

government in america people politics and policy

government in america people politics and policy is a phrase that captures the intricate connections shaping the United States' political landscape. In this comprehensive article, readers will explore the foundations of American government, the dynamic role of citizens, the complexities of politics, and how policy is created and implemented. The structure of government in America, the influence of people and public opinion, the interplay between politics and policymaking, and the impact of federalism are all examined in detail. Whether you are a student, educator, or someone interested in understanding American politics, this article offers a thorough and accessible guide to government in America people politics and policy, using clear explanations and up-to-date insights. Dive into the main elements that define the U.S. political system and discover how they shape the nation's future.

- Understanding the Foundations of Government in America
- The Role of People in American Democracy
- Politics in the United States: Key Features
- Policy Development and Implementation
- The Impact of Federalism on People, Politics, and Policy
- Contemporary Challenges in American Government

Understanding the Foundations of Government in America

The Constitution and the Structure of Government

The foundation of government in America is built upon the U.S. Constitution, which outlines the organization and powers of the federal government. The Constitution establishes three branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial. Each branch has distinct responsibilities and the separation of powers ensures a system of checks and balances. This design prevents any single branch from becoming too powerful and promotes accountability in government. The legislative branch, composed of the House of Representatives and the Senate, makes laws. The executive branch, led by the President, enforces laws, while the judicial branch interprets them. Understanding this structure is crucial for appreciating how politics and policy operate in the United States.

Federalism and State Governments

Federalism is a defining characteristic of American government. It divides power between the national and state governments, allowing for a balance that accommodates the country's regional diversity. States retain significant authority over areas such as education, public safety, health, and transportation while adhering to the supremacy of federal law. This system allows for experimentation with policy initiatives at the state level and provides opportunities for people to influence government beyond the federal level. State constitutions mirror the federal structure, often with their own executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

The Role of People in American Democracy

Citizenship and Civic Participation

People are at the heart of American democracy. Citizenship carries both rights and responsibilities, including the right to vote, freedom of expression, and the duty to obey laws. Civic participation involves more than voting; it encompasses activities such as volunteering, attending public meetings, engaging in peaceful protest, and contacting elected officials. These actions ensure that government in America remains responsive to its citizens and that the democratic process thrives.

Public Opinion and Influence on Policy

Public opinion plays a major role in shaping government policy and political priorities. Elected officials and policymakers often consider the views and preferences of their constituents when making decisions. Opinion polls, media coverage, and grassroots advocacy campaigns help gauge public sentiment. The relationship between people and government is dynamic; public opinion can drive legislative change, influence election outcomes, and affect the direction of politics in America.

- Voting in local, state, and federal elections
- Participating in town halls and public hearings
- Joining advocacy groups or political campaigns
- Communicating with representatives
- Engaging in community service and civic projects

Politics in the United States: Key Features

The Two-Party System and Political Parties

The American political system is dominated by two major parties: the Democrats and the Republicans. Each party represents different ideologies, policy priorities, and constituencies. Political parties organize voters, recruit candidates, and help frame the national debate on key issues. Third parties also exist, but they rarely win major elections due to the winner-take-all electoral system. The competition between parties shapes the nature of government in America people politics and policy, driving debates on economic, social, and foreign policy.

Elections and Representation

Elections are fundamental to American democracy, serving as the primary mechanism for people to choose their leaders and hold them accountable. The United States holds regular elections at local, state, and federal levels. The Electoral College system is used for presidential elections, while Congress members are elected directly by the people. Campaigns, debates, and political advertising are central to the electoral process, allowing candidates to present their platforms and connect with voters. Representation is designed to ensure that different regions and populations have a voice in government decision-making.

Interest Groups and Political Advocacy

Interest groups and advocacy organizations play a significant role in American politics. These groups represent business, labor, environmental, civil rights, and other interests. They seek to influence government policy through lobbying, public campaigns, and coalition-building. While interest groups can enhance democratic participation, concerns about unequal influence and the impact of money in politics remain ongoing debates.

