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### History

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The American Enterprise Association (AEA) arrived in Washington in 1943, in the middle of World War II. In Congress there was talk of making wartime price and production controls permanent when the war ended to prevent another depression. The tiny AEA, a business group formed in New York City five years earlier, was horrified; it resolved to open a Washington office to advocate rapid postwar economic demobilization and, more generally, to improve Congress's understanding of the economic consequences of its actions. The Washington office of AEA (which eventually graduated from "association" to "institute") was the avant-garde of two momentous developments of the decades to come, both responses to the growing size and power of the federal government: the migration of business and trade associations from commercial centers to the nation's capital and the emergence of the policy "think tank."

AEA was a partnership of top executives from leading business and financial firms (Bristol-Myers, General Mills, Chemical Bank) and prominent policy intellectuals (Roscoe Pound of the Harvard Law School, economic journalist Henry Hazlitt and disillusioned New Dealer Raymond Moley). From the beginning, however, the Association's spirit was libertarian and conservative rather than simply "pro-business." Its founding mission statement would still serve well: to promote "greater public knowledge and understanding of the social and economic advantages accruing to the American people through the maintenance of the system of free, competitive enterprise." So, too, its academic and empirical commitments: AEA was to be "nonpartisan and nonpolitical," was to "express no opinion of its own" and was to produce "accurate, impartial, and objective" research.

Following the highly successful dismantling of wartime economic controls, the AEA Washington office began preparing analyses of legislative proposals and publishing studies on subjects that remain AEI staples today--Social Security reform, government health insurance, the effects of trade on domestic employment and the impact of productivity growth on wages and income. In 1950, a fan letter from freshman congressman Gerald R. Ford began a long and happy relationship with the late president. AEA also produced philosophic tracts portraying private enterprise as a form of voluntary social cooperation undergirding strong communities and democratic self-government--intellectual sprouts that would later blossom in such landmark works as Michael Novak's "The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism" and Irving Kristol's "Two Cheers for Capitalism."

### Books by scholars in residence

Click on the cover image to read a fuller description of the author, the book, and the role it played in AEI's history.

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The arrival in 1954 of William J. Baroody marked the beginning of the modern AEI. The son of a Lebanese

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immigrant stonemason, Mr. Baroody gave up a secure job at the US Chamber of Commerce for the chance to lead a small, financially strapped organization. He was an entrepreneur and risk-taker, a strong political conservative and a widely read intellectual convinced of the potential for ideas to move practical politics. During his 26 years at AEI, he demonstrated singular gifts for spotting important academic talent and for promoting dense—and often contrarian—policy-reform ideas for busy public officials, business executives and journalists. Mr. Baroody expanded the legislative analyses, commissioned original research by leading scholars and raised the money to pay the bills. Within a year of his arrival, reviews and excerpts of AEA publications began appearing in *The Wall Street Journal* and *Barron's*. By the early 1960s, economists Milton Friedman, Paul McCracken and Gottfried Haberler had joined his academic advisory board. Mr. Baroody conceived for AEI a brilliant slogan that combined the Institute's commitment to freedom and competition with a forthright challenge to the liberal orthodoxy of 1960s Washington: "Competition of ideas is fundamental to a free society."

Mr. Baroody's leadership produced a period of astounding growth in the quantity and quality of the Institute's output, making it one of the busiest and most productive centers of policy research in the nation and heralding the sea change in American politics to come. In 1972, Gottfried Haberler was appointed AEI's first "resident scholar," to be joined the following year by Yale's William Fellner; the arrival of such renowned scholars signaled the Institute's intention to become a first-rate research institution in fact and name. When the voters prematurely retired President Ford in 1976, he became AEI's "distinguished fellow" and brought with him a dozen colleagues to pursue work that was begun in his administration; among those who would subsequently return to public service were Arthur Burns, Robert Bork, Laurence Silberman, Antonin Scalia, James C. Miller III, John Snow, Rudolph Penner and David Gergen. As AEI achieved critical institutional mass, it was able to attract several of America's most influential thinkers, including neoconservative godfather Irving Kristol; economists Herbert Stein and Marvin Kosters; sociologist Robert Nisbet; political scientists Robert Goldwin, Jeane Kirkpatrick and Walter Berns; theologian Michael Novak; and author Ben Wattenberg

