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Herian, Mitchel N., "Review of *Democracy in California: Government and Politics in the Golden State: Post-recall Edition* by Brian P. Janiskee, and Ken Masugi" (2004). *Publications of Affiliated Faculty: Nebraska Public Policy Center.* Paper 4.
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Janiskee, Brian P., and Ken Masugi
Democracy in California: Government and Politics in the Golden State: Post-recall Edition
Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield
176 pp., $22.95, ISBN 0-7425-3484-7
Publication Date: March 2004

Californians periodically capture the attention of the nation with their dynamic political activities. In 2003, Californians once again managed to command the national spotlight when California became only the second state in the union to recall its governor. California's eccentric political atmosphere has widely been recognized, but few observers imagined that Californians would attempt to replace a governor midterm, and even fewer imagined that they would succeed. The events that culminated in the October 2003 recall of Gray Davis and the subsequent election of Arnold Schwarzenegger came to symbolize the seemingly unstable political climate in California. The recall election, however, represented much more. The recall election illustrated to the American public how much power citizens can actually wield in a political system in which the electorate has direct control over the electoral mechanisms of government.

Brian P. Janiskee, an assistant professor of political science at California State University, San Bernadino, and Ken Masugi, the director of the Center for Local Government at the Claremont Institute, discuss the recall election throughout the post-recall edition of *Democracy in California: Politics and Government in the Golden State*, with special attention paid to the election in the final chapter of the book. In the book, Janiskee and Masugi examine the events surrounding the recall election and place those events into a Californian context, where populist politics abounds, thereby allowing readers to gain perspective into how the recall election is a product of the Progressive legacy that has guided California politics for decades.

The book includes a thorough analysis of California politics, with foci that range from discussions of diversity to a look at the democratic institutions of the state. *Democracy in California* is an appropriate book not only for students of California politics but also for students of state politics in general, as the authors apply many of the basic concepts of American democracy to the state and local levels of California government. The concepts of American individualism, love for novelty, and equality as expounded by Alexis de Tocqueville are used by Janiskee and Masugi to introduce readers to some of the classic notions of American political culture. They then describe how these notions can be attributed to the people and culture of California. Similarly, Janiskee and Masugi incorporate the more general concept of Progressivism and its impact on the politics of California by distinguishing California's brand of Progressivism from other strands of Progressivism across the nation. Progressivism, the authors tell us, has influenced nearly every facet of California democracy, from the composition of its constitution to the actions of its citizens. Thus, Janiskee and Masugi rely heavily on Progressivism to explain much of the phenomena within California's government and politics.

Although a more detailed analysis of the 2003 recall election is provided by Larry N. Gerston and Terry Christensen in *Recall! America's Political Earthquake*, no text compares in its ability to place a discussion of the recall into the Progressive political context that exists in California. Furthermore, Janiskee and Masugi succeed in producing a work on California's politics and government that fills a relative void, as very few books on the workings of California's government have been published in recent years. As a result, *Democracy in California* is a valuable work that examines the workings and peculiarities of California government that exist in 2004.

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