Policy Development and Implementation

The Policy Process: From Idea to Law

Policy development in America follows a structured process. It typically begins with the identification of an issue, followed by the formulation of policy proposals. Lawmakers debate and revise these proposals before passing them into law. Implementation is carried out by government agencies, which develop regulations and oversee enforcement. The policy process is influenced by political considerations, public opinion, and the expertise of civil servants and advisors.

Types of Public Policy in America

Public policy in the United States covers a broad range of areas, including economic policy, social policy, foreign affairs, defense, health care, education, and environmental protection. Each type of policy reflects the priorities of government and society at a given time. Policymakers must balance competing interests, available resources, and constitutional principles when crafting effective and equitable policies.

1. Economic policy: taxation, spending, regulation, and monetary policy
2. Social policy: healthcare, welfare, education, and civil rights
3. Foreign policy: diplomacy, trade, defense, and international relations
4. Environmental policy: conservation, energy, and climate change

The Impact of Federalism on People, Politics, and Policy

State Innovation and Policy Diversity

Federalism enables states to serve as “laboratories of democracy.” States can develop and implement innovative policies tailored to their unique populations. This diversity leads to a wide range of approaches in areas such as education funding, health care delivery, and criminal justice. Successful policies at the state level can influence national policy debates and be adopted by other states or the federal government.

Challenges of Coordination and Inequality

While federalism promotes policy experimentation, it can also create challenges. Coordination between state and federal governments can be complex, especially during emergencies or when addressing issues that cross state boundaries. Additionally, policy differences among states can lead to inequalities in access to services, funding, and protections for citizens. Ensuring fairness and consistency while respecting state autonomy is a persistent challenge in American government.

Contemporary Challenges in American Government

Polarization and Partisan Conflict

Political polarization has intensified in recent years, affecting both government operations and public discourse. Partisan divides can lead to legislative gridlock, making it difficult to pass important laws or address pressing issues. This environment challenges the effectiveness of American democracy and raises questions about the future of bipartisan cooperation in government in America people politics and policy.

Public Trust and Institutional Confidence

Declining public trust in government institutions is an important issue. Concerns about transparency, accountability, and responsiveness have led to skepticism among citizens. Strengthening public confidence requires ongoing efforts to improve government performance, increase transparency, and foster meaningful engagement between people and policymakers.

Adapting to Change and Future Directions

American government must continually adapt to evolving social, economic, and technological realities. Issues such as cybersecurity, healthcare innovation, climate change, and demographic shifts present new challenges and opportunities. Policymakers and the public must work together to ensure that government in America people politics and policy remains effective and responsive in a rapidly changing world.

Questions and Answers about Government in America People Politics and Policy

Q: What are the three branches of government in America and their main functions?

A: The three branches of government in America are the legislative (makes laws), executive (enforces laws), and judicial (interprets laws). This structure ensures a balance of power and accountability within the federal system.

Q: Why is federalism important in the United States?

A: Federalism is important because it divides power between national and state governments, allowing for policy diversity, local autonomy, and innovation while maintaining a unified national framework.

Q: How do citizens participate in American democracy besides voting?

A: Citizens participate by attending public meetings, joining advocacy groups, volunteering, engaging in peaceful protest, and communicating with elected officials to influence policy and hold government accountable.

Q: What role do political parties play in American politics?

A: Political parties organize voters, recruit candidates, and help shape policy debates. The two-party system, dominated by Democrats and Republicans, influences elections and government decision-making.

Q: How does public opinion influence government policy?

A: Public opinion influences policymakers through elections, advocacy, media, and opinion polls, prompting politicians to adjust policies and respond to constituent preferences.

Q: What are the main steps in the policy-making process in the U.S.?

A: The main steps are issue identification, policy formulation, legislative debate, passage into law, and implementation by government agencies.

Q: What challenges does the U.S. face due to political polarization?

A: Political polarization leads to legislative gridlock, reduced bipartisan cooperation, and can undermine public trust in government institutions.

Q: What is the impact of interest groups on American government?

