brings greater clarity to the environmental literature. The six thematic areas may initially appear somewhat unrelated, but through the lens of the sustainability framework they are clearly interrelated. This broad application of the sustainability framework provides a foundation upon which existing research can be better understood and future research better organized. Furthermore, by bringing together established and emerging policy scholars, the editors have successfully created a collection that is both experienced and forward-thinking, and in so doing they further a trend that benefits the discipline overall.

In summation, the book has a lively and engaging style, which reflects the experience of established scholars and the energy of emerging scholars. In providing a broadly defined theoretical foundation, the editors encourage bridge-building across the subfield. The book is particularly appropriate for advanced undergraduate and graduate courses in environmental studies, graduate policy courses, and the general community of scholars interested in developing greater knowledge of emerging environmental issues. Kamieniecki, Gonzalez, and Vos have created a well-written and thoughtful book, bringing together a variety of voices. Ultimately, anyone interested in environmental or policy studies will enjoy it.


Randall Strahan, Emory University

Once a central focus of historians, political history seems well on the way to marginalization within that discipline. Fortunately, many in political science have developed a renewed appreciation for the importance of historical analysis, with the result some of the best political history is now being done by political scientists. Robin Kolodny's book is a case in point. It provides a valuable account of congressional campaign committees (CCCs) from their origins in the 1860s through the present. Two main themes are developed: the importance of political context for explaining the activities and strategies of CCCs in the House and Senate, and the fact that CCCs organized by Republicans and Democrats in the two chambers are products of the distinctive and longstanding "institutional party interests" of congressional partisans. CCCs emerged and continued to thrive, according to Kolodny, because the electoral interests of congressional partisans differ from those of presidential incumbents or candidates of their party. Students of Congress are aware that the modern CCCs have become important not only for raising money and coordinating electoral campaigns but also for steppin
decision by the NRCC to put the pursuit of majority status ahead of incumbent protection" (p. 197). More often, her analysis shows, the tendency of CCCs has been to place incumbent protection first. Kolodny argues that active and skillful leadership—by presumptive House GOP leader Newt Gingrich and NRCC Chair Bill Paxon, in cooperation with Republican National Committee Chair Haley Barbour—was critical for undertaking this innovative and ultimately successful campaign strategy. Kolodny concludes by citing the continuing importance of the congressional campaign units as evidence of the imprint of governing institutions on party organization and of the limited prospects for "meaningful, overarching parties" in the American system of separation of powers (p. 216).

Overall, Kolodny succeeds well in combining good political science with good political history. Pursuing Majorities will be of great interest to scholars who study American political parties, campaigns and elections, and the historical development of Congress. And in showing the persistent influence of the separation of powers on American political parties, this book makes the important point that while institutions matter, constitutions are the institutions that matter most.


Theodore R. Marmor, Yale University

This 1998 work by Rushfsky and Patel is the second effort of political scientists in recent years to apply general understandings of American politics to the nation's medical care world. Carol and William Weissert had a similar ambition in their Governing Health: The Politics of Health Policy (1996) and took a similar approach. The common method is to review the literature of American government institution by institution—Congress, the presidency, interest groups, the media, and so on—and in each case ask what that literature explains about one or another feature of the American government's policies toward the financing, organization, regulation, or quality of medical care. In the case of the Weisserts, the scope is very broad, encompassing topics from NIH to national health insurance, from Medicare to HMO regulation. Not so for the volume under review.

Rushfsky and Patel use a similar approach but apply it to the most salient and controversial health policy struggles of the 1990s. Their narrower policy scope is quite understandable, since they had earlier published a more general book, Health Care Politics and Policy in America (1993). This time, they begin their review of health policy with the rise and demise of the Clinton health reform proposal and shift to the health politics of the Gingrich congressional period, 1994–96. But they do so with an analytic twist. They regard these health struggles as the revealing window on American political processes. In their words, the book uses "health care reform in the 1990s as a vehicle for understanding the potential and limits of American policy making ... at the end of the twentieth century." At the same time, they seek to explain both the advent of Clinton's effort and the fallout of that failure in the fights over the "Contract with America" and the presidential election of 1996. Proceeding to the Balanced Budget Law of 1997, Rushfsky and Patel also set out to describe and explain the process by which the ideas of managed competition, ridiculed by the Republicans in the form of the Clinton Plan, returned as an acceptable model for changes in Medicare in 1997–98. And, along the way, the book charts the changes in Medicaid that accompanied welfare reform and a variety of other policy shifts that exemplified the differences in political balance between the early and later part of the decade.

