, increasing them.

Chinese Communist Party (CCP) policies against the Uyghurs include the destruction of religious sites and heavy surveillance, such as ubiquitous facial recognition cameras, police checkpoints, and overnight home visits by CCP minders.

The regime's concentration camps and prisons detain approximately 1 million Uyghurs, who are subjected to forced labor, brainwashing, “reeducation” in CCP doctrine and the Mandarin Chinese language, torture, rape, forced sterilization, overcrowding, hunger, lack of access to medical care, and the separation of families.

The United States sanctioned Tuniyaz and banned his travel in the country, while London and Brussels only sanctioned some of his deputies.

Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress, called the planned visit “shocking and incomprehensible” in comments published by The Wall Street Journal. “Proven complicity in crimes against humanity and genocide must be a clear red line, and must lead to justice and accountability instead of engagement,” he said.

Tuniyaz's trip coincided with the European Parliament's debate over the proposed Forced Labor Regulation that would restrict imports from Xinjiang. Did he hope to lobby parliamentarians to reject the bill or score photo-ops with diplomats?

Instead, two politicians joined Uyghur protesters outside Britain's Foreign Office. They denounced not only Tuniyaz, but the British government's plan to meet him, saying his visa should be denied.

**Erkin Tuniyaz helps oversee Beijing's genocidal policies against the Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims.**

Jewish groups also joined the protest. One member told the Jewish Chronicle: “We have our own history of persecution and discrimination, which morphed into the genocide of the Holocaust, and it has major similarities to what is happening to the Uyghurs. Jews knew in the 1930s and '40s what it was like to have too few to speak up and act for us.”

Iain Duncan Smith, a Conservative member of Parliament, told the BBC the visit sought a “propaganda coup” for Beijing. (It actually achieved the opposite.)

“We have got to start being much tougher on China—to say, ‘If you want to be part of the free market, if you want to be treated by the rest of the world as a partner, then you have to start abiding by the standards, laws, and responsibilities that come with that, including full human rights,’” Smith said.

Tuniyaz allegedly arrived in London on Feb. 12, and a protest was held outside the Foreign Office the next day.

Smith told cameras at the protest

that the attorney general should allow a private prosecution brought by a Uyghur group to move forward. He said that the government's loudest statement against those guilty of genocide would be, “You are not welcome here, and if you set foot here, we will detain you.”

Another Conservative parliamentarian, Alicia Kearns, agreed. “We should arrest [Tuniyaz] on arrival. The only meetings with him should be in a courtroom,” she said.

Labor peer Helena Kennedy said at the protest: “Why have we allowed him to come here? ... To talk about trade in his province where there is forced labor?”

The Uyghur group, based in North America and led by Salih Hudayar and Ghulam Yaghma, seeks to establish an East Turkistan government-in-exile. On the same day as the protest, the group's legal team formally requested that London's counterterrorism police investigate and arrest Tuniyaz on charges of torture. They made a compelling case that he was among those personally responsible and that he should be arrested based on Britain's Criminal Justice Act of 1988 (Section 134).

It wouldn't be the first time that UK police started an investigation against the Chinese regime. In December, six employees apparently left the country in a hurry, shortly before a deadline for police questioning about what appeared to be an attack on a protester led by China's consul general in Manchester.

In the context of arrest threats, Tuniyaz's meetings in London and Brussels were canceled by the eve of Feb. 14.

That victory for the Uyghurs raises a question. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is still planning a European tour of Germany, France, Italy, and Hungary; perhaps his complicity in the Uyghur genocide is also cause for expulsion or arrest?

MILTON EZRATI is chief economist for Vested, a contributing editor at The National Interest, and author of “Thirty Tomorrows” and “Bite-Sized Investing.”

# Milton Ezrati



## The Outlook for Commercial Real Estate

COVID's long shadow will help some areas and hurt others

COVID-19 HAS CAST A long economic shadow, most especially in commercial real estate. While rising interest rates have had a consistently negative impact on activity and pricing, the pandemic's aftermath has had a mixed effect—helping in some areas, such as warehousing, and hurting in others, such as retail and office space. These patterns will likely linger.

The effect of rising interest rates is straightforward. The Federal Reserve has raised short-term interest rates from near zero last spring to just about 4.5 percent. The costs of financing a real estate project have risen almost in tandem.

Of course, no single rate governs commercial real estate projects, but with mortgage rates almost doubling during this time, it's safe to say that the costs of projects have risen significantly, discouraging ventures of every kind and driving developers away from debt and toward equity financing—a preference that has brought pension funds, private equity, and hedge funds into the area. And since the Federal Reserve has made clear that it intends to drive up interest rates further, these pressures and trends will likely persist.

COVID-19's legacy is more complex. The initial recovery from pandemic lockdowns and quarantines created a surge in all real estate activity, raising prices, rents, and sales. From the first quarter of 2020 to early 2022, prices in commercial real estate generally rose more than 80 percent. Sales rose nearly 30 percent in 2021 alone.

But by the end of 2022, the boom was losing momentum. During the second half of last year, overall commercial real estate prices fell more than 40 percent, leaving the whole year down 13 percent. No doubt, the

rise in financing costs was the major cause of the turn, but the softening also revealed the differential impact of COVID-19's legacy.

Warehousing and logistics generally have been clear winners. Even before the pandemic, the startling growth of e-commerce was dramatically raising the need for warehousing space. The pandemic's lockdowns greatly accelerated that trend, one that shows no signs of abating even now that economies have reopened.

At the end of last year, warehouse vacancy rates stood at a low of 3.2 percent. Pricing in this area, even late in 2022, was up in every region of the country, especially the northeast. The underlying pricing and sales trends are so strong that even a recession in 2023 isn't likely to reverse them entirely.

### During the second half of last year, overall commercial real estate prices fell more than 40 percent.

Multifamily housing has also led. The rising cost of financing may have pushed development expenses, but rising interest rates have also driven families that might have bought in the past into rental units of one kind or another. Demand had outstripped supply so significantly that the median rent rose almost 8 percent in 2021 and much more in major cities.

It appears, however, that development has begun to catch supply up to demand. Median rent rose a relatively modest 5 percent in 2022. On this basis, gains for 2023, though likely positive, will be even more modest.

If the bloom is coming off the rose

of multifamily development, it still looks far more attractive than the retail area. In city centers, though many workers have returned to their offices, the foot traffic so many retailers rely on is still well below pre-pandemic levels. That and the continuing trend toward e-commerce have kept retail real estate on its back foot.

Malls have closed, and many are being repurposed for residential purposes and office space. With so little building and so much property off the market, things have begun to stabilize. Retail rents are rising again, though at a slower rate than inflation—3.8 percent in the past year. That stabilization may persist, but it's hard to see any significant gains in 2023, especially given the likelihood of a recession.

Office building is probably the most problematic area. Construction costs have risen some 14 percent in the past year, hardly an encouragement, and most developers will likely remain skeptical until work-from-home trends become clearer. Vacancy rates, already high at almost 13 percent nationally, continue to climb in every major market.

Some suggest that some 10 to 20 percent of existing office space will have to be restructured in the coming years. Pricing accordingly remains weak. Indicative of the hesitation dogging the sector, commitments to long-term leases have fallen steeply.

The picture can only be described as a “mixed bag,” to use an old-fashioned expression. Though the rise in financing costs will act as a general drag in the sector in 2023, as will a recession, some areas will deal with COVID-19's legacy a lot better than others with warehousing in the lead and office building, once the darling of the sector, bringing up the rear.

KEVIN STOCKLIN is a business reporter, film producer, and former Wall Street banker. He wrote and produced “We All Fall Down: The American Mortgage Crisis” and “The Shadow State.”

# Kevin Stocklin



## The No. 1 Problem

Why are Americans dissatisfied with their government?

ACCORDING TO A RECENT Gallup poll, Americans say that government is their No. 1 problem, beating out inflation for the top spot.

In response to the question “What do you think is the most important problem facing the country today?” 21 percent of Americans answered “Government,” up from 15 percent in 2022.

According to Gallup's January poll, other top concerns for Americans are, in order, immigration, the economy in general, unifying the country, race relations, poverty, crime, and family decline.

“This result is not surprising,” Charles Steele, professor of economics at Hillsdale College, told The Epoch Times.