A: Interest groups advocate for specific issues, influence policy decisions through lobbying, and represent diverse interests, but their influence can raise concerns about unequal access and the role of money in politics.

Q: How does federalism contribute to policy innovation?

A: Federalism allows states to experiment with new policies, serving as "laboratories of democracy" and providing models that can be adopted nationally or by other states.

Q: What are some current challenges facing government in America people politics and policy?

A: Current challenges include political polarization, declining public trust, adapting to technological and demographic change, and addressing complex issues like healthcare, climate change, and economic inequality.

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Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy

Understanding the intricate workings of the American government can feel like navigating a complex maze. This post serves as your guide, unraveling the relationships between the people, politics, and policies that shape the United States. We'll explore the core tenets of American governance, examining its structure, the influence of its citizens, and the processes by which policies are created and implemented. Prepare to gain a clearer perspective on how your government impacts your daily life.

The Three Branches: A Foundation of Checks and Balances

The United States operates under a system of government based on the principle of separation of powers, dividing authority among three distinct branches:

1. The Legislative Branch: Making the Laws

Congress, comprising the Senate and the House of Representatives, holds the power to create laws. The House, with representation based on population, and the Senate, with equal representation for each state, work together to draft, debate, and pass legislation. This process involves committee hearings, floor debates, and ultimately, a vote by both chambers. The intricate interplay between

these two bodies ensures careful consideration of proposed laws. Understanding the legislative process is key to understanding how policies are formed.

2. The Executive Branch: Implementing the Laws

The President, as head of the Executive Branch, is responsible for enforcing the laws passed by Congress. This involves a vast bureaucracy, including cabinet-level departments and agencies, each with specific responsibilities. The President also plays a significant role in foreign policy, negotiating treaties and commanding the armed forces. Presidential power is subject to checks and balances from the other two branches, ensuring no single entity holds unchecked authority.

3. The Judicial Branch: Interpreting the Laws

The Supreme Court and the lower federal courts form the Judicial Branch. Their primary role is to interpret the Constitution and federal laws, ensuring their application is consistent with the founding principles of the nation. Judicial review, the power to declare laws unconstitutional, is a powerful check on the other two branches, preventing the enactment of laws that violate the Constitution. This system of checks and balances is fundamental to the American system of government.

The Influence of the People: Participation and Representation

While the structure of government dictates how laws are made and enforced, the influence of the people is paramount. Citizens participate in the political process through various means:

1. Voting: The Cornerstone of Democracy

Voting in elections at the local, state, and national levels is the most direct way citizens can influence their government. This participation allows them to choose their representatives and shape the direction of the country. Understanding the electoral process, including voter registration and campaign finance, is crucial for informed participation.

2. Advocacy and Lobbying: Shaping Policy

Citizens and groups can actively advocate for their interests through lobbying efforts, aiming to influence policymakers. This can involve direct contact with elected officials, participating in public hearings, and engaging in grassroots campaigns. The effectiveness of advocacy depends on organization, strategic communication, and understanding the legislative process.

3. Public Opinion and the Media: Shaping the Narrative

Public opinion, often shaped by media coverage, significantly impacts the political landscape. The media, through news reporting, opinion pieces, and analysis, frames important issues, influencing public perception and, consequently, the actions of policymakers. Understanding media bias and information literacy are crucial skills in navigating the complex information landscape.

Policymaking: From Idea to Implementation

The creation and implementation of policies are complex processes, involving several steps:

1. Agenda Setting: Identifying Key Issues

The process begins with identifying issues demanding government attention. This can be driven by public opinion, events, or the initiatives of policymakers. The selection of issues that receive serious consideration reflects the priorities of government at any given time.

2. Policy Formulation: Developing Solutions

Once an issue is on the agenda, policymakers develop potential solutions. This often involves research, consultation with experts, and consideration of various perspectives. The formulation stage is where the details of a policy are shaped, considering feasibility, costs, and potential impacts.

3. Policy Adoption: Getting the Law Passed

This stage involves the legislative process outlined earlier, with debates, amendments, and ultimately, a vote to pass the policy into law. The process can be influenced by various factors including political alliances, public opinion, and lobbying efforts.

