

# Social Science and the Public Interest

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## Murray L. Weidenbaum (1927–2014)

*Society* mourns the passing of Murray L. Weidenbaum, among the longest-time contributors to *Society*, beginning in 1966, three years after its debut, when he and Irving Louis Horowitz were colleagues at Washington University where Weidenbaum remained throughout his career, except for his brief work in the Reagan administration as chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. Weidenbaum's contributions to *Society* spanned nearly 45 years and included "Where Do All the Billions Go?" (1966); "Government-Wide Budget Planning" (1968); "The Sagging Finances of States & Cities—How Washington Can Help" (1968); "Freedom and Enterprise" (1981); "Winners and Losers" (1981); "Economic Strategies for a Narcissistic Society" (1983); "Budgetary Quandaries" (1984); "Japan Bashing and Foreign Trade" (1986); "Responding to Corporate Takeovers" (1987); "The Pedagogy of Competition" (with Richard Burr and Richard Cook, 1987); "Facing Reality in the George Bush Era" (1989); "Protecting the Environment" (1989); "Poland: Another Middle Way?" (1990); "Sponsoring Research and Development" (1992); "Modern Corporations and Private Property" (and Mark Jensen, 1992); "How Government Reduces Unemployment" (1994); "The Evolving Corporate Board" (1995); "American Isolationism versus the Global Economy" (1996); "Three Scenarios on the Future of China" (1997); "Government Regulation and Medium-Sized Business" (1998); "Federal Regulatory Policy, 1980–2000" (2000); "Globalization: Wonder Land or Waste Land?" (2002); "Meeting America's Future Energy Needs" (2003); "A New Approach to Regulatory Reform" (2005); "Measuring the Influence of Think Tanks" (2010).

## Robert A. Dahl (1915–2014)

*Society* mourns the passing of Robert A. Dahl, emeritus professor of political science at Yale University. He published a brief autobiographical account of his personal and intellectual growth toward becoming a leading thinker about democracy (see "Justifying Democracy," *Society*, March/April 1995). Stein Ringen,

in 2008, wrote in these pages that "He has brought together with great force, persuasion and challenge the main insights from the research of his own and previous generations. He has set the new agenda for the next generation. It is no mean achievement for a man in his nineties who has achieved more than any others in his field to hand over to his pupils a magnificent legacy and then say to them that you must do it differently and better than we did. It is then for those of us who follow in his footsteps to breathe more life into his vision of a higher level of democracy" ("Robert A. Dahl: Defender of Democracy," *Society*, May/June 2008).

## Editorial: Seniors in Casino Land

The Institute for American Values (IAV) has taken a broad stand against the rise of commercial gambling, encouraging politicians and the public to look more carefully at the variety of social and economic consequences that follow from state-sanctioned gambling activities. IAV has commissioned a variety of studies toward that end as well. Amy Zietlow, an ordained pastor in the mainline Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, spent several days visiting four casino sites in Louisiana, Iowa, and two in New York. Her work does not qualify as substantial ethnography but in 50 pages she has provided a glimpse of what does qualify as an incentive for more extensive social-scientific research. Zietlow points out that 23 states now license casino gambling, earning more than \$37 billion in gross gambling revenue in 2012. One third of Americans visited a commercial casino in 2012, more than half of whom were 50 years old or older. A study of gambling in the 1990s reported that the number of people who had gambled in their lifetime had more than doubled from 35 % in 1975 to 80 % in 1998. Zietlow describes new casinos that have been organized specifically to cater to older people: "Casino bathrooms are supplied with disposal boxes for diabetic needles and attendants keep a stash of adult diapers on hand." One critic has described casinos as "day care for the elderly." (Access at: <http://americanvalues.org/catalog/pdfs/seniors-in-casino-land.pdf>)