

Executive Editor's Note

Few things have challenged me more than undertaking this position during perhaps the most difficult year in modern American history. A year where the Covid-19 pandemic transformed the way we work and interact with one another. A year where partisan tensions and misinformation shaped our everyday fears and concerns. A year where health scares, social inequities, and record-high unemployment all proved the importance of good policy. In this pursuit of good policy, I also cannot think of a better year to produce a nonpartisan, policy-focused blog for any and all Americans to read.

Despite the challenging year, the Brief Policy Perspectives team produced 27 powerful snapshots of influential policy debates and 4 thoughtful op-eds covering timely events. Our staff writers observed everything from the GameStop stock exchange phenomenon to data bias in medicine to racial justice.

With each piece, one theme came to the forefront: power. Who has power and who lacks it? How does policy shape power? How does power impact policy? Our four selected “Best of the Blog” pieces assess this relationship of power and policy, looking closely at how policy can create abuses of power and how it can redefine and redistribute power.

Whether it is Ben White analyzing how power intersects with gender and authority in "Protecting Our Service Members: Sexual Assault Response Reform in the US Military" or Catherine Kaufman examining the consequences of Washington DC's lack of sovereignty in "The National Guard: Another Argument for DC Statehood?" power remains at the heart of all policy debates. Policy can mitigate abuses of power, as Christina Prinvil notes in her op-ed "Reforming Policing Institutions: A Closer Look at #EndSars and BLM." Power can also corrupt our resources indirectly and leave irreversible marks on our planet—something Sean Parker discusses in “Food Waste: How Leftovers are Choking the Planet.” Each of the enclosed “Best of the Blog” pieces reminds us that while power influences policy, policymakers can also shape power.

To conclude, I want to thank the extraordinary team that makes Policy Perspectives the policy powerhouse it is today. Thank you to Sydney Hamilton and Katie Howell for steering the ship and trusting me with the blog. Thank you to my three deputy editors, Rachel Silber, Lauren Salmiery, and Xavier Adomatis. The blog is nothing without your brilliant insight and devotion to style and grammar. And last but not least, a huge thank you to our staff writers: Julia Vanella, Brett Litzler, Catherine Kaufman, Sean Parker, Christina Prinvil, Madison Grady, Ben White, Dagoberto Acevedo, and Emma Dewhurst. I am deeply indebted to each of you. Thank you for your work. Thank you for your words. Thank you for your wisdom.

Signing off,

Olivia Shaffett

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