

Eighth Edition

# Social Welfare

Politics and Public Policy



Diana M. DiNitto

David H. Johnson

# Social Welfare

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EIGHTH Edition

# Social Welfare

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## Politics and Public Policy

Diana M. DiNitto

*The University of Texas at Austin*

David H. Johnson

*Millersville University of Pennsylvania*

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**Printer/Binder:** Edwards Brothers Malloy  
**Cover Printer:** Edwards Brothers Malloy  
**Text Font:** DanteMTStd

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#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

DiNitto, Diana M.

Social welfare : politics and public policy / Diana M. DiNitto, The University of Texas at Austin.—Eighth edition.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-205-95913-6 (alk. paper)—ISBN 0-205-95913-X (alk. paper) 1. Public welfare—United States.

2. United States—Social policy. I. Title.

HV95.D56 2016

361.6'130973—dc23

2014044463

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

**PEARSON**

Student Edition

ISBN 10: 0-205-95913-X

ISBN 13: 978-0-205-95913-6

In loving memory of my family,  
Vincent J., Mary, and Daniel V. DiNitto.

D. M. D.

For all those who struggle courageously to make life better for someone else,  
and in grateful memory of my father, Howard Johnson.

D. H. J.

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# Preface

It seems amazing that more than three decades have passed since this book was first published. Like previous editions, the eighth edition of *Social Welfare: Politics and Public Policy* is intended to introduce students to the major social welfare policies and programs in the United States and to stimulate them to think about major conflicts in social welfare today. The book focuses on issues and emphasizes that social welfare in the United States involves a series of political questions about what should be done for those who are poor, near poor, and not poor and other individuals and groups—or whether anything should be done at all.

*Social Welfare: Politics and Public Policy* describes the major social welfare programs—their histories, trends, and current problems and prospects. But more importantly, it tackles the difficult conflicts and controversies that surround these programs. Social welfare policy is not presented as a series of solutions to social problems. Instead, social policy is portrayed as public conflict over the nature and causes of social welfare problems, over what, if anything, should be done about them, over who should do it, and over who should decide about it.

## New to this edition

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The Enhanced Pearson eText provides a rich, interactive learning environment designed to improve student mastery of content with the following multimedia features:

- Video links to topical videos on current issues are accompanied by a question to encourage reflection or critical thinking. Each chapter features two video links located in the margin.
- Quizzes on major sections in each chapter give students the opportunity to check their understanding of the section as they read. Students simply click on a link in the margin, read questions, and select the best responses. After they submit their selections, they receive feedback on the correct answers. (ex. ch. 10, pp. 372, 392, 399, etc.)
- Chapter Review short-answer items, available via a link at the end of each chapter, allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the major concepts in the chapter. Feedback or the “correct answer” is provided to help scaffold learning.

Writing a book on social welfare policy is always challenging because policy is changing as we write. In this edition you will find a great deal of new information including

- Updated illustrations, tables, and figures on poverty, health insurance, child maltreatment, and other social welfare issues:
- The latest developments in the political controversies over issues such as health-care reform, immigration policy, and LGBT rights

- Recent court decisions that have changed the landscape of social welfare
- New information on political topics such as campaign finance, political donors, and lobbying
- New developments in state-level initiatives affecting education, child welfare, and wage and employment policies
- Current ideas about reforming social welfare policies and programs

Some of the major policies and programs covered in this book are the following:

Social Security

Unemployment insurance

Workers' compensation

Supplemental Security Income

Vocational rehabilitation

The Americans with Disabilities Act

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Child Support Enforcement

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Community action programs

No Child Left Behind Act

Job training

Minimum wage legislation

Mental health services

The Older Americans Act

Child welfare services

Medicare

Medicaid

State Children's Health Insurance Program

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Voting rights legislation

Civil rights legislation

Affirmative action

Immigration legislation

Reproductive rights policies

Violence Against Women Act

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights legislation

Although it is impossible to capture all the complexities of social welfare in a single volume, and this book is not a legal guide to benefits, these policies and programs are described and analyzed, and alternative proposals and reforms are considered.

This book is designed for undergraduate and beginning graduate courses in social welfare policy. It does not require prior knowledge of social welfare. Hopefully, it will spur further interest in social welfare policies and programs.

