



Too Weak to Govern: Majority Party Power and Appropriations in the U.S. Senate

Peter Hanson

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Too Weak to Govern investigates the power of the majority party in the United States Senate through a study of the appropriations process over a period of nearly four decades. It uses quantitative analysis, case studies, and interviews with policy makers to show that the majority party is more likely to abandon routine procedures for passing spending bills in favor of creating massive 'omnibus' spending bills when it is small, divided, and ideologically distant from the minority. This book demonstrates that the majority party's ability to influence legislative outcomes is greater than previously understood but that it operates under important constraints. However, the majority generally cannot use its power to push its preferred policies through to approval. Overall, the weakness of the Senate majority party is a major reason for the breakdown of the congressional appropriations process over the past forty years.



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