“If we look at the next four most-cited problems—inflation, immigration, economy, and divisiveness—people know that politicians and bureaucrats have been making those problems worse, not better. Inflation is a good example. It is entirely created by government spending and by expansionary monetary policy from the Federal Reserve.”

Chris Talgo, editorial director at The Heartland Institute, told The Epoch Times: “Perhaps most Americans think government is the most pressing problem because almost all of the other problems are a result of poor government policy and lackluster leadership.”

“If the Biden administration hadn't spent trillions of dollars, well after the worst days of the pandemic, inflation would be less. If the Biden administration hadn't opened the border, illegal immigration would not be the catastrophe that it currently is.

“And, if the Biden administration had not gone all in on its DEI [diversity, equity, and inclusion] initiatives, it is quite likely that crime would not be as awful as it currently is.”

The Gallup poll follows a June 2022 Pew Research poll that states:



### An annual international survey found a growing distrust of government across the globe, with a significant decline over the past two years, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Americans remain deeply distrustful of and dissatisfied with their government. Just 20% say they trust the government in Washington to do the right thing.”

While the Pew report found that a majority of Americans gave the government good marks for responding to natural disasters and fighting terrorism, only 37 percent approved of the government's economic performance. Before President Joe Biden took office, 54 percent of Americans approved of the government's economic performance.

The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer, an annual international survey, found a growing distrust of government across the globe, with a significant decline over the past two years, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regarding possible reasons for this, the report states that “economic optimism is collapsing around the world, with 24 of 28 countries seeing all-time

lows in the number of people who think their families will be better off in five years. ... People in the top quartile of income live in a different trust reality than those in the bottom quartile, with 20+ point gaps in Thailand, the United States, and Saudi Arabia.”

Trust in the media has also fallen precipitously.

“I believe the COVID-19 pandemic was a watershed moment in U.S. history,” Ivan Pongracic, a Hillsdale College economics professor, told The Epoch Times.

“The government engaged in unprecedented actions during the pandemic, and Americans seemed to be eager to trust that the government had our best interests in mind when evaluating and adopting those policies. But in the past year, it has become increasingly clear that was not the case.”

Americans' increasing mistrust of government may not come as welcome news to the Biden administration, which has spent trillions on expanding federal programs and subsidies, extended the scope of federal agencies to include “climate and social justice,” and pursued an industrial energy policy to replace America's fossil fuel industry with wind and solar power.

“If the American people really believed that was done out of good intentions, they may be willing to forgive,” Pongracic said.

“But what we have seen is that the pandemic has led to possibly the greatest-ever wealth transfer from lower and middle-income people to high-income people, most of those beneficiaries being closely involved in government's policies.”

Citing the examples of windfall profits reaped by the tech and pharmaceutical industries, Pongracic added that “we are increasingly finding out about the remarkably cronyist relationship between the government and those industries, with a revolving-door hiring between them.”

**DANIEL LACALLE** is chief economist at hedge fund Tressis and author of “Freedom or Equality,” “Escape from the Central Bank Trap,” and “Life in the Financial Markets.”

# Daniel Lacalle



## Digital Currencies Could Bring Hyperinflation

*Central bank digital currencies are an unnecessary and terrible idea*

**T**HERE ARE MANY EXCUSES often used to explain inflation. However, the fact is that there’s no such thing as “cost-push inflation” or “commodity inflation.” Inflation isn’t an increase in prices; it’s the destruction of the purchasing power of the currency.

Cost-push inflation is more units of currency going to relatively scarce real assets. The same can be said about all others, from commodities to demand and, my favorite, “supply chain disruption”: more units of currency going to the same goods and services.

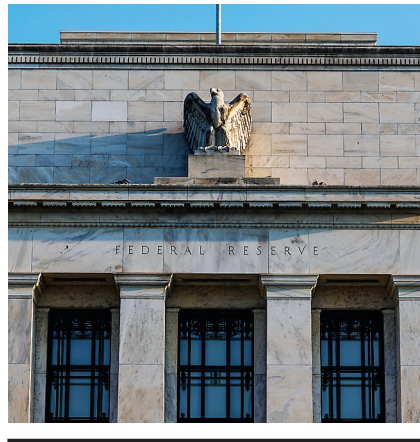
The monster inflation we’ve endured these past years first arrived through asset inflation and then through consumer prices.

Central banks know that inflation is a monetary phenomenon, and that’s why they’re hiking rates and tightening as fast as governments allow them. However, central banks have lost a significant amount of their already low credibility by first ignoring the inflation risk and later using the base effect and transitory excuse, only to react late and slowly.

This has happened in a world where the excess in money supply growth has a number of back-stops and limits that prevent a massive increase in consumer prices through the destruction of the artificially printed currency.

With quantitative easing, there are a number of limits that stop inflationary pressures. As the transmission mechanism of monetary policy is the banking channel, it’s our demand for credit that puts a break on inflationary pressures.

The only thing that saves citizens from much higher prices is the fact that the transmission mechanism of monetary policy is independent and diversified. Now, imagine for a second if that transmission mechanism was



### Should the central banks make the mistake of printing way too much money, as they did in 2020, the impact on consumer prices would be direct.

direct and had only one channel: the central bank.

A central bank digital currency would be issued directly to your account within the central bank. As such, it would be surveillance disguised as money. The central bank would know exactly what you used the currency for, how much you saved, borrowed, and spent and where. The entire privacy system and monetary limit mechanism would be eliminated.

Even worse, should the central banks make the mistake of printing way too much money, as they did in 2020, the impact on consumer prices would be direct.

Now, imagine if there was only one account, one central bank, and the government. Guess what would happen? Answer: The complete monetary financing of all government spending driving the currency to hyperinflation in a few years and the obliteration of

the private sector.

Central bank digital currencies are an unnecessary and terrible idea. You can’t start an experiment of such caliber when the independence of central banks has been questioned for many years and there’s ample evidence of policy actions that fail to recognize the risk of elevated inflation in asset prices and consumer goods.

They’re unnecessary as well because there’s absolutely no need to compete with a digital yuan. If you want to compete with other currencies or cryptocurrencies, there’s only one way: Make it absolutely clear that you’ll defend the reserve of value status of your currency.

However, it looks like the only reason the Fed or the European Central Bank (ECB) wants a digital currency is because they want to retain their market share without defending the purchasing power and reserve of value status of their currency.

It looks like central banks want to behave like a monopoly that sells bad quality products but demands to remain the main supplier by eliminating the competition.

If the Fed or the ECB implemented a sound money policy and truly followed their mandate of price stability, they would destroy any competing currency, digital or not, in a second.

If they don’t win this race, it will be because the ultimate motive is to abandon the price stability and reserve of value mandate to continue bloating government size at the expense of real wages and deposits of the private sector.

Do the Fed and the ECB want a global and digital dollar or euro that’s accepted and demanded by everyone? Simple: Follow exactly the mandate and gain global share in currency utilization because people want it, not because they’re forced to.

KEVIN DIETSCH/GETTY IMAGES

**FANYU** is an expert in finance and economics and has contributed analyses on China’s economy since 2015.

# Fan Yu

## China Joins the Chat Bot War

*Artificial intelligence has become the blockchain technology of 2023*

**C**HINESE INTERNET giants Baidu and Alibaba have joined the global artificial intelligence chat bot arms race.

And yet, in a string of events eerily similar to 2020’s, Chinese state media quickly offered a stinging rebuke.

Let’s set the stage first. The recent release of the latest version of OpenAI’s ChatGPT chat bot has brought a renewed emphasis on artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. ChatGPT is able to write essays, do research, and pass occupational tests, all of which have both stoked fear and whipped up a frenzy on the business potential of this technology.

Two of the companies at the forefront of this technology are Microsoft and Alphabet. Microsoft already has a multibillion-dollar investment and partnership with OpenAI, the entity behind ChatGPT. Microsoft announced that it would integrate a version of the chat bot into its internet search engine Bing and web browser Edge.

Alphabet, the parent company of Google, has its own AI chat bot called Bard, built on the company’s LaMDA platform. It works a bit differently from ChatGPT but has its own merits.

