

THE COMMITTEE

A Study of Policy, Power, Politics and Obama's Historic Legislative Agenda on Capitol Hill

Bryan W. Marshall and Bruce C. Wolpe

Bryan W. Marshall is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at Miami University.

Bruce Wolpe has served as Chief of Staff to Julia Gillard, Australia's 27th Prime Minister. Wolpe was Senior Advisor to Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-CA), Chairman of the (US) House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

The Committee is based on a political journal kept by Bruce Wolpe, who served as a Senior Advisor to Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-CA), Chairman of one of the most powerful committees in Congress, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. For three years (February 2009-2012), Wolpe recorded an inside view of how a powerful **Committee and the House look and feel as legislation is developed and processed**, from the vantage of a senior staffer. Using the insider view of the rough-and-tumble politics of cap-and-trade, healthcare reform, tobacco, oversight of the BP oil spill crisis, and the debt ceiling agreement, *The Committee* co-author Prof. Bryan Marshall uniquely frames how politics and policymaking are practiced on the Hill with the theory and literature of political science. The themes are aligned with important questions asked by political scientists relating to committee power, partisanship, and the political strategies used to build winning policy coalitions in the Committee and on the floor of the House. *The Committee* will appeal to those teaching in the area of American politics and those interested in the formulation of major policies that continue to reverberate with partisan conflict today. The insider politics and strategies about moving legislation in Congress, from internal and external coalition building to a Chairman's role in framing policy narratives, will captivate both novice and die-hard readers of politics.

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POLICY, POWER, POLITICS AND
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ADDITIONAL PRAISE FOR *THE COMMITTEE*

“Bryan Marshall and Bruce Wolpe have teamed up to produce a remarkable book that is sure to become an indispensable work on how Congress really works. Marshall, with the keen eye of a political scientist who has also worked inside Congress, meshes together the theory and practice of how Congress and specifically the House of Representatives works. From his vantage point in 2009 and 2010, beside the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Henry Waxman, Wolpe chronicles what it was like to be in the middle of some of the biggest legislative fights of the last 20 years. Wolpe, Chairman Waxman, House Democrats and President Obama won some legislative battles and lost others, but the real winners from this book will be the readers, students and teachers alike, their knowledge and understanding of how Capitol Hill often works but sometimes can’t work is invaluable.”

Charles E. Cook, Jr., Editor & Publisher, *The Cook Political Report*; Columnist, *National Journal*

“A lively and penetrating treatment of the contemporary Congress sure to engage and educate students of American politics and policy. *The Committee* is deftly crafted around a fascinating insider journal kept during the 111th Congress by the senior advisor to House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Henry Waxman. Highly entertaining and enlightening.”

—Thomas E. Mann, Senior Fellow - Governance Studies, The Brookings Institution and Norman Ornstein, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute

“Political scientists and political practitioners rarely do anything together, not least write a reality-based book on one of the vital organs of the US legislative complex, the committee. One of the 111th Congress’ super-staffers Bruce Wolpe and scholar Bryan Marshall have produced a masterful and human treatment of how politics churns through a powerful committee—probably the best such legislative story-telling since Eric Redman’s masterful *Dance of Legislation*. A gripping and thoughtful read for those needing a dose these days on the considerable power of the legislative branch.”

—Steve Clemons, Editor at Large, *The Atlantic*

“Marshall and Wolpe have written a unique book—truly one of kind. It is a well-crafted, fascinating account of major legislative episodes in the 111th Congress, President Obama’s first Congress, written by the lead staffer to a central player in those episodes and a sharp political scientist who worked for the party whip. From this team, you will learn that a talented committee chair played a vital role in building coalitions and passing major legislation even in an era of deeply polarized parties and assertive party leadership. Scholars will gain new insights and fresh perspective from the detailed accounts. Students will find a find a set of colorful stories that bring important themes to life. Citizens will gain a deeper appreciation for the permanent struggle of republican government.”

Steven S. Smith, Kate M. Gregg Distinguished Professor of Social Sciences, Professor of Political Science, and Director, Weidenbaum Center on the Economy, Government, and Public Policy, Washington University, St. Louis, MO



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ADDITIONAL PRAISE FOR *THE COMMITTEE*

“A unique and insightful look into one of the most productive periods in modern American policymaking. In its lucid and fascinating recounting of how ‘the sausage’ of policy gets made.”

—E.J. Dionne Jr., Senior Fellow, Governance Studies, BROOKINGS

“The authors have captured the dramatic events and personalities of key players in a way that will appeal to students and political junkies ... [The book] should work well in courses on U.S. political institutions, parties, legislatures and leadership.”

—Linda L. Fowler, Professor of Government and Frank Reagan Chair in Policy Studies, Emerita, Dartmouth College

“This book is an impressive blend of theoretical insights from the political science literature and first-hand observations of the actual legislative process by both authors. Their reflections and insights will be valuable to students, to researchers, and to citizens interested in the operations of the ‘first branch’ of our government.”

—David W. Rohde, Ernestine Friedl Professor of Political Science in the Trinity College of Arts and Sciences and Director of the Political Institutions and Public Choice Program

“*The Committee* knits together insight and context from political science with a fascinating blow-by-blow account of the policy battles waged in the House Energy and Commerce Committee throughout the first three years of the Obama administration. Readers will gain a deeper understanding of the variability, complexity, and challenges of policymaking in today’s party polarized House of Representatives.”

Frances E. Lee, Department of Government & Politics, University of Maryland

“We live in a world where 24/7 we can get endless pundit commentary on permanent and crucial policy issues such as trade, healthcare, environment and debt/deficit. Bryan Marshall and Bruce Wolpe give us an insightful insider, not outsider, view with their analysis of the 2009-2012 111th Congress in *The Committee: A Study of Policy Power, Politics and Obama’s Historic Legislative Agenda on Capitol Hill*. Veteran political scientist Marshall combines his academic expertise and one year’s APSA Congressional Fellowship on the staff of Rep. James Clyburn (D-SC) with Wolpe’s three year on-the-ground experience as a senior adviser to Energy and Commerce Committee chair Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA). For teachers and students of American politics interested in the internal and external coalition building and a chairman’s role in the legislative process, this book takes us beyond such classics as Eric Redman’s “Dance of Legislation.” Importantly, the authors go well beyond the politics and the policy and provide the critical ingredient of the legislative process. Whether a novice or hard-core veteran of the Congress’s critical role in shaping our national priorities, you owe it to yourself to read this new University of Michigan analysis by Bryan Marshall and Bruce Wolpe.”

—Jeffrey R. Biggs, PhD, retired director of the American Political Science Association’s Congressional Fellowship Program



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