4. Policy Implementation: Putting the Plan into Action

Once a policy is adopted, the executive branch is responsible for its implementation. This often involves creating regulations, allocating resources, and establishing programs to carry out the policy's objectives. Effective implementation requires coordination among different government agencies and sufficient resources.

5. Policy Evaluation: Assessing Effectiveness

The final stage involves evaluating the policy's effectiveness in achieving its intended goals. This may involve gathering data, conducting research, and reviewing feedback from those affected by the policy. This evaluation helps inform future policy adjustments or the development of new policies to address unforeseen consequences.

Conclusion

Understanding the American government requires navigating the intricate interplay between its three branches, the active participation of its citizens, and the complex process of policymaking. By comprehending these elements, you can become a more informed and engaged citizen, better equipped to participate in shaping the future of your nation.

FAQs

1. What is the role of political parties in the American government? Political parties play a crucial role in organizing the political process, recruiting candidates, and shaping public opinion. They serve as a crucial link between the electorate and their representatives.
2. How can I get involved in the political process beyond voting? You can engage through volunteering for campaigns, joining political organizations, contacting your elected officials, and participating in public forums and protests.
3. What are some common criticisms of the American government? Common criticisms include concerns about political polarization, campaign finance regulations, gridlock in Congress, and the

influence of lobbying groups.

4. How does the American government compare to other systems of government? The American system, with its emphasis on checks and balances and federalism, differs significantly from parliamentary systems, where the executive branch is directly accountable to the legislature.

5. What are some key resources for learning more about the American government? Excellent resources include the websites of government agencies (such as Congress.gov and the White House), reputable news organizations, and academic journals focusing on political science.

government in america people politics and policy: *Government in America* George C. Edwards, Martin P. Wattenberg, William G. Howell, 2020 This edition of *Government in America* explains the reasons we have such a difficult time resolving differences over public policy and the stakes we all have in finding solutions to the challenges facing our nation. We frame its content with a public policy approach to government in the United States and continually ask-and answer-the question, What difference does politics make to the policies that governments produce? It is one thing to describe the Madisonian system of checks and balances and separation of powers or the elaborate and unusual federal system of government in the United States; it is something else to ask how these features of our constitutional structure affect the policies that governments generate. The essence of our approach to American government and politics is that politics matters. The national government provides important services, ranging from retirement security and health care to recreation facilities and weather forecasts. The government may also send us to war or negotiate peace with our adversaries, expand or restrict our freedom, raise or lower our taxes, and increase or decrease aid for education. In the twenty-first century, decision makers of both political parties are facing difficult questions regarding American democracy and the scope of our government--

government in america people politics and policy: *Government in America* George C. Edwards III, Martin P. Wattenberg, William G. Howell, 2017-05-19 This is the eBook of the printed book and may not include any media, website access codes, or print supplements that may come packaged with the bound book. Learn how American politics affect public policy *Government in America : People, Politics and Policy - 2016 Presidential Election*(Subscription), 17/e, explores our government's impact on the daily lives of Americans by focusing on public policy. Authors George Edwards and Martin Wattenberg provide a framework for students to understand the difficult questions that decision makers of both political parties are facing: How should we govern? And, what should government do? In order to boost student engagement with key concepts, the 2016 Elections incorporates coverage of contemporary issues that dominate today's headlines, as well as the most up-to-date data.

government in america people politics and policy: *AP* Test Prep Workbook for Government in America* George C. Edwards, III, 2012-12-01

government in america people politics and policy: *American Government 3e* Glen Krutz, Sylvie Waskiewicz, 2023-05-12 Black & white print. *American Government 3e* aligns with the topics and objectives of many government courses. Faculty involved in the project have endeavored to make government workings, issues, debates, and impacts meaningful and memorable to students while maintaining the conceptual coverage and rigor inherent in the subject. With this objective in mind, the content of this textbook has been developed and arranged to provide a logical progression from the fundamental principles of institutional design at the founding, to avenues of political participation, to thorough coverage of the political structures that constitute American government. The book builds upon what students have already learned and emphasizes connections between topics as well as between theory and applications. The goal of each section is to enable students not just to recognize concepts, but to work with them in ways that will be useful in later courses, future careers, and as engaged citizens. In order to help students understand the ways that government,

