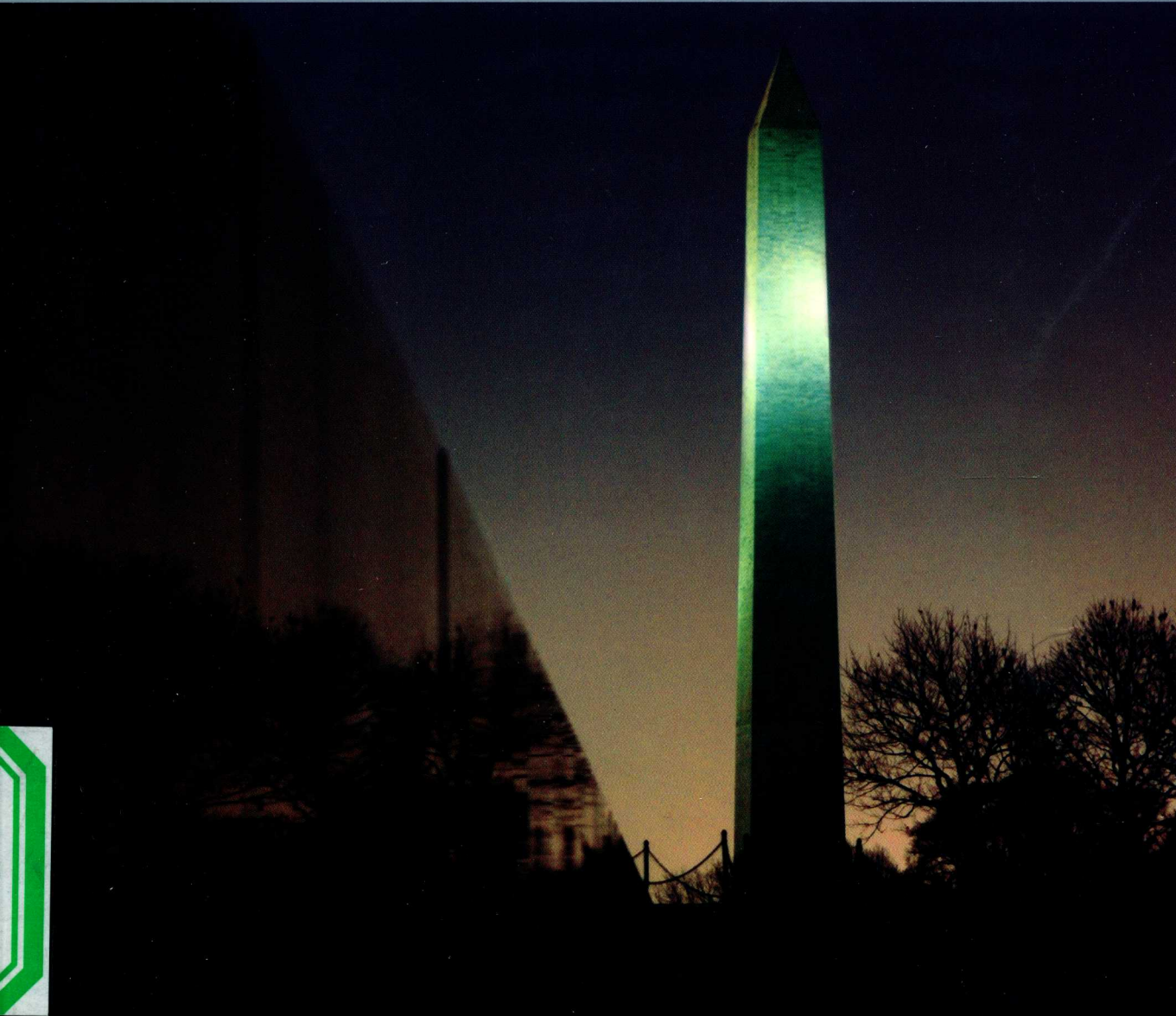


TENTH EDITION

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

BRIEF VERSION



JAMES Q. WILSON

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BRIEF VERSION

TENTH EDITION

James Q. Wilson

University of California, Los Angeles
Pepperdine University
Boston College



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Tenth Edition**
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To Diane

PREFACE

American Government, Brief Version explains not only how the federal government works but also clarifies how its institutions have developed over time and their effects on public policy. Students will gain a deeper understanding about the subject's enduring historical, constitutional, and institutional dimensions within a concise framework. This book is thoroughly revised and redesigned to excite students' interest about the latest in American politics and encourage critical thinking.

In response to suggestions from readers, I have added the following features:

- **So What?** sections in each chapter pose a question to students about the content ahead, ask them to brainstorm about possible answers, and then offer an alternate answer that may not be so apparent. The goal is to make the chapter immediately accessible to students and help them see why it's so important to learn about our government.
- **What Would You Do?** boxes further enhance the critical thinking emphasis of the book, challenging students to explore their opinions on controversial topics and generating classroom discussion and debate.
- **How We Compare** features show how other nations around the world structure their governments and policies in relation to the United States and ask students to think about the results of these differences.

