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The Paralysis of American Politics and What It Might Mean for 2012

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Abstract

In recent years, the rise of partisanship and polarization in U.S. politics results in a democratic system that's increasingly considered to be dysfunctional and unable to address national and international problems. This examination of the contemporary political and governmental landscape in America will explain the origins of the current problems and the reasons why the Democratic and Republican parties have become more beholding to their more extreme members. What are the consequences of what's called "base politics" and the possible implications for the 2012 Elections? Is reform possible, or will stalemate become a continuing feature of American political life?



Robert Schmuhl

Robert Schmuhl is the inaugural Walter H. Annenberg-Edmund P. Joyce Chair in American Studies and Journalism and Director of the John W. Gallivan Program in Journalism, Ethics & Democracy at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author or editor of eleven books, including *The Responsibilities of Journalism*, which has appeared in four foreign editions, his collection of essays, *In So Many More Words: Arguments and Adventures*, and *Making Words Dance* (both 2010). His journalism has appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *USA TODAY*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *American Journalism Review*. In 2009, Schmuhl served as the first John Hume Visiting Research Fellow at University College Dublin's Hume Institute for Global Irish Studies. He has taught in Australia, Ireland, South Africa, and Great Britain. In 2010, he won the Frank O'Malley Undergraduate Teaching Award, the only University-wide, student-selected honor given for teaching at Notre Dame.

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