Having begun the 1970s with a budget of \$1 million and a staff of 10, AEI at decade's end had a budget of \$8 million and a staff of 125. AEI had become a hotbed of innovative ideas—on deregulation, tax reform, trade policy, social welfare problems and revitalization of defense and foreign policy—that were about to debut on the political stage.

The 1980s were great years for AEI's ideas but troubled years for the institution itself. President Ronald Reagan appointed several dozen AEI scholars and fellows to his administration and to federal judgeships, where they helped him to achieve monumental improvements in economic, regulatory and legal policy and to deploy the more assertive foreign policy that would dispatch Soviet communism. But Mr. Baroody died just months before Reagan's election, and his successor, son William Baroody Jr., struggled to maintain his father's legacy in a transformed political environment. With so many prominent AEIers in government, and with the emergence of several energetic new think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute, AEI's reputation and finances suffered. Still, many exceptional scholars remained busy and productive at AEI and began work on audacious new projects, such as producing a new liberal-conservative consensus on welfare reform that eventually produced the Welfare Reform Act of 1996.

AEI's trustees appointed a new president in 1986—Christopher DeMuth, a lawyer and economist who had served in the Nixon and Reagan administrations and taught at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Mr. DeMuth revamped the Institute's program of foreign and defense policy studies and focused its domestic research agenda on traditional strengths: public finance and tax policy; government regulation; US politics and political institutions; and cultural, philosophical and social welfare issues. He also instituted major managerial and financial reforms and a new and variegated publications program.

Donors responded with alacrity; by the early 1990s, AEI had paid off its debts and was growing mightily in financial resources, the size of research staff and the quality and influence of its output. Soon, the Institute's eminent senior scholars were joined by a new generation of economists, social scientists, foreign policy and trade experts and students of social and cultural problems. To name only three recent accomplishments: Peter J. Wallison provided prescient warnings about the problems of the government-sponsored enterprises Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. In foreign policy, Frederick W. Kagan developed the intellectual and practical rationale for a change in strategy in Iraq in 2007, which came to be known as the surge. In 2003, Danielle Pletka and Michael Rubin began the AEI project "Dissent and Reform in the Arab World," which imagined the possibility of an "Arab Spring" at a time when most other commentators dismissed such a notion out of hand.

Today, the Institute has a staff of 185, including about 70 scholars and fellows. It also has a new president. In 2008, after 22 years at the helm, Mr. DeMuth stepped down as president and moved down the hall to do

research on government regulation and other policy areas. His successor, Arthur C. Brooks, is a classical musician by training. He came late to the world of public policy, influenced by the innovative and daring social science research of Charles Murray, and before becoming AEI president was the Louis A. Bantle Professor of Business and Government Policy at Syracuse University.

Mr. Brooks has focused on the culture struggle underway in America today. He sets forth that struggle in his 2010 book, *The Battle: How the Fight Between Free Enterprise and Big Government Will Shape America's Future*. "This is not the culture war of the 1990s ... over guns, abortions, religion, and gays," he writes in *The Battle*. "Rather it is a struggle between two competing visions of America. In one, America will continue to be a unique and exceptional nation organized around the principles of free enterprise. In the other, America will move toward a European-style statism grounded in expanding bureaucracies, increasing income redistribution, and government-controlled corporations." Our choice between these competing visions, he argues, will determine the future of the nation.

Mr. Brooks has launched a range of new initiatives at AEI to promote and defend free enterprise in America. By combining scholarship with enhanced communications and outreach, he has stepped up AEI's presence on Capitol Hill, in the national media, on college campuses and to new and growing audiences in cities across the country. More forcefully than ever, AEI has been making the case that free enterprise is not just the most efficient economic system for America, but an expression of American values.

