



**UNIVERSITY  
of VIRGINIA**  
**FRANK BATTEN SCHOOL**  
**of LEADERSHIP and PUBLIC POLICY**



**Front Cover:** All photos used on the cover page are the property of and were submitted by contributors to this journal, with their express permission for use in this publication.

All contents property of Virginia Policy Review and its contributors. Contributors retain all rights to their work. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form (electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written consent of the Virginia Policy Review and its contributors. Nothing in this publication represents the ideas, beliefs, or positions of the Virginia Policy Review, its staff, or the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy. All statements are strictly the ideas, beliefs, or positions of the authors.



Volume XVI | Issue I | Spring 2025

A Student-Run Publication From



FRANK BATTEEN SCHOOL  
*of LEADERSHIP and PUBLIC POLICY*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Letter from the Editor.....</b>	<b>I.</b>
<b>On the Theme: Public Policy Is Everywhere.....</b>	<b>II.</b>
<b>Staff Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>III.</b>
<b>Hezbollah Versus the Lebanese State's Healthcare: An Examination and National Security Implications.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Author:</b> Maryam Ahmed	
<b>Improving Access to Family Planning.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Author:</b> Gabriella Bartlett	
<b>Public Policy Research Paper: No Child Left Behind Act of 2002.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Author:</b> Oscar Kemp	
<b>Tazewell County: A Case Study on Decentralization and Taxation.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Author:</b> Darrah Young	
<b>Misinformed but Decisive: Public Opinion and the Politics of Ukraine Aid.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Author:</b> Konstantin Shchelkunov	

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading the new edition of the Virginia Policy Review! As students, we are affirming our commitment to maintaining an open channel of ideas that allow contributions from students with their valuable vantage points. After a 4 year hiatus, the journal has been revived at this crucial crossroads in American, and global, politics.

First, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication that made this possible. I am eternally grateful to Konstantin Shchelkunov, Morgan Berry, and Anastasia Jones-Burdick as this would not have been possible without each of them pouring hours of their time into VPR. In addition, I thank all of our editors and those who have volunteered to continue the journal to build it back to its previous stature. Finally, I thank all those who have submitted pieces to this edition of the journal and our Third Rail, shorter form, publication. Without this collective effort, this edition would not be the thoughtful, important piece that it has become.

The theme for this edition of “Public Policy is Everywhere” serves to remind us of the profound impact that policies have on each of our lives. In uncertain times like these, it is important that we do not forget the influence that every decision has on the society we live in. This also presents an opportunity for us to evaluate our society and contribute our ideas toward shaping it. VPR creates these opportunities for students of all interests to share their vision of how public policy and its effects can be a force for good. I strongly believe in the role of open, honest policy writing that reflects the ideals and skills built through a rigorous education.

Accordingly, the topics covered in this edition are wide reaching. From an in-depth analysis of how citizen opinions on foreign policy influence spending to an evaluation of how difficult federal decisions affect local areas, these pieces showcase the many ways that policy affects real people. They reflect the moments in which they were written, and the unique perspectives that passionate students can offer.

Sincerely,  
Matt Docalovich  
VPR Editor-in-Chief

## On the Theme, “Public Policy is Everywhere”

In a world of self determination and righteousness, we oftentimes forget that the decisions we make, the schools we attend, the food we eat, the water we drink, the clothes we wear, the homes we live in, and even the air we breath are in some way or another affected by decisions made by others: those others being policymakers; lobbyists; and governments; both domestic and foreign.

A well known proverb states that the most wrong thing is to do nothing at all, that ignorance is bliss to a fault of one's own path through life. This year, Virginia Policy Review aims to highlight those ignorances that, for better or worse, shape our words, actions, and decisions to better equip us to do something about them. Be it climate change, abortion, humanitarian crises, economic insecurity or many, many other policy issues this edition addresses, one thing is certain amongst them all: to enact change, to do something about them is to first acknowledge their pervasive existence in our lives and the lives of others: our friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, acquaintances, and even mere strangers.

Some articles will offer potential resolutions, others more carefully define the policy issue and dig deeper into root causes and outcomes, others simply attempt to convince you some policies are right or wrong. As a reader, we encourage to read on, even if some issues strike too close to home or nowhere near it. We encourage you to challenge your own beliefs, dig deeper into issues, and become more informed about the decisions that affect us in our day-to-day lives. After all, policy is indeed everywhere; don't be ignorant - tread on self-determined, righteous, and better equipped to solve the issues of today and tomorrow.

Konstantin Shchelkunov  
The Third Rail Editor-in-Chief

## STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

<b>Editor-in-Chief</b>	<b>Matt Docalovich</b>
<b>Managing Editor</b>	<b>Morgan Berry</b>
<b>Editor-in-Chief of the Third Rail</b>	<b>Konstantin Shchelkunov</b>
<b>The Academical Podcast</b>	<b>Ian Novak</b>
<b>Director of Outreach &amp; Media</b>	<b>Anastasia Jones-Burdick</b>
<b>Editors</b>	<b>Claire Geith</b> <b>George Langhammer</b> <b>Chrissy Leech</b> <b>Oscar D. Kemp</b> <b>Sarah King</b>

We welcome your thoughts. Please forward any comments, questions, or concerns to [virginiapolicyreview@gmail.com](mailto:virginiapolicyreview@gmail.com) or visit us online at <http://www.virginiapolicyreview.org/>.

**Title:** Hezbollah Versus the Lebanese State's Healthcare: An Examination and National Security Implications

**Date Written:** December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Author:** Maryam Ahmed

---

## Abstract

This analysis examines the healthcare welfare systems in Lebanon, focusing on the roles of the Lebanese state and Hezbollah in providing healthcare, especially in the context of the ongoing economic crisis. The Lebanese state's healthcare infrastructure has faced significant challenges, including government paralysis, corruption, and financial collapse, resulting in inadequate healthcare services for much of the population. In contrast, Hezbollah, backed by Iranian funding, has developed a parallel healthcare system that serves primarily the Shia community in Lebanon, providing more accessible and affordable care in regions where the state has been ineffective. Hezbollah's healthcare model, reliant on a mix of state-funded insurance, community-oriented clinics, and hospitals, has contributed to better health outcomes, particularly in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley. Despite these benefits, Hezbollah's system is limited to its supporters, reinforcing sectarian divisions and creating disparities in healthcare access. By comparing the challenges faced by the state and Hezbollah, the analysis highlights the roles of political affiliations, external funding, and socioeconomic factors in shaping access to care. Ultimately, the analysis suggests that a more equitable and inclusive healthcare system in Lebanon could strengthen state legitimacy, reduce inequalities, and mitigate the influence of non-state actors like Hezbollah, contributing to both improved public health and broader political stability.

## Introduction

*“What is the difference between the healthcare welfare state (WS) that the Lebanese state offers to its citizens versus Hezbollah's (HZ) healthcare?”*

The commonly accepted view is that the Lebanese state provides fragmented, low-quality healthcare because it is underfunded, while HZ offers citizens living under their influence more accessible, comprehensive, and better-quality care (Bou Sanayeh & El Chamieh, 2023). In actuality, the structural differences lead to a nuanced approach to the quality of care, accessibility. This has further political implications as a result of the economic systems in place. Scholars and researchers use both quantitative and qualitative data to analyze health outcomes from both systems. Understanding the critical differences each model presents reveals issues of

governance control and state legitimacy and how healthcare systems bolster citizen allegiance and social cooperation—a cycle referred to as the “cycle of instability” (Kilcullen, 2010).

Why do some Lebanese citizens ally themselves with the richest terrorist organization in the world at about \$1.1 billion (Statista, 2024)? Lebanon's historical, political, and sectarian landscape actively shapes its healthcare system, reflecting influences from colonial rule and the dynamic interplay of religious affiliations in state-building efforts. It operates through a complex mix of public, private, and religious sectors, reflecting the country's fragmented governance and social divisions. The Lebanese state (LS) and Hezbollah (HZ) actively manage public hospitals, while private insurance providers and religiously affiliated institutions directly serve specific populations, underscoring disparities in access and quality of care. The system faces significant challenges, including fragmented oversight, funding inequities, and uneven service provision, with resources disproportionately favoring urban and wealthier areas. HZ has leveraged these gaps, particularly in marginalized Shia-dominated regions, by providing affordable, accessible healthcare through its extensive network of clinics and hospitals. This dynamic highlights the limitations of the Lebanese state in meeting healthcare demands and raises questions about the role of non-state actors like HZ in delivering essential services, further entrenching sectarian divides within the system.

### **Healthcare in the Lebanese State Conceptual Context**

During the French Mandate (1920-1943), public health infrastructure was built to maintain disease outbreaks and maintain social order, which laid the current groundwork for the healthcare model seen in Lebanon today (Khalaf, 2002). In 1943, Lebanon gained independence, though the healthcare system remained fragmented due to the predominant religious factions: Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, and Christians. These religious factions all maintained their own healthcare institutions funded through local resources and charities (Cammett & MacLean, 2014). Militias and various political parties took control of the distribution of healthcare services after the exacerbated divisions caused by the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) (Hanf & Richardson, 2015). Due to the divisions caused by the Civil War, the development of sectarian identities (HZ) grew congruent with the existing Lebanese state infrastructure and emerged to capitalize on serving citizens of underprovided areas (Norton, 2018). Simultaneously, neoliberal reforms emerged (1990s) that promoted privatization and reduced the Lebanese state's role in welfare provision, resulting in reliance on NGOs and private healthcare providers instead of state-funded, public healthcare institutions (Khalaf, 2002). Legislative efforts, such as the National Social Security Law (1963), the Health Law (1970), Law No. 220 (2000), the Health Sector Strategy (2007-2012), and the National Health Sector Strategy (2015), addressed healthcare needs across Lebanon (Al Shami et al., 2024). Political and economic instability, however, posed significant challenges; the system continued to stratify along socio-economic and sectarian lines, demonstrating the lasting influence of historical factors on the current healthcare welfare state of Lebanon.

The Esping-Anderson model classifies the Lebanese state's healthcare welfare state as liberal due to its reliance on private providers and NGOs (a market-oriented approach), inevitably leading to a fragmented system favoring those in higher socioeconomic standings that can afford private healthcare (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The social safety nets are minimal. Mechanisms like the

NSSF provide inadequate coverage, often excluding vulnerable populations that non-state actor HZ capitalizes on (Sayed, 2023). The healthcare system exhibits significant stratification, with access and quality of care dependent on socio-economic status and sectarian affiliations. The level of decommodification is low since many citizens depend on private healthcare or community organizations.

### Primary Methods of Providing Healthcare

A hospital stay in Lebanon varies widely across public, private, and NGO facilities, though quality healthcare favors those of higher socioeconomic standing. Only 60% of Lebanese citizens have insurance, which allows them to utilize public hospitals (International Labour Organization [ILO] 2024). Public hospitals contain 17% of hospital beds, but overcrowding raises occupancy rates to as high as 90% (Dagher & Zoughaib, 2022). Due to high occupancy rates and long wait times, healthcare providers often limit resources, resulting in basic care that lacks specialized services. Private hospitals contain about 83% of hospital beds while offering a higher standard of care, more specialized services, and shorter wait times (World Health Organization [WHO] Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2024). Lebanese citizens, however, must pay significant out-of-pocket expenses or require insurance coverage that only about 40% of the population has (ILO, 2024). Private hospital stays range from \$100 to \$200, exposing low and middle-income families to costs they might not have covered under insurance (Adib et al., 1997). NGO and religious hospitals provide a middle ground, though subsidized healthcare relying on donations in the form of zakat, an Islamic charity, may face resource constraints (Makassed Foundation of America, n.d.).

### Public Spending

Direct spending by the Lebanese state plays a crucial role in shaping the healthcare landscape without directly managing healthcare facilities. Healthcare expenditures typically account for about 12% of the national budget, translating to approximately 66% of the Ministry of Public Health's (MoPH) budget going toward hospitals. The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) covers around 15.2% of the population, providing health insurance for formal sector workers, although it faced financial difficulties as NSSF savings dropped from \$8.5 billion to \$450 million after sanctions were placed against Syria in 2019 (Osmat, 2023). Despite government allocations for healthcare programs, spending has drastically declined since Lebanon owes the NSSF about \$55 million (ILO, 2023). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government allocated an additional \$40 million to support healthcare services (Raad et al., 2024). Due to the NSSF's liquidity shortage because of low subscription rates added to ongoing economic

instability and corruption within government institutions, effective allocation of healthcare resources exacerbates the existing challenges within Lebanon's healthcare system (Osmat, 2023).

### Private Spending

The Lebanese government indirectly invests in healthcare by collaborating with private insurance companies that can compensate for shortcomings in publicly provided healthcare insurance services. Private insurers like Libano-Suisse, MedGulf, and MetLife offer a range of plans for different income levels, often covering hospitalization, outpatient care, and specialized treatments that the NSSF excludes. Private hospitals contain about 83% of hospital beds while offering a higher standard of care, more specialized services, and shorter wait times (WHO Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2024). Public beds are overcrowded, while private beds remain more open but unfilled because most of the Lebanese population cannot afford private hospitals. Partnerships with international organizations and funding NGOs that deliver healthcare services, especially in underserved areas, help the Lebanese state fill the gaps that it may not afford through the NSSF—and in turn, citizens may not be able to afford healthcare through only publicly-provided healthcare.

### Lebanese State's Expenditures In-Between

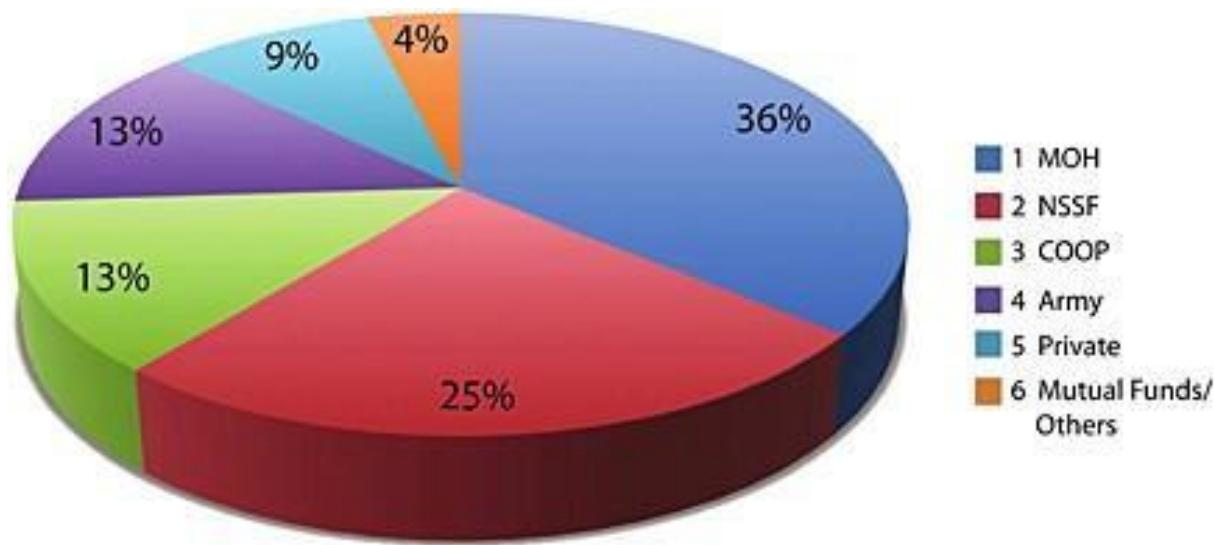


Figure 1: Lebanon's Distribution of Funds Across Public and Private Insurances

Source: Tatari et al., 2015

Figure 1 illustrates Lebanon's distribution of funds across different insurances (both public and private). Although the data shows that a quarter of healthcare-related funds flow through the NSSF, a public insurance, 39% of the data requires citizens to meet certain requirements (such as COOP, Army, Private, and Mutual Funds/Others). Army and cooperative (COOP) insurances play crucial roles in Lebanon's healthcare system, each catering to specific segments of the population. Approximately 500,000 people and their families benefit from military hospitals and insurance, which cover medical expenses like hospitalization, outpatient care, and specialized

treatments (The LAF - Militarized Welfare, 2012). The Lebanese government fully funds army insurance, allocating about \$65 million annually for military health expenditures, even though less than 10% of those treated in military hospitals are active personnel (Executive Magazine, 2012). COOP insurance covers around 250,000 public sector employees and their dependents, including teachers and government workers. Representing approximately 13% of total healthcare expenditure in Lebanon, COOP allocates around \$80 million annually for healthcare services (\*Note: that is a proportional estimate. Reports do not provide exact numbers). COOP typically covers a wide range of medical services, including hospitalization with up to 80% of costs covered, outpatient care, and preventive services, comparable to insurance provided through the army (Kronfol, 2004).

### **Hezbollah's Healthcare Welfare State Conceptual Context**

After the Israeli invasion and the influential remnants of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, HZ emerged as a militant group aimed at resisting Israeli occupation, though transformed into a group defending Shia rights in Lebanon in the 1980s (Counter Extremism Project, 2022).

As the Lebanese state struggled with governance and service provision, particularly in Shia-majority areas, HZ began developing a network of social services, including healthcare. The expansion into providing social services was strategic; it both legitimized HZ at a local and international level while offering material benefits to the Lebanese people recovering from inefficiencies in healthcare due to war (Heern, 2016). Over the years, HZ built a healthcare network including hospitals, clinics, and mobile units, offering services to approximately 2 million people, mainly from the Shia community, in underserved regions of southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley (The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 2019). HZ's health services became integral to its social contract with its supporters, making healthcare a cornerstone of its legitimacy and its ability to govern certain areas independent of the Lebanese state.

