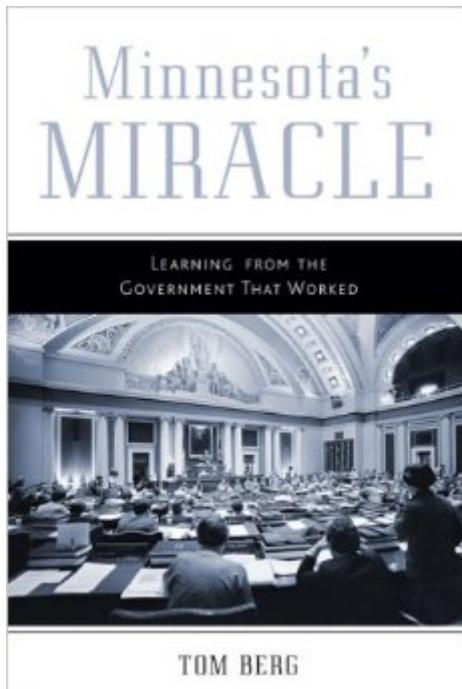


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Minnesota's Miracle: Learning From The Government That Worked



Synopsis

Social upheaval, political gridlock, and controversies over taxes, the environment, and an unpopular war: the state of Minnesota in 1968 was a lot like the state of America today. Tom Berg, a lawmaker in Minnesota during the 1970s, was a witness "and a party" to the deal cutting, arm-twisting, and just plain hard work that led to historic political shifts. His account of the making of legislative history at the state level and relationships with federal and local governments has much to tell us about where we stand as a nation and how change happens. A firsthand look into the political and personal mysteries and realities that make real and significant differences in people's lives, Minnesota's Miracle is a civics lesson and legislative primer with a rare kick-it's as rollicking as it is relevant. Berg tells the stories behind changes made in legislative policies and programs during a critical decade, describing the key players, their emotions, the politics they employed, their electoral wins and losses, the impact of national politics when Walter Mondale was elected vice president, and the role of important court decisions. It was a time of partisanship, high emotions, violent protests, heated controversy, and outright political fights over issues that continue to haunt us; but it was also a time when government functioned well, in what Time Magazine called "A State That Works." Berg's behind-the-scenes view of the "Minnesota Miracle" is a work of living history that offers suggestions and as much hope as it does hard truths and cold facts.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Politics tries to keep love in its place, in its own time and space, like in a song by Pat Benatar from a

big hit album, Crimes of Passion. Tom Berg was in the legislature of the state of Minnesota a few years before the big changes that made Walter Mondale Vice President with Jimmy Carter in the election of 1976. I was living in Minnesota then and remember the confusion of 1978 when the liberal Congressman Don Fraser tried to become one of Minnesota's US Senators and was blocked in the primary election by Bob Short, who only received 34 percent of the votes in November, when the issues that made the NRA powerful in the primary had already been taken care of. Jimmy Carter would have liked more enthusiasm, but the years before the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 combined stagnation with the highest level of inflation in my lifetime. Minnesota has an income tax. At one point the House of Representatives pushed some more progressive taxation by creating some higher brackets. Democrats were earning a reputation about taxing the rich which makes Tom Berg sorry that for more than the next twenty years, the process of society being wiped out by the wealthy could call Minnesota a state the millionaires should want to leave because of high tax rates or establish an official residence in Alaska or Florida to avoid state income taxes. State income taxes were not indexed to keep workers from being pushed into higher brackets by inflation, but workers who make less money than they could get in taxfree welfare benefits had a zero rate in one of the tax reforms mentioned in Minnesota's Miracle (2012) by Tom Berg.

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