After seven decades, AEI continues to serve a vital role in the intellectual life of the nation—and on November 22, 2011, reached another milestone when it co-hosted its first Republican presidential debate. The Institute's work on behalf of freedom, opportunity and enterprise are informing the policy debates of today—and helping set the agenda for the policy debates of tomorrow.

#### PRINTABLE TIMELINE INFOGRAPHIC



**Freedom.  
Opportunity.  
Enterprise.**



AEI announces plans to acquire the National Trust for Historic Preservation's property at 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, in downtown Washington, DC, with occupancy expected in late 2015.

Former Sen. Jon Kyl joins AEI as a visiting fellow, and with former Sen. Joe Lieberman, launches the American Internationalism Project.

## 2013

- Arthur Brooks, Danielle Pletka, and Sadanand Dhume are invited to visit with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, in Dharamsala, India.
- AEI launches a four-part speaker series with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, focusing on America's military transformation. General James F. Amos, commandant of the Marine Corps, commences the series.

National Review senior editor Ramesh Ponnuru is one of several key additions to AEI's team of scholars. He is joined by Jim Capretta, Tim Carney, Ed Conard, and Jeff Eisenach.

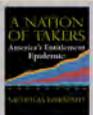
AEI merges the Program on Advanced Strategic Studies with the Center for Defense Studies to create the Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies, which is directed by Gary Schmitt and Tom Donnelly. Mackenzie Eaglen joins the center to focus on defense spending and military resource requirements.

## 2012

- Nick Eberstadt publishes "A Nation of Takers," which describes the growth of entitlement spending and the effects on American civic culture. President Obama indirectly references the monograph during his January 2013 inaugural address.
- Alan Viard proposes a significant reformation of the tax code in his book, "Progressive Consumption Taxation," drawing heavily from the work of late AEI scholar David Bradford.
- AEI scholars testify a record 106 times during the 112th Congress, more than scholars from any other think tank.
- AEI scholars publish four New York Times bestsellers:



AEI begins a substantive effort to engage college students, hosting 30 events on 28 campuses across the country.




AEI's education policy studies program marks its 10th anniversary under the leadership of Rick Hess.

## 2011

AEI cohosts a debate with the Republican presidential candidates on foreign policy and national security issues. The debate is broadcast live on CNN.



AEI's Road to Freedom Project expands the institute's communications and government relations departments, helping to solidify AEI's influence in Washington and leadership role within the free enterprise movement.

AEI begins publishing its Values & Capitalism monographs, which are designed to introduce college students to public policy concepts from a free-market perspective.



Arthur Brooks releases "The Battle," in which he describes two competing visions of America: European-style statism versus a healthy free enterprise system.

Peter Wallison is named to the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission, which is tasked with determining what triggered the 2008 financial crisis and proposing steps for reform.

Christopher DeMuth steps down as AEI president and is succeeded by Arthur Brooks.



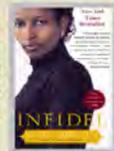
## 2008

George W. Bush delivers a major address at AEI about the war on terror. Additional members of the Bush administration to address AEI include Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez, and Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt.

Fred Kagan releases "Choosing Victory: A Plan for Success in Iraq," which serves as an intellectual roadmap for the successful Iraq "surge" strategy.

## 2006

Ayaan Hirsi Ali joins AEI to study religion, culture, and women's rights. One year later she publishes "Infidel," a memoir describing her escape from an arranged marriage to her election to the Dutch parliament.



Henry Olsen joins AEI as a vice president and director of the institute's National Research Initiative.



AEI scholars publish 100 op-eds in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The Washington Post, exceeding scholars from any other think tank.

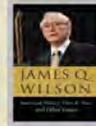
Rep. Paul Ryan unveils the 2012 House Republican Budget at AEI. One year later, Rep. Ryan returns to AEI to release the 2013 House Republican Budget.



Jim Capretta, Tom Miller and others release the book "Why ObamaCare is Wrong for America," which assesses the impact of the Affordable Care Act on individuals and businesses.