In the Esping-Andersen model of welfare state typologies, HZ's welfare system aligns with the conservative-corporatist welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990). HZ employs a community-oriented approach, delivering healthcare through a network of clinics and hospitals funded by donations and foreign aid. Unlike market-driven systems, its services are largely free or subsidized, reducing reliance on the private sector. However, these social safety nets selectively benefit HZ's Shia base and tie themselves to political and sectarian loyalty, reflecting a corporatist model. This structure reinforces stratification, as access to services depends on one's political and sectarian alignment, creating disparities in care across communities. HZ's system shows strong decommmodification, as beneficiaries can access healthcare without relying on the market because of subsidies and external funding. This setup lessens the financial burden on recipients while embedding them in a politically and socially stratified welfare network.

### Primary Methods of Providing Healthcare

A hospital stay in a facility operated by HZ typically offers a community-centric approach, prioritizing residents in areas under its influence, particularly in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley. Admission involves referrals from one of the hundreds of primary healthcare centers managed by HZ (Ghaddar, 2018). Al-Nour Hospital in Baalbek, a Shia-dominated area, is well-equipped, with about 80% of HZ's healthcare facilities reporting access to modern medical technology. These facilities provide emergency care, maternity services, chronic disease management, and specialized units such as intensive care units (Byman & McCaleb, 2023). These facilities treat an estimated 1 million patients annually, with a focus on offering personalized care from dedicated healthcare professionals, contributing to a high standard of service. By focusing on specialized healthcare and investing in dedicated healthcare professionals, HZ-run facilities treat an estimated 1 million patients annually (Hamadeh et al., 2021). HZ subsidizes costs for local residents, allowing patients to pay only a fraction of the total cost, which significantly reduces the financial burden compared to private hospitals (Bouri, 2023). HZ aims to reinforce loyalty and support among its constituents while addressing healthcare needs in underserved areas.

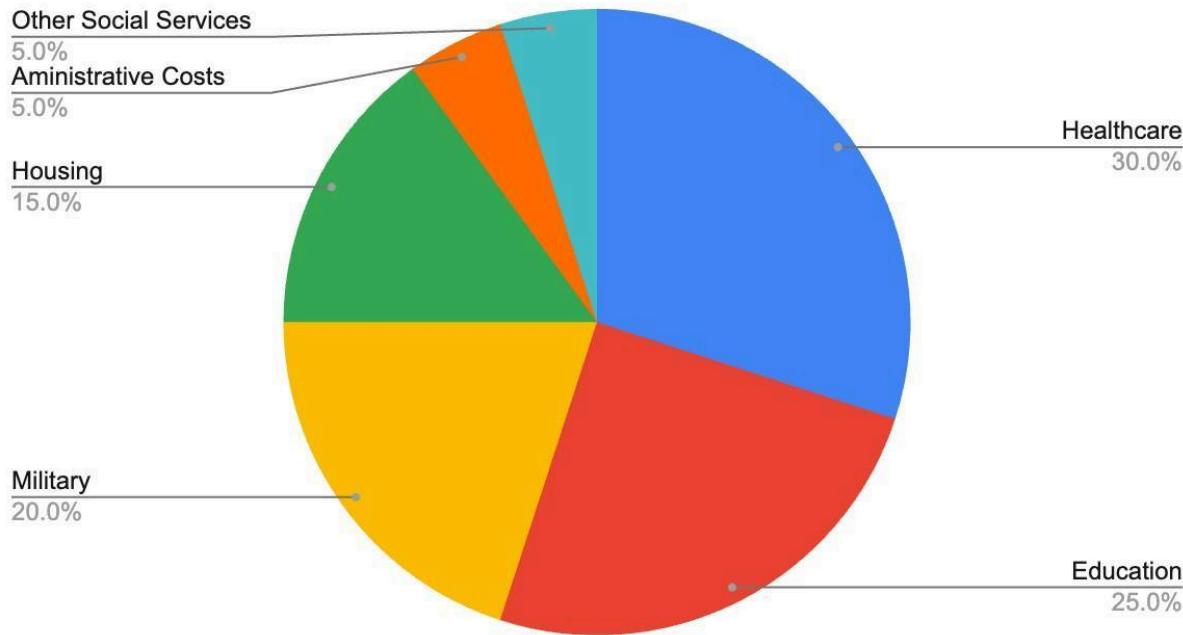
### Public Spending

HZ provides publicly offered health insurance primarily to its supporters within the Shia community, functioning as a vital component of its social welfare strategy. This insurance system, often called "Hezbollah's health insurance," offers comprehensive coverage that includes hospital stays, outpatient treatments, surgeries, and medications, significantly reducing the financial burden on families. Operating at lower costs than private insurance providers, HZ's plan features subsidized premiums and minimal out-of-pocket expenses, which are crucial in Lebanon's economically challenging environment. HZ closely integrates the insurance with its network of hospitals and clinics, ensuring that beneficiaries receive accessible care tailored to community needs.

### State-Funded (Iran) Spending

Iran provides about \$200 million to HZ through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) (Karam, 2018). This funding supports various initiatives, including military operations and social services, particularly in healthcare. The \$200 annual funding breaks down into HZ's social services expenditures outlined in Figure 2.0 (Cammett, 2014) (Ghaddar, 2020). With Iranian backing, HZ operates independently of the Lebanese state, not relying on their existing economic infrastructure to run medical sites. Because of HZ's independent operations, constituents of HZ get medical services at a reduced cost, making it more readily available in Shia-dominated regions (like Al-Manar Hospital) and even hospitals in Beirut (Badran, 2018). Iran's financial support allows for lower prices of over-the-counter and prescription medication, enhancing the long-term health of Lebanese constituents.

### Overall HZ Expenditures



*Figure 2: HZ Overall Spending*

\*Note: Since HZ does not make much data public, the percentages are proportional estimates based on findings from various sources. This figure should be read and understood in tandem with Part III: State-Funded (Iran) Spending (Cammett, 2014; Ghaddar, 2020).

Figure 2 illustrates HZ's overall spending in accordance with their complete annual budget, which ranges between \$700 million to \$1 billion, and \$200 million of that budget is sourced from Iran (Levitt, 2013). Healthcare spending comprises 30% or \$210-300 million, which branches into hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics (Cammett, 2014). The largest of HZ's hospitals is Al-Rassoul Al-Azam Hospital in Beirut, which is in Lebanon's most populous city and results in high rates of hospital occupation, though not as severe overcrowding complications as the Lebanese state's (World Population Review, 2024) (Ghaddar, 2020).

### **Challenges From Each Actor and Comparison**

The Lebanese state faces several significant challenges in addressing its healthcare welfare state infrastructure. Governmental paralysis and frequent crises like wars, involvement with neighboring countries, and corruption are primary obstacles to the Lebanese state's inefficiencies with healthcare administration. Regarding corruption, Transparency International ranked Lebanon 149th out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index in 2022, indicating low public trust and inefficient resource allocation (Transparency International, 2023). Inflation, by association, hit the value of the Lebanese pound, or lira, now characterized by a 90% devaluation

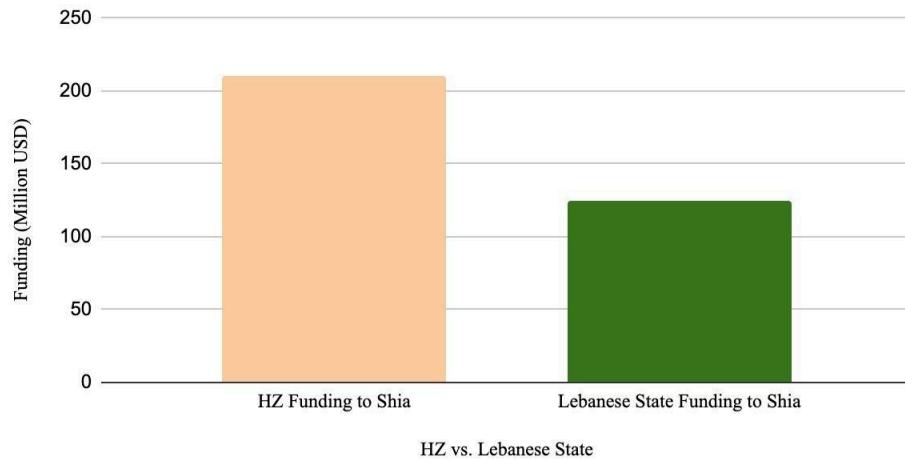
since 2019, reducing the state's revenue generation and its ability to cycle currency through to public health services (Madi & Azakir, 2023). The crisis has led to the closure of about 30% of public hospitals, 40% unemployment of nurses and physicians, and leaving an estimated 40% of the population without access to basic healthcare services (ACAPS, 2023). Reliance on private insurance for quality care deepens inequalities, as lower-income individuals and informal workers often rely on underfunded public systems. They cannot afford comprehensive insurance plans or do not have family members who are active personnel in the Lebanese army.

HZ faces several significant challenges in addressing the healthcare welfare state infrastructure it provides, particularly in regions where it holds significant influence: southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley. Funding constraints are a primary issue, as HZ's healthcare initiatives rely heavily on donations in the form of zakat and the group's external source of funding from Iran, resulting in adverse effects from regional political dynamics and U.S. sanctions. For example, sanctions imposed by various countries have reduced HZ's healthcare budget by 30% (U.S. Department of the Treasury, 2022). Almost counterintuitively, HZ operating more than 20 hospitals and over 200 clinics poses the struggle to meet the growing healthcare demands of approximately 1 million patients annually. Constituents of HZ find occupancy rates higher than 80% in HZ-ran hospitals, so overcrowding is not just a problem that the Lebanese state faces (Dagher & Zoughaib, 2022). A more glaring challenge—and inequality—is HZ's focus on serving primarily Shia communities, creating a perception of exclusivity and alienating non-Shia populations who might need access to healthcare services, mainly marginalized and persecuted Christian Lebanese citizens. In summary, HZ built a healthcare network that fills the gaps in the Lebanese state's system, though its reliance on Iran for funding and the associated political challenges in the region—mainly Israel—complicate long-term sustainability and the ability to expand services, particularly as Lebanon's overall economic crisis continues to strain resources.

## Discussion of Comparison

Complications in the Lebanese state's NSSF in 2019 allowed for HZ to take and dominate the healthcare sector. HZ, which profits off illegal activity, took the lead in filling healthcare gaps that the Lebanese state could not—a principle that not only applies to HZ, a known terrorist group, but to crime and mafia organizations worldwide (Zapata Celestino, 2023). Private healthcare insurance in Lebanon has become increasingly expensive, especially following the financial crisis of 2019, which has led to many Lebanese citizens being unable to afford high insurance premiums and finding other avenues for healthcare (Dagher & Zoughaib, 2022). With the economic collapse, many private insurers now only cover treatments in Lebanese pounds, which has lost over 98% of its value since the crisis, severely limiting the real value of insurance coverage (Reuters, 2023). Lebanon's healthcare inflation rate has risen to about 50% annually since the crisis began, further exacerbating the situation. Lebanon's Consumer Price Index (CPI) shows that healthcare is at 644.3%, and Lebanon's cumulative inflation has soared to 4,667%

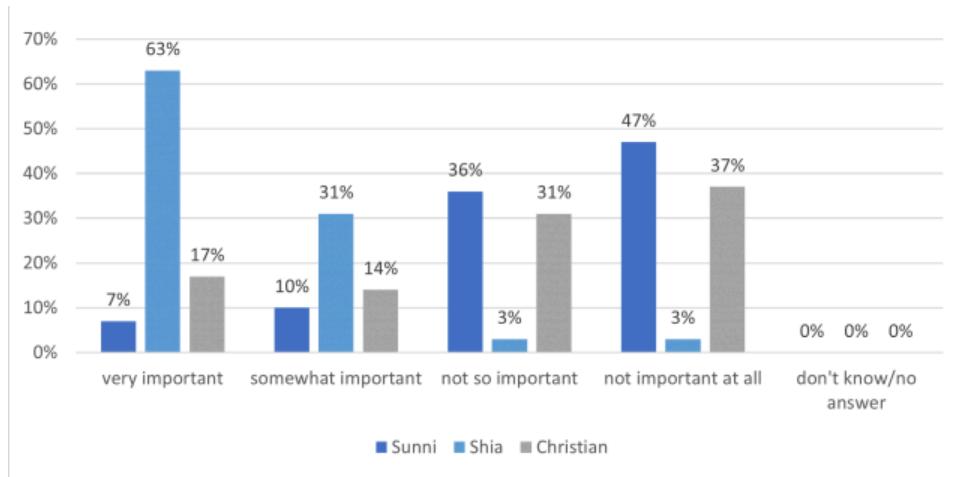
since 2019 (Ganot, 2023). As a result, many Lebanese citizens, especially those who cannot afford private insurance, turn to HZ's healthcare network, which has become a crucial provider for the Shia community.



*Figure 3: Healthcare Funding to Shia Communities: HZ vs. Lebanese State*

Source: (Zanotti, 2023)

The Shia community acts as a pivotal difference between the Lebanese state and HZ; HZ allocates nearly all its funds to the Shia community compared to the Lebanese state, which approximately budget a fourth of its healthcare toward Shias (Shias make up about 27% of Lebanon's population) (Figure 3) (Zanotti, 2023). In contrast, the Lebanese state provides public healthcare thinly and unreliably, spreading resources across the population, while the NSSF covers only 10% of costs, leaving beneficiaries to pay the remaining 90% (El-Jardali et al., 2023). Citizens who cannot afford to pay the remaining amount often switch to private insurance companies, which increased from 33% in 2013 to more than 85% in 2022, and 70% of the population cannot afford medications due to stocks of drugs dropping more than 50% (El-Jardali et al., 2023). As a result, HZ's parallel system acts as a more effective and reliable means of treatment in addressing the needs of the Shia community, and therefore healthcare.



*Figure 4: Lebanese Views on the Importance of Lebanese Relations with Iran*  
Source: (Pollock, 2020)

Although many Shias are aware that HZ's funding comes from Iran, access to healthcare prevents opposition to trans-national aid. Integration of Iranian funding bolsters healthcare provision through its annual funding of approximately \$200 million through the IRGC, allowing HZ to function independently from the Lebanese state's healthcare infrastructure. Facilities like Al-Manar Hospital and others in Beirut actively offer affordable healthcare at reduced costs, strategically fostering dependency and loyalty to benefit (HZ). Beyond strategically building reliance on non-state actor services, improvements in long-term public health are more noticeable in Shia-dominated areas. Resistance to Iranian-backed initiatives is low as seen in Figure 4; as Shias are the primary demographic of HZ aid, they are more likely to view Lebanese relations with Iran as "very important" in comparison to Sunni and Christian Lebanese.

## Conclusion

While the Lebanese state provides fragmented and underfunded healthcare services, HZ's healthcare model proves to be more comprehensive and accessible, particularly in areas where it maintains significant influence. Focus on affordability and rural healthcare delivery is crucial in addressing health disparities in Lebanon. This examination focused on key factors contributing to health disparities, including accessibility, quality of care, and health outcomes. HZ's system helps reduce preventable deaths, particularly in regions where the state has historically been absent or ineffective. Collectively, these factors illuminate the broader implications of healthcare disparities in Lebanon, accounting for a significant portion of the differences in health outcomes between the two systems. By addressing the needs of uninsured or underinsured populations, HZ fills a critical healthcare gap, directly contributing to better health outcomes and reducing inequality in healthcare access across Lebanon. Even though HZ bridges gaps for constituents not receiving quality or affordable care under the Lebanese state, HZ acts independently, and

often unpredictably. HZ attacks and threatens the United States' national security interests; notably, the kidnapping of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief of station in Beirut and attacks against the United States during the 2003-2011 deployment in Iraq (Clayton & Zanotti, 2024). Central to this analysis is the pressing need to design and implement an equitable healthcare system that effectively addresses the needs of all communities, fostering trust, social cohesion, and loyalty. Such a system not only alleviates humanitarian challenges but also strengthens state legitimacy, reducing vulnerabilities to exploitation by non-state actors. In this way, healthcare transcends its role as a basic human necessity, becoming a critical factor in promoting stability and contributing to broader international security analysis.

