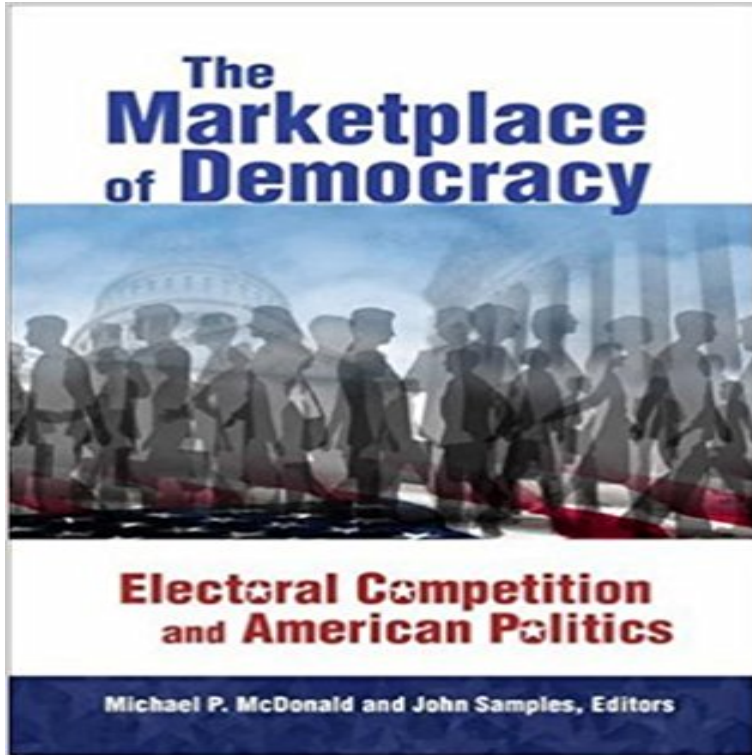


# The Marketplace of Democracy: Electoral Competition and American Politics



Since 1998, U.S. House incumbents have won a staggering 98 percent of their reelection races. Electoral competition has also declined in some state and primary elections. The Marketplace for Democracy combines the resources of two eminent research organizations Brookings and the Cato Institute to address several important questions about our democratic system. How pervasive is the lack of competition in arenas only previously speculated on, such as state legislative contests and congressional primaries? What have previous reform efforts, such as direct primaries and term limits, had on electoral competition? What are the effects of redistricting and campaign finance regulation? What role do third parties play? In sum, what does all this tell us about what might be done to increase electoral competition? The authors, including a number of today's most important scholars in American politics, consider the historical development, legal background, and political aspects of a system that is supposed to be responsive and accountable yet for many is becoming stagnant, self-perpetuating, and tone-deaf. How did we get to this point, and what if anything should be done about it? Elections are the vehicles through which Americans choose who governs them, and the power of the ballot is still the best lever ordinary citizens have in keeping public officials accountable. The Marketplace of Democracy considers different policy options for increasing the competition needed to keep American politics vibrant, responsive, and democratic. Contributors include Stephen Ansolabehere (MIT), William D. Berry (Florida State University), Bruce Cain (University of California Berkeley), Thomas Carsey (Florida State University), James Gimpel (University of Maryland), John Hanley (UC Berkeley), John Mark Hansen (University of Chicago), Paul S. Herrnson

(University of Maryland) Gary Jacobson (University of California San Diego) Thad Kousser (UC San Diego), Frances Lee (University of Maryland), John Matsusaka (University of Southern California), Kenneth Mayer (University of Wisconsin Madison), Michael P. McDonald (Brookings Institution and George Mason University), Jeffrey Milyo (University of Missouri Columbia), Richard Niemi (University of Rochester) Nate Persily (University of Pennsylvania Law School), Lynda Powell (University of Rochester), David Primo (University of Rochester), John Samples (Cato Institute), and James Snyder Jr. (MIT).

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