Many texts on social policy treat social insurance, public assistance, and social service programs descriptively; by so doing, they tend to obscure important conflicts and issues. Other books treat these programs prescriptively; by so doing, they imply that there is a “right” way to resolve social problems. *Social Welfare: Politics and Public Policy* views social policy as a continuing political struggle over the issues posed by poverty and other social welfare problems in society—different goals and objectives, competing definitions of problems, alternative approaches and strategies, multiple programs and policies, competing proposals for reform, and different ideas about how social welfare policy decisions should be made.

### Instructor Supplements

An instructor’s manual, test bank, and PowerPoint slides are available to accompany the text.

### Acknowledgments

Special gratitude goes to Thomas R. Dye, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at Florida State University. Although he no longer appears as a coauthor of the book, without him there would never have been a book at all. The eighth edition might not have been completed without the contributions of Elaine Eisenbaum, Peter Kindle, Melissa Radey, and Jessica Ritter. We are grateful to each of them for their meticulous work and the many hours they invested in this project. Thanks again to Linda Cummins, who took on the task of helping with the sixth edition of this book. We appreciate the comments of the reviewers who have helped us improve this book. Appreciation also goes to Dean Luis Zayas and the faculty and staff of The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work and Dr. Karen Rice, Chair, and the faculty and staff of the Millersville University School of Social Work for their continued support and encouragement of this work.

Thanks to all who read this book. We hope you find it useful in studying social welfare policy. Feel free to send us comments at [ddinitto@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:ddinitto@mail.utexas.edu) and [david.johnson@millersville.edu](mailto:david.johnson@millersville.edu).

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# Introduction: Politics, Rationalism, and Social Welfare Policy

No one is happy with the nation's social welfare system—not the taxpayers who must support it, not the social welfare professionals who must administer it, and certainly not the needy who must live under it. The nation's social insurance, public assistance, and social service programs are sources of intense controversy. Since the Social Security Act of 1935, the federal government has tried to develop a rational social welfare system for the entire nation. Today a wide variety of federal programs serve people who are aged, poor, disabled, sick, or have other social welfare needs. Social welfare programs are the federal government's largest expenditure, far surpassing national defense. The Social Security Administration and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have the largest budgets of any federal agencies, and other agencies administer many additional social welfare programs. After 80 years of large-scale, direct federal involvement, social welfare policy remains a central issue in U.S. politics.

This book describes the country's major social welfare policies and programs, but it is also concerned with the causes of social welfare policy—why policy is what it is. To understand contemporary social welfare policy, it is necessary to learn about some of the social, economic, and political forces that have shaped social welfare policy in the United States. This book looks at how social welfare policies have developed and changed over time. It considers the consequences of social welfare policies—their effects on target groups and on society in general. The chapters that follow also consider alternative policies—possible changes, reforms, improvements, or phaseouts—and how those involved in the policy process develop, analyze, and evaluate these proposals.

Policymaking is frequently portrayed as a *rational* process in which policymakers identify social problems, explore all the solutions to a problem, forecast all the benefits and costs of each solution, compare benefits to costs for each solution, and select the best

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- Identify the difficulties in defining social welfare policy.
- Describe a rational approach to social welfare policy.
- Examine questions that the political approach raises about rational policymaking and the roles of incrementalism and policy punctuations in policymaking.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

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ratio of benefits to costs. In examining social welfare policy, this book considers both the strengths and weaknesses of this rational model of policymaking and demonstrates that the political barriers to rational policymaking are indeed very great.

In so doing, this book presents social welfare policy as a series of continuing political conflicts over the nature and causes of poverty and other social problems and what should be done for groups such as those who are poor, near-poor, or not poor—or whether anything should be done at all. The root problems in social welfare are not problems of organization, administration, or service delivery. Rather, they involve different ideas about the nature and causes of inequality in society, government’s role in society, the burdens that taxpayers should carry, the appropriate strategies for coping with social problems, the need for reform in specific social welfare programs, the importance of one’s own needs and aspirations in relation to those of others, the nature of the decision-making process itself, and about the ability of government to do anything “rationally.” In short, we present social welfare policy as a continuing political struggle over the issues of poverty, inequality, and other social problems in society.

## What Is Social Welfare Policy?

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*Social welfare policy* is anything a government chooses to do, or not to do, that affects the quality of life of its people. Broadly conceived, social welfare policy includes nearly everything government does—from taxation, national defense, and energy conservation, to healthcare, housing, and public assistance. More elaborate definitions of social welfare policy are available.<sup>1</sup> Most refer to actions of government that have an “impact on the welfare of citizens by providing them with services or income.”<sup>2</sup> By government, we mean the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Agency administrators and judges influence social welfare policy as much as elected officials.

