

YU IDEAS



Power, Politics and Leading a Nation

As Americans prepare to vote in the midterm elections, Yeshiva University faculty offer their insights into the questions, themes, and history that inform how we think about the dynamics of politics, peoplehood, law, and authority. We hope you enjoy this issue of YU Ideas examining “Power, Politics, and Leading a Nation.”

Natural Law and Statecraft

DR. DOUGLAS BURGESS, Associate Professor of History, Chair of the History Department



“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” In these words, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. articulated not only a philosophy but a political reality: a recognition of the centrality of universal, immutable principles of justice, commonly known as natural law.

Today, natural law serves as the foundation of every Western legal system (and many non-Western systems as well) and of international law. Yet there has been little attempt to examine its interrelationship with statecraft over time; for most scholars, it remains a charming philosophical concept quaintly removed from the hurly-burly of actual governance.

This begs an obvious question: if natural law is so remote, esoteric and fragile, how did it come to supplant the doctrine of raw force?

From antiquity to the 17th century, European sovereigns employed the concept of natural law to carve out a separate jurisprudence from the Church, challenging ecclesiastic authority while remaining nominally pious. The idea that law could be discerned through logic rather than faith meant that any reasonable person could, in effect, know God’s mind. Through the creation of new courts and legal codes, the preponderance of the law shifted from ecclesiastical to secular courts, and by the end of the Middle Ages, “King’s justice” dominated.

But justice and right are two very different concepts. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the basic understanding that the individual deserves justice was recast into an understanding that the subject/citizen enjoys certain rights under natural law, the infringement of which is inherently unjust. In a series of revolutionary convulsions, the polity demanded that recognition of “inalienable” rights be written into their nation’s jurisprudence. The evolution of law in the west was complemented by similar developments in the Middle East and Asia.

The 19th and 20th centuries saw the concept of natural law transformed into one of universal human rights. Beginning with the laudable aim of outlawing slavery as an offense against the law of nations, 19th-century reformers ultimately came to regard the spread of Western law as a moral crusade. “Civilizing the empire” meant imposing not only Western concepts of right but also Victorian morality on captive peoples around the world. Conflation of Western mores with natural law had devastating consequences, both for the recipients of this “civilization” and for the law itself.

Natural law’s trajectory in the 20th century went some distance to correct these errors. Commencing with attempts to limit the atrocities of war and culminating in Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms” speech, particularly his insistence that the enumerated rights applied “everywhere in the world,” a new idea emerged. If natural law was indeed universal, it fell not to individual states to uphold it but rather to the entire world. This was what Justice Robert Jackson meant when he declared at the Nuremberg Tribunals of 1945 that “the real complaining party at your Bar is Civilization.” Nazi crimes could only be understood as offenses against natural law, since they were not, by their nature, illegal in Germany itself. The subsequent establishment of the United Nations and the promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights represent attempts to codify this understanding and make permanent an enumerated list of rights under natural law, common to all.



In Search Of A Vibrant Orthodox Political Discourse

AVITAL CHIZHIK-GOLDSCHMIDT, Adjunct Instructor of Journalism at Stern College for Women



As an Orthodox Jewish journalist, I believe that one of the greatest challenges facing our community is a severely limited political discourse.

That is, the opportunity to thoughtfully opine on politics as an Orthodox Jew is becoming increasingly rare.

I often receive letters from Orthodox readers expressing their tacit agreement with something I’ve written and wishing they could write their opinions, too, usually closing with a sentiment like, “But in my circles, it’s too complicated.” Whether it’s a fear of taking professional risks or losing institutional donors, or simply looking to avoid getting attitude in shul, community members feel uncomfortable espousing a dissenting view.

After all, a public dissenting opinion barely exists. Over our Shabbat tables, perhaps, and in our private WhatsApp groups, debates may take place. But in the public arena, the discourse is becoming deafeningly monotonous. Only a select few are empowered to speak their minds and will only speak in support of a popularly supported policy or politician. Our political discourse is often owned by a select few communal organizations, which choose to jump on the partisan bandwagon for the sake of photo-ops or “good relationships” while our communal publications’ op-ed pages remain hopelessly uniform.

