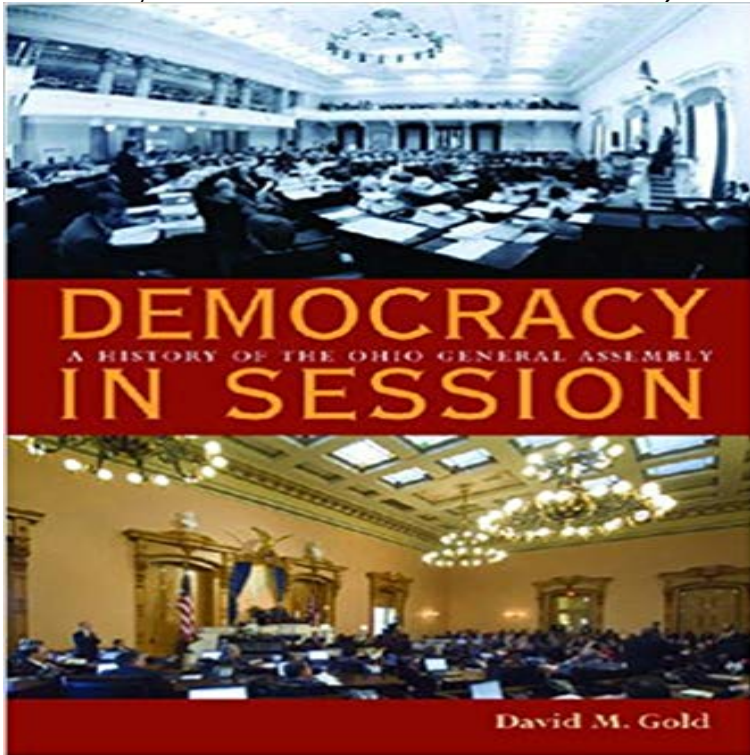


# Democracy in Session: A History of the Ohio General Assembly (Law Society & Politics in the Midwest)



For more than 200 years no institution has been more important to the development of the American democratic polity than the state legislature, yet no political institution has been so neglected by historians. Although more lawmaking takes place in the state capitals than in Washington D.C., scholars have lavished their attention on Congress, producing only a handful of histories of state legislatures. Most of those histories have focused on discrete legislative acts rather than on legislative process, and all have slighted key aspects of the legislative environment: the parliamentary rules of play, the employees who make the game possible, the physical setting the arena in which the people's representatives engage in conflict and compromise to create public policy. This book relates in fascinating detail the history of the Ohio General Assembly from its eighteenth-century origins in the Northwest Territory to its twenty-first-century incarnation as a full-time professional legislature. *Democracy in Session* explains the constitutional context within which the General Assembly functions, examines the evolution of legislative committees, and explores the impact of technology on political contests and legislative procedure. It sheds new light on the operations of the House and Senate clerks offices and on such legislative rituals as seat selection, opening prayers, and the Pledge of Allegiance. Partisan issues and public policy receive their due, but so do ethics and decorum, the election of African American and female legislators, the statehouse, and the social life of the members. *Democracy in Session* is, in short, the most comprehensive history of a state legislature written to date and an important contribution to the story of American democracy.

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