FREE MARKETS.
REAL SOLUTIONS.

R Street

HIGHLIGHTS REPORT 2023

OUR MISSION

The R Street Institute (RSI) engages in public policy research and activity in support of free markets and limited, effective government. We work to bolster American innovation, increase consumer choice, and safeguard individual liberty.

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2012, RSI is a leading think tank focused on solving complex public policy challenges through pragmatic, real solutions. Stakeholders come to RSI for in-depth, credible research and analysis, as well as our strong alliances across the political spectrum. To bolster our policy work, RSI's organizational culture encourages and embraces new ideas, healthy conflict, and responsiveness. We benefit from our teams' diversity of thought, experience, and expertise.

HOW WE ARE DIFFERENT

RSI stands apart from many other think tanks because our scholars are not constrained by partisan labels. Our commitment to market-based policy solutions—at all levels of government—means we value the private sector's ability to drive decision-making, rein in government overreach, and promote an ecosystem that supports a dynamic economy where individuals and businesses can thrive. Our research independence allows us to take an objective, solutions-oriented approach to complicated economic and societal challenges. We cultivate relationships across the political spectrum and ally with those others often cannot, which allows us to bring a free-market perspective to where it is needed most.

ABOUT THE COVER IMAGE

Taking Reform Seriously: Policing, policy, and preventing violent crime panel discussion at the RSI 2023 Real Solutions featuring (pictured left to right) :

- **Jillian Snider**, RSI's Policy Director, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties
- **Tracie Keesee**, President and Chief Operating Officer, Center for Policing Equity
- **Ja'Ron K. Smith**, Former Deputy Assistant to the President for the White House Domestic Policy Council and Office of American Innovation
- Moderator **Diane Goldstein**, Executive Director, Law Enforcement Action Partnership

ABOUT THE R STREET INSTITUTE REAL SOLUTIONS SUMMIT

At a time when the nation had become increasingly polarized, RSI focused on fostering connections across the political and policy spectrums, hosting deep conversations, and collaborating for policy impact around the country. The theme of the 2023 Real Solutions Summit was "trust"—in our society, in our institutions, and in our political system—and how we can restore it to build a better country together.

Learn more about the RSI Summit. ›

R Street

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OUR WORK, OUR IMPACT, AND HOW OUR THINK TANK MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Last year was characterized by continued political uncertainty and quickly declining trust in many of our major government and civic institutions. That is why the R Street Institute (RSI) spent 2023 showing that our public policy community is critical to reestablishing and safeguarding trust in our communities.

To achieve this, we embraced the three Cs—credibility, constructive conflict, and collaboration—and worked to weave them into every part of our organization and the broader policy landscape. These are the values that we, as a think tank, put forth to demonstrate the work that led to our conclusions, investigate our own ideologies and biases, and build new relationships with allies for better, more meaningful collaborations.

When we reflect on 2023, our work speaks for itself: We fought back against overreach by the Biden administration; crisscrossed Capitol Hill and the country as we promoted a light-touch regulatory approach to artificial intelligence; highlighted government policies that undermined American innovation; organized our inaugural, standing-room-only Real Solutions Summit; and launched our *Red Tape* podcast, which focused on the ways that government bureaucracy can interfere with Americans' daily lives—and so much more.

We're among the best at this work because this three Cs approach is in our DNA: When we opened our doors in 2012, we established our credibility by engaging honestly and seriously on the tough issues of that time. Then, as now, we remain laser-focused on honest, principled, nonpartisan analysis, research, and collaboration. We work with policymakers, think tanks, trade associations, academic institutions, and others spanning the political and ideological spectrums to explore—and provide policy prescriptions for—some of our thorniest policy problems. We frequently testify before Congress and state legislatures, are featured in hundreds of news stories every year, and maintain high-profile collaborations across our issue areas.

None of this impact and influence would be possible without stakeholders trusting us and understanding why we take the policy positions we do. That will become even more important this year, as political tribalism and demagoguery continue to upend public trust. This is why our credibility is the most important asset we have: If our supporters do not deem us trustworthy, a think tank focused on public policy research and solutions simply cannot survive.

Thank you for supporting our work and our mission. We look forward to another year of important and influential dialogues—and outcomes.

Eli Lehrer
President

Erica Schoder
Executive Director

COMPETITION POLICY

The Competition team focuses on everything from health care disintermediation and regulatory reforms to telehealth expansion, outdated alcohol policies, labor and workforce issues, and other burdensome regulations that inhibit innovation and economic growth.

One of RSI's key disintermediation projects works to advance contraceptive access at the state and federal levels through reforms such as pharmacist-prescribing models and over-the-counter (OTC) access. Since the Competition team began this project, the number of states allowing pharmacy-based access to contraception has more than doubled, and the team has helped stakeholders—including conservative Republicans—in more than a dozen states champion this model. In fact, RSI traveled to a number of states to discuss concerns over contraception policies and scope-of-practice laws. The team also produced a policy study on the importance of expanding the OTC contraceptive market as well as an explainer on the similarities and differences of seeing a pharmacist for birth control versus a doctor.

