


# Public Integrity

*By J. Patrick Dobel*

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In this groundbreaking book, J. Patrick Dobel describes and analyzes the elements that constitute integrity in public office. Drawing on case studies, memoirs, interviews, and fiction (e.g., John Le Carré), Dobel addresses such issues as when to resign and when to stay in office. He examines the temptations of power, the relation between private and public life, and the role of honor and prudence in making personal decisions. He applies not only moral theory but also the insights of history, organizational theory, and psychology. Unlike most political ethics books, *Public Integrity* puts personal responsibility at the center of public morality, examining not just the responsibilities of office but also the role of personal moral commitments and promises. This timely book reminds us of the importance of public integrity as well as the demands and challenges that often threaten that integrity, especially in a liberal democracy such as the United States.

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**Public Integrity By J. Patrick Dobel Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #1148645 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Johns Hopkins University Press
- Published on: 2001-10-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .67" w x 6.00" l, 1.02 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 280 pages

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Review

In Dobel's book the outlines of public integrity come into view. We see the extent to which integrity remains compatible with inconsistencies over personal history and social geography, the ways in which it can abide both pluralism and pragmatism.

(Andrew Stark *American Political Science Review*)

At a time when confidence in public office holders is low, Dobel shows that there still is virtue in public life. His research clearly indicates that office holders can be individuals of character and integrity if they put aside their focus on self-interests and ground their decision-making powers in the obligations of office, personal capacity and commitments, and prudence and effectiveness.

(Daniel Baracskay *Journal of Politics*)

Just when Americans in great numbers have given up on expecting integrity and prudence from public officials along comes Pat Dobel. He writes for anyone holding any public office but the book is even more important for non-office holding citizens. Never preachy, but always demanding, Dobel's accessible erudition persuades the reader of both the difficulty and the nobility of holding public responsibility. *Public Integrity* will attract some of America's finest into public life. It's that good.

(John E. Brandl, Dean, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota)

From the Publisher
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About the Author

**J. Patrick Dobel** is a professor of public affairs, adjunct professor of political science, and associate dean in

the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington. He is the author of *Compromise and Political Action: Political Morality in Liberal and Democratic Life*.

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