



The Coming Age of Direct Democracy: California's Recall and Beyond

Mark Baldassare, Cheryl Katz

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This book examines the new, hybrid democracy that has been taking shape in California since the historic recall of Gov. Gray Davis and election of former actor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2003. During the recall and its aftermath, California has reached unprecedented levels of use of direct democracy, in which public policy decisions are made by voters at the ballot box, rather than by elected representatives in the legislature. Driven by Californians' long-standing populism and distrust of government, a new form of governance is emerging: one that seeks to avoid the pitfalls of party politics and influence by special interest groups that plague representative democracy, by increasing the role of voters at the ballot box. This book analyzes the hybrid democracy that has developed under Gov. Schwarzenegger, and how his leadership has encouraged its growth. Using the Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Surveys, which include interviews with more than 150,000 Californians, the authors detail the transformation in the state's political climate and the public attitudes behind this change. The authors conclude that this transformation will likely take place in other states, perhaps even nationwide, and offer recommendations for ways to improve policymaking in a hybrid democracy.

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