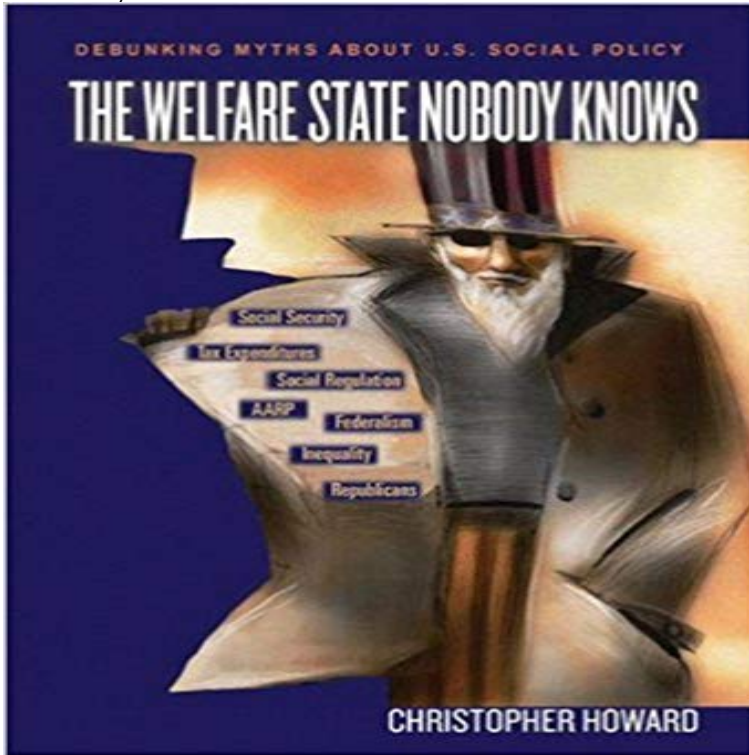


The Welfare State Nobody Knows: Debunking Myths about U.S. Social Policy



The Welfare State Nobody Knows challenges a number of myths and half-truths about U.S. social policy. The American welfare state is supposed to be a pale imitation of true welfare states in Europe and Canada. Christopher Howard argues that the American welfare state is in fact larger, more popular, and more dynamic than commonly believed. Nevertheless, poverty and inequality remain high, and this book helps explain why so much effort accomplishes so little. One important reason is that the United States is adept at creating social programs that benefit the middle and upper-middle classes, but less successful in creating programs for those who need the most help. This book is unusually broad in scope, analyzing the politics of social programs that are well known (such as Social Security and welfare) and less well known but still important (such as workers compensation, home mortgage interest deduction, and the Americans with Disabilities Act). Although it emphasizes developments in recent decades, the book ranges across the entire twentieth century to identify patterns of policymaking. Methodologically, it weaves together quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to answer fundamental questions about the politics of U.S. social policy. Ambitious and timely, The Welfare State Nobody Knows asks us to rethink the influence of political parties, interest groups, public opinion, federalism, policy design, and race on the American welfare state.

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