



Letter from the President, Peter Goettler

As the new administration settles in, Washington is awash in grand ambitions and sweeping plans. Some of these we welcome enthusiastically. Others are troubling. But in all cases, we see opportunity—opportunity to advance the principles of individual liberty, free markets, and limited government in a political climate that is ripe for new ideas.

Cato is seizing this moment. For decades, our experts have provided principled, research-backed solutions to the country's most pressing policy challenges. The Institute has always made a moral case for human liberty that must undergird all public policy. Now, we can play a decisive role in shaping what comes next.

Our people mobilized as an administration open to rolling back regulation and state power in key sectors began taking shape. We reconnected to its leadership only hours after the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) was announced. By the next day, we had outlined a road map for reform to eliminate unnecessary and harmful federal interventions in Americans' daily lives—one that prioritizes economic freedom, personal liberty, and the rule of law. The full plan was delivered to DOGE and released to the public in less than a month.

We'll keep making the strongest case for reining in reckless federal spending. There are some encouraging early signs—cutting waste, exposing absurd taxpayer-funded programs, and pushing the parameters of public debate toward downsizing government. But with a hesitant Congress and a president unwilling to touch entitlements, major reform looks unlikely. That won't stop Cato from pushing harder.

While some of the administration's rhetoric around foreign policy has been downright irresponsible, we remain hopeful that its action will be more in line with Cato's long-held views of realism and restraint. Keeping in mind the old saying "Personnel is policy," some of the administration's appointments in international affairs have been a mixed bag. But many—particularly those below the cabinet level—have been encouraging. Until recently, we've been a lone voice against interventionism, but it's increasingly clear our efforts are helping to change the DC consensus that has led to costly mistakes without making America safer.

But advancing liberty isn't just about moving forward in areas of agreement. It's also about holding the line where government overreach threatens core principles.

While there's growing support in Washington that we can increase economic dynamism by reducing regulation, we remain deeply concerned about growing protectionism. Tariffs, quotas, and industrial policy distort markets, harm consumers, and undermine global prosperity. The benefits of an open world for trade—wider choices, lower costs, and greater innovation—are not political talking points; they're economic realities. We'll continue making that case forcefully.

On immigration, we're fighting for an approach that embraces what immigrants have contributed to America today and throughout our history. A closed legal immigration system has fueled illegal immigration, border chaos, and partisan

rancor. And it threatens to deny us the prosperity fueled by America's long history of welcoming talent, ambition, and hard work from around the world.

Above all, we'll be most vigilant in defending the US Constitution and the rule of law. The modern presidency already wields far more authority than the Framers intended and more power than any libertarian would countenance. Congress after Congress—Republican and Democrat alike—continue to both delegate and cede more powers to the executive branch.

Since its founding, Cato has called out every president when he's overstepped his bounds or contravened the Constitution and the rule of law. With President Trump's willingness to do so already well established, the Institute's voice—which exists only through the generosity of our Partners—will remain credible and vital.

Throughout the year, you'll hear more about our ambitious efforts to keep amplifying this voice and expanding our impact. Now is the time to build on our momentum, engage new allies, and take bold steps toward a freer, more prosperous future.

The fight for liberty never stops, and with the support of the thousands who keep Cato's mission alive and vibrant, we are making real progress. Thank you to everyone who stands with us.

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Peter".

Peter Goettler
President and CEO