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The Politics of American Government



THIRD EDITION

The Politics of American Government

THIRD EDITION
Basic Version

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The Politics of American Government, Third Edition
Basic Version

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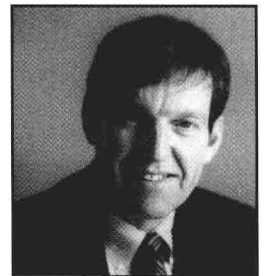
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Dedication

These pages bear the fruits of our country's proud political tradition. Enjoy them. Improve them. Live them. And give them to your children.

To

Jonathan C. Cole
Mary Ashley Cole
Andrew C. Mackenzie
Peter W. Mackenzie
Rebecca M. Knight
Benjamin M. O'Brien
Sara A. O'Brien
Talía M. O'Brien
Jared B. Wayne
Jeremy B. Wayne

Preface

Since the first two editions of *The Politics of American Government* were published, American politics has been characterized by change and continuity. The changes began in 1994 with the Republicans' victory in the midterm elections and continued into 1995 and 1996 with their Contract with America, a new political agenda they attempted to implement. Consistent with the Republican philosophy of less reliance on public institutions and more on the private sector, particularly within the economic realm, the Republican agenda promised to reduce the size, programs, and budget of the federal government, devolving some of its responsibilities to state and local governments. Naturally, the thrust of these initiatives was opposed by those, primarily Democrats, who believed that the federal government had an obligation to help those who could not help themselves achieve a decent standard of living, greater economic opportunities, and confront fewer discriminatory practices. What followed was an old-fashioned political clash, but one that pitted Clinton and the Democrats as the defenders of the status quo and Gingrich and the Republicans as the proponents of change. So fierce did the confrontation become that the national government had to shut down, not once but twice.

These shutdowns, combined with the partisan wrangling in Washington that headlined the news, heightened the cynicism that many Americans felt about politics and politicians. Mistrust of government officials, both Republicans and Democrats, spurred the public's interest in new candidates and parties that did not subscribe to "politics as usual." It also contributed to anti-government activity, the growth of private militias in several states, and to the bombing of the federal office building in Oklahoma City.

Despite the confrontational politics in Washington and the undercurrents of public malaise outside of it, the economy grew, crime declined, and the nation was secure within the international arena. Over time, these conditions mollified the public, tempered partisanship, and resulted in the reelection of those disliked politicians in Congress and the presidency. Good times almost always help those in power.

The external environment had quieted the internal turmoil, but only temporarily. As soon as the outcome of the election became clear, political clouds began to gather again over the White House. This time the president was accused of engaging in sexual improprieties and having lied about them under oath. Although the headlines screamed the charges and news reports detailed the investigation, partisanship was muted until the independent counsel delivered his report to Congress in September 1998, a report that contained eleven possible impeachment offenses against the president. Then partisanship exploded.

With the 1998 midterm elections approaching, the Republicans tried to use the scandal to mobilize their electoral constituency, demoralize the Democrats, and shift attention from Congress and its failure to deal with the current issues of campaign finance reform, teen smoking, and health maintenance organizations (HMOs), as well as the perennial issues of minimum wages, taxes, the environment, and the longer-term issues of Social Security and Medicare. Democrats cried foul and charged the

Republicans with ignoring public policy. When polls indicated that although the president's personal favorability ratings had declined, his job approval ratings remained high, Clinton also took the initiative, reemerging from the ceremonial and statesman roles he had assumed during the investigation to play a more active part in the end-of-the-session negotiations on spending bills with the Republican leadership in Congress as well as to raise money and campaign for Democrats. He also helped broker a Middle East "land-for-peace" deal between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The 1998 midterm elections came and passed with little change in the composition of Congress. Both sides began to position themselves for the 2000 elections.

The Importance of Politics

The reemergence of partisan politics into the electoral and governing arenas was to be expected. And it is not an undesirable occurrence. *Politics* is the lifeblood for a society. It is a process through which people struggle peacefully to pursue their own interests and those they believe will benefit society as a whole. It is only when politics breaks down that struggle can turn violent. Herein lies the danger.