## 2010

AEI publishes James Q. Wilson's "American Politics: Then and Now," which includes a selection of essays spanning Wilson's career.



AEI launches its Summer Institute academic program with an inaugural class of 25.

## 2009

Sen. Joseph Lieberman delivers a keynote address marking the launch of AEI's Critical Threats Project. The unique initiative tracks, monitors, and assesses threats to America's security interests.

The Washington Post devotes a full page to an AEI-Brookings event on the changing demography of the electorate, calling the participants "a stellar cast."

Michelle Rhee, the chancellor of DC Public Schools, speaks at an AEI event on urban school reform. In the second event in this series, New York City Public Schools Chancellor Joel Klein defends his aggressive empowerment and accountability strategies.

## 2007

Michael Barone joins AEI as a resident fellow focusing on US electoral politics.

Benazir Bhutto, the first woman to serve as prime minister of Pakistan, speaks at AEI months before her assassination.

Arthur Brooks becomes a visiting scholar in July after promoting his latest book, "Who Really Cares: The Surprising Truth About Compassionate Conservatism."



Charles Murray publishes "In Our Hands: A Plan to Replace the Welfare State," which outlines steps to increase individual autonomy by minimizing the level of government bureaucracy.

Norm Ornstein and John Fortier launch a four-year AEI-Brookings project evaluating the way elections in the United States are conducted. Then-Senator Barack Obama delivers the keynote address inaugurating the initiative.

Gary Schmitt launches AEI's Program on Advanced Strategic Studies to promote a serious and comprehensive analysis of US security needs in a post-September 11 world.

## 2005

US Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad addresses Afghan relations.

## 2004

Afghan President Hamid Karzai speaks before a private gathering at AEI on democratic institutions and political stability in his nation.

AEI holds a series of regular briefings on the war in Iraq, as well as a major conference with Rend al-Rahim, Iraq's ambassador-designate to the United States.



President George W. Bush speaks at AEI's Annual Dinner.

## 2003

AEI trustee and former adjunct scholar John Snow is named secretary of the Treasury.

## 2002

AEI expands its foreign and defense policy scholarship in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Danielle Pletka joins AEI, becoming its vice president for foreign and defense policy. Tom Donnelly joins as a resident fellow, later becoming codirector of the Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies.

Rick Hess and Scott Gottlieb join AEI, greatly bolstering the institute's work on education and health policy, respectively.

Irving Kristol receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom.



AEI launches the National Research Initiative. The program supports, publishes, and disseminates research by university-based academics and policy experts. NRI also brings younger scholars — such as then-Syracuse University professor Arthur Brooks — to AEI at the start of their public policy careers.

## 2001

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, AEI hosts a major conference with Israeli Minister Natan Sharansky, CIA Director James Woolsey, and Newt Gingrich on the principles that should guide the war on terror.

President George W. Bush appoints more than a dozen AEI scholars and fellows to senior positions in his administration, including: Vice President Dick Cheney, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Undesecretary of State for International Security John Bolton, Chairman of the Defense Policy Board Richard Perle, and Chairman of the President's Council on Bioethics Leon Kass.

## 2000

Nick Eberstadt is named to the new Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy.

Michael Greve joins AEI as the John G. Searle scholar, studying constitutional law and federalism.

Leon Aron publishes "Yeltsin: A Revolutionary Life," the definitive account of the Russian leader.



## 1999

Peter Wallison joins AEI to codirect the institute's Financial Market Deregulation Project. Wallison organizes his first AEI seminar on government-sponsored enterprises, focusing on the financial risk posed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

## 1998

Margaret Thatcher speaks at AEI's World Forum.



## 1997

John Bolton joins AEI as the senior vice president for finance and program oversight. That same year, Federal Reserve senior economist Kevin Hassett becomes a resident scholar.

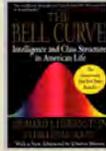
AEI launches its website.

