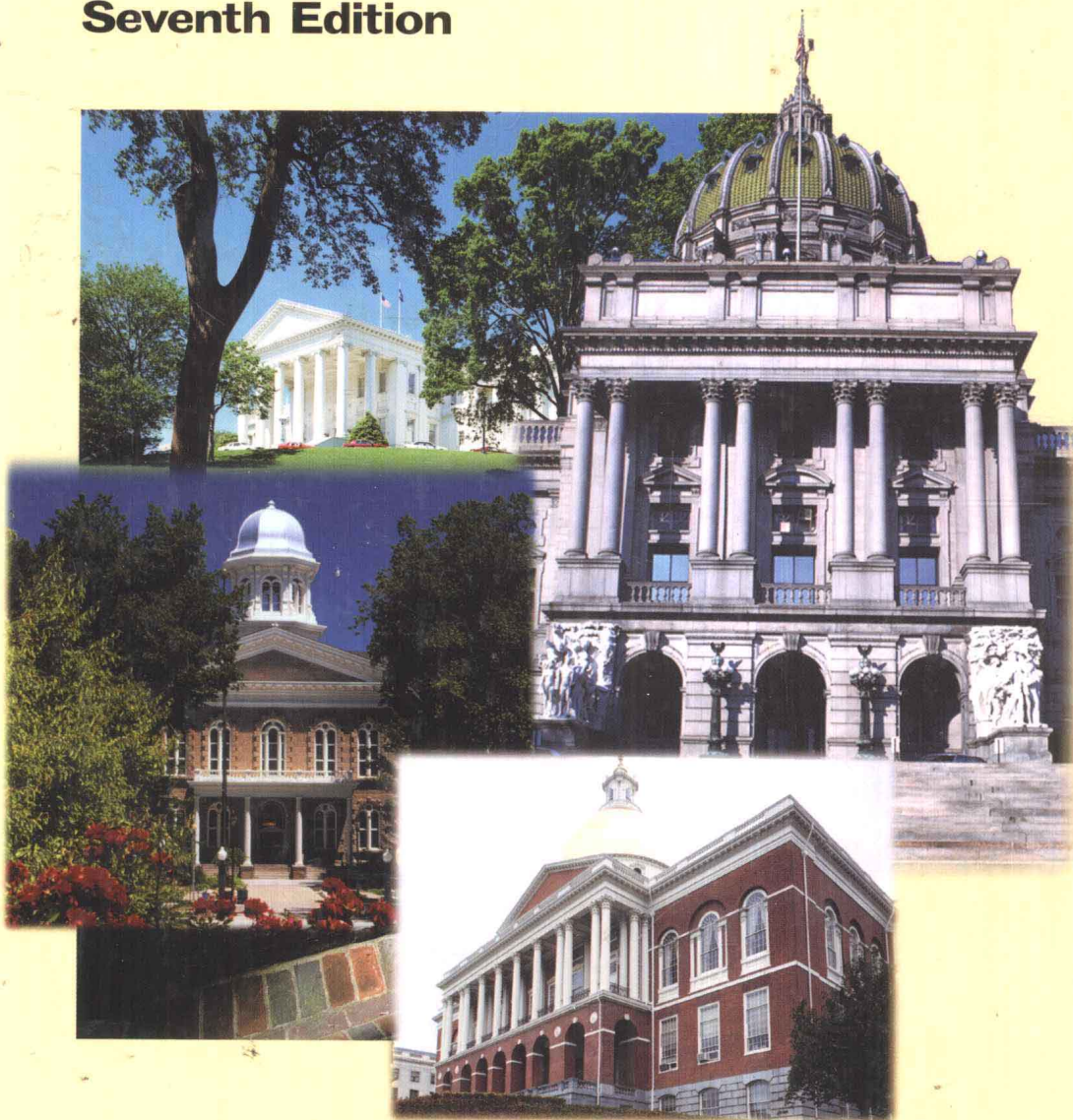


# **POLITICS AND POLICY IN STATES AND COMMUNITIES**

**Seventh Edition**



**John J. Harrigan  
David C. Nice**

# POLITICS AND POLICY IN STATES & COMMUNITIES

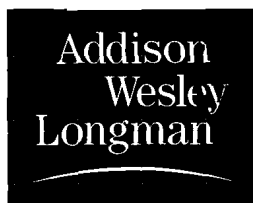
*Seventh Edition*

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New York San Francisco Boston  
London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore Madrid  
Mexico City Munich Paris Cape Town Hong Kong Montreal

Publisher: Priscilla McGeehon  
Senior Acquisitions Editor: Eric Stano  
Marketing Manager: Megan Galvin-Fak  
Supplements Editor: Kristinn Muller  
Production Manager: Joseph Vella  
Project Coordination, Text Design, and Electronic Page Makeup: Shepherd Inc.  
Cover Designer/Manager: Nancy Danahy  
Cover Photos: Copyright © PhotoDisc, Inc.  
Photo Research: PhotoSearch, Inc.  
Manufacturing Buyer: Dennis J. Para  
Printer and Binder: The Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group  
Cover Printer: Coral Graphic Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Harrigan, John J.

