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detract substantially from the major contribution Gerhardt has made to our understanding of the process of federal appointments.

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Government Works: Why Americans Need the Feds by Milton J. Esman.
Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press. 196 pp. \$26.00.

This brief book is intended to rebut those current-day conservatives whose mission in life and politics is to attack the bureaucracy, cut budgets, and shrink the government. Attentive students of government will find little new in this volume, but much worth saying and repeating. It might seem obvious that government works much of the time, that many public services are vital and even more are desirable, and that the private sector does not always get it right (current examples range from the Ford Explorer and its tires, to the local nursing home, to the last flight anyone took). But in campaign after campaign, the obvious is often ignored or denied, and government is depicted as the enemy. In Esman's words, "The dominant theme of right wing politics and public discourse during the past quarter century has been an unrelenting campaign to demonize the government . . ." (p. ix).

Government Works is an articulate and well-informed counter-attack, and it deserves wide reading. The book should be read by members of appropriations committees from both sides of the aisle and by candidates for office who have conservative opponents. It should also be read by the opponents. My fear, of course, is that Esman's volume will be read mainly by believers and not by those who need it most. Still, I may send my review copy to President George W. Bush.

Esman makes clear that although hostility to government has been a continuing theme in American history, the antigovernment ideology of recent years has gained strength for several reasons. The Vietnam War was one, Watergate another. Conflicts surrounding civil rights, welfare, energy, and the environment may have encouraged the skepticism of others. Small businesses and large corporations alike believe that minimalist government is in their immediate interest (less regulation, lower taxes). And even American political mythology asserts that government is best which governs least.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan took his antigovernment campaign all the way to the White House and did it so convincingly that twelve years later his Democratic successor, Bill Clinton, famously asserted that the era of big government was over. As if to clinch the point, a clearly antigovernment Republican has followed.

Borrowing from Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Esman argues that government growth and shrinkage, government and antigovernment, are cyclic. How long will the antigovernment cycle we are now in continue? Before the election of

November 2000, Esman predicted a “limited shelf life for the Republican-rightist antigovernment crusade” (p. 57). Yet clearly the crusade’s shelf life has not yet expired. Esman’s prediction can be checked against the 2004 election outcome, perhaps even the outcome of the 2002 congressional elections. If Esman is right, George W. Bush will be a one-term president.

Esman knows what government is for, and he knows what government can do. The American government should conduct an energetic foreign policy and take an active part in an increasingly complex world. We cannot withdraw, nor can we simply dictate terms. Government must moderate and regulate the excesses of the market place. “The claim that business can practice self regulation, setting and enforcing voluntary standards among the members of particular industries, is indeed fanciful” (p. 69). Government must provide necessary services, and Esman lists them. Government must manage the economy, and it must safeguard the institutions of democracy. Esman is clear that a minimalist government, a shrunken government, cannot perform these essential functions. And he points out clearly that focusing primarily on cutting taxes will starve current programs and frustrate new initiatives, like prescription benefits for Medicare.

Esman makes a strong case for better government, not less government. He thinks, indeed, that we need more. “Despite rightist propaganda of recent years, the United States suffers not from too much, but from too little government” (p. 105). But how to get more and better government? In his final chapter, Esman suggests the elements of a winning strategy, but he is at most suggestive. Those who favor Esman’s vision, who see his goal of more and better government as a proper destination, will put down this book still needing a detailed road map, an effective, detailed battle plan. Without careful planning, attractive and energetic progressive candidates, an appealing message, and plentiful resources to defeat antigovernment opponents, minimalism, in the absence of an international or domestic crisis, may enjoy an extended shelf life.

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Stepping Up to Power: The Political Journey of American Women by
Harriet Woods. Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 2000. 252 pp. \$25.00.

Harriet Woods’s story is in many ways familiar. She came of age during the late 1940s, briefly worked as a reporter for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, attempted a writing career, and then married and became a suburban homemaker. Quickly experiencing what Betty Friedan described as “the problem without a name,” Woods channeled her energies and frustrations into community activism, launching a street repair campaign in her neighborhood and becoming active in the League of Women Voters (LWV). Her motivation for joining the League was similar to that of middle-class homemakers throughout the country