



# SHOW-ME newsletter

## NEXT GEN VOICES RECEPTION FEATURES NEW MEDIA EXPERTS

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“New media *is* advancing liberty!” That is the opinion of influential blogger Jim Hoft, founder and editor of the popular online *Gateway Pundit*. Hoft was a special guest — along with Stacy Washington, of *StacyOnTheRight.com*, and Amy Lutz, of the *College Conservative*, — at the Show-Me Institute’s “Next Gen Voices” reception on May 1.

The panelists led a lively discussion about leveraging new media in the fight for liberty, giving the attendees their perspectives on strategies and practical tips for effectively navigating the complex waters of today’s media world.

Our panelists also highlighted some of the successes won for liberty through effective use of new media. Washington spoke about conservative activists forcing the mainstream media to cover previously ignored stories by taking to Twitter in unison to air their demands for nationwide coverage. Lutz echoed those sentiments, describing the many times she has observed the power of simple Facebook images going “viral” and building national momentum for public policy issues. The Show-Me Institute won praise from Hoft for our social media outreach on Facebook and Twitter.



In addition, guests had the chance to hear from Show-Me Institute President Rex Sinquefield, who discussed the threat that constant expansion of big government poses, especially to the livelihood of the younger generations. Show-Me Institute Executive Director Brenda Talent gave guests an overview of the Institute’s work and invited them to consider investing their resources in the fight for liberty in Missouri.

We hope that the advice and knowledge the panelists provided will empower the attendees to make an impact for liberty in their own sphere of influence, whether it is through Facebook, Twitter, or even starting their own blog.

The Show-Me Institute’s “Next Gen” events are designed for young professionals. These receptions give up-and-coming community leaders the chance to network with each other, participate in discussions about relevant public policy issues, and learn more about the work of the Show-Me Institute. All proceeds from these events benefit the efforts of the Show-Me Institute to advance market solutions for Missouri public policy.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When the strong and independent citizens of Missouri are given freedom, they will carry our state to new heights of success and innovation.

When unhindered by bureaucratic red tape and regulation, Missourians are resilient and resourceful. The industrious and selfless citizens of our state roll up their sleeves, go to work, create, and build. Unfortunately, too many of our elected leaders in Jefferson City lack faith in our fellow citizens and mistakenly think that more government and increased regulation are the answer.

We can rebuild Missouri's economy and provide a thriving, vibrant future for ourselves and loved ones. Here are three main issues in our sights to accomplish that:

### Tax Reform

Individuals can invest their money to create economic prosperity better than government taxing and spending on Missourians' behalf. But our government is getting in the way, picking winners and losers among businesses through the use of tax credits and subsidies, and we are footing the bill.

We believe in tax relief for all Missourians — not just a select few. We are pushing forward innovative research and sound tax policy ideas that will once again make Missouri a competitive state.

We propose:

- eliminating the state income tax on all individuals, which will spark economic growth;
- eliminating the corporate income tax by getting rid of economic development tax credits that unfairly favor some businesses over others and cost the state money; and
- eliminating taxes on pass-through entities which stifle investment and economic growth.

### Health Care Reform

We have exposed why Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon's insistence on expanding Medicaid in our state and accepting ObamaCare subsidies from the federal government is bad business and bad government. Treating these subsidies as "free money" and increasing our state's already bloated entitlement program will lead to unmanageable debts for our children and grandchildren.

We are a leading voice in providing a viable alternative to ObamaCare, supporting free-market reforms such as:

- health savings accounts so that individuals can keep and manage their health care dollars;
- interstate competition in health insurance, so that market forces can get the cost of insurance and care down; and
- the extension of tax benefits to individual insurance purchasers that employers who provide health benefits already receive.



**Brenda Talent**  
Executive Director

### Education Reform

We are leading the charge to free the state's education system from the confines of burdensome policies that significantly tie the hands of school districts and administrators. These constraints hinder their ability to hire the very best teachers, incentivize achievement, and reward excellence.

We promote policies that:

- free schools from regulatory burdens that limit their ability to innovate or to make important staffing decisions such as hiring the best individual for the job, regardless of certification;
- treat teachers like professionals, evaluating them based on their performance in the classroom, rewarding them for excellence, and removing them if they fail to get results; and
- allow parents to direct public education funding to a school that best meets their children's needs, rather than being forced to send them to a school based on geography.

