Zephyr Teachout’s ‘Corruption in America’

The lawyer and political activist Zephyr Teachout has long been a force in New York politics. A specialist in government ethics, she’s won renown for her work to improve transparency and accountability in government. Teachout’s latest book, ‘Corruption in America: From Benjamin Franklin’s Snail to Plutocrats’ Paradise,’ offers a comprehensive look at how corruption permeates American political culture and provides a roadmap for addressing it.

Teachout begins with a historical perspective, tracing the origins of corruption in American politics back to colonial times. She notes how the Founding Fathers were aware of corruption but chose to tolerate it in exchange for stability. The Framers believed that the presence of corruption would serve as a check on power, preventing any one person or group from gaining too much influence.

Yet as Teachout points out, the reality of American politics has been far different from the Founders’ intentions. She argues that corruption has become a systemic problem, with money playing an increasingly outsized role in politics. Teachout cites numerous examples of corruption, from pay-to-play schemes to influence peddling, and argues that these practices erode public trust in government.

To address corruption, Teachout calls for a multi-faceted approach. She proposes measures to increase transparency, such as requiring public officials to disclose their financial interests and prohibiting them from trading on that information. Teachout also advocates for campaign finance reforms, including limits on political spending by corporations and wealthy individuals.

Teachout’s book is a thought-provoking and well-researched exploration of corruption in American politics. It’s a must-read for anyone interested in understanding how corruption has become a bedrock of American politics and what can be done to combat it.

Book Review

Zephyr Teachout’s ‘Corruption in America: From Benjamin Franklin’s Snail to Plutocrats’ Paradise’ is a timely and important contribution to the ongoing conversation about corruption in American politics. Teachout’s book is a compelling call to action for those who care about the future of American democracy.

Teachout’s historical perspective is both informative and engaging. She skillfully weaves together stories of corruption throughout American history, from the colonial era to modern times. Teachout’s account of the Founders’ intentions and the reality of modern American politics is both illuminating and disheartening.

Teachout’s proposed solutions are practical and well-reasoned. She offers a series of specific recommendations for reducing corruption, from increased transparency to campaign finance reforms. Teachout’s proposals are grounded in both theory and practice, and she provides concrete examples of how they could be implemented.

In conclusion, Teachout’s book is a powerful reminder of the importance of fighting corruption in American politics. It’s a must-read for anyone who cares about the future of American democracy.