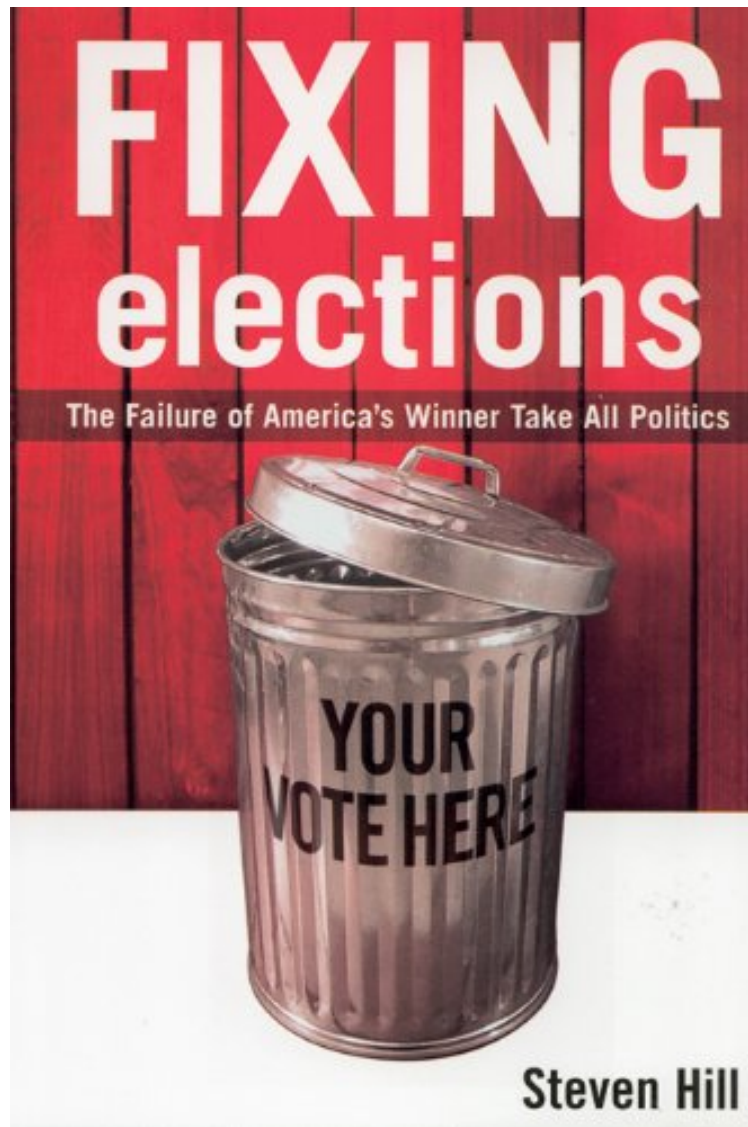


Fixing Elections: The Failure of America's Winner Take All Politics

STEVEN HILL

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STEVEN HILL : Fixing Elections: The Failure of America's Winner Take All Politics before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fixing Elections: The Failure of America's Winner Take All Politics:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Fundamental Sound. Editorially a Nightmare.By Jack RyanThis book paints a very disturbing picture of democracy in America at the turn of the twenty-first century, but thankfully it paints an equally hopeful vision about how to fix it. The crux of the problem is that the electoral system the United States uses in its elections is over two hundred years old and needs to be updated to suit the times. In 1789 the

American constitution was revolutionary, but now it has fallen behind nations like Ireland, the UK, New Zealand, and France in terms of ensuring representative democracy. In order to fix the problem, Mr Hill suggests the the US adopt some sort of proportional representation system to replace the winner take all system we have now. Under such a proposal, the number of seats a party wins in an election is tied to the percentage of the vote they received. So if the Green Party gets 9 percent of the vote, they will get 9 percent of the seats. Under the current system, 9 percent gets you nothing, you actually have to get more votes than anyone else in at least one district. Mr. Hill convincingly makes his case for proportional representation, however his style of writing nearly undercuts it. He feels the need to interject his opinions about all matters political, cultural, and religious into almost every sentence, rather than focus on the matter at hand. He clearly displays a left of center bias, which doesn't conflict with my politics, but I worry how a conservative might ignore his opinions on electoral reform because of Mr. Hill's gratuitous references to his support for leftist politics. Electoral reform shouldn't be a left or right issue. It is a matter of democracy and fairness. And although Mr. Hill admirably makes a logical case for electoral reform, he may have unfortunately drowned himself out with his pop-culture references and leftist din.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. good perspective...By RADEnjoyed this expanding perspective on America's voting system.4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. It's not the politicians, it's the system.By A CustomerFixing Elections is a fascinating and, I believe, accurate analysis of why our politicians behave the way they do. Hill goes straight to the core of our democracy, the election system, and explains why it causes our government to be, as I see it, so un-American. If you are disgusted by slippery politicians, this book will help you understand what is going on. After reading it you will be better able to discern the shallow and uninformed nature of most of the political discussion in the U.S. media. If you are looking to improve America in any lasting way, you will very likely find the ideas in this book intimately related to your cause.Hill has made me aware of the importance of many aspects of our political system that I hadn't considered before, such as the importance of swing voters and re-districting. If you've been following the re-districting dispute in Texas, that's just the tip of the iceberg. I was amazed to find out how diabolical the strategies used by the two major parties are. Have you ever wondered why one party or the other would not even bother to field a candidate for a particular race? I also found answers to many questions I have had about our government, such as the following: Why, if we have a democracy, do only two parties have all the power? Why would a newly democratized country not choose the American system? Why aren't issues covered in any sort of depth in election campaigns? Why is seemingly well-intended legislation so often castrated by loopholes? What is so difficult about balancing the federal budget? And why is most everyone in Congress white when I see so many non-whites living around me?Hill has done his research and knows his topic inside and out. His discussion moves among the local, national and global levels with ease. A large portion of the book is about the problems associated with the winner-take-all voting system, wherein one candidate wins each race. If Hill had written a longer book, I would have liked him to include more information about other voting systems. He discusses proportional systems a fair amount and he touches on cumulative and run-off systems, but I would have liked to know more about these and other possible systems. In particular, I wanted to know more about the nuts and bolts of how these systems work and what pros and cons are associated with them.Hill draws from a wide array academic research, statistical information, and anecdotal evidence to support his arguments. At times I would have liked him to dilate more on the importance of the evidence or provide more statistics. When I turned to the footnotes hoping for this, I was generally disappointed. Of course, Hill does list his sources, which enables me to find and examine the sources myself. Hill makes a point of mentioning it when there is a dearth of research or information about a particular subject, as when he discusses the dynamics of representation in the U.S. Senate, for example.Hill's writing style is lively and full of punch, which makes the book a great read. His penchant for rhetorical flourish, while usually enjoyable, did give me pause occasionally. He also likes to use rhetorical questions, which adds variety to the prose, but sometimes the tone was a bit too incredulous for me.All in all, Fixing Elections is a wonderful book. I recommend it to every American.

Fixing Elections shows our whole 18th-century Winner Take All political system, including the way we elect our legislatures. Steven Hill argues our geographic-based, Winner Take All political system is at the root of many of our worst political problems, including poor minority and majority representation, low voter turnout, expensive mudslinging campaigns, congressional gridlock, regional balkanization, and the growing divide between city-dwellers and middle-America.