## References

- ACAPS. (2023). *Lebanon: The effect of the socioeconomic crisis on healthcare*.  
<https://www.acaps.org/en/countries/archives/detail/lebanon-the-effect-of-the-socioeconomic-crisis-on-healthcare>
- Adib, S., Hajjar, H., & Lawand, T. (1997). Cost and length-of-stay of hospital care billed to the Ministry of Public Health by private hospitals. *National Library of Medicine*, 45(1).
- Al Shami, F., Pellerano, L., & Eghnatiros, R. (2024, April 12). *Recent Social Security Reforms and New Pension System in Lebanon: Interview with ILO's Rania Eghnatiros and Luca Pellerano*. Arab Reform Initiative.  
<https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/recent-social-security-reforms-and-new-pension-system-in-lebanon-interview-with-ilos-ania-eghnatiros-and-luca-pellerano/>
- Badran, T. (2018, November 9). *Hezbollah is Set to Control Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health*. Foundation for Defense of Democracies.  
<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2018/11/09/hezbollah-is-set-to-control-of-lebanons-ministry-of-public-health/>
- Bou Sanayeh, E., & El Chamieh, C. (2023). The fragile healthcare system in Lebanon: sounding the alarm about its possible collapse. *Health Economics Review*, 13(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13561-023-00435-w>
- Bouri, C. (2023, June 21). *The Dollarization of Lebanon's Health Sector*. Think Global Health.  
<https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/dollarization-lebanons-health-sector>
- Byman, D., & McCaleb, E. (2023). Understanding Hamas's and Hezbollah's Uses of Information Technology. *CSIS.org*.  
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-hamas-and-hezbollahs-uses-information-technology>
- Cammett, M. (2014, October 2). *How Hezbollah helps (and what it gets out of it)*. Washington Post.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/10/02/how-hezbollah-helps-and-what-it-gets-out-of-it/>
- Cammett, M., & MacLean, L. M. (2014). *The Politics of Non-state Social Welfare*. Cornell University Press.
- Clayton, T. & Zanotti, J. (2024). *Lebanese Hezbollah*. Congressional Research Service.  
<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF10703>
- Counter Extremism Project. (2022). *Hezbollah's Influence in Lebanon*.  
<https://www.counterextremism.com/hezbollah-in-lebanon>

- Dagher, G., & Zoughaib, S. (2022, June 16). *A Collapsing Society: The urgency of a social protection floor*. The Policy Initiative.  
<https://www.thepolicyinitiative.org/article/details/166/a-collapsing-society-the-urgency-of-a-social-protection-floor>
- El-Jardali, F., Masri, R., & Sleem, Z. (2023, July 27). *LCPS - Rethinking Lebanon's Healthcare System Amid the Economic Crisis*. LCPS.  
<https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/en/articles/details/4799/rethinking-lebanon%E2%80%99s-healthcare-system-amid-the-economic-crisis>
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton University Press.
- Executive Magazine. (2012, July 3). *The LAF - Militarized Welfare*.  
<https://www.executive-magazine.com/economics-policy/laf-militarized-welfare>
- Ganot, S. (2023, August 22). *Lebanon's Inflation Soars to 4,667% Since 2019, Says Bank Audi Report*. The Media Line.  
<https://themedia-line.org/mideast-daily-news/lebanons-inflation-soars-to-4667-since-2019-says-bank-audi-report/>
- Ghaddar, H. (2018, October 19). *Why Does Hezbollah Want Lebanon's Health Ministry?* The Washington Institute.  
<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/why-does-hezbollah-want-lebanon-s-health-ministry>
- Ghaddar, H. (2020, March 2). *Hezbollah Has a New Strategy to Survive Lebanon's Financial Crisis*. The Washington Institute.  
<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hezbollah-has-new-strategy-survive-lebanons-financial-crisis>
- Hamadeh, R., Kdouh, O., Hammoud, R., Leresche, E., & Leaning, J. (2021). Working short and working long: can primary healthcare be protected as a public good in Lebanon today? *BioMed Central*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-021-00359-4>
- Hanf, T., & Richardson, J. (2015). *Co-Existence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers.
- Heern, Z. (2016). *Hezbollah and Healthcare in Lebanon*. Blogspot.  
<https://themiddleeastandislam.blogspot.com/2016/10/hezbollah-and-healthcare-in-lebanon.html>
- International Labour Organization [ILO]. (2023, May 17). *Urgent reforms are needed to restore adequate coverage by Lebanon's National Social Security Fund*.

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/urgent-reforms-are-needed-restore-adequate-coverage-lebanon%E2%80%99s-national>

International Labour Organization [ILO]. (2024, January 30). *Privatizing coverage: Emerging threats to universal healthcare in Lebanon.*

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/privatizing-coverage-emerging-threats-universal-healthcare-lebanon>

Karam, J. (2018, June 5). *Iran pays Hezbollah \$700 million a year, US official says.* The National News.

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/the-americas/iran-pays-hezbollah-700-million-a-year-us-official-says-1.737347>

Khalaf, S. (2002). *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon.* Columbia University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.7312/khal12476>

Kilcullen, D. (2010). *Counterinsurgency.* Hurst.

Kronfol, N. M. (2004, June 7). *Report: Rebuilding of the Lebanese health care system: health sector reforms.* World Health Organization - Regional Office for the Eastern

Mediterranean.

<https://www.emro.who.int/emhj-volume-12-2006/volume-12-issue-3-4/report-rebuilding-of-the-lebanese-health-care-system-health-sector-reforms.html>

Levitt, M. (2013). *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God.* Georgetown University Press.

Madi, E., & Azakir, M. (2023, March 19). *As economy worsens, Lebanese juggle dizzying rates for devalued pound.* Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/economy-worsens-lebanese-juggle-dizzying-rates-devalued-pound-2023-03-19/>

Makassed Foundation of America. (n.d.). *Makassed Foundation of America.*

<https://www.makassedfoundationofamerica.org/>

The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. (2019, July 24). *The Islamic Health Organization: Hezbollah institution providing health services to Hezbollah operatives and the Shiite population in general as a means for gaining influence and creating a Shiite mini-state within Lebanon.*

<https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/islamic-health-organization-hezbollah-institution-providing-health-services-hezbollah-operatives-shiite-population-general-means-gaining-influence-creating-shiite-min/>

Norton, A. (2018). *Hezbollah: A Short History.* Princeton University Press, 69(3).

<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc77gzc>

- Osmat, B. (2023). *Social Security in Lebanese Political Economy: A Critical View from within the National Social Security Fund*. Arab Reform Initiative.  
<https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/social-security-in-lebanese-political-economy-a-critical-view-from-within-the-national-social-security-fund/>
- Pollock, D. (2020, December 1). *Lebanon Poll Shows Drop in Hezbollah Support, Even among Shia; Plurality Back Israel Boundary Talks*. The Washington Institute.  
<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/lebanon-poll-shows-drop-hezbollah-support-even-among-shia-plurality-back-israel>
- Raad, M., el Cheikh, M., Doumani, N., & Mrad, K. (2024). Financial Aid Distribution amid Covid-19 in Lebanon: Ministerial Executive Relief Initiative. *IntechOpen EBooks*.  
<https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1007648>
- Reuters. (2023, March 21). *Lebanon to sell unlimited US dollars to prop up collapsing pound*.  
<https://www.reuters.com/markets/currencies/lebanon-sell-unlimited-us-dollars-prop-up-collapsing-pound-2023-03-21>
- Sayed, H. (2023, June 14). *How Better Social Protection Can Strengthen Lebanon's Social Contract*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.  
<https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/06/how-better-social-protection-can-strengthen-lebanons-social-contract?lang=en&er=middle-east>
- Statista. (2024, August 9). *Richest terrorist organizations worldwide 2017*.  
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/950492/richest-terrorist-organizations-worldwide/>
- Tatari, S., Soubra, L., Tamim, H., Akhras, K., & Kabbani, S. (2015). The economic impact of patients with heart failure on the Lebanese healthcare system: The economy of heart failure in Lebanon. *ESC Heart Failure*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ehf2.12038>
- Transparency International. (2023). *Lebanon*. <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/lebanon>
- U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2022, January 21). *Treasury Sanctions International Hezbollah Network*. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0564>
- World Health Organization Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Region. (2024). *Understanding the private health sector: in Lebanon*.  
<https://applications.emro.who.int/docs/9789292742225-eng.pdf>
- World Population Review. (2024). *Lebanon Cities by Population 2024*.  
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/cities/lebanon>
- Zanotti, J. (2023). *Lebanon: Background and U.S. Relations*. Congressional Research Service.  
<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R44759>

Zapata Celestino, K. (2023). The clandestine welfare: The role of illicit actors in the provision of social protection in Latin America. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 39(2), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ics.2023.10>

**Title:** Improving Access to Family Planning

**Date Written:** September 2024

**Author:** Gabriella Bartlett

---

## **Overview**

Improved access to contraceptives and reliable reproductive health resources mitigates risks typically associated with birth, and this is especially salient domestically and abroad as the United States and many developing states experience increasingly high rates of maternal mortality. Particularly internationally, a key to solving underdevelopment begins with the reproductive crisis. Family planning and reproductive health programs (e.g., information campaigns, provision of birth controls, regular gynecological checkups) stand to aid these sectors, but funding is in constant flux, and the implementing institutions are demanding greater contributions.

## **Background**

In many low- and middle-income countries, the largest population of recorded maternal deaths are in adolescent girls (aged 15-19), where complications are more likely to arise (Najati, 2010). International policy cannot criminalize traditional customs of child marriage that are prevalent in these low- and middle-income nations, but it can help alleviate the risk of an unexpected pregnancy. Reproductive health programs (RH) have historically been provided alongside family planning (FP) programs within U.S. foreign policy. Both family planning and reproductive health programs offer education and support with contraceptive access, birth spacing, post-abortion care, STI screening, antenatal and postnatal care, HPV vaccinations, and additional FP/RH research. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) previously stood as the key institution managing foreign aid and implementing policies abroad, but it financially depends on executive and legislative attitudes toward FP/RH. The funding of FP/RH policies through both USAID and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) had decreased from \$715 million in 2007 to \$607.5 million in 2024 (“The U.S. Government and International Family Planning & Reproductive Health Efforts | KFF” 2024) However, given the Trump administration’s dismantling of USAID and staunch opposition to the provision of any FP/RH programs, all UNFPA program funding has been terminated, eliminating approximately \$377 million to their programs (*US Funding Cuts Confirmed, Ending Lifesaving Support for Women and Girls | the United Nations Office at Geneva*, 2025). The current political state has reflected this tumultuous relationship between FP/RH funding and U.S. politics, as funding is dependent on political will and the current Administration’s perception of maternal and reproductive health.

International FP/RH statutes initiated by the United States began in 1973 with the Helms Act prohibiting any foreign aid that may “motivate or coerce any person to practice abortion.”

(“U.S. International Family Planning & Reproductive Health: Requirements in Law And Policy | KFF” 2024) This statute remains in place and has influenced similar FP/RH statutes that prohibit funding abortions for federal workers abroad, such as Peace Corp members and policies such as the Mexico City Policy (MCP) that withholds U.S. aid to states that “perform and promote abortion.” (Peace Corp Provision, 1978, “The U.S. Government and International Family Planning & Reproductive Health Efforts | KFF” 2024) The MCP policy remains in place, but historically, the executive administration’s positioning either reinstates or disbands the policy in the early days of their new administration. The U.S. has also sought to highlight its position on sterilizations, as it formally banned foreign aid from funding coercive sterilizations or research related to coercive sterilization (U.S. policies: Involuntary Sterilization Amendment, 1978, as well as the Biden Amendment, 1981) (“U.S. International Family Planning & Reproductive Health: Requirements in Law And Policy | KFF” 2024). The latter position reflects the United States’ commitment to practical measures of contraception, opposed to coerced sterilizations that may indicate the use of eugenics in these underdeveloped nations.

The United States has historically sought to maintain an image of foreign allyship with underdeveloped states, and has done this in part by supporting underserved women and girls through FP/RH aid. The U.S. position as a majority stakeholder in the international arena has been challenged in recent years, however, by extreme political polarization around FP/RH policies for U.S. citizens domestically, culminating in the landmark 2022 *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* ruling, which overturned the constitutional right to an abortion.

### **Impact and Effect**

While some national policies banning child marriages have been implemented, rural or traditional communities (e.g., rural provinces such as the Kathmandu valley in Nepal, or eastern areas within Ethiopia) often disregard them, leaving young girls exploited and in dangerous health conditions (Seta, 2023; Fan & Koski, 2022). As policy cannot yet circumvent traditional practices, providing FP/RH programs can mitigate risks by providing contraceptives and allowing young, married girls the opportunity to stay in school and benefit from participating in the workforce. This is in service to economic development because if women can maintain their education, they will reach the workforce with higher rates of employment and capital gain, all of which contribute to a state’s economy, GDP, and Human Development Index (HDI).

If a young girl stays in school, she will reap an average 20 percent wage increase for her future, yet many girls are leaving school in droves due to unplanned pregnancies or inadequate reproductive care (Casey, 2024). Reports from UNESCO and Marie Stopes International (MSI), a leader NGO for FP/RH programs, state that 132 million girls are not enrolled in school, and rates of education compared to rates of unplanned pregnancy are staggering: in Niger, “one in two girls will give birth before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday while only one in 100 will finish secondary school” (Casey, 2024). When these programs are implemented, a single dollar investment generates, on average, \$120 in annual benefits (“FP2020: Family Planning’s Return on

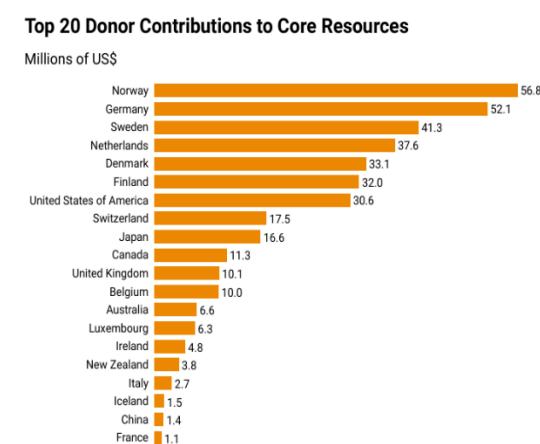
Investment - Family Planning 2030," n.d.). Similarly, the long-term effects of these programs are reflected in GDP gains from avoiding adolescent pregnancy; one USAID report noting if girls in Brazil and India were able to wait until their early twenties to have children, the increased economic productivity would equal more than US\$3.5 billion and US\$7.7 billion, respectively (Starbird et al., 2016).

Apart from the economic benefits, USAID and UNFPA boast the impact of FP/RH on individual's lives — as preventing adolescent unplanned pregnancy also prevents adolescent mortality. USAID has declared that FP programs can reduce global maternal mortality by up to thirty percent ("Fact Sheet: Family Planning Program Overview | Document | U.S. Agency for International Development" 2024). Success in the FP/RH arena is quantified using indicators such as the percentage of women aged 15–49 with access to modern contraceptives, maternal and child health outcomes, number of births, and prevalence of HIV and other STIs (FP2020 and Performance Monitoring & Evidence (PME) Working Group, n.d.).

These empirical studies are overseen by both USAID, UNFPA, and FP2030 (a core partner of USAID) — all finding that access to contraceptives and other FP/RH resources decreases maternal mortality and increases the quality of life for adolescents and women globally. The programs have shown little drawback in their return on investment, and the rates of HIV, unplanned pregnancy, and maternal mortality have decreased, and the rates of girls in school have increased. ("UNFPA Transformative Results | United Nations Population Fund," n.d.; "UNFPA Global Results | United Nations Population Fund," n.d.).

### **Advocates and Opposition**

Proponents of FP/RH programs have encouraged greater funding in the global arena, following the UNFPA outline for reaching "zero unmet need for family planning," which requires a total investment of approximately \$65.5 billion between 2020 and 2023. (Avenir Health, n.d.) Advocates for FP/RH programs have found that of the top 10 largest OECD government funders, "only four met or exceed their "fair share" based on the relative size of their economies," with the U.S. ranking ninth, yet "several donors exceed their "fair shares" by orders of magnitude, for example, Sweden at almost 500%." (Guttmacher Institute 2024)



Opponents of FP/RH programs believe the United States should only provide as much support as other countries; yet despite having a GDP nearly fifteen times larger than the combined economies of Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, the U.S. has historically contributed less to global FP/RH efforts as a share of its economic capacity (United Nations Population Fund, 2023). Within Congress, opposition to federal aid funds going toward abortions overseas is led almost exclusively

by Republicans, who view it as a covert means of supporting abortion despite legal restrictions prohibiting such funding from promoting or providing the procedure.

### **Plan of Action—Preparatory Items**

Given that the window of opportunity to further FP/RH programs will not be viable at this juncture, given the Trump administration's stance and current policies, it is paramount to use current public opinion to prepare for the next window of opportunity. The window of opportunity is not feasible due to the political layout of the legislature and executive. Thus, in making the following window count, the demographics of Congress must change, and preparation should focus on election results in the midterms.

Working alongside grassroots Pro-Choice movements like the Center for Reproductive Rights and Vote.org, which boasts “[the] largest 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan voting registration and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) technology platform in America,” can help coalesce politically active voters. (Vote.org, n.d.) To shift the demographics to Pro-Choice and Pro-FP/RH Congressional members, young voters must mobilize. Americans from ages 18-29 are the largest coalition to support abortion in all/most cases — PEW reports a support rate of 76%. (Nadeem and Nadeem 2024) However, only 42% (+/- 1%) voted in the 2024 general election, less than the 2016 and 2020 outcomes. Similarly, the share of all votes cast by young voters was less than in the last two general elections, standing at only 14%. (“The Youth Vote in 2024” 2024) If the voting coalition of younger voters is successfully mobilized, midterms are likely to reflect a Pro-Choice population.

Mobilizing with the Center for Reproductive Rights has the potential to connect the domestic abortion debate with that of the international discussion. As American moms' frustration grows due to increasing rates of maternal mortality, media publicization of similar stories abroad can boost civic engagement in FP/RH issues internationally, as groups see shared struggles across borders (HealthDay, 2024). Thus, when midterm elections occur, voters may align themselves with officials who simultaneously support reproductive rights overseas.

