

RICE UNIVERSITY'S
BAKER INSTITUTE
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

News, Research and Events

May 21, 2020



A Message from the Director

Today as we face the unprecedented consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, fundamental assumptions about how we govern our economy and society, and how we formulate public policy, are being reexamined. As the director of Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, I recognize that we have a special responsibility at this critical moment to provide data-driven, nonpartisan analysis of the immense domestic and foreign policy challenges that lie ahead.

To that end, our fellows and scholars are actively [producing research and holding webinars](#) on a wide range of areas including energy, health and biosciences, public finance, entrepreneurship and economic growth, presidential elections, drug policy, the Middle East, United States-Mexico relations and China. They are disseminating their work to public and private sector decision-makers, publishing blogs and op-eds, and serving as go-to experts for sound commentary and analysis.

This work reflects the institute's history of relevant public policy analysis and recommendations that, in 25 short years, established our reputation as a major think tank with a trusted, independent voice locally, nationally and globally. Our impact on policy was recognized in 2019, when the Baker Institute was ranked the second best university-affiliated think tank in the world and its Center for Energy Studies first in its class. Moreover, the institute acts as a forum for objective and well-informed debate on domestic and foreign policy challenges. Since our inception, we have provided a platform for top national and foreign leaders, including all living former presidents of the United States.

While Rice University welcomes back students for the fall semester — either on campus or remotely — the institute will similarly pursue its mission to educate and train the next generation of policymakers. As an integral part of Rice, our fellows and scholars offer a variety of undergraduate courses and teach graduate students in our Master of Global Affairs Program, in collaboration with the School of Social Sciences, as well as the Master of Energy Economics Program, a joint effort of our top-ranked Center for Energy Studies and Rice University's Economics Department.

The Baker Institute works each day to fulfill its mission of bridging the world of ideas and the world of action. The challenges before us make these efforts all the more relevant. I am grateful to our Board of Advisors, Roundtable and Roundtable Young Professionals members, and our donors, for supporting and sharing our vision and mission. My appreciation extends to the Rice administration, faculty, staff, students and community who assist in our endeavors.

With best regards,

Edward P. Djerejian
Director, Baker Institute
Janice and Robert McNair Chair in Public Policy

“We’re definitely not out of the woods. We will likely see a second spike, a rise in the number of cases probably later this summer and early fall.”

Peter Hotez, Fellow in Disease and Poverty,
to the editorial board of the [Houston Chronicle](#)



Webinar: Global Humanitarian Aid and the Coronavirus Pandemic

With the added threat of the coronavirus pandemic, ongoing global humanitarian crises have become increasingly dire, and aid organizations are racing to adapt their models of service delivery. At a recent webinar, experts shared their on-the-ground experiences in countries such as Venezuela and Greece, where food and medical supplies, already scarce, have become increasingly difficult to access.

[Marcia Biggs](#), a special correspondent for PBS NewsHour, showed undercover footage of Venezuela’s crumbling medical sector, with hospitals dealing with broken equipment, drug shortages, patients packed in hallways and a lack of qualified doctors. [Devon Cone](#), senior advocate at Refugees International, shared equally disconcerting images from her recent trip to refugee camps in Greece. Unsanitary and overcrowded housing in tents has created conditions ripe for the spread of disease.

The pandemic is also predicted to create a global food security crisis as food supply chains break and unemployment soars, said [Chase Sova](#), senior director of Public Policy and Research at the U.S. branch of the World Food Program. To learn more about the rapidly escalating humanitarian needs around the globe, and how international and local organizations are trying to help individuals most at risk, view the full presentation on our [event page](#). [Kelsey Norman](#), fellow for the Middle East and the director of the Women’s Rights, Human Rights and Refugees Program, moderates the Q&A.

This webinar is part of the Baker Institute’s larger response to the unprecedented crisis facing the world. Each week, experts at the Baker Institute are offering free webinars to share their insights and knowledge on critical policy issues, ranging from [the effects of reopening the economy](#) to important research on [vaccine development](#), and much more. For a full list of webinars scheduled to date, please see our [events page](#).

Covid-19 updates from the Baker Institute Blog

Updates on masks in the workplace, vaccine development and policy responses. [Vivian Ho](#), the James A. Baker III Institute Chair in Health Economics; [Kirstin R.W. Matthews](#), fellow in science and technology policy; and [Heidi Russell](#), associate professor at the Baylor College of Medicine, consider the risks posed to workers not wearing masks in large offices, the risks scientists are considering for speeding the vaccine development process, and multiple policy responses to the pandemic.

Browse the Baker Institute [research library](#) and the [Baker Institute Blog](#) to keep up with the latest research and news on the coronavirus pandemic.

Upcoming Events

Webinar: How do we balance human lives vs. economic revival in the age of Covid-19? As society begins to reopen, a conversation about how to balance the need for health precautions to save lives, while also protecting civil liberties and the economy is warranted. [Hagop M. Kantarjian, M.D.](#), nonresident fellow in health policy, discusses the most crucial cost-benefit analysis of our time. **May 21 | 1:30 pm**

Member exclusive webinar — The state of the Baker Institute and the Covid-19 crisis: A conversation with the Director. At this town hall event exclusively for Baker Institute [Roundtable members](#) and [supporters](#), Ambassador [Edward P. Djerejian](#) shares his views on the state of the institute and highlights how fellows, scholars and staff are addressing Covid-19-related challenges. **May 27 | 1:00 pm**

Visit our [events page](#) for a complete list.

Get Involved with the Baker Institute

Become a member of the [Baker Institute Roundtable](#) and [Roundtable Young Professionals](#). Contact [our development office](#) for more information on how you can join the conversation on the relevant issues and ideas that shape our world.



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