For libertarians, the basic unit of social analysis is the individual. It’s hard to imagine how it could be anything else. Individuals are, in all cases, the source and foundation of creativity, activity, and society. Only individuals can think, love, pursue projects, act. Groups don’t have plans or intentions. Only individuals are capable of choice, in the sense of anticipating the outcomes of alternative courses of action and weighing the consequences. Individuals, of course, often create and deliberate in groups, but it is the individual mind that ultimately makes choices. Most important, only individuals can take responsibility for their actions. As Thomas Aquinas wrote in *On the Unity of the Intellect*, the concept of a group mind or will would mean that an individual would “not be the master of his act, nor will any act of his be praiseworthy or blameworthy.” Every individual is responsible for his actions; that’s what gives him rights and obligates him to respect the rights of others.

But what about society? Doesn’t society have rights? Isn’t society responsible for lots of problems? Society is vitally important to individuals. It is to achieve the benefits of interaction with others, as Locke and Hume explained, that individuals enter into society and establish a system of rights. But at the conceptual level, we must understand that society is composed of individuals. It has no independent existence. If 10 people form a society, there are still 10 people, not 11. It’s also hard to define the boundaries of a society; where does one society end and another?

*Continued on page 6*
CHAIRMAN’S MESSAGE

On God and Politics

Last year, I was on a panel discussing a provocative play by Suzanne Bradbeer, The God Game. The play’s protagonist is Tom, an agnostic-leaning-atheist vice-presidential wannabe who is offered a slot on the ticket if he will falsely affirm his belief in God. Like most political candidates, Tom is convinced he can do great things for the country—but first he must lie about one of his deep-rooted convictions. That quandary raises several public-policy questions that might interest Cato readers.

First: Today's voters seem to accept religious differences. We’ve had a Catholic president, a Mormon presidential candidate, and a Jewish vice presidential candidate. Doesn’t that belie the underlying premise of The God Game—that is, voters will reject a candidate who doesn’t profess a religious belief? According to a 2012 Gallup poll, the premise is still correct, despite evidence of increasing religious tolerance. When voters were asked if they would support a well-qualified presidential candidate who was an atheist, 46 percent said “No.” Comparable percentages for African-American, Jewish, gay, or Muslim candidates were 4, 9, 32, and 42, respectively. Apparently, voters care less about race, sexual orientation, and minority religious views (Catholic, Jewish, Mormon) than they do about belief in God. The exception—most likely for geopolitical reasons—is concern about the Muslim faith. Even that aversion is less than voter antipathy toward atheists.

Second: Politicians often dissemble to justify their ends. Obama said we could keep our health plan; Bush II equivocated about Iraq; Clinton lied about Lewinsky, Nixon about Watergate, and Johnson about Vietnam. Why should voters be even more hostile when a candidate prevaricates about religion? My best guess: Religion is a core value. Lying about such a value is more serious and reflects more on the candidate’s character than, say, lying about whether health insurance will be canceled. If the only way to get elected is to falsely claim theism, and if voters discover the deception, the end will not justify the means.

Third: Shouldn’t religion be a private matter—that is, none of the public’s business? Ordinarily, yes, but once a person becomes a candidate for national elective office, his private affairs become public. Voters demand full disclosure about religious beliefs that might have an impact on political decisions. Suppose, for example, a religion disavowed all medical care or endorsed pacifism, jihadism, racism, sexism, or homophobia. Surely, voters should know if a candidate embraces that religion and those beliefs.

Fourth: Are there constitutional issues related to the precondition in The God Game that Tom must profess religious beliefs? After all, Article VI states that “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.” That question reflects a common misconception about the nature and purpose of our Constitution. It has two primary objectives: to secure individual rights and to limit the power of government. The Constitution does not constrain candidates or political parties or voters; it’s a code of conduct for the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. Importantly, in The God Game, there are no actions by government that would affect Tom’s decision to run or not. It’s up to him—shaped of course by his assessment of whether he can win and his willingness to compromise his principles.

Fifth: The Declaration speaks of unalienable rights endowed by our creator. How can that be reconciled with the Constitution’s prohibition on the establishment of religion? There’s no conflict. Several of the Framers were deists—meaning they believed in God as creator, not a God who interacts with mankind on an ongoing basis. For constitutional purposes, however, that belief is irrelevant. Our constitutional framework does not hinge on the question of whether rights come from God, nature, or some other source. The key point is, they do not come from the king. Individuals have rights, independent of and prior to government. Rights come first; then we secure those rights by delegating limited and enumerated powers to a government bound by a written Constitution. That document does not separate God from our lives; but it does separate God from government.

Historically, our political leaders have been theists—not surprisingly, because the overall population is overwhelmingly theist. But even when those leaders have actually been religious figures, such as Rev. Martin Luther King, the public-policy ends they sought and the justifications they advanced were secular, not religious. King did not insist that everyone should be a Christian because Christians believe in racial equality. He insisted that everyone—Christians and non-Christians alike—should believe in racial equality on moral and constitutional grounds.

Robert A. Levy
THE BATTLE AGAINST OBAMACARE

Prior to oral arguments in King v. Burwell in March, the National Law Journal called Cato’s amicus brief, written with constitutional scholar Josh Blackman, its “Brief of the Week.” “Can the executive branch extend tax credits to people who buy insurance through the federal marketplace?” the NLJ asked. Cato’s brief, it said, “argues that the Internal Revenue Service’s decision to expand subsidy eligibility beyond state-run exchanges is part of a dangerous pattern of executive lawmaking.”

In December, Michael Cannon, director of health policy studies at the Institute, was named to American Health Line’s “Top 14 Health Care Movers and Shakers of 2014.” Cannon, along with law professor Jonathan Adler, was the first to criticize the government’s departure from the provisions of the law back in August 2011.

UNDERSTANDING POVERTY

In 2013, Cato published Poverty and Progress: Realities and Myths about Global Poverty by Deepak Lal, the James S. Coleman Professor Emeritus of International Development Studies at UCLA and a senior fellow at the Institute. The title has now been rereleased by Oxford University Press.

Lal argues that economic growth is the only means to alleviate the structural poverty of the Third World. Therefore, ensuring the continued transformation of the world’s poor relies on clarifying the facts and exposing the myths surrounding the challenges of economic development. Poverty and Progress provides an indispensable guide toward achieving that end.

FREE SPEECH AND ALL THAT JAZZ

A new documentary called The Pleasures of Being Out of Step traces the extraordinary life of Nat Hentoff, senior fellow at the Cato Institute and one of the leading defenders of the First Amendment. Hentoff began his career as a jazz critic—soon becoming perhaps the country’s foremost expert—before dedicating the next stage of his life to writing about civil liberties.

