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The American welfare state has long been a source of political contention and academic debate. This Oxford Handbook pulls together much of our current knowledge about the origins, development, functions, and challenges of American social policy. After the Introduction, the first substantive part of the handbook offers an historical overview of U.S. social policy from the colonial era to the present. This is followed by a set of chapters on different theoretical perspectives available for understanding and explaining the development of U.S. social policy. The three following parts of the volume focus on concrete social programs for the elderly, the poor and near-poor, the disabled, and workers and families. Policy areas covered include health care, pensions, food assistance, housing, unemployment benefits, disability benefits, workers' compensation, family support, and programs for soldiers and veterans. The final part of the book focuses on some of the consequences of the U.S. welfare state for poverty, inequality, and citizenship. Many of the chapters comprising this handbook emphasize the disjointed patterns of policy making inherent to U.S. policymaking and the public-private mix of social provision in which the government helps certain groups of citizens directly (e.g., social insurance) or indirectly (e.g., tax expenditures, regulations). The contributing authors are experts from political science, sociology, history, economics, and other social sciences.

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Review

"This volume offers a trenchant, sweeping understanding of the history and current pulse of American social welfare policy. Bringing together some of the most creative and respected experts in the field, the collection is impressive...Highly Recommended"

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