That is why law and order are necessary. They protect and constrain political activities, keeping them within acceptable bounds. But that same law and order also require that the public abides by the political result so long as that result was obtained legitimately, according to rules and procedures that existed at the time, and accepted by the majority.

Politics and government are closely and inevitably interrelated. One cannot operate without the other. Politics influences government; government makes and implements public policy; public policy affects society in ways that generate political activity which in turn affects further government action or inaction. This is the life cycle of the politics of American government. This is what this book is all about.

In placing the focus of *The Politics of American Government* on the drama of American political life, we do not argue that politics is good or bad but rather that it is a necessary means of expression for citizens of a democracy, both individually and in groups. To help students more easily understand the intricacies of the connections between the struggle of politics and the structure of government, we examine government in terms of both its inputs and its outputs. Central to this discussion is the role of equity in a democratic political system. We take a careful look at the outputs of government—its authoritative decisions and actions and their consequences for society. Do the same people benefit or the same ones suffer most of the time? The answer to this question suggests the capacity or incapacity of the system to be fair and just to everyone. At the same time, we also examine the inputs of government—the effects that different political actors achieve through elections and their access to policy makers. Do some groups exercise more influence than others? Identifying influential political groups, understanding their sources of power, and evaluating their motivations and strategies for affecting public policy enable us to determine how fairly and effectively the democratic process is working.

A Critical, Not Cynical, View of Politics

In emphasizing the struggle between politics and government, we have tried to maintain a perspective that is critical but not cynical. One of the greatest challenges facing American government instructors is engaging students to think politically both in and out of the classroom—in other words, to show them that politics matters to them both as individuals and as members of a community. To this end, we have taken great

care in this edition to integrate more opportunities for student participation into the text, through boxes labeled *Practicing Democracy* and *Where on the Web*?

An Eye Toward the Future

As the world becomes more interdependent through trade and political and military alliances and as countries become more closely linked by instantaneous communications, students no longer view American government in a vacuum. Their desire to put current events into a broader perspective has led us to include more focused comparative information where appropriate. We have also extended our feature called *Hot-Button Issues* to give students a forum for exploring and discussing contemporary political issues. The results of recent elections are woven into the narrative and provide a basis for understanding how the latest changes in American politics and government will shape institutions and policy making into the twenty-first century.

THE THIRD EDITION

In addition to the thorough, balanced analysis of politics and government offered in the first and second editions, our latest edition incorporates changes and additions recommended to us by the instructors, reviewers, and students who used the previous editions of the text:

Thorough Updating

The text, tables, figures, photographs, and reference sources have been thoroughly updated; you will find coverage of current political figures and significant recent events in the United States, including the latest White House scandal and its impact on presidential-congressional relations and the results of the 1998 midterm elections.

Focus on Student Involvement: Practicing Democracy

The focus on student involvement in politics has been enhanced through the *Practicing Democracy* boxes. Topics include contacting legislators, using the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act, doing jury duty, and getting involved in a political party. Many of these boxes feature new means of participation via the Internet and e-mail.

Where on the Web?

The Internet and the World Wide Web offer instant access to a wealth of primary resources that can be used to create an interactive course in American government, and new *Where on the Web?* boxes in almost every chapter provide students with the information they need to use these technologies. Students can find information on interest groups they want to get involved in, check the status of items in this year's budget, contact their congressional representative, or research Supreme Court decisions or White House press releases. Not only are these sources helpful to students doing academic research, but they also encourage them to get involved in politics on their own.

Hot-Button Issue Boxes

These boxes explore some of the social issues that arouse the most passionate political feelings in the United States today, from immigration to affirmative action, from same-sex marriage to censorship of the Internet, from the politics of impeachment to

the legislative struggle over tobacco. They frame the issue at stake, explore the differing nuances of positions, and tell students how to get more information about the issue and become involved in groups on either side.