In the film, Hentoff elaborates on the connection between his twin passions. “The reason we have jazz,” he says, “the reason we have almost anything worthwhile, is the fact that we’re a free people. And that came about because of James Madison, and those improvisers.”
Presenting his new book, *Saving Congress from Itself*, former U.S. senator and federal judge James L. Buckley argued at a Capitol Hill Briefing that repealing aid-to-state programs would free the federal government to focus on truly national matters.

Weiyang Zhang, an economist at Peking University and China’s leading market liberal, signed copies of *The Logic of the Market* at the Institute in January. First published in China, where it became a bestseller, the book has now been translated and re-issued by Cato, offering Zhang’s unique perspective on the country’s past economic developments and its prospects for further reform in the future.

Ramesh Ponnuru, senior editor at *National Review*, spoke at a health care conference held in the Cato Institute’s George M. Yeager Conference Center in January. Ponnuru argued that the legal case against the Obama administration in *King v. Burwell* is strong, but that if the court splits the difference between conservative and liberal interpretations, it could be the worst of all possible worlds.

Georgetown law professor Randy Barnett, senior fellow at Cato and architect of the constitutional challenge to Obamacare’s individual mandate, spoke at a Cato Policy Forum on *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*. 
ICANN president and CEO FADI CHEHADÉ visited Cato for a luncheon discussion of Internet governance at the end of last year. ICANN—the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers—is a nonprofit that coordinates and maintains the Internet’s domain name system, which makes websites and other online resources easy to find. As the U.S. government moves toward relinquishing the last vestiges of control over ICANN’s functions, Chehadé warned against coming efforts by the United Nations and International Telecommunications Union to take them over. Chehadé fielded questions about the risk that ICANN itself could become an Internet-wide regulatory body.

At a Cato Policy Forum in December, TERENCE KEALEY, vice-chancellor emeritus of the University of Buckingham and an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute, challenged the prevailing wisdom that science and research are public goods and thus need financial support from the government.

In December, JOHN ALLISON (left), president and CEO of the Cato Institute, met with GREG GLASSMAN (center), founder and CEO of the global fitness phenomenon known as CrossFit. Along with BRIAN MULVANEY, director of strategy for CrossFit, they discussed how Glassman built his business based on free-market principles. “I’m a rabid libertarian,” he recently said.
begin? By contrast, it’s easy to see where one individual ends and another begins—an important advantage for social analysis and for allocating rights and duties.

We cannot escape responsibility for our actions by blaming society. Others cannot impose obligations on us by appealing to the alleged rights of society, or of the community. In a free society we have our natural rights and our general obligation to respect the rights of other individuals. Our other obligations are those we choose to assume by contract.

THE NEED FOR COOPERATION

Yet none of this is to defend the sort of “atomistic individualism” that philosophers and professors like to deride. We do live together and work in groups. How one could be an atomistic individual in our complex modern society is not clear: Would that mean eating only what you grow, wearing what you make, living in a house you build for yourself, restricting yourself to natural medicines you extract from plants? Some critics of capitalism or advocates of “back to nature” might endorse such a plan, but few libertarians would want to move to a desert island and renounce the benefits of what Adam Smith called the Great Society, the complex and productive society made possible by social interaction.

Libertarians agree with George Soros that “cooperation is as much a part of the system as competition.” In fact, we consider cooperation so essential to human flourishing that we don’t just want to talk about it; we want to create social institutions that make it possible. That is what property rights, limited government, and the rule of law are all about.

It might be nice if love could bring about all the complex tasks of cooperation and competition by which we achieve our purposes, without all the emphasis on self-interest and individual rights, and many opponents of liberalism have offered an appealing vision of society based on universal benevolence. But as Adam Smith pointed out, “in civilized society [man] stands at all times in need of the cooperation and assistance of great multitudes,” yet in his whole life he could never befriend a small fraction of the number of people whose cooperation he needs. If we depended entirely on benevolence to produce cooperation, we simply couldn’t undertake complex tasks. Reliance on other people’s self-interest, in a system of well-defined property rights and free exchange, is the only way to organize a society more complicated than a small village.

The human need for cooperation has helped to create vast and complex networks of trust, credit, and exchange. For such networks to function, we need several things: a willingness on the part of most people to cooperate with others and to keep their promises, the freedom to refuse to do business with those who refuse to live up to their commitments, a legal system that enforces the fulfillment of contracts, and a market economy that allows us to produce and exchange goods and services on the basis of secure property rights and individual consent.

If we were a species for whom cooperation was not more productive than isolated work, or if we were unable to discern the benefits of cooperation, then we would not only remain isolated and atomistic, but, as Ludwig von Mises explains, “Each man would have been forced to view all other men as his enemies; his craving for the satisfaction of his own appetites would have brought him into an implacable conflict with all his neighbors.” Without the possibility of mutual benefit from cooperation and the division of labor, neither feelings of sympathy and friendship nor the market order itself could arise. Those who say that humans “are made for cooperation, not competition” fail to recognize that the market is cooperation. (Indeed, it is people competing to cooperate better!)

President Obama defends his vision of expansive government by saying, “Imagine if everybody had their own fire service. That would be a hard way to organize fighting fires” and “No single person can ... build the roads and networks and research labs that will bring new jobs.” Well, of course not. No one thinks a single person could. It takes many people, working together. But in most cases it takes businesses, coordinated by prices and markets, to meet our needs and generate progress. We are fed, clothed, sheltered, informed, and entertained by individuals, working together with other individuals, mostly in corporations, with their activities coordinated by the market process. Obama offers a stark vision of a world in which lone individuals have no way to cooperate with others except through the state. Life would indeed be nasty, brutish, and short if it were solitary.

SLAVERY AND RACISM

Of course, as late as Jefferson’s time and beyond, the concept of the individual with full rights did not include all people. Astute observers noted that problem at the time and began to apply the ringing phrases of Locke’s Second Treatise of Government and the Declaration of Independence more fully. The equality and individualism that underlay the emergence of capitalism and republican government naturally led people to start thinking about the rights of women and of slaves, especially African American slaves in the United States. It’s no accident that feminism and abolitionism emerged out of the ferment of the Industrial Revolution and
The equality and individualism that underlay the emergence of republican government naturally led people to start thinking about the rights of women and of slaves.