Some scholars have insisted that government activities must have “a goal, objective, or purpose,” in order to be labeled a *policy*.<sup>3</sup> This definition implies a difference between governmental actions in general and an overall plan of action toward a specific goal. The problem, however, in insisting that government actions must have goals in order to be labeled as *policy* is that we can never be sure what the goal of a particular government action is. We generally assume that if a government chooses to do something, there must be a goal, objective, or purpose, but often we find that bureaucrats who helped write the law, lobbyists who pushed for its enactment, and members of Congress who voted for it all had different goals, objectives, and purposes in mind. Multiple goals are not necessarily a bad thing, especially when they mean that more people stand to benefit from a policy, but any of the intentions of a law (stated or not) may also be quite different from what government agencies actually do. All we can really observe is what governments choose to do or not do.

Political scientists Heinz Eulau and Kenneth Prewitt supply still another definition of public policy: “Policy is defined as a ‘standing decision’ characterized by behavioral consistency and repetitiveness on the part of those who make it and those who abide by it.”<sup>4</sup> It might be a wonderful thing if government activities were characterized by such consistency—that they seem to have “rhyme and reason”—but it is doubtful that we would ever find a public policy in government if we insisted on these criteria. As you shall see, much of what government does is not consistent, and government policies often conflict with each other.

Note that this book focuses not only on government action but also on government *inaction*—that is, on what governments choose *not* to do. Government inaction can have just as important an impact on society as government action.

Lengthy discussions of the definition of social welfare policy are unnecessary, often futile, and even exasperating, since few people can agree on a single definition of social welfare policy. Moreover, these discussions divert attention away from the study of specific social welfare policies.

The boundaries of social welfare policy are indeed fuzzy. For practical purposes, much of the discussion presented in this book concerns government policies that directly affect the income, services, and opportunities available to people who are aged, poor, disabled, ill, or otherwise vulnerable. Specifically, the major government policies and programs addressed are:

#### Income maintenance

- Social Security
- Unemployment insurance
- Workers' compensation
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Child support
- Minimum wage legislation
- Earned income tax credit

#### Health

- Medicare
- Medicaid
- State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)
- Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
- Public health

#### Nutrition

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly the Food Stamp Program)
- Nutrition programs for older adults

#### Social services

- Child and adult protective services
- Family preservation services
- Adoption services
- Community mental health services
- Day care
- Independent living services
- Long-term care services

#### Employment

- Employment services (job finding)
- Job training
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Work incentive programs

#### Housing

- Public housing
- Housing vouchers

- Mortgage assistance
- Homeless shelters

#### Education

- Preschool education
- No Child Left Behind Act
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Public school funding
- Financial aid for higher education

Some of these social welfare programs are called *public assistance* because people must be poor (according to legal standards) in order to receive benefits, and benefits are paid from general-revenue funds. Public assistance programs (what most people call “welfare”) include TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, SSI, and public housing. These programs are also called *residual* because benefits are provided only *after* people experience economic difficulties.

Other social welfare programs are called *social insurance* because they are designed to *prevent* poverty. Workers and/or their employers pay into these programs. Upon retirement, disability, or unemployment, those who paid in are entitled to benefits, regardless of their wealth. Social insurance programs include Social Security, Medicare, unemployment insurance, and workers’ compensation. These programs are also called *universal* or *institutional* because almost all Americans participate or are entitled to do so.

Still other social welfare programs are labeled *social services* because they provide care, counseling, education, or other forms of assistance to children, older adults, people with disabilities, and others with particular needs. Child protective services, daycare, independent living services, and mental healthcare are all examples of social services. Social services are also provided in areas like employment, housing, and education.

This book also addresses a number of social justice or rights policies that affect social welfare. Civil rights legislation, the Americans with Disabilities Act, affirmative action, and other provisions bear directly on the status of women, people of color, immigrants, gay men and lesbians, and other groups.

## social Welfare Policy: a rational approach

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Ideally, social welfare policy ought to be rational. A policy is rational if the ratio between the values it achieves and the values it sacrifices is positive and higher than any other policy alternative. This might be viewed as a strictly economic (cost-benefit) approach, but we should not measure benefits and costs only in a narrow dollar-and-cents framework while ignoring basic social values. The idea of rationalism involves the calculation of *all* social, political, and economic values sacrificed or achieved by a public policy, not just those that can be measured in dollars.