It would also benefit FP/RH interest groups such as Population Action International (PAI) and Marie Stopes International (MSI) to begin immediate lobbying of moderate Republicans to maintain USAID contracts under the State Department's new oversight, as well as advocating for renewed funding to the UNFPA to support global FP/RH efforts. While the window of opportunity is not feasible due to the current administration, if moderate Republicans can be persuaded to oppose Project 2025's plan to dismantle and eliminate FP/RH funding and organizations, there may be a chance to preserve current regulations until the midterm elections, potentially ushering in a more Pro-Choice legislative environment.

### **Conclusion**

The United States has long supported family planning and reproductive health programs through USAID, UNFPA, and FP2030; however, recent political polarization around abortion, both domestically and internationally, has led to reduced contributions to these programs under

conservative administrations, with funding for such programs being terminated during the early months of the Trump administration, marking a significant shift in U.S. policy.

Democratic caucuses have sought to increase contributions and codify contributions regardless of use, allowing funds to be used for abortions. To meet the needs the UNFPA outlines, substantial contributions would have to be made from the U.S. and its allies; however, they depend on the fluctuating executive and legislative positioning on reproductive health, which has become a salient policy topic.

While there is a clear standing of international family planning on the government agenda, it stands as a proxy policy to further debate the merits of abortion access. Therefore, regardless of the increasing public opinion to establish Pro-Choice policies domestically, the Trump administration reaps the benefit of staunch and unequivocal support from a GOP majority in both Houses. To utilize the window created by intensifying Pro-Choice support, the Congressional makeup must change to allow for opposing policies. Voter mobilization and midterm elections must be prioritized. Achieving a diversity of opinion in Congress could foster cross-party cooperation, leading to the development of policies that align with the majority of Pro-Choice supporters.

## Bibliography

- Vote.org. (n.d.). *About Vote.org: What is Vote.org?* <https://www.vote.org/about/>
- Avenir Health. (n.d.). *Costing the three transformative results.* United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resourcepdf/Costing\\_of\\_Transformative\\_Results\\_Chapter\\_2\\_-\\_Cost\\_of\\_Ending\\_Unmet\\_Need\\_for\\_Family\\_Planning.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resourcepdf/Costing_of_Transformative_Results_Chapter_2_-_Cost_of_Ending_Unmet_Need_for_Family_Planning.pdf)
- Casey, K. (2024). "Contraception Keeps Girls in School." MSI Reproductive Choices. April 25, 2024. <https://www.msiunitedstates.org/contraception-keeps-girls-in-school/>.
- Congress.gov. (2024). "S.Res.734 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): A resolution recognizing 30 years since the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt, and reaffirming the goals and ideals of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights." June 13, 2024. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-resolution/734>.
- "Fact Sheet: Family Planning Program Overview | Document | U.S. Agency for International Development." (2024). U.S. Agency For International Development. April 18, 2024. <https://www.usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/family-planning/resources/family-planning-overview>.
- Fan, S., & Koski, A. (2022). The health consequences of child marriage: a systematic review of the evidence. *BMC Public Health*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-12707-x>
- "FP2020: Family Planning's Return on Investment - Family Planning 2030." (n.d.). <https://www.fp2030.org/resources/resources-fp2020-family-plannings-return-investment/>.
- FP2020 and Performance Monitoring & Evidence (PME) Working Group. (n.d.). "FP2030 Measurement Framework." Report. *FP2030 Measurement Framework*. <https://wordpress.fp2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Framework-06-03-2022-EXT-ERNAL.pdf>.
- Guttmacher Institute. (2024). "Methodology for Calculating the U.S. Share of the Cost of Addressing the Unmet Need for Contraception." *POLICY BRIEF*. [https://res.cloudinary.com/dhu2eru5b/images/v1720634606/2024\\_PAI\\_Washington\\_Memo\\_Just\\_the\\_Math\\_FINAL\\_sv0gfg/2024\\_PAI\\_Washington\\_Memo\\_Just\\_the\\_Math\\_FINAL\\_sv0gfg.pdf](https://res.cloudinary.com/dhu2eru5b/images/v1720634606/2024_PAI_Washington_Memo_Just_the_Math_FINAL_sv0gfg/2024_PAI_Washington_Memo_Just_the_Math_FINAL_sv0gfg.pdf).
- HealthDay. (2024, June 5). *Many U.S. Women Unhappy With Maternal Health Care, Poll Finds.* US News & World Report. <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2024-06-05/many-u-s-women-unhappy-with-maternal-health-care-poll-finds>
- Najati, N. (2010). Maternal and neonatal complications in mothers aged under 18 years. *Patient Preference and Adherence*, 219. <https://doi.org/10.2147/ppa.s11232>
- Seta, R. (2023). Child marriage and its impact on health: a study of perceptions and attitudes in Nepal. *Journal of Global Health Reports*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.29392/001c.88951>

Starbird, E., Norton, M., & Marcus, R. (2016). Investing in Family Planning: Key to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. *Global Health Science and Practice*, 4(2), 191–210.  
<https://doi.org/10.9745/ghsp-d-15-00374>

“The U.S. Government and International Family Planning & Reproductive Health Efforts | KFF.” (2024). KFF. June 14, 2024.

<https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/fact-sheet/the-u-s-government-and-international-family-planning-reproductive-health-efforts/#footnote-608615-29>.

“The Youth Vote in 2024.” (2024). CIRCLE. November 6, 2024.

<https://circle.tufts.edu/2024-election#overall-youth-turnout-down-from-2020-but-strong-in-battleground-states>.

“UNFPA Global Results | United Nations Population Fund.” n.d.

<https://www.unfpa.org/data/results>.

“UNFPA Transformative Results | United Nations Population Fund.” (n.d.).

<https://www.unfpa.org/data/transformative-results>.

United Nations Population Fund. (2023). “TOP DONORS.” *Ensuring Rights and Choices for All*. United Nations Population Fund.

<https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Top20Donors-2023.pdf>.

“U.S. International Family Planning & Reproductive Health: Requirements in Law And Policy | KFF.” (2024). KFF. July 25, 2024.

<https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/fact-sheet/u-s-international-family-planning-reproductive-health-requirements-in-law-and-policy/>.

*US funding cuts confirmed, ending lifesaving support for women and girls | The United Nations Office at Geneva.* (2025, February 10). The United Nations Office at Geneva.

<https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2025/02/103814/us-funding-cuts-confirmed-ending-lifesaving-support-women-and-girls>

**Title:** Public Policy Research Paper: No Child Left Behind Act of 2002

**Date Written:** April 14th, 2023

**Author:** Oscar Kemp

---

## Introduction

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), according to Lindsay (2007), sought to raise student achievement and close achievement gaps. In response to widespread worries about the status of education, especially poor academic performance and enduring achievement discrepancies, President George W. Bush signed the NCLB Act into law in 2001 (Jainania and Whitford, 2011). This statute provided standards and accountability measures forcing states to follow rules. These guidelines, when met by states, would increase their federal appropriations for statewide education, with the intention of ensuring a high-quality education for all students and holding schools accountable for their performance. The policy was formulated and adopted at a time when education in America was perceived to be in a state of crisis (Powers & Xiang, 2007). To examine the role of the NCLB Act in U.S. education policy, this paper provides a comprehensive literature review of the legislation, with a particular emphasis on the stages of agenda-setting, formulation and adoption, implementation, and evaluation.

## Agenda-Setting Stage

Henig and Rich (2004) discuss the NCLB Act as it is aimed to address the problem of poor academic performance among American students, particularly those from low-income families and minority groups. Hess and Petrilli (2006) argue that the legislation was crafted in response to a growing concern about the persistent achievement gap between these groups and their more affluent, predominantly white peers. Lubienski and Wietzal (2010) propose that the gap has been a long-standing issue in American education and has been linked to a range of social and economic factors. These factors include poverty, inadequate school funding, and inadequate teacher preparation (Lubienski & Wietzal, 2010). Only 8% of African American fourth-graders achieved proficient or above reading scores in 1999, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), compared to 39% of white fourth-graders (Linn & Gronberg, 2006). Another report by the Civil Rights Project found that in 2005, high-poverty schools were more likely to have uncertified and inexperienced teachers, which further contributed to the achievement gap (Orfield & Kornhaber, 2007).

Bartlett (2006) defines the problem addressed by the NCLB Act as the failure of American schools to provide quality education to all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the resulting achievement gap. This problem was identified through a variety of sources, including academic research and political discourse. Lubienski and Wietzal (2010) state that the achievement gap between white and minority students in the United States was growing, with Black and Hispanic students performing significantly worse than their White peers on standardized tests. In a speech given in 2000, then-candidate Bush referred to the "soft bigotry of low expectations" that led to lower achievement for minority and disadvantaged students (Bush, 2000). This rhetoric was a key part of the political discourse leading up to the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Brookings (2015) examines the specific issues of child education that are rather dynamic and include subpar accountability, testing, adequate yearly progress, teaching quality, funding, and state and local control. Greene (2008), along with Hess and Petrilli (2008), reveal the triggering mechanisms that led to the NCLB Act. One mechanism was the nationwide desire to improve the quality of education and hold schools accountable for student performance. Henig (2008) cites the political climate in the early 2000s, with a Republican-controlled Congress and presidency, as providing an opportunity to pass significant education legislation. Hess (2011) claims an accountability movement that had been gaining momentum in the education policy arena since the 1980s was yet another triggering mechanism. The idea that schools should be held accountable for student accomplishment and that testing was an essential tool for monitoring student progress motivated the accountability movement (Lubienski and Wietzal, 2010).

## **Formulation and Adoption Stage**

Ferguson (2006) acknowledges that key contributions to the creation and revision of the NCLB Act were made by congressional committees such the House Education and Workforce Committee and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. During this phase of the policy-making process, the U.S. Department of Education, under the direction of Secretary of Education Rod Paige, also contributed ideas and recommendations (Manna, 2006). During the adoption stage, members of Congress, including both Democrats and Republicans, overwhelmingly passed the NCLB Act. President George W. Bush signed the legislation into law on January 8, 2002 (Lindsay, 2007).

Hess and Petrilli (2008) evaluate that the policymaking process involved a variety of official and non-official actors at different levels of government and in various interest groups. One of the primary actors was the Bush administration, which played a crucial role in developing and promoting the NCLB Act. At the state level, governors and state education officials also

played a significant role in shaping the policies and implementing the law (Arce et al. 2005). Interest groups such as teachers' unions and advocacy organizations for disadvantaged students also played an important role in shaping the NCLB Act. Shelly (2007) observes that the NAACP and the Children's Defense Fund were instrumental in advocating for stronger accountability measures and greater resources for disadvantaged schools. Non-official actors such as education experts, think tanks, and academic researchers were also involved in the development of the NCLB Act. These actors contributed to the policy discourse around educational accountability and helped shape the specific provisions of the legislation.

Lawmakers played a significant role in the formulation and passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. President George W. Bush was a strong advocate for education reform and made it a priority during his presidency. He worked with lawmakers to shape the bill, and his administration provided technical assistance and guidance throughout the process (Gunthrie, 2004). Kahlenburg (2008) points out that the judiciary was not directly involved in the formulation of the NCLB Act, but Spector (2008) notes the judiciary responded to the NCLB Act by hearing cases related to its implementation and challenging its constitutionality.

### **Goals and Objectives of the No Child Left Behind Act 2002**

Reckhow and Snyder (2014) reports that some alternative education policies that have been proposed as responses to the NCLB Act include community schools, performance-based assessments, school vouchers, and charter schools. They explain that community schools aimed to provide comprehensive support services to students and families, including health care, after-school programs, and community engagement. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) write that performance-based assessments, such as project-based learning and portfolios, aim to measure student learning in more authentic and meaningful ways than standardized tests. Libeinski (2003) speculates that school vouchers provide families with public funds to use toward tuition at private schools. Wells (2015) pointed out that charter schools are publicly funded schools that operate independently from traditional public schools.

Domke and Coe (2007) presented one approach that was used by policymakers. This approach was to draw on research and evidence-based practices to inform their policy decisions. For example, policymakers looked at research on effective teaching methods, school leadership, and curriculum design to develop alternative policies that were more effective in improving student outcomes. They explain further that some policymakers worked with education experts and stakeholders to gather input and feedback on proposed policies, with the goal of ensuring that the policies were practical and effective.

The political climate during the enactment of the NCLB Act, according to Doughtery (2008), was characterized by a high degree of partisanship and a sense of urgency to change the educational system in the United States. The act was passed at a time when Republicans controlled the federal government, and Domke and Coe (2007) claim that this reflects the party's inclination for market-based solutions to social issues. There was a sense of bipartisan agreement that the educational system needed to be improved, and the bill enjoyed support from members of both parties in Congress (Dougherty, 2008). They also speculate that the 2000 presidential election was seen as a mandate for educational reform, and both major candidates had made improving education a key part of their platforms.

There are eight titles included in NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Federal funding is made available to schools with high percentages of low-income pupils under Title I: Enhancing the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged in order to raise academic accomplishment. The money for teacher preparation and professional development programs is provided by Title II: Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers and Principals. Language instruction programs for pupils who are not fluent in English are funded by Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficiency and Immigrant Students. Title IV: 21st Century Schools, which provides funding for technology and school improvement programs. Title V: Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs, which provides funding for programs that give parents more choices in their children's education.

While granting states and local school districts more freedom in how they spend federal education dollars, Title VI: Flexibility and Accountability also imposes certain accountability requirements on them. Native American kids' educational prospects and academic performance are improved by programs funded and supported under Title VII: Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education. Impact Assistance, or Title VIII, gives funding to school districts with a high proportion of pupils whose parents are federal employees or who reside on federal property.

## Implementation Stage

According to Sunderman and Kim (2007), several federal agencies were involved in implementing the NCLB Act, including the Department of Education, the National Assessment Governing Board, and the Office of Inspector General. The Department of Education played a crucial role in implementing the Act's provisions, particularly in developing regulations and guidelines for state education agencies. The National Assessment Governing Board, on the other hand, oversaw the implementation of the Act's assessment and accountability requirements. Meanwhile, the Office of Inspector General was tasked with monitoring and auditing the use of federal funds by states and local education agencies to ensure compliance with the Act's provisions. According to Manna (2006), other agencies that played a role in implementing the

Act included state education agencies, local school districts, and schools themselves. State education agencies were responsible for submitting accountability plans to the Department of Education and ensuring compliance with the Act's provisions. These agencies worked closely with federal agencies to ensure successful implementation of the Act's provisions (Silber, 2015).

## Policy Tools Used

Kingdon (2014) reveals that the NCLB Act was enforced through policy tools such as funding sanctions, monitoring and evaluation, and technical assistance. He explains that states that failed to meet the annual progress requirements were required to provide supplemental educational services or school choice options. These states were also required to provide annual reports on student achievement to parents and the public. Monitoring and evaluation were also conducted to ensure that schools and districts were complying with the law's provisions and meeting the required goals (Lindsay, 2007). Schools and districts received technical support to help them raise student achievement and comply with the law. This help includes education, materials, and pointers for enhancing assessment procedures, accountability standards, and instructional quality.

## Evaluation Stage

According to Hamilton et al. (2002), the NCLB Act was controversial and met with criticism because of its focus on standardized testing, which had unexpected repercussions such as political rallies, media campaigns against it, and a drive for more pupils to attend private schools. According to Hess and Petrilli (2008), the NCLB Act's anticipated outcomes included greater accountability, better-qualified teachers, and parental involvement. They list teaching the new, standardized test, a more constrained curriculum, punitive actions, and declines in student participation as examples of the unexpected outcomes. Punitive actions like designating schools as "failed" and cutting off financing have a negative impact on schools and kids.

The NCLB Act continues to have a dynamic impact on public policy, standards-based education policy reform, and American politics. Policymakers will continue to consider the NCLB Act as they produce new reforms in the near future at the federal and state levels.