The fact that many lay people in our community feel silenced if they have a differing political viewpoint—or even a *nuanced* viewpoint—is deeply problematic.

I often wonder: Why is there no room for respectful dispute here? Where are our individual voices? Where are the op-eds that push stimulating dialogue within the community?

We, as citizens of a “medina shel chesed,” are enjoined to care. To comment. To improve civil society.

Let us not be afraid of discourse. Let us not be afraid of truly manifesting our millennia-old traditions of intellectual argument. It is incumbent upon us to take this tradition out of the yeshiva hall and into the public space.

By creating a community that rewards free-thinking political discourse, we not only expand the conversation, but we build a larger culture that encourages thinking about ideas deeply. The intellectual exercise that happens while writing, that crystallization of thought that goes into making an argument, is foundational to Jewish thought. Let us not lose it for the sake of social comfort.



Lincoln's Religion

RABBI MENACHEM GENACK, *Rosh Yeshiva*, RIETS



Abraham Lincoln can be characterized perhaps as both the most religious and least religious president. Lincoln did not belong to any church and was skeptical of religious dogmas. As a young man in New Salem, he may have authored a skeptical treatise influenced by Thomas Paine's writings on religion. (Allegedly, a friend concerned for Lincoln's political future relegated the treatise to the flames, leaving its existence as well as its contents the subject of much speculation among historians.) Shortly after Lincoln's death, one newspaper reported on "the best story he ever read in the papers of himself":

Two Quakeresses were traveling on the railroad and were heard discussing the probable determination of the war. "I think," said the first, "that Jefferson [Davis] will succeed." "Why does thee think so?" asked the other. "Because Jefferson is a praying man." "And so is Abraham a praying man," objected the second. "Yes, but the Lord will think Abraham is joking," the first replied conclusively.

Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, told William Herndon that President Lincoln was not a "technical Christian." Allegations that he was "an open scoffer at Christianity" almost cost Lincoln his 1846 congressional race. During that race, his opponent was a preacher named Peter Cartwright. Carl Sandburg, in *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*, tells the story of one encounter between Lincoln and Cartwright:

In due time Cartwright said, "All who desire to lead a new life, to give their hearts to God, and go to heaven, will stand," and a sprinkling of men, women, and children stood up. Then the preacher exhorted, "All who do not wish to go to hell will stand." All stood up—except Lincoln. Then said Cartwright in his gravest voice, "I observe that many responded to the first invitation to give their hearts to God and go to heaven. And I further observe that all of you save one indicated that you did not desire to go to hell. The sole exception is Mr. Lincoln, who did not respond to either invitation. May I inquire of you, Mr. Lincoln, where are you going?"

And Lincoln slowly rose and slowly spoke. "I came here as a respectful listener. I did not know that I was to be singled out by Brother Cartwright. I believe in treating religious matters with due solemnity. I admit that the questions propounded by Brother Cartwright are of great importance. I did not feel called upon to answer as the rest did. Brother Cartwright asks me directly where I am going. I desire to reply with equal directness: I am going to Congress."

"That I am not a member of any Christian Church is true," Lincoln wrote in response to the charges of irreligion, "but I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular."

Yet although Lincoln was not a conventional believer, he was undoubtedly a man of deep religious faith. As a youth, Lincoln did not have many books. One of the few books he did have was the Bible, and he read and reread it. "I am slow to learn and slow to forget that which I have learned," Lincoln said about himself. "My mind is like a piece of steel, very hard to scratch anything on it and almost impossible after you get it there to rub it out." His reading of the Bible informed his oratory as well, leading to the Biblical cadences in the greatest rhetoric in American history, Lincoln's speeches.

