

Presidential Leadership in Public Opinion

Causes and Consequences

Although presidents may have a difficult time actually leading the public and Congress, voters still desire strong leadership from their commander in chief. In *Presidential Leadership in Public Opinion*, Jeffrey E. Cohen argues that the perception of presidential leadership in American politics is affected not so much by what presidents accomplish but by whether voters think their president is a good leader. When assessing whether a president is a good leader, voters ask two questions: Does the president represent me and the nation? And, is the president strong? Cohen shows that presidential interactions with Congress affect voter perceptions of presidential representation and strength. These perceptions have important implications for public attitudes about American politics. They affect presidential approval ratings, the performance of candidates in presidential elections, attitudes toward Congress, and trust in government. Perceptions of presidential leadership qualities have implications not only for the presidency, but also for the larger political system.

Jeffrey E. Cohen is a professor of political science at Fordham University. Cohen is the author of thirteen other books. His book *Going Local: Presidential Leadership in the Post-Broadcast Age* (Cambridge University Press 2010) won both the 2011 Richard E. Neustadt Award from the Presidency Research Group of the American Political Science Association and the 2012 Goldsmith Award from the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He is the author of more than fifty articles in academic journals such as the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and the *Journal of Politics*.

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