RSI also led the way in advocating for updates to America's antiquated food and beverage laws. Over the past two years, the Competition team has published more empirical alcohol research than any other public policy organization, showing that enhanced alcohol delivery does not correlate with more drunk driving deaths, alcohol consumption, or underage drinking. Their piece about the "War on Restaurants" in *The Wall Street Journal* discussed the progressive crackdown on gas stoves, tipped wages, and attempts to import European sectoral bargaining concepts into the food industry. The team also laid out a flexible worker agenda in the pages of *National Affairs*, positing a pro-worker future for the middle- and working-class labor force in America. An adaption of this essay also appeared in the March print issue of *National Review*.

2023 Research Highlights:

- Designing a Better Child Tax Credit: Accounting for Effects on Poverty, Parental Employment and Government Budgets
  (Policy Study, February 2023)
- The Devil Is in the Details: Reviewing OTC Birth Control Efforts in Congress and Their Potential Impacts
  (Policy Study, March 2023)
- Alcohol in the 21st Century Store
  (Policy Study, April 2023)
- The Data Is In: Alcohol Delivery and Consumption During COVID-19
  (Policy Study, April 2023)
- Alcohol Delivery and Underage Drinking: A COVID-19 Case Study
  (Policy Study, July 2023)
- Pharmacist-Prescribed Hormonal Contraception: A guide for what you need to know about pharmacy access to birth control
  (Explainer, October 2023)

2023 News Highlights:

Reason, Bloomberg Law, The Hill, Military Times, National Affairs, State Affairs, The Tennessean, USA Today, The Virginian-Pilot, Washington Examiner, Why We Can't Have Nice Things Podcast

COMPETITION POLICY

Breaking down barriers with a focus on advancing contraceptive access at the state and federal levels through reforms and advocating for updates to America's antiquated food and beverage laws.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

RSI's Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties policy program works across the ideological spectrum to engage on public policy that impacts many different facets of the criminal justice system: incarceration, juvenile justice, policing, pretrial, bail system changes, reentry, and sentencing. The team produces research and commentary; conducts outreach to key stakeholders and lawmakers; engages local, regional, and national coalitions; and educates policymakers, the public, and other influencers. Their work is guided by principles that prioritize public safety, due process, individual liberty, and fiscal responsibility.

In 2023, elected officials and other individuals at every level of government requested the team's expertise, as did groups central to criminal justice research and advocacy. In response to these requests, RSI's scholars met with more than a dozen congressional offices, worked with state officials from Colorado and Washington (among others), and spoke at four times as many conferences, events, and engagements as they did in 2022. These ran the gamut from press conferences to mayoral meetings to policy and practitioner meetings, and more.

The Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties team's work on policing focused on increasing police legitimacy and enhancing public safety through legislative and regulatory changes to existing law enforcement policies, such as holding police accountable, improving data collection and transparency, promoting the effective use of funds, and addressing police union influence. In addition, the team's efforts on pretrial policy sought to enhance public safety and protect personal liberty through prosecutorial policies and programs that promote rehabilitation and address root causes with innovative law enforcement response models,

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Pictured here: Sumita Das (left), Research Collaborator, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and R Street's Lisel Petis (right), Resident Senior Fellow, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties, at a 2023 criminal justice event in Denver, CO.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL LIBERTIES (continued)

alternatives to prosecution, bail system changes, and mental and behavioral health resources. RSI experts on reentry and community supervision focused on applying evidence-based practices to improve supervision outcomes and reduce barriers to reentry and full social reintegration. Such work included increasing the awareness of pretrial diversion supervision programs and post-conviction specialty courts, as well as advancing reasonable record sealing and expungement possibilities for those who successfully reintegrate. Juvenile justice was also a primary area of focus in 2023. The team assessed developmentally appropriate responses to justice-involved youth, which included advancing community-based violence interruption or intervention programs for those with the highest risk of violence; police-led deflection or other system programs that intervene early; individualized treatment; close community supervision; and consistent judicial oversight, among others.

RSI's scholars attended the 2023 National Sheriff's Association event in Grand Rapids, MI.

2023 Research Highlights:

- Treating Kids Like Kids: "Raise the Age" Laws Align Juvenile Justice with Neuroscience and Common Sense
  (Explainer, February 2023)
- The Pathway to Prosperity: How Clean Slate Legislation Enhances Public Safety and Stimulates the Economy
  (Policy Study, March 2023)
- Effectively Updating Michigan's Bail System
  (Explainer, April 2023)
- Data-Driven Deflection: A Systems Approach to Reducing Juvenile Arrests
  (Policy Study, June 2023)
- Trauma-Informed Criminal Justice: Part One of a Four-Part Series
  (Explainer, August 2023)
- Justice for All: How Restorative Justice Mutually Benefits Victims and Youth
  (Policy Study, September 2023)

2023 News Highlights:

The Baltimore Sun, Bloomberg Law, CBS New York*, Chicago Sun-Times,* CNN*, Colorado Newsline,* Colorado Point of View*, The Columbus Dispatch,* The Dallas Morning News, Fox News*, Gothamist,* Governing*, The Hill, The Kansas City Star,* Law360*, National Affairs, Newsweek, The Orange County Register, Tampa Bay Times, Washington Examiner*

Quick Links:

- Meet the team
- All research, commentary, and outreach
- Testimony

CYBERSECURITY AND EMERGING THREATS

The Cybersecurity and Emerging Threats (CSET) policy program at RSI focuses on two critical areas: whole-of-society approaches to enhancing U.S. cybersecurity and bolstering U.S. data privacy and security. Through their engagement in these areas, the team's scholars aim to inform and shape policy action that strengthens cybersecurity, national security, consumer privacy, and the U.S. competitive advantage on the global stage while ensuring that policies support innovation and embrace a limited-government, free-market perspective.

