

People's Audit Daily

The Top 10 Libertarians

Dan Mitchell

July 23, 2017

I'm in Las Vegas for FreedomFest, which is sort of like summer camp for libertarians, small-government conservatives, and others who don't like a bloated and intrusive state.

I'll be talking about tax reform, the sharing economy, and strategies to constrain big government.

One of the features of this 10th-anniversary meeting of FreedomFest is that the world's top-100 libertarians will be feted. You can see the entire list at *NewsMax*, but here's the top 10. A very impressive collection.

1. **Ron Paul** — Perhaps no one has done more to bring the libertarian platform into the national spotlight than Ron Paul, the former United States Representative from Texas and three-time presidential candidate. He has also authored several books of libertarian philosophy on economics, education, foreign policy, and freedom.
2. **Rand Paul** — The Republican Kentucky junior senator and son of Ron Paul has been credited with bringing libertarianism into the mainstream by advancing the movement's torch lit by his father. He has been one of the loudest voices against government overreach in Washington, particularly on issues of revenue, privacy, and justice.
3. **Thomas Sowell** — The Hoover Institution's Rose and Milton Friedman Senior Fellow on Public Policy at Stanford University is a writer of distinction having authored nearly three dozen books on economics, social policy, and race, and his works have been collected in several others. Sowell is a National Humanities Medal winner for his libertarian-conservative writings and a longtime syndicated columnist, until his column was retired last year.
4. **John Stossel** — The longtime network and cable newsman has unpacked emerging stories with a libertarian viewpoint on his way to 19 Emmy awards and several best-selling books. Stossel is also a syndicated columnist and, as of this year, a contributor to the Reason Foundation and ReasonTV.
5. **Charles Koch** — The Koch Industries CEO is one of the world's wealthiest people and a fervent political donor and philanthropist who uses his influence to promote libertarian ideals. Charles Koch is also a co-founder of the Cato Institute, an influential, liberty-minded think tank.
6. **David Koch** — Executive vice president and co-owner of Koch Industries, David Koch, like his brother, is a generous benefactor and patron of the arts. In 1980, he was the Libertarian Party's candidate for vice president.
7. **Gary Johnson** — The former New Mexico governor is the most recent presidential hopeful from the Libertarian Party, and one of the most successful third-party candidates to date. Johnson garnered nearly 5 million votes, almost reaching the 5-percent threshold that would have given the Libertarian Party greater federal election funds.
8. **Judge Andrew Napolitano** — A former private-practice lawyer, law professor, and youngest-ever life-tenured New Jersey Superior Court judge, Napolitano has been Fox News' senior judicial analyst since 1998 and is a best-selling author.
9. **Ed Crane** — A former national chairman of the Libertarian Party, Crane is the co-founder and president emeritus of the Cato Institute, a public policy organization "dedicated to the principles of individual liberty, limited government, free markets and peace."
10. **Steve Forbes** — The chairman and editor-in-chief of Forbes has been a Republican presidential candidate twice. Forbes was also a pioneer in running on a flat-tax platform and a return to the gold standard.

You'll notice that Cato's founder and former president is in the Top 10, but he's not the only representative from the organization.

The Cato Institute is justly recognized for being a principled and effective organization.

So it's no surprise that several of us are listed in the Top 100.

Cato Institute well represented in the Top 100

9. **Ed Crane** — A former national chairman of the Libertarian Party, Crane is the co-founder and president emeritus of the Cato Institute, a public policy organization “dedicated to the principles of individual liberty, limited government, free markets and peace.”
15. **David Boaz** — The executive vice president and longtime member of the Cato Institute has been credited as a significant influence in the libertarian movement. Among his several books on the subject, “The Libertarian Mind” is considered a must-read work and recommended by other libertarians on this list.
16. **John Allison** — The former CEO of the Cato Institute transformed BB&T into the largest bank in the South without investing in sub-prime mortgages during the financial crisis. He required all his executives to read “Atlas Shrugged.” The Trump administration reportedly considered Allison a potential nominee for Treasury secretary.
36. **José Piñera** — A distinguished senior fellow at Cato Institute, Piñera is a former minister of Labor and Social Security in Chile and is credited with privatizing the country’s social security. He founded the World Pension Revolution, which provided workers and governments worldwide social security solutions based on the model he built in Chile.
38. **Daniel Mitchell** — Sought out worldwide as an expert on fiscal policy and tax reform, Mitchell is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. His writings frequently appear in prestigious national publications such as The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and Investor’s Business Daily.
58. **Tom Palmer** — As vice president of International Programs at the nonprofit Atlas Network, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, and director of Cato University, Palmer works to advance libertarian ideals and philosophy worldwide. He is the author of many works, including “Realizing Freedom: Libertarian Theory, History, and Practice,” a collection of his past writings. He has also edited many collections of essays and op-eds from notable libertarians.
76. **Jeffrey A. Miron** — The Harvard economist directs economic studies at the Cato Institute. Miron teaches a course at Harvard on libertarianism, focusing on the consequences of criminalizing drugs and other topics.

I’m honored to be on the list, though I wonder if I’m there because I’m noisy rather than competent. That being said, given the expansion of government under both Bush and Obama, I guess nobody would be on the list if it was based on achievements. We obviously need to do a better job as a movement.

Daniel J. Mitchell is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute who specializes in fiscal policy, particularly tax reform, international tax competition, and the economic burden of government spending.