



## INTRODUCTION

Compromise is difficult, but governing a democracy without compromise is impossible. Anyone who doubts either the difficulty or the necessity of compromise need only recall the heated politics of the summer of 2011 in Washington, D.C., when a sharply divided Congress confronted the need to raise the sovereign debt limit of the United States. Compromise appeared to be the only way to avoid further inflaming the financial crisis and risking an unprecedented governmental default on the debt. With the approach of the August 3 deadline (after which the government would no longer be able to pay all its bills), many observers doubted that any compromise could be reached in time.

The spirit of compromise was in short supply. Only at the last moment—on the evening of July 31—was President Barack Obama able to announce that leaders in both the House and the Senate had reached an agreement. Congress and the White House would now compromise. Yet criticism of the compromise abounded on all sides. The best that supporters could say for it was that its terms were less bad than the consequences of doing nothing. The episode stands as a dramatic

reminder that compromise is the hardest way to govern, except all the others.

Why is compromise so hard in a democracy when it is undoubtedly necessary? Much of the resistance to compromise lies in another necessary part of the democratic process: campaigning for political office. Though valuable in its place, campaigning is increasingly intruding into governing, where it is less helpful. The means of winning an office are subverting the ends of governing once in office. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that in the United States “every day is election day in the permanent campaign.”<sup>1</sup> The effects of a continuous campaign—along with the distorting influence of media and money that it brings—encourage a mindset among politicians that makes compromise more difficult. Systematic rejection of compromise is a problem for any democracy because it biases the political process in favor of the status quo and stands in the way of desirable change.

Privileging the status quo does not mean that nothing changes. It just means that politicians let other forces control the change. The status quo includes not only a current state of affairs but also the state that results from political inaction. In the deeply divided politics of 2011, rejecting congressional compromise on raising the debt ceiling would not have left the economy unchanged. A status quo bias in politics can result in stasis, but it can also produce unintended and undesirable change.

The resistance to democratic compromise is anchored in what we call an uncompromising mindset, a cluster of attitudes and arguments that encourage standing on principle and mistrusting opponents. This mindset is conducive to campaigning but inimical to governing. Resistance to democratic compromise can be kept in check by a contrary cluster of attitudes and arguments—a compromising mindset—which favors adapting one’s principles and respecting one’s opponents. It is the mindset more appropriate for governing because it enables politicians more readily to recognize opportunities for desirable compromise. When enough politicians adopt it, enough of the time, the spirit of compromise prevails.

Politicians have complained about the decline of the spirit of compromise, but they have not seen fit to restrain the clamor of campaigning. Political scientists have exposed the harmful consequences of misplaced campaigning, but they have not connected this problem with these mindsets and their implications for democratic compromise.<sup>2</sup> Understanding the mindsets can help show how the tension between campaigning and governing creates difficulties for compromise, and how a better balance between campaigning and governing supports possibilities for compromise.

The influence of campaigning is not necessarily greater than other factors that interfere with compromise. Compromises are difficult for many reasons, including increased political polarization and the

escalating influence of money in democratic politics. But the uncompromising mindset associated with campaigning deserves greater attention than it has received. First, it reinforces all the other factors. Even sharp ideological differences would present less of an obstacle to compromise in the absence of the continual pressures of campaigning that the uncompromising mindset supports. Second, for compromise to play its proper role in the process, politicians and citizens need to understand not only the partisan positions and political interests that influence compromise but also the attitudes and arguments that resist or support it. Third, unlike some of the other factors, such as ideological polarization, campaigning is an essential and desirable part of the democratic process. It becomes a problem only when it interferes with governing—another equally essential part of the process.<sup>3</sup>

In an era characterized by the permanent campaign, the balance in democratic governing needs to shift more toward the compromising mindset and the promotion of political compromises that it makes possible. Our defense of compromise in democratic governance is consistent with—indeed requires—a vigorous and often contentious politics in which citizens press strongly held principles and mobilize in support of boldly proclaimed causes. Social movements, political demonstrations, and activist organizations are among the significant sites of this kind of politics. The citizens who participate in these activities play important roles in democratic

politics. But their efforts would be in vain if the democratic process of governance did not produce public benefits that citizens seek, and protect rights that they cherish. The success of democratic politics ultimately depends on how our elected leaders govern—and therefore inevitably on their attitudes toward compromise.