## References

- Arce, J., Luna, D., Borjian, A., & Conrad, M. (2005). No child left behind: Who wins? Who loses? *Social Justice*, 32(3 (101)), 56–71. <https://doi.org/10.2307/29768321>
- Brookings Institution. (2015). *What we got wrong about No Child Left Behind*. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/what-we-got-wrong-about-no-child-left-behind/>
- Domke, D., & Coe, K. (2007). The politics of framing: The issue of Iraq and the Bush presidency. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 37(4), 611-629. doi:10.1111/j.1741-5705.2007.02517
- Dougherty, J. E. (2008). *Education and the public interest: School reform, public finance, and access to higher education*. State University of New York Press.
- Ferguson, R. F. (2006). The No Child Left Behind Act and the challenge of accountability in American education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76(4), 647-697.
- Hamilton, L. S., Stecher, B. M., & Klein, S. P. (2002). *Making sense of the No Child Left Behind Act*. RAND Corporation. <https://doi.org/10.2307/29768321>
- Kahlenberg, R. D. (2008). The Judiciary, the Executive Branch, and the No Child Left Behind Act. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 618(1), 68-83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207312487>
- Henig, J. R. (2008). *The road to No Child Left Behind: The shaping of federal education policy, 1965-2001*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Henig, J. R., & Rich, M. (2004). Mayoral control, accountability, and the remaking of urban education. *Urban Affairs Review*, 39(3), 311-335. doi:10.1177/1078087404265552
- Hess, F. M., & Petrilli, M. J. (2008). No Child Left Behind: A retrospective. *Educational Policy*, 22(5), 734-755. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904807307067>

- Hess, F. M., & Petrilli, M. J. (2008). The new politics of the No Child Left Behind Act. *Education Next*, 8(2), 66-73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508480802541230>
- Hess, F. M., & Petrilli, M. J. (2006). *No Child Left Behind: A primer*. Hoover Institution Press.
- Jaiani, V., & Whitford, A. B. (2011). Policy windows, public opinion, and policy ideas: The evolution of No Child Left Behind. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 19(1), 8–27. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09684881111107735>
- Kingdon, J. W. (2014). *Agendas, alternatives and public policies*.
- Ladd, H. F. (2008). The Educational Efficacy of Poverty Relief Programs in the United States. In S. L. Morgan, D. B. Grusky, & G. S. Fields (Eds.), *Mobility and Inequality: Frontiers of Research in Sociology and Economics* (pp. 311–338). Stanford University Press.
- Lindsay, J. (2007). No Child Left Behind: A review of the literature. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 26(3), 661-681. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.20280>
- Linn, R. L., & Gronberg, T. J. (2006). Measurement issues under the No Child Left Behind Act. *Educational Researcher*, 35(1), 11-16. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X035001011>
- Lubienski, C. (2003). School vouchers: The emerging track record. *Educational Policy*, 17(1), 109-128. doi: 10.1177/0895904802238363
- Lubienski, C., & Weitzel, P. (2010). Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed...And Something Blue: A Framework for Systemic School Reform. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 85(3), 276–295. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2010.492312>
- Manna, P. (2006). Interests, institutions, and ideology in the No Child Left Behind Act. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(3), 285-306. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327930pje8002\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327930pje8002_4)

- Orfield, G., & Kornhaber, M. L. (2007). *Raising standards or raising barriers? Inequality and high-stakes testing in public education*. The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8d23q3rz>
- Powers, J. M., & Xiang, P. (2007). No Child Left Behind and educational accountability in the United States. *Prospects*, 37(2), 171-186. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-007-9018-7>
- Reckhow, S., & Snyder, J. W. (2014). The expanding role of community schools in the United States: A nationwide comparison. *Educational Policy*, 28(4), 570-597. doi: 10.1177/0895904813516543
- Rhodes, J. H. (2012). *An education in politics: The origins and evolution of no child left behind*. Cornell University Press.
- [https://www.google.com/books/edition/An\\_Education\\_in\\_Politics/-y9KDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0](https://www.google.com/books/edition/An_Education_in_Politics/-y9KDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0)
- Shelly, B. (2007). Rebels and their causes: State resistance to no child left behind. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 38(3), 444–468. <https://doi.org/10.1093/publius/pjn008>
- Silber, M. (2015). *Leaving implementation behind: Understanding the failures of the bipartisan no child left behind act of 2002*. ProQuest; University of Florida ProQuest Dissertation Publishing.
- <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1942328012?pq-orgsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>
- Spector, M. (2008). The No Child Left Behind Act and State Supreme Court Decisions. *Journal of Education Finance*, 33(4), 315-328. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jef.0.0012>
- Sunderman, G. L., & Kim, J. S. (2007). The expansion of federal power and the politics of implementing the no child left behind act. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, 109(5), 1057–1085. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146810710900506>
- Wells, A. S. (2015). School choice and the pressure to perform: Déjà vu for African American students? *Educational Policy*, 29(1), 54-79. doi: 10.1177/0895904813512879

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA:  
Association for  
Supervision and Curriculum Development.

**Title:** Tazewell County: A Case Study on Decentralization and Taxation

**Date Written:** November 22, 2023

**Author:** Darrah Young

---

## Abstract

The 2019 closure of Raven Elementary and Springville Elementary in Tazewell County, Virginia, sparked controversy and raised questions about the implications of federal economic reforms on local education policies. This paper examines the complex interplay of decentralized governance structures, economic reform initiated by the Obama Administration, and local responses to fiscal challenges in Tazewell County. This paper addresses the structural dynamics of American decentralized governance, particularly in relation to public school funding. It explores how federal economic reforms aimed at transitioning away from fossil fuels impacted coal-dependent regions like Appalachia, ultimately leading to the closure of local mines and a significant decline in revenue for Tazewell County.

The analysis highlights the challenges faced by local governments in addressing revenue shortfalls caused by federal policies. In response to budgetary constraints, Tazewell County officials proposed various tax measures, including real property taxes and automobile license taxes. However, attempts to diversify revenue streams faced resistance from local residents, leading to political polarization and the rejection of proposed taxes through public referendums. By examining the nexus of federal policy, state constraints on local finance, and local political dynamics, this paper argues the closure of elementary schools in Tazewell County was not solely attributable to federal economic reforms but rather to a combination of factors. It underscores the need for better coordination among levels of government to mitigate the adverse effects of economic transitions on local communities and educational institutions.

## Introduction

In 2019, two elementary schools closed in rural Appalachia, resulting in children being ferried by bus nearly an hour to nearby schools. This was much to the dismay of parents, teachers, students, and residents of the Southwest County. Tazewell County, Virginia residents believe federal economic reform, particularly environmental regulations, closed Raven Elementary and Springville Elementary. While the constitutional and statutory framework of the United States' decentralized system of governance places control over public education primarily at the state and local levels, the effects of federal policy can still be felt indirectly. In this case, the lack of coordination among federal, state, and local governments likely contributed to fiscal pressures that ultimately led to the school closures.

To answer the question of why schools closed in Tazewell County in 2019, we must examine several issues. First, the structure of decentralized American Government generally and specifically with regard to public school funding. Second, the economic reform initiated by the Obama Administration. Third, the negative economic impact of federal environmental regulations on the local economy and finances. Fourth, how the local government's limited statutory options to replace revenue losses, precipitated by the federal reform, led to local political polarization and closure of the schools. Last, whether the federal economic reforms necessarily led to the school closures or whether the State's local government financing structure led to the school closures, or whether the local political polarization led to the school closures.

There is a common sentiment in Tazewell County that President Obama closed two of their elementary schools. It is held by Tazewell County locals as they look at their local coal mines closing, community members leaving, and local government struggling to keep the county in the black. Beginning in 2009 the Obama Administration initiated economic reforms intended to transition the United States away from fossil fuels towards more environmentally friendly energy sources, resulting in the shutdown of coal mines across Appalachia (Follett, 2016). As a locality, Tazewell County was structured by the state to meet core government service funding obligations with coal severance tax revenues. When coal mining abruptly declined in the face of the Obama Administration's environmental regulatory reform, Tazewell County faced severe budget issues as the industry imploded. This greatly reduced local capability to fund operations at many school facilities (Truong, 2018).

To compensate for the revenue loss, government officials proposed an increase to real property taxes. This put the entire burden on the back of elites who owned real property. Consequently, the government received backlash from those taking the brunt of the tax (Jordan, 2018). Thus, the local governing body implemented an automobile license tax in an effort to spread the tax burden to persons who did not own real property (*ARTICLE XI. - CIGARETTE TAX*, 2022). This, however, was still insufficient to cover the losses from coal. The county also proposed a meals (or restaurant) tax to further distribute the tax burden and generate funding to maintain school facilities (News Channel 11 Staff, 2018). However, due to the Virginia Code, the meals tax could only be imposed by a public referendum. In Virginia, voters had to vote to tax themselves with respect to the meals tax, which voters rejected (Owens, 2018). Thus, the question is whether President Obama's clean energy policies closed the schools or local polarization over local taxation closed the schools. I conclude federal economic reform policies, state structural limitations on local government finance, and local government polarization, exemplifying a lack of coordination among decentralized levels of government, combined to close the two elementary schools.

## Governmental Structural Context

A decentralized government aims to allocate responsibility to different levels of government to optimize the allocation of resources and better reflect the interests and needs of the citizens. In the United States, the decentralized government is composed of three levels; federal, state, and local government. A greater picture of control shows the importance of the state on the jurisdictional structure. The powers of the federal government are derived from the states and enumerated in the federal Constitution. Local governments also receive their power from state government. In Virginia, the Code of Virginia as enacted by the elected General Assembly, enumerates the power of the local governments within the Commonwealth (*Search the Law – Virginia Rules*, 2022). Virginia limits localities' ability to tax, strictly limiting taxes they may impose and capping the rates of those taxes.

The federal government's authority includes jurisdiction to regulate interstate commerce and act to protect citizens from the actions or inactions of other states which have negative external effects. Environmental policy is an example of the federal government's greater exercise of power to limit negative externalities between more localized governments.

Historically, the Clean Air Act of 1990 and Clean Water Act of 1972 gave the federal government sweeping authority to protect the environment (Congressional Research Service, 2022; United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2023). Although these Acts required Congressional approval, federal environmental regulations do not always require Congressional approval. The use of administrative power to implement environmental regulations or allocation of power to the Environmental Protection Agency characterizes recent federal government expansion of power. Thus, the President, as chief executive for the federal government, may regulate certain activities that threaten the environment without consent from the states.

For example, beginning in 2009, the Obama Administration proposed an economic reform to move America's economy away from the use of fossil fuels. The executive branch of the federal government implemented the Clean Power Plan through administrative action in 2015. Under the Obama Administration, this executive action aimed to improve health conditions, save the average consumer money, and boost the renewable energy industry (Obama White House Archives, 2016). However, the use of an executive order to impose regulations on carbon dioxide emissions was, in itself, a centralization of powers because it circumvented Congressional approval. Executive orders act as laws but require no action by Congress (CIO.GOV, n.d.). These documents are "signed, written, and published directives from the President of the United States that manages operations of the federal government" (American Bar Association 2021).

By contrast, public education is an authority retained by the states. Schools do receive funding from each government level. However, state funding plays a crucial role in allocating funds per student. This money is mainly granted based on the school-age population of the jurisdiction, or total enrollment (Lou et al., 2018, p. 5). Virginia uses a formula, crafted in the 1980s, to calculate the minimum funding per district. The formula also includes a per student cost in each district.

Enrollment aspects create a per student amount which, “is then multiplied by the district’s enrollment to determine the program or funding stream’s funding. Finally, each funding stream or program’s overall amount is divided between state funding and required local funding from the district using a composite index of local ability to pay.” (Lou et al., 2018, p. 5). The localities’ ability to pay is calculated based upon “each district’s aggregate property wealth, adjusted gross income, and taxable retail sales per capita relative to the per capita figures for these metrics statewide” (Lou et al., 2018, p. 6). Importantly, Virginia delegates to its local governments the obligation to fund school operations, such as building maintenance and utilities (T. Lester, personal communication, November 22, 2023).

Tazewell County, like other coalfield counties, chose to meet many of its funding obligations by taxing coal. Coal severance and machinery and tools taxes paid by coal companies funded the localities educational obligations. In 2014, coal severance taxes alone provided over a million dollars in revenue (Davenport & Company, 2019, p. 23). The same year machinery and tools taxes were assessed around \$150 million (Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates, 2020, p. 7). Further, indirect revenues such as sales tax and real property taxes from those employed in the coal industry helped the county meet its obligations. With this framework, certain federal economic reforms severely reduced revenues for the county. County obligations, constrained by the state's limitations on taxing authority, were unable to replace the lost revenue with new taxes. They were limited to adjusting rates on existing taxes. Ultimately, they chose not to raise rates on existing taxes due to pressures from narrow interest groups disproportionately affected by the focused tax rate. This resulted in the schools closing for lack of funding. This case illustrates how the lack of coordination among levels of decentralized government caused local political polarization that resulted in a reduction of government services.

## Federal Economic Reform

Centralization of power to the federal executive office, seen through the Obama Administration’s policies regarding fossil fuels, decreased the abilities of other branches of government or government levels to lobby for programs to mitigate the concentrated negative impact on coal producing communities. To illustrate this theorized relationship, I first introduce the Cap-and-Trade 2009 proposed policy. This policy required congressional approval. Second, I define the Clean Power Plan executive order, which did not require congressional approval. Then, I assess the ramifications of this executive order on decentralized power, coal-dependent economies, and the ability of local jurisdictions to adjust to new regulations.

In 2009, the ACES, or the American Clean Energy and Security policy, appeared on the floor of the House. This ‘cap and trade’ policy aimed to limit the greenhouse gas emissions to below 2005 levels by 2050 (Wex Definitions Team, 2021). It was approved by the House 219-212 in June (Barr & Dominici, 2010). However, concerns over the economic effects halted the bill in

the Senate. According to a New York Times article, particular interest groups “portrayed it as an economy-killing tax” (Broder, 2010).

Six years later with no legislative movement to combat greenhouse gas emissions, the Obama Administration took action into its own hands, imposing an executive order essentially increasing the Environmental Protection Agency’s power. The Clean Power Plan (CPP) was an executive order implemented by the Obama Administration. President Obama’s Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed the CPP in 2014 and it was enacted in August 2015 (Beasley, 2023). By 2030, the EPA aimed to reduce carbon emissions by 32 percent from 2005 levels and meet three goals: protect American health, save American families money on their energy bills, and boost the economy by supporting renewable energy initiatives (Obama White House Archives, 2016). However, the executive branch was not empowered to appropriate any funding to coalfield communities to offset the consequences of the Clean Power Plan, as legislation could have done.

### Fiscal Impact of CPP on Southwest Virginia Coalfields

The Clean Power Plan did not make coal mining illegal. However, it made coal mining exceedingly expensive and difficult. The Southwest Virginia field had to adjust fast. The Southwest Virginia coalfield holds ninety-seven percent of coal in the state of Virginia in seven counties: Tazewell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell, Scott, Wise, and Lee (USGS.gov, 1952). The Commonwealth of Virginia had structured these coalfield local governments around coal related taxes to maintain their budgets, economies, and labor force. Coal severance taxes are a percentage of coal company gross receipts from sales paid to localities. A portion of this is allocated to the local government’s general fund (Teague, 2015). When the Obama Administration stopped issuing coal mining permits, coal production and coal tax revenue virtually ceased.

However, localities were limited to taxing powers set forth in state code. The state had either not foreseen the impact of CPP on local governments in the coalfields or had failed to react by granting additional taxing authority. Therefore, the inability of the county to adapt flowed from the Federal Government’s abrupt implementation of the reform without plans to assuage the negative impacts on coal communities and the state’s strict local financing structure. To assess the impact of the Obama Administration’s clean energy policy and the restraints of the state imposed financial structure on coal-dependent localities, I focus my research on Tazewell County. An assessment of the role of Virginia’s local government financing scheme sets the stage for how Tazewell County’s government finance is structured and how this structure limited the ability for Tazewell County to adjust to the economic impacts caused by the federal reform.

Prior to 2018, Tazewell County’s budget depended heavily on coal severance taxes as well as machinery and tools taxes paid by coal companies. The Obama Administration’s CPP decreased

its general fund revenues directly and indirectly. The direct decrease came first, when less coal mining meant less coal severance revenue and less coal machinery to tax; the indirect decrease came later as population decline decreased sales taxes and local real property values revenues, as coal miners moved elsewhere in search of employment. This led to a local financial crisis in 2018. To compensate for direct and indirect coal revenue losses, the county increased an existing tax, implemented new taxes on automobiles and held a public referendum to implement a third tax on restaurant dining, “meals tax.” However, the community’s polarized views on tax increases resulted in the failure of the proposed tax. The local governing body was unwilling to increase existing real and personal property taxes to sufficiently make up the difference. Absent the additional revenues, decreased local funding resulted in the closure of two elementary schools.

Therefore, Obama’s administrative actions against coal drastically decreased the coal severance tax revenue. Jean Jordan, funds administrator for Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority, stated in a 2015 interview, “Compared to fiscal year 2012, there’s probably been a 50 percent or more decline in coal severance taxes.” (Teague, 2015). Many members of coal-dependent communities blamed the Obama Administration’s clean energy initiatives. Thus, the federal economic reforms negatively impacted local governments in the coalfields directly and abruptly.

Tazewell County residents blame the Obama Administration for the decline in revenues yet failed to pass the proposed new tax to compensate for funding shortfalls. The role of the Obama Administration in the economic shifts of the county explain why locals blame the democratic party for the school closures. However, an overall assessment of the economic shift, political shift, and efforts to cushion the effects on public services economic downfall answer the question of who closed the schools.

#### *Local Fiscal Crisis and Polarization*

Tazewell County had structured its general fund around coal severance taxes and other taxes like machinery and equipment. The EPA’s regulatory closing of mines pursuant to the CPP executive order directly impacted a large portion of Tazewell County’s revenue sources. Additionally, the loss of jobs in the mines resulted in indirect economic impacts. Mass emigration meant less people shopping, resulting in lower sales tax revenue. A decreasing population meant homes going up for sale, resulting in lower property values, ultimately leading to lower real property tax revenue. The economy struggled under the federal regulations, prompting local leaders to explore new taxes to replace the vanishing revenue. To assess whether federal economic reforms, like the CPP, were the overwhelming cause of the school closures, we must probe the fiscal impact of the economic downturn on the locality.

The depth of the financial crisis is well documented by the governing Board of Supervisors. Davenport Financial Services, based in Richmond, VA, assessed the general fund revenues of Tazewell County. Overall, the county’s governmental funds cash and equivalents dropped 61% in

four years. Their historical trend analysis from 2014 to 2018 found decreases in coal severance taxes, general property taxes, other local taxes, and intergovernmental revenue across the period (Davenport & Company, 2019, p. 26, 23). To quantify the breadth of the decline, first we must examine not only changes in coal severance tax deductions but also the reduction of revenue from related taxes on machinery, equipment, etc. Additionally, the population shifts quantify the effects of job losses on the local fiscal budget as a whole, through the reduction in sales tax revenue. Third, the shifting population greatly affected the ability to tax real property.