## 1996



## 1995

Vaclav Klaus, prime minister of the Czech Republic, describes the economic and political progress his country has made after the fall of the Soviet Union in a major AEI address.



## 1994

Charles Murray, who joined AEI in 1990, publishes "The Bell Curve" with Richard Herrnstein.

Lynne and Dick Cheney join AEI as fellows.

## 1990

Ten former chairmen of the Council of Economic Advisers — spanning the terms of Presidents Eisenhower through Bush — speak at AEI's annual policy conference in a session entitled "Presidents and Economics."

With a generous grant from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, AEI inaugurates the Bradley Lecture Series, which examines the intersection of political philosophy and policy. Lecturers in the first year included such luminaries as Allan Bloom, Michael Novak, Robert Bork, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Allan Meltzer, and Harvey Mansfield.

## 1989

Christopher DeMuth announces plans to devote greater resources to government regulation, health policy, and legal and constitutional studies.

## 1987

Christopher DeMuth marks his first full year as AEI president. He is joined by executive vice president David Gerson.

DeMuth announces a major reorganization of the institute's research divisions, naming Marvin Kosters as director of economic policy studies, Jeane Kirkpatrick as counselor to the president for foreign policy studies, and Michael Novak as director of social and political studies.

AEI publishes "The New Consensus on Family and Welfare."

The report's recommendations, which include a work requirement for those on welfare, drew on Charles Murray's 1984 book "Losing Ground" and helped move welfare reform ahead.

## 1985

AEI's weekly radio program, "National Policy Forum," is carried by 800 stations nationwide.

## 1983

Norm Ornstein hosts off-the-record dinners with new congressional members Dick Cheney, Geraldine Ferraro, Newt Gingrich, and others. Ornstein later publishes "Congress off the Record: The Candid Analyses of Seven Members," which becomes a highly influential volume offering a behind-the-scenes look at Congress.

## 1982



AEI inaugurates its Election Watch conference series, featuring political analysis on key national elections from Ben Wattenberg, William Schneider, Norm Ornstein, and Karlyn Bowman. The series marked its 30th anniversary in 2012.

AEI holds its first annual World Forum in Beaver Creek, Colorado.

## 1981

Ronald Reagan appoints a number of AEI scholars to positions to his administration, including Jeane Kirkpatrick, Murray Weidenbaum, Robert Helms, and Michael Novak.

AEI publishes the first edition of its Bible of congressional statistics: "Vital Statistics on Congress."

## 1979

In his first appearance at AEI, Leon Kass, M.D., speaks on in-vitro fertilization.

Distinguished historian Paul Johnson becomes a fellow at AEI and writes his influential "Modern Times" while in residence.

## 1978

George H.W. Bush is named to head the advisory council for a new AEI project, the Future Conduct of American Foreign Policy.

Arthur Burns joins AEI as a distinguished scholar. He is pictured here with Paul McCracken, longtime AEI adviser and interim institute president.



# 1977

AEI launches Regulation magazine, naming Antonin Scalia and Murray Friedman as coeditors. The AEI Economic Review, edited by Herbert Stein, also makes its debut. A year later the institute launches Public Opinion magazine, edited by Ben J. Wattenberg and Seymour Martin Lipset. These three lively niche publications were widely popular.

Former President Gerald Ford joins AEI as a distinguished fellow and delivers the first Francis Boyer Lecture.



AEI publishes "To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy," by Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus. Twenty years later, AEI celebrates the anniversary of this highly influential publication.



The November 7 issue of Newsweek says that AEI "has begun to match the Brookings Institution brain-for-brain as the most influential think tank in Washington."

# 1975

Nobel laureate Friedrich A. Hayek speaks at AEI on inflation and the recession.

Ronald Reagan makes his first appearance at an AEI conference on regulatory reform, with, among others, Ralph Nader and Hubert Humphrey. AEI's work on government regulation that began in the 1960s was gaining critical mass and resulted in significant changes in government policy.