Fifteen years after Lincoln's death, Joshua Speed, a friend of Lincoln's, shared a moving recollection of the president's esteem for the wisdom of the Bible:

As I entered the room, near night, [Lincoln] was sitting near a window intently reading his Bible. Approaching him, I said, "I am glad to see you so profitably engaged." "Yes," said he, "I am profitably engaged." "Well," said I, "if you have recovered from your skepticism I am sorry to say that I have not!" Looking me earnestly in the face, and placing his hand on my shoulder, he said: "You are wrong, Speed; take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a happier and better man."

In fact, Lincoln's rejection of conventional beliefs led him to develop a more universal religious outlook deeply informed by his reading of the Bible. In contrast to his Calvinist upbringing, Lincoln believed that salvation could be achieved by all. A key tenet in Lincoln's faith was the fundamental American proposition that all men are created equal, which Lincoln understood as based on the Biblical idea that mankind is created in the image of God. In a letter celebrating Thomas Jefferson's birthday, Lincoln wrote, "All honor to Jefferson—to the man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document, an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so to embalm it there, that to-day, and in all coming days, it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling-block to the very harbingers of re-appearing tyranny and oppression."

In a speech in Lewistown, Illinois, Lincoln explicitly noted the Biblical foundation of the American creed: "These communities, by their representatives in old Independence Hall, said to the whole world of men: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' This was their majestic interpretation of the economy of the Universe. This was their lofty, and wise, and noble understanding of the justice of the Creator to His creatures. Yes, gentlemen, to *all* His creatures, to the whole great family of man. In their enlightened belief, nothing stamped with the Divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on, and degraded, and imbruted by its fellows. They grasped not only the whole race of man then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the farthest posterity."

This rejection of religious dogmatism and embrace of all of humanity displayed itself when two women from Tennessee came before Lincoln, asking for the release of their husbands who were being held as prisoners of war at Johnson's Island. One of the women urged that her husband was a religious man. Lincoln ordered the release of the prisoners, but then said to this woman, "You say your husband is a religious man; tell him when you meet him, that I say I am not much of a judge of religion, but that, in my opinion, the religion that sets men to rebel and fight against their government, because, as they think, that government does not sufficiently help *some* men to eat their bread on the sweat of *other* men's faces, is not the sort of religion upon which people can get to heaven!"

Lincoln's Biblically-based universalism and his noble personality were what gave him the spirit of "malice toward none and charity for all" and the ability to treat all people, whatever their origins, without prejudice. Jews were also beneficiaries of Lincoln's magnanimity, which was far from commonplace in the 19th century. His philo-Semitism expressed itself both in his overturning Grant's infamous General Order No. 11 expelling the Jews from areas of Tennessee, Mississippi and Kentucky and in his introduction of Jewish army chaplains, for the first time in American history, during the Civil War. In a letter to a Jewish friend, Abraham Jonas, Lincoln wrote, "You are one of my most valued friends," words he never wrote to anyone else.

Lincoln's sincere religiosity and faith in the divine guidance of history were expressed in his decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, recalled in his diary a cabinet meeting in which Lincoln described "a vow, a covenant, that if God gave us the victory in the approaching battle [Antietam], he would consider it an indication of the divine will and that it was his duty to move forward in the cause of emancipation."

Lincoln maintained a fatalistic outlook, believing in what he termed "the doctrine of necessity," but was nevertheless the greatest promoter of human freedom. His law partner William Herndon described Lincoln's ambition as "a little engine that knew no rest," and Lincoln was a wholly self-made man, yet he always remained profoundly humble. Lincoln's incorrect prediction that "the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here" in the most famous speech in American history, the Gettysburg Address, is characteristic of his humility. The greatest speech in American history, his Second Inaugural, reckons with the Civil War without sounding a single note of triumphalism. Historians have pointed out that the Second Inaugural contains the word "I" only once. In a letter to Albert Hodges, editor of the Frankfort Commonwealth, Lincoln wrote:

In telling this tale I attempt no compliment to my own sagacity. I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Now, at the end of three years' struggle the nation's condition is not what either party, or any man devised, or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.

