

Too Liberal For Cato?

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by Chris Bodenner

Weigel [wonders](#) why Brink Lindsey and Will Wilkinson are both suddenly [leaving](#) the libertarian think tank:

[Y]ou have to struggle not to see a political context to this. Lindsey and Wilkinson are among the Cato scholars who most often find common cause with liberals. In 2006, after the GOP lost Congress, Lindsey [coined the term](#) "Liberalartarians" to suggest that Libertarians and liberals could work together outside of the conservative movement. Shortly after this, he launched a dinner series where liberals and Libertarians met to discuss big ideas. (Disclosure: I attended some of these dinners.) In 2009 and 2010, as the libertarian movement moved back into the right's fold, Lindsey remained iconoclastic—just last month [he penned a rare](#), biting criticism of *The Battle*, a book by AEI President Arthur Brooks which argues that economic theory is at the center of a new American culture war.

Did any of this play a role in the departure of Lindsey and Wilkinson? I've asked Lindsey and Wilkinson, and Wilkinson has declined to talk about it, which makes perfect sense. But I'm noticing Libertarians on Twitter starting to deride this move and intimate that Cato is enforcing a sort of orthodoxy. (The title of Wilkinson's kiss-off post, "[The Liberalartarian Diaspora](#)," certainly hints at something.)

With Lindsey and Wilkinson out, perhaps there's a chance for Nick Newcomen, the Rand fan who [drove](#) 12,000 miles with GPS tracking "pen" to scrawl the message above? If nothing else, his ideological chops are unassailable.