### Direct Impact

The downturn of Tazewell County funding began with decreases in coal severance taxes and machinery and tools taxes. Coal severance taxes decreased 22.71% with over a half-million dollar drop between 2014 and 2015 according to the Davenport study (Davenport & Company, 2019, p. 23). According to an audit by Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates (an independent Certified Public Accountant LLC), machinery and tools taxes peaked in 2014 around \$150 million dollars. This tax revenue plummeted to just more than \$50 million dollars in 2019 (Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates, 2020, p. 7).

### Indirect Impacts

In addition to direct impacts on the coal related taxes, the CPP's shutdown or limitations on mines across the Southwest Virginia fields resulted in layoffs. Layoffs forced many families to move from the coal-dependent area in search of employment. In a 2023 interview, Tom Lester, former Board of Supervisor member, stated mine operators and miners as the prominent population in Western Tazewell County who left to work in surrounding counties (T. Lester, personal communication, November 22, 2023). So, while the overall state population grew 21.8%, Tazewell County's population decreased 11.2% from 2010 to 2021 as coal-mine related jobs were eliminated and the majority of the population decline came from those in the median labor force age group (35 to 49) (USA Facts, 2022). Essentially, Tazewell lost nearly a third of their labor force and the remaining population was aging. The workforce leaving and population aging greatly affects the taxable population, resulting in less sales tax and personal property tax revenue (Boyd, 2019, p. 4).

Additionally, local businesses depended on the public's purchase of their goods and services. However, the majority of the purchasing group left the county seeking alternative employment. The remaining citizens had less money in their pocket as well because they were either laid off by the coal mine or because they were laid off by employers whose businesses depended on sales revenue. Overall ,the loss of disposable income meant less discretionary spending resulting in a decrease in sales tax revenue (T. Lester, personal communication, November 22, 2023).

A decreasing population also increased the real property for sale. The supply of homes exceeded the demand, thus the property value decreased. The decrease in property value resulted in a decrease in collectable real property taxes. In 2014, Tazewell County received over \$27 million

in general property taxes. This dropped dramatically in 2015 to \$24 million. By 2018 the general property tax revenue decreased 2.71% (Davenport & Company, 2019, p. 23). These decreases in revenue resulted in an overall decrease in county expenditures per the Davenport Industries study. Davenport Industries reported a 1.41% decrease in total expenditures and a 4.95% decrease in education funding from 2014 to 2018 (Davenport & Company, 2019, p. 24). In sum, the county's total governmental cash dropped from over \$14 million to just over \$5.5 million, a 61% decrease from FY2014 to FY2018 (Davenport & Company, 2019, p. 26).

The Obama Administration's CPP failed to address the indirect fiscal impact of the regulations. The direct loss of coal severance and machinery and tools taxes could be predicted based on fiscal budgets from previous years. The indirect impacts of the CPP became evident quickly in the overall tax revenue loss, which played a major role in the funding of public services, such as education. Replacing the revenue loss would require innovative thinking from local government officials.

### **Did Economic Reforms Necessarily Lead to School Closures?**

A Board of Supervisors is the elected governing body of a county with powers enumerated in Section 15.2 of the Code of Virginia (Va. Code § 15.2-802, 2023). One of these powers is the implementation of local taxes. To replace direct and indirect revenue loss, the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors proposed three tax changes: increasing real property tax, implementing an automobile tax, and implementing a meals tax. Increasing real property taxes places the burden on property owners. Real property owners opposed the increase because the economy around them was collapsing while they are asked to pay more. Interest groups, such as the Farm Bureau, pushed against the real property tax increase. The Board bowed to Farm Bureau's pressure, lessening the real property tax increase and adding a license tax on automobiles. Finally, the Board sought implementation of a discretionary tax on food and beverages sold in restaurants, "meals tax." However, state regulations required a public referendum for implementation. In November 2018, the public voted down the tax. The following sections provides an in-depth discussion of these tax decisions and the limitations on local government power to support their economy.

### **Options Dictated by the State**

However, the increase did not last for long. On August 7, 2018, the Board reconvened voting four to one to reduce the increase in real property taxes imposed six weeks earlier. At the August meeting they then implemented a new automobile license tax in hopes of spreading the tax burden to non-property owners.

Discussion to increase real property taxes at the June 28th session began an hour and a half into the meeting. A divided Board spoke in an effort to persuade their constituents. Supervisor Mike Hymes, representing the Southern district, supported the proposed increase stating, "It's not a tax

issue, it's a revenue issue... We know and the school system knows many students have you lost because people moved away because there (weren't) any jobs. I believe we need to raise the tax rate... I don't think spending it on the school system is a waste" (*Board of Supervisors: June 28, 2018, 1:37:00*). Supervisor Travis Hackworth representing the Northwestern district, on the other hand, plead for no increase based on the poverty rate and many citizens' inability to make the existing tax payments (*Board of Supervisors: June 28, 2018, 1:39:47*). In the end, the motion was adopted three to two, with Supervisors Hackworth and Lester opposing. The Board approved a five-cent increase moving the local real property tax levy to \$0.60 per one hundred dollars in value (*Board of Supervisors: June 28, 2018*).

In a 2023 interview, Mr. Lester recalled a conversation with Supervisor Hymes regarding persistent phone calls from farm owners in the Southern district protesting the tax increase (T. Lester, personal communication, November 22, 2023). Pressure from landowners, in particular the Farm Bureau, resulted in the reappearance of real property tax on the August 7th meeting agenda.

Unlike the June 28th meeting, this session focused on reducing the real property tax and implementing an automobile tax. While numerous community members questioned the decrease, Bill Gillespie, a member of the Farm Bureau and Southern district resident, supported reducing the rate. Mr. Gillespie stated his support, "to spread the burden out more evenly for people that use services in Tazewell County" (BoS August 7, 2018). However, President of the Tazewell County Education Association, Greg Deskins, spoke in support of maintaining the \$0.60 real property tax increase (BoS August 7, 2018). It became a debate between the Farm Bureau, landowners, and the Education Association. Thus, to appease property owners and spread the impact, the Board voted four to one to reduce real property taxes to \$0.58 per one hundred dollars in value as well as impose a twenty dollar per vehicle annual automobile license fee (*Board of Supervisors August 7, 2018*). The passed combined action predicts a net revenue increase of \$136,000 (*Board of Supervisors: August 7, 2018 1:58:37*).

Real property taxes and automobile license taxes are implementable without public approval. According to the Code of Virginia, the implementation of these taxes only requires a majority vote by the Board of Supervisors. By passing these initiatives the county cushioned some of the direct and indirect impacts of the coal industry implosion. Mr. Lester, discussing his opinion on the decision in the 2023 interview, found the August proposal more equitable in the Western district where a majority of the population owned personal property as opposed to real property (T. Lester, personal communication, November 22, 2023). The Board believed they created a compromise between interest groups while increasing tax revenue. However, the net revenue increase created at the June 28 and August 7, 2018 meetings failed to generate funds to save the schools.

### State Tax Code Limitations

The idea of a meals tax, first proposed during the August 7, 2018 Board of Supervisors meeting, aimed to catch tax revenue from tourists spending money eating at restaurants in the county (*Board of Supervisors: August 7, 2018 2:07:35*). The tax is a widely distributed, discretionary tax aimed at non-residents. The meals tax is defined as a county tax on food and beverages sold by a restaurant to not exceed four percent of the amount charged. While this tax would greatly increase county revenue, a county tax of this type, defined in Section 58.1-3833 of the Code of Virginia, is subject to a public vote. The Board agreed to move forward and hold a public vote in 2018.

Voters in the November 2018 referendum did not pass the meals tax, but barely. Overall, 6,272 voters agreed with its implementation, but 6,929 voted against. The precinct breakdown of the vote reveals some interesting information regarding the demographic agreements with additional taxation. The Eastern and Southern districts supported a meals tax, but their voting in the subsequent elections did not support a general agreement with increasing taxes (Tazewell County Registrar, 2018).

Although the meals tax barely failed, local sentiments over the idea of increasing taxes became evident in the following election years. Three board members who voted in favor of the larger real property tax increase lost their seats. D.M. “Mike” Hymes lost his seat representing the Southern district in 2021. Charles A. Stacy, Eastern district, and Margaret A. “Maggie” Asbury, Northern district, lost their respective seats in 2023. The two board members who initially voted against the tax increase now hold positions related to the state government. T. Travis Hackworth, previously representing the Northwestern district, was elected as District 38’s Virginia State Senator (Tazewell County Registrar, 2023). Tom Lester serves as legislative assistant for Delegate Will Morefield (T. Lester, personal communication, November 22 2023). The political ramifications of supporting versus opposing increased taxes is evident - the public does not support the governmental implementation of tax increases.

### *School Closures*

With an overall decrease in population, the school-age population decreased as well: 8,332 in 2000 to 6,666 in 2018. This is highly relevant because the state calculates school funding based on the school-age population. In Tazewell County, the educational funding dropped by 4.95% from 2014 to 2018 (Davenport & Company, 2019, p. 24).<sup>1</sup> The Bluefield Daily telegraph published an article stating, “Each child lost equals \$6,000 lost in state funding, and when as many as 200 students leave the school system, it has an impact.” (Jordan, 2018). Combining an overall county revenue decrease with decreased state school funding presented an issue. In June

---

<sup>1</sup> Tazewell County faced other financial issues not discussed in this paper regarding emergency service expenditures. For this reason they increased their Public Safety expenditures by 3.43% and Health and Wellness expenditures by 1.59% from 2014 to 2018 (Davenport & Company, 2019, p. 24).

2018, School Board members faced a tough decision the public would not support: schools must close.

The School Board voted to close Raven and Springville Elementary schools in the event they did not get additional funding. Raven Elementary School, housing 148 students in 2016, closed following a four to one vote (Public School Review, 2006; Jordan, 2018). Springville, housing 112 students in 2016, closed following a three to two vote (Public School Review, 2006; Jordan, 2018). While the board members did not desire school closures, the public viewed the votes as a quick decision to create a balanced budget despite a perceived negative impact on their child's education (Jordan, 2018). President of the Tazewell County Education Association, Greg Deskins, stated at the School Board meeting, "...loss of schools in the name of efficiency is not something to be celebrated" (Jordan, 2018).

### **Greater Implications**

Tazewell County's closure of two public schools in 2018 is a case study of the role of decentralized power and provides a stepping stone for more research on the effects of state structure and federal policy on local government.

Decentralization is the delegation of power from a central authority to lower levels of government in an effort to make government more responsive, efficient and responsive to the population. Utilizing administrative power eliminates input from representative officials in Congress whose representees will experience the effects of the imposed regulations in their economy. The centralization of power in this manner had negative ramifications on the landscape of Tazewell County. Had Obama negotiated a less aggressive legislative action, representatives of coalfields in Congress could have included financial relief for impacted communities. Acting purely administratively, Obama did not address these issues. In this sense of centralized, executive federal power caused the closure. The same ramifications can be assumed in similar jurisdictions or under similar conditions of centralized power. Further research on other coalfield localities and assessing environmental policy impacts when passed legislatively may support this thesis.

Obama's failure to address the negative economic impacts on coal communities alone did not dictate closure of the schools. In theory, decentralization should have allowed Virginia and Tazewell County to adapt. However, decentralization in this case meant the response was uncoordinated because the state also failed to act.

Analysis of state and federal officials' experiences at lower levels of government may highlight understanding of local authority. Mr. Lester, reflecting on how his time as a Board of Supervisor affects his current position as a state legislative assistant for Delegate Will Morefield stated, "We ask how the counties will look at things because they are the ones that do the heavy lifting. We pass the laws; we pass the ordinances... but they are the ones that execute it." (T. Lester,

personal communication, November 22, 2023). Virginia's requirement that the meals tax be enacted by referendum meant two things. First, pressure from the teacher's association to keep the real property tax increase in place was amplified because alternative tax sources were limited. Similarly, pressure from landowners represented by the Farm Bureau were amplified. County officials could not simply substitute the meals tax revenue for real property tax revenue without approval by the public at large. Virginia's state level failure to react to the crisis caused by the federal reforms thus limited the county's ability to respond.

In regard to the ability for a local government to diversify their revenue stream, support for the generalizability of my thesis is supported by the Virginia tax code change of 2020. Until 2020, Section 58.1-3833 of the Code of Virginia required a public referendum to levy a county tax on food and beverages sold by a restaurant. However, the 2020 Code of Virginia amends the regulation, nullifying the requirement through the elimination of section D. of the code (Justia US Law, 2023). The amendment of Section 58.1-3833 demonstrates the coordination which was lacking in the case study and supports my thesis. Nullifying the referendum requirement effectively allows local governments to diversify their revenue streams. Further research on local government's ability to influence changes in state tax codes would provide information on the degree of influence local jurisdictions have on state governments. Finally, research on Tazewell County raises greater questions of the longevity of local economies dependent on disappearing industries. Where do these localities, dependent on blue collar jobs, find themselves as the industrial age comes to a close? How do these shifts alter the political landscape and influential interest groups?

## Conclusion

This paper highlights how Tazewell County changed drastically following the Obama Administration's environmental policy change. The federal government failed to assess the ramifications of its policy and did not provide financial relief to localities affected by the new regulations. Tazewell County's main industry imploded, and its population decreased resulting in overall decreased general fund revenue. A decrease in general fund revenue forced the Board of Supervisors to seek different tax revenue sources. They proposed and passed a real property tax increase June 28, 2018, but pressure to spread the taxation burden resulted in a two-cent reduction of the increase and implementation of an automobile license tax on August 7, 2018. Further pressure resulted in the proposal of a meals tax in November 2018, which required a referendum with public approval. The public failed to pass tax change and local officials lacked the ability to diversify their tax base. These compounding issues resulted in Tazewell County lacking the funds to meet their fiscal obligations. Additionally, population reduction due to job loss negatively impacted school funding at the state level. The local School Board lacked the state and local funding to maintain existing schools. The closure of two elementary schools in Tazewell County in 2019 exemplifies how a lack of coordination within a decentralized government structure can significantly affect local communities.

## References

- American Bar Association. (2021, January 25). *What Is an Executive Order?*  
[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public\\_education/publications/teaching-legal-docs/what-is-an-executive-order/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/publications/teaching-legal-docs/what-is-an-executive-order/)
- ARTICLE XI. - CIGARETTE TAX | Code of Ordinances | Tazewell County, VA.* (2022). Municode Library.  
[https://library.municode.com/va/tazewell\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=CO\\_CH18TA\\_ARTXICITA\\_S18-226EFDA](https://library.municode.com/va/tazewell_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CO_CH18TA_ARTXICITA_S18-226EFDA)
- Bardhan, P. (2002). Decentralization of Government and Development. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 16(4), 185-205.  
<https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/089533002320951037>
- Barr, C. D., & Dominici, F. (2010, January 6). Cap and Trade Legislation for Greenhouse Gas Emissions. *JAMA Network*.  
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/185133>
- Beasley, B. (2023). *Clean Power Plan: Timeline of Key Events*. Bipartisan Policy Center.  
<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/clean-power-plan-timeline-of-key-events/>
- Board of Supervisors: August 7, 2018.* (2018, August 8). Tazewell County, Virginia. Retrieved November 21, 2023, from  
<https://tazewellcountyva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/August-7-2018-BOS-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>
- Board of Supervisors: August 7, 2018 [Meeting Audio].* (2018, August 8). Tazewell, Virginia. Retrieved November 21, 2023, from  
<http://tazewellcountyva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/8-7-2018-BOS-Audio.mp3>
- Board of Supervisors: June 28, 2018.* (2018, June 29). Tazewell County, Virginia.  
<https://tazewellcountyva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Website-Minutes-June-28-2018.pdf>
- Board of Supervisors: June 28, 2018 [Meeting Audio].* (2018, June 29). Tazewell County, Virginia.  
<http://tazewellcountyva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/8-7-2018-BOS-Audio.mp3>
- Boyd, D. (2019). *Demographics, Aging, and State Taxes*. Pew Charitable Trusts.  
[https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2020/01/demographics\\_aging\\_and\\_state\\_taxes.pdf](https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2020/01/demographics_aging_and_state_taxes.pdf)
- Broder, J. M. (2010, March 25). *Tracing the Demise of Cap and Trade*. The New York Times.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/26/science/earth/26climate.html>

CIO.GOV. (n.d.). *3.1 Executive Orders (EOs)*.

<https://www.cio.gov/handbook/other-it-authorities/executive-orders/>

USGS.gov. (1952, January 1). *Coal resources of Virginia | U.S. Geological Survey*.

<https://www.usgs.gov/publications/coal-resources-virginia>

Congressional Research Service. (2022, September 13). Clean Air Act: A Summary of the Act and Its Major Requirements. CRS Reports.

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL30853>

Davenport & Company. (2019, February 5). Tazewell County, Virginia [Financial Review].

Dyvik, E. H. (2022, August 5). *Median age of the global labor force in years 2025*. Statista.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/996530/median-age-global-labor-force-years/>

Handwerk, B. (2013, June 27). *Obama Unveils Climate Change Strategy: End of Line for U.S. Coal Power?* National Geographic.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/130625-obama-unveils-climate-change-strategy>

Folett, K. (2016, Sept. 5). *Obama Kept His Promise, 83,000 Coal Jobs Lost And 400 Mines Shuttered*. The Daily Caller.