RSI continues to be a leader in the pursuit of comprehensive federal data privacy policy, which the team showcased through federal testimony before the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce as well as a number of events and briefings. In addition, CSET scholars continued to explore a wide range of issues within privacy policy, examining the role of law enforcement, data brokers, and online child privacy proposals. The team also launched the Cybersecurity Score Project, which highlights the cybersecurity implications of legislative proposals that are not cybersecurity-specific, and was the first right-of-center organization to launch an Artificial Intelligence-Cybersecurity Working Group, bringing together experts from academia, civil society, Capitol Hill, and the private sector. Highlights of the team's recent impact include engaging more than 120 entities on data privacy to find consensus on a comprehensive data privacy and security law, working with dozens of congressional offices on cyber and privacy policy, producing novel written work and research cited by government officials, coordinating nearly 100 diverse cybersecurity leaders to address cyber workforce challenges, and participating in White House and United Nations programs.

2023 Research, Federal Testimony, and Events Highlights:

- The Future of Data Privacy and Security in the 118th Congress (Event, January 2023)
- House Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce Hearing Overview Featuring R Street's Brandon Pugh (Federal testimony, February 2023)
- Hill Briefing Recap: The Private Sector's Evolving Role in Conflict (Event, June 2023)
- Cybersecurity Score – S.2033: American Innovation and Choice Online Act (AICOA) (Explainer, August 2023)
- Cybersecurity Score Project (Series, August 2023)
- The Overlooked Risk in Our Pockets: Cybersecurity Risks in Mobile Devices (Event, September 2023)
- Cybersecurity Score – European Union (EU) Cyber Resilience Act (Explainer, October 2023)
- Data Privacy and Security as a National Security Imperative (Event, October 2023)

2023 News Highlights:

Bloomberg Law, C-SPAN, CyberScoop, *E&E News,* Fox Business, *The Hill,* Inkstick, MarketWatch, *The Orange County Register, Politico, The Seattle Times, The Washington Post*

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CYBERSECURITY AND EMERGING THREATS

The team's scholars aim to inform and shape policy action that strengthens cybersecurity, national security, consumer privacy, and the U.S. competitive advantage on the global stage while ensuring that policies support innovation.

Pictured above: R Street's Brandon Pugh, Policy Director and Resident Senior Fellow, Cybersecurity and Emerging Threats speaking at the 2023 RSA Conference.

Pictured below: R Street's Amy Chang, Senior Fellow, Cybersecurity and Emerging Threats, along with her Service Dog, Potato, as they interact with a robot dog. Photo by Chris Constantine on behalf of Axios.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Energy and Environment team seeks to promote a cleaner environment through the combination of a thriving economy, well-founded science, and principles of market competition and limited government. From grid reliability and transmission to the Defense Production Act and rising gas prices, RSI's expertise on electricity and environmental policy has never been more sought after by the media or legislative leaders across the political spectrum.

Last year, RSI's energy work helped set the agenda for many on the right. Important permitting reforms were passed in the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) of 2023 with RSI's influence. In particular, the team's research and subsequent Hill outreach helped shape the Building United States Infrastructure through Limited Delays and Efficient Reviews Act of 2021, which was folded into Republicans' Lower Energy Costs Act (H.R. 1) legislation that passed the House. The scholars' research updates and collaborations with progressive groups also helped secure a bipartisan foundation for FRA negotiations. On the regulatory front, the team's technical comments were cited extensively by federal regulators in a new rule that cuts red tape for new power plants, which may help remove some of the biggest barriers to new clean power in half the country. The team also regularly breaks down complicated energy topics for Capitol Hill staff in our "Low-Energy Fridays" weekly series.

The Energy and Environment team's state work also bore fruit this year, achieving overwhelming Texas legislative victories to align market incentives to reduce gas flaring and unleash geothermal energy via better-defined property rights. We also helped prevent anticompetitive electric legislation through an analysis series on Texas SB 6, SB 7, and SB 2012.

2023 Research and Federal Testimony Highlights:

- U.S. Mineral Production Potential Unlikely to Satisfy Clean Energy Demands (Policy Study, February 2023)
- Testimony for the Senate Finance Committee on Tax Incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act: Jobs and Investment in Energy Communities (Testimony, May 2023)
- Greening the Invisible Hand: The Policy Implications of Corporate Environmentalism (Policy Study, May 2023)
- Importance of Well-Functioning Markets in Unlocking Carbon Offset Opportunities (Policy Study, June 2023)
- Electric Paradigms: Competitive Structures Benefit Consumers (Policy Study, September 2023)

2023 News Highlights:

The Atlantic, Axios, *Bloomberg Green, Bloomberg Law, The Christian Science Monitor,* The Dispatch, *E&E News, Financial Times,* Fox Business, *Houston Chronicle, New York Magazine, Politico, Reuters,* RTO Insider, *The Texas Tribune,* Utility Dive, *The Wall Street Journal*

Quick Links:

- Meet the team
- All research, commentary, and outreach
- Testimony

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

From grid reliability and transmission to the Defense Production Act and rising gas prices, RSI's expertise on electricity and environmental policy has never been more sought after by the media or legislative leaders across the political spectrum.