In a fragment found and preserved by John Hay, one of President Lincoln's White House secretaries, known as the "Meditation on the Divine Will," Lincoln gives expression to some of the themes which he would subsequently express in the Second Inaugural. Hay said that in this text, "not written to be seen of men," Lincoln "admits us into the most secret recesses of his soul... Perplexed and afflicted beyond the power of human help, by the disasters of war, the wrangling of parties, and the inexorable and constraining logic of his own mind, he shut out the world one day, and tried to put into form his double sense of responsibility to human duty and Divine Power... It shows—as has been said in another place—the awful sincerity of a perfectly honest soul, trying to bring itself into closer communion with its Maker." In this paragraph of text, we find Lincoln engaged in what can only be characterized as *cheshbon hanefesh* for the Civil War:

The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both *may* be, and one *must* be, wrong. God cannot be *for* and *against* the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party—and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true—that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By his mere great power, on the minds of the now contestants, He could have either *saved* or *destroyed* the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds.

Lincoln saw the war as retribution for the sin of slavery, for which both the North and South were culpable. As he put it in the Second Inaugural, “If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which... He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?” “It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces,” Lincoln said, characterizing slavery as a perversion of man’s role as described in Genesis. “Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said ‘the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’” Lincoln, recognizing the infinite distance between man and God, understood that ultimately the divine will is inscrutable: “The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes.”

In his autobiography, the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass describes Lincoln approaching him after delivering the inaugural, saying to him, “Douglass, I saw you in the crowd today listening to my inaugural address. There is no man’s opinion that I value more than yours; what do you think of it?” Douglass responded, “Mr. Lincoln, it was a sacred effort.” He was correct. The Second Inaugural was truly a religious treatise.

Lincoln’s political philosophy was animated by a profound moral imperative, and his political genius as well was rooted in his morality and empathy. His notion of God and what he saw as the divine teleology in history were sources of courage and balance for him in the darkest days. His was an open, creative and questing mind which thought deeply about the ultimate questions in life and developed a theology based on respect for the dignity of every person, rooted in the Bible and in America’s founding documents. His humility and nobility, statesmanship and genius are what made him the most exalted American.



Romans, Power, and Talmud

DR. RICHARD HIDARY, Associate Professor of Judaic Studies



Over the course of the entire 586-year span of the Second Temple period, Jewish sovereignty in Israel lasted barely 80 years during the Hasmonean dynasty. Military stability and growth in land controlled by each successive Maccabean ruler reached its apex under Queen Salome Alexandra. Her two sons, however, in a rivalry for power, devolved the state into civil war and invited the Romans to take control of Judea from 63 BCE on.

The Romans allowed the Jews to maintain a king in name under the Herodians as well as a high priest and a Temple to turn to as their source of divine providence and protective power. Julius Caesar even recognized Judaism as a legal religion, permitted Jews to collect donations for the Temple and exempted them from paying Roman taxes during the Sabbatical year. However, the Temple’s destruction during the Great Revolt followed by the failed Bar Kokhba rebellion and the devastating exile from Jerusalem prompted a need for a new Jewish leadership and a new strategy to maintain identity and dignity under the pressure of Roman culture and power.

The path led by the sages of the Talmud has proved in the long run to have been more successful than other groups of Jews who were either more Hellenized or who remained rigidly attached to a priestly Temple-based hierarchy. The Rabbis promoted working within and under the Roman bureaucracy to avoid further conflicts and lobbying for policies that would allow them religious freedom and a semblance of semi-autonomy. This approach is exemplified in the story of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai predicting that Vespasian would become emperor and requesting from him the right to build a new council of sages at Yavneh.

The Rabbis succeeded in creating a spiritual realm of peoplehood within the temporal, and they hoped temporary, sovereignty of the Romans. To solidify his Empire, Hadrian ordered jurists to collect the various edicts and rulings that had accumulated in diverse provinces and compile them into a unified code. At the same time, Rabbi Akiva also collected the many oral traditions of Jewish law and began the compilation that would become the Mishnah. In other words, the very strategy that the Romans employed to subdue diversity was co-opted by the Rabbis to promote their own legal system, unify the Jewish people and thereby withstand Roman domination.