Extensive Comparative Material

New material throughout the text helps students view the American political system in a comparative perspective. With a globally linked economy, agreements like GATT and NAFTA, and many international commitments borne by the United States as the only remaining superpower, it is important that American students fully understand their country's place in the context of its North American neighbors, its European allies, and the world as a whole.

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Every chapter opens with an engaging story about politics. Throughout the text, a series of boxed features, many of which fall into the following categories in addition to those already described, appeal to student interests and provide insight into the ways in which politics is at work in so many aspects of American life.

People in Politics

These informative profiles provide brief biographies of people who have made a difference in American political life. Spanning the political spectrum from Ruth Bader Ginsburg to Eleanor Roosevelt and Hillary Rodham Clinton from Thurgood Marshall to Newt Gingrich, and from Sarah Brady to Tabitha Soren, they also focus on younger and lesser-known figures involved in party organizing and political journalism.

INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGE

As authors, publishers, and instructors, we continue to seek to create and assemble a diverse range of materials to support the teaching of American government and contribute to the most complete and purposeful instructional package available today. Each component of *The Politics of American Government* is designed to make teaching more effective and to heighten students' interest in American government and, particularly, their American government course.

Instructor's Manual and Test Item File Using her experience as a professor of political science at Tyler Junior College, Amy S. Glenn has combined the Instructor's Manual and Test Item File into a single volume. The comprehensive Instructor's Manual portion includes chapter outlines and overviews, key terms, discussion exercises, and student assignments. The newly revised Test Item File offers close to 4,000 multiple-choice, fill-in, true/false, and essay questions with multiple levels of difficulty. The computerized version of this Test Item File is available in three formats (DOS, Macintosh, and Windows) and has full authoring capabilities.

***The Politics of American Government* Web Companion** Found on the World Wide Web at **www.worthpublishers.com** *The Politics of American Government* site offers students a wealth of online resources, an electronic documents library, interactive study functions, annotated Web links, and periodic comments on the politics of American government by the authors.

Documents Collection Compiled by Brian Fife of Indiana University—Purdue University at Fort Wayne, this volume contains a comprehensive collection of more than fifty primary source documents. Each document is preceded by a brief explanation of its context.

The St. Martin's Resource Library in Political Science In recognition of the rising cost of books, shrinking budgets, and continued requests from instructors and students for briefer reading materials, St. Martin's publishes a series of brief, inexpensive supplementary books on a range of topics to complement your teaching and customize your focus. Each book in the series has fewer than 120 pages so that students can easily and quickly read and understand the material. The series includes:

- *Ralph Nader's Practicing Democracy, 1997: A Guide to Student Action.* This book introduces students to the many ways that they can become politically active on the local, state, and federal levels and provides a wealth of information on numerous political organizations.
- *Big Ideas: An Introduction to Ideologies in American Politics*, by Mark Tiller of Houston Community College. For instructors who wish to give their students more grounding in political theory, this book offers an introduction to the predominant political ideas that shape American politics.
- *The Real Thing: Contemporary Documents in American Government*, by Fengyan Shi of Georgetown University. This collection of actual memos, bills, ballots, briefs, grants, and other materials allows students to see for themselves the types of documents that are produced and used in government on a day-to-day basis. The chapters of this book parallel those of *The Politics of American Government* so that instructors can easily work these materials into their lectures.
- *Untangling the Web: A Beginner's Guide to Politics on the World Wide Web.* For instructors and students who might not be comfortable "surfing the Net," this guide by Brian Werner of St. John's University offers hands-on advice for learning how to get onto the Internet and access information. It also provides novice instructors with ways to incorporate the Internet in the classroom. By using the guide in conjunction with *The Politics of American Government's* Web companion, instructors can offer a whole new dimension for classroom activities and exercises.

For information about these ancillaries or about special packages and discounts for those who want to use *The Politics of American Government* with other readers and topical books published by St. Martin's, please contact your local representative or call Faculty Services at (800) 446-8923.

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