Pictured here: R Street's Wayne Brough (left), Policy Director, Technology and Innovation, and Devin Hartman (right), Policy Director, Energy and Environmental Policy, working to educate captive audiences on the need for Energy and Environmental reform.

FINANCE, INSURANCE, AND TRADE

RSI's insurance program was our inaugural policy area. Over the past decade, legislators, regulators, coalition partners, and industry experts have all come to view RSI as the leader in responding to government overreach in the property and casualty (P&C) insurance industry. As a whole, the Finance, Insurance, and Trade (FIT) team works to address public policy questions that span financial services and free trade, the transfer of risk, and insurance practices in each state.

RSI believes that the insurance industry is the best-kept secret in the financial services world. The industry plays a critical role in the aftermath of catastrophes, is a significant investor in capital markets, and is the grease in the economy's engine. Without a strong private P&C insurance sector, financial risk would fall on individuals and the government—which is unsustainable, ineffective, and unmanageable. Moreover, a heavily regulated P&C insurance market would have catastrophic effects on all sectors of the economy. Public policy should recognize this and be carefully crafted to take advantage of the value the insurance industry adds to the U.S. economy.

In 2023, the FIT team testified three times before Congress, helping cement our credibility as an organization that can be trusted to explain the relationship between the insurance industry, the economy, public policy, and outside factors like climate change. By developing insightful policy papers and hosting events on and off Capitol Hill, the team established RSI as a trusted voice on federal crop insurance reform—a nearly $8-billion-a-year program covered by taxpayers that is ripe for reform. The team's scholars also spoke at major conferences across the country, including those of the American Property Casualty Insurance Association, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies, M200 Association, Florida Chamber of Commerce Insurance Summit, and Responsible Investor Conference, among others.

2023 Research Highlights:

- Florida's Insurance Crisis—Brought by Lawyers (Policy Study, February 2023)
- Crop Insurance Reform (Policy Study, March 2023)
- Environmental Benefits of Crop Insurance Reform (Policy Study, October 2023)
- The Truth about Catastrophes (Policy Study, December 2023)

2023 News Highlights:

The American Spectator, Axios, Axios Miami, *Insurance Journal,* In Focus, KTLA, Law360, *Miami Today, National Mortgage News, The Orange County Register,* Spectrum Bay News 9, *The Wall Street Journal, Washington Examiner,* WFTV

Quick Links:

- **Insurance:** Meet the team; research, commentary, and outreach
- **Finance and Trade:** Meet the team; research, commentary, and outreach
- Testimony

FIT

The FIT team works to address public policy questions that span financial services, the transfer of risk, and insurance practices in each state.

Pictured here: R Street's Jerry Theodorou, Policy Director, FIT, testifying before United States Senate Budget Committee, and Anthony Lamorena, Senior Manager, Federal Government Affairs.

GOVERNANCE

Governance aims to assess and improve America's system of self-governance, with a focus on Congress and our electoral system. The program continues its efforts to educate and encourage Congress to properly assert its Article One powers, claw back executive branch overreach, and curb overspending by the federal government.

In 2023, RSI and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) Agora Institute at Johns Hopkins University partnered to travel around the country and bring together more than 100 election officials, election administrators, business leaders, advocates, scholars, and others to help bolster American elections and develop a conservative agenda for democracy. The groups held closed-door gatherings in multiple states, ultimately culminating in a public-facing event in Washington, D.C. where they released a set of Conservative Principles for Building Trust in Elections. (Of note, those principles were echoed by four Republican Secretaries of State and one Lieutenant Governor in *National Review*.)

The Governance team also continued to work across the political spectrum with dozens of coalition allies, Capitol Hill offices, and other experts to cut wasteful spending in the federal government, including bloated Pentagon projects, a red tape-filled Farm Bill, and subsidies for Big Sugar. The team also equipped congressional staff with a deeper understanding of the rules and resources at their disposal to help maximize the power of the "first branch." All of this occurred as the U.S. House replaced Speaker McCarthy in October and Senate Democrats considered nuking Senate rules over held-up military nominations.

2023 Research and Commentary Highlights:

- Evaluating the Effects of the Top-Four System in Alaska (Policy Study, January 2023)
- The High Price of Federal Sugar Policy: What's the true cost of this "free" program? (Explainer, September 2023)
- The Good, the Bad and the In-Between: Washington's Implementation of Top-Two Voting (Policy Study, September 2023)
- Combating Misinformation Through Electoral Reform (Policy Study, October 2023)
- The Unbridled Potential of the Future Farm Economy (Policy Study, December 2023)

2023 News Highlights:

Arizona Capitol Times, C-SPAN, *The Charlotte Observer, DC Journal, The Hill,* Inside Sources with Boyd Matheson, Julie Mason Show, KNX In Depth, *The New York Times, The Orange County Register,* Reason, Virginia Mercury, *The Washington Post,* WYFF

Quick Links:

- Meet the team
- All research, commentary, and outreach
- Testimony

GOVERNANCE

The Governance team continues its efforts to educate and encourage Congress to properly assert its Article One powers, claw back executive branch overreach, and curb overspending by the federal government.