Rationalism has been proposed as an “ideal” approach to both studying and making public policy<sup>5</sup> and even as a single “model of choice” that can be applied to all kinds of problems, large and small, public and private.<sup>6</sup> Most government policies are far from being entirely rational. Even so, the model remains important because it helps identify barriers to rationality. It also helps us ask why policymaking is not a more rational process.

## Steps in the Rational Process

Let's consider the conditions for rational policymaking more closely:

1. Society must be able to identify and define social problems and agree there is a need to resolve these problems.
2. All the values of society must be known and weighed.
3. All possible alternative policies must be identified and considered.
4. The consequences of each alternative must be fully understood in terms of both costs and benefits, for the present and for the future, and for target groups and the rest of society.
5. Policymakers must calculate the ratio of benefits to costs for each alternative.
6. Policymakers must choose the policy that maximizes *net* values—the alternative that achieves the greatest benefit at the lowest cost.

Because this notion of rationality assumes that the values of society as a whole can be known and weighed, it is not enough to know some groups' values but not others. There must be a common understanding of societal values. Rational policymaking also requires information about alternative policies and the capacity to accurately predict the consequences of each alternative. Rationality requires the intelligence to calculate correctly the ratio of costs to benefits for each policy alternative. This means calculating all present and future benefits and costs to both the target groups (those for whom the policy is intended) and nontarget groups. Finally, rationalism requires a policymaking system that facilitates rationality in policy formation and implementation.

## The Limits of Rationality

The type of *comprehensive rationality* just described not only fails to occur in the political environment, it may actually not be rational. Herbert A. Simon, a Nobel Prize winner for his studies of the decision-making process in large organizations, noted this apparent contradiction many years ago. It is so costly and time-consuming to learn about *all* the policy alternatives available to decision makers, to investigate *all* the possible consequences of each alternative, and to calculate the cost-benefit ratio of *every* alternative, that the improvement in the policy selected is not worth the extra effort required to make a comprehensive rational selection. Simon's theory of *bounded rationality* recognizes the practical limits to complete rationality:

It is impossible for the behavior of a single, isolated individual to reach any high degree of rationality. The number of alternatives . . . [to] explore is so great, the information . . . to evaluate them so vast that even an approximation to objective rationality is hard to conceive.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to completely rational decision-making, Simon's notion of bounded rationality means that policymakers consider a limited number of alternatives, estimate their consequences using the best available means, and select the alternative that appears to achieve the most important values without incurring unacceptable costs. Instead of maximizing the ratio of benefits to costs, policymakers search for a "satisfying" choice—an alternative that is good enough to produce the desired benefits at a reasonable cost. Policymakers do not try to create the best of all possible worlds; rather they seek to get by, to come out all right, to avoid trouble, to compromise.



Rationalism presents an ideal model of policymaking—in social welfare and in other policy fields—even though policymaking in “the real world” is not usually a rational process. Policymaking occurs in a political context that places severe limits on rationality, especially in an increasingly partisan political environment. Anyone who has witnessed the various rounds in the country’s debate over health insurance or gun control knows this is true.

## social Welfare Policy: a Political approach

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Social welfare policy is political because it arises out of conflict over the nature of the problems confronting society and what actions, if any, governments should take to address them. The word *politics* itself is almost synonymous with the word *conflict*.

Political scientist Harold Lasswell described politics as “who gets what, when, and how.”<sup>8</sup> Politics is an activity through which people try to get more of whatever there is to get—money, jobs, prestige, prosperity, respect, and power itself. “Politics . . . consists of the activities—for example, reasonable discussion, impassioned oratory, balloting, and street fighting—by which conflict is carried on.”<sup>9</sup> Conflict over the allocation of values in society is central to politics and policymaking. In the United States this conflict more often takes the form of balloting and debate than violence.

Why do we expect conflict in society over who gets what? Why can’t we agree on “a theory of justice” according to which everyone would agree on what is fair for all members of society, particularly those who are most vulnerable to social problems?<sup>10</sup> Why can’t we have a harmonious, loving, caring, sharing society of equals? Philosophers have pondered these questions for centuries. James Madison, perhaps the first American to write seriously about politics, believed that the causes of “faction” (conflict) are found in human diversity—“a zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points . . . [and] an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for preeminence and power.” More importantly, according to Madison, “the most common and durable source of faction has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society.”<sup>11</sup> In short, class differences among people, particularly in the sources and amount of their wealth, are the root cause of social conflict.

