Dear Colleagues,

In recent years American politics has been influenced by contentious ideological disputes and partisan arguments over a range of important domestic and international issues. In many cases there has been little common ground among the rival camps and few examples of consensus building in the political establishment. The American political system has thus become dysfunctional, marked by legislative gridlock and endless disagreements over public policy solutions.

This disturbing state of conflict and controversy in American politics was the stimulus for writing Debates, Differences and Divisions: The 25 Political Issues That Shape American Politics. In my book I explore many of the key issues that are at the center of the disputes and arguments in the current political environment. From homeland security to global warming to health care reform to gay marriage to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, my book seeks to explain the issues that shape our political system. Each of the 25 issues is presented in an impartial manner so that the reader can see both sides of the debates, differences and divisions.

The 25 chapters (plus a “bonus” chapter on the Great Recession) have supplementary data, quotes and explanatory material along with critical thinking questions, Internet sites and books to help the reader better understand the individual issues. The aim of each issue chapter is to give the reader a general overview of the issue, present ways to think through these disputes and arguments, and then offer additional resources that may aid in the formation of opinions and positions.

As I worked on this text, I became convinced that it is essential to provide the general readership and particularly undergraduate students with a guide to the issues of the day, especially since American politics is increasingly being defined in terms of how the governing system deals with these issues. Not a day goes by in this country when one of these issues is at the forefront of the news or is the topic of a national conversation. Familiarity with these issues is thus, in my view, vitally important for a thriving democracy.

I hope you can take time out of your busy schedule to examine Debates, Differences and Divisions: The 25 Political Issues That Shape American Politics and see whether it suits your instructional needs. I, of course, welcome your comments and observations not only about the book, but also about these key issues, which are at the core of our political system.

Sincerely,

Michael Kryzanek
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