## Two Compromises

To begin to diagnose resistance to democratic compromise, consider two pieces of historic legislation—the Tax Reform Act of 1986<sup>4</sup> and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.<sup>5</sup>

The Tax Reform Act was the most comprehensive tax-reform legislation in modern American history, achieved only after years of failed attempts.<sup>6</sup> The historic effort began without much fanfare. In his State of the Union address in 1984, President Ronald Reagan called merely for a study of the problem, with a report to be submitted after the election. Congressional Democrats did not think he was serious about reform. Walter Mondale, his challenger in the election, showed no interest in making tax reform an issue. Mondale was not eager to say more about it after the less-than-enthusiastic reaction to his comment about taxes in his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention: “Mr. Reagan will raise taxes, and so will I. He won’t tell you. I just did.”<sup>7</sup>

The hard work on the bill began quietly, with experts meeting secretly in the Treasury Department. The proposals that came out of Treasury were turned into a bipartisan compromise, forged with the support of President Reagan, Democratic House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski, and later with the help of Republican Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee Bob Packwood and Democratic Senator Bill Bradley.

All the supporters of the Tax Reform Act gained something they wanted, but they all also made concessions that flew in the face of their most principled reasons for supporting comprehensive tax reform in the first place. Democrats were glad to end loopholes for special interests and the wealthy, but they also had to agree to lower the top tax rate more than their strong commitment to progressive taxation would support (from 50 percent to 28 percent). Republicans won the lower marginal tax rates, but they also had to accept the elimination of some \$30 billion annually in tax deductions, which would result in the wealthy contributing a higher percentage of income tax revenues than they had in the past.

Compromises—even the most successful ones, like the Tax Reform Act—never satisfy pure principles. After the act was passed, its supporters rallied to its defense, hailing it as landmark legislation. It was—if compared to previous or subsequent tax reform. But judged by the moral principles invoked even by its staunchest

supporters—whether principles of progressive taxation and or those of the free market—the Tax Reform Act fell far short. A respected scholar of tax law compared the Tax Reform Act to a series of principled tax reform plans and found it lacking: “We are advised that this is the most sweeping legislation in fifty years, that it is a model of fairness and equity ... I am not at all convinced by the propaganda.”<sup>8</sup>

Now fast-forward to the efforts to pass a health-care reform bill in 2009–10.<sup>9</sup> Health care was an important issue in the campaigns leading up to both the Democratic primary and to the general election in 2008. Most of the presidential candidates set forth proposals that were more detailed than is usual in a campaign. Barack Obama came late to this debate, offering his health-care plan after other candidates had presented theirs.<sup>10</sup> But once in office, Obama made reform a priority. At first, he signaled that he was open to compromise on the details of his proposal and left the negotiations largely to congressional leaders. Relying on congressional leaders was essentially the same strategy that President Reagan had followed with tax reform. But the political landscape had changed since then. Throughout the 1990s, Republicans had begun more often to unite in the manner of a parliamentary minority, a strategy that drastically reduced the possibilities for bipartisanship.

When Congress was unable to reach bipartisan agreement on health-care reform by the August 2009 recess, the campaign in effect began again, with opponents

taking advantage of the break to mobilize opinion against the pending proposals—often distorting them in the process. The upshot was to end whatever small hope there might have been for bipartisan compromise. Reformers then turned to the task of compromise within the Democratic Party, a challenge that turned out to be almost as formidable.

The first bill passed with only a five-vote majority in the House in November 2009. The Senate passed its own bill on the day before Christmas. As the leaders in the House and Senate were trying to hammer out a compromise between the two significantly different bills early in 2010, a special election in Massachusetts erased the Senate Democrats' filibuster-proof majority and caused many moderate Democrats in both the Senate and the House to reconsider their support. The campaign mentality returned with a vengeance. The reform proposals had to be divided into separate bills, a rarely used legislative procedure (reconciliation) invoked to gain final passage, and the ultimate measures rendered less comprehensive than any of the original proposals.

Although the Affordable Care Act was not bipartisan, the process that produced it was just as much a compromise as was the Tax Reform Act. All those who voted for health-care reform gave up something that they thought valuable, and they agreed to disagree about greater cost controls, the nature of the mandate for universal coverage, insurance coverage for abortion services, abortion funding, and the inclusion (or exclusion) of a public



option (a government-run insurance agency that would compete with other companies). Although all who supported this compromise evidently believed the legislation would be better than the status quo, they also believed that the compromise bill could have been still better if only their opponents had been less obstinate.

