



Work over Welfare: The Inside Story of the 1996 Welfare Reform Law

Ron Haskins

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Work over Welfare tells the inside story of the legislation that ended "welfare as we know it." As a key staffer on the House Ways and Means Committee, author Ron Haskins was one of the architects of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996. In this landmark book, he vividly portrays the political battles that produced the most dramatic overhaul of the welfare system since its creation as part of the New Deal.

Haskins starts his story in the early 1990s, as a small group of Republicans lays the groundwork for welfare reform by developing innovative policies to encourage work and fight illegitimacy. These ideas, which included such controversial provisions as mandatory work requirements and time limits for welfare recipients, later became part of the Republicans' Contract with America and were ultimately passed into law. But their success was hardly foreordained. Haskins brings to life the often bitter House and Senate debates the Republican proposals provoked, as well as the backroom negotiations that kept welfare reform alive through two presidential vetoes. In the process, he illuminates both the personalities and the processes that were crucial to the ultimate passage of the 1996 bill. He also analyzes the changes it has wrought on the social and political landscape over the past decade.

In *Work over Welfare*, Haskins has provided the most authoritative account of welfare reform to date. Anyone with an interest in social welfare or politics in general will learn a great deal from this insightful and revealing book.

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