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Edited by Bradley C. S. Watson
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Progressive Challenges to the American Constitution
A New Republic

In this volume, Bradley C. S. Watson brings together the leading scholars who have sparked one of the most important intellectual and political movements of our times: the criticism of the progressive intellectual synthesis that has dominated American thought and politics over much of the last century, and has provided the intellectual framework in which the administrative state has expanded and flourished. The contributors address the most important questions raised by this movement: what is the meaning of progressivism? What is the nature of the Founders' Constitution and the progressive challenges to it? What is the significance of recent scholarship and public opinion that have arisen in opposition to the progressive vision? What are the implications of American progressivism for 21st century politics and policy? *Progressive Challenges to the American Constitution* addresses the growing doubt about the scope and sustainability of expanded government power.

BRADLEY C. S. WATSON is Professor of Politics at Saint Vincent College in Pennsylvania, where he holds the Philip M. McKenna Chair in American and Western Political Thought. Watson has contributed to various journals and authored or edited many books, including *Living Constitution*, *Civic Education and Culture*, *The Idea of the American University*, and *The West at War*.

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For all those who study and endure the age of progress

Theirs was the task (and nobly they performed it) to possess themselves, and through themselves, us, of this goodly land; and to uprear upon its hills and its valleys, a political edifice of liberty and equal rights; 'tis ours only, to transmit these, the former, unprofaned by the foot of an invader; the latter, undecayed by the lapse of time and untorn by usurpation, to the latest generation that fate shall permit the world to know. This task of gratitude to our fathers, justice to ourselves, duty to posterity, and love for our species in general, all imperatively require us faithfully to perform.
—Abraham Lincoln

Our country – this great Republic – means nothing unless it means the triumph of a real democracy, the triumph of popular government, and, in the long run, of an economic system under which each man shall be guaranteed the opportunity to show the best that there is in him. That is why the history of America is now the central feature of the history of the world; for the world has set its face hopefully toward our democracy; and, O my fellow citizens, each one of you carries on your shoulders not only the burden of doing well for the sake of your own country, but the burden of doing well and of seeing that this nation does well for the sake of mankind.

—Theodore Roosevelt

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Contributors

James W. Ceaser is a professor of politics at the University of Virginia, where he has taught since 1976, and is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. He is the author of several books on American politics and political thought, including *Presidential Selection*, *Liberal Democracy and Political Science*, *Reconstructing America*, *Nature and History in American Political Development*, and *Designing a Polity*.

Eric R. Claeys is a professor of law at the Antonin Scalia Law School, George Mason University. He is a fellow at the James Madison Center for American Ideals and Institutions, Princeton University, and he served as a law clerk to the Honorable William Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the United States. His research focuses on the influence of American natural law and natural rights principles on American property law and constitutional law.

Charles R. Kesler is the Dengler-Dykema Distinguished Professor of Government at Claremont McKenna College, editor of the *Claremont Review of Books*, and author of *I Am the Change: Barack Obama and the Crisis of Liberalism*.

John Marini is a professor of political science at the University of Nevada, Reno, and a senior fellow at the Claremont Institute. He is the author or editor of several books, including *The Politics of Budget Control: Congress, the Presidency, and the Growth of the Administrative State*; *The Imperial Congress: Crisis in the Separation of Powers*;

The Progressive Revolution in Politics and Political Science; and The Founders on Citizenship and Immigration.

Wilfred M. McClay holds the Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty at the University of Oklahoma and is the director of its Center for the History of Liberty. He was previously a professor of history at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, where he held the SunTrust Bank Chair of Excellence in Humanities.

Sidney M. Milkis is the White Burkett Miller Professor in the Department of Politics and Faculty Associate in the Miller Center at the University of Virginia. His books include *The President and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System Since the New Deal; Political Parties and Constitutional Government: Remaking American Democracy, Presidential Greatness*, coauthored with Marc Landy; *The American Presidency: Origins and Development, 1776–2011*, 6th edition, coauthored with Michael Nelson; *Theodore Roosevelt, the Progressive Party, and the Transformation of American Democracy*; and *The Politics of Major Policy Reform since the Second World War*, coedited with Jeffery Jenkins. He is currently working on a project that traces the relationship between presidents and social movements.

Johnathan O'Neill is a professor and the chair of the history department at Georgia Southern University. He is the author of *Originalism in American Law and Politics: A Constitutional History* and editor, with Joseph W. Postell, of *Toward an American Conservatism: Constitutional Conservatism During the Progressive Era*.

Ronald J. Pestritto is Dean of the Graduate School of Statesmanship at Hillsdale College, where he holds the Charles and Lucia Shipley Chair in the American Constitution. He serves as a senior fellow of the College's Kirby Center and is a senior fellow of the Claremont Institute. He is the author of *Woodrow Wilson and the Roots of Modern Liberalism*, the editor of *Woodrow Wilson: The Essential Political Writings*, and the co-editor of *American Progressivism: A Reader*.

William A. Schambra is Director of Hudson Institute's Bradley Center for Philanthropy and Civic Renewal. He served as a senior advisor and chief speechwriter for Attorney General Edwin Meese III. He has written extensively on the Constitution, the theory and practice of civic revitalization, and civil society for *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Times*, *Policy Review*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Nonprofit*

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Quarterly, Philanthropy, The Chronicle of Philanthropy, and Crisis, and has edited several books, including *As Far as Republican Principles Will Admit: Collected Essays of Martin Diamond*.

James R. Stoner Jr. is the Hermann Moyse Jr. Professor of Political Science and Director of the Eric Voegelin Institute at Louisiana State University. He is the author of *Common-Law Liberty: Rethinking American Constitutionalism* and *Common Law and Liberal Theory: Coke, Hobbes, and the Origins of American Constitutionalism*. He was a member of the National Council on the Humanities from 2002 to 2006 and in 2013 was Garwood Visiting Professor at Princeton University.

Jean M. Yarbrough is Gary M. Pender Sr. Professor of Social Sciences and Government at Bowdoin College. She is the author of *American Virtues: Thomas Jefferson on the Character of a Free People* and *Theodore Roosevelt and the American Political Tradition*, which won the Richard E. Neustadt Award in 2013.

Acknowledgments

This book was conceived as a means to bring together, in a single volume, the scholars who have sparked one of the most important movements within American political science, and indeed one of the most important intellectual movements in America. They have led the effort to reconsider the political thought of the progressives, including the profound importance of that thought for both the theory and practice of American politics. As editor, I am deeply indebted to these contributors, who have done so much to remind us of the importance of America's founding principles by elucidating the nature and consequences of the most potent assaults on them.

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The contributors assembled at my home institution, Saint Vincent College, in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, under the sponsorship of the Center for Political and Economic Thought, which is an interdisciplinary public affairs institute of Saint Vincent's Alex G. McKenna School of Business, Economics, and Government. The Center combines the resources of the college's politics and economics departments. It was founded in 1991 to sponsor research and educational programs in politics, economics, and culture. It seeks to advance a free and well-ordered society in the American and Western traditions.

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I undertook the final edits to this volume and attended to pre-publication miscellany while on sabbatical at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. I’m extremely grateful to Hoover for providing an ideal working environment.

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I also owe thanks to my wife, Barbara, and our children – Victoria, Charles, and James – who must endure the progressive age.

Bradley C. S. Watson
Latrobe, Pennsylvania and Stanford, California