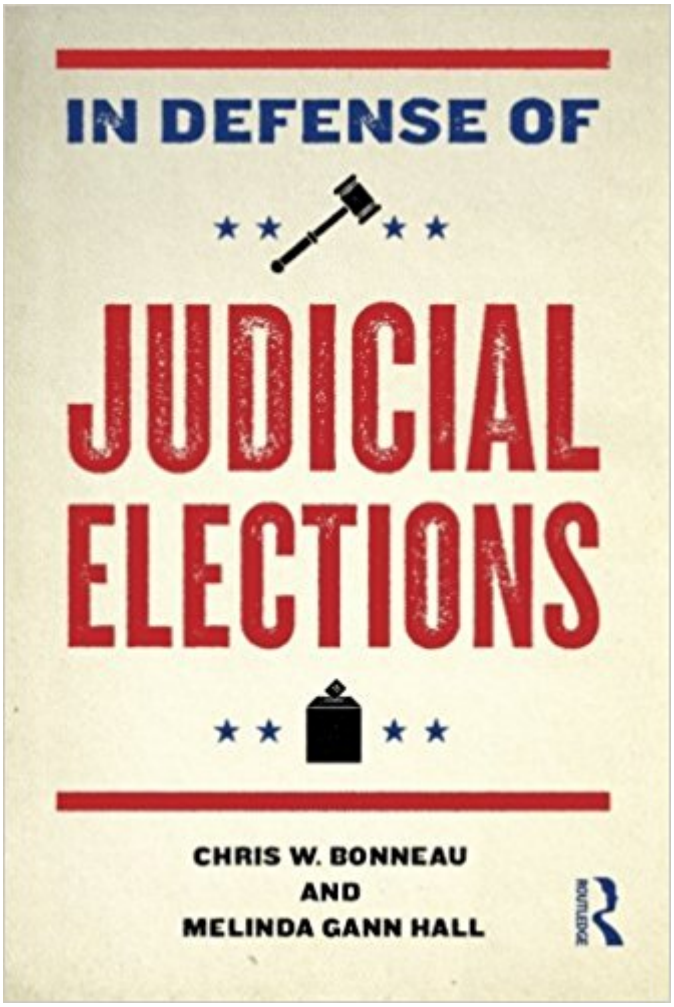
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In Defense Of Judicial Elections (Controversies In Electoral Democracy And Representation)



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Synopsis

One of the most contentious issues in politics today is the propriety of electing judges. Ought judges be independent of democratic processes in obtaining and retaining their seats, or should they be subject to the approval of the electorate and the processes that accompany popular control? While this debate is interesting and often quite heated, it usually occurs without reference to empirical facts--or at least accurate ones. Also, empirical scholars to date have refused to take a position on the normative issues surrounding the practice. Bonneau and Hall offer a fresh new approach. Using almost two decades of data on state supreme court elections, Bonneau and Hall argue that opponents of judicial elections have madeÃ¢â ¬â ¢and continue to makeÃ¢â ¬â ¢erroneous empirical claims. They show that judicial elections are efficacious mechanisms that enhance the quality of democracy and create an inextricable link between citizens and the judiciary. In so doing, they pioneer the use of empirical data to shed light on these normative questions and offer a coherent defense of judicial elections. This provocative book is essential reading for anyone interested in the politics of judicial selection, law and politics, or the electoral process. Part of the Controversies in Electoral Democracy and Representation series edited by Matthew J. Streb.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"In the Acknowledgment section of this book, Professors Bonneau and Hall make the bold, perhaps even audacious, claim that their "book represents the most comprehensive, systematic examination

of state supreme court elections that we (or others) have ever undertaken." After reading the book and digesting their voluminous analyses, IÃ¢â ¬â„¢m convinced! In adducing rigorous, empirical evidence regarding how state judicial elections actually operate, thereby busting a number of widely held myths about state judicial elections, Bonneau and Hall have entirely reconstruct our understanding of the state courts of last resort. An empirical tour-de-force that addresses extremely important normative issues of accountability and independence. No student of state or judicial politics can afford to ignore this important book."Ã¢â ¬â ¢James L. Gibson, Sidney W. Souers Professor of Government, Washington University in St. Louis "This is an important book.Ã Â Bonneau and Hall use a rich body of empirical data to illuminate the functioning of judicial elections and to probe the desirability of electing judges.Ã Â The questions they raise about widely accepted arguments against judicial elections and the evidence they muster in support of their position are major contributions to the debate over how to select judges." Ã¢â ¬â ¢Lawrence Baum, Ohio State University "Going against the tide, Bonneau and Hall, two leading scholars of state judicial elections, provide a strong argument for retaining this controversial method of judicial selection. The authors effectively debunk reformersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ pretensions and stick empirical fingers in the reformersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ eyes." Ã¢â ¬â ¢Stephen L. Wasby, Professor Emeritus, University at Albany, SUNY Ã Â "IN DEFENSE is another title in the Routledge series 'Controversies in Electoral Democracy and Representation.' It is a valuable and excellent addition to the literature of state judicial elections; if only for one reason, it empirically demonstrates and strongly argues that opponents of judicial elections are erroneous in their underlying assumptions...IN DEFENSE is a well-written book and very accessible to both scholars and non-scholars...I found it difficult to put down once I began reading it. The authors, while forceful in their condemnations of assumptions behind judicial election opponents' arguments, nevertheless acknowledge that elections are not the perfect panacea to some of the problems identified by judicial reform advocates. They conclude that these problems are not limited to judicial elections alone and that citizens are rightly concerned about all elections for political offices in the United States. Bonneau and Hall posit that there are other alternative solutions better suited for resolving these issues. I agree and strongly recommend the book to every reader concerned about either judicial independence or judicial accountability." --Salmon A. Shomade, University of New Orleans "Summing Up: Recommended.Ã Â Upper-division undergraduates and above." - J. Michael Bitzer, CHOICE (March 2010)

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Fantastic compilation of research presented in a accessible way. This is good stuff.

There is a movement in this country, (already passed in some states) to take away your constitutional Right to vote for judges.The premise is there is little or no corruption in the current judiciary.And that new rules allowing Judges to have party affiliations and take contributions will lead to destruction of this current allegedly pristine non corrupt system.The premise is false.Corruption is Rampant through through out the Judiciary.We no longer have the rule of law, we have might makes right, how much justice can you afford and whim of judges.This book is a fantastic read taking the perspective of analyzing whether elections are better for the integrity of the judiciary or not.Wonderful book...All Patriots regardless of political stripe should consider this book required reading to fulfill their civic duty.Those were my thoughts.Don MashakThe Cynical Patriot[...]

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