We cannot allow plans detrimental to Missouri to advance. The Show-Me Institute has better alternatives that we believe will propel Missouri into a freer and more successful future — and move our state forward.



## COMMON CORE: A WELL-INTENTIONED DISASTER

By James V. Shuls

Milton Friedman once said, “Concentrated power is not rendered harmless by the good intentions of those who create it.” The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a well-intentioned idea, but they will have a disastrous impact on individual liberty and academic freedom for students. With full-scale implementation of these *de facto* national standards looming, Missourians may want to heed Friedman’s warning.

The idea is simple. Set common, rigorous standards for what all students in the United States should know and then watch them excel. No harm, no foul, right? Wrong.

Supporters of these standards will have you believe that the development and our subsequent adoption was completely a state-led process. The fact is that the U.S. Department of Education heavily influenced these standards. The end result is a reduction in local control.

Supporters of Common Core will also have you believe that these are *just* content standards. The Common Core sets the standards for math and English language arts; other subjects are forthcoming, but simply saying these are content standards could not be further from the truth. Establishing a set of national standards will have far-reaching implications for all Missourians, even those who homeschool or send their children to private schools. The standards will influence textbook development, teaching practices, college entrance exams, teacher preparation, and much more.

Ultimately, the whole Common Core movement is built on the flawed mindset that we can mandate and orchestrate improved student achievement through centralized government. For standards-based accountability to work, it must be followed by heavy-handed government accountability.

Improved student achievement comes from having great teachers in the

classroom who can meet the individual needs of their students and from having parents engaged in their child’s education. States, schools, teachers, and even students are far too unique to have one centralized approach that is suitable to all of their differences.

There is nothing wrong with having high academic standards for students, but a federal consortium of states does not have to set those standards. Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute wrote: “Only a free market can produce the mix of high standards, accountability, and flexibility that is essential to achieving optimal educational outcomes.”

Parents and taxpayers in Missouri are right to be wary of the Common Core State Standards because they are nothing more than the camel’s nose under the tent for more federal involvement in our local schools.

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS) QUICK FACTS

**What:** Content Standards in Math and English Language Arts

*the Top* application (a Stimulus Grant Program)

**Number of States Adopting CCSS:** 45 + D.C.

**June 2010:** Standards were released

**Created by:** National Governors Association & Council of Chief State School Officers

**June 2010:** Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon signed a memorandum of agreement to adopt the CCSS

#### TIMELINE

**June 2009:** Initiative began

**June 2012:** Missouri granted a waiver from *No Child Left Behind*, promises to adopt CCSS

**January 2010:** Missouri promised to adopt in *Race to*

**2014-15:** Full Implementation



Officials from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education held meetings around the state to explain the Common Core State Standards. However, the meetings were ineffective as officials refused to answer concerned parents' questions.

## SHOW-ME INSTITUTE SUPPORTERS

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# Roethelis Prove That Self-Reliance Works Better Than Government Reliance



**J**oe and Judy Roetheli know what it takes to make their own way in the world, and they use their knowledge and experience to empower others to do the same.

The Roethelis, longtime supporters of the Show-Me Institute, both were raised by hard-working parents who made do with limited means. Their work ethic, along with a spirit of giving to others in need, was instilled during humble upbringings.

Joe was raised on a Missouri farm working with animals and later earned three degrees in agricultural economics. Judy, a former teacher, earned a degree in history and education, with certifications in geography and kindergarten education.

Joe served as assistant AARCC (Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercialization Corporation) director at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). He was instrumental in the passage of the Food, Agriculture,

Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990.

“The federal government was paying billions to farmers for doing nothing,” Joe said. “The legislation enabled us to look for new resources and to incentivize farmers.”

A few years ago, Joe served on a governor’s commission about small business and said he saw correlations between education and business.

“We were asked to assess the real needs of small businesses,” Joe said. “I thought education was the way to solve problems. Teaching is more difficult now because there’s no time to teach with all the other things they have to do. There also is no respect and parents aren’t involved. That translates into the business world. Until we get respect back in the classroom, we will have problems.”