In addition to updates on statistics, tables, figures, and photos throughout, new topics include:

- Chapter 1: A look at why it's important to study American government in light of how we differ from other countries and how our nation deals with times of crisis, such as war and the current economic downturn.
- Chapter 2: How our Constitution differs from those around the world and what that means for us as citizens.
- Chapter 3: *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, a discussion of church and state in the United States and other countries, and the issues of trying terrorists in civilian courts and the closing of Guantanamo prison.
- Chapter 4: A new introduction looks at the difference between minimum, intermediate, and strict scrutiny, and a How We Compare box looks at same-sex marriages at home and abroad.
- Chapter 5: State and federal relations in regard to the 2010 Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act, forms of Federalism around the world, and updates on grants and the intergovernmental lobby.
- Chapter 6: The increased role of the Internet and other technology in today's political world, the role of genetics in our political ideology, the world's opinions on America, a new table examining the policy positions of politically engaged Republicans and Democrats, and a new discussion about media bias in newspapers.
- Chapter 7: New updates on party preferences and delegates' representativeness to their voters, a look at political parties in other countries, and a new section on interest groups at work.
- Chapter 8: Updates on voter participation in the recent elections and an examination of how to increase voter turnout, a look at voting laws and turnout around the world compared to the United States, the role of the Internet, blogs, and social networking in campaigns, "narrowcasting" and "astroturfing," and an updated section on campaign financing.
- Chapter 9: A look at the recent party polarization of Congress, the 2010 elections, and how our number of legislators compares to other governments.
- Chapter 10: New coverage of the Obama administration and his policy toward issues such as the recession, health care, and war, a new section

on signing statements, and a look at presidential systems in other countries.

- Chapter 11: A new discussion helping students see why the bureaucracy matters and how the public and private sectors differ, and a How We Compare box on Outsourcing Government.
- Chapter 12: A revised discussion of the confirmation process, including Elena Kagan's hearing; an expanded and clarified look at activist and strict constructionist approaches, and a comparison of judicial review in the United States and the rest of the world.
- Chapter 13: The economic downturn and new policies to combat the crisis, health care reform, the BP oil spill, and how our Social Security system compares to those in other countries.
- Chapter 14: Updates on the war in Afghanistan and how our opinions on global issues compare to the rest of the world.
- Chapter 15: A new discussion about the current issues facing our government and those that lie ahead.

Instructor and Student Ancillaries

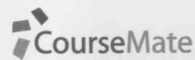
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CourseMate

The CourseMate for *American Government, Brief Version, Tenth Edition* offers a variety of rich online learning resources designed to enhance the student experience. These resources include video activities, audio summaries, critical thinking activities, simulations, animated learning modules, interactive timelines, primary source quizzes, flashcards, learning objectives, glossaries, and crossword puzzles. Chapter resources are correlated with key chapter learning concepts, and users can browse or search for content in a variety of ways. It also contains an interactive **eBook** that has highlighting and search capabilities along with links to the chapters' study tools.

NewsNow on CourseMate brings current events to life for the student through weekly news stories from the Associated Press, videos, and images. For instructors, NewsNow includes an additional set of multimedia-rich PowerPoint slides posted each week to the password-protected area of the text's instructor companion website. Instructors may use these slides to take a class poll or trigger a lively debate about the events that are shaping the world right now. No Internet connection is required! Instructors also have access to the **Instructor's Guide to YouTube**, which shows American government instructors where on the Internet to find videos that can be used as learning tools in class.

Engagement Tracker lets instructors assess student preparation and engagement on CourseMate. Use the tracking tools to see progress for the class as a whole or for individual students.

WebTutor on Blackboard and WebCT

This web-based teaching and learning tool includes course management, study/mastery, and

communication tools. Use WebTutor to provide virtual office hours, post your syllabus, and track student progress with WebTutor's quizzing material. For students, WebTutor offers real-time access to interactive online tutorials and simulations, practice quizzes, and Web links—all correlated to *American Government, Brief Version, Tenth Edition*.

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ABC Video: Speeches by President Barack Obama

This DVD of nine famous speeches by President Barack Obama, from 2004 through his inauguration, also features critical-thinking questions and answers for each speech, designed to spark classroom discussion.

Election 2010: An American Government Supplement

Written by John Clark and Brian Schaffner, this booklet addresses the 2010 congressional and

gubernatorial races, with real-time analysis and references.

The Obama Presidency—Year One Supplement

This full-color, sixteen-page supplement by Kenneth Janda, Jeffrey Berry, and Jerry Goldman analyzes such issues as healthcare, the economy and stimulus package, changes in the U.S. Supreme Court, and the effect Obama's policies have had on global affairs.

American Government CourseReader: Politics in Context

This database of readings enables instructors to create a customized reader, available to their students online or in print format. Hundreds of documents, readings, and videos can be searched by various criteria or browsed by collection, previewed, and then selected for a customized collection. The sources are edited to an appropriate length and include headnotes describing the document and critical-thinking and multiple-choice questions. Students can take notes, highlight, and print content. The e-Reader gives instructors easy-to-use assignment and assessment tools.