Pictured here: R Street's Matthew Germer (far right panelist), Policy Director, Governance, participating at 2023 NCSL (National Conference of State Legislatures), Austin, TX.

Governance Spotlight

POLITICS IN QUESTION—

a joint project of the R Street Institute, New America Foundation, and Marquette University. It has released more than 120 episodes with over 160,000 downloads.

INTEGRATED HARM REDUCTION

RSI's Integrated Harm Reduction program is grounded in the belief that abstinence-only approaches to risky behavior are ineffective on a population level. The team takes a holistic approach to harm reduction, bringing together historically disparate areas of risk, such as tobacco, cannabis, sexual health, and illicit drug use to advance policy research and propose real solutions to mitigate risk, preserve individual liberty, and ensure public safety.

RSI's pragmatic approach to policy allows the Integrated Harm Reduction team to find places of consensus and communicate with stakeholders with varying priorities and viewpoints. In 2023, the team was part of the conversation about granting naloxone OTC status, promoted the use of syringe services programs in states across the country, and supported continued access to less harmful nicotine-containing products for adult smokers, among many other harm reduction policy debates.

The team also hosted a standing-room-only expert panel on Capitol Hill to discuss the new era of nicotine and tobacco control, which received rave reviews from key stakeholders, staff, policymakers, and allies. The team's scholars continued to expand the discussion of harm reduction to new, more mainstream audiences, appearing for the first time in *STAT News* (twice)—an outlet read mostly by those in healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and academia. Similarly, the Mercatus Center twice asked RSI scholars to write about substance use for *Discourse Magazine*. Meanwhile, the team's Safer from Harm coalition—which brings together a diverse network of organizations and individuals dedicated to advancing all forms of harm reduction under one public policy banner—added the ACLU, End It For Good, the Center for Black Equity, and Faith in Harm Reduction, among others, to our membership.

2023 Research Highlights:

- Better Policy Is Needed to Improve Access to Medical Cannabis (Policy Study, February 2023)
- How Medicinal Cannabis Programs Are Changing: A Policy Perspective (Explainer, April 2023)
- Improving Access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder: Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic (Policy Study, May 2023)
- Analyzing Medical Advocacy Organizations' Positions on E-cigarettes (Policy Study, May 2023)
- Beyond Addiction: The Myriad Reasons People Use Drugs (Explainer, June 2023)
- How a Drug's Schedule I Status Restricts Research (Explainer, July 2023)
- Optimizing Naloxone Access Through Group Purchasing (Policy Study, October 2023)
- The Impact of Cultural Pressures on Tobacco Harm Reduction Efforts in Southeast Asia (Policy Study, November 2023)
- Putting Patients First: Medical Cannabis Use Patterns and Policy Protections (Policy Study, November 2023)

2023 News Highlights:

The American Spectator, Cannabis Tech, Cannabis Wire, C-SPAN, DCist, *The Hill,* LAist, Marijuana Moment, *The Orange County Register,* Pain News Network, *Reuters, Rutland Herald, South Florida Sun Sentinel, Tobacco Reporter,* WAMU/NPR, The Week, *Winston-Salem Journal*

Quick Links:

- Meet the team
- All research, commentary, and outreach
- Testimony

INTEGRATED HARM REDUCTION

The Integrated Harm Reduction team believes that if you support harm reduction for one behavior, you should support it for all behaviors, but also understands the importance of building consensus in communities and rolling out clear, reasonable regulations.

Pictured here: R Street's Chelsea Boyd, Resident Research Fellow, Harm Reduction, discussing the findings of her RSI study on overdose prevention centers at a Cato Health Event.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

RSI's Technology and Innovation program champions permissionless innovation, which allows innovators and entrepreneurs the freedom to bring new products to market for the benefit of consumers. While government intervention with new technologies may sometimes be warranted, it should not be a default remedy for fear of the unknown. The team strives to provide an understanding of how digital markets and platforms operate from an economic perspective, as well as evaluate the noneconomic rules and norms required for internet governance.

RSI believes that artificial intelligence (AI) is a critical new technology with the potential to fundamentally expand productivity and economic growth and that it will be adopted in virtually all sectors of the economy. In this sense, AI may be viewed as the engine of a much larger computational revolution that will offer economic benefits to producers and consumers. The team's goal is to address the potential regulatory threats that may impede the development and deployment of AI-driven technologies.

In 2023, RSI's Technology and Innovation team established itself as a leading voice on AI policy. After making the case for permissionless innovation and providing a thoughtful, balanced perspective on questions around cybersecurity, the team's expertise was requested by legislative committees, congressional caucuses, and individual members of Congress seeking to understand and grapple with this important issue. The team's scholars educated lawmakers and staff at the state and federal levels on ways to improve children's online safety while upholding First Amendment principles. The team also continued to both lead the debate on the case for the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program (which ensures that households can afford broadband) and challenge the Biden Administration's and Congress' attempts to use government tools to intervene in the free market (which included the Federal Trade Commission's attack on mergers, the misguided Journalism Competition and Preservation Act, and attempts to undo decades of antitrust and copyright policy).