Racism is the lowest, most cruelly primitive form of collectivism. It is the notion of ascribing moral, social or political significance to a man's genetic lineage ... which means, in practice, that a man is to be judged, not by his own character and actions, but by the characters and actions of a collective of ancestors.

In her works Rand emphasized the importance of individual productive achievement to a sense of efficacy and happiness. She argued, “Like every other form of collectivism, racism is a quest for the unearned. It is a quest for automatic knowledge—for an automatic evaluation of men's characters that bypasses the responsibility of exercising rational or moral judgment—and, above all, a quest for an automatic self-esteem (or pseudo-self-esteem).” That is, some people want to feel good about themselves because they have the same skin color as Leonardo da Vinci or Thomas Edison, rather than because of their individual achievements; and some want to dismiss the achievements of people who are smarter, more productive, more accomplished than themselves, just by uttering a racist epithet.

FEMINISM

The liberal writer Mary Wollstonecraft responded to Edmund Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France by writing A Vindication of the Rights of Men, in which she argued that “the birthright of man... is such a degree of liberty, civil and religious, as is compatible with the liberty of every other individual with whom he is united in a social compact.” Just two years later she published A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, which asked “whether, when men contend for their freedom ... it be not inconsistent and unjust to subjugate women?”

Women involved in the abolitionist movement also took up the feminist banner, grounding their arguments in both cases in the idea of self-ownership, the fundamental right of property in one’s own person.

The Declaration of Sentiments adopted at the historic Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 consciously echoed both the form and the Lockean natural-rights liberalism of the Declaration of Independence, expanding its claims to declare that “all men and women are created equal,” endowed with the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The document notes that women have been “deprived of their most sacred rights” by “unjust laws.” That classically liberal, individualist strain of feminist thought continued into the 20th century, as feminists fought not just for the vote but for sexual freedom, access to birth control, and the right to own property and enter into contracts.

A libertarian must necessarily be a feminist, in the sense of being an advocate of equality under the law for all men and women, though unfortunately many contemporary feminists are far from being libertarians. Libertarianism is a political philosophy, not a complete guide to life. A libertarian man and woman might decide to enter into a traditional working-husband/nonworking-wife marriage, but that would be their voluntary agreement. The only thing libertarianism tells us is that they are political equals with full rights to choose the living arrangement they prefer. In their book Gender Justice, David L. Kirp, Mark G. Yudof, and Marlene Strong Franks
endorsed this libertarian concept of feminism: “It is neither equality as sameness nor equality as differentness that adequately comprehends the issue, but instead the very different concept of equal liberty under the law, rooted in the idea of individual autonomy.”

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Much of the progress of liberty in the United States has involved extending the promises of the Declaration of Independence—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—to more and more people. The emphasis on the individual mind in the Enlightenment, the individualist nature of market capitalism, and the demand for individual rights that inspired the American Revolution naturally led people to think more carefully about the nature of the individual and gradually to recognize that the dignity of individual rights should be extended to all rational individuals. As noted, those intellectual trends quickly led to feminist and abolitionist sentiments. It took longer for people to take seriously the idea of homosexual activity as a matter of personal freedom and to recognize homosexuals as a group of people with rights.

Of course it was classical liberals who first came to that recognition. The pioneering criminologist and reformer Cesare Beccaria in his 1764 book Of Crimes and Punishments argued against legal punishment for sodomy. Montesquieu and Voltaire criticized such criminalization, and Adam Smith said that “sodomy was a thing in itself indifferent.” The first gay journal in the world, Der Eigene, was launched in 1896 by the individualist anarchist Adolf Brand and was published until it was shut down by the Nazis in 1933. Hayek condemned “the treatment of homosexuality” in The Constitution of Liberty, published in 1960, writing that “private practice among adults, however abhorrent it may be to the majority, is not a proper subject for coercive action for a state whose object is to minimize coercion.” The Libertarian Party was the first American political party to endorse gay rights, with its first platform in 1972.

“Libertarianism is the kind of individualism that is appropriate to a free society.”

Historians have often noted the general danger to minorities of a powerful and expansive government. In his book Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality the Yale historian John Boswell wrote that “gay people were actually safer under the [Roman] Republic, before the state had the authority or means to control aspects of the citizenry’s personal lives.” In Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America, John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman note the rise of liberalism in the late 18th century, which brought about in America “an overall decline in state regulation of morality and a shift in concerns from private to public moral transgressions.”

Today libertarians believe, as John Stuart Mill famously wrote, that “Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.” That applies to gay people and to everyone else. Thus libertarians oppose laws criminalizing any consensual sexual activity among adults, in the United States and elsewhere. Many libertarians argue for the complete privatization of marriage, making marriage a matter of individual contract and for some people a religious ceremony, thus removing any need for state recognition of marriages. As long as marriage is licensed by government, however, same-sex couples are entitled to equal legal rights. Libertarians would like to get government out of most areas, but as long as government is involved, it must treat citizens equally.

INDIVIDUALISM TODAY

How fares the individual in America today? Conservatives, liberals, and communitarians all complain at times about “excessive individualism,” generally meaning that Americans seem more interested in their own jobs and families than in the schemes of social planners, pundits, and Washington interest groups. However, the real problem in America today is not an excess of individual freedom but the myriad ways in which government infringes on the rights and dignity of individuals.

We’re constantly exhorted to look at public policy in terms of its effect on groups, not whether it treats individuals according to the principle of equal rights. Interest groups from the American Association of Retired Persons to the National Organization for Women to the Veterans of Foreign Wars to the American Federation of Government Employees encourage us to think of ourselves as members of groups, not as individuals.

While campaigning for president, Barack Obama declared that “our individual salvation depends on collective salvation,” while his Republican opponent John McCain denounced “self-indulgence” and insisted that Americans serve “a national purpose that is greater than our individual interests.” Obama and Senator Elizabeth Warren disparage the idea of individual achievement, asserting that a benevolent government is behind every successful business. New York Times columnists Charles Blow and Ross Douthat deplore the “individualism” of the millennial generation, which they equate not so much with self-reliance and skepticism about institutions as with “selfies.” Fellow columnist David Brooks ups the ante to “hyperindividualism.” Today’s Establishment just doesn’t like the idea that people might make their own choices without central direction.

