Bounded Bureaucracy and the Budgetary Process in the United States

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Jay Eungha Ryu

Editorial Reviews

“Jay Eungha Ryu’s recent book exemplifies the steady accumulation of knowledge about punctuated change in policy processes. . . . Bounded Bureaucracy and the Budgetary Process in the United States provides insight into the impact that bureaucratized budgetary processes have on budgetary outcomes across three domains: federal executive budgeting, federal legislative budgeting, and state-level budgeting. . . . Ryu builds on a steadily growing literature on the structural determinants of budgetary punctuations and policy change.”
—Scott E. Robinson, Perspectives on Politics

“In this very useful book, Ryu succinctly summarizes and extends the research locating budget behavior firmly within a bounded rationality framework. But he does more: he places the study of budgets within the information-processing capacity of public bureaucracies. Budgets are not only implementing mechanisms for the political branches; they are also devices for acquiring and assimilating information on the problems facing government and the performance of agencies responsible for addressing these problems. Ryu goes on to analyze the conditions conducive to effective information-processing, particularly executive-centered budgeting at the state level. The book fills what has been a huge hole in the study of public decision-making.”

—Bryan D. Jones, J.J. “Jake” Pickle Regents Chair in Congressional Studies, University of Texas at Austin

“Ryu shows strong evidence that the best solution to too much bureaucracy is, ironically, a new agency at the central level. But the ability of bureaucracy to counter bureaucracy is subject to a threshold effect: too much centralized control is not effective. Thus, this fine book adds to a debate about the ills and merits of centralized control that has been at the core of debates about good government since the Progressive Era and the initial establishment of the Executive office of the Presidency and the Bureau of the Budget. . . . The book will be of equal interest to graduate students in public administration, scholars, and administrators and budgeters everywhere, and I strongly recommend it to all who seek a better understanding of how budgets are made.”

—Frank R. Baumgartner, Richard J. Richardson Distinguished Professor of Political Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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