



# Who Governs?: Presidents, Public Opinion, and Manipulation (Chicago Studies in American Politics)

*James N. Druckman, Lawrence R. Jacobs*

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America's model of representational government rests on the premise that elected officials respond to the opinions of citizens. This is a myth, however, not a reality, according to James N. Druckman and Lawrence R. Jacobs. In *Who Governs?*, Druckman and Jacobs combine existing research with novel data from US presidential archives to show that presidents make policy by largely ignoring the views of most citizens in favor of affluent and well-connected political insiders. Presidents treat the public as pliable, priming it to focus on personality traits and often ignoring it on policies that fail to become salient.

Melding big debates about democratic theory with existing research on American politics and innovative use of the archives of three modern presidents—Johnson, Nixon, and Reagan—Druckman and Jacobs deploy lively and insightful analysis to show that the conventional model of representative democracy bears little resemblance to the actual practice of American politics. The authors conclude by arguing that polyarchy and the promotion of accelerated citizen mobilization and elite competition can improve democratic responsiveness. An incisive study of American politics and the flaws of representative government, this book will be warmly welcomed by readers interested in US politics, public opinion, democratic theory, and the fecklessness of American leadership and decision-making.

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