Libertarians sometimes say “Conservatives want to be your daddy, telling you what to do and what not to do. Liberals want to be your mommy, feeding you, tucking you in, and wiping your nose. Libertarians want to treat you as an adult.” Libertarianism is the kind of individualism that is appropriate to a free society: treating adults as adults, letting them make their own decisions even when they make mistakes, trusting them to find the best solutions for their own lives.
From Executive Overreach to Cato’s Deepbills

At a Cato Policy Perspectives event in Beverly Hills in January, the Institute brought together several prominent experts to discuss a wide variety of current issues. The keynote address was given by Tom Campbell, the dean of Chapman University School of Law and a former five-term U.S. congressman from California. Campbell spoke about executive overreach and the dangers of the imperial presidency. Jim Harper, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, discussed the centrality of information in today’s age and what a lack of government transparency means for freedom. Alex Nowrasteh, an immigration policy analyst at the Institute, explained how the country can maximize the market-liberalizing benefits of immigration reform and minimize the potential costs.

TOM CAMPBELL: I want to talk to you today about the exercise of executive authority, and I want to begin by saying that I’m grateful to President Obama. Were it not for him, I wouldn’t be able to give you all of the following examples of overreach.

President Obama bombed Libya without congressional authorization. He began bombing in Syria in September, with only the claim that ISIS is an offshoot of al Qaeda and hence is covered by the Authorization to Use Military Force resolution after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. The health care law was suspended throughout 2014 by the president alone. He suspended the obligation to carry insurance by anybody who had their insurance coverage changed as a result of his own law. He granted money to states that did not set up their own exchanges, despite the fact that the law says that it’s for states that do set up their own exchanges. He ordered the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) not to deport anyone who has been here five years and anyone who has entered the United States under the age of sixteen as long as they’re not a security risk, despite what the law itself states. The President further ordered DHS not to deport the parents of children who are citizens of legal residents. He ordered DHS to provide work permits to these persons who are not here legally.

The President has also appointed members of the National Labor Relations Board during what he called a “recess of the United States Senate,” even when the Senate itself did not call it a recess. He has instructed the Department of Justice not to prosecute marijuana sales or possession cases in states where state law has permitted such sales. He has refused to print Jerusalem, Israel, as a place of birth on U.S. passports.

Thank you, President Obama, for giving me the ability to speak today.

It’s only fair to put this in context, however. In fact, I want to make the point that President Obama is hardly unique in this regard. Other presidents have exercised a remarkable amount—and even depth—of executive authority in the past. In 1970, President Richard Nixon ordered the Environmental Protection Agency not to release funds that were available and due to New York City. He decided to make the ability to speak today.

In 1951, President Harry S. Truman ordered the United States Army to take possession of the nation’s steel mills. He had no statutory authority at all, but went ahead simply because it was during the Korean War and a strike by the United Steelworkers of America was imminent.

In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt traded U.S. naval ships to Britain in return for leases on British naval bases in Newfoundland and the West Indies. He decided to make the trade when Congress refused to authorize sales to the Allies, giving the British U.S. battleships in a time of great need. In 1939, President Roosevelt expelled United States citizens’ claims against the Soviet Union by executive agreement with the Soviet Union, unilaterally, with no action from Congress.

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson paid for U.S. commercial shipping to be armed against U-boat attacks before World War I, even though Congress had forbidden any bellicose actions.

I want to add to this list a quick vignette of my own. In 1999, President Bill Clinton bombed Belgrade, Yugoslavia, for 79 days without the approval of Congress, in order to help Kosovo, then a breakaway province of Yugoslavia. He claimed not to need the approval of Congress, since he was leading a NATO coalition. Yet the War Powers Resolution states that no troops may be inserted into a situation of hostilities, or where hostilities are reasonably imminent, for more than 60 days without the approval of Congress.

On the 61st day, I went to the House floor and made two motions. The first motion was for U.S. troops to be withdrawn from the theater of operations in and above the airspace of Yugoslavia because there had been no declaration of war or authorization to do so. The
second was for the United States to declare war on Yugoslavia. You choose, I told them, but do your job. You are the members of the United States Congress. You’re obliged to take a stand.

I’ll conclude by saying that in all my years in Congress, the opportunity to bring that vote to the House floor—and then to go to court to uphold the obligation that the members of Congress shall declare war—was the accomplishment of which I’m proudest. I wish the court had taken the lawsuit. I wish the court had done its job. To me, the breach of executive authority stems from two sources. First, presidents exceed their boundaries because Congress lets them, because Congress does not want to take responsibility. Second, the courts abdicate their responsibility to provide a means of resolving disputes between the president and Congress.

In my conclusion on the House floor that evening in 1999, I quoted Abraham Lincoln from 1848, who described war as the “most oppressive of all kingly oppressions,” and saw the requirement that Congress, not the president, declare war as the only way to provide that “no one man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us.”

ALEX NOWRASTEH: Immigration is one of the most complicated and misunderstood topics in public policy, so it’s vital to begin with what the system actually looks like. As law professor Elizabeth Hull wrote, “With only a small degree of hyperbole, the immigration laws have been termed second only to the Internal Revenue Code in complexity.” A lawyer is often the only person who could thread the labyrinth.

As it stands, there are basically four ways to come to the United States legally. One, be closely related to a current American. Two, win a spot in the visa lottery. Three, snare one of the few spots for refugees. And four, be a high-skilled worker. This last one, however, includes a lot of regulatory caveats: the quota is limited to 140,000 workers. Only 7 percent can come from any one country. The company that sponsors each individual has to pay anywhere from $10,000 to $35,000. And there is a host of other hurdles.

The category that’s missing, you’ll notice, is for the low-skilled worker who doesn’t have any family here. There is no green card available to these individuals unless they are related to an American. As a thought experiment, if we were to push this system back in time so that it applied to our ancestors, none of us would be here today, because virtually none of us would fit into any one of these categories.

Why do people want to come here? Economists have a complicated metric they use called a “place premium.” It’s a tool that measures the economic gain for a worker coming to the United States from the particular countries, standardized for worker characteristics such as education. And what it tells us is that a typical Mexican with a high-school degree can expect a threefold increase in wages just by coming to the United States. For Indians and Vietnamese, it’s sixfold. For Haitians, it’s tenfold. The median across the developing world is a fourfold increase in income.

Now, I spend a lot of time talking to college students about these facts. One thing I’ve found is that before they enter the job market, many of them are willing to move across the United States for a 20 percent increase in income. These foreigners are facing magnitudes far greater than that, and yet there is no legal way for them to take advantage of it.

So what does this mean for us? An economist will tell you that productivity is what determines wages. Well, these immigrants are more productive here; that’s why they garner higher wages. Capitalism, free markets, the rule of law, and the security that goes along with that allows these workers to be more productive than they are in their home countries. So when they come here, it’s not redistributive. It’s not like we are making poor countries worse off and the United States better off. We are making the whole world better off because these folks can produce so much more here.

