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How the States Shaped the Nation: American Electoral Institutions and Voter Turnout, 1920-2000

By Melanie Jean Springer

The University of Chicago Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, How the States Shaped the Nation: American Electoral Institutions and Voter Turnout, 1920-2000, Melanie Jean Springer, The United States routinely has one of the lowest voter turnout rates of any developed democracy in the world. That rate is also among the most internally diverse, since the federal structure allows state-level variations in voting institutions that have had-and continue to have-sizeable local effects. But are expansive institutional efforts like mailin registration, longer poll hours, and "no-excuse" absentee voting uniformly effective in improving voter turnout across states? With *How the States Shaped the Nation*, Melanie Jean Springer places contemporary reforms in historical context and explores how state electoral institutions have shaped voting behavior throughout the twentieth century. Although reformers often assume that more convenient voting procedures will produce equivalent effects wherever they are implemented, Springer reveals that this is not the case. In fact, convenience-voting methods have had almost no effect in the southern states where turnout rates are lowest. In contrast, the adverse effects associated with restrictive institutions like poll taxes and literacy tests have been persistent and dramatic. Ultimately, no single institutional fix will uniformly resolve problems of low...



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