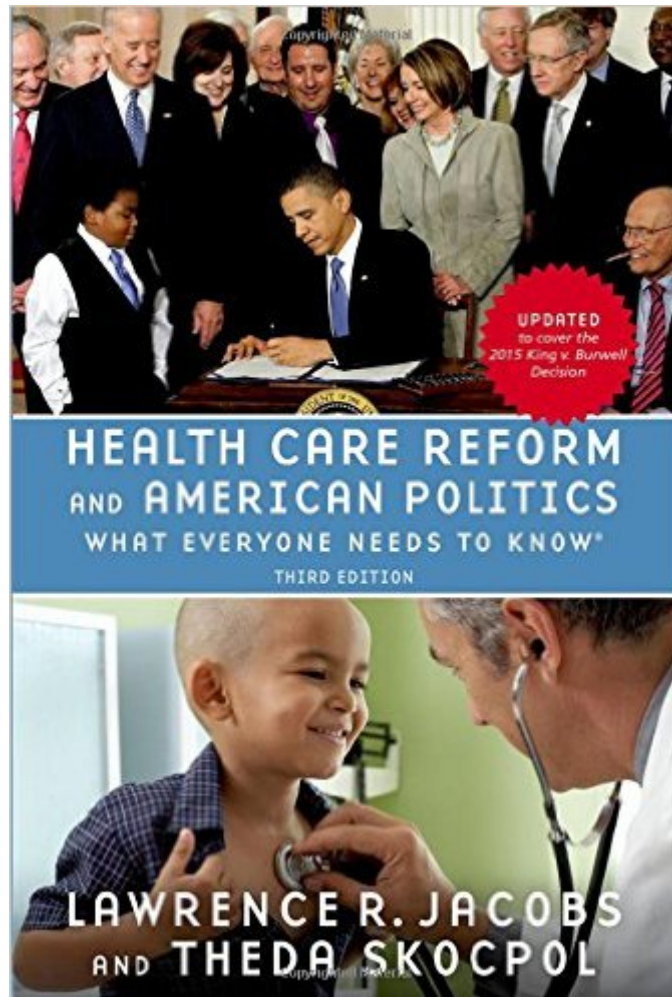


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Health Care Reform And American Politics: What Everyone Needs To Know, 3rd Edition



Synopsis

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act signed by President Obama in March 2010 is a landmark in U.S. social legislation, and the Supreme Court's recent decision upholding the Act has ensured that it will remain the law of the land. The new law extends health insurance to nearly all Americans, fulfilling a century-long quest and bringing the United States to parity with other industrial nations. Affordable Care aims to control rapidly rising health care costs and promises to make the United States more equal, reversing four decades of rising disparities between the very rich and everyone else. Millions of people of modest means will gain new benefits and protections from insurance company abuses - and the tab will be paid by privileged corporations and the very rich. How did such a bold reform effort pass in a polity wracked by partisan divisions and intense lobbying by special interests? What does Affordable Care mean - and what comes next? In this updated edition of *Health Care Reform and American Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*®, Lawrence R. Jacobs and Theda Skocpol - two of the nation's leading experts on politics and health care policy - provide a concise and accessible overview. They explain the political battles of 2009 and 2010, highlighting White House strategies, the deals Democrats cut with interest groups, and the impact of agitation by Tea Partiers and progressives. Jacobs and Skocpol spell out what the new law can do for everyday Americans, what it will cost, and who will pay. In a new section, they also analyze the impact the Supreme Court ruling that upheld the law. Above all, they explain what comes next, as critical yet often behind-the-scenes battles rage over implementing reform nationally and in the fifty states. Affordable Care still faces challenges at the state level despite the Court ruling. But, like Social Security and Medicare, it could also gain strength and popularity as the majority of Americans learn what it can do for them.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

American voters have become much too reliant on 30-second soundbites to inform them about critical issues. For this reason, we are easily manipulated by politicians who skillfully distort the facts for no other purpose than to keep themselves and their financial backers in power, at the expense of most citizens. This book explains exactly how this type of manipulation was perpetrated with regard to the health care reform debate; how it was overcome, resulting in passage of an Act that stands to benefit nearly all stakeholders; how it can be expected to continue as politicians try to prevent implementation of the Act (not for your benefit or even that of the insurance companies -- only for the benefit of the politicians themselves); and why citizens should get involved now in ensuring full implementation of the Act. There might be some pro-Obama bias in the writing (mine, too). This is difficult for me to assess. Even if there is, this book is a great place to start in informing oneself about a critical issue facing all of us today. You can always read another one biased in the opposite direction to balance this one out. Why is the topic of this book so critical? A recent poll showed that only 26% of those polled listed health care reform as a top priority. However, even if your employer currently provides you with health insurance at a cost to you that you find acceptable, you can expect your out-of-pocket costs to increase very dramatically in the near term if this act is not implemented. If, like me, you pay for your own insurance, you have already seen huge (in my case, 17%/year) increases in premiums over the past several years (and, importantly, not just since the vilified "Obamacare" was passed).

The authors seem to be very supportive of the Affordable Care Act (ACA... aka "Obamacare"), but such potential bias does not diminish their coverage of the subject. This isn't just a book on healthcare, it's an incredible example of the general sausage-making process that goes on between the legislative and executive branches in D.C. Even for the many conservatives who oppose the ACA, this book is instructive to what can happen when bipartisan political compromise isn't achieved. The analysis of this book makes a very strong case that the ACA would/could have been much more palatable to conservatives had Republican congressmen not chosen to step away from bipartisan conversations as the bill was being drafted. Once Scott Brown was elected to the senate,

Republicans felt they had won a decisive trump card against the ACA and so refused to continue participating. But instead of having succeeded in halting the bill, Republicans effectively provided a way for Democrats to pass a more liberal piece of legislation into law. Republicans probably had a better chance of avoiding the law as it now stands had they stuck in the game and pushed for more compromise. Instead they sat on the sidelines and made petty potshots against Democrats not reading the law. The extreme polarization of U.S. politics allowed Democrats a victory on the ACA, and unfortunately Republicans will not learn to compromise next time. Romney's campaign platform of "Repeal and Replace" proves that Republicans haven't learned the lesson of the benefits of compromise. Political processes aside, this book is also a great resource for what the ACA means to individual Americans. For those who are open-minded and willing to learn what the law is and is not really about then this book will be very informative.

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