What would happen, then, if we took a radical policy—global open borders—and introduced it tomorrow? What would happen, in other words, if anybody could move to any other country and work legally? The estimate is that global GDP would increase between 50 and 150 percent, which is 35 to 105 trillion dollars in annual extra growth per year. Even in Washington those are big numbers. The present value of this change in policy globally is about 800 trillion dollars in economic growth over the next 20 years or so. It’s an enormous, enormous gain. I’m not proposing open borders, but it’s important to understand the magnitude of the gains from freer movement of people.

I want to talk about two additional topics that are particularly relevant for libertarians. The first is the welfare state. There are a few legal issues that are particularly important here. Under current law, if you are a legal immigrant with a green card, you have no access to means-tested welfare for the first five years that you are here. There are some small ex-
ceptions that vary by state—with, for instance, emergency medical care—but these benefits are nevertheless highly restricted. Illegal immigrants have no access to means-tested welfare in the United States, with the exception of emergency medical care. Nevertheless, when you compare welfare usage between poor immigrants and poor Americans, which is the relevant metric, you find that poor immigrants, even when eligible, vastly underuse compared to poor Americans. So much so, in fact, that if poor Americans used Medicaid at the same rate and the same benefit levels as poor immigrants, the program would be .42 percent smaller. And the real kicker is that there are no real differences in healthcare outcomes.

Despite this, critics of immigration reform worry that immigrants will disproportionately consume public benefits. Instead, they should support legal changes to the welfare that does exist for immigrants. Eliminating eligibility for certain programs would, in the words of Cato’s late chairman emeritus William Niskanen, “build a wall around the welfare state, not around the country.” Cato is the only think tank in Washington, D.C., that has written a detailed policy analysis of how to actually do this. We cite the statutes that need to be changed and specify how to change them. In turn, Senator Rand Paul has taken that and written it into a 15-page piece of legislation, taking all of our suggestions save for one.

In short, I like to use immigration as an argument against welfare, rather than using welfare as an argument against immigration.

JIM HARPER: Sir Francis Bacon is credited with the saying “knowledge is power.” I’m going to talk to you about technology and the conditions that affect your liberty, and I’d like to convince you that information is power. I don’t mean power in the legal sense. Rather, I mean raw power, the capacity to direct or influence the behavior of others: your ability to influence the government, as well as the government’s ability to influence you. How do technological conditions affect these relative powers?

You’re probably aware of many ways the government collects information about you. One of the most obvious is your filings with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These records used to be on paper and were relatively obscure, even to the IRS. But now they’re more available to tax authorities because they’re often in digital formats. This tax information contains very intimate, telling details about your life.

But there are other ways the government keeps track of you. They take a good close look at you when you fly through the Transportation Security Administration. They collect information on your movement through toll roads. More and more of you are tracked as you walk around a city. Facial recognition will be coming to a state before too long where you’ll actually be identified as you pass through urban areas. And of course we all know about recent controversies where the government is collecting information about your communications. Every phone call you make today—who you call, who you receive calls from, how long the call occurred—will be recorded today in databases held by the National Security Agency. That program still continues, years after we’ve learned of its existence.

All these data collections increase the power of government. The government is better positioned to access your assets. It knows more about your relationships, business negotiations, health care, spending, and charitable giving. The government knows where you’ve been and who you’ve been there with.

At the heart of all this are abstraction and digitization. These things have produced a change in the information circumstances from what we used to live in, where information was mostly analog. Today, much of it is digital. I’m going to talk a little bit about abstraction using the illustration of the dog.

Sometime in our primordial history, we determined that the furry four-legged creature in front of us should be called a “dog.” This allowed humans to organize themselves with reference to these animals in wondrous ways compared to the prior status quo. If we project forward a few thousand years, someone came up with the concept of writing, which is more efficient abstraction on the sound “dog.” With writing, you could record the existence of a dog, you could create memories that outlasted the human brain, you could pass along concepts over time and across space without person-to-person communication.

Over the last few hundred years and even in recent decades, abstraction has improved. We’ve gone from speaking and writing to Morse code, first developed in the mid-19th century, to binary code, which is essentially what’s used to communicate on the internet. Now the concept of a dog can be rocketed around the world instantaneously, copied an infinite number of times, and processed over and over again for a variety of uses. This is all good news, but it also means that information about you can be stored, copied, and shared...
This has been called the information age, which by definition means that it is also an age of surveillance. Never in human history have people been more connected than they are today—nor have they been more thoroughly monitored. Over the past year, the disclosures spurred by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden have drawn public attention to the stunning surveillance capabilities of the American intelligence community. Are these tools a vital weapon against criminals and terrorists—or a threat to privacy and freedom?

At the 2014 Cato Institute Surveillance Conference, under the direction of senior fellow Julian Sanchez, a diverse array of journalists, privacy advocates, lawyers, technologists, and intelligence officials came together in an attempt to reconcile the tension between privacy and security. As Sanchez noted in his opening remarks, information has become a central means for protecting ourselves from a multiplicity of threats. “At the same time, the architecture of monitoring ... that we are constructing in order to make ourselves safer threatens to undermine the preconditions of liberal democracy.”

Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY) opened the day with a keynote address, discussing his attempt to cut off funding to two government backdoor searches and ensure that information gathered for national security purposes would not be used by law enforcement in routine investigations. The Massie-Lofgren amendment, which passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support, was nevertheless later stripped from the funding bill to which it was attached. At the conference, Massie called the fight in Congress to rein in these abuses “very frustrating.” “The leadership and all the chairmen of the committees of respective jurisdictions do not want to reform the intelligence community’s activities,” he said. Nevertheless, he vowed to continue to work across party lines to protect the freedoms that lie at the foundation of a liberal democracy.

Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Google, sat down with the Washington Post’s Craig Timberg for a wide-ranging one-on-one conversation. Schmidt—referred to earlier in the day by Sanchez as “the NSA’s best ‘frenemy’”—clarified his company’s unique relationship with the spy agency and reviewed the previous 18 months since the Snowden revelations came to light. In general, he said, the reputation of the American technology industry has been damaged, in particular throughout Europe. Yet the fallout from the leaks hasn’t been all bad. “It’s also caused us to tighten every procedure within our system,” he said. He explained that Google has responded by thoroughly encrypting their internal systems. “It’s generally viewed that this level of encryption is unbreakable in our lifetime by any sets of human beings in any way.” As a result, he said, users are a lot safer.

Other panelists throughout the day included Alex Joel and Robert S. Litt, civil
liberties officer and general counsel with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, respectively, offering a broad range of views.

