

A Conversation with CHRISTOPHER DEMUTH

Christopher DeMuth Sr. is a distinguished fellow at the [Hudson Institute](#) in Washington, D.C. He was president of the [American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research](#) from 1986–2008; previously he served in the administrations of Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon, was managing director of Lexecon, Inc. (a law-and-economics consulting firm), was editor and publisher of *Regulation* magazine, taught at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

In this conversation, Kristol and DeMuth discuss political thinkers including Edward C. Banfield, [James Q. Wilson](#), and Friedrich Hayek and consider how ideas shape policy. DeMuth also recounts a chance meeting with then-Senator Barack Obama, which led to a conversation about Chicago politics.

On Big Government Today, DeMuth says: “The Obamacare implementation...is a sort of civics education course to the entire public about unintended consequences and how government says it's doing [something] but it's actually doing the opposite.”

On Progressivism, DeMuth says: “Progressivism can be thought of as trying to overcome all constraints. And technology, affluence, education has made this an almost popular creed; what life is about is...self-actualization, the elimination of barriers to my happiness.”

On President Nixon's Management Style, DeMuth says: “He just distrusted the bureaucracy, including his own appointees, so deeply that he converted the staff and grew the staff and treated them as the government. And we were operating as line officers of government without any of the checks and balances and institutional flywheels that work on that.”

Chapter Links to CHRISTOPHER DEMUTH Conversation

[Becoming Conservative](#)

[Edward C. Banfield](#)

[The Nixon White House](#)

[James Q. Wilson](#)

[Big Government Today](#)

[Friedrich Hayek](#)