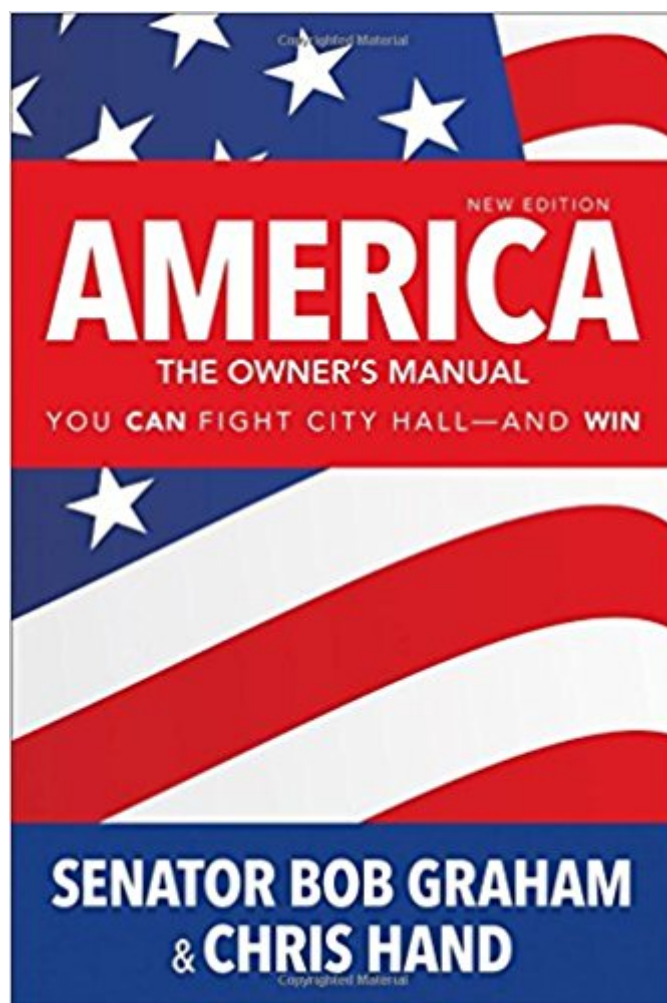


The book was found

America, The Owner's Manual: You Can Fight City Hall—and Win



Synopsis

In 2016, Americans fed up with the political process vented that frustration with their votes. Republicans nominated for president a wealthy businessman and former reality show host best known on the campaign trail for his sharp rhetoric against immigration and foreign trade. Democrats nearly selected a self-described socialist who ran on a populist platform against the influence of big money in politics. While it is not surprising that Americans would channel their frustrations into votes for contenders who pledge to end business as usual, the truth is that we don't have to pin our hopes for greater participation on any one candidate. All of us have a say if we learn, master and practice the skills of effective citizenship. One of the biggest roadblocks to participation in democracy is the perception that privileged citizens and special interests command the levers of power and that everyday Americans can't fight City Hall. That perception is undoubtedly why a 2015 Pew Charitable Trusts survey found that 74 percent of those Americans surveyed believed that most elected officials didn't care what people like them thought. Graham and Hand intend to change that conventional wisdom by showing citizens how to flex their citizenship muscles. They describe effective citizenship skills and provide tips from civic experts. Even more importantly, they offer numerous examples of everyday Americans who have used their skills to make democracy respond. The reader will see themselves in these examples of citizens who chose to be victorious participants rather than tranquil spectators in the arena of democracy. By the end of the book, you will have new confidence that citizen participation is the lifeblood of America -- and will be ready to make governments work for you, not the other way around.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"America, the Owner's Manual is the only book that comprehensively explains how to be effective in American politics and civic life, and it does so brilliantly. It's consistently practical, realistic, accessible, and inspiring." -- Peter Levine "Senator Bob Graham and Chris Hand have produced an invaluable primer on how American citizens can be involved in politics and affect policy change." -- Russell J. Dalton "Senator Bob Graham and Chris Hand have provided a how-to manual complete with clear examples, simple rules of the political road and smart strategies for Americans ready to get off the couch and get results from their government." -- Rick Wilson "Combining expert advice with relevant and timely examples, America, the Owner's Manual is a straightforward and accessible 'how to' guide to working for change in any political system. " -- Annise Parker "In America, the Owner's Manual, Senator Bob Graham and Chris Hand honor the ideal of a government of, by, and for the people by preparing citizens with the skills they need to hold public officials accountable." -- Joe Lieberman "Bob Graham belongs to that now practically endangered breed of public servant that put country above politics. Sen. Graham and Chris Hand provide an important read to those of us who want to see citizens restore those governing values in American democracy." -- Ana Navarro "Bob Graham and Chris Hand's book, America, the Owner's Manual: You Can Fight City Hall-and Win, is an exciting, energizing and hope-giving guide to effective citizenship." -- Donna Brazile "Americans need to be reminded of the importance of their role in our democracy. We are the only ones who can change the direction of our country. America, the Owner's Manual provides just the roadmap to achieve those changes." -- Christine Todd Whitman "When it comes to the state of American democracy, are you a doer or a complainer? In America, The Owner's Manual, Bob Graham and Chris Hand don't just urge more Americans to be better citizens. They provide the instructions." -- Chuck Todd