The frenzy over AI chat bots has boosted the stock of both companies recently. And not to be outdone, at Apple’s third-quarter earnings call, CEO Tim Cook announced that AI is also a priority for Apple, which has the benefit of data gathered from the most popular smartphone in the world.

A MarketWatch analysis of earnings call transcript data found that so far this year there have been 466 total mentions of AI, underscoring the desire for management teams to broadcast that their firms are focused on this area. In other words, AI has become the blockchain of 2023.

JADE GAO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



### The AI arms race of 2022–2023 seems to be underway, and investors are contributing to this frenzy, sending shares of both Baidu and Alibaba higher immediately after their announcements.

Back to China’s technology firms. The day after Google announced Bard, Chinese internet giant Baidu unveiled that it is working on its own AI chat bot, called Ernie. The platform has been under development for four years and will be ready for trial in March.

In 2021, Baidu announced ERNIE 3.0 Titan, an AI language model based on 260 billion parameters. That’s a bigger set of parameters than the database underpinning ChatGPT.

Merely a few days later, Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba announced that it was putting a similar AI chat bot type of service under testing. Alibaba also has a nickname for its AI language model: DAMO (Discovery, Adventure, Momentum, and Outlook).

Chinese online retail giant JD.com also got into the fray. On the compa-

ny’s Weixin account, JD announced ChatJD, an industrial chat bot dedicated to the fields of “retail and finance,” in a seemingly flagrant bid to hype up its core business and stock price at once.

The AI arms race of 2022–2023 seems to be underway, and investors are contributing to this frenzy, sending shares of both Baidu and Alibaba higher immediately after their announcements.

This all causes some déjà vu for those who remember when traditional imaging firm Eastman Kodak and a beverage company known as Long Island Iced Tea very publicly announced pivots toward blockchain and crypto, sending their share prices momentarily upward.

As for the Chinese upstarts, the party might be over before it begins.

The Securities Times, a state-owned financial industry newspaper, published a stern editorial warning investors not to be lured by speculation of “false concepts” and ultimately losing out by blindly following popular trends. The editorial was directed at AI and chat bots such as ChatGPT specifically.

Such warnings from Chinese state-owned media likely shouldn’t be trifled with. The technology sector crackdown of 2020 and 2021 was preceded by a string of government media editorials warning against tech speculation and unchecked expansion.

With that said, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) likely is interested only in slowing down the rollout of such services. When Baidu initially announced years ago that it was working on an AI initiative, it received validation from Beijing. The CCP likely wants strong input into the algorithms and parameters these chat bots use so it can influence the outputs.





Alvin Lui, president of Courage Is A Habit.

THOUGHT LEADERS

# The Revolutionist Playbook in America's Schools

*How schools are weaponizing 'social-emotional learning' to indoctrinate children*

**“M**Y GREAT-GRAND-father ran from communism,” Alvin Lui says. “The people that dragged him out of his little bakery shop and beat him weren’t soldiers. They were college kids—the Red Guard. And that’s what they’re creating now with these kids, this revolutionist thinking: to hate America and American values, and to drive a wedge into the family.”

In a recent episode of “American Thought Leaders,” host Jan Jekielek speaks with Lui, president of Courage Is A Habit, which creates resources for parents to help protect their children from ideological indoctrination masquerading as education, from pronoun ideology to “social-emotional learning.”

**JAN JEKIELEK:** Give me a sense of how this began. When did you realize something was amiss?

**ALVIN LUI:** I was born and raised in California, and I moved my young family from California to Indiana in April 2020. The Midwest is wonderful, and we couldn’t have been happier.

But then, I saw the same seeds growing in schools that ruined California, and everybody reacted the way we did 20 years earlier in California. “Oh, it’s not that bad. It’ll never happen here.”

**MR. JEKIELEK:** What exactly is being taught?

**MR. LUI:** Instead of teaching children rigorous academics so that they can be independent, successful people, they’re teaching a certain brand of politics. It isn’t, “Here’s the left, here’s the right.” It’s, “Here’s the ‘woke’ ideology, and the other side is bad.”

When I saw these seeds being planted in Indiana, it was like watching the same movie again, except I knew the

**“And that’s what they’re creating now with these kids, this revolutionist thinking: to hate America and American values, and to drive a wedge into the family.”**

ending, and there was nowhere left to run. I live in Carmel, a nice city. Even there, the school board and schools already have the transgender ideology and critical race theory. At that moment, I realized that if I didn’t do something, then I can’t complain. But then I realized this is going to blanket the entire country. It’s not a red-state, blue-state thing. It’s an attack on children’s innocence and separates children from families. Some of my tools on the site explain that.

My great-grandfather ran from communism. The people that dragged him out of his little bakery shop and beat him weren’t soldiers. They were college kids—the Red Guard. That’s how my father got here, and my siblings and I were born here as well. And that’s what they’re creating now with these kids, this revolutionist thinking: to hate America and American values, and to drive a wedge into the family. You have to drive a wedge between the parents and children before you can get them to be revolutionists.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** How is that wedge being driven?

**MR. LUI:** In K–12 today, they’re using race and gender. It’s coming through a mental health program called social-emotional learning, which sounds great. They use terms all parents love, like empathy, personal responsibility, and responsible decision making, but they’re doing

what we call language contamination. They’re weaponizing kindness, for example, and empathy. They’re not using them in the way we think of them.

We did a big exposé on school counselors and social workers, who are redefining safety and abuse. We’ve always believed that if a child is unsafe, they’re being neglected at home, beaten, or starved. Today, they’re not safe if parents don’t succumb to the transgender ideology—if you don’t use their pronouns, if you don’t let them have breast binders, if you don’t let them take puberty blockers. Then, the schools say: “The parents are unsafe. They’re causing the suicides. They’re neglectful and abusive, but we’re the safe space.”

With social-emotional learning, all these arrogant teachers, school board members, and counselors want to push their idea of what good parenting is onto everybody else.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** We hear about social-emotional learning as a multifaceted tool to bring people into this way of thinking, but it’s just a survey. What’s wrong with a survey?

**MR. LUI:** The survey is how they manufacture a self-fulfilling prophecy. But before we talk about the survey, let’s talk about why social-emotional learning is so deceptive. I mentioned empathy. Let’s take another example of social-emotional learning—responsible decision making. ♦

“It isn’t, ‘Here’s the left, here’s the right.’ It’s, ‘Here’s the “woke” ideology, and the other side is bad.”

**MR. JEKIELEK:** Who would disagree with that?

**MR. LUI:** Right. What parent doesn’t want their children to have responsible decision-making skills? But this is responsible decision making through the lens of a critical race theorist. It means that if you’re white, when you become voting age, you need to vote for things like reparations. That’s your responsible decision. You need to give up certain things because of white privilege.

And if you’re not white, you need to be taking down the systems that are oppressing you. It doesn’t matter how successful you are, you’re being oppressed. That’s your responsible decision making.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** Why are school counselors so significant?

**MR. LUI:** The American School Counselor Association is the largest organization that trains school counselors and social workers in K–12. They have chapters in all 50 states. They drive the mission and the training and the objectives for school counselors and social workers.

They had an annual conference in Austin last July, and we made sure we went. We picked up their videos, speeches, and handouts, because we knew that parents didn’t understand that counselors are complete ideologues today.

We decided to use their own words to expose who they are. We found so much. Some of it was online, some was in that conference. Since then, we created Behind Closed Doors. If anybody wants to see this, you can go to [CourageIsAHabit.org](https://CourageIsAHabit.org), and under

“School Counselors,” you’ll see our Behind Closed Doors exposé.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** I want to go back to these surveys, because you describe the social-emotional learning process, of which the survey is a key feature. How is it brainwashing?

**MR. LUI:** When parents push back against these radical policies, oftentimes, the answer is, “This is data driven. It’s evidence based.” They never tell you from where, but what they’re alluding to are these social-emotional learning surveys they give in class that the parents never see. This data is manipulated to justify more social-emotional learning and more radical policies.

These surveys often ask innocuous questions that most parents won’t find offensive. Here’s an actual social-emotional learning question: “What is your level of confidence that you can complete the work assigned to you in school?” Instead of using that to help the child do more work, they’ll use the answer, “There’s too much work.”