society, and individuals interconnect, the revision includes more examples and details regarding the lived experiences of diverse groups and communities within the United States. The authors and reviewers sought to strike a balance between confronting the negative and harmful elements of American government, history, and current events, while demonstrating progress in overcoming them. In doing so, the approach seeks to provide instructors with ample opportunities to open discussions, extend and update concepts, and drive deeper engagement.

government in america people politics and policy: *The Submerged State* Suzanne Mettler, 2011-08-31 “Keep your government hands off my Medicare!” Such comments spotlight a central question animating Suzanne Mettler’s provocative and timely book: why are many Americans unaware of government social benefits and so hostile to them in principle, even though they receive them? The Obama administration has been roundly criticized for its inability to convey how much it has accomplished for ordinary citizens. Mettler argues that this difficulty is not merely a failure of communication; rather it is endemic to the formidable presence of the “submerged state.” In recent decades, federal policymakers have increasingly shunned the outright disbursing of benefits to individuals and families and favored instead less visible and more indirect incentives and subsidies, from tax breaks to payments for services to private companies. These submerged policies, Mettler shows, obscure the role of government and exaggerate that of the market. As a result, citizens are unaware not only of the benefits they receive, but of the massive advantages given to powerful interests, such as insurance companies and the financial industry. Neither do they realize that the policies of the submerged state shower their largest benefits on the most affluent Americans, exacerbating inequality. Mettler analyzes three Obama reforms—student aid, tax relief, and health care—to reveal the submerged state and its consequences, demonstrating how structurally difficult it is to enact policy reforms and even to obtain public recognition for achieving them. She concludes with recommendations for reform to help make hidden policies more visible and governance more comprehensible to all Americans. The sad truth is that many American citizens do not know how major social programs work—or even whether they benefit from them. Suzanne Mettler’s important new book will bring government policies back to the surface and encourage citizens to reclaim their voice in the political process.

government in america people politics and policy: *Democracy in America?* Benjamin I. Page, Martin Gilens, 2020-04-02 America faces daunting problems—stagnant wages, high health care costs, neglected schools, deteriorating public services. How did we get here? Through decades of dysfunctional government. In *Democracy in America?* veteran political observers Benjamin I. Page and Martin Gilens marshal an unprecedented array of evidence to show that while other countries have responded to a rapidly changing economy by helping people who’ve been left behind, the United States has failed to do so. Instead, we have actually exacerbated inequality, enriching corporations and the wealthy while leaving ordinary citizens to fend for themselves. What’s the solution? More democracy. More opportunities for citizens to shape what their government does. To repair our democracy, Page and Gilens argue, we must change the way we choose candidates and conduct our elections, reform our governing institutions, and curb the power of money in politics. By doing so, we can reduce polarization and gridlock, address pressing challenges, and enact policies that truly reflect the interests of average Americans. Updated with new information, this book lays out a set of proposals that would boost citizen participation, curb the power of money, and democratize the House and Senate.

government in america people politics and policy: *The Transformation of American Politics* Paul Pierson, Theda Skocpol, 2007-08-19 The contemporary American political landscape has been marked by two paradoxical transformations: the emergence after 1960 of an increasingly activist state, and the rise of an assertive and politically powerful conservatism that strongly opposes activist government. Leading young scholars take up these issues in *The Transformation of American Politics*. Arguing that even conservative administrations have become more deeply involved in managing our economy and social choices, they examine why our political system nevertheless has grown divided as never before over the extent to which government should involve itself in our lives.