On the 10th anniversary of William Baroody's arrival at AEI, Richard Nixon sends a message complimenting the institute for introducing competition in the Washington world of ideas dominated by proponents of centralized big government.

# 1974

# 1973

Yale Law School professor and AEI adjunct scholar Ralph Winter and his student John Bolton write an AEI study on campaign finance and political freedom, which argues that limits on campaign spending and individual contributions are unconstitutional.

In anticipation of America's bicentennial, AEI commences a televised lecture series, which features scholars speaking from historic sites across the nation. Irving Kristol, Martin Diamond, Seymour Martin Lipset, Daniel Boorstin, Dean Rusk, and Edward Banfield deliver lectures from locations such as Boston's Old North Church and Independence Hall.

In an indication of AEI's growing importance in Washington, Senators Sam Ervin and Howard Baker of the Watergate Committee ask AEI scholars to address the implications of the evidence unearthed by the committee.

AEI's resident scholar program starts. Harvard University economist Gottfried Haberler is named AEI's first resident scholar, followed shortly by another world famous economist, William Fellner.

# 1972

AEI moves to its current location at 1150 Seventeenth Street, NW, in downtown Washington.

# 1971

# 1967

AEI acquires an IBM 1130 to bolster its research on the federal budget.



AEI's televised "Rational Debate" series begins, which is later broadcast to more than 370 stations nationwide. Participants in the first year include Arthur Schlesinger, Milton Friedman, Arthur Burns, and US Supreme Court Justice Charles Whittaker. The debates drew many current and future Nobel laureates.

# 1966

# 1965

AEI starts its very popular AEI News Digest, a daily press summary for the Hill. Later, the White House starts its own summary, modeled after AEI's.

# 1964

AEI establishes its Antitrust Center. In 1971, Robert H. Bork becomes an AEI adjunct scholar and later a senior fellow. His 1978 book, "The Antitrust Paradox," revolutionized thinking in this field.



# 1962

AEI begins to publish High School Debate and College Debate manuals in conjunction with the national committees on debate.

# 1960

According to a report from AEA's board, 85 percent of the Senate and 73 percent of House members

of the Senate and 75 percent of House members have requested AEA materials.

William J. Baroody Sr. is named AEA's executive director. He is named president in 1962, when AEA becomes the American Enterprise Institute, and marking a key turning point in the institute's rise to national prominence.

## 1954

1950 • Then-Michigan Rep. Gerald Ford sends a letter to AEI complimenting the institute on a policy brief, writing, "I want you to know that I deeply appreciate the analysis." This is the first record of correspondence between AEA and Ford, who would become an AEI distinguished fellow in 1977 after leaving the White House.

As a mark of its importance, AEA is given its own box in the House document room to get its copies of bills as soon as they are received there.

## 1949

• More than 30 years before Charles Murray publishes "Losing Ground," AEA releases a pamphlet on the expansion of welfare. It states, "the issue is not more welfare or less welfare, but between governmental management or private and voluntary management of the capital needed for all forms of welfare. If the central government continues to acquire capital for itself ... by promising to provide welfare for more and more groups ... then private voluntary organizations will lose."

## 1944

• An academic advisory board (a precursor to AEI's Council of Academic Advisers) is established to maintain objectivity and a high standard of scholarship. Members ultimately include — among others — Henry Hazlitt, Roscoe Pound, Paul McCracken, Milton Friedman, Elliot Cohen, Sam Peltzman, George Priest, Gertrude Himmelfarb, and James Q. Wilson. McCracken chaired the council for 24 years, and Wilson did so for 21 years.



AEA incorporates in Washington, DC, and begins its "Legislative Analyses" series, which produces brief surveys of 50 congressional bills per year.

## 1943

## 1938

• Longtime AEI economist Herb Stein comes to Washington. At this time, there is no economist in the Cabinet or as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. There is no Council of Economic Advisers. The Chamber of Commerce does not have an economist on staff. The World Bank and the IMF do not exist.

The American Enterprise Association (AEA) is founded in New York City. Lewis Brown is its first chairman.





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