Or they’ll say, “Certain students of color cannot complete their work because the school isn’t inclusive enough.” So they use that answer to include more LGBT books, more Black Lives Matter flags, or GSA clubs. But of course, when you bring that stuff in, it destroys academics.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** Several people who have appeared on this show were told by counselors, “If you don’t participate in social transitioning at the beginning for your child, there’s a high likelihood they’ll commit suicide.”

**MR. LUI:** We teach parents how to fire

back at that, to say something like: “So if I don’t call them by the right pronoun, they’ll kill themselves? Are you going to say that when they do the breast binders? If they don’t get puberty blockers and hormones, they’re going to kill themselves?”

One of the tools we put out is the Safety and Inclusion Express, which you can download on [CourageIsAHabit.org](https://CourageIsAHabit.org). It takes parents through what we call the train stops. And changing the pronoun is the ticket. It’s the stamping of that ticket that gets the children on the train.

The Safety and Inclusion Express shows parents that the best chance of winning this fight is at the pronoun level. Once you allow them that pronoun ideology, the chances of them moving to the next level is higher, and at each step, it’s harder for the parents to pull them out.

What we don’t focus on enough is the addictiveness of social value. A lot of these kids, especially autistic kids, don’t feel socially accepted. So you get this group that says, “If you join us, you have instant social value.” You are heard. You are seen. You are celebrated. You get the enormous love bombs. “You’re so brave. You’re so stunning. You’re so beautiful.” That’s very addictive. And with each step they take, the cult rewards them.

There are two things every parent can do. First, get your children out of the data mining because that’s the bloodline to a lot of this. On our website, you can find an opt-out form. Some schools, depending on how extreme they are, might ignore you. But the point is, now you’ve got some leverage legally, because you’ve got them on record as ignoring it.

The second thing is to go to Behind Closed Doors, where there’s a form putting the school and the counselors on notice that they’re not to meet with your child formally or informally without your consent. ■

*This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.*



A MUST-SEE DOCUMENTARY FROM THE EPOCH TIMES

## ‘THE FINAL WAR’: A FILM ABOUT THE REAL EXISTENTIAL THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES

It’s not climate change. It’s not raging inflation or even the national debt. The real threat to the United States and to the world is the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) 100-year plan to defeat America and establish world domination. There’s no urgency in the Mainstream Media. That’s why “THE FINAL WAR” had to be made. Anchored by senior investigative reporter Joshua Philipp, and one-and-a-half years in the making, “THE FINAL

WAR” is a film that is so relevant to current events and so important that we’re offering it to EVERYONE for free. It will answer your questions about the pandemic, the impending invasion of Taiwan, and how the CCP works to keep the U.S. occupied with at least four global adversaries.

See the film. Know the danger. Be prepared. “THE FINAL WAR” is already underway.



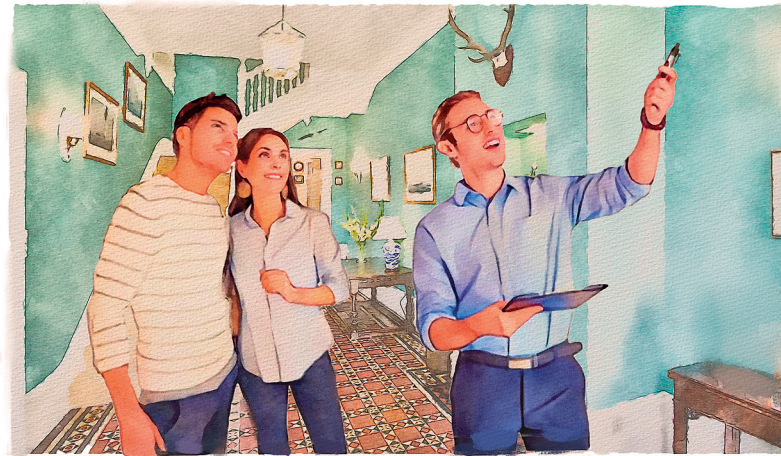
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# Bring Your Best Efforts to Every Task

*Applying your talent to every job can convert the mundane into excellence*

By Jeff Minick



“**N**EVER FOLLOW your passion,” says Mike Rowe. “But always bring it with you.”

Rowe, the host of the series “Dirty Jobs”—which recently returned to television—is renowned for urging others to pursue opportunities instead of passions: “Just because you’re passionate about something doesn’t mean you won’t suck at it. And just because you’ve earned a degree in your chosen field, it doesn’t mean you’re going to find your ‘dream job.’”

On his website—his bio brings a chuckle, and his Eagle Scout letter some serious laughter—Rowe stands as living proof of his own advice. He wanted to go into the trades like his grandfather but showed little natural talent, so instead, he studied opera and acting, and literally talked his way onto the stage and into a position at the QVC Shopping Channel, and many freelance jobs, before eventually creating and snagging the “Dirty Jobs” gig. At no time was he truly following his passions, but he carried them in his pocket wherever he worked.

We can find this same train of events in the lives of others, some of them famous. George C. Marshall’s low grades prevented him from entering West Point. Instead, he attended the Virginia Military Institute, where he graduated in the middle of his class. After entering the Army, his superiors soon discovered that Marshall had a

genius for logistics and organization. Throughout his career, he brought a passion for getting things right—even to tasks that sparked little interest. He ended up as chief of staff of the Army during World War II, did as much as or more than any American to win that war, put into play the post-war relief for Europe that was soon called the Marshall Plan, and won the Nobel Peace Prize. His enthusiasm and high standards of excellence brought Marshall well-deserved fame.

## Bring passion to every job. Develop our talents. Blend the two together.

On a less illustrious playing ground, one young man I know is a bit like Rowe. He wanted to be an actor—he possessed some performance skills—but changed course in college and worked for a politician for two years following graduation. He then launched himself into software sales and excelled in that company for seven years, all the while investing his money in rental houses and apartments. Today, at age 34, he is self-employed and successful, working along with his wife and a friend buying, selling, and leasing out properties.

Did this entrepreneur follow his passions? No. But the jobs he worked developed the talents, particularly when dealing with people, that today

stand him in good stead while doing business with anyone, from bankers to tenants.

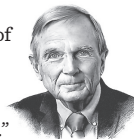
So what are we left with here?

First, we should be careful about squashing anyone’s dreams, or for that matter abandoning our own, however impossible they seem. History records too many men and women who did follow their passions and achieved their goals, winning success, fame, and wealth.

On the other hand, far more others have failed. Any high school teacher probably knows a dozen kids who would give all they have to play professional sports, but the odds against them are staggering. To these students, Rowe would say to bring the passion you feel in athletics—to win, to give everything you’ve got in a game—to almost any job and expand your chances both for opportunities and for a life well-lived.

The formula for success, then, is to bring passion to every job. Develop our talents. Blend the two together while keeping a sharp eye out for opportunity. And if these three elements buddy up and start down the same path, grab hold, hang on tight, and run with them like there’s no tomorrow. ■

**Jeff Minick** lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. He is the author of two novels, “Amanda Bell” and “Dust on Their Wings,” and two works of nonfiction, “Learning as I Go” and “Movies Make the Man.”



# Unwind

**Coffee fans know** that the process of making coffee, from grinding the beans to using a press, can be just as enjoyable as taking that first sip.

PHOTO BY FRANCISCO LOPES CARVALHO/SHUTTERSTOCK



## The Joy of Coffee 75

**INSTEAD OF YET ANOTHER** beach vacation, consider Antarctica, the magical, mysterious, and still largely unexplored continent. 72

**HEARING IS ONE OF THE MOST** sensitive of the five senses, but protective measures can help preserve it. 76

**GARDENERS WHO CHOOSE** their tools wisely can use them for decades, perhaps even generations. 79

INSIDE

# Greek Isles Elegance

A TASTEFULLY RESTORED ESTATE  
ON THE ISLE OF SYROS

By Phil Butler

The residence's idyllic roof-top garden is the ideal setting for delightful al-fresco dining.

**T**HIS TASTEFULLY RESTORED MANSION on Syros Island in the heart of the Greek Cyclades resides on a high bluff overlooking the blue Aegean and the island's picturesque capital, Ermoupoli.

