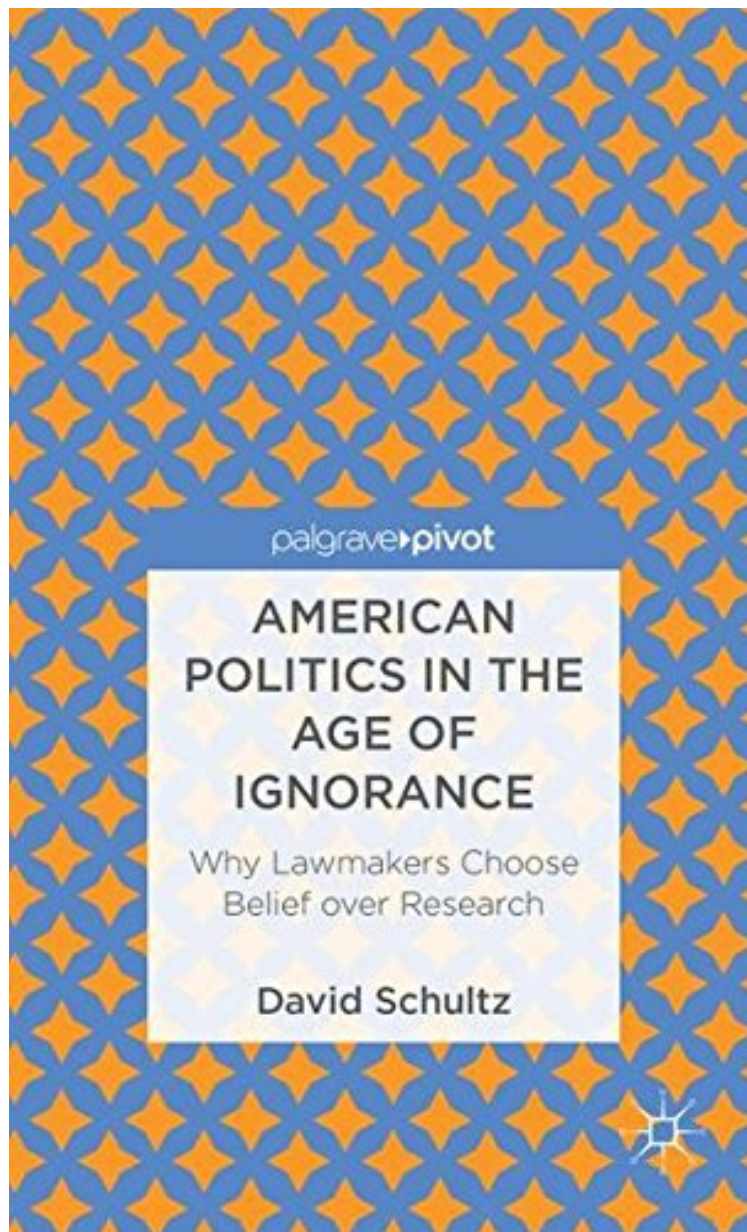


(Download pdf) American Politics in the Age of Ignorance: Why Lawmakers Choose Belief over Research (Palgrave Pivot)

American Politics in the Age of Ignorance: Why Lawmakers Choose Belief over Research (Palgrave Pivot)

D. Schultz

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D. Schultz : American Politics in the Age of Ignorance: Why Lawmakers Choose Belief over Research (Palgrave Pivot) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised

American Politics in the Age of Ignorance: Why Lawmakers Choose Belief over Research (Palgrave Pivot):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A critique of common sense political solutions By Steven Peterson On page 1, the author notes his basic thesis: ". . . often times many policies and ideas get enacted either when there is little evidence supporting their likelihood of success, or worse, when social science research indicates probable failure." In short, we rely on myths and common sense to make key policy decisions--when evidence suggests that the myths and common sense will not work. What are some examples? Chapter 1 looks at the states as laboratories of innovation. The author argues that much innovation is one state adopting the failed policy of another state. Taxes? Are higher taxes killers of economic growth and lower taxes engines of growth? Schultz contends that taxes are often not as important as other factors in the decision by a company to invest in a particular venue. What about "sportsfare," where communities invest public funds in sports stadia and the like? Schultz argues that this is a poor use of public funds, in that the economic benefits do not justify the public investment. And so on. . . He concludes that we pursue policies that will not work because of the power of interest groups who support those policies and an unwillingness by citizens and public officials to engage in evidence-based decision making. Key actors avoid coming to grips with evidence that does not support their preferred policy choices. The book might be seen by some as a bit one-sided, in that there appear to be more conservative positions criticized than liberal ones. But the basic point is valuable, applying equally to liberal, conservative, moderate, and other positions. As such a useful check on use of myths, hope, and ideology in policy making.

American Politics in the Age of Ignorance looks at ten policy myths and bad ideas that governments and public officials - most often conservatives - consistently repeat and re-enact. Acting on these myths, the policies inevitably fail and thereby reinforce preconceived beliefs that government is ineffective at solving problems.

"American Politics in the Age of Ignorance is simultaneously depressing, hopeful and engaging. Depressing because of its convincing arguments and examples that government policies are consistently made based on 'political myths' accepted at face value by officeholders, candidates, journalists, and the public alike rather than on empirical social science evidence. Hopeful because it makes an equally compelling case that we actually know a good deal about what works and what does not, and in theory at least, have a policymaking process designed to provide the feedback necessary to learn from past successes and failures. And engaging because of the 'take no prisoners' style in which it is written. Finding solutions to the dilemma documented in these pages will not be easy, but I suggest as a first step that policymakers, journalists and citizens who care about the state of our nation read this book." - Michael X. Delli Carpini, Dean of The Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, USA "The divide between evidence and ideology in American political debate has never seemed so wide. With this small book, David Schultz applies actual, credible research to highly-charged assertions, separating fact from fiction and defending the propositions that citizenship requires respect for data and information, and that reason should trump uninformed emotion. The book is a plea for Americans to quit "dumbing down" our politics." - Sheila Suess Kennedy, Professor of Law and Public Policy, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, IUPUI About the Author David Schultz is Hamline University Professor in the School of Business where he teaches classes in ethics, public policy, and economics. He also holds an appointment at the University of Minnesota School of Law, USA where he is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Law and Politics. Professor Schultz has a PhD in Political Science and a Law degree and has been a professor for more than 21 years. Previous to teaching he has worked as a housing and economic planner and in local government. Professor Schultz is the author and editor of more than 25 books and 70+ articles on various topics of law, legal theory, and American politics, and he has edited or co-edited several encyclopedias.