Such broad works have the vices of their virtues. Understood as a synthesis of scholarship on American politics, this volume is exemplary, a useful book for teachers who want to infuse their treatment of American government with interesting, intricate material from the complex politics of health care in this decade. And interesting political struggles they have been. Looked at the other way, these struggles are good cases of American government in action, a window through which American politics can indeed be vividly seen.

But surveys of a decade cannot compete with first-rate scholarship on particular struggles. So, for instance, Rushfsky and Patel review the relatively well-known process by which comprehensive reform arrived on the national agenda. They sketch its tortuous way from Clinton's electoral strategy to the infamous Task Force, then to a legislative proposal in September 1993, and on to its ignominious defeat from political apathy by September 1994. More than competent, the Rushfsky and Patel account provides less than Jacob Hacker's prize-winning analysis of The Road to Nowhere (1997), a book that more fully explains why candidate Clinton seized upon the "managed competition" strategy as a compromise between traditional Democratic versions of universal health insurance and familiar conservative opposition to them. The demise of the Clinton Plan—the subject of commentary by what is now a virtual subindustry—is handled by Rushfsky and Patel with an even hand. Yet, here there is less a puzzle than meets the eye. Clinton's victory in 1992 and the prominence of health care in that campaign explains the arrival of the issue on the presidential/congressional agenda. But there never was the issue majority in Clinton's first term for anything like his "comprehensive" proposal. And by talking in the language of the Right (the end of big government, the appeal of markets), Clinton made sure that he would lose some of the enthusiasm of traditional Democratic reformers. What he did not expect was the extent to which conservative Republicans would attack his plan as socialized medicine in disguise. Nor did he expect that his seeming supporters in the community of large business—exemplified by the Business Roundtable—would in the end abandon him and in effect line up with such traditional antigovernment groups as the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB), the Chamber of Commerce, and the Health Association of America.

What remains puzzling is why all health reform plans died in 1994 when the Clinton Plan disappeared from American politics, a topic that none of the works on the subject so far—whether by Skocpol, Broder and Johnson, the Weisserts, or this volume—satisfactorily answers.

What Rushfsky and Patel do treat satisfactorily is the manic-depressive cycle of health politics following the Republican resurgence of 1994. They chart the way cutbacks in Medicare became so central to budget fights in Congress, how interests groups behaved during that struggle, the role that Medicare played in the presidential campaign of 1996, and the way the commitment to a balanced budget changed the politics of Medicare in 1997. It is no easy feat to make sense of both the health reform struggles and what they mean for the performance of American political institutions. Convinced that public opinion constrained the health reform results of the 1990s and that interest groups and the media shaped (and distorted) much of that opinion, Rushfsky and Patel are thereby wedded to complexity rather than clear, overarching conclusions. Clarity about real complexity is, in
how our method of constitutional argument has remained remarkably consistent. Even with substantive changes in doctrine, many early topics of constitutional dispute are still alive, and the types of evidence marshaled remarkably similar. Though quick to point out that representatives routinely acknowledged judicial review, Currie convincingly demonstrates that "it was in the legislative and executive branches, not in the courts, that the original understanding of the Constitution was formed" (296).

—David J. Siemers
Wellesley College


Robin Kolodny's Pursuing Majorities provides a new view of what are, in reality, very old actors in American electoral politics, the congressional campaign committees. By now, the rise of candidate-centered electoral politics is a familiar story. While candidates are seen as central to the modern electoral process, a number of other actors are thought to be important, including traditional parties, campaign consultants, PACs, and other party organizations like legislative campaign committees. This book focuses on the last of these, seeking to describe the relationship between congressional campaign committees, other party units, and party leaders within Congress.

Kolodny's essential goal is to provide a clear account of the history of congressional campaign committee activity. Her essential thesis is that these organizations, which date at least to 1866, were created and persist because they serve an essential need for congressional caucuses to secure and preserve legislative majorities. Unlike the broader aims of other party organizations, this need is specific to each congressional caucus and narrowly focused in a strategic sense on achieving a majority to organize the chamber, with little ideological or policy content. The result is a set of organizations which operate independently of other party units, such as national committees or state party organizations, neither destructive to the aims of these organizations nor part of a new party "system" adapting to new electoral laws and technologies.