Rabbinic legislation on all matters of civil and criminal law encouraged Jews to handle their disputes internally rather than turn to Roman courts. Even in areas where the Rabbis had no authority to realize their laws, such as in capital punishment, the Talmud's comprehensive and more morally sensitive deliberations served as a theoretical but penetrating protest against Roman brutality.

The Rabbis also reimagined the definition of power itself. For example, 2 Samuel 23:20 reports that one of King David's brave warriors, Benaiah, "went down on a snowy day into a pit and killed a lion." The Talmud explains this figuratively as a demonstration of his scholarship: He studied all the Sifra, the complex exegesis of Leviticus, on a single winter's day. For the Rabbis, military and political power were mere facades compared to the true strength that grows from the Torah and Talmud's spiritual teachings and aspirations. The Rabbis knew that the Romans would come and go as did the mighty empires before them. Instead, they turned in hope and faith to the Almighty who Himself grants power to kings and who would ensure their ultimate survival and triumph.

These strategies for survival served the Jewish people well during the long centuries of Diaspora. The resurgence of biblical and Hasmonean models of political power in modern Zionism now prompts us to ask some of the most fundamental questions facing the Jewish people: How do we reintegrate national sovereignty with the Judaism of the past 2,000 years? Will the role of the Talmud as a traveling homeland disappear in the face of a renewed geographic homeland? Will it remain an independent subculture within a secularized state? Or will there emerge a hybrid that can integrate both models of power for the benefit of the Jewish people and the other nations with whom they interact? These questions deserve serious thought to ensure that the State of Israel, now entering its eighth decade, remains a light unto nations for a long time to come.

Leadership and the Common Good

DR. MATT HOLBREICH, Resident Scholar, Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought



Power is an amoral term. It is a measure of force, applicable both to the human and the natural worlds. We turn on the power, for instance, or during a storm, the power can go out. In the political world, power is an expression of the ability to control or force others, a measure of influence. The American armed forces are powerful because they can bring immense force to bear over vast distances.

But to say that someone has power says nothing about the aim of their actions.

We have different intuitions about leadership. Leadership combines power and purpose. Leaders have a vision, an objective, and bring others along with them. This distinction between power and leadership is made evident because we can draw a distinction between someone who has power but who may not be a leader. We say that such and such a person abused his or her power, or that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Rarely do we say that leadership is abused.

Ancient political philosophers such as Aristotle knew as well as we do that the rulers of nations could be rapacious, murderous tyrants. But what is so refreshing about reading Aristotle today is his unwavering focus on the purpose of politics. As Aristotle famously begins the *Nicomachean Ethics*: “Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action as well as choice, is held to aim at some good. Hence people have nobly declared that the good is that at which all things aim.” And he begins the *Politics* in a similar way: “Since we see that every city is some sort of community, and that every community is constituted for the sake of some good (for everyone does everything for the sake of what is held to be good), it is clear that all communities aim at some good, and that the community is most authoritative of all and embraces all the others does so particularly, and aims at the most authoritative good of all.”

Politics at its best is achieving the most authoritative, comprehensive good for the community. For Aristotle, this is human excellence, what he calls *arete*. Excellence means living a virtuous life, being courageous, generous, moderate, prudent, thoughtful and just. The aim of politics is to make citizens virtuous and enable them to live excellent lives. For this to happen, the leaders must be virtuous and want others to be so.

The simplest ideas, the ones that seem most platitudinous, are easily lost sight of in constant news cycles and lectures about sophisticated electoral strategy. What we forget in a world of interest and identity groups, of the “coasts and the heartland,” of Wall Street and Main Street, is that politics is about an excellence that transcends sub-groups. Aristotle reminds us that to be a leader is to have a moral vision for the whole community, not just a part of it.

The Organized States of America

MATTHEW INCANTALUPO, Assistant Professor in Yeshiva College's Political Science Department



The foundational lessons of American political history involve stories of great men (and it is almost always the men remembered) who wrought political change through ideas, leadership and charisma. Civics classes focus on individual actors and key events at the expense of groups, movements and trends. Ask a bright student in one of those classes to describe the political culture of the United States, and he or she will almost certainly mention individualism. Compelling as that may be, however, this focus on individuals misses the true source of power in the American political system: organization.