These two historic efforts vividly underscore how difficult it is to achieve compromise on comprehensive reform on major issues in the U.S. political system. Although nearly everyone agreed that tax reform was long overdue and health care in dire need of change, political leaders struggled to reach these agreements, and the agreements fell far short of what reformers had sought. For the health-care reform bill to pass, it took an epic push by a president enjoying a majority in both houses and willing to stake the success of his first year in office on passing the bill. And the majority supporting this compromise was—with the exception of one lone vote among 220—exclusively within one party. Both efforts addressed major problems that had proved resistant to reform for many years, but only the Tax Reform Act was widely considered to be a significant improvement over the status quo. Many critics of the Affordable Care Act thought it was worse than doing nothing, and many supporters thought that it was better only than doing nothing.

Not even a crisis can ease the way of compromise. Although the consequence of failing to reach a compromise to raise the debt ceiling in 2011 was high risk of

governmental default and a further financial crisis, the process of reaching the compromise was also agonizingly difficult, and the agreement—unlike the tax and health-care reforms—provided only a short-term fix. Achieving compromise on any of the many complex issues on the democratic agenda is always a challenge, not only with those initiatives that deal with taxation, health care, and the debt but also with job creation, education, immigration, and the many other matters about which citizens and their representatives deeply disagree.

### **Characteristics of Compromise**

Before further exploring how the mindsets revealed in these episodes help or hinder compromise, we need to clarify the nature of compromise that is typically at stake in democratic politics.

In general, compromise is an agreement in which all sides sacrifice something in order to improve on the status quo from their perspective, and in which the sacrifices are at least partly determined by the other sides' will.<sup>11</sup> The sacrifice involves not merely getting less than you want, but also, thanks to your opponents, getting less than you think you deserve. The sacrifice typically involves trimming your principles.<sup>12</sup> We call these defining characteristics of compromise *mutual sacrifice* and *willful opposition*.

Although many kinds of compromise share these characteristics, legislative compromises—agreements that produce laws—do not always function in the same way as the kinds that are more commonly discussed, such as compromises to avert a war or create a peace in international politics or compromises to conclude deals in commercial transactions. Unlike major international compromises, legislative bargains are not negotiated with an ultimate threat of force in the background (though sometimes legislators speak of nuclear options and act as if electoral death is the end of the world). Unlike common commercial deals, the bargains struck by legislators are not primarily financial. Legislative compromises usually implicate principles as well as material interests.

The character of legislative compromise is shaped by its distinctive democratic and institutional context. It takes place in an ongoing institution in which the members have responsibilities to constituents and their political parties, maintain continuing relationships with one another, and deal concurrently with a wide range of issues that have multiple parts and long-range effects. The dynamics of negotiation in these circumstances differ from the patterns found in the two-agent, one-time interactions that are more common in most discussions of compromise.

Although some of the conclusions we reach concerning legislative compromise have implications for negotiation in other circumstances, especially in other

lawmaking institutions, we concentrate specifically on legislative compromise in the United States, especially the Congress. Conclusions about compromise—even more so than many other concepts in political theory and practice—depend heavily on context. To make progress in understanding legislative compromise, we need to focus on how it operates and the specific challenges it confronts in American democracy in our time. The U.S. Congress is a critical case in part because its performance in recent years has been so widely condemned as dysfunctional. If we can find greater scope for compromise in this hard case, we might reasonably hope to find it in other political institutions.

Within the arena of legislative compromises, we need to distinguish between what may be called classic compromises and other consensual agreements. Classic compromises express an underlying and continuing conflict of values: the disagreements among the parties are embodied in the compromise itself. Other consensual compromises are based on an underlying convergence of values or what is often called “common ground.” These agreements set aside the original disagreement and conclude in a complete consensus.<sup>13</sup>

Consensus on common ground is a lofty goal, and politicians never tire of claiming that they are seeking it. During the Republican primary in 2011, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney declared: “Leaders [are successful] not by attacking their opposition but by finding common ground where principles are shared.”<sup>14</sup>

Some advocates of consensus see it as a way to promote the value of community. Still others believe that it is more likely to produce the best laws and policies. All in effect urge politicians to base legislation on common ground shared not only between ideologically opposed parties but also among most citizens who do not have highly developed political ideologies. All citizens want a better life for themselves and their children; all want security, decent health care, a good education, and the like. The hope seems to be that a consensus would form on this common ground.