Politics and policy in state and communities/by John J.

Harrigan.—7th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 0-321-05267-6

1. State Governments—United States. 2. Municipal government—United States. 3. Local government—United States. I. Title.

JK2443.H37 1997

320.973—dc21

97-31719

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Please visit our website at <http://www.awl.com/harrigan>

ISBN 0-321-05267-6

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10—MA—03 02 01

**POLITICS AND POLICY  
IN STATES  
&  
COMMUNITIES**

# Preface

State and local governments play a major role in all of the domestic policies issues facing the United States. States and localities have gained a more prominent role over the past two decades, in part because the federal government has abdicated leadership in so many areas of domestic policy and there was no other governmental arena to which to turn. But they are doing so also because of four vital threads that have woven through the fabric of American domestic politics in recent years:

- The dramatic waves of reforms in state and local governments since World War II
- The unprecedented role that state and community governments play today in the political economy and in promoting economic development
- The never-ending ideological conflict over the public issues that dominate state and community politics
- The emergence of explosive social conflicts over ethnicity, gender, and sexual preference

These four themes play important roles in *Politics and Policy in States and Communities*. Examples of the four themes abound.

*Item:* During the early and middle years of the twentieth century, many critics drew attention to the weaknesses of state and local governments. However, reformers have worked to modernize and upgrade state and local governments across the country and, in the process, strengthened their abilities to deal with complex policy problems. Today the talk is of rejuvenating government and, as we shall see, of “reinventing” government. Some of the most exciting political leaders around the nation are emerging from state politics. (President Bill Clinton, for example, came to prominence as governor of Arkansas, and Republican senator Richard Lugar came to the Senate from the mayor’s office in Indianapolis.)

*Item:* States and municipalities have gone into the economic development business in a big way in recent years. They seek to stimulate business activity to create more jobs, attract new industries, and keep existing ones. This has sparked an intense interstate and interregional competition for corporate investment dollars. When General Motors decided to build a factory to manufacture a new automobile called the Saturn, over half the states offered packages to GM in their competition to get the site of the new Saturn plant.

*Item:* In 1960, a prominent scholar published a book lamenting the end of ideology. Today ideology is alive and well in state and community politics (too alive, in some people’s judgment). On virtually every major domestic issue area (education, social welfare, crime, infrastructure, regulation) political leaders divide themselves into a variety of ideological positions on the left-right spectrum, which we will examine shortly.

## CONCEPTUAL THEMES

Rejuvenation of state and local government, the role of those governments in state political economies, and the influence of political ideology in state and community politics are the unifying themes of this book. Rejuvenation of state and local government is particularly the dominant theme for Chapters 2 through 12, which deal with the institutions and processes of state and local politics. Political ideology is most relevant in the material for Chapters 13 through 16, which deal with the major policy areas confronting state and local governments (crime, education, social welfare, infrastructure, and regulation). The object of examining the ideological aspect of these issue areas is twofold: (1) to help the reader better understand his or her own value orientations toward these issues and (2) to provide conceptual tools that the reader can use to evaluate these issues as they arise in the reader's own community. The theme of political economy is relevant in several chapters of the book but nowhere more directly than in Chapter 17, which discusses the role that state and local governments play in promoting economic development. Finally, today's great social conflicts over ethnicity and gender will surface in a great many chapters ranging from legislative representation in Chapter 9 to affirmative action in Chapter 11.

## IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THIS EDITION

- A separate chapter (17) on economic development policy. So important has economic development politics become that a special chapter is devoted specifically to it. Especially useful in this chapter is a set of analytical questions the reader can use to assess proposed economic development projects in his or her own state.
- A unique appendix on career prospects in state and community government and politics. This appendix gives students a guide to numerous career possibilities in state and local politics as well as some sources that can provide more information. This is especially helpful given today's demand that the college curriculum be relevant to the workplace.
- End-of-chapter glossaries. Important terms are defined in glossaries at the end of each chapter, where they can easily be found by the reader.
- Up-to-date coverage of recent developments in state and community politics. These include the legislative term limitation movement, and recent changes in health care policy, among others.
- A series of exercises to introduce students to some major sources of information regarding state and local governments and policies via the Internet.

