



Innocent Until Nominated: The Breakdown of the Presidential Appointments Process



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According to outspoken presidential scholar Cal Mackenzie, the presidential appointments process is a national disgrace. It encourages bullies and emboldens demagogues, silences the voices of responsibility, and nourishes the lowest forms of partisan combat. It uses innocent citizens as pawns in the petty games of politicians and stains the reputations of good people. It routinely violates fundamental democratic principles, undermines the quality and consistency of public management, and breaches simple decency. In short, at a time when the quality of political leadership in government matters more than ever, the procedures for ensuring that quality are less reliable than ever. How did we get into this distressing condition? What is wrong with the current appointments process? And, most important, what can we do to fix it? *Innocent Until Nominated* brings together ten of the country's leading scholars of government and politics to explore recent changes in the presidential appointments process and their effects on the ability of contemporary presidents to recruit and retain talented leaders. Each chapter provides a special focus on a range of topics including presidential transitions, the obstacle course of Senate confirmation, the morass of forms and questionnaires, and the exasperating, exhausting, and humiliating experiences of recent appointees. For scholars, students, and potential presidential recruits, the book offers a candid and revealing look at the failures of the appointments process... and how it has become a serious impediment to effective leadership of the executive branch. Contributors include Sarah A. Binder (Brookings Institution and George Washington University), E. J. Dionne Jr. (Brookings Institution and Washington Post), George C. Edwards III (Bush School of Government and Public Service, Texas A&M University), Stephen Hess (Brookings Institution), Judith M. Labiner (Brookings Institution), Paul C. Light (Brookings Institution), Burdett Loomis (Robert J. Dole Institute for Public Service and Public Policy at the University of Kansas), James P. Pfiffner (George Mason University), and Terry Sullivan (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy).



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