



# The Challenge of Legislation: Bipartisanship in a Partisan World

*John L. Hilley*

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## **The Challenge of Legislation: Bipartisanship in a Partisan World** John L. Hilley

In 1995, the budget standoff between Democrats and Republicans forced the federal government to shut down. Two years later, the parties joined forces to pass the first balanced budget in a generation. In *The Challenge of Legislation*, John Hilley, the Clinton administration's chief liaison to the Republican-controlled Congress, tells the inside story of this dramatic turnaround. Hilley weaves together a detailed narrative and vivid portraits of the key players—including then-Speaker Newt Gingrich, Senate Republican leader Trent Lott, and President Bill Clinton—in this comprehensive account of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Equally at home with the complexities of the legislative process and the realities of political combat, he offers unique insight into the highly charged relationship between party leaders and their rank-and-file, the interplay between elected officials and their professional staff, the delicate art of partisan negotiations, and the role of uncertainty and surprise. The result is a compelling look at how public policy is made, rich in enduring lessons for both policymakers and students of legislative politics. Ten years ago, bipartisanship triumphed against daunting odds. *The Challenge of Legislation* shows how it happened and what it will take for bipartisanship to succeed again.

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