



# **African American Legislators in the American States (Power, Conflict, and Democracy: American Politics Into the 21st Century)**

*Kerry L. Haynie*

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Has black inclusion in the political process changed political institutions and led to more black influence in the governmental process? How do African American legislators balance racial interests with broader issues of government? And how is their effectiveness subjectively perceived and objectively evaluated?

In one of the first book-length studies to analyze the behavior of African American state legislators in multiple legislative sessions across five states, Kerry Haynie has compiled a wealth of valuable data that reveals the dynamics and effectiveness of black participation in the legislative process. Owing to the increasing role of state government in administering what he defines as key "black issues" -- education, healthcare, poverty/social welfare, civil rights, and children's issues -- Haynie focuses on bills introduced in these categories in Arkansas, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, and North Carolina.

The book reveals how responsive political institutions have been to the nation's largest minority group. It explores the question of how legislators deal with the "duality dilemma" -- which requires them to be both responsible legislators and race representatives -- and whether agendas should be "deracialized" in order to appeal to a broader constituency. Along with numerous statistical charts illustrating everything from representation on house standing committees to a ranking of the fifteen legislative sessions by quartiles of African American political incorporation, a useful and revealing portrait emerges -- one that will fuel debate and inform future discussions of the role of African Americans in the political process.

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