<https://dailycaller.com/2016/09/05/obama-kept-his-promise-83000-coal-jobs-lost-and-400-mines-shuttered/>

Jordan, G. (2018, June 29). *Tazewell supervisors pass increase in taxes*. Bluefield Daily Telegraph.

[https://www.bdtonline.com/news/tazewell-supervisors-pass-increase-in-taxes/article\\_992b1604-7b3e-11e8-b8e3-f3401ad39011.html](https://www.bdtonline.com/news/tazewell-supervisors-pass-increase-in-taxes/article_992b1604-7b3e-11e8-b8e3-f3401ad39011.html)

Justia US Law. (2006). *2006 Code of Virginia § 58.1-3833 - County food and beverage tax*.

<https://law.justia.com/codes/virginia/2006/toc5801000/58.1-3833.html>

Justia US Law. (2023, June 16). V. YouTube.

<https://law.justia.com/codes/virginia/2020/title-58-1/chapter-38/section-58-1-3833/>

Lou, C., Blagg, K., Rosenboom, V., Lee, V., & Mudrazija, S. (2018, December). School District Funding in Virginia. *Urban Institute*.

[https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99540/school\\_district\\_funding\\_in\\_virginia\\_0.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99540/school_district_funding_in_virginia_0.pdf)

News Channel 11 Staff. (2018, June 16). V. YouTube.

<https://www.wjhl.com/news/regional/virginia/tazewell-county-citizens-vote-down-meal-tax-referendum-richlands-passes-mixed-beverage-sales>

Obama White House Archives. (2016). *President Obama's Plan to Fight Climate Change*.

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/president-obama-climate-action-plan>

Owens, C. (2018, November 6). *Voters reject 4 percent meals tax referendum in Tazewell County*. Bluefield Daily Telegraph. from  
[https://www.bdtonline.com/news/voters-reject-4-percent-meals-tax-referendum-in-tazewell-county/article\\_b8676bfc-e237-11e8-a7a0-b3a6c1de822d.html](https://www.bdtonline.com/news/voters-reject-4-percent-meals-tax-referendum-in-tazewell-county/article_b8676bfc-e237-11e8-a7a0-b3a6c1de822d.html)

Public School Review. (2006). *Springville Elementary School (Closed 2021) - North Tazewell, VA*. <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/springville-elementary-school-profile/24630>

Public School Review. (2016). *Raven Elementary School (Closed 2021) - Raven, VA*.  
<https://www.publicschoolreview.com/raven-elementary-school-profile>

Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates. (2020, January 14). *County of Tazewell, Virginia [Audit Presentation]*.

Search the Law – Virginia Rules. (2022). Virginia Rules. Retrieved November 21, 2023, from  
<https://virginiarules.org/resources-and-publications/search-the-law/>

Tazewell County Registrar. (2018, November 6). *2018 Meals Tax Referendum Results [Precinct Data]*. Virginia.

Tazewell County Registrar. (2023). *Board of Supervisors Election Results [2013 - 2023]*. Virginia.

Teague, A. (2015, February 19). *Coal*. SWVA Today.

[https://swvatoday.com/collection\\_4c77647a-b864-11e4-a9cf-9776ec50a16b.html#2](https://swvatoday.com/collection_4c77647a-b864-11e4-a9cf-9776ec50a16b.html#2)

Truong, D. (2018, June 16). V. YouTube.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/when-the-heartbeat-stops-rural-schools-close-as-opportunity-and-residents-flee/2018/10/20/bfc2d06a-b52f-11e8-a2c5-3187f427e253\\_story.htm](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/when-the-heartbeat-stops-rural-schools-close-as-opportunity-and-residents-flee/2018/10/20/bfc2d06a-b52f-11e8-a2c5-3187f427e253_story.htm)

United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2023, June 22). Summary of the Clean Water Act | US EPA. Environmental Protection Agency.

<https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-water-act>

USA Facts. (2022, July). *Our Changing Population*. from

<https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/virginia/county/tazewell-county/?endDate=2021-01-01&startDate=2000-01-01>

Va. Code § 15.2-802. *Powers of county vested in board of supervisors; membership, election, terms, etc., of board; vacancies; powers of chairman*. (2023).

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title15.2/chapter8/section15.2-802/>

Wex Definitions Team. (2021, June). *American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009*. Legal Information Institute. Law.Cornell.Edu.  
[https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/american\\_clean\\_energy\\_and\\_security\\_act\\_of\\_2009](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/american_clean_energy_and_security_act_of_2009)

**Title:** Misinformed but Decisive: Public Opinion and the Politics of Ukraine Aid

**Date Written:** December 2023

**Author:** Konstantin Shchelkunov

---

Author's Note: This article was written in December 2023. All data on congressional foreign aid allocations and U.S. public opinion reflect information available up to that date. The analysis does not account for developments related to the 2024 U.S. presidential election or any subsequent shifts in executive policy or public attitudes toward foreign aid, including assistance to Ukraine.

## I. Foreign Aid for Ukraine

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the former Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic attained autonomous sovereignty as the nation of Ukraine. The Orange Revolution of 2004 indicated a continuation of tense relations between Russia and Ukraine, as protestors alleged a corrupted election of pro-Russian president Victor Yanukovych. The Supreme Court of Ukraine ultimately annulled the election results and a revote was held, with Ukrainians electing pro-West candidate Viktor Yushchenko. However, after Yanukovych claimed victory over Yushchenko in the following, 2010 presidential election, Russo-Ukrainian relations began to escalate when Yanukovych rejected a European Union (EU) association agreement in favor of a Russia-backed deal. Then the Euromaidan crisis took place in 2014, where Crimea was annexed by Russia while Donetsk and Luhansk sought some level of autonomous governance separate from the Ukrainian government given the demands of Russian separatist forces. This status was established under the Minsk II agreement. Relations reached a boiling point in February 2022, when Russia declared that Ukraine had allegedly violated the Minsk II agreement, formally recognized the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic, and invaded Ukraine.

### *U.S Foreign Aid Policy for Ukraine (2001 – Present)*

United States-backed foreign aid to Ukraine started as early as 2001 in the form of security assistance, humanitarian assistance, economic and other assistance. Increased U.S. foreign aid began in 2014, following the Euromaidan conflict, where the United States pledged an additional \$220 million in assistance to Ukraine in 2016 under the Obama Administration (Whitehouse, 2016). Under the Trump administration, Congress approved \$47 million assistance package aimed at providing Ukraine with lethal weapons in 2017, culminating in a total of \$1.5 billion in security assistance from 2014 through 2019 (Gould & Altman, 2019).

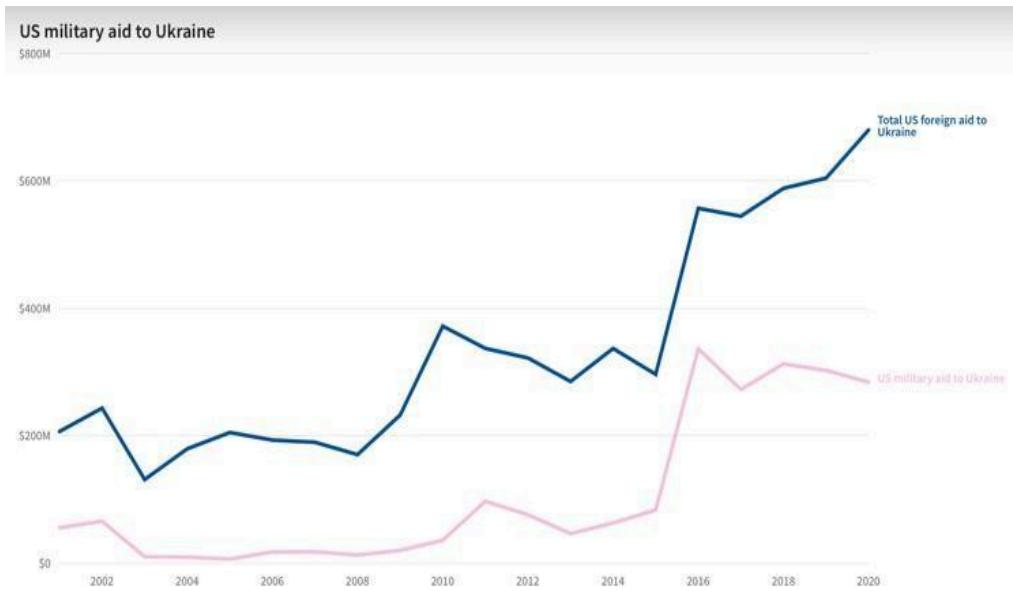


Figure 1: Total U.S. foreign aid to Ukraine. Note the increase in 2016 due to an increase in foreign aid by the Obama administration (USA Facts, 2022)

Following the escalation in 2022, Congress has passed four additional emergency spending packages for foreign aid in Ukraine totaling \$113 billion (Hoffman et al., 2023). Of those four spending packages, since 2014, “\$46.7 billion has been committed as security assistance with more than \$43.9 billion” under the Biden Administration, which includes funds to strengthen military capacity in Ukraine (Arabia et al., 2023). Humanitarian aid includes provisions such as food and shelter, as well as emergency healthcare and protection services, while economic assistance was attributed to bolster support for basic government services as well as a mechanism to finance economic penalties inflicted upon the Russian Federation (Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, 2023). The spending has been appropriated across a wide array of bureaus and government agencies, with an average 54.7% appropriated to the Department of Defense, the U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID] at an average 32.8%, and the State Department at an average 8.8%, amongst other government agencies, across all four spending packages (Hoffman et al., 2023).



Figure 2: U.S foreign assistance to Ukraine in terms of the obligations funding phase ([foreignassistance.gov](http://foreignassistance.gov), 2023)

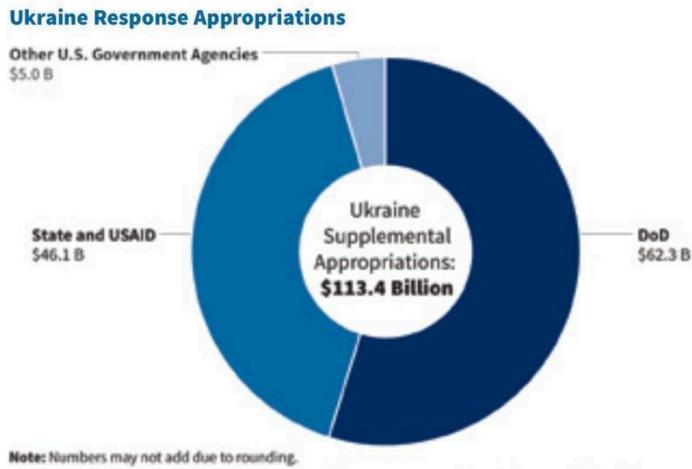


Figure 3: U.S spending appropriations across government agencies (Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, " 2023)

### History of Congressional Foreign Aid

Although informal sources of foreign aid had been administered by the U.S since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the process of formalizing assistance to foreign nations began following the Second World War under the Truman administration. The Marshall Plan, named after then Secretary of State George Marshall, paved the road for Truman to establish a foreign aid program in 1949, following the Four Point Program that aimed to promote capitalism and bolster US markets by investing into developing countries (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2023). Foreign aid, however, was codified a decade later under the Kennedy administration through the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. USAID was also established by Kennedy's Executive Order 10973, incorporating precursor organizations that had been created to promote the provisions of the Truman's program prior (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Foreign aid, primarily through USAID, instituted different objectives throughout the decades following its establishment; focusing on human needs in the 1970s, free markets in the 1980s, sustainability

and democracy in the 1990s, and war and rebuilding in the 2000s (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2023).

Dissecting the objectives across their respective decades, it is clear that the United States employs foreign aid as a foreign policy tool to promote its own interests abroad. When attempting to contain communism during the Cold War, foreign aid was dispersed to countries in Latin America as well as South Korea and Taiwan (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). The Middle East played an essential role in international power politics both during and after the Cold War, as the U.S procured investments into Israel and Egypt prior to and following the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. This region remained a foreign aid ‘hot spot’ throughout the United States’ war against terrorism campaign (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). The war on drugs bolstered foreign aid into Latin America whilst the fight against the AIDS pandemic funneled U.S. funds into Africa (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). Nonetheless, when comparing foreign aid spending on Ukraine relative to other historic foreign policy campaigns, spending levels for Ukraine are unprecedented for the United States. Aid to Ukraine takes up a 0.33 percent share of U.S gross domestic product, overtaking 1979 aid to Israel which represented a 0.18 percent share of U.S gross domestic product at the time (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023).

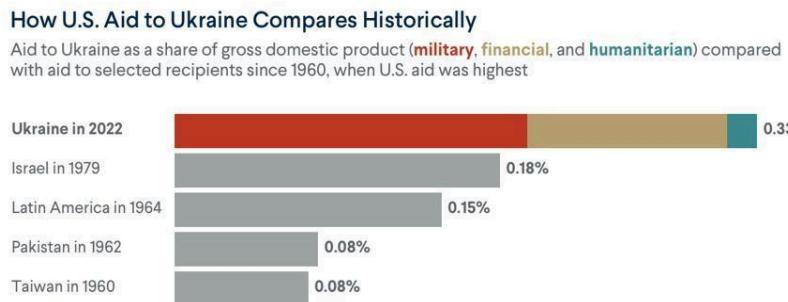


Figure 3: History of U.S foreign aid campaigns (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023)

### A Global Initiative

Second to the EU, the United States is the largest contributor in foreign aid for Ukraine at \$46.6 billion in military assistance, \$26.4 billion in financial assistance, and \$3.9 billion in humanitarian aid (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). Adjusted for GDP of each country, however, the United States is ranked 17<sup>th</sup> out of the top 20 donor countries, EU share inclusive (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). The unprecedented rise in foreign aid spending by EU Member States is attributed to Russian military aggression in 2022, which increased costs of housing Ukrainian refugees (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023). Also noteworthy is the geographic disposition of the top donor countries relative to their GDP, as they tend to be located on the eastern frontier of Europe in closest proximity to the conflict,

signaling interests other than altruistic concerns for the humanitarian implications of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.

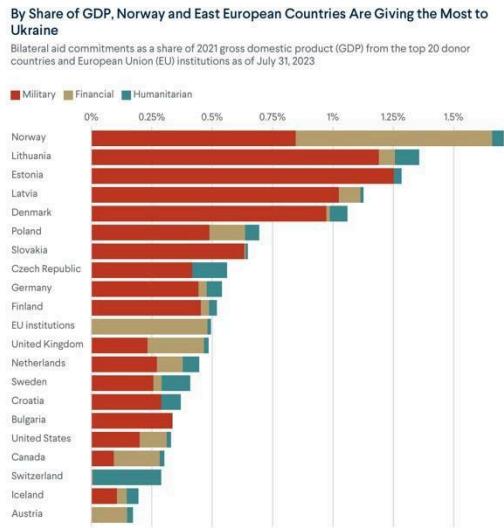


Figure 4: Foreign aid as percent share of GDP by top 20 donor countries (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023)

## II. Public Opinion

### Public Opinion on U.S Foreign Aid

The U.S. constituency, in general, appears to have differing perceptions of the quantity, effectiveness, and purpose of foreign aid issued by the United States. Americans tend to overestimate the amount of the U.S budget spent on foreign aid, while also declaring that the optimal percentage of the budget to be spent is nearly ten percentage points larger than actual spending (Ingram, 2019). The purposes of foreign aid also tend to be contested in public opinion polls: foreign aid that is used for strategic purposes is viewed less favorably than that of humanitarian assistance (Ingram, 2019). Contentions also exist over the efficacy of foreign aid, particularly as it relates to allocating funds to governments overseas. Perceptions exist that suggest that foreign aid, predominantly economic assistance, is unregulated and may land in the hands of corrupt governments (Ingram, 2019). The share of U.S foreign aid committed to foreign governments [approximately twenty-one percent in 2018] (Ingram, 2019), however, is indeed highly regulated by U.S agencies such as USAID, the Department of State, and Department of Defense to name a few (Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, 2023). Gathering from evidence found in public opinion polls, it appears that Americans, on average, are uninformed if not misinformed about issues related to foreign aid. This may be driven by partisan-motivated reasoning or discrepancies in mass media coverage.

When extrapolating analysis to foreign policy more generally, a slight majority [fifty-three percent] of U.S. adults offer that is best for the U.S. to remain active in world affairs

(Pew Research Center, 2019). Since the 1990s, diplomacy has been viewed as an effective foreign policy mechanism to maintain peace between approximately sixty to seventy-five percent of Americans (Pew Research Center, 2019). Americans have also been divided over foreign policy versus the prioritization of domestic policy interests, with domestic priorities remaining the American public opinion majority until about 2017-2018 (Pew Research Center, 2019).

### Most Democrats say playing an active role in world affairs benefits the nation

% who say ...

We should pay It's best for the future less attention to of our country to be problems overseas active in world affairs



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 3-15, 2019.

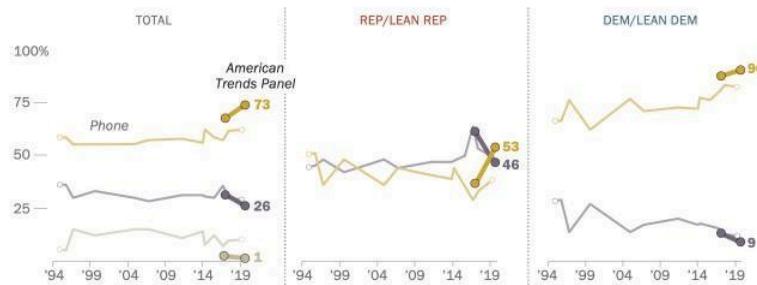
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 5: American public opinion on being active in world affairs (Pew Research Center, 2019)

### Democrats overwhelmingly say diplomacy, rather than military strength, is the best way to ensure peace; Republicans are more divided

% who say ...

- Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace
- The best way to ensure peace is through military strength
- Both/Neither/DK/Ref.



PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 6: American public opinion on diplomacy versus military strength as a foreign policy tool to ensure peace (Pew Research Center, 2019)

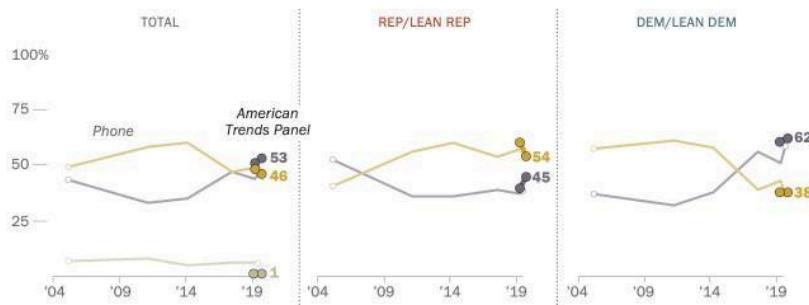
**Public is divided on whether it is best for the U.S. to be active in world affairs, or to pay less attention to overseas problems and focus more on problems at home**

% who say ...

◐ We should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on problems here at home

◑ It's best for the future of our country to be active in world affairs

◐ Both/Neither/DK/Ref.



Note: DK/Ref and other volunteered responses for Republicans and Democrats not shown.

Source: American Trends Panel online survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 3-15, 2019. Phone survey conducted Sept. 5-16, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 7: American public opinion on foreign policy versus the prioritization of domestic policy interests (Pew Research Center, 2019)

### Public Opinion on U.S Foreign Aid for Ukraine

Nearly at the two-year mark of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the American public appears to have shifted in their support of foreign aid for Ukraine. When asked about the level of U.S. support for Ukraine more broadly, initial American sentiments around the start of the conflict remained at a majority of “not enough support” [thirty eight percent] followed by the “right amount of support” at thirty six percent (Younis, 2023). Nearly a year and half later, a strong majority believed that the U.S is providing “too much support” [forty-one percent] to Ukraine (Younis, 2023).

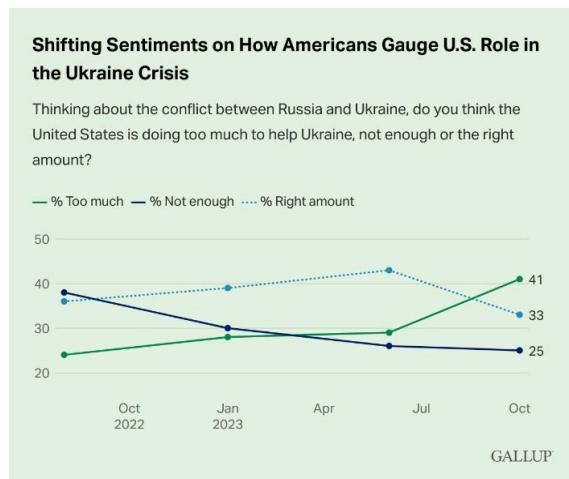
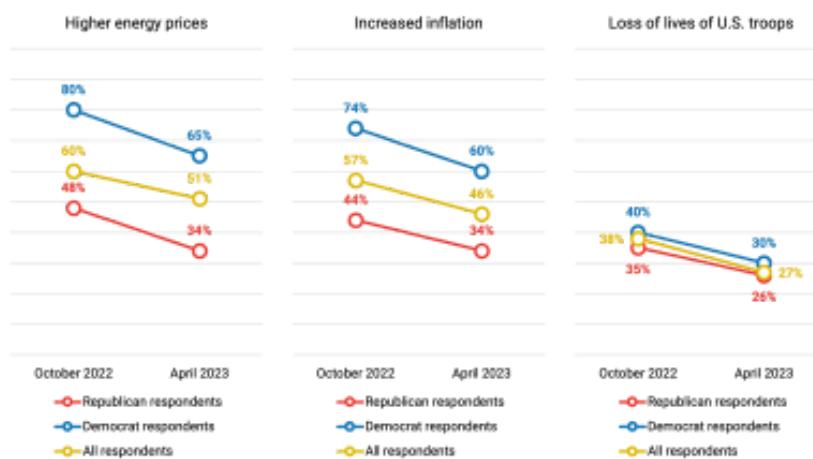


Figure 8: American perception of U.S support over time (Younis, 2023)

Another Gallup public opinion poll conducted in October 2023 indicated that a majority of Americans [sixty-one percent] believe there should be a limit on financial support for Ukraine (Younis, 2023). Given the United States' overwhelming foreign aid campaign for Ukraine relative to other European counterparts [excluding the EU as a singular institution], it appears that, on average, American constituents followed the heed of their congressional representatives and their attempts to limit foreign assistance to Ukraine. This is also marked by a change in willingness of Americans to bear the burden of financial support efforts for Ukraine. The average American, regardless of their party affiliation, has dropped nearly nine to fifteen percentage points in willingness to endure higher energy prices, increased inflation, and loss of lives of U.S. troops (Shibley, 2023). Experts suggest that this phenomenon may be correlated with the public's perception of the longevity and outcome of the war, with a decrease in belief of Russian failure and decrease in belief of Ukrainian success (Shibley, 2023). The prolific impact of the foreign aid-oriented policy versus domestic policy prioritization debate has evidently contributed to waning public support for foreign aid for Ukraine.

FIGURE 5  
Q. How much of a cost are you prepared to see the U.S. pay in helping Ukraine?  
(those who said a lot/somewhat)



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll, October 7-10, 2022 and March 27 - April 5, 2023

BROOKINGS

*Figure 9: American willingness of bearing domestic burden due to foreign aid-related contributions for Ukraine (Shibley, 2023)*

#### Partisan-line Voting

Following mass political polarization, foreign aid has become a contentious topic of debate between Republicans and Democrats. Conservative-leaning tendencies toward isolation and domestic-focused policy initiatives contrast with liberal-leaning tendencies toward diplomacy and involvement in global affairs. Democrats, over time, have remained avid advocates for diplomatic efforts in terms of foreign policy implementation mechanisms while Republicans were more divided, with a recent increase in military strength as the best measure to

ensure peace (Pew Research Center, 2019). Republicans and Democrats also differed on policy priorities in the past half of a decade, with a majority of Republicans [fifty-four percent] in support of concentrating on problems here at home while a majority of Democrats [sixty-two percent] favored being active in world affairs (Pew Research Center, 2019).

This trend is no different as it pertains to U.S. foreign aid for Ukraine. On average, Republican/conservative-identifying Americans tended to be more skeptical of foreign aid for Ukraine, indicative of a forty to sixty-five percentage range over the two years since the conflict who determined “too much aid” was being provided to Ukraine while Democrats remained below fifteen percent by the same measure (Younis, 2023). Republican-aligned Americans were also more likely [eighty four percent] to indicate that there should be a limit on financial support relative to a thirty four percent measure by Democratic-aligned Americans (Younis, 2023). A majority of Democrats [fifty-one percent] were also willing to provide foreign aid funding for Ukraine for as long as it takes relative to the Republican majority [sixty two percent] who preferred a shorter time quota of one to two years (Shibley, 2023).

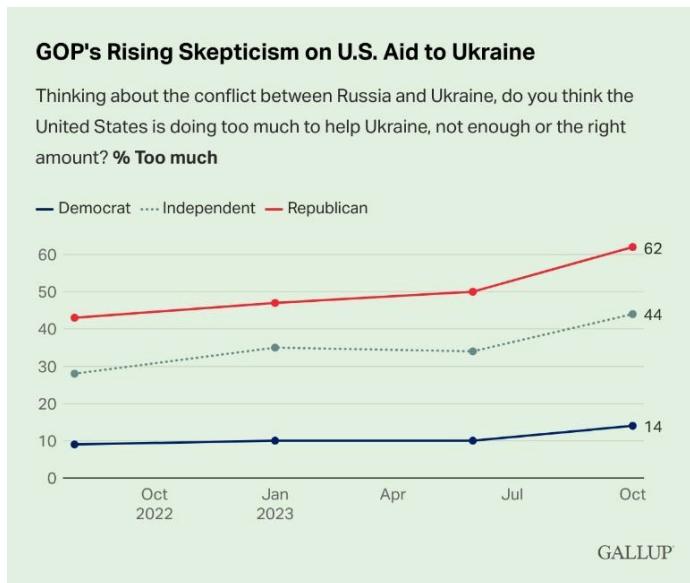
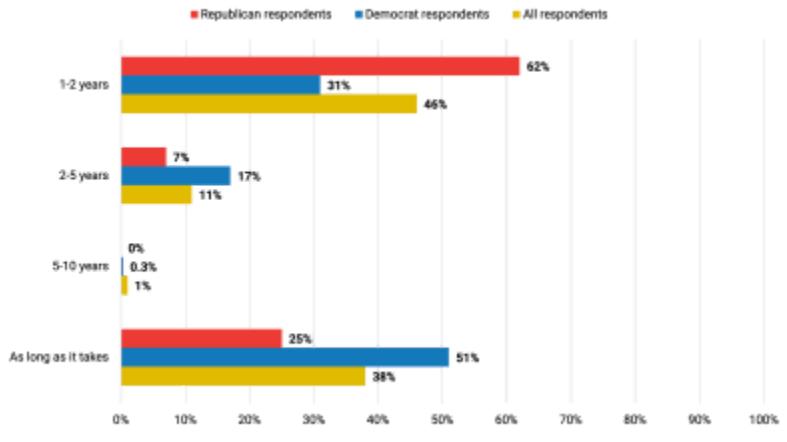


Figure 10: Percentage of Americans who believe the U.S is doing too much to help Ukraine (Younis, 2023)

FIGURE 2  
Q. How long should the U.S. stay the course in supporting Ukraine?



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll, March 27 - April 5, 2023

BROOKINGS

*Figure 11: American support for longevity of U.S. foreign aid for Ukraine (Shibley, 2023)*

Nonetheless, recent public opinion polls notice some convergence across party lines. Americans affiliated to both political parties have an increased perception that too much foreign aid is being provided to Ukraine [refer to Figure 10] (Younis, 2023) and have a decreased willingness to endure domestic burdens [refer to Figure 9] (Shibley, 2023).

### III. Public Opinion and Public Policy

Contrary to initial analyses of the influence of public policy on public opinion and vice versa, partisan-motivated reasoning remains a strong indicator of American public opinion on many policy issues, including U.S. foreign aid for Ukraine. With a misinformed public on the nature of the structure of foreign aid in America, alongside of detailed awareness of how foreign assistance funds have been allocated to Ukraine since the initial increase in 2014, it is evident that respondents tended to follow party-driven perspectives. Congressional resistance to additional funding for Ukrainian foreign aid bolstered the public unfavorable perception of foreign aid for Ukraine across party lines, yet to differing degrees. While Democrats tended to advocate for continued foreign aid, the current Republican majority in Congress helped push a paradigm shift in foreign aid spending, away from Ukraine and towards Israel with the ongoing Israel-Palestinian conflict.

### *Policy Implications*

Under a representative democracy system and participatory democratic framework, congressional legislators are expected to represent the perspectives and voices of their constituents. However, when constituents are uninformed on government policy issues, Americans rely on their representatives in government, be it a congressperson or the President, as a heuristic for their own opinions on policy decision-making. As seen with the case of U.S foreign aid to Ukraine, the American public is not only uninformed in terms of federal budgetary spending on foreign aid overall but also tend to thermostatically follow their representatives. With an increasingly polarized political climate across partisan lines, it is clear that the consensus of the public follows heed to that of congressional decision-making. With a Republican majority in Congress, this means a shift in political decision-making in favor of divesting from Ukraine aid towards other foreign governments that are viewed favorably by constituents, who in turn assert their favorability due to the decision-making processes themselves. Partisan-motivated reasoning by constituents, while serving as a tool for uninformed citizens and aligns well with the elite democratic theoretical model, may ultimately hurt foreign policy decision-making in the long term. Relying on convoluted conceptions of success and failure in a foreign conflict such as Russia-Ukraine ultimately serves as an unreliable indicator of whether foreign aid is truly effective.

Foreign aid, first and foremost, was designed under the presumption of humanitarian assistance as opposed to strategic interference in global affairs yet when success and failure are at play, constituents rely on an indicator that they themselves disfavor based on public opinion polls. This, in turn, is the first and primary indicator of partisan-motivated reasoning at play. Secondly, when looking at policy convergence across the partisan aisle in an increasingly polarized political atmosphere, the Democratic perspective of overextended foreign aid spending on Ukraine is more indicative of a historically non-party allegiance perspective. In turn, we notice that while truly Democratic congresspeople may continue to believe in funneling aid to Ukraine, their constituents on the most recent public opinion polls think otherwise, furthermore aiding in an overall “follow the leader” trope represented by the Republican majority in Congress. Other factors not mentioned may also be at play, be it favorability of current president Joe Biden, demographic backgrounds that shape policy perspectives, and consumption of misinformation to name a few. With a long-standing tradition of party alignment in the United States since the 1980s, however, it is skeptical that policy congruence exists across party lines on a singular foreign policy issue.

### **IV. Conclusion**

Cognizant of the misinformed public, policy decision-makers in the future ought to take into account the implications of their own party affiliation as a means of guiding public opinion, and whether their constituents look favorably upon their policy because they agree with them as

opposed to relying on the expertise of their staffers as a heuristic for their opinions. By no means was foreign aid for Ukraine a source of true compromise between conservatives and liberals, to the contrary, it was a Republican-led majority that shaped the trajectory of spending since Russia's invasion in 2022. The U.S foreign aid for Ukraine serves as a noteworthy case study of partisan-motivated reasoning in the most recent iteration of a foreign aid spending bill passed by Congress, and the strengthened ability of decision-makers to draw an outline for public opinion to follow closely, even across partisan lines.

## References

- Arabia, C. L., Bowen, A. S., & Welt, C. (2023, October 5). *U.S. security assistance to Ukraine* (CRS Report IF12040). Congressional Research Service.  
<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12040>
- Council on Foreign Relations. (2023). *How much aid has the U.S. sent Ukraine? Here are six charts.* <https://www.cfr.org/article/how-much-aid-has-us-sent-ukraine-here-are-six-charts>
- Foreignassistance.gov. (2023). *FA.gov: Ukraine obligations 2022.*  
<https://www.foreignassistance.gov/cd/ukraine/2022/obligations/0>
- Gould, J., & Altman, H. (2019, September 28). Here's what you need to know about the US aid package to Ukraine that Trump delayed. *Defense News.*  
<https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2019/09/25/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-u-s-aid-package-to-ukraine-that-trump-delayed/>
- Hoffman, E., Han, J., & Vakharia, S. (2023). The past, present, and future of U.S. assistance to Ukraine: A deep dive into the data. *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).*  
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/past-present-and-future-us-assistance-ukraine-deep-divedata>
- Ingram, G. (2019, October 2). What every American should know about US foreign aid. *Brookings.*  
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-every-american-should-knowabout-u-s-foreign-aid/>
- Department of Defense Office of Inspector General. (2023, January). *Joint strategic oversight plan for Ukraine response.*  
[https://www.stateoig.gov/uploads/report/report\\_pdf\\_file/fy2023\\_jsop\\_ukraine\\_response.pdf](https://www.stateoig.gov/uploads/report/report_pdf_file/fy2023_jsop_ukraine_response.pdf)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2023). Foreign aid surges due to spending on refugees and aid for Ukraine - OECD.  
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/foreign-aid-surges-due-to-spending-on-refugees-and-aidfor-ukraine.htm>
- Pew Research Center. (2019, December 17). 6. Views of foreign policy. *Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics & Policy.*  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/12/17/6-views-of-foreign-policy/>
- Telhami, S. (2023, April 28). Americans show signs of impatience with Ukraine war. *Brookings.*  
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/americans-show-signs-of-impatience-with-ukraine-war/>
- U.S. Department of State. (2023). Milestones: 1961–1968 - Office of the Historian. *U.S. Department of State.* <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/pl-480>
- U.S. Agency for International Development. (2023). *USAID history.*  
<https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/usaid-history>

USA Facts. (2022, February 18). How much foreign aid does the US give to Ukraine? *USA Facts*.  
<https://usafacts.org/articles/how-much-foreign-aid-does-the-us-give-to-ukraine/>

The White House. (2016, June 15). Fact sheet: U.S. assistance to Ukraine since February 2014.  
*White House Archives*.

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/15/fact-sheet-us-assistance-ukraine-february-2014>

World101 from the Council on Foreign Relations. (2023). *A brief history of U.S. foreign aid*.  
<https://world101.cfr.org/global-era-issues/development/brief-history-us-foreign-aid>

Younis, M. (2023, November 2). American views on Ukraine war. *Gallup*.

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/513680/american-views-ukraine-warcharts.aspx>

Thank you for reading!

Volume XVI | Issue I | Spring 2025



For more, listen to “Academical”  
The Virginia Policy Review's Official Podcast



A Student-Run Publication From



FRANK BATTEN SCHOOL  
*of LEADERSHIP and PUBLIC POLICY*