Few doubt that consensus is desirable if it can be found, and most agree that it is usually preferable to the standard form of compromise, which leaves all parties dissatisfied. But the common ground is more barren, and the possibilities for basing legislation on it more limited, than the inspiring rhetoric in its favor might suggest. Yes, a consensus existed among legislators and citizens that the tax system needed to be revised and that the health-care system needed to be reformed. Everyone agreed that the tax system should be made fairer and that health care should be made affordable for more people. But this general consensus on the need for reform did not translate into a common-ground agreement on the particular provisions of either a tax or a health-care reform bill. To produce reform legislation, specific terms had to be negotiated, and as is usual at this level, the common ground became fractured terrain.

In the context of a polarized politics, an additional problem with counting on common-ground agreements is that trying to find the usually small points of convergence in the middle is likely to prove less effective than combining big ideas from the partisans. Describing how they managed to gather a majority on their politically diverse commission on fiscal responsibility, co-chairs Alan Simpson and Erskine Bowles emphasize the value of “shared sacrifice” that comes from “bold and big” compromises. “The more comprehensive we made [our proposal], the easier our job became. The tougher our proposal, the more people came aboard. Commission members were willing to take on their sacred cows and fight special interests—but only if they saw others doing the same and if what they were voting for solved the country’s problems.”<sup>15</sup>

Classic compromises are sometimes also distinguished from what are called “integrative agreements,” also known as “problem-solving,” “value-creating,” or “win-win” solutions.<sup>16</sup> Long the favorite of many writers on negotiation, they offer the prospect of an agreement in which both sides gain over the status quo, and neither side sacrifices. (The lack of sacrifice is why it does not count as a classic compromise.) The much-cited example, devised by Mary Parker Follett, the pioneering scholar in this field, features two sisters who both want the same orange.<sup>17</sup> The classic compromise solution is simply to split the orange. But it turns out that one sister wants only the juice and would throw

out the peel. The other sister wants only the peel for a cake, and would discard the pulp. If they recognize that they have different interests in the orange, they could reach an integrative solution: one would take all of the pulp, the other all of the peel. Both would gain, and neither would sacrifice anything. The tactics that negotiation experts propose for reaching integrative agreements include expanding the pie, logrolling, creating symbolic compensation, and discovering new options.

Like the consensus agreements they resemble, the opportunities for achieving integrative agreements are scarcer in legislative politics than some of their enthusiasts imply.<sup>18</sup> Most of the examples of successful integrative agreements involve individuals or groups trying to resolve specific financial disputes rather than the kind usually faced in the ongoing negotiations that take place in legislatures. When legislators seek integrative solutions, they often use tactics of logrolling or expanding the pie. Logrolling typically requires the government to spend more money in order to satisfy the legislators' favored causes. Special interests then prevail over the public interest. By expanding the budgetary pie, older generations typically load more debt onto younger or future generations.

Health-care reform shared a feature of this problem. It expanded the budgetary pie by universalizing health insurance, but it fell short of coming to clear and certain terms with the rapidly rising costs of health care. For many supporters as well as critics of the reform,

expanding the budgetary pie without fully facing up to escalating health-care costs is part of the ongoing problem, as these costs rapidly continue to rise. Only a classic compromise, which would include measures that more fully control costs and entail some sacrifice on all sides, could begin to deal with this problem.

While integrative approaches can be productive, legislative opportunities to achieve win-win solutions that serve the public without any sacrifice are rarely available. Legislators are much more likely to find themselves confronting conflicts that cannot be resolved without sacrifice on all sides. If they want to make gains over the status quo, they will have to give up something of value. They will not have the luxury of hoping for the pure win-win solutions that some negotiation theorists promise. They will just have to compromise.

Fortunately, the mindset and practices that encourage classic compromise are often the same as those that offer the best chance of finding common ground and integrative agreements. We can cheer on politicians when they search for common ground, but we should not let their failure to find it cast doubt on the value of the less exalted classic compromise.

## **Mindsets of Compromise**

The compromising mindset displays what we call principled prudence (adapting one's principles) and mutual



respect (valuing one's opponents). In contrast, the uncompromising mindset manifests principled tenacity (standing on principle) and mutual mistrust (suspecting opponents). Return now to the Tax Reform Act and Affordable Care Act, and notice how the defining characteristics of compromise—mutual sacrifice and willful opposition—map onto these mindsets.