A critical task of government is to regulate conflict. It does so by (1) establishing and enforcing general rules by which conflict is carried on, (2) arranging compromises and balancing interests in public policy, and (3) imposing settlements that the parties to a dispute must accept. Governments arrange settlements in the form of public policies that allocate values in such a way that both “winners” and “losers” will accept them, at least temporarily. Governments impose these settlements by enforcing public policy through the promise of rewards or threat of punishment.

From a political perspective, public policy is the outcome of conflicts in government over who gets what, and when and how they get it. A policy may be considered “politically rational” when it succeeds in winning enough support to be enacted into law, implemented by executive agencies, and enforced by the courts. Or it may be considered politically rational if it is supported by influential groups and believed to be popular among the voters. But this certainly differs from the type of rationality described in the rational model.

The political approach raises serious questions about rationality in policymaking. It suggests that:

- 1. Few social values are generally agreed on; more often there are only the values of specific groups and individuals, many of which are conflicting.** For example, even if there is agreement that all Americans should have health insurance, deciding the role of the public and private sectors in accomplishing this goal is a major public policy issue that has defied a rational solution. On many issues, there is virtually no fundamental agreement on the value to be achieved. For example, it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which antiabortion and pro-choice forces will ever agree on the issue of access to abortion. Moreover, it seems that policymakers are increasingly coming to the table with such strongly held philosophical positions or partisan loyalties that there is less and less room for compromise, or that those with more extreme views pressure policymakers into taking these positions for fear of losing votes.
- 2. Problems cannot be defined, because people do not agree on what the problems are. And what is a problem to one group may be a benefit to another group.** Consider discussions of what causes poverty. Explanations range from the willful behavior of those who prefer not to work, to discrimination and structural barriers to participation in gainful, economic activity. Remedies include low public assistance payments that provide a very meager standard of living for those who are poor, but save taxpayers' money, at least in the short run. Meager welfare payments may also force unemployed people to accept low-wage jobs benefitting industries that rely on this cheap labor pool. Or consider that saving the spotted owl is viewed as a great benefit to some environmentalists but represents a serious cost to those who rely on the logging industry for a living.
- 3. Many conflicting costs and values cannot be compared or weighed.** For example, how can we compare the value of individual dignity with the cost of a general tax increase? Policymakers at all levels—local, state, and federal—face these challenges every day. A city or county government may choose to fund a residential program for people with developmental disabilities rather than a drug detoxification program. Perhaps they view people with developmental disabilities as a more deserving clientele; perhaps they believe that program will be better administered. But they do not really know whether their choice will achieve greater social values. In fact, local governments may appoint citizen advisory groups to recommend allocations of human service funding, because it takes the political pressure off elected officials in trying to distinguish one seemingly good cause from another.
- 4. Policymakers, even with most advanced analytic techniques, cannot accurately forecast or predict the consequences of various policy alternatives or calculate their cost-benefit ratios when many diverse social, economic, and political values are involved.** Perhaps the best example of this concerns difficulties in economic forecasting. We may try to predict the effects of a general tax cut or an economic stimulus payment on consumer buying power, but other economic forces that cannot be foreseen well in advance—downturns in particular sectors of the economy (auto, steel, high tech) or a rise in fuel costs—may

offset any beneficial effects on the country's overall economic well-being. Many other events happen over which we have no control, such as earthquakes in California, tornadoes in the Midwest, or hurricanes on the Gulf Coast. Even though federal, state, and local governments try to respond rationally to these natural disasters, they may divert funds and attention from other activities already in place. Finally, there is fallout from events that perhaps could be predicted, but were ignored—events leading to city riots during the civil rights unrest of the 1960s and the subprime mortgage debacle and stock market failures that shook the U.S. economy in 2008.