The residence is of Greek neoclassical design. Visitors entering from the street are instantly transported to another era, as they take in the 15-foot-high ceilings, gleaming herringbone wood floors, and a most impressive white marble staircase with Doric columns. Throughout the 6,275-square-foot, 10-bedroom, 10-bath mansion, art deco accents, arched glass doorways, and other decorative elements underscore an air of grandeur.

Inside, the home glows with magnificent art deco colors; emerald greens, bold blues, and powder pink grace the walls of the living spaces. Incredible ceiling decorations have been carefully restored throughout the home, and impressive wall art brings a bygone era back to life. The spacious and inviting bedrooms of the house all feature artistically crafted marble accents in their bathroom areas to ensure complete and luxurious comfort. Several of

the bedrooms provide their occupants with private verandas, plunge pools, and panoramic views of Mykonos and Tinos.

The home's rooftop pool, terrace, and garden work together to create an idyllic place from which to watch the world of Syros unfold throughout the day and after dark. The home's other notable features include staff quarters, a laundry, a fabulous bar, and many private nooks for reading or moments of solitude.

Located in the exclusive Vaporia neighborhood, the home is a few steps from the town's historic port, many delightful cafes, shops, and the Apollo Theater, Greece's first opera house. A short drive away are many delightfully quaint traditional villages and some of Greece's best beaches. Ermoupoli—the city of Hermes—is a beautiful seaside town once renowned for its shipbuilding. The city is now the capital of Syros and the South Aegean region and a popular tourism destination. ■

*Phil Butler is a publisher, editor, author, and analyst who is a widely cited expert on subjects ranging from digital and social media to travel technology.*



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(Above) The home's foyer features a classic marble staircase with Doric columns. Verdant colors and contrasts are combined with grand dimensions to create an air of luxury. (Top Right) The aesthetically pleasing residence has an adjacent private garden and lies in close proximity to Syros's capital city of Ermoupoli. (Right) Each bedroom of the home has soaring ceilings with crown moldings and elegant light fixtures and a private bath, and is finished with a unique color.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF GREECE SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY



# Heroic Explorer

Follow the footsteps of the most staggering expeditions in history—to Antarctica

By Tim Johnson



Adélie penguins leap into the ocean from Paulet Island.

PHOTO BY SLOWMOTIONGLI/SHUTTERSTOCK

**W**HEN YOU STEAM SOUTH from Ushuaia, as most Antarctica-bound ships do, you have no idea, and can't even fathom, what lies ahead. The world's southernmost city, Ushuaia, is Patagonia-pretty. Colorful shops selling outdoor gear line an undulating Main Street. Restaurants along the waterfront do brisk business in crab leg dinners. Seen from the water, the whole place climbs a rise, backdropped by snowcapped mountains. There's a famous Argentinian national park just nearby, for picnics and day-long hikes.

But leaving the busy pier aboard a south-bound ship is akin to departing our regular, known orbit. First, of course, you must cross the infamous Drake Passage, perhaps the most tumultuous stretch of sea on earth. Here, mighty currents of the Southern Ocean, carried by the powerful Antarctic Circumpolar Current, are squeezed through a narrow 500-mile span, unblocked by any land mass.

Veterans speak about two possibilities for the passage—"Drake Lake" or "Drake Shake." The former is when the passage is unusually calm. But on my various crossings, I've almost always experienced the latter: Swells rising to 30-foot waves; winds rising to hurricane-force gusts.

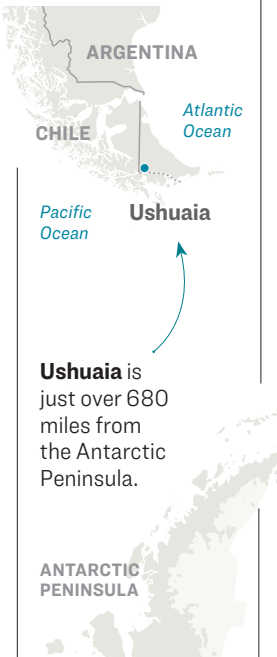
And then, when you first see it, you can scarcely believe your eyes. The coldest, driest, windiest, highest, darkest, most remote continent on earth. A desert where ice and snow can date back 10,000 years. Mountain peaks that have never been climbed. Whole huge swaths of land where man has never set foot—or, at least, not anytime lately.

Despite the inevitable tumult and roil on the Drake, these days, voyages to the ultimate south are safe and comfortable. Every year, more and more luxury expedition ships are built, christened, and launched. No matter what the weather outside, guests return to their vessel and are welcomed with warm drinks, with maybe a cocktail, with steak and lobster tail waiting on the menu later that evening.

But still, this is a destination that makes you feel like an explorer. Like you're sailing right off the map. I've visited five times, and this vast, frozen continent keeps drawing me back, like metal to the magnetic South Pole.

It's a feeling I share with those actual, real explorers, from what's now known as the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration. What's truly remarkable is how very little was known about Antarctica until very recently. An entire continent. A total of 5.5 million square miles. A lot bigger than Europe. But while its reality had been theorized, and while Capt. James

Summer Peninsula temperatures are around **32–36 F.**



Ushuaia is just over 680 miles from the Antarctic Peninsula.

Cruise travelers get the chance to **take a short swim in the waters of Antarctica.**

A crabeater seal prepares for a nap on an iceberg in Antarctica.



FROM TOP: THE EPOCH TIMES; ANTON BODIONOV/SHUTTERSTOCK



Researchers and tourists have the opportunity to explore Antarctica up close.

Cook came very close to it in 1773, no human actually laid eyes on this continent until 1820.

Exploration really began in earnest around the turn of the 20th century—the dawn of the Heroic Age. Nations, and men, competed to plant their flags. But the most famous episode of exploration here was Ernest Shackleton's epic Trans-Antarctic Expedition. Aiming to be the first person to cross the continent via the South Pole, his expedition, aboard the ship *Endurance*, set sail in 1914. They entered an ice-choked Weddell Sea and became lodged in it.

The ship was crushed and lost in 1915, and the 28 men then lived in an "Ocean Camp" on shifting ice floes. Making it to Elephant Island, more than 100 miles away, they survived on a diet of penguins and seals and slept under their lifeboats. In a desperate and daring attempt to survive, Shackleton took a crew of six and sailed a 23-foot lifeboat 800 miles through a tempest to the closest known human settlement, at the whaling stations on South Georgia Island.

Against all odds, they made it—a miracle by any standard. A storm forced them to land on the far side of the island. Shackleton, Captain Frank Worsley, and Second Officer Tom Crean then trekked 36 straight hours

over soaring mountains and deep, crevassed glaciers to find help.

When Shackleton and his men entered the Norwegian whaling station at Stromness, the hardened whaler who saw them first broke down and wept. They'd been assumed lost for a year and a half.

Today, the Heroic Age long over, Antarctica still enchants. Researchers spend summers at 82 stations, built by 30 different nations. And a growing number of travelers, almost always arriving by ship, join them.

The remoteness, the feeling of otherworldliness, it's all part of the appeal; landing on snow-covered islands and walking among penguins—Gentoos, chinstraps, kings, and Adélies; zooming around icebergs in zodiacs, spotting seals taking a nap on top; seeing glaciers calve, and massive wandering albatrosses swoop; and spotting whales turning their tails and showing you their flukes.

All part of the reason why I'll keep going back, as often as I can. A chance to feel like Shackleton. As long as there's a T-bone steak, some lobster, and a warm bed awaiting me, I'm back on the ship. ■

*Tim Johnson is based in Toronto. He has visited 140 countries across all seven continents.*

### If You Go

**Fly:** Most trips to Antarctica happen aboard an expedition ship, which sail out of far southern ports in Argentina and Chile. Ushuaia (USH) is the busiest.

**Getting Around/Stay:** Ships range from small, aging research vessels to super-luxe liners. No matter which one you choose, it'll be a lot more comfortable than anything Shackleton sailed on.

**Take Note:** On any trip to Antarctica, you'll see a lot of penguins. A variety of species, with different sizes and markings, occupy different latitudes.