To accomplish tax and health-care reform, both sides had to give up something of value. The need for mutual sacrifice makes compromises inherently difficult. Citizens and their representatives have different interests and values, and they naturally resist giving up something they care about, especially if they believe that one of their core principles is at stake. Supporters of the Tax Reform Act and Affordable Care Act believed that the compromises would improve the status quo, but at first they clung tenaciously to their principles. The compromise came about only because the principled positions that reformers espoused—a simple and transparent tax code or universal health-care coverage, for example—did not survive intact in the tangled process that produced the final legislation.

To achieve these compromises, the mistrust so easily generated by willful opposition also had to be partially suspended. Enough of the legislators respected their opponents enough to make the necessary concessions. But in both cases, the uncompromising mindset that fosters mistrust of one's opponents hung over the process and its aftermath. Supporters as well as opponents

of both reforms continued to believe that the legislation could have been better if the other side had been less inflexible. Even in the case of the Tax Reform Act, resistance was relentless, and discontent rife. The opponents, under the influence of the uncompromising mindset, nearly prevailed. The supporters, only fitfully taking up the compromising mindset, nearly yielded.

Health-care reform fared worse. Both the process and the outcome were more widely and severely criticized than any aspect of tax reform. The suspicion and mistrust characteristic of the uncompromising mindset lingered among Democrats themselves. The progressive wing faulted their leaders and the president for betraying campaign promises. Moderate Democrats complained that their colleagues did not appreciate how public opinion had shifted against the reform, and how vulnerable they would now be in the 2010 midterm elections.

Political polarization is no doubt an important part of the story of why compromise is so difficult. It exacerbated the willful opposition that beset both tax reform and health-care reform. The lower degree of party polarization in the 1980s may also partly explain why bipartisan compromise was possible in the case of the Tax Reform Act but not the Affordable Care Act. But partisan polarization does not shed much light on why compromise on health-care reform within the Democratic Party was at least as difficult as compromise on tax reform between the two parties. Nor is it sufficient

to account for the widespread assumption that compromise on health-care reform could have been more successful if Senators Orrin Hatch and Ted Kennedy had been able to collaborate as they had many times in the past.<sup>19</sup> Polarized profiles do not necessarily prevent political opponents from reaching agreement. Even when the ideological positions of political opponents are polarized, compromising mindsets can make a difference.

Political scientists disagree about the source of polarization in the United States. Is it only elites who have become more polarized, or also the electorate, and, if both, to what extent are elites the cause?<sup>20</sup> Identifying more precisely the source of polarization could help in targeting reforms to reduce the obstacles to compromise. (We consider a range of reforms in chapter 5.) But the value of our analysis does not depend on resolving the disagreement about whether the public, elites, or both are the ongoing source of polarization. Whatever the source, a compromising mindset can go a long way toward mitigating the negative effects of polarization on the dispositions toward compromise of both political leaders and voters, and an uncompromising mindset can exacerbate those effects. The characteristics of these mindsets and their connection to campaigning and governing apply to both political leaders and voters.

Some observers are so impressed by the influence of polarization that they give up any hope of compromise and see partisan domination as the only alternative.

They begin by describing increased polarization among not only political elites but also engaged partisans, who spend most of their lives with like-minded peers. The uncompromising views of these engaged partisans, coupled with the “disappearing center” in American politics, create strong incentives against compromise: “any serious attempts at compromise by party leaders would almost certainly produce a backlash among their most politically active and informed supporters.”<sup>21</sup> These doubters of compromise conclude that “successful efforts at bipartisan cooperation and compromise are unlikely. That leaves partisan dominance as the only viable means of overcoming gridlock in Washington.”<sup>22</sup>

Strong partisans may still chase the tantalizing dream that the next election will settle the matter, once and for all. My party will gain control and push through its agenda, undiluted. Yet in contemporary American politics it is unlikely that one party will regularly gain complete control at the national level (securing the presidency, the House, and the reliable sixty votes needed to overcome a filibuster in the Senate). And if one party were to gain control, it would still face the daunting task of making compromises within its own ranks. Neither can we look for a single, strong leader to come to the rescue—the president, as some have urged. No president can prevail as long as Congress remains recalcitrant.