2023 Research Highlights:

- Patent Reform and Pharmaceuticals: The Key to Lower Drug Prices (Policy Study, January 2023)
- Can We Predict the Jobs and Skills Needed for the AI Era? (Policy Study, March 2023)
- Getting AI Innovation Culture Right (Policy Study, March 2023)
- Flexible, Pro-Innovation Governance Strategies for Artificial Intelligence (Policy Study, April 2023)
- Existential Risks and Global Governance Issues Around AI and Robotics (Policy Study, June 2023)
- Artificial Intelligence, Energy and the Economy (Policy Study, September 2023)

2023 News Highlights:

Bloomberg Law, The Boston Globe, Communications Daily, Daily Caller, The Dispatch, *The Hill, Houston Chronicle,* Inside AI Policy, Law360, *Miami Herald, National Review, New York Post, The New York Times, The Orange County Register,* Reason, Tech Dirt, *The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post*

Quick Links:

- Meet the team
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TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

RSI's Technology and Innovation team strives to provide an understanding of how digital markets and platforms operate from an economic perspective, as well as evaluate the noneconomic rules and norms required for internet governance.

Pictured here: R Street's Jonathan Cannon (far left panelist), Policy Counsel, Technology and Innovation, participating in a panel session.

REAL SOLUTIONS SUMMIT
CREDIBILITY, COMMUNITY, TRUST

At a time when the nation had become increasingly polarized, RSI focused on fostering connections across the political and policy spectrums, hosting deep conversations, and collaborating for policy impact around the country. The theme of the 2023 Real Solutions Summit was "trust"—in our society, in our institutions, and in our political system—and how we can restore it to build a better country together.

Why the Real Solutions Summit? As a leading think tank focused on solving complicated public policy challenges through free markets and limited, effective government, RSI consistently offers pragmatic, real solutions that foster American innovation through competition and safeguard individual liberty—all with an understanding that life in a democratic society sometimes means reaching compromises that don't necessarily represent first, best solutions. This approach means that R Street stands apart from many other think tanks because it is not constrained by partisan labels.

RSI recognizes that although our primary audience is policymakers, influencing public policy is not a linear endeavor. Stakeholders, policymakers and their staff, policy experts, academics, and media are all part of our ecosystem. Each comes to RSI for in-depth, credible research and analysis; for our strong alliances across the political spectrum; and for our ability to build influence and drive conversations around complicated policy debates. Together, these diverse stakeholders enable RSI to influence real public policy change by laser-focusing on real solutions.

The Real Solutions Summit was the first event of its kind for RSI, and we look forward to hosting another summit in 2025. Thank you to everyone who attended and supported this standing-room-only event, and thank you to our sponsors.

2023 Agenda and Speakers:

- Three Keys for Restoring Political Trust
  Erica Schoder, Executive Director, R Street Institute (Opening Remarks)
- One Ring to Rule Them All: How centralized power is corrupting our institutions, increasing polarization, and undermining elections (Panel). Featuring:
  - [Moderator] **Ramesh Ponnuru**, Editor, National Review
  - **James Wallner**, Senior Fellow, Governance, R Street Institute
  - **Veronique de Rugy**, George Gibbs Chair in Political Economy, Senior Research Fellow, Mercatus Center
  - **Casey Mattox**, Vice President for Legal and Judicial Strategy, Americans for Prosperity
- Keynote Remarks by Former Arizona Governor **Doug Ducey** (R)
- A Conservative Agenda for Democracy (Panel). Featuring:
  - [Moderator] **Jeff Vanderslice**, Director, Federal Government Affairs, R Street Institute
  - **Matt Germer**, Associate Director and Resident Elections Fellow, Governance Program, R Street Institute
  - **Trey Grayson**, Partner, Frost Brown Todd Attorneys and former Kentucky Secretary of State (R) and former Chair of the Republican Association of Secretaries of State
  - **Scott Warren**, Fellow, Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute at Johns Hopkins University
- Taking Reform Seriously: Policing, policy, and preventing violent crime (Panel). Featuring:
  - [Moderator] **Diane Goldstein**, Executive Director, Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP)
  - **Jillian Snider**, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties Policy Director, R Street Institute
  - **Tracie Keesee**, President and Chief Operating Officer, Center for Policing Equity
  - **Ja'Ron K. Smith**, Former Deputy Assistant to the President for the White House Domestic Policy Council and the Office of American Innovation (2019-2020)
- Future of Philanthropy (Fireside Chat). Featuring:
  - Introduction: **Susanna Dokupil**, Chairwoman of the Board of Directors, R Street Institute
  - **Eli Lehrer**, President, R Street Institute
  - **Brian Hooks**, Chairman and CEO, Stand Together, Co-author, *Believe in People: Bottom-Up Solutions for a Top-Down World*
- The Case for Optimism in the Age of AI (Panel). Featuring:
  - [Moderator] **Adam Thierer**, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation, R Street Institute
  - **James Pethokoukis**, Senior Fellow and DeWitt Wallace Chair, American Enterprise Institute, Author, *The Conservative Futurist: How to Create the Sci-Fi World We Were Promised*
  - **Virginia Postrel**, Columnist and Author, *The Fabric of Civilization: How Textiles Made the World*
  - **Halie Craig**, Policy Director, Tech, Senate Commerce Committee, Ranking Member Ted Cruz (R-TX)
- Closing Remarks by **Sabrina Schaeffer**, Vice President of Public Affairs, R Street Institute

