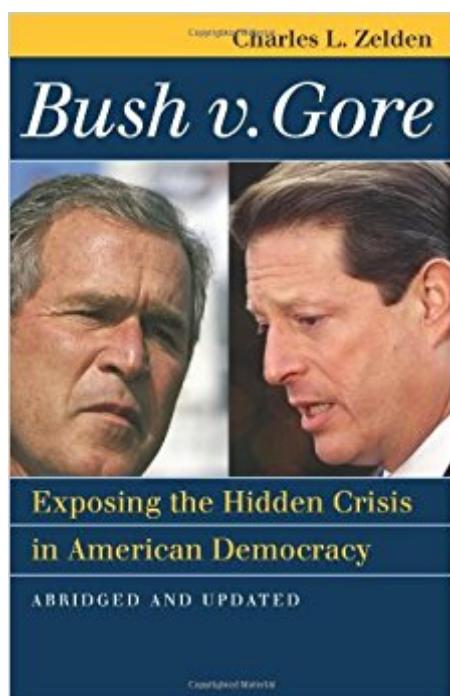


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Bush V. Gore: Exposing The Hidden Crisis In American Democracy: Abridged And Updated (Landmark Law Cases And American Society)



Synopsis

Who could forget the Supreme Court's controversial 5-4 decision in Bush v. Gore or the 2000 presidential campaign and election that preceded it? Hanging chads, butterfly ballots, endless recounts, raucous allegations, and a constitutional crisis were all roiled into a confusing and potentially dangerous mix-until the Supreme Court decision allowed George W. Bush to become the 43rd President of the United States, despite losing the popular vote to Al Gore. Praised by scholars and political pundits alike, the original edition of Charles Zelden's book set a new standard for our understanding of that monumental decision. A probing chronicle and critique of the vexing and acrimonious affair, it offered the most accurate and up-to-date analysis of a remarkable episode in American politics. Highly readable, its comprehensive coverage, depth of documentation and detail, and analytic insights remain unrivaled on the subject. In this first paperback edition, Zelden has abridged and simplified the original to focus on the core story and its essential details, greatly increasing its appeal for a wider and more diverse readership, including students and general readers. He has also added a postscript that deals with developments of the past decade relating to the case. Like the original edition, this volume distills the events, issues, and voluminous commentary relating to Bush v. Gore into a sharply insightful and nonpartisan account of a remarkable election, the crisis it produced, and the litigation that followed. Ultimately, it shows that both the election controversy of 2000 and Bush v. Gore signaled major flaws in our electoral system that remain with us today.

Book Information

Paperback: 324 pages

Publisher: University Press of Kansas; Updated ed. edition (September 8, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0700617493

ISBN-13: 978-0700617494

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 1 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #487,068 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #53 in Books > Law > Administrative Law > Urban, State & Local Government #608 in Books > Law > Legal History #664 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Elections & Political Process > Elections

Customer Reviews

Historian Zelden (Battle for the Black Ballot) offers a comprehensive and thoughtful study of the high-stakes legal drama of the 2000 presidential election. He doggedly documents the strategies of the troops of lawyers from the Bush and Gore camps, the seesaw of court victories and defeats, the transparent machinations of the local political machinery as well as what he views as the prejudices and predilections of the Florida judges who had a role in the dispute. Zelden is especially attentive to the rationales of individual Supreme Court justices, which resulted in the Court's opinion in *Bush v. Gore*. But Zelden's most heartfelt point is that the electoral process—the bedrock of democracy—is broken, and that without significant reform American democracy is threatened. Zelden suggests that the U.S. needs a uniform national electoral system that leaves no wiggle room for partisan local officials. The details of the *Bush v. Gore* dispute may seem stale to some readers, but Zelden's concerns about restoring the integrity of the electoral process are provocative and timely. (Sept. 4) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

—A superior achievement. Zelden writes clearly and precisely, laying the issues out patiently and thereby presenting a convincing account of such matters as overvotes and undervotes and dimpled and hanging chads. I also admire his nonpartisan restraint. While it's clear that he finds aspects of the Court's decision disappointing or unconvincing, he doesn't have a large axe to grind, which is what makes his critique so persuasive.—James T. Patterson, Bancroft Prize winner and author of *Restless Giant: The United States from Watergate to Bush v. Gore*

If you are looking to read a calm, carefully considered, and critical analysis of the Supreme Court's decision in *Bush v. Gore* go no further. Prof. Zelden does a masterful job of walking you through the complexities of the case as well as the range of speculation concerning its reasoned opinions. I'm always appreciative of those who can reroute a controversial subject from the maw of the media circus as well as partisan activists to the realm of reasoned discussion and disagreement. I found reading this account of *Bush v. Gore* an enjoyable educational experience. I highly recommend it for those interested in the case, the operations of the Supreme Court, and the history of disputed presidential elections.

Dr. Zelden has written a gripping tale of the 2000 *Bush v. Gore* election. He offers a unbiased

analysis of the case, exploring the philosophy underlying the actions of each justice. He invites us to reconsider the case apart from our personal views of the final outcome, and emphasizes the failures of the election SYSTEM, rather than the election of a president by judicial decree. The writing is excellent and the editing very well done. The only thing I might change is to add an early chapter exploring the wide variety of state laws that implement our system of indirectly electing an electoral college instead of directly voting for president. A close look at our election laws is like watching sausage being made. It will alarm the reader and demonstrate the need for increased uniformity. Read this book before Nov. 4, 2008. It will convince you to vote early!

WHO ARE THE INTENDED READERS of this volume? CERTAINLY NOT THE CONCERNED VOTER wishing to be better informed about how we elect our presidents and the deficiencies in our current electoral systems. The narrative of events is FAR too detailed, complicated and mind-numbing for most. Few casual readers would ever get to the book's analysis of electoral deficiencies. CERTAINLY NOT THE LEGAL SCHOLAR OR ATTORNEY seeking a deeper understanding of the Supreme Court's mishmash of conflicting opinions in *Bush v. Gore*. The author's analysis is rather superficial and ignores almost completely the majority's departure from all those precedents firmly establishing the Court's non-interference in the legal and political province of the various states--unless a federal question of law compelled intervention. CERTAINLY NOT THE HISTORICAL SCHOLAR. Not a single footnote here to lead one to further research. No documentation of quotations and facts. PERHAPS a high school teacher of civics or American history looking for an interesting tidbit to enliven a class discussion of those events.

Using "The Case That Must Not Be Named", Dr. Zelden shows in detail how the flaws in our electoral system can be, and were, used to manipulate the results of the vote. This is an important book: although many people would like to forget about *Bush v. Gore*, we need to look at the events in that election closely in order to make changes that will allow every vote to be counted. Unless and until the problems described are corrected, any close race in the future will continue to be vulnerable. It is essential to our democracy that these flaws be corrected so that we can have confidence in the system.

There could not be a more timely book than Charles Zelden's *Bush v. Gore*. Now would be the perfect time to pick up this book and learn what we, as a country, are facing with our almost precarious process of electing a president. This book is both comprehensive and well written. In

spite of its detail, it reads like a detective novel. This book will be the go to source in years to come for those who want to read about the 2000 election--both for students doing research and for the reader looking for a gripping story to read. The Timeline of Events in Appendix 1 is invaluable. Zelden has written an evenhanded account that is destined to be the classic and definitive account of the election of 2000. We can hope that future elections do not necessitate a sequel.

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