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Editors' Introduction

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Editor's Introduction

The twenty-second edition of *Res Publica* comes at a trying time for our country. It seems as though every day we ask ourselves what our role in society should be. In some way, each of the authors in this edition try to understand a different aspect of power that seeks to understand and explain these trying times. It has been a pleasure collecting, reading, and editing the papers in this edition.

In trying to understand the country we are living in, each author has looked at a different part of the United States. Each paper represents an exceptional level of scholarship that demonstrates the full range of work this department requires of its students. The first of these papers is Madalyn Browning-Perry's, a piece that looks at the role citizens' opinion plays in a democracy. She asserts that political knowledge and participation has declined in recent years, rendering opinion polls an unreliable way of measuring congressional approval. Preslav Mantchev's paper examines the early foreign policy of the United States under Thomas Jefferson. The paper seeks to understand why the United States came to have an established standing army. Giving readers an example of what is expected of students in an internship, Ally Daskalopoulos, looks into the Vanderbilt rape case that she had to deal with as part of her internship. The case dealt with the problems of power and misogyny, issues dealt with frequently in our society today. Jordan Gagnon looks at the Social Security Act of 1935 and the debate around the original intention of the law, in which he argues that the law is distributive in nature. The last paper in this edition is an exploration of the relationship between the different levels of government by Yige Chen. Specifically, he looks at how the Clean Air Act has been implemented and impacted by federalism. All of these papers help readers understand the development of our country and the issues that affect it still. We thank all of this year's authors for their contributions.

There have been many people who have helped us put this journal together. Our associate editors, Sam Kasten and Brianna Bacigalupo, provided invaluable assistance to us during the editing process. They made our meetings fun and made creating *Res Publica* an enjoyable experience. We also want to thank the IWU printing services who were very helpful in producing the final copy of the journal. Finally, we would like to thank the incredible faculty in the Political Science Department. Their continuous support and encouragement inspire us every day and make our time here at IWU worthwhile.

Thank you for reading, and we hope you enjoy!

Robert Perez and Molly Johnson