Following 12 years of service in the Florida Legislature, Bob Graham was elected governor of Florida in 1978. During two successful terms as governor, Graham was nationally recognized for reforms in education, environmental protection, and economic diversification. Upon concluding his two terms as governor, Graham had an 83 percent approval rating from the people of Florida. Graham was elected to the United States Senate in 1986, serving three consecutive terms. As a member of the Senate Finance, Environment and Public Works, and Veterans Affairs Committees, he was a leader on health, trade, tax, water and infrastructure issues. One of Graham's most

important contributions came during his last Senate term, when he was named chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence. As Senator he cosponsored the bill to create the Director of National Intelligence position and co-chaired the Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001. In 2016, Graham received international attention for urging President Obama to declassify and make public 28 pages redacted from the final Joint Inquiry report. Graham also authored the 2004 book *Intelligence Matters* and the 2011 novel *Keys to the Kingdom*, both revealing serious faults in the U.S. national security system. Graham may be best known for his workdays. During the nearly 30 years that he campaigned for or served as Florida's Governor and U.S. Senator, Graham worked at more than 400 jobs alongside Floridians. His first workday was teaching citizenship at Carol City High School in Miami Gardens, Florida. Graham wrote of these experiences in his first book *Workdays: Finding Florida on the Job*. Since leaving the Senate in early 2005, Graham has led national commissions on weapons of mass destruction, the BP oil spill, and financing public higher educations. He spent the 2005-2006 academic year at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government as a senior fellow. Graham continues his work in environmental protection as chair of the Florida Conservation Coalition. The former Governor and U.S. Senator leads efforts to enhance citizen engagement and train the next generation of public leaders through the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida. Chris Hand is an attorney with a long record of public service. He previously served as speechwriter, press secretary, and campaign press secretary for Senator Graham and as campaign manager for Florida's former statewide elected chief financial officer, Alex Sink. In 2008, Hand served as one of 27 Florida electors in the United States Electoral College. In 2010, Graham and Hand authored the original version of this book, entitled *America, the Owner's Manual: Making Government Work for You*. From 2011 to 2015, Hand served as Chief of Staff at the consolidated City of Jacksonville, Florida-the largest city by area in the contiguous United States and the 12th largest by population in the entire nation-during the administration of Mayor Alvin Brown. As Chief of Staff, Hand managed the Mayor's Office team, with oversight for policy, advocacy, communications, outreach and scheduling. He also led the advancement of strategic initiatives, including efforts to achieve comprehensive pension reform for taxpayers and public safety employees. Those efforts culminated in the enactment of a landmark agreement in 2015. Hand graduated with honors from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and the Fredric G. Levin College of Law at the University of Florida. At Princeton, Chris was honored with the Daily Princetonian Award for his successful efforts to reform the university's then centuryold Honor Code. At the University of Florida, the law school student body elected Hand as president of

the student bar association. He also served as a research assistant to former Florida Governor and U.S. Representative Buddy MacKay.

As a former local elected official and someone that knows Bob Graham I was intrigued by the title. It is well written with great examples of how to take on issues and win. For me it is a bit basic but it's always good to remind yourself of what works and how to implement it. I'm planning to recommend it to several friends who are political novices. They will love it.

This is a vital document of understanding how to make our system work as it is intended to. A must for any activist/advocate.

Practical ideas on participating in a democracy, lots of examples. I gave it to my new-voter grandson.

Great resource from a great statesman.

Interesting book. Very good.

I am very impressed by the amount of detail in this book and the way the book is structured, making it possible for someone with little experience to face a task that may be daunting and overwhelming. I appreciate the many anecdotes that illustrate each point made; the ten main skills, with a chapter devoted to each; the little "Tips from the Pros" sidebar, the wealth of information on so many related topics and above all, the encouraging tone throughout. Readers are encouraged to learn by doing, rather than just read through the book. Each chapter ends with a "checklist for action" to help us follow through. Reading this book has taught me so much, and I am emerging with a very different attitude about the world and each citizen's place in it. Highly recommended.

This book is a nice surprise. I honestly was expecting a partisan rant against the current administration. This is no such book. This is a well-written, well-organized book that deserves a thorough read-through. This is designed for the advocate who may feel intimidated by fighting City Hall all the way up to fighting Big Fat Government. What the authors Bob Graham (former governor and Senator from Florida) and Chris Hand (attorney and speech writer for Graham) want the reader to understand is that while congressional representatives are "there for you," to make your

argument work you must be organized, have researched your issue thoroughly, and offer a solution. This book is not intended for people who want to violently overtake the government. This is a book for anyone who is concerned about an issue (environment, immigration, education, medical, etc) and who wants its elected officials to do something about it. This also means that anyone wanting to fight city hall must also understand who those representatives are, what they stand for, and their voting record, where they were raised, what their professional training includes, etc. This requires a lot of long-term knowledge one only gets by following elected officials closely. Only this way will a person fighting city hall have any credibility and get any results. There are many highlighted "Tips from Pros" in the text, offering real examples of how advocates got things done. Many issues can be resolved at the lowest level, often through a representative's aide. Other times it requires a specific department or subdepartment. The authors also stress how important it is to allow elected officials to work out a problem (practice patience!) rather than going to the press or using social media, although there are times when those outlets are important, too. This is a good book not just for advocates of any kind, but for anyone concerned about their city, state or country and understanding better how it all works together.

Call me cynical, but anything penned by any politician is suspect. This book however is a fairly good handbook for citizen advocacy. It is well organized and understandable. It deals with everything from distilling the problem, dealing with decision makers, the press and the public, cultivating resources and backers and dealing with victory and defeat. It's fairly comprehensive and while it presents really nothing new it contains much between its covers. It has photographs and the typical feel good anecdotes. If your style is more Anonymous than MADD, pass. It doesn't push the limits. It is less about "fighting" city hall and more about working nicely with them. It is for people who play nice and work within the system. It is not an update on Rules for Radicals. That being said it is a decent primer and the portions on new media, funding and timelines are welcome.

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