

## Preface

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### Overview of the Book

With the elections of 2018 completed, it is time to shift the conversation from running for office to finding solutions to the problems facing Pennsylvania and the country. Governing and campaigning are two completely different facets of an elected official's political life. As the adage goes, politicians campaign in poetry but govern in prose. To help guide the policy conversations that need to take place, the content of *Pennsylvania Politics and Policy: A Commonwealth Reader*, volume 2, has been carefully created to address policy issues in a constructive, nonpartisan manner. The topics include pressing issues such as opioid addiction, the state's structural budget deficit, the effects of demographic change on Pennsylvania, and childcare policy. The book also addresses important topics related to how we have structured our democracy in Pennsylvania. Supreme Court elections, redistricting processes, and when we vote are all explored.

This volume includes a new opening chapter with an introduction to Pennsylvania government that provides context for the ensuing policy discussions. After that, each chapter is headlined by an article previously published in *Commonwealth: A Journal of Pennsylvania Politics and Policy*. A number of the articles have been updated to reflect policy changes through mid-2018. These are followed by additional content designed to help citizens and students more fully explore the topics raised in the articles. After each article is a series of discussion questions prepared to promote critical thinking about the policy issues raised by the authors. The questions are followed by a "Commonwealth Forum" providing pro-con perspectives on an issue related to the original article's topic. Finally, several sources of additional information are provided to continue the exploration of issues raised in the forums. Since Chapter 4 is itself a *Commonwealth* Forum, there is no

separate pro-con section. The additional content was researched and written by the editors of this volume, not the authors of the articles.

## Overview of the Journal

*Commonwealth* is a peer-reviewed, online journal that publishes original research on political and policy topics of importance to Pennsylvania and contiguous states. It provides political scientists and experts in related disciplines such as law, economics, history, and public policy with a periodical to advance scholarship in their fields. The journal is also intended to inform political actors and governmental policy makers about the political, structural, and historical contexts for decision making and options for improving public policy outcomes on a wide variety of topics. Issues cover general-interest pieces, applied research, practitioners' or expert analysis, research notes, essays, and book reviews.

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