## TEACHING FEATURES OF THIS BOOK

This book contains numerous pedagogical features that aid the instructor in teaching the course and help the student in learning the material:

- “You Decide” exercises. These are boxed case studies that ask the reader to respond to lively issues that range from deciding welfare eligibility in a complicated case to applying comparable worth to a particular situation.
- Chapter previews and summaries. Chapter previews give the reader a brief outline of the major issues in each chapter. The end-of-chapter summaries seek to wrap up the most important points.
- Highlight boxes in each chapter. These are short, boxed case studies that seek to illustrate important points made in the body of the text.
- A comprehensive *Instructor’s Manual/Test Bank*. This manual provides: (1) chapter outlines, (2) twenty-five to thirty multiple-choice questions for each chapter, (3) suggested classroom exercises to promote discussion of key issues and topics, (4) proposed research projects designed to have the student investigate how well the chapter’s assertions apply to his or her state or community, (5) a career exploration exercise tied to the book’s Appendix, (6) a film guide, and (7) study guides that can be given to the student. The two-page study guide for each chapter can be duplicated and distributed to the class as an aid for mastering the material of the course. Each contains (a) learning objectives for the chapter, (b) identification terms that the student should understand, and (c) mastery questions for which the student should be able to outline answers.
- *NEW! Companion Website*. This online course companion ([www.AWL.com/harrigan](http://www.AWL.com/harrigan)) provides a wealth of resources for students and instructors. Students will find chapter objectives, review questions, and links to related sites. Instructors will have access to the instructor’s manual and web links, and can also put their course materials online with our Syllabus Manager.
- Detailed footnotes that the reader can use as a guide to basic literature on research topics.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Both authors of this book have a keen interest in state and local politics because it is a topic that is directly involved in people’s daily lives and one that has changed dramatically over the past several decades. We hope that interest is contagious. If it is, we have many people to thank. First, there are the many users of the earlier editions of the book. They will see retained the approaches they responded to positively in the earlier editions and will note substantial additions in this edition to accommodate changing events and perspectives. Additionally and more directly, we are greatly indebted to the following reviewers who read part or all of the manuscript and gave their invaluable comments: Shari Garber Bax at Central Missouri State University; Martin Sellers at Campbell University; Mark Griffith at University of West Alabama; James D. Ivers at Southern Illinois University; Richard K. Scher at University of Florida; Martin P. Sutton at Bucks County Community College; and Gregory T. Williams at Albany State University. In addition, Eric Stano Senior Acquisitions Editor for Political Science of

Addison Wesley Longman was a tremendous help in bringing the new edition to completion, Terri Schiesl did a superb job of copyediting, and thanks to Andrea Bednar and the entire book team at Shepherd, Inc.

*John J. Harrigan*  
*David C. Nice*



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# *Chapter 1*

## INTRODUCTION TO STATE AND COMMUNITY POLITICS

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### **Chapter Preview**

Chapter 1 introduces the central concerns of state and community government today and outlines the plan of this book. In this chapter, we will discuss in turn:

1. How state and local government responsibilities have increased in recent decades.
2. How state and local governments have reformed and rejuvenated themselves to handle their new responsibilities.
3. What conflicts arise in states and communities as those governments seek to carry out their responsibilities.
4. How state and local governments have become increasingly concerned with political economy and the politics of economic development.

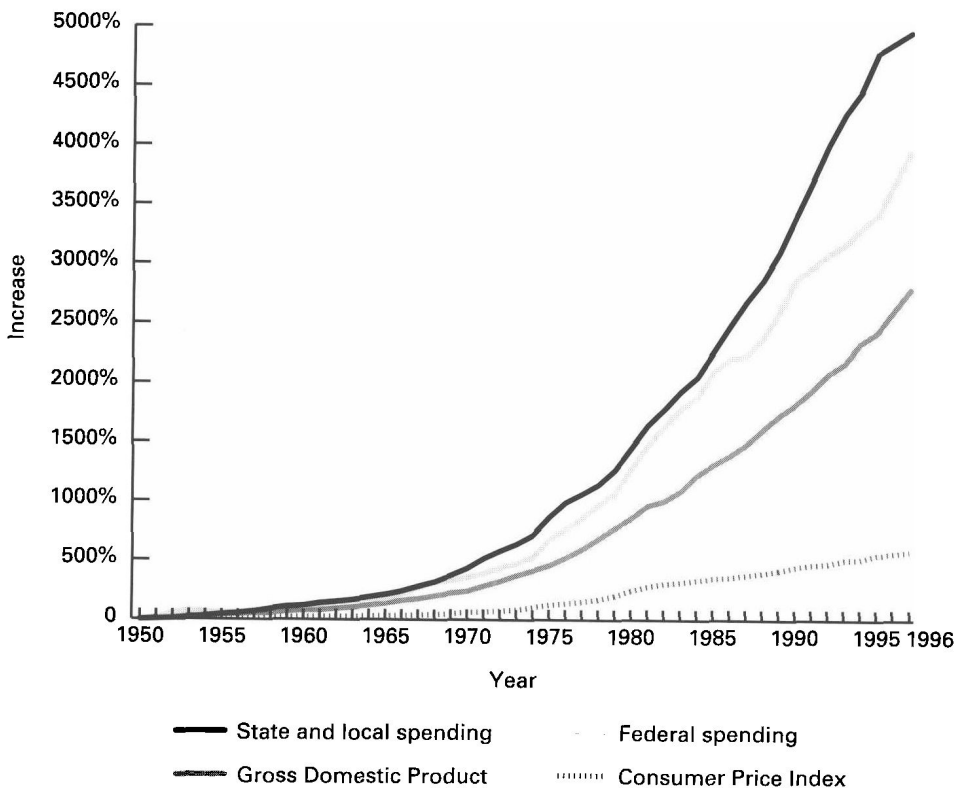
State and local governments seem to affect our lives much more directly than does the federal government. Most of the governmental services we receive are delivered by state or local units, not by Washington. That includes most of the federal government's domestic services, such as public housing, Medicaid, and most forms of public welfare. Many people feel, rightly or wrongly, that they can influence what occurs in their city hall or state capitol much more than they can influence what transpires in Washington. For most of us, Washington often seems very far away, with most of its money being spent elsewhere, in somebody else's neighborhood, state, or country. Bear in mind, however, that much government spending is not very visible; some of your neighbors may be receiving Social Security benefits and some of your classmates may be partially