REAL SOLUTIONS SUMMIT

The Real Solutions Summit was the first event of its kind for RSI, and we look forward to hosting another summit in 2025. Thank you to everyone who attended and supported this standing-room-only event, and thank you to our sponsors.

Pictured here: R Street's Shoshana Weissmann (left), Director, Digital Media; Fellow and Former Arizona Governor Doug Ducey (R) (right) networking at RSI's 2023 Real Solutions Summit in Washington, D.C.

RED TAPE PODCAST

Our approach to policy impact involves the three Ps: people, products, and pipelines. At RSI, we focus on creating specific products and building pipelines to reach specific people to help achieve real solutions.

That's why, in 2023, RSI launched Red Tape, a new podcast about the country's biggest problems and the surprising ways that governments (and regular people) often get in the way of solving them.

From good-paying jobs to TikTok and electric vehicles, Americans often find themselves in need of a real solution that fits the real world. But more often than not, bureaucratic red tape gets in their way. The problems might be more absurd and the answers far simpler than you'd think. Co-hosts Kelli Pierce and Shoshana Weissmann spent 9 episodes speaking with experts and diving deep into some of the biggest policy challenges facing Americans, explaining how getting government out of the way is often the answer.

Subscribe to Red Tape today on your favorite podcasting app, including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Pandora, iHeart, or via RSS feed. All episodes also include full transcripts that can be found here.

Red Tape is produced by the R Street Institute, in partnership with Pod People. Special thanks to the production teams at Pod People (producer Chris Jacobs and senior production manager Bryan Rivers) and R Street (executive producer Ann Phelan, with support from Alexa Cunniff and Addyson Garner). Album art by Ashley Blackwell.

Red Tape Episodes and Guests

Episode 1—"You're not as free as you think" with Jillian Snider, Policy Director, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties and Courtney Joslin, Resident Fellow and Senior Manager, Project for Women and Families

Episode 2—It Ain't Easy Being Green with Josiah Neeley, Texas Director and Resident Senior Fellow, Energy and Philip Rossetti, Resident Senior Fellow, Energy

Episode 3—Ban It All! with Brandon Pugh, Policy Director, Cybersecurity and Emerging Threats and Mazen Saleh, Policy Director, Integrated Harm Reduction

Episode 4—South Park Explains Why We're Trillions in Debt with Nan Swift, Resident Fellow, Governance and Jonathan Bydlak, former Policy Director, Governance

Episode 5—They Took Our Jobs with Adam Thierer, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation and Christi Smith, Resident Senior Fellow, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties

Episode 6—Where's the Lie? with Matt Germer, Policy Director, Governance and Stacey McKenna, Resident Senior Fellow, Integrated Harm Reduction

Episode 7—It's 230. Do you know where your children are? with Shoshana Weissmann, Digital Director and Fellow, Technology and Innovation and Josh Withrow, Resident Fellow, Technology and Innovation

Episode 8—Build high where it's dry with Caroline Melear, Resident Fellow, Finance, Insurance and Trade and Steven Greenhut, Western Region Director and Resident Senior Fellow

Episode 9—Humble Beginnings with Eli Lehrer, R Street's President and Co-Founder and Erica Schoder, Executive Director and RSI's very first hire

About the Red Tape Podcast Hosts

Kelli Pierce is an award-winning journalist who manages R Street's website as part of the communications team. When she's not relaxing in Utah, she can be found chasing her toddler son and helping address the U.S. infant formula crisis. Follow Kelli on Twitter.

Shoshana Weissmann is R Street's digital director. When she's not tweeting memes at elected officials, she can be found researching and writing technology and occupational licensing policy as a fellow or hiking around the world for weeks at a time. Follow Shoshana on Twitter.

BY THE NUMBERS 2023

$12+ million annual operating budget

80 staff including **16** new hires

55+ virtual and in-person events hosted around the country

900 features in the media

900+ products edited and published, from policy studies to op-eds

24 RSI scholar submissions of public comments to federal agencies

270+ congressional offices substantively engaged

96 state testimonies submitted in 32 states

25 percent average email open rate on communications sent to stakeholders and grasstops influencers

17 instances of RSI scholars testifying before and submitting statements for the record that were accepted by congressional committees (a nearly three-fold increase over 2022)

586 state policymaker meetings

1 podcast launched (9 episodes)

1 new office secured

0 ninja infiltrations

TOP 25 MOST-READ PIECES OF 2023

1—ANALYSIS

R Street Institute Concerns About the Kids Online Safety Act

By Shoshana Weissmann, Resident Fellow, Technology and Innovation; Canyon Brimhall, Senior Manager, Federal Government Affairs; Josh Withrow, Resident Fellow, Technology and Innovation