The contributors show how these two closely linked trends have influenced the reform and running of political institutions, patterns of civic engagement, and capacities for partisan mobilization--and fueled ever-heightening conflicts over the contours and reach of public policy. These transformations not only redefined who participates in American politics and how they do so, but altered the substance of political conflicts and the capacities of rival interests to succeed. Representing both an important analysis of American politics and an innovative contribution to the study of long-term political change, this pioneering volume reveals how partisan discourse and the relationship between citizens and their government have been redrawn and complicated by increased government programs. The contributors are Andrea Louise Campbell, Jacob S. Hacker, Nolan McCarty, Suzanne Mettler, Paul Pierson, Theda Skocpol, Mark A. Smith, Steven M. Teles, and Julian E. Zelizer.

government in america people politics and policy: American Government and Politics in the Information Age , 2011 Our text is a comprehensive introduction to the vital subject of American government and politics. Governments decide who gets what, when, how (See Harold D. Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*, [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936]); they make policies and pass laws that are binding on all a society's members; they decide about taxation and spending, benefits and costs, even life and death. Governments possess power?the ability to gain compliance and to get people under their jurisdiction to obey them?and they may exercise their power by using the police and military to enforce their decisions. However, power need not involve the exercise of force or compulsion; people often obey because they think it is in their interest to do so, they have no reason to disobey or they fear punishment. Above all, people obey their government because it has authority; its power is seen by people as rightfully held, as legitimate. People can grant their government legitimacy because they have been socialized to do so; because there are processes, such as elections, that enable them to choose and change their rulers; and because they believe that their governing institutions operate justly. Politics is the process by which leaders are selected and policy decisions are made and executed. It involves people and groups, both inside and outside of government, engaged in deliberation and debate, disagreement and conflict, cooperation and consensus and power struggles. In covering American government and politics, our text introduces the intricacies of the Constitution, the complexities of federalism, the meanings of civil liberties and the conflicts over civil rights; explains how people are socialized to politics, acquire and express opinions and participate in political life; describes interest groups, political parties and elections?the intermediaries that link people to government and politics; details the branches of government and how they operate; and shows how policies are made and affect people's lives. This textbook has been used in classes at: Metropolitan College of New York, University of Central Oklahoma, Bucks County Community College, University of South Carolina? Beaufort, Delaware County Community College, Collin College? Spring Creek, Austin Community College? Northridge, Randolph College, Columbia Gorge Community College, Central Christian College, Thomas More College, Orange Coast College, San Bernardino Valley College, Southwestern College? Chula Vista, De Anza College, Shasta College, Jacksonville University, Northeastern University, University of Baltimore, Southern New Hampshire University, Seattle Central Community College, Edmonds Community College, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Brazosport College, Sul Ross State University, Odessa College, California State University? Monterey Bay, University of Texas? Arlington, Chabot College, Portland Community College? Cascade, Athens High School, Dalat International School, Paradise Education Center, St. Teresa's Academy, South Broward High School, Academy of the Sacred Heart, St. Ignatius College Preparatory, Henrico County Public Schools, Blue Ridge High School, Newell High School, Southern New Hampshire University, American University in Bulgaria, Miami Springs Senior High School, Seattle Central Community College, Milaca High School, Rock Canyon High School, Media Arts Collaborative Charter School, Susan E. Wagner High School, St. Monica's University, Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory.

government in america people politics and policy: White-Collar Government Nicholas Carnes, 2013-11-05 Eight of the last twelve presidents were millionaires when they took office.

Millionaires have a majority on the Supreme Court, and they also make up majorities in Congress, where a background in business or law is the norm and the average member has spent less than two percent of his or her adult life in a working-class job. Why is it that most politicians in America are so much better off than the people who elect them— and does the social class divide between citizens and their representatives matter? With *White-Collar Government*, Nicholas Carnes answers this question with a resounding—and disturbing—yes. Legislators' socioeconomic backgrounds, he shows, have a profound impact on both how they view the issues and the choices they make in office. Scant representation from among the working class almost guarantees that the policymaking process will be skewed toward outcomes that favor the upper class. It matters that the wealthiest Americans set the tax rates for the wealthy, that white-collar professionals choose the minimum wage for blue-collar workers, and that people who have always had health insurance decide whether or not to help those without. And while there is no one cause for this crisis of representation, Carnes shows that the problem does not stem from a lack of qualified candidates from among the working class. The solution, he argues, must involve a variety of changes, from the equalization of campaign funding to a shift in the types of candidates the parties support. If we want a government for the people, we have to start working toward a government that is truly by the people. *White-Collar Government* challenges long-held notions about the causes of political inequality in the United States and speaks to enduring questions about representation and political accountability.

