

ON PARLIAMENTARY WAR

PARTISAN CONFLICT AND PROCEDURAL CHANGE IN THE U.S. SENATE

Dysfunction in the Senate is driven by the deteriorating relationship between the majority and minority parties. Regular order is virtually nonexistent and unorthodox parliamentary procedures are frequently needed to pass important legislation. Democrats and Republicans are fighting a parliamentary war in the Senate to steer the future of the country. James Wallner presents a bargaining model of procedural change to explain the persistence of the filibuster in this polarized environment, focusing on the dynamics responsible for contested procedural change. Wallner's model explains why Senate majorities have historically tolerated the filibuster, even when it has defeated their agendas, despite having the power to eliminate it. It also shows why the then-Democratic majority deployed the nuclear option to eliminate the filibuster for an Obama judicial nominee in 2013. *On Parliamentary War's* game-theory approach unveils the relationship between partisan conflict and procedural change in the Senate.

"Partisan conflict in the Senate has become increasingly intense, raising doubts that the chamber's rules protecting minority rights will survive. Wallner provides thoughtful new insights into what may come, drawing from military theory to explain when the Senate majority party will—and will not—limit the powers of the minority."

—Matthew Green, Catholic University of America

"Skillfully navigates modern controversies surrounding the filibuster to advance our theoretical understanding of Senate obstructionism."

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"In these highly uncertain times, *On Parliamentary War* is an insightful study of how the U.S. Senate has come to reflect the changing nature of American politics and shows how the chamber designed by the Founders to encourage extended deliberation has now devolved into a partisan battlefield . . . This book is a must-read guide to the U.S. Senate."

—Wendy J. Schiller, Brown University

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