THIS PAGE: KATIEKK/SHUTTERSTOCK

## THE PERFECT FRENCH PRESS COFFEE: A GUIDE TO GETTING THE BREW JUST RIGHT

*A small footprint, uncomplicated process, and full-bodied brew make the French press a beloved choice for home coffee enthusiasts—as long as you follow these expert tips*

By Kevin Revolinski

LOVE A GOOD ESPRESSO, but I also love the long, slow sipping experience that you get with a larger brewed cup. Several years ago, on a trip through Austria, I stumbled upon the Vienna School of Coffee. I met its founder, Johanna Wechselberger, a master barista and co-author of "The Ultimate Coffee Book for Beginners and Professionals." I admitted to her that I usually drink French press coffee.

"Ugh, coffee tea!"

Perhaps noting my dismay, she consoled me, conceding that such a method wasn't so barbaric if you did it right. Here's what you need to know.

### The Beans

Wechselberger recommends that "the beans should be lighter than for an espresso blend," which gives you a brighter-tasting cup. Don't purchase your coffee pre-ground. Fresh is best, of course. Keep the beans in a cool, dark place; I move mine to a mason jar and throw in oxygen absorbers reclaimed from my other packaged food.

### The Grind

Use a scale to weigh the beans before grinding. Most online guides tell us to shoot for 30 grams per 12 ounces of water. (I grind about 35 grams.)

Guides always say to grind these beans "coarsely" to something a bit bigger than sea salt crystals. On a burr grinder, this is likely the coarsest setting. If you grind too fine, the resulting brew may be over-extracted and bitter. Forget the blade grinder; the uneven result leads to uneven taste.

**A burr grinder** set to the coarsest setting is your best bet.



**Glass and stainless steel** French presses are both popular options, but the latter offer better durability.



**Plunge slowly** and evenly, without stirring up the grounds.



**The almost ceremonial** process of making French press coffee can be a soothing morning ritual.



### STEP BY STEP

**Boil a kettle** of fresh, filtered water.

**Measure and grind** 30 to 35 grams of beans to coarse grounds.

**Bloom the coffee** by pouring the water over the grounds, and swirl or stir to let the gases escape.

**Steep for three** to eight minutes, with the plunger at water level.

**Press the plunger** slowly and evenly, and decant the same way.

### The Temperature

I use an electric kettle to boil just the right amount of filtered water. While 212 degrees Fahrenheit is boiling, the steeping wants to be at 198 to 205 degrees F. I admit that I don't use a thermometer. The temperature drops into range when I pour the water from the kettle into the room-temperature coffee pot, just enough to wet the grounds. Then I add the remaining water to my coffee mug, which also heats it.

Gases will escape the grounds and raise them up above the waterline. I swirl or stir them a bit to get the bubbles out and then lower the plunger to water level to hold them under.

### The Time

Most websites and manuals tell you to steep the grounds for three to four minutes, and Wechsel-

berger recommends up to five. Nick Cho, coffee lecturer and co-founder of Wrecking Ball Coffee Roasters, recommends six to eight minutes. I took Cho's advice and found it brought fuller flavor.

Plunge slowly and evenly, without stirring up the grounds, and pour the same way. Transfer any remaining coffee to a thermos or another pot "so that it doesn't sit on the grounds too long and become bitter," according to Wechselberger. Grinding is never entirely perfect, and some silt may get through, but give the cup a minute and even that settles out.

Now, kick back and enjoy a cup while pitying those who are still brewing coffee tea. ■

*Kevin Revolinski is an avid traveler, craft beer enthusiast, and home-cooking fan. He's based in Madison, Wis.*

# HOW TO AVOID EAR DAMAGE

With very little effort, it can be easy to enjoy life and protect your hearing

By Bill Lindsey

**Headphones** let you hear every note clearly, but excessive use at high volume can lead to some degree of hearing loss.

PHOTO BY ZDAN IVAN / SHUTTERSTOCK



**T**HE ABILITY TO HEAR CLEARLY is a luxury that is often taken for granted, until we realize we can no longer hear the TV, friends and family, or certain tones.

Our ability to hear is an incredible process: The very abbreviated description of the process is that sound waves, which are vibrations in the air, are captured by the ears and then channeled into the ear canal to the eardrum, to three tiny bones, and then to hair cells to be processed by type, stimulating a flow of chemicals that create electrical signals that are carried by auditory nerves to the brain, to be instantly translated into recognizable sounds.

The problem is that, as we age or the auditory system is damaged, our ability to hear can be compromised. According to the Mayo Clinic, some level of hearing loss afflicts almost half of the U.S. population aged 65 or older. However, by taking a few precautions, it's possible to prevent or at least slow hearing loss. Any uptick in turning up the TV volume, an increased need for people to repeat themselves, or an inability to hear certain tones should prompt a visit to a physician.

## How Does It Happen?

Hearing loss is often the result of the aging process, but there are many other ways in which hearing can be impaired. Cavemen were most likely more concerned about saber-toothed tigers than hearing loss, but as soci-

**By taking a few precautions, it may be possible to prevent or at least slow hearing loss.**

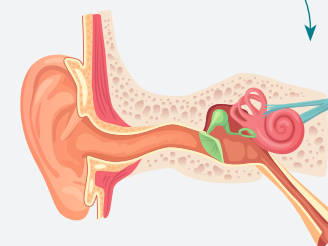
ety evolved, an ever-widening array of external influences began to take a toll on hearing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, loud noises cause the hair cells in the ear that process sound wave vibration to bend, with the degree of bending correlating to the sound level. After one-time exposure to relatively loud noise, the hair cells become straight again. However, extremely loud noises or repeated exposure to loud noise can damage these hair cells so they can't straighten and can eventually kill them.

Because these hair cells don't grow back, any damage or loss is concerning. In some cases, a loss of hearing can even lead to balance issues.

## Turn Down the Volume

It's well-known that exposure to loud rock music at concerts and to loud noise for several hours at car races can cause a temporary ringing effect resulting from an impairment in the ear's ability to transmit or process sounds effectively. Regardless of the source of the noise, while the auditory system can rebound from short-term exposure to overly loud sounds, the vibration caused by

The human auditory system consists of multiple components working together to transform sound waves into recognizable sounds.



As speakers and amplifiers get larger, they are able to project more music, making it important to maintain a safe distance from them to avoid hearing loss.



At the first sign of reduced hearing ability, consult with a physician to determine the cause and possible treatments.



Headphones at a safe volume allow you to enjoy music in private, so you can focus without disturbing those around you.

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: FIZES / SHUTTERSTOCK; TARTILA / SHUTTERSTOCK; PRAPANAN / SHUTTERSTOCK; DUXXX / SHUTTERSTOCK



**Electronic hearing protection systems** automatically block sounds above a set decibel level, making them ideal for shooting sports such as skeet.

long-term exposure to loud noises can result in permanent hearing damage. One of the most common ways hearing is damaged is extended listening to music at very loud levels, whether using earbuds or headphones and even when sitting too close to the speakers.

Taking part in shooting sports such as skeet, hunting, or even casual target shooting without wearing ear protection can result in short-term or long-term damage; some enthusiasts “double up” on protection by combining the use of foam earplugs with over-the-ear headphone-style protection.

Another common cause of hearing loss is using power tools such as circular saws or gas-powered string trimmers without ear protection. Electronic hearing protection, which incorporates an electronic sound-canceling feature that automatically activates when it detects sound levels above a certain decibel (dB) level, can prove helpful to those using excessively loud power equipment or taking part in shooting sports.

Riding a motorcycle can be a potential factor in hearing damage; not surprisingly, loud engines—100 dB or more—can damage unprotected

ears, but the leading cause of hearing damage among motorcycle riders, including passengers, is actually wind noise. The turbulence called wind noise rushing past and over unprotected ears can negatively affect hearing ability, either short term or permanently. Turbulence can also be experienced by those driving or riding in convertibles at high speeds.

The solution for motorcycle riders is simple: Either wear a helmet that completely covers the ears or use earplugs to eliminate or at least mitigate turbulence and thus hearing damage. According to AGV, a manufacturer of motorcycle safety equipment, more than 15 minutes’ exposure to engine noise louder than 100 dB can cause permanent damage.

Another perhaps surprising cause of hearing impairment is an excessive buildup of earwax. Also called cerumen, earwax protects the ear canal by trapping dirt and mitigating the growth of bacteria; if it becomes a blockage, it can decrease one’s ability to hear and may cause dizziness or an earache. The good news is that health care professionals can usually remove earwax blockages very easily.

