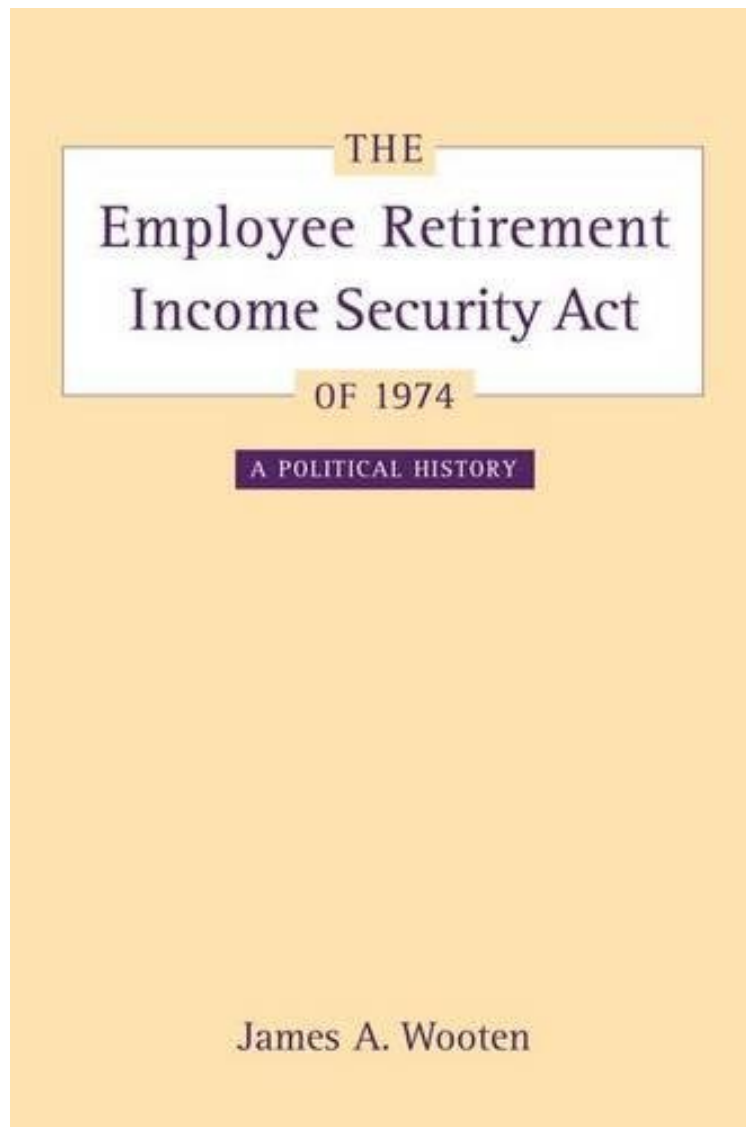


[Free read ebook] The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974: A Political History
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The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974: A Political History (California/Milbank Books on Health and the Public)

James Wooten

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James Wooten : The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974: A