The conference ended with an engaging surprise interview over Skype with NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. In a remote discussion with Sanchez and ProPublica's Julia Angwin, Snowden said that he was “broadly satisfied” with the reaction to his disclosures. “We have seen a change in public opinion, in public awareness. We have seen an increased openness and innovative spirit in government—not by choice, but by necessity,” he said. But “the real change that’s happening is actually occurring outside of the courts, outside of Congress, outside of the executive agencies entirely.” The real change, Snowden said, can be found in “the fabric of the internet,” as a result of engineers, technologists, and academics worldwide coming together to secure their own technologies and counteract the unprecedented growth of government surveillance. In a poll by the Centre for International Governance Innovation, they found that of those aware of Edward Snowden, 39 percent have taken steps to protect their online security—which, as Snowden pointed out, amounts to over 700 million people worldwide.

Throughout the day, various experts noted that the growth of government surveillance is by no means restricted to spies. Even ordinary law enforcement agencies increasingly employ sophisticated tracking technologies, from face recognition software to “Stingray” devices that can locate suspects by sniffing out their cellular phone signals. “It’s often hard to keep track of how tracked we are,” Sanchez concluded. As such, it’s important to think very carefully about how this unprecedented aggregation of information can be made compatible with a free society.

Continued from page 11

nearly infinitely. And that makes a difference to your liberty.

Since the advent of digitization, the government’s power to abstract information about you and your life—to acquire, process, hold, and reuse that information—has grown dramatically. As such, the power of governments over individuals and their capacity to influence each of our lives has also grown dramatically. What this means is that under bad circumstances we could lose our freedoms very quickly due to this relative power dynamic.

Now let’s see how much power you have, based on the amount of information you have about government. Does anyone know the significance of H.R. 26? It was the first law that the new 114th Congress passed. It’s now public law 114-1, also known as the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015. If you didn’t know that this law was passed, that’s a function of the fact that we have little access to information about what the government is doing.

Now compare this with information about the other aspects of your life. A lot of you probably know that the Santa Ana winds are predicted later today. I’m sure many of you now know what the pressure per square inch of an NFL football is supposed to be. And of course people are often very familiar with the detailed information on their investments each day. But it’s not the same with politics. Over time, we’re losing power vis-à-vis the government.

At Cato we’re trying to rectify this imbalance, and one of the ways we’re doing so is through our Deepbills project. In order to offer more information about the government’s deliberations, we’ve gathered detailed, accessible versions of legislation. We’ve annotated them in order to make key elements of their content easily readable by computer. Cato’s data is now being used by the *New York Times* to flesh out information about the legislation it publishes on its website. Cornell Law’s Legal Information Institute also employs the Institute’s Deepbills data, helping to inform its 26 million yearly visitors about what Congress is doing. Everyone from Wikipedia to GovTrack, which is the leading private transparency site, uses our data. As such, Americans now have better access to information about who is spending their money.

It’s a little shocking that we didn’t have this information accessible before. The government has been in the dark ages. But with Cato’s work, my hope is that as our access to information catches up, our relative power vis-à-vis government organizations catches up as well—and ultimately liberty flourishes.
At a Cato forum for his new book, *The Moral Arc: How Science and Reason Lead Humanity toward Truth, Justice, and Freedom*, author Michael Shermer (at podium) argued that the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment led theorists to apply the scientific way of thinking, which in turn made people—and society as a whole—more moral. Shermer is the founding publisher of *Skeptic* magazine and the author of 10 other books on the evolution of human beliefs and behavior.

In January, the Institute held the Latin American version of its premier educational event, Cato University, in Heredia, Costa Rica, with 60 students and young professionals from 11 countries attending. LEFT: Participants were eager to engage in each day’s events, which featured lectures from renowned classical liberal scholars. ABOVE RIGHT: MANUEL HINDS, El Salvador’s former minister of finance, discussed his country’s experience with dollarization. BELOW RIGHT: MAURICIO ROJAS, a former member of parliament in Sweden, outlined his new book on the crisis of that country’s welfare state. More than 800 Latin American students have participated in these events since 2009.
Author Brian Aitken recounted the nightmare that ensued when he ran afoul of New Jersey’s draconian gun laws in 2009, raising troubling questions about government overreach.

B RANDON GARRETT, a University of Virginia law professor, revealed how Justice Department lawyers exact billions of dollars from corporate defendants without ever going to court.
Over the last five decades, central banks have failed to deliver both reliably sound money and smoother real growth. Instead, chronic inflation peaked in the Great Inflation of the late 1960s, while more recently a series of booms and busts led to the Great Recession of 2007. In response to this poor performance, however, many venerable ideas for monetary reform have been rediscovered.

In *Renewing the Search for a Monetary Constitution*, published in February by the Cato Institute, leading scholars weigh in on the debate over creating constitutional provisions that prohibit government interference with money versus those that empower it. Edited by Lawrence H. White of the Cato Institute and Victor J. Vanberg and Ekkehard A. Köhler of the Eucken Institute, this volume commemorates the 50th anniversary of economist Leland Yeager’s *In Search of a Monetary Constitution*, a largely overlooked work that has proven to be remarkably prescient. Yeager argued in favor of a set of enforced constraints on the creation of money by government. This collection, like its earlier counterpart, takes a broad view, aiming to revitalize public discussion of constitutional monetary reform by offering a range of different views. The time is ripe to rethink monetary arrangements rather than, as White writes, “tinkering with the instruction sets for status quo institutions.”

The late Nobel laureate James Buchanan believed that money is a special economic good that needs special constitutional rules. He granted that monetary arrangements can evolve spontaneously within a system of property rights, but argued that the evolved outcome wouldn’t generally be efficient. Money has certain aspects of a public good, he thought, which means that a role for the state is warranted—but only a limited role.

In his chapter, Buchanan endorses a constitutional mandate for government to stabilize the purchasing power of the monetary unit.

As Cato senior fellow Gerald P. O’Driscoll notes, the economist Ludwig von Mises argued that the concept of preserving sound money from a government’s temptation to use inflationary finance “belongs in the same class with political constitutions and bills of rights.” At the same time, the track record of the Federal Reserve’s monetary policies over its hundred-year history, judged by inflation, price-level unpredictability, and real output variability, has been “unenviable” at best. Central bank histories around the world are equally or even more regrettable than the Fed’s. Prompted by these poor records, O’Driscoll organizes his arguments around two questions: Can central banks be constrained to a beneficial role, or must they be abolished? And can a bad system be made better, or do we need wholesale replacement?