Care for your ears and you won’t be that person asking, “What’d he say?” ■



LIFESTYLE

## DID YOU HEAR THAT?

Some hearing loss is preventable



### Common Causes

Attending rock music concerts, using chainsaws, driving a convertible, or riding a motorcycle at high speeds are all actions that can lead to some amount of hearing loss.



### An Ounce of Prevention

Developing a habit of using earplugs, sound-dampening earmuffs, or electronic hearing protection in noisy environments can help prevent unnecessary hearing loss.



### Get It Checked

It’s best to consult with a physician at the first sign of even a minor degradation of hearing, rather than ignoring it or simply hoping it will get better.

THIS PAGE FROM L. ROMAN CHAZOVY/SHUTTERSTOCK, THEEPOCH TIMES

# HEIRLOOM-QUALITY GARDENING TOOLS

These tools aren’t inexpensive, but they are reasonably priced when you realize they will provide many seasons of service to you, your children, and their kids

By Bill Lindsey



### A Short Spade SNEEBOER PERENNIAL SPADE

\$99.00

Designed for gardeners who spend a lot of time on their knees digging holes for new plantings or dividing shrubs while working in flower beds, this compact spade is built to provide many seasons of use. The forged blade is sharpened, and the ash wood “T” handle, available in 11-inch or 16 1/2-inch lengths, provides the torque needed to lever plants out of the ground.



### Dig Deep DEWITT FORGED TROWEL

\$29.18

You can find less expensive trowels, but few are made to endure decades of use digging planting holes in dense or rocky soil, removing weeds from around delicate plants, mounding soil around plantings, or breaking up soil that needs to be aerated. The sharpened and tempered boron blade makes digging easy, while the hardwood handle provides a sure grip when wet or muddy.



### A Handy Claw HOMESTEAD HAND FORGED 3-TINE CULTIVATOR

\$40

Those gardeners who are new to using a cultivator are often astounded to discover just how useful a claw tool can be to prepare soil for planting by loosening and aerating dry, packed dirt or declumping clay, while also removing rocks. Crafted of hand-forged steel with a wooden, tool-quality handle, it’s engineered to serve several generations of gardeners.



### Hoe, Hoe, Hoe BRIDGETOWN GARDENER’S GIFT BUNDLE

\$62.99

The never-ending task of weeding and cultivating can be made more efficient with this set of specialized hoes. It includes a Nejiri Gama hand hoe for surface weeds such as chickweed, a Handy Hoe for trenching and removing deep-rooted weeds, and a stirrup-style Garden Ninja to easily remove weeds immediately adjacent to delicate plants. A light-duty pruner and a bar of Gardener’s Hand Soap round out the collection.



### Have a Drink HAWES ENGLAND 1 GALLON WATERING CAN

\$128

A proper watering can is an essential tool for serious gardeners; this traditional design can hold a full gallon of water, making it well-suited for areas the hose can’t reach. Made in England of galvanized steel that is powder-coated to resist corrosion and last pretty much forever, it features a large-diameter brass spray rose for a fast, coarse flow to thoroughly wet plants.

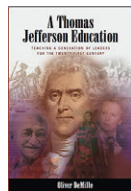


**Are there books you'd recommend?**  
We'd love to hear from you. Let us know at [features@epochtimes.com](mailto:features@epochtimes.com)

## RECOMMENDED READING

*This week, we feature an ancient guide for the bereft and a riveting history of a crime fighter who battled organized crime and organized racism.*

### EDUCATION



**'A THOMAS JEFFERSON EDUCATION'**  
By Oliver DeMille

### Inspiring Our Youth to Learn

This first volume of the Leadership Education Library explores the basis of the Founding Fathers' education: the classics and mentoring. For those eyeing homeschooling and for teachers seeking inspiration, this book provides a method for challenging our youth.

TJEDONLINE, 2009, 198 PAGES

### HISTORY



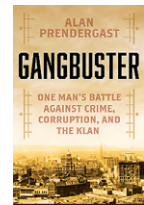
**'POST-ROMAN KINGDOMS'**  
By Raffaele D'Amato and Andrea Salimbeti

### Weaponry of the Dark Ages

When the Goths sacked Rome in A.D. 410, it marked the end of the Western Roman Empire and the beginning of what became known as the Dark Ages. There are countless books on the subject, but Raf-

faele D'Amato and Andrea Salimbeti write less about the kingdoms and leaders that arose during the late Roman world and more about the armies that fought for those kingdoms and what they fought with, such as wardrobe and weaponry. For such a short work, it isn't short on sources from the ancient to the modern world.

OSPREY PUBLISHING, 2023, 64 PAGES



**'GANGBUSTER'**  
By Alan Prendergast

### A Real Crime-Fighting Hero

If anyone is looking for a new American hero, Alan Prendergast's March release "Gangbuster" has identified one: Philip S. Van Cise. With a gift for true crime narratives, Prendergast tells the story of the fearless and methodical Denver district attorney who, in the post-World War I era, eventually rounded up "Big Con" artists and brought them to justice. Then, the hero fought another onslaught of injustice: the rise of the Ku Klux Klan—a topic well explored in a fascinating history.

CITADEL, 2023, 320 PAGES

### BIOGRAPHY



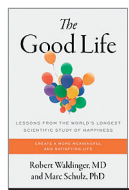
**'INVENTOR OF THE FUTURE'**  
By Alec Nevala-Lee

### The Visionary Buckminster Fuller

Without a doubt, Buckminster Fuller was a brilliant man. In a new biography of the relentless inventor-architect-designer, he is presented as one of the 20th century's most brilliant people. But the book calls into question how much of his brilliance was real and how much of it was showmanship. Part inspiration, part disenchantment, this biography examines the clash between the promise of the future and the reality of the present.

DEY STREET BOOKS, 2022, 672 PAGES

### WELLNESS



**'THE GOOD LIFE'**  
By Robert Waldinger, M.D. and Marc Schulz, Ph.D.

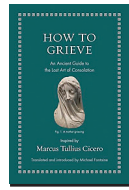
### Spotlight on Relationships

This ongoing study, based on research by the Harvard Study of Adult

Development, began in 1938. It now includes three generations and 1,300 descendants of the original 724 participants. The main takeaway: Those who are connected to family, friends, and community are happier and healthier. Sound advice for our era of loneliness.

SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2023, 352 PAGES

### CLASSICS



**'HOW TO GRIEVE'**  
Written by Marcus Tullius Cicero; translated by Michael Fontaine

### A Guide to Solace

Capturing the spirit of Roman statesman Cicero's "Consolation," Michael Fontaine's translation provides wisdom on how to grieve and how to think about death, tragedy, and other misfortunes. One of the recent editions from Princeton University Press's ongoing series "Ancient Wisdom for Modern Readers," this excellently researched work is based on a recreation of the lost original, which was likely written in response to the death of Cicero's daughter. It presents solace in a philosophy that balances grieving and stoicism.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2022, 264 PAGES

### FOR KIDS



**'RAGGED DICK'**  
By Horatio Alger Jr.

### From Rags to Respectability

Resourceful "Ragged Dick" is a 14-year-old living on the streets of New York in the 1860s, but his honesty leads him to a better life. Alger's once-popular books show that a virtuous character and a willingness to learn and work hard can lead to success.

READACLASSIC, 2011, 130 PAGES



**'PATRICK PICKLEBOTTOM AND THE LONGEST WAIT'**  
By Mr. Jay

### Waiting Without Boredom

In this second book about Patrick Picklebottom, he arrives early for the library's storybook hour. Time goes by really s-l-o-w-l-y until he learns that he can entertain himself, in this story that shows children they need never be bored.

LYRIC AND STONE, 2022, 32 PAGES



**Ian Kane**  
is a U.S. Army veteran, filmmaker, and author. He enjoys the great outdoors and volunteering.

## MOVIE REVIEWS

*This week, we feature a drama about an alcoholic and his canine companion and a thriller about an intrepid reporter tracking down Nazis.*

### NEW RELEASE



### 'The Year of the Dog' (2023)

Set in the beautiful environs of Montana, this drama follows the struggles of Matt (Rob Grabow), an alcoholic who's trying to sober up so that he can visit his dying mother. Soon, a unique souly enters his life and the two wayward souls begin to have a positive effect on each other.