government in america people politics and policy: *New Democracy* William J. Novak, 2022-03-29 The activist state of the New Deal started forming decades before the FDR administration, demonstrating the deep roots of energetic government in America. In the period between the Civil War and the New Deal, American governance was transformed, with momentous implications for social and economic life. A series of legal reforms gradually brought an end to nineteenth-century traditions of local self-government and associative citizenship, replacing them with positive statecraft: governmental activism intended to change how Americans lived and worked through legislation, regulation, and public administration. The last time American public life had been so thoroughly altered was in the late eighteenth century, at the founding and in the years immediately following. William J. Novak shows how Americans translated new conceptions of citizenship, social welfare, and economic democracy into demands for law and policy that delivered public services and vindicated people's rights. Over the course of decades, Americans progressively discarded earlier understandings of the reach and responsibilities of government and embraced the idea that legislators and administrators in Washington could tackle economic regulation and social-welfare problems. As citizens witnessed the successes of an energetic, interventionist state, they demanded more of the same, calling on politicians and civil servants to address unfair competition and labor exploitation, form public utilities, and reform police power. Arguing against the myth that America was a weak state until the New Deal, *New Democracy* traces a steadily aggrandizing authority well before the Roosevelt years. The United States was flexing power domestically and intervening on behalf of redistributive goals for far longer than is commonly recognized, putting the lie to libertarian claims that the New Deal was an aberration in American history.

government in america people politics and policy: *The Increasingly United States* Daniel J. Hopkins, 2018-05-30 In a campaign for state or local office these days, you're as likely today to hear accusations that an opponent advanced Obamacare or supported Donald Trump as you are to hear about issues affecting the state or local community. This is because American political behavior has become substantially more nationalized. American voters are far more engaged with and knowledgeable about what's happening in Washington, DC, than in similar messages whether they are in the South, the Northeast, or the Midwest. Gone are the days when all politics was local. With *The Increasingly United States*, Daniel J. Hopkins explores this trend and its implications for the American political system. The change is significant in part because it works against a key rationale of America's federalist system, which was built on the assumption that citizens would be more strongly attached to their states and localities. It also has profound implications for how voters are

represented. If voters are well informed about state politics, for example, the governor has an incentive to deliver what voters—or at least a pivotal segment of them—want. But if voters are likely to back the same party in gubernatorial as in presidential elections irrespective of the governor's actions in office, governors may instead come to see their ambitions as tethered more closely to their status in the national party.

government in america people politics and policy: Government's Greatest Achievements

Paul C. Light, 2010-12-01 In an era of promises to create smaller, more limited government, Americans often forget that the federal government has amassed an extraordinary record of successes over the past half century. Despite seemingly insurmountable odds, it helped rebuild Europe after World War II, conquered polio and other life-threatening diseases, faced down communism, attacked racial discrimination, reduced poverty among the elderly, and put men on the moon. In *Government's Greatest Achievements*, Paul C. Light explores the federal government's most successful accomplishments over the previous five decades and anticipates the most significant challenges of the next half century. While some successes have come through major legislation such as the 1965 Medicare Act, or large-scale efforts like the Apollo space program, most have been achieved through collections of smaller, often unheralded statutes. Drawing on survey responses from 230 historians and 220 political scientists at colleges and universities nationwide, Light ranks and summarizes the fifty greatest government achievements from 1944 to 1999. The achievements were ranked based on difficulty, importance, and degree of success. Through a series of twenty vignettes, he paints a vivid picture of the most intense government efforts to improve the quality of life both at home and abroad—from enhancing health care and workplace safety, to expanding home ownership, to improving education, to protecting endangered species, to strengthening the national defense. The book also examines how Americans perceive government's greatest achievements, and reveals what they consider to be its most significant failures. America is now calling on the government to resolve another complex, difficult problem: the defeat of terrorism. Light concludes by discussing this enormous task, as well as government's other greatest priorities for the next fifty years.