In the immediate decades after World War II, labor and business were evenly matched adversaries and enjoyed similar levels of political influence. However, superior coordination among formerly disjointed industries, and the decline of manufacturing jobs that weakened union rolls and coffers, tipped this balance in favor of business. Business interests, owing to their superior organization, cemented their hold on American politics by helping create a new policy regime centered around tax cuts, deregulation and supply-side economics. Labor interests lagged and found only weak political support in a disorganized Democratic Party plagued by infighting.

Economic inequality in the United States is as high today as it was during the Gilded Age that preceded the Great Depression. The gaps between the rich and the poor, between the affluent and everyone else, and even between the rich and the “super-rich” are vast and growing. Some economists blame these shifts on changes to the U.S. economy. The collapse of the manufacturing sector, the rise of the financial sector and a shift to new high-tech jobs have left millions of Americans locked out of the most lucrative avenues for growth. However, it is impossible to develop a complete picture of how the United States became so unequal without understanding the fundamental changes to the balance of power and public policy that contributed to our current economic and political climates.

The promises of technology to fill this organizational void among ordinary Americans are specious. Social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook do provide users with more information but also with more avenues to ignore politics or to explore their own niche interests. Today, Americans are permitted to choose their own adventures with respect to political learning, participation and speech. More Americans than ever are declining to join political parties or other voluntary civic organizations. The result of this is that political movements, even relatively popular or successful ones, have to start from nothing and bring millions of Americans together in order to enact change.

Without some form of organization to fill the vacuum created by the decline of labor unions and other membership driven political organizations, we should expect the United States to continue to become more unequal. Political movements without lasting organizations are typically ephemeral, and Americans seeking to change the status quo must look beyond individuals and turn to organizations. Power comes from organization, and it is essential that we teach this alongside the basic mechanics of American politics and the individualized accounts of U.S. history.

The Role of Government in Entrepreneurship in the United States

DR. SHARON L. POCZTER, Chair of the Strategy & Entrepreneurship Department, Associate Professor, Sy Syms School of Business



The idea that small business is the engine of growth in the United States is not true. In fact, it is new businesses, and not small businesses, that drive economic growth. Entrepreneurship not only drives growth in normal economic periods but has also been shown to help deliver an economy from post-crisis productivity slumps. Thus, it is rightly so that policy should focus on entrepreneurship in the United States.

The role of any government in entrepreneurship should be one not of direct involvement but rather one of support. The government should not provide support to specific new companies but rather institute policies that aid in the development of the fundamental institutions and markets that support entrepreneurship. For instance, perhaps the biggest challenge for new firms is funding. The ability to be funded rests on many factors on the entrepreneurs' side, and, on the supply side, on a well-functioning financial market for new firms. The government should have a role in maintaining the efficiency of the market for funding new firms. Similarly, the government can make it easier for firms to form by limiting the bureaucratic barriers needed to start a new firm. By initiatives such as these, the government can lower the cost of doing business for new firms and lower the barriers to entry for new firms.

The unfortunate yet interesting part of the issue is that the effects of policy are not always straightforward and not always well executed. For instance, while patent protection provides the incentive to create intellectual property by protecting output, it also creates barriers to entry for new firms. This is particularly challenging for new technology firms that may enter to compete against a larger rival with a stable of patents that need to be constantly considered and invented around. So, on the one hand, policies that protect intellectual property provide long term incentives to innovate; they may also lead to higher costs of doing business for new firms.

All in all, the government should be guided by the goal of creating an environment that supports entrepreneurship both because of its importance to the economy at large and because policymaking always has unintended consequences. Regardless of these unintended consequences, however, a clear connection to the entrepreneurship community, where concerns and opportunities are registered, should be paramount to the government. Only through a direct line of communication to entrepreneurs can the government hope to improve policymaking and bolster growth.