This heartfelt film shows that help with one's difficulties can sometimes be found in places such as the local community and even in the company of stray animals. It's an inspiring film about recovering from addiction through the healing power of love.

#### DRAMA

**Release Date:**  
Feb. 24, 2023

**Directors:**  
Rob Grabow, Andrew McGinn, Michael Peterson

**Starring:**  
Rob Grabow, Michael Spears, Jon Proudstar

**Running Time:**  
1 hour, 35 minutes

**MPPA Rating:** PG-13

**Where to Watch:**  
Theaters

★★★★★

### A GRIEVING WIDOW FINDS A NEW LIFE



### 'The Rose Tattoo' (1955)

Tennessee Williams wrote this play for actress Anna Magnani, who plays the Sicilian woman

a taut drama with excellent direction and acting, Magnani dominates this film with her incredible range and intensity.

#### COMEDY | DRAMA | ROMANCE

**Release Date:**  
Dec. 13, 1955

**Director:**  
Daniel Mann

**Starring:**  
Anna Magnani, Burt Lancaster, Marisa Pavan

**Running Time:**  
1 hour, 57 minutes

**Not Rated**

**Where to Watch:**  
Redbox, Kanopy, Vudu

★★★★★

### FAMILY PICK

### 'Finding Dory' (2016)

Dory (Ellen DeGeneres), a blue tang fish, forgets things a lot. But one day, she remembers her plan of finding her missing parents. Together with her clownfish cohorts and a turtle named Crush, Dory travels up the perilous California coast to locate them.

This computer-generated adventure sports striking visuals of mesmerizing underwater environs with their varied flora and fauna. Its storyline is pretty similar to its predecessor, 2003's "Finding Nemo," but



should have enough pure entertainment value to please audiences.

#### ANIMATION | ADVENTURE | COMEDY

**Release Date:**  
June 17, 2016

**Directors:**  
Andrew Stanton, Angus MacLane

**Starring:**  
Ellen DeGeneres (voice), Albert Brooks (voice), Ed O'Neill (voice)

**Running Time:**  
1 hour, 37 minutes

**MPPA Rating:** PG

**Where to Watch:**  
Apple TV, Redbox, Vudu

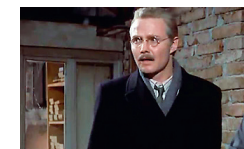
★★★★★

### A RIVETING THRILLER THAT NEVER LETS UP

### 'The Odessa File' (1974)

In 1963, a West German reporter named Peter Miller (Jon Voight) discovers the diary of an elderly Jewish Holocaust survivor. Further investigations lead Miller deep into the murky world of international intrigue and a mysterious group of Nazi-war criminals.

This intense thriller is packed with suspenseful scenes, beautiful cinematography, a memorable score, and brilliant performances by its cast, including



Maximilian Schell as an ex-Nazi officer. It's a harrowing potboiler from start to finish.

#### DRAMA | THRILLER

**Release Date:**  
Oct. 18, 1974

**Director:**  
Ronald Neame

**Starring:**  
Jon Voight, Maximilian Schell, Maria Schell

**Running Time:**  
2 hours, 10 minutes

**MPPA Rating:** PG

**Where to Watch:**  
Apple TV, Crackle, Tubi

★★★★★

# Courageous Reporting

We believe that investigating and exposing the truth is the only way that we can remain safe and free



## CROSSFIRE HURRICANE

ON MAY 25, 2017, The Epoch Times published an article headlined “Despite Allegations, No Evidence of Trump–Russia Collusion Found.” The article detailed that—despite a media frenzy at the time—no actual evidence had been uncovered that President Donald Trump or anyone associated with his campaign had colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election.

OUR REPORTING was proven accurate with the conclusion of the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller.

NOT ONLY DID WE NOT BUY INTO the false narrative that Trump colluded with Russia, but we have also been a leader in reporting on the irregular and apparently politicized nature of the FBI’s investigation of the Trump campaign. During the past five years, we have published dozens of articles on the topic, many of them exclusive.



## ELECTION INTEGRITY

FOLLOWING THE 2020 ELECTION, The Epoch Times was at the forefront of investigating and reporting on the questions surrounding the integrity of the election. Through our fact-based and independent reporting, we were able to uncover multiple irregularities.



## ORIGINS OF COVID-19

ON APRIL 15, 2020, The Epoch Times published its documentary “Tracking Down the Origin of Wuhan Coronavirus.” The film, which received over 100 million views, explored the origins of the virus, including the possibility of a lab leak. It presents scientific data and interviews with top scientists and national security experts.



YEARS AFTER THE RELEASE of this groundbreaking documentary, the possibility of a lab leak is considered by government officials and experts as the most likely explanation for the virus’s spread.

## CHINA THREAT

SINCE ITS INCEPTION in the year 2000, The Epoch Times has been at the forefront of reporting on the infiltration of the United States by the Chinese Communist Party. Numerous times over the years, we’ve broken major China-related stories ahead of other news organizations. In 2003, The Epoch Times was the first media outlet to systematically and continuously report on the spread of SARS, well ahead of most other Western media. We were also the first to report on state-sponsored forced organ harvesting in China—one of the most underreported atrocities of our time—in



which prisoners of conscience are killed for their organs, which are then sold for profit on a large scale.

THE EPOCH TIMES also published the editorial series “Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party,” revealing the true nature and history of the Communist Party and inspiring a movement that so far has seen more than 400 million Chinese people quit the Party and its affiliated organizations. Another of our series, “How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World,” systematically exposes the evil nature of communism, as well as the harm it has brought and continues to inflict on the United States and the world.



# Make Every Date Great

*How to Increase the Chances There Will Be a Next Date*

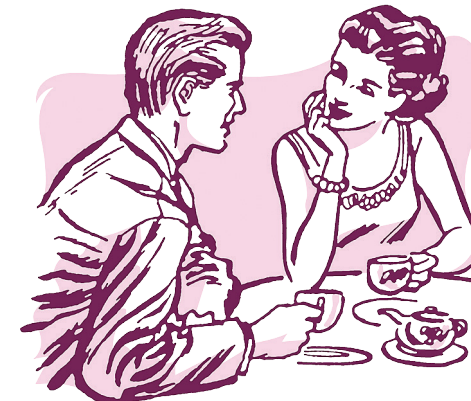
Whether it’s a first date or the 457th, it’s important to be respectful and polite to ensure that you both have a great time

By Bill Lindsey

### 1 Big Smiles

It’s understandable to be nervous or shy on a date, so overcome this by making sure your date feels comfortable. A warm, genuine smile, combined with eye contact, puts others at ease. Watch their body language for signs of boredom, irritation, or agreement, alerting you to revise what you are doing or saying.

If alcohol is being served, take care to not let your date, or you, overindulge as a way to overcome shyness.



### 5 Grooming Matters

A date should be an exciting event, so along with showing up on time, make an effort to look good, too. For men, a collared shirt, clean jeans or pants, and nice shoes (she will look) are a great choice, while ladies might consider a similar look or possibly a casual dress. To increase the chance of a follow-up date, guys should avoid a trendy 5 o’clock shadow, or if you have a beard, make sure it’s neatly trimmed.

### 2 Listen Closely

Encourage your date to talk as much as they want. Understand that, sometimes, a shy person needs a bit of encouragement, so ask innocuous questions and offer appropriate compliments such as “Did you grow up around here?” or “You have a great smile!” Resist the urge to talk about yourself; instead, pay attention to what they are saying. You’ll impress them much more by being a good listener than you would by just talking about yourself.

### 3 Tick Tock

Choose a location for the date that’s convenient for both parties, and arrive on time. Punctuality is a sign of respect; those who make a habit of arriving “fashionably late” send a signal of disrespect for others. If you realize you will be even a little bit late, advise them well in advance. Wrap up the date at a decent hour, especially if you both need to be at work early the next morning.

### 4 Be Diplomatic

When first dating, be careful to avoid potentially controversial topics such as politics or religion, and especially previous relationships that ended badly. If the other person strays into these areas, you can gently change the subject if you feel the need, or be very careful choosing your answers. However, if it becomes very clear that the two of you have vastly different beliefs, preferences, and attitudes, it may be best for both parties to end the date politely and go your separate ways.

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