



America, the Owner's Manual: Making Government Work For You

Bob Graham, Chris Hand

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Would you teach someone to play basketball using just chalkboard diagrams? Or would you get them on the court and have them play? In basketball, the answer is easy -- you do both. So why teach politics only as a spectator sport?

Senator Bob Graham believes that US citizens should expand on their classroom learning about the political system: he spurs them to hit the court and actually play the game. If citizens work on an issue they care about, politics will become a meaningful and positive experience. This short, how-to guide takes readers out of theoretical discussions of policy and into a world where they can affect change. Graham's goal is to have readers identify a problem, and then walk them through each step from researching the issue, to getting others involved, to engaging the media. Each chapter starts with a real case, showing citizens tackling a step in the process, and ends with a summary checklist and a series of questions that help readers put Graham's game plan in action. By offering readers concrete guidance, an array of resources, and advice for troubleshooting and overcoming barriers, this compact user's guide gets readers way beyond textbook learning.

This book is the culmination of his efforts that began after a year in the state legislature more than 30 years ago, when Senator Graham took on the challenge of civic education at one school in Jacksonville. His time as both a governor and a senator has only strengthened his resolve to pique students' curiosity about politics and teach them to get what they want from government.

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