

J. Bradford DeLong's Grasping Reality with All Eight Tentacles

The Semi-Daily Journal of an Economist: A Fair, Balanced, Reality-Based, and Multi-Appendaged Look at the World
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October 30, 2009

The Cato Institute Needs to Exercise Some Quality Control

As long as it employs [utter fools like Chris Edwards](#), the smart people who work there will have a hard time being taken seriously.

Just saying...

Think about it. Think hard about it.

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Brad DeLong on October 30, 2009 at 03:31 PM in [Moral Responsibility](#), [Utter Stupidity](#) | [Permalink](#)

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[Verbal](#) said...

No, no. Cato is a libertarian organization -- there's no need for a centralized, authoritarian, SOCIALIST approach to quality control! The unfettered marketplace of ideas will spontaneously create non-lying, non-stupid commentators.

[Reply October 30, 2009 at 03:58 PM](#)

rea said...

"The unfettered marketplace of ideas will spontaneously create non-lying, non-stupid commentators."

Thus Chris Edwards single-handedly refutes libertarianism.

[Reply October 30, 2009 at 04:09 PM](#)

howard said...

prof, it's too late now for cato: let's see if any of the smart ones there are willing to leave. one doubts they want to test the market's absorptive capacity right now.

Reply October 30, 2009 at 04:20 PM

DrDick said...

I was unaware that there were any intelligent people working at the Cato Institution.

Reply October 30, 2009 at 04:23 PM

zeno2vonnegut said...

But The News Hour with Jim Lehrer used Chris and his "federal stimulus crowds out private investment" thesis on their he said/she said feature about the economy so he's delivering for Cato.

Reply October 30, 2009 at 06:38 PM

Barry said...

The basic rule of thumb for CATO (in fact, the iron law), is that they're good to great on human rights, , but oxygen thieves on economics.

Reply October 30, 2009 at 07:38 PM

Mark A. Sadowski said in reply to DrDick...

My impression is that if they show any signs of intelligence they are soon shown the door.

Reply October 30, 2009 at 08:33 PM

zeno2vonnegut said...

Is the mission of Cato scholarship or advocacy? Does their employment policy match their goal?

Reply October 30, 2009 at 10:51 PM

save_the_rustbelt said...

Are we arguing his facts or his conclusions? Or both?

Reply October 31, 2009 at 07:38 AM

jonathan said...

To quote, "I suspect that many firms are scared to death of higher taxes, inflation, health care mandates, increased labor regulation, and other profit-killers coming down the road from Washington. That is speculation, but I haven't heard a better explanation of the death of private investment in America." He hasn't heard a better explanation. I believe the name for that is Rip Van Winkle Syndrome because he's clearly been asleep for the past few years. Either that or Selective Hearing Disorder. While commonly found in children - who can only hear a few words of what their parents say - it also occurs in people so wedded to their political biases that they lose the thread of reason. The former occurrence is of course treatable by age, while the latter is terminal.

Reply October 31, 2009 at 07:40 AM

DrDick said in reply to Mark A. Sadowski...

That has been my take as well.

Reply October 31, 2009 at 11:05 AM

DrDick said in reply to zeno2vonnegut...

Rightwing, pro-corporatist propaganda is their mission.

Reply October 31, 2009 at 11:06 AM

zeno2vonnegut said in reply to DrDick...

Agreed. I'll hazard a guess that much less of their funding comes from ACLUish individual rights supporters than from the Dick Armey breed of "muscular capitalists".

Reply October 31, 2009 at 11:26 AM

Maynard Handley said...

"the smart people who work there will have a hard time being taken seriously."

The smart people (supposedly Brink Lindsey is one) who work there ALREADY have a hard time being taken seriously, at least by me.

I treat them the same way I treat Heritage or Hoover or AEI --- the world is full of people who want my time, and I'm not going to waste it on someone who is almost certainly a nut, a liar, or both, when I could be listening to a wide array of basically honest, and undoubtedly smart, academics.

[Reply October 31, 2009 at 12:05 PM](#)

elliottg said...

I don't think so (re: quality control). The Cato Institute's purpose is to exercise message control. Chris Edwards pushes that agenda forward and any credible argument by the non-crazy, non-stupid who work there that don't contradict the basic requirement is welcome. And why should anyone at Cato care; they all get paid and if you deem them non-stupid, non-crazy then you still pay attention. Until you dismiss everything anyone at Cato writes or says with a simple "I didn't bother to read it; he/she works at Cato" then the incentives will not be right.

[Reply October 31, 2009 at 12:09 PM](#)

leo said...

I heard him last night on the NewsHour. It was painful.

[Reply October 31, 2009 at 01:11 PM](#)

David said...

Academia has plenty of openings for people who advocate free markets. It's likely only the worst end up at places like Cato.

[Reply October 31, 2009 at 05:01 PM](#)

David said...

Let me add that finance is also quite lucrative for those so inclined.

[Reply October 31, 2009 at 05:02 PM](#)

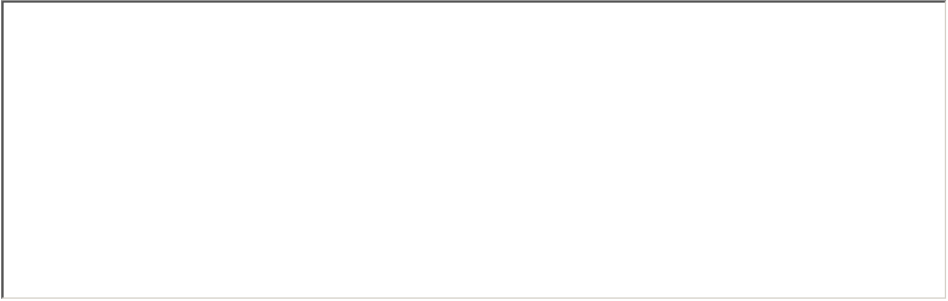
Mark A. Sadowski said...

David,

Some of us still have scruples. Finance is for those who have no morals.

[Reply October 31, 2009 at 06:12 PM](#)

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