Despite that assessment, the Roethelis have managed several successful entrepreneurial ventures. Perhaps most notable is Greenies® pet products. In 1996, the family dog, Ivan, had what Joe described as “horrendous” breath.

“Judy kept asking me to find a solution,” Joe said. “I had managed research for the federal government for 18 years so she thought I could research how to fix the problem. She was persistent and kept after me. If it hadn’t been for her, Greenies® would have never happened.”

Joe discussed the issue with his dentist, who provided research on results of various products and ingredients on dogs’ teeth as a precursor to use in human oral care products. The Roethelis worked with a veterinary nutritionist and other experts to develop the company’s first dental chew.

“We gave it to Ivan and about 10 days later, Judy noticed an improvement in his breath,” Joe said. “She thought others could benefit from it and that’s how it all started.

By Susan E. Sagarra

We basically didn't have an income for about five years. Judy worked some as a substitute teacher and somehow we skated through."

The business eventually became the eighth-largest pet food and treat company in the world.

"We accomplished that in less than 10 years," Joe said. "It was a David and Goliath-type battle. It's all because our dog had bad breath and Judy was very, very persistent. I didn't think I knew how to solve the problem. To my utter amazement, it worked. We went from not knowing if we'd be able to sell the product to not being able to fulfill orders."

The Roethelis sold the company to Mars, Inc. in 2006. By that time, they had 90 direct employees and outsourced production to 450 employees. They earned numerous awards, including the Stevie Award as Best Company in America with less than 100 Employees; the Mr. K Award as Best Small Business in Kansas City; the Small Business Exporter of the Year from the National District Export Council; and Entrepreneur of the Year in Manufacturing for Western Missouri and Kansas from Ernst & Young.

"We created close to 550 jobs (that were either) in the immediate Kansas City area or within a few hours (of Kansas

City)," Joe said. "I told Judy from the start that we weren't going to make this our baby and not be able to let go. I knew I would not be great at managing a large organization. I'm more creative. We had good people and that helped a lot."

The Roethelis shifted attention to their Lil' Red Foundation, a non-profit charity they had started in 2003 with their two sons and a relative in Switzerland. It was a natural transition into charitable work. When they owned their company, they made charitable donations of pet products for police canines; service and therapy dog organizations; rescue dogs at the scene of 9/11; and pets that were recovered after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"Judy and I both grew up in families that were giving and we were taught to help people," Joe said.

Lil' Red's stated mission is to "inspire and empower people to use their talents for the betterment of themselves and others." It focuses on Third World housing and education, pet therapy for the elderly, and entrepreneurship.

The Roethelis and Lil' Red have helped build four villages in Guyana, including one in a remote area that Joe calls a "miracle" village.

"They don't have electricity and they use outhouses," Joe said. "The

government provided the land — 40 acres — and the people cleared the land, 32 miles of trail, and two construction crews built the 70-house village, school and water system, all in 54 days of hard work. If people are given incentive to do it, they will do it. If there is no incentive, people will not do it. Most Americans do not have a clue what poverty means. People here have access to food stamps, housing, and health care. In Guyana, there are no food stamps, public housing, or health care, other than charitable entities assisting."

The Roethelis also launched a pet therapy initiative for the elderly.

"That started with my Dad being in a nursing home," Joe said. "I convinced my cousin, who was a nurse there, to let me bring our dog. But it wasn't just Dad who benefited from the visits. Everyone's eyes lit up when they saw the dog. Now, we provide funding to groups that pair the elderly with animals."

Joe and Judy also serve as guest lecturers and mentors with students at the University of Missouri's Columbia and Kansas City campuses.

There is no doubt that Joe and Judy Roetheli will continue their lifelong pursuit to make the world a better place and empower others to do the same.

**JOIN THE FIGHT FOR LIBERTY IN OUR STATE**



## WHAT ARE THEY WAITING FOR? THE CITY WITH AVAILABLE VACANT LAND

By Kacie Barnes

**T**he St. Louis Land Reutilization Authority (LRA) is the largest owner of vacant property in the city, yet some real estate agents do not even know the LRA exists. That is by no fault of their own.