government in america people politics and policy: Forgotten Americans Isabel Sawhill,

2018-09-25 A sobering account of a disenfranchised American working class and important policy solutions to the nation's economic inequalities One of the country's leading scholars on economics and social policy, Isabel Sawhill addresses the enormous divisions in American society—economic, cultural, and political—and what might be done to bridge them. Widening inequality and the loss of jobs to trade and technology has left a significant portion of the American workforce disenfranchised and skeptical of governments and corporations alike. And yet both have a role to play in improving the country for all. Sawhill argues for a policy agenda based on mainstream values, such as family, education, and work. While many have lost faith in government programs designed to help them, there are still trusted institutions on both the local and federal level that can deliver better job opportunities and higher wages to those who have been left behind. At the same time, the private sector needs to reexamine how it trains and rewards employees. This book provides a clear-headed and middle-way path to a better-functioning society in which personal responsibility is honored and inclusive capitalism and more broadly shared growth are once more the norm.

government in america people politics and policy: The Politics of Information Frank R.

Baumgartner, Bryan D. Jones, 2015-01-02 How does the government decide what's a problem and what isn't? And what are the consequences of that process? Like individuals, Congress is subject to the "paradox of search." If policy makers don't look for problems, they won't find those that need to be addressed. But if they carry out a thorough search, they will almost certainly find new problems—and with the definition of each new problem comes the possibility of creating a government program to address it. With *The Politics of Attention*, leading policy scholars Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones demonstrated the central role attention plays in how governments prioritize problems. Now, with *The Politics of Information*, they turn the focus to the problem-detection process itself, showing how the growth or contraction of government is closely

related to how it searches for information and how, as an organization, it analyzes its findings. Better search processes that incorporate more diverse viewpoints lead to more intensive policymaking activity. Similarly, limiting search processes leads to declines in policy making. At the same time, the authors find little evidence that the factors usually thought to be responsible for government expansion—partisan control, changes in presidential leadership, and shifts in public opinion—can be systematically related to the patterns they observe. Drawing on data tracing the course of American public policy since World War II, Baumgartner and Jones once again deepen our understanding of the dynamics of American policy making.

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crucial and controversial issues affecting the nation in the 21st century. This bestselling book has been extensively revised to provide in-depth coverage of President Barack Obama's first two years in office and the 111th Congress, the 2010 congressional elections, continued concerns related to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and domestic concerns related to health care reform and the economy.

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text shows how to measure and evaluate the importance of equality in America, from its founding up to today--

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and believe it is wasteful, inefficient, and doing a generally poor job managing public programs and providing public services. When social problems arise, Americans are therefore skeptical that the government has the ability to respond effectively. It's a serious problem, argues Amy E. Lerman, and it will not be a simple one to fix. With *Good Enough for Government Work*, Lerman uses surveys, experiments, and public opinion data to argue persuasively that the reputation of government is itself an impediment to government's ability to achieve the common good. In addition to improving its efficiency and effectiveness, government therefore has an equally critical task: countering the belief that the public sector is mired in incompetence. Lerman takes readers through the main challenges. Negative perceptions are highly resistant to change, she shows, because we tend to perceive the world in a way that confirms our negative stereotypes of government—even in the face of new information. Those who hold particularly negative perceptions also begin to “opt out” in favor of private alternatives, such as sending their children to private schools, living in gated communities, and refusing to participate in public health insurance programs. When sufficient numbers of people opt out of public services, the result can be a decline in the objective quality of public provision. In this way, citizens' beliefs about government can quickly become a self-fulfilling prophecy, with consequences for all. Lerman concludes with practical solutions for how the government might improve its reputation and roll back current efforts to eliminate or privatize even some of the most critical public services.

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