To uncover this story, Kolodny relies heavily upon archival material, such as collections of personal papers and surviving documents from congressional campaign committees and national committees. In the contemporary era, these are supplemented with interviews with committee leaders and staff members. Even constructing a basic historical record is a daunting task, and Kolodny displays great ingenuity and persistence in identifying campaign committee leaders and activity during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In some cases the only surviving references to committee activity are indirect, appearing in papers of other actors with whom the campaign committee chairs have interacted. While a few gaps remain in the basic historical timeline Kolodny constructs, the book provides a clear description of the ebb and flow of campaign committee activity.
over the last 130 years.

The book presents a number of findings which are of significance to scholars of Congress, parties, and elections. First, congressional campaign committees have maintained a relatively constant mission—the securing and preserving of a chamber majority—throughout their long history. Second, while the technology of campaigning has changed, from the mass mobilization/military style of the post-Civil War era to the candidate-centered advertising style of today, the essential tactic of the committees of providing assistance to local campaigns has not. The precise nature of the assistance has evolved from speaker’s bureaus to printed material to pooled production studios to coordination of campaign financing, matching the evolution of campaign technology, but the essential function has not changed. Third, congressional campaign committees have been relatively active throughout their long histories; these are not organizations which suddenly came to life with the passage of the Federal Election Campaign Act in 1971. Fourth, the precise strategies of the campaign committees are determined by the broad strategic landscapes they face, most notably whether the caucus has majority or minority status heading into an election and whether the election features a presidential race. Fifth, as Congress institutionalized, these changes affected the congressional campaign committees, increasing the importance of the protection of incumbents and integrating the campaign committee leadership with the congressional caucus leadership structure.

As with any project, this book leaves some questions unanswered. With the exception of a relatively simple analysis of the role of campaign committee leadership in congressional careers in Chapter 6, the book is entirely descriptive. Nearly two-thirds of the book consists of a straightforward chronological account of who headed the congressional campaign committees during an election cycle, committee activities during the cycle, the election outcomes, and the subsequent careers of the committee leaders. Interspersed with these accounts are summary discussions relating these campaign committee activities to changes in campaigning and the operations of Congress. Absent, however, are the identification and careful measurement of key variables, presentation of a model of campaign committee activity, or the systematic empirical assessment of such a model.

This, of course, is simply another way of saying that Pursuing Majorities not only provides a set of preliminary answers, but will stimulate readers to take the next step in advancing the research agenda on this subject. The starting point for these subsequent efforts will be the comprehensive historical description provided here. While the book’s subject matter renders it too specialized to be a required text for most undergraduate and graduate classes, the clarity of its presentation makes its findings accessible to both students and scholars. Robin Kolodny’s Pursuing Majorities makes significant contributions to scholarship on political parties, elections, and Congress, and it should be read by everyone who is interested in both the historical evolution and contemporary nature of the congressional electoral process.

—John Freidreis
Loyola University, Chicago
The logistical conditions, advanced technologies, and level-headed leadership the superpowers enjoy and that stable deterrence relationships are unlikely. Hagerty's volume is a supporting case study for optimistic deterrence logic. His conclusions are all the more powerful given that the South Asian deterrence he examines is of the ostensibly problematic opaque variety.

During the two crises, India and Pakistan existed in nuclear opacity—a condition in which countries are strongly suspected of having nuclear weapons even though they have not officially declared they do. Opaque proliferators do not fully reveal their nuclear arsenals because they fear the ire of the global nonproliferation regime; but they may well hint about their weapons in order to deter enemies, much the same as a robber with a concealed gun might point to the bulge in his coat in order to frighten a victim. Opaque deterrence can be effective, but it is fuzzy. Consequently, Hagerty's difficult historical task is to clarify exactly what Pakistani and Indian decision makers perceived the nuclear situation to be in South Asia during 1986-1987 and 1990, and then to deduce what the deterrent effects of the opaque nuclear capabilities were.

Hagerty does this superbly. By weaving together official statements, semiofficial leaks, indigenous journalistic accounts, and a small number of interviews with informed decision makers, he sketches the opaque deterrence dialogue that existed between India and Pakistan. He concludes that during the Brasstacks crisis, Pakistan had not quite achieved nuclear capability, and therefore nuclear deterrence did not figure in the episode's ultimate resolution. However, as he rightly underscores, nonproliferation logic to the contrary, crisis fears did not drive India to launch preventive strikes to forestall what it accurately perceived to be Pakistan's imminent nuclear weapon development. Hagerty contends that deterrence logic did play a large role in 1990, because Pakistan had sufficiently established its nuclear weapons credentials by then.

