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# Introduction

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# Introduction

I was approached by the Lehigh University Martindale Center for the Study of Private Enterprise during the late phase of the pandemic, toward the end of 2021. At the time, planning a trip to Denmark for university students in 2022 sounded complicated due to continuing COVID lockdowns and travel restrictions. Getting together in person was still difficult. We were finally able to schedule an event at the Danish Consulate General in New York City in March 2022, and it was such a pleasure and honor to meet an extremely engaged and talented group of students who already knew so much about Denmark and the Danish society, economy, and culture. I had brought along to the presentation one of my interns who—along with a group of other Danish students—spent six months at the Consulate, taking part in various activities across all departments. We did a presentation on Denmark but what really moved us was the wonderful dialogue that followed.

I always frown when my fellow Danes start a presentation by stating, “Denmark is a small country.” Of course, Denmark is a small country, but hopefully that is not its most important characteristic. Here at the Consulate, we work on building partnerships with all parts of American society: trade, investments, culture, education, health care, and government. Danes tend to be humble and quiet, but we consider ourselves open to the world and interested in learning from other cultures. Denmark has a strong focus on sustainability across the whole political spectrum and is considered a front-runner. The Danish health-care sector is extremely important for the Danish

government and is receiving additional funding in order to continue to grow and develop solutions that will benefit Danish patients as well as health-care systems worldwide.

I was honored that the Lehigh University Martindale students chose Denmark and impressed that they spent so much time not just traveling there but also studying our country in detail and writing some truly remarkable essays about various aspects of Danish society. It is my belief that the only way to become better is to learn from each other, and Denmark definitely has a lot to learn from the US and from students who take a critical view and come up with new solutions for improvements.

When reading the young scholars’ work, it became clear to me that the students had chosen subjects that are key to ensuring that Denmark remains a progressive society that is at the forefront of sustainability, climate change, health care, education, diversity, and inclusivity, to name but a few. I was particularly interested in reading about trust and its role in Danish society.

I truly hope that the students and faculty who have taken the time to visit and to research and write about Denmark will continue to take an interest in our country and maybe in the future can help build partnerships between the US and Denmark.

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