financing their education with government-guaranteed loans. State and local governments spend most of their money locally, and many of their projects are literally carried out before our eyes, sometimes in our own neighborhoods.

Not only do state and community governments have a more direct impact on our lives than does the government in Washington, but their role in domestic policy is steadily growing. This growth is illustrated in Figure 1-1, which shows that growth of state and local government expenditures since midcentury has outstripped the growth of federal governmental spending, the gross domestic product (or GDP, the most common measure of the nation's economic output), and inflation, as measured by change in the consumer price index (CPI).

To some extent, state and local government spending has grown because of rising public expectations. Since the turn of the century, the American public has demanded more and better roads and highways, more access to higher education, and a host of other services that cannot be provided without increased

**Figure 1-1 GROWTH IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**



Sources: Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1996* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), pp. 303, 330, 443, 483; *Statistical Abstract: 1987*, pp. 250, 416, 463; *Statistical Abstract: 1984*, pp. 272; *Statistical Abstract: 1971*, pp. 305, 396.



funding. As we will see, the states and especially local governments have not raised all of that money themselves.

The growing role of states and localities also occurred because the federal government during the 1980s abdicated leadership in tackling some of our most pressing domestic problems, such as air and water pollution, massive poverty, deteriorating public school systems, and dreaded toxic wastes seeping into the drinking water and contaminating the ocean beaches. During these years of neglect, groups concerned about these problems, finding little support for their concerns in Washington, D.C., began turning their attention to the states instead. The most imaginative leadership on some of these national problems today is coming not from the national capital in Washington but from the state capitals.

The years of domestic neglect were caused in no small measure because domestic problems for most of the past forty years were overshadowed by America's great Cold War conflict with the Soviet Union. When choices had to be made in the federal budget, Cold War fears over national security sometimes ensured that it was not the military but federal programs for the environment, education, social welfare, and other domestic problems that were reduced. There are still dangerous challenges to America's security, but the Cold War is over, and nothing on the international horizon poses a threat of that magnitude. With the Cold War gone, it is more difficult to ignore any longer the scores of domestic problems that were given low priority during the years of neglect. As national attention turns to these issues, state and community governments have been playing ever-growing roles and have been reasserting their historic role as the laboratories of democracy.<sup>1</sup>

As states move to the forefront on domestic issues, they find themselves with difficult choices to make. Which public services should be emphasized? At what levels? Who should receive these services? Who should pay for their cost? And how should the great burden of regulating the environment, the economy, health, and safety be divided among the three levels of government (national, state, and local)?

## REJUVENATION OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

If these great tasks had been handed to the states a generation ago, in the 1960s, the states probably would not have been up to the task. In those years, scholars and journalists usually viewed state and community governments as incompetent at best. State governments were described as "sick,"<sup>2</sup> and state legislatures were caricatured as "horse-and-buggy" institutions.<sup>3</sup> States for the most part shirked their responsibilities for dealing with urban problems.<sup>4</sup> And as states ignored their growing urban problems in the 1950s and 1960s, the federal government picked up much of the slack with a vast expansion of social services and domestic programs. Journalists and social scientists increasingly turned their attention to Washington or to the central city, largely ignoring state government as "Dullsville."<sup>5</sup>

Today, these charges no longer ring true. State and community governments have considerably rejuvenated themselves in recent years. In many states there has been a broad upgrading of the professionalism and competence of the