Hagerty focuses his theoretical firepower on opacity itself. It is true, Hagerty says, that efforts to obscure nuclear weapons make it difficult to establish believable nuclear threats. But he adds that global nonproliferation leaders such as the United States inadvertently contribute to proliferators' deterrence credibility when they publicize proliferators' suspected nuclear developments. Here, Hagerty makes a bit too much of too little. Opaque proliferators have always found it easy to establish their weapons capability, using such simple methods as announcing scientific achievements or, as in India's 1974 example, exploding "peaceful nuclear devices." The more interesting question is how opacity persists despite increasingly transparent situations. Everyone knows Israel has nuclear bombs, and the May 1998 detonations reaffirm that India and Pakistan have them, too. Yet concerned parties continue to find utility in preserving some degree of ambiguity about the extent of arsenal development and deployment in both situations. If anything, Hagerty's fine historical work should help put to rest the overdone distinction between opaque and overt deterrence, and help focus attention on the unique advantages of opacity and other distinctive elements of nuclear proliferation among "minor" states.

Jordan Seng
Harvard University


Two themes organize Pursuing Majorities. The first is that the campaign committees have long been a preeminent part of the national party apparatus. They are not, Robin Kolodny's
analysis argues, organizational innovations from a recent cycle of party building. Their activity rates have increased, and they are involved in more aspects of campaigning, but they have been a feature of congressional elections for more than a century. The second theme argues that the conventional conception of the American parties as a tripartite structure with a facet in government, in the electorate, and existing as a separate organizational structure produces a poor understanding of them. Kolodny insists that a clearer perspective on the dynamics of the party system emerges when we acknowledge that the party organization is not separate from the party in government, but exists as an extension of the officeholders’ efforts to be reelected and become the majority. The national committee serves the electoral needs of the presidential candidate. The campaign committees seek to elect and send members to their respective houses with an eye to achieving and retaining a majority.

Kolodny’s argument and evidence are laid out in seven chapters. This first proposes the thesis that it is “separate elections in a separated system” that motivated the development of the campaign committees. This is also the point at which he makes a case that the campaign committees have more than an electoral role, insisting that the officeholders who have directed external electioneering activities of each party’s committee have used the campaign committee to demonstrate the talents their colleagues seek in a party’s leader. The next three chapters offer a detailed history of the evolution of the campaign committees, their establishment by the GOP in 1866 and the Democrats in 1870, the creation of campaign committees for the Senate with the direct election of senators, the activities of the committees, and the practices and conventions of the committees between 1920 and the emergence of the modern campaign regime after 1972. Despite limited primary and secondary historical materials, these chapters have a reasonably extensive description of the activities of the committees during their first hundred years and the identities of the individuals who directed them. The narrative may be too detailed for some, but the detail persuasively advances Kolodny’s argument that the campaign committees have been active institutions from the time they were established. The innovations and twists and turns of campaign committee chairs provide a rich historical bonus. Chapter 6 analyzes the relationship between leadership roles in Congress and service as a chair of the campaign committee. Kolodny’s conclusion that the campaign committees provide a try-out for ambitious members of Congress who look for a leadership position in their party may not persuade everybody, but the narrative makes the case with a wealth of interesting detail. The involvement of the National Republican Congressional Committee in the development of the “Contract with America” (Chapter 7) is an interesting case study of the involvement of the campaign committees in governing and elections.

The most interesting chapter (5) examines how the burst of campaign finance reform in the 1970s energized and reshaped the campaign committees. It explains how and why the committees were transformed from serving as conduits for campaign money to become sources of money; it documents each committee’s involvement in the development and dissemination of new campaign technology and how the GOP did it differently than the Democrats; it also elegantly describes how the committees became energetic users of soft money and how the Republicans have prospered more than the Democrats. Some of the specific evidence is new, some is familiar, but the weaving into an explanation of how campaign finance changes made the committees prominent players in the party caucuses is distinctive and original.

All students of political parties ought to have this book. Its historical material alone makes it a useful reference. The chapter on the committees and campaign finance is close to being a must-read.

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