One new possibility for superseding central-bank money involves the gradual replacement by private alternatives that begin as parallel standards and win an increasingly larger market share. Kevin Dowd, a professor of finance and economics at Durham University and an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute, gives a fascinating account of three such alternatives—the Liberty Dollar, E-gold, and Bitcoin—that achieved loyal clienteles, only to face legal obstacles thrown up by the U.S. federal government. The reforms necessary to unleash the potential of these new innovations are to remove all discriminatory legal restrictions that stack the deck in favor of status quo banks.

The likelihood of returning to a commodity standard is surely lower today than in the past, when, after a wartime suspension, a consensus was commonly in its favor. But low likelihood can be ascribed to any proposal other than retaining the status quo. The real question is what changes will lead to the best monetary regime. “If otherwise desirable and feasible, no reform must remain ‘politically unrealistic,’” Yeager wrote in the introduction to his 1962 volume, “except as thinking makes it so.” This remains as true today as it did back then.

VISIT STORE.CATO.ORG, AMAZON, OR BOOKSTORES NATIONWIDE TO GET YOUR COPY OF RENEWING THE SEARCH FOR A MONETARY CONSTITUTION TODAY.
The Great Recession ended over five years ago, yet the U.S. economy remains sluggish. At a Cato Institute Conference, The Future of U.S. Economic Growth, the nation's top economists and leading policy experts explored what policy changes might be needed to reverse the growth slowdown. “Given that policy change is difficult and time-consuming, it’s inevitable that we can only try a limited number of reforms,” Brink Lindsey, Cato’s vice president for research, said in his opening remarks. “So of all the countless levers we could be pulling, which offer the biggest bang for the buck?”

Erik Brynjolfsson of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology focused on the future of innovation: Have the good ideas already been used up or is there a bright future ahead? He challenged the idea that the country has passed over a great divide where the most useful inventions—from the telephone to the automobile—have already been thought of. “There’s a long tradition of people being pessimistic, especially in the throes of an economic downturn,” he said. “The nice thing is that we know what happened after these predictions of stagnation: we had some of the best decades of economic growth and technological progress in human history.”

Edmund Phelps, a Nobel laureate at Columbia University, explained that a significant factor behind the innovation drop-off is cultural. He pointed, for instance, to the rise of materialism. “Kids are being brought up to seek the highest paycheck consistent with job security,” he said. “This has a very direct effect on the supply of innovation. If money is the only metric that matters—if wealth and wealth inequality become the focus in society, rather than adventure and exploration and creativity—then there’s not going to be very much innovative activity.”

Edward Glaeser of Harvard University said that his prescription for reform is to eliminate most land-use powers of local governments throughout the country. In the 1960s, he said, developers had an easy time doing business in America. Now, however, housing supply in the nation’s most productive areas is being prevented by various regulatory barriers. This needs to change if the country is going to harness its potential.

Other speakers throughout the day included Dale Jorgenson of Harvard University, Robert Gordon of Northwestern University, and Tyler Cowen of George Mason University.

In conjunction with the conference, Cato organized a special online forum of essays that also explore the possible avenues for pro-growth policy reforms. Peter Van Doren, a Cato senior fellow and editor of Regulation magazine, examined what factors combine to produce economic output and found little support that “simple changes” would improve productivity. So what advice does he give? “Of the policies I examined, zoning, low-income college student assistance, and patent reform seem to offer the most promising, though limited, gains.”

The online forum features an eclectic group of contributors from across the ideological spectrum in order to stimulate creative thinking about reform alternatives. Other contributors include Ramesh Ponnuru of National Review, Jonathan Rauch of the Brookings Institution, Susan Dudley of George Washington University, and Michael Mandel of the Progressive Policy Institute.

EACH OF THE PRESENTATIONS FROM THIS CONFERENCE, AS WELL AS A LINK TO THE ESSAYS FROM THE ONLINE FORUM, CAN BE VIEWED ONLINE AT WWW.CATO.ORG/EVENTS/ARCHIVES.
Fannie, Freddie, and Future Bailouts

There was perhaps no issue of greater importance to the financial regulatory reforms of 2010 than the resolution, without taxpayer assistance, of large financial institutions. The rescue of firms such as AIG shocked the public conscience and provided the political force behind the passage of the Dodd-Frank Act. Such is reflected in the fact that Titles I and II of Dodd-Frank relate to the identification and resolution of large financial entities. How the tools established in Titles I and II are implemented are paramount to the success of Dodd-Frank. In “The Resolution of Systematically Important Financial Institutions: Lessons from Fannie and Freddie” (Working Paper no. 25), Mark Calabria, director of financial regulation studies at the Cato Institute, attempts to gauge the likely success of these tools via the lens of similar tools created for the resolution of the housing government sponsored enterprises (GSEs), Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Calabria also provides some additional legislative history of the resolution mechanisms contained in the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA), which established a resolution framework for the GSEs similar to that ultimately created in Title II of Dodd-Frank. As such, he adds to the current debate over the resolution of systemically important financial institutions by revisiting how such issues were debated and agreed upon in HERA. “The neglect of HERA’s tools and the likely similar neglect of Dodd-Frank’s suggest a much deeper reform of our financial regulatory system is in order,” Calabria concludes.

INFORMAL LAND CLAIMS

Informal land tenure continues to be the norm in developing countries despite billions spent on land administration and reform programs in the last 20 years. But the problem goes deeper than insufficient funding or poorly executed projects, write Peter F. Schaefer and Clayton Schaefer of Globaland Group, in “An Innovative Approach to Land Registration in the Developing World” (Policy Analysis no. 769). “By strengthening public land registry institutions that work on behalf of authoritarian or predatory governments, reform programs, often financed by Western aid agencies and intended to improve property protections for smallholders, may have actually enhanced the ability of elites to cap-

C A T O S T U D I E S
tured informal property or delay formalization for their own political or financial benefit,” they write. This paper explains how inexpensive hand-held devices, satellite imagery, and informal online land registries can be used by communities to identify and settle property claims through mutual verification of rights among neighbors. Such documentation of land claims is not costly or complex and is thus accessible even to the poorest communities around the globe. Neither would such a process be controversial for those involved. The vast majority of informal land claims are well established and undisputed within the communities and an informal mapping and registration process would simply make a record of existing property patterns. Such informal communities and support organizations can and should engage in self-registration of property and transactions, in essence bypassing incompetent, inefficient, or hostile land registry bureaucracies, until they reach the critical mass necessary to achieve formal recognition of their land rights.

REGULATING RIDESHARING

Rideshare companies Uber and Lyft are facing predictable complaints as they continue to grow, many of which concern safety. Ridesharing safety worries relate to the well-being of drivers, passengers, and third parties. “In each of these cases there is little evidence that the sharing economy services are more dangerous than traditional taxis,” writes Matthew Feeney, a policy analyst at the Cato Institute, in “Is Ridesharing Safe?” (Policy Analysis no. 767). In fact, the ridesharing business model offers big safety advantages as far as drivers are concerned. In particular, ridesharing’s cash-free transactions and self-identified customers substantially mitigate one of the worst risks associated with traditional taxis: the risk of violent crime. An analysis of the safety regulations governing vehicles for hire does not suggest that ridesharing companies ought to be more strictly regulated. “It does highlight, however, that in many parts of the country lawmakers and regulators have not adequately adapted to the rise of ridesharing, which fits awkwardly into existing regulatory frameworks governing taxis,” Feeney adds. There will be many real and substantive issues to sort out as the rideshare industry continues to develop. In particular, heavily regulated taxi drivers have a valid point when they complain that they have to compete on an unlevel playing field with less regulated rideshare companies. But, as Feeney concludes, the appropriate response to this problem is to rationalize and modernize the outdated and heavy-handed restrictions on taxis—not to extend those restrictions to ridesharing.

MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT UNGOVERNED SPACES

Scholars and policymakers are worried about “ungoverned spaces”—areas of limited or anomalous government control inside otherwise functional states. “Ungoverned spaces are the latest incarnation of persistent concerns about governance,” writes Jennifer Keister, a former Cato visiting research fellow, in “The Illusion of Chaos: Why Ungoverned Spaces Aren’t Ungoverned, and Why That Matters” (Policy Analysis no. 766). The concern is that poorly governed areas will spawn instability or shelter violent nonstate actors who can launch attacks, interdict access to fossil fuels and transit lanes, or pursue criminal activities. Policies to mitigate these risks are broadly based in the belief that bringing ungoverned spaces more fully under states’ control is both possible and beneficial. While the United States has undertaken direct action against some violent nonstate actors in ungoverned spaces, most policies have aimed to encourage host states to more fully integrate these areas. Ungoverned spaces exist because integrating them offers few benefits and may pose high costs to host regimes. “Moreover, the term ‘ungoverned spaces’ is a misnomer—these areas are not ungoverned,” Keister writes. They are simply ruled by subnational authorities. Failure to understand why ungoverned spaces exist and persist may lead policymakers to underestimate the costs of integrating them. Keister concludes that policymakers should be realistic about the limited problems posed by ungoverned spaces, the political and financial costs of integration policies, the need to prioritize goals, and the intelligence requirements needed to make fine-grained assessments.
“To Be Governed…”

**YA THINK?**
“It is not the right time for Vermont” to pass a single-payer system, [Gov Peter] Shumlin acknowledged in a public statement ending his signature initiative. He concluded the 11.5 percent payroll assessments on businesses and sliding premiums up to 9.5 percent of individuals’ income “might hurt our economy.”
— POLITICO, 12/20/2014

**GRAPPLE WITH THE PROBLEM OF MORE COMPETITION AND BETTER SERVICE**
Legislators also will debate myriad less-partisan issues that have arisen as technology advances, including cybersecurity policies, regulations on electronic cigarettes and ride-sharing services. . . . Several states are grappling with the rise of ride-sharing services, such as Uber, Lyft and Sidecar.
— WASHINGTON POST, 01/03/2015

**AND HOW WILL THAT INCREASE JOBS?**
Many Spaniards are . . . frustrated that while the economy here is growing, unemployment still tops 23 percent and double that for youth. Polls show voters are switching to Podemos. It promises to raise the minimum wage, hike taxes on the rich and re-evaluate whether Spain should pay its debts.
— NPR, 01/28/2015

**DRACONIAN CUTS**
[Maryland Gov. Larry] Hogan is slashing those [state education] payments by half, which will mean cuts approaching 1 percent to the school budgets of both Montgomery and Prince George’s counties.
— WASHINGTON POST, 01/22/2015

**AND THE MONEY KEEPS ROLLING OUT**
State and local governments spent $118.15 billion more than they collected between 2007 and 2012. Total expenditures during that period increased by 18.2 percent, from $2.7 trillion to $3.2 trillion, while total revenue declined 3.2 percent over the same five-year period, from $3.1 trillion to $3.0 trillion.
— WASHINGTON POST, 01/04/2015

**EXCEPT FOR, YOU KNOW, THE ONES THAT PASSED THE FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT AND THE INCOME TAX AND THE IRAQ WAR**
This . . . was, by just about every measure, the worst Congress ever.
According to a tally by the Library of Congress, 296 bills were presented to the president by this Congress—nearly the same as the 284 presented by the previous Congress, the fewest of any Congress since the counts began in the 1940s.
— DANA MILBANK, WASHINGTON POST, 12/19/2014

**IT’S NOT EASY FOR INCUMBENTS TO LOSE**
Joseph D. Morrissey was reelected Tuesday to the House of Delegates. . . . Voters were apparently unmoved by Morrissey’s plea last month on a misdemeanor charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor, which stemmed from his relationship with a 17-year-old receptionist at his law office. . . . After entering his guilty plea last month, Morrissey was sentenced to six months in jail. . . . results weren’t even final when he was required to report back to jail for the night.
— WASHINGTON POST, 01/13/2015

**FREE HEALTH CARE IS GREAT, WHEN YOU CAN GET IT**
A hospital in North Idaho is marketing itself to Canadian tourists — medical tourists, that is. . . . Northwest Specialty Hospital isn’t the only hospital near the border trying to get in on the multi-billion dollar international medical tourism business. A group in Washington is trying to make Seattle a destination.
U.S. hospitals may not have the prices that places like Costa Rica, Thailand and Mexico can offer. But what they do have, at least in the eyes of Canadians, is speediness.
Valorie Crooks, a health geographer at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, said Canadians are often heading across the border to avoid the wait lists of their national healthcare system.
— NW NEWS NETWORK, 11/28/2014

**GOVERNMENT LAGGING BEHIND SOCIAL CHANGE**
A year ago, same-sex marriage was legal in 18 states and Washington, D.C. Now that number is up to 35 states, and there’s a strong possibility that remaining bans will go before the Supreme Court in the year ahead. . . . “What surprised me was how welcoming everyone I met in Tennessee was, and how they themselves respected our marriage,” Kostura says. “Really at this point, it’s only been the state who hasn’t recognized our marriage.”
— NPR, 12/29/2014