“It is distressing that an agency that is supposed to be getting rid of properties does absolutely no marketing,” said Michael Allen, founder of the Preservation Research Office, a private historic preservation and architectural research organization.

The LRA has nearly 8,000 properties for sale. These lots will not be returned to private, productive use if no one knows about them.

LRA-owned properties, however, are not listed in the Multiple Listing Service (MLS). The MLS is the primary source of real estate listing information for approved brokers in Saint Louis, said Chuck Roper, marketing director at Janet McAfee Real Estate.

“How do people find out about LRA-owned properties?” Roper asked.

He laughed at my answers. First, they have to somehow know that the LRA exists. Second, they must hunt the LRA website or visit their office to obtain a listing of available properties. That

is all before they dive into the lengthy application process.

In a world with advertisements everywhere, real estate agents can only be competitive if they aggressively publicize available properties, Roper said. Allen lamented that a land bank is supposed to sell properties, not let them rot away as non-tax-generating sources. Roper said that if the LRA utilized at least one avenue for marketing and publicity, information about available properties would reach more potential buyers.

Allen said the LRA used to purchase full-page advertisements in newspapers to promote available properties.

“The last time I saw an LRA ad must have been at least 20 years ago,” Roper said.

Allen speculated that a lack of resources likely is a barrier to advertising properties now. But the LRA’s bystander approach portrays the city as content to hold on to properties for years, just in case a large-scale development comes along.

“We have known for over half a century that large-scale development is not effective, it is destructive,” Allen said.

Yet in 2012, the LRA sold 1,117 properties to the NorthSide Regeneration

project to redevelop North Saint Louis. While selling property is a good thing, giving 88 percent of total 2012 sales to one developer for a government-subsidized project is “not in the true spirit of returning land to private use,” Allen said. Hundreds of other prospective buyers were turned down last year in their quest to revitalize Saint Louis land.

Abandoned and vacant properties are more than an eyesore. If you had to choose between two homes, one on a beautiful, well-kept street, and one with an abandoned and boarded up neighboring home, it is obvious where you would prefer to live. Abandoned and vacant properties depress property values, discourage property ownership, and attract criminal activities in the surrounding area, according to a University of Michigan land bank study.

“This city will not come back to life if it deliberately banks thousands of properties,” Allen said.

He proposes this idea: Why don’t we become the city with the easiest to use land bank? It does not sound as glamorous as the City of Love (Paris) or Sin City (Vegas), but really, what harm would it do to be the City with the Least Vacant Land?

### POLICY BREAKFAST ~ CELEBRATING MILTON FRIEDMAN LEGACY DAY • July 31

FEATURING SHOW-ME INSTITUTE EDUCATION POLICY ANALYST JAMES SHULS, PH.D.  
AT THE LIBRARY CENTER (4653 S. CAMPBELL AVE., SPRINGFIELD, MO)

*Friedman Legacy Day honors Milton Friedman’s vision and impact on educational choice and is celebrated each year on his birthday, July 31.*

### SHOW-ME INSTITUTE FREEDOM DINNER • September 27

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

*For more details about Show-Me Institute events, visit [www.showmeinstitute.org/events](http://www.showmeinstitute.org/events) or contact Amy Lutz at (314) 454-0647 or [amy.lutz@showmeinstitute.org](mailto:amy.lutz@showmeinstitute.org).*

## NATIONAL TEACHERS' UNION TARGETS THE SHOW-ME INSTITUTE

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), a nationwide public employee union, recently targeted the Show-Me Institute for our work to improve educational opportunities for Missouri's families. The public-sector union included Show-Me Institute board members as part of a national blacklist of fund managers that public pension trustees are encouraged to avoid.

According to a *Wall Street Journal* article, the union's goal is to "strong-arm pension trustees not to invest in hedge funds or private-equity funds that support education reform."

Show-Me Institute Policy Analyst Patrick Ishmael wrote in a blog post that it appeared Education Policy Analyst James Shuls' "ongoing efforts to make our children's education better and Andrew Biggs' report on Missouri's public pension liabilities" raised the AFT's displeasure.

Ishmael cited the *WSJ* article:

The union report says it wants pension trustees to "take into account certain collateral factors, such as a manager's position on collective bargaining, privatization [read: vouchers] or proposals to discontinue providing benefits through defined benefit plans."