Acknowledgments

In preparing this edition, I was greatly aided by advice from the following colleagues and the reviewers of this and previous editions:

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James Q. Wilson is an emeritus professor of management and public policy at the University of California, Los Angeles. He lectures at Boston College and Pepperdine University, where he is the Ronald Reagan professor. From 1961 to 1987, he was a professor of government at Harvard University. Raised in California, he received a B.A. degree from the University of Redlands and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

He is the author or coauthor of fifteen books, including *The Marriage Problem* (2002), *Moral Judgment* (1997), *The Moral Sense* (1993), *Bureaucracy* (1989), *Crime and Human Nature* (1985, with Richard J. Herrnstein), and *Political Organizations* (revised edition, 1995).

Wilson has served on a number of advisory posts in the federal government. He was chairman of the White House Task Force on Crime in 1967, chairman of the National Advisory Council on

Drug Abuse Prevention in 1972–1973, a member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board in 1986–1990, and a member of the President's Council on Bioethics (2002).

He has received three lifetime achievement awards from the American Political Science Association: the Charles E. Merriam Award for advancing government through social science knowledge; the John Gaus Award for scholarship on public administration; and the James Madison Award for distinguished scholarship. In 1991–1992, he was president of the Association.

He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the American Philosophical Society. During his free time, he rides horses and goes scuba diving. In 2003, he received at the White House the Presidential Medal of Freedom, this nation's highest civilian award.

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What Should We Know About American Government?

1



ENDURING QUESTIONS

1. If citizens are fit to select their leaders, why may they be unfit to decide public policies?
2. What is democracy, and why is democracy alone not sufficient to protect personal freedom?

We the People
and our Country, its words and symbols are the heart of our nation's identity.

If you are like most Americans, you may not have much confidence in the federal government. Many of us worry that it is too remote from the people, spends more money than it takes in from taxes, can't solve social problems, and never seems to serve as a remedy for disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

Some people believe that government works that way because it is run by self-seeking politicians and dominated by special interest groups. I think that view is an exaggeration. Every government in the world will be influenced by politicians and interest groups. Yet government is necessary to protect the people, manage conflict, and provide essential services. What is striking about American government is that the same people who criticize its actions defend its principles: they like the way our Constitution protects personal freedom, sets limits to what government can do, and manages a capitalist economy. Winston Churchill, the British statesman, put it this way: "Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried."



Why Have a Government?

It may seem obvious that every nation has a government, but it is important to understand why. One reason is that there are many things that people acting by themselves or through the economic market cannot achieve. When we buy a television set or an automobile, we have to pay for it; but a military force that protects the country affects everybody, whether they pay or not, and as a result nobody has any reason to fund it voluntarily. An environmental law that safeguards the quality of the air we breathe helps everybody, so no one has any incentive to pay its costs. We need government to compel people to pay for those things that they need but that cannot be supplied by the market.

A second reason is that people disagree about what should be done in society. They will argue about how a military force should be employed or whether we need an environmental law. Because these are important issues, there must be a way to settle the argument. **Politics** exists because people disagree about who should have power and what decisions they should make. Politics is inevitable. When people say that the government should “do the right thing” and ignore “politics,” they are making a nonsensical statement. Taking politics out of government would be like taking religion out of church. **Government** exists to manage disagreements; it consists of those institutions that have the right to make decisions binding on the whole society.

Of course, politics exists in clubs, families, unions, and business firms, but this book is not about those entities. It is about disagreements that affect us all and so can be managed only by an institution—the government—that controls the lawful use of power. A business firm or labor union may change your behavior, but only the government can send you to jail or tax away your money.

Politics *The management of conflict over who shall rule and what policies shall be made.*

Government *The institution that, with a monopoly on the lawful use of power, can make decisions binding the whole society.*

The Meanings of Democracy

Democracy *Political system where the people rule.*

Direct democracy *Political system in which most citizens make policy, as in a town meeting.*

Representative democracy *Political system in which policy is made by officials elected by the people.*

Republic *A form of democracy in which power is vested in representatives selected by means of popular competitive elections.*

A **democracy** is government by the people. But what does “by the people” mean? It could mean **direct democracy**, in which all or most citizens make government decisions by themselves. They might do so by coming together in meetings to debate and vote on various issues, as happens in many town meetings in New England. Or they could vote on major issues that are put on the ballot, as is done in California and several other states.

However, our nation’s government is not like this; it is a **representative democracy**. Voters do not decide policies; they choose leaders. If there is free competition among people who want to hold office and the election process is fair, it is democratic. The framers of our Constitution called a representative democracy a **republic**.

But it is not enough for a government to be democratic. After all, the people could elect rulers who would ignore or repress a minority of the population. Americans want not only democracy but also freedom. Americans believe their freedom can be protected by having a government with limited powers, access to courts where they can challenge government decisions, and a clear right to demand new policies or complain about existing ones. As we shall see in the next chapter, the Constitution and its chief amendments were written to do just that.