



American Compass

Edgerton Essays

You'd recognize Jim Edgerton, even if you don't know his name. He was the Vermont farmer made famous in Norman Rockwell's 1943 painting, "[Freedom of Speech](#)." Rockwell depicted Edgerton at the annual meeting in their small town, rising to speak against a tax increase he could not afford, but that would fund a new school building. The town proceeded to vote 10-to-1 in favor of the proposal, but all who were in attendance listened respectfully while their neighbor made his case.

That spirit is missing today. The public square is too often closed to those without a narrow set of credentials, and too few listen respectfully to anyone. Politicians and pundits in Washington are consumed with ideological battles far removed from the day-to-day concerns of American workers and their families, and often seem incapable of even understanding them. Our policy debates are poorer for it, our policymakers less informed, and our fellow citizens excluded.

American Compass was founded in 2020 to restore an economic consensus that emphasizes the importance of family, community, and industry to the nation's liberty and prosperity. Edgerton Essays are a collection of short contributions to political discussions from Americans often ignored. Our goal is to showcase perspectives from outside the usual corridors of power and help inform policymakers and pundits about what matters most to working-class families.

How It Works

American Compass is committed to supporting writers in communicating their own views.

- We are looking for writers who come from all walks of life, have not earned a bachelor's degree, and think critically about issues important to their families and communities.
- In some cases, we will provide specific prompts for Edgerton Essays; in others, we will ask contributors to share whatever thoughts they see as most important for leaders to hear.
- Edgerton Essays will not be chosen for, or edited to fit, any particular party line; rather, the diversity of the contributors' ideas and thoughts be will what make this collection so unique and necessary.
- Each writer will receive an honorarium of \$250 upon publication of their work.
- Writers will work with a professional editor to make their essays strong and clear without losing their distinctive voices and viewpoints.
- Edgerton Essays will be published on [The Commons](#), the American Compass forum that features regular contributions from prominent writers, scholars, and policymakers and receives widespread media coverage.

About American Compass

American Compass is the flagship for efforts to reinvigorate American conservatism. Compass receives frequent media citations, including prominent coverage in features on the future of conservatism at the [New York Times](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Washington Post](#), and the [New Yorker](#), and we have become a vital resource for both policymakers and commentators looking beyond "market fundamentalism" on the right-of-center.

- Steve Hilton, Fox News: "I would not call American Compass 'dissident,' but the future of conservatism."
- Eric Levitz, *New York Magazine*: "American Compass represents the most intellectually honest tendency within the anti-Establishment right."
- Yuval Levin, *National Review*: "Even where I disagree with the case that American Compass looks set to advance, it seems to me that it will help us see that challenge more clearly, and so will help us understand it and meet it."

Read more of our work on [our website](#), and learn more about our initiatives in our [2020 annual report](#).

To submit an essay, please contact contributing editor Patrick Brown at Patrick.Brown@AmericanCompass.org

Henry Olsen, *Washington Post*

"American Compass aspires to be the tool with which future conservative leaders can guide the American ship of state. Those men and women ignore it at their peril."