5. **The environment of policymakers, particularly the political system of power and influence, makes it virtually impossible to discern all social values, particularly those that do not have active or powerful proponents in or near government.** Those who are homeless, ill, or lack sophisticated communication skills may have little access to governmental representation, even though their needs may be great. Children in the United States face high rates of poverty, abuse, and neglect, yet they have no direct voice in the political arena. Cynicism has grown that without substantial financial resources it is difficult to influence public policy.
6. **Policymakers are not necessarily motivated to make decisions on the basis of social values. Instead they often seek to maximize their own rewards—power, status, reelection, money, and so on.** Policymakers have their own needs, ambitions, and inadequacies, all of which can prevent them from performing in a highly rational manner. For instance, although the federal debt may place a severe strain on the country, Congress members often do little about it, because any tax increase or budget cut may mean lost votes for some senator or representative anxious for reelection. For the same reason, elected officials often tread lightly on issues that may raise the ire of constituents even if their own views differ from those of their constituents.
7. **Large, segmented government bureaucracies create barriers to coordinated policymaking.** It is difficult to bring all the interested individuals, groups, and experts together at the point of decision. Governmental decision-making is so disjointed that it is a wonder how any legislation gets passed and any programs get implemented. Anyone who remembers the diagrams of “How a Bill Becomes a Law” from middle school civics classes knows that the maze of readings and calendars works to prevent most proposals from ever being seriously considered. Even when proposed legislation is considered, lawmakers use many tactics to pass or to defeat it, from filibusters to riders attached to unrelated bills. Generally, both the 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the 100 members of the U.S. Senate must consider a bill and both chambers must pass an identical version of the bill for it to become law. With the two major political parties vying for their philosophies to prevail and with these 535 Congress members representing constituencies that have many diverse interests, the process is daunting. Only a tiny fraction of legislation that is introduced to Congress and state legislatures ever makes it through the gauntlet (see the Illustration I.1 “Tips for the Legislative Process”). The process of implementing public policy once it is enacted is no less challenging.

### Illustration I.1 Tips for the Legislative Process

Very few of the bills introduced in any body become law. In the U.S. Congress as well as most states, only about 10 to 15 percent of the bills introduced become law. A classic study by Ron Dear and Rino Patti of the bills introduced over several years in the Washington state legislature yielded seven tactics that were likely to improve a bill's chances of success. The bills that made it out of committee and onto the floor tended to share the following characteristics.

#### Factors That Foster Success

**Early Introduction** If your state allows bills to be prefiled before the session formally begins, that's a good time to get your bill introduced. It means there will be more time to consider it, hold hearings on it, build for it, raise and answer questions about it.

**Multiple Sponsors** A bill that has several sponsors from the outset tends to look more like a winner. Bills with only one sponsor, by contrast, are sometimes assumed to be introduced just to please a constituent or do somebody a favor but not as a serious legislative proposal. Multiple sponsors increase credibility and also the number of advocates working for its success.

**Bipartisan Sponsorship** It is always essential to have sponsors from the party in the majority, but unless the legislature is overwhelmingly dominated by one party, it helps a bill's credibility and chances if its sponsors come from both parties. (On the national level, and anywhere that margins are close or party discipline is unreliable, bipartisan sponsorship is essential.)

**Support of Governor and Relevant Executive Agency** Since the executive branch will have to administer the resulting program (and in any case tends to have data, information, and expertise), legislators often are influenced by their support or opposition. If support is out of the question, the next best option is executive branch neutrality. The worst posture is outright opposition.

**Influential Sponsors** The job of getting a bill through hearings and out to the floor will be much easier if the chair or highest ranking minority members of the subcommittees and committees are sponsors of the bill. If they, or highly respected senior members of the body, become sponsors and use their influence on its behalf, that's half the battle.

**Open Hearings** Hearings are a good opportunity to make a public record, bring an issue before the public, get questions and points of opposition out in the open and dealt with, and to give the advocacy groups a rallying point.

**Amendments** Some advocates think their proposal has to be enacted exactly as they conceived it. That rarely happens. In fact, bills that are not amended tend to die. That's because everyone who amends a proposal has to be familiar with it and develops a bit of "ownership," a stake in its future if you will. Encourage amendments; they'll increase your bill's chances of success.

Ultimately, even these seven tactics are no guarantee of success. Bills are more likely to pass if they involve low costs, noncontroversial beneficiaries and purposes, and little significant change. Bills to create "National Tuna Week" or name a building have an easier time than bills to provide comprehensive health or human services to low-income families. Knowing the process won't ensure victory, but not knowing it makes it hard to even be a player.

Just keep reminding yourself: Laws will be passed with you or without you. The choice is yours.

Source: Nancy Amidei, *So You Want to Make a Difference: Advocacy Is the Key* (Washington, DC: OMB Watch, June 1991), pp. 19–20. Based on Ronald B. Dear and Rino J. Patti, "Legislative Advocacy: Seven Effective Tactics," *Social Work*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 1981, pp. 289–296. Copyright 1981, National Association of Social Workers, Inc. Pearson Education, Inc.

## Incrementalism

How can we bridge the differences between an ideal model of rational policymaking and the realization that policymaking is a political activity? Political scientist Charles E. Lindblom first presented an *incremental model* of policymaking as a critique of the rational model.<sup>12</sup> Lindblom observed that government policymakers do *not* annually review the entire range of existing and proposed policies, identify all of society's goals, or research