There is no escape from compromise. Politicians are likely to continue to work in a strongly divided

partisan environment, and they need to find ways to reach agreements if they expect to govern well. Looking more carefully at differences between the Tax Reform Act and the Affordable Care Act can help clarify what makes compromise more or less possible in polarized partisan contexts.

Among the many differences between the processes that led to these compromises on tax reform and health-care reform, one stands out as the most relevant to understanding the mindsets that prevailed. Tax reform was not an issue in the campaigns before or after the compromise. Health-care reform was an issue in the 2008 and 2010 elections, and no doubt will be an issue in campaigns to come. Partly as a result, the process that led to the Tax Reform Act was more responsive to the compromising mindset, and the process that produced the Affordable Care Act was more susceptible to the uncompromising mindset. The uncompromising mindset inherent in campaigns gained less traction during the tax reform negotiations and therefore had less influence in the legislative process later. Furthermore, the permanent campaign that reinforces that mindset has been more conspicuous in recent years than it was in the mid-1980s when the Tax Reform Act was negotiated.

Campaigning in an uncompromising style—making unconditional promises and discrediting rivals—plays a moral as well as a practical role in democratic politics. It enables candidates to communicate where they

passionately stand on important issues and to differentiate themselves from their opponents. It is a necessary element of an electoral system with competitive elections and is therefore a legitimate part of the democratic process. But so is governing. To govern, elected leaders who want to get anything done have to adopt a compromising mindset. Rather than standing tenaciously on principle, they have to make concessions. Rather than mistrusting and trying to defeat their opponents at every turn, they have to respect their opponents enough to collaborate on legislation.

Here is the internal tension in political compromise: the democratic process requires politicians both to resist compromise and to embrace it. The uncompromising mindset that characterizes campaigning cannot and should not be eliminated from democratic politics. But when it comes to dominate governing, it obstructs the search for desirable compromises. The uncompromising mindset is like an invasive species that spreads beyond its natural habitat as it roams from the campaign to the government.

The democratic process itself in this way gives rise to the problem of compromise. Some theorists have emphasized that the democratic process requires compromise, and some have also found constraints on compromise in the process itself.<sup>23</sup> Others have argued that negative attitudes toward compromise are “rooted in the nature of political life.”<sup>24</sup> We go further and show that the democratic process itself creates obstacles

to compromise by means of the tension between the mindsets manifested in governing and campaigning. We examine how the domination of campaigning over governing feeds the uncompromising mindset, making legislative compromise even more difficult than it needs to be.

We do not try to provide a causal explanation for the Tax Reform Act, Affordable Care Act, or other compromises. The causes are multiple, and the outcomes usually overdetermined. We focus here on the role of the mindsets in the process of political compromise. Appreciating the attitudes and arguments that make up the mindsets—and their connection to campaigning and governing—is an essential step in any effort to address the problem of compromise in democracy.

Many observers blame Republicans for the uncompromising spirit that pervades current American politics, pointing out that they have become more extreme and intransigent in recent years. But it would be a mistake to dwell on who is most to blame at the moment. The uncompromising pressures are persistent in a democratic process in which campaigning dominates governing. If it so happens that one party is more responsible for the polarization at a particular time, this should not distract us from the broader problem that needs to be addressed to make room for responsible governing.

The problem of compromise in American democracy has always been challenging. It becomes harder still with the rise of the permanent campaign. The

relentless pressures of campaigning—which call for an uncompromising mindset—are overtaking the demands of governing—which depend on a compromising mindset. Because legislating in the public interest is all but impossible without compromise, the domination of campaigning over governing has become a critical problem for American democracy, and increasingly for other democracies. By recognizing the pressures of the permanent campaign and the dynamics of the mindsets in play in democratic politics, politicians, the media, and, above all, the voting public would be more likely to find ways to address this problem.

In the pages that follow, we first show why compromise matters—its value and its limits (chapter 1). Next we analyze the uncompromising mindset (chapter 2) and the compromising mindset (chapter 3), and in each case explore their links to campaigning and governing. Then (in chapter 4), we explain how the democratic process—with its dual demands of campaigning and governing—depends on both kinds of mindsets. Finally (in chapter 5), we consider some reforms that could create a better balance between campaigning and governing, as well as the mindsets that typify them. That balance is essential to making more space for desirable compromises in the democratic process. When the spirit of compromise fades, the spirit of the laws suffers.