2—REAL SOLUTIONS

The Affordable Connectivity Program: When Government Spending Is Good

By Jonathan Cannon, Policy Counsel, Technology and Innovation

3—REAL SOLUTIONS

The Fundamental Problems with Social Media Age-Verification Legislation

By Shoshana Weissmann, Resident Fellow, Technology and Innovation

4—EXPLAINER

Treating Kids Like Kids: "Raise the Age" Laws Align Juvenile Justice with Neuroscience and Common Sense

By Logan Seacrest, Resident Fellow, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties

5—REAL SOLUTIONS

The technology to verify your age without violating your privacy does not exist

By Shoshana Weissmann, Resident Fellow, Technology and Innovation

6—REAL SOLUTIONS

The Most Important Principle for AI Regulation

By Adam Thierer, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation

7—REAL SOLUTIONS

The Schumer AI Framework and the Future of Emerging Tech Policymaking

By Adam Thierer, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation

8—REAL SOLUTIONS

How ROFR Laws Increase Electric Transmission Costs in Midwestern States

By Josiah Neeley, Resident Senior Fellow, Energy and Environment and Texas Director, State Government Affairs

9—POLICY STUDY

Flexible, Pro-Innovation Governance Strategies for Artificial Intelligence

By Adam Thierer, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation

10—ANALYSIS

The United States Is at a Tipping Point on Juvenile Life Without Parole

By Logan Seacrest, Resident Fellow, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties

11—ANALYSIS

White House Executive Order Threatens to Put AI in a Regulatory Cage

By Adam Thierer, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation

12—REAL SOLUTIONS

Current age-verification methods threaten our First Amendment rights beyond anonymity

By Shoshana Weissmann, Resident Fellow, Technology and Innovation

13—REAL SOLUTIONS

Mapping the AI Policy Landscape Circa 2023: Seven Major Fault Lines

By Adam Thierer, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation

14—POLICY STUDY

Data-Driven Deflection: A Systems Approach to Reducing Juvenile Arrests

By Logan Seacrest, Resident Fellow, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties

15—ANALYSIS

America's juvenile detention facilities are collapsing

By Logan Seacrest, Resident Fellow, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties

16—REAL SOLUTIONS

Private Sector Coordination Critical to New National Cybersecurity Strategy Implementation Plan

By Amy Chang, Resident Senior Fellow, Cybersecurity and Emerging Threats; Brandon Pugh, Policy Director, Cybersecurity and Emerging Threats

17—ANALYSIS

BEAD: Broadband or Boondoggle?

By Jonathan Cannon, Policy Counsel, Technology and Innovation

18—POLICY STUDY

Getting AI Innovation Culture Right

By Adam Thierer, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation

19—ANALYSIS

Without Section 230 Protections, Generative AI Innovation Will Be Decimated

By Adam Thierer, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation; Shoshana Weissmann, Resident Fellow, Technology and Innovation

20—ANALYSIS

President Biden Wants America to Become Europe on Tech Regulation

By Adam Thierer, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation

21—POLICY STUDY

Evaluating the Effects of the Top-Four System in Alaska

By Ryan Williamson, former Resident Fellow, Governance

22—ANALYSIS

Artificial Intelligence Legislative Outlook: Fall 2023 Update

By Adam Thierer, Resident Senior Fellow, Technology and Innovation

23—REAL SOLUTIONS

The state ROFR wave could hit electric consumers in their pocketbooks

By Josiah Neeley, Resident Senior Fellow, Energy and Environment and Texas Director, State Government Affairs

24—REAL SOLUTIONS

If platforms are required to have your government IDs and face scans, hackers and enemy governments can access them too

By Shoshana Weissmann, Resident Fellow, Technology and Innovation

25—ANALYSIS

The Western War on Vaping Is Harming Public Health

By Theo Menon, Former Associate, Government Affairs; Steven Greenhut, Resident Senior Fellow and Western Region Director, State Affairs

Free Markets. Real Solutions.

About R Street • The R Street Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public-policy research organization ("think tank"). Our mission is to engage in policy research and outreach to promote free markets and limited, effective government. In addition to our D.C. headquarters, we are represented in a number of states across the country, covering the Southeast, Central, Midwest, Northeast, and Western regions. We work extensively on both state and national policy, focusing on issues that other groups tend to neglect. Our specialty is tackling issues that are complex, but do not necessarily grab major headlines. These are the areas where we think we can have a real impact. We believe free markets work better than the alternatives. At the same time, we recognize the legislative process calls out for practical responses to current problems. Toward that end, our motto is "Free markets. Real solutions."

Independence Statement • The R Street Institute is committed to producing high-quality research and educating federal, state, and local policymakers. Facts, data, and staff expertise drive our research. We do not and will not permit the interests of politicians, donors, or any other third party to dictate R Street's research or policy positions. While R Street may solicit input from any number of interested stakeholders, we are solely responsible for our research and related activities. Even where we agree with stakeholders and donors, R Street staff does not and will not represent, lobby, or advocate on behalf of any third party.

Contact

1411 K Street N.W., Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 525-5717
www.rstreet.org
feedback@rstreet.org