Governing the States and the Nation: The Intergovernmental Policy Influence of the National Governors Association
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Description

The modern governor holds one of the most powerful and influential offices in the American political system. In their role, governors have the opportunity to guide policy within their home states, but also have the opportunity to shape policy outside their home states, for example, by developing successful policies that are mimicked by other states. Furthermore, in recent decades, developments in intergovernmental relations have afforded governors an opportunity to shape federal policy as states have become responsible for the administration of various federal policies. Governors have responded to this situation by actively pursuing policies at the federal level that are most beneficial to the states.

Even though this is the situation, current empirical work on the American governorship has generally failed to consider the importance of the governors’ role in helping shape federal policy. For the most part, the work on the governorship has been limited to studying such concepts as the formal and informal powers of governors as they work within the boundaries of their home states but has mostly ignored the intergovernmental role of the modern governorship. As a result, the researchers’ ability to fully understand the breadth of the office has been limited.

This book strives to address this gap in the research literature by focusing on the intergovernmental role of the nation’s governors. This is done by examining the lobbying efforts of the governors through their national organization, the National Governors Association (NGA). The NGA has been a prominent representative of state interests for a number of decades, and the increasingly complex relationships between the states and the federal government—and the governors’ role as manager of those relationships—have ensured that the governors and the NGA remain at the center of many critical national policy debates. Furthermore, the NGA serves as the primary organizing body of the governors, and the organization allows the state executives to effectively exert their influence over important policy decisions at the federal level. For these reasons, the NGA is a most appropriate organization for the study of governors as they work to influence federal policy.

Taking a mixed method approach, this study highlights the factors that affect the ability of governors to shape national policy decisions and
examines the results in the context of contemporary literature on the governorship, intergovernmental relations, and federalism. This book is therefore ideal for all who are interested in U.S. governorship, intergovernmental relations, and federalism generally.