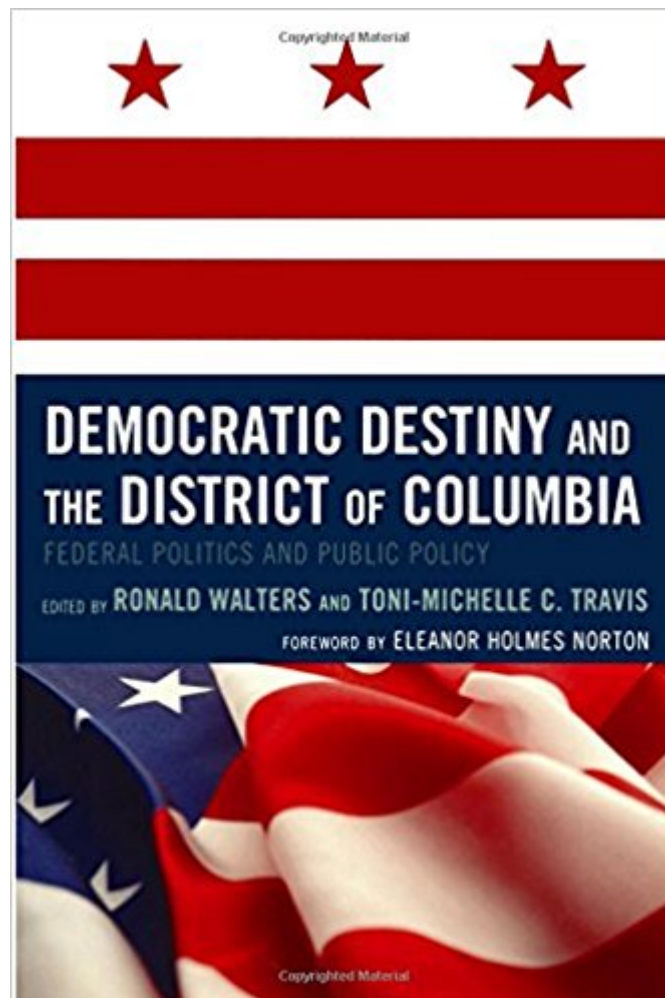




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Democratic Destiny And The District Of Columbia: Federal Politics And Public Policy



Synopsis

This book contributes substantially to urban affairs and public policy literature by presenting an introduction to the complex politics and public policy issues of Washington, D.C. The uniqueness of the city, as elaborated in this volume, provides background for understanding the non-traditional congressional relationship with the city and the way in which this establishes and perpetuates the continuing fight for congressional representation, real home rule and equitable federal benefits for citizens of the District of Columbia. Usually becoming a mayor, member of a city council, or agency head in a major city could become a stepping stone to higher office. In Washington, D.C. however, this has not been the case. Contests for political leadership operate in a unique political climate because Washington, D.C. is the capital of the U.S., subject to congressional oversight, has a majority African American population, and has a majority Democratic population. Those who become mayor are therefore, confined to play a local with rare opportunities for a national role. One Objective of this volume is to highlight the difficulties of experiencing political democracy and adequate policy distribution by citizens of the District of Columbia. These analyses conclude that one of the major obstacles to these objectives is the manner in which home rule was constructed and persists, leading to the conclusion that the desire of citizens and their leaders for change is well founded.

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Customer Reviews

The struggle for full democratic self-government and for full congressional voting rights in the House

continues unabated. These authors take a fresh look at how the first elected officials to govern the District of Columbia defined self-government for the city amidst the problems and dilemmas they found. The nation should be grateful to these authors for what their insights tell us about government in the modern nation's capital and, inadvertently, about the nature of governing in the nation itself. (Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, Delegate of the District of Columbia, from the foreword) This volume is very timely as it offers the reader a case study of the struggle for full democracy in the Nation's capital at a time when the United States is actively seeking to establish and promote democracy internationally. This volume offers important insights into the successes and failures of executive leadership in the District of Columbia thereby providing students of political science and governance a wealth of case materials not previously available. Most important, this volume shows the political conflicts in the city's struggle to achieve control over its governance and to achieve local representation for its residents. (Stephen S. Fuller, Director, Center for Regional Analysis, George Mason University) The Declaration of Independence asserts that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, but American citizens who live in the District of Columbia see their elected local government overruled by a Congress in which they have no voting representative. This impressive anthology explains why the District achieved only limited home rule in 1973, and how this anomalous form of local government has shaped a wide range of public policies ever since. (Zachary M. Schrag, author of *The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro*) The essays contained in this volume are at once timely and revealing. They explain in penetrating detail why Washington D. C. is often referred to as the "last colony." Using a combination of case studies and probing policy analysis, this volume shatters the myth that city governance in Washington is impossible without the intervention of the heavy hand of the federal government. The contributors to this volume demonstrate convincingly that as long as racism is an omnipresent and highly institutionalized factor in the administration of city affairs in Washington, the absence of home rule and self government in the nation's capital will continue to resound as a problem in democracy for the United States as a whole. This volume is long overdue. It should be essential reading for every federal official and local politician involved in the shaping of the city's future. (William E. Nelson, Ohio State University) Every American has a responsibility to understand the unique challenges facing our federal capital—particularly because the citizens of Washington, D.C. do not have their own fully empowered representation in Congress. Respected scholars Ronald Walters and Toni-Michelle Travis have assembled a superb group of contributors who present us with the unvarnished truth about D.C. And the truth is the first step to solving some of the intractable problems that plague both the District and the entire nation. (Larry J.

Sabato, director, University of Virginia Center for Politics)

Ronald W. Walters is director of the African American Leadership Institute and professor of government and politics at the University of Maryland. His many books include *Black Presidential Politics*, winner of the American Political Science Association's Ralph Bunche Prize and *White Nationalism, Black Interests*, an 'academic best seller,' covered by C-SPAN. Toni-Michelle Travis is an associate professor and Program Director of African American Studies at George Mason University. She is the faculty representative to the Board of Visitors' Committee on Equity and Diversity. She has been a member of the Public and International Affairs Department since 1984.

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