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Van Andel Graduate School of Government Celebrates First Graduating Class

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College’s Van Andel Graduate School of Government in Washington, D.C., celebrated its first graduating class on Saturday, May 7. Caitlin Burke, Steve Schaefer, and Bridget Weisenburger each received their Master of Arts in Government degree at the main campus graduation ceremony.

“Our first three graduates demonstrate the purposes of this unique program: to educate and form the best, rising professionals in Washington, D.C., to know the first principles of politics and to be able to apply them in the challenging circumstances we face today,” said Matthew Spalding, vice president of Washington operations and dean of the Van Andel Graduate School of Government.

Caitlin Burke is a professional staff member for the House Committee on Education and Labor where she focuses on workforce development and anti-poverty policy. She previously served as a legislative assistant in the office of Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, handling healthcare, education, labor, pensions, welfare entitlements, and social issues. Before working in Congress, Burke worked at the American Enterprise Institute and completed a fellowship at the Heritage Foundation. Originally from Phoenix, Arizona, she graduated summa cum laude from Arizona State University’s Institute for Design and the Arts. While at ASU, she was president of the university’s pro-life student group.

Steve Schaefer recently accepted a job as the new director of the regulatory transparency project at the Federalist Society. Prior to joining the Federalist Society, he was an attorney with the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights. In this capacity, he enforced the federal health care conscience legal protections for healthcare workers. Schaefer received a B.A. in history and a M.A. in curriculum and teaching from Michigan State University. He is also a graduate of the Wayne State University Law School.

Bridget Weisenburger serves as associate director for coalition relations for the Heritage Foundation, focused on the Institute for Family, Culture, and Opportunity. In this role, she builds and maintains relationships to advance domestic policy priorities in health care, welfare reform, education policy, family formation, marriage, and religious liberty. Prior to working at the Heritage Foundation, Weisenburger managed communications for Texas charter school operator, ResponsiveEd. She received a B.A. in philosophy from the University of Dallas.

“These graduates have received an education that will undoubtedly benefit them as they continue their lives as American citizens and working professionals,” said Matthew Mehan, assistant professor of government.

For photographs of the graduates, click [here](#).

For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 6.3 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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