The report adds the lovely threat that "The American Federation of Teachers is committed to shining a bright light on organizations that harm public sector workers. . ."

The report goes on to list StudentsFirst, the Show Me Institute and the Manhattan Institute as special bêtes noires that promote school and pension reform. And it helpfully lists no fewer than 34 funds whose "directors, managers, advisors and executives" have dared to support reform organizations.

"The Show-Me Institute will not be bullied by the American Federation of Teachers into abandoning ideas that are in the interests of the people of Missouri," Show-Me Institute Executive Director Brenda Talent said in a statement to the media. "It is ironic, and sad, that a union which claims to represent kids and teachers is using pressure tactics to defeat proposals that would benefit both groups. We will continue our principled fight for Missouri's students, taxpayers, and pensioners — whether the AFT likes it or not."

Ishmael's conclusion summed up the Show-Me Institute's position best:

... if public unions such as the AFT stand in the way of reforms that would protect taxpayers and help kids, they should absolutely worry about the threat the Show-Me Institute poses to them. . . . [W]e will, with great pleasure, continue the fervent, methodical, and fact-based research that has raised their ire.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENTS

**The Show-Me Institute has had a lot to celebrate, including some recent staffing changes.**

- Education Policy Analyst James Shuls completed his doctoral dissertation this spring and received his Ph.D. in education policy from the University of Arkansas in May.
- Policy Analyst Patrick Ishmael has returned to his roots in Kansas City. He will continue working for the Show-Me Institute from the western side of the state, along with Western Missouri Field Manager Patrick Tuohey.
- Former Show-Me Institute intern Amy Lutz has returned to the Institute to become its new executive assistant.
- Policy Researcher Kacie Galbraith married former Show-Me Institute intern Ben Barnes on May 4 in New Jersey.

- Darin Morley has joined the Institute as its new website and video manager.
- The Institute also welcomes the following five interns who have joined us this summer: Haleigh Albers, Allison Davis, Joseph Miller, Joseph Niebling, and William Reynolds.



Amy Lutz



Darin Morley



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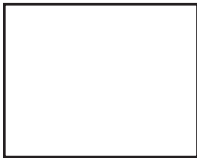
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## SHOW-ME INSTITUTE FOCUSES ON YOUR STORIES

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### “Tell me a story.”

As children, we implored our parents, grandparents, or older siblings to read bedtime stories to us. Our own children and grandchildren keep the family ritual alive.

Our parents were most people’s first storytellers, but storytelling exists every day throughout our lives, even when we do not realize it. We sit around the work lunch table and tell tales of our weekend, or reconnect at the family dinner table to share stories about our day. We gather around the television, grab a newspaper, or head to the Internet to hear or read stories about the world, the nation, our state, and our local communities.

And when we are trying to make a point in a clever, understandable, and memorable manner, we often use anecdotes to deliver the message.

The Show-Me Institute has made incredible strides in garnering name recognition throughout the state, especially among the media and lawmakers. Through our active engagement in the debate about a wide range of public policy issues, the Show-Me Institute makes the case for sound, sensible, free-market thinking. Through penetrating analysis and persuasive argument, we have shown how it is possible to stop bad legislation — and set the stage for wiser and more enlightened government.

We have done a good job at this, but we want to be even better in delivering our message to promote freedom and liberty for all Missourians. To that end, the Show-Me Institute has launched a new initiative in an effort to tell our stories and your stories as they relate to public policy.

We will be telling stories about people and how public policy, good or bad, has directly impacted their lives and livelihoods. We hope to highlight how sensible, free-market solutions can enhance individuals’ abilities to thrive and prosper, and the state’s ability to grow economically. And we aim to tell these stories in an interesting manner, in ways that are relatable for everyone, while ensuring that the message aligns with the policy that we seek to change or implement.

Do you have a story to share? Please contact [rick.edlund@showmeinstitute.org](mailto:rick.edlund@showmeinstitute.org) and [susan.sagarra@showmeinstitute.org](mailto:susan.sagarra@showmeinstitute.org) and we will consider using your stories in future publications and videos to help promote the message of liberty and free enterprise.