



For the Many or the Few: The Initiative, Public Policy, and American Democracy (American Politics and Political Economy Series)

John G. Matsusaka

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Direct democracy continues to grow in importance throughout the United States. Citizens are increasingly using initiatives and referendums to take the law into their own hands, overriding their elected officials to set tax, expenditure, and social policies. John G. Matsusaka's *For the Many or the Few* studies a century of budget data from states and cities to provide the first comprehensive, empirical picture of how direct democracy is changing government policies.

Based on a century of evidence and the most recent theory, Matsusaka argues against the popular belief that initiatives empower wealthy special interest groups that neglect the majority view. Examining demographic, political, and opinion data, he demonstrates how initiatives led to significant tax and expenditure cuts over the last 30 years and that these cuts were supported by a majority of citizens. He concludes that, by and large, direct democracy in the United States has worked for the benefit of the many rather than the few.

"*For the Many or the Few* is a valuable contribution to our understanding of American democratic institutions and public policy and an important book."—*Journal of Politics*

"John G. Matsusaka's valuable, accessible book represents one of the few studies that attempt to test how policy outcomes are affected by the initiative process and to examine whether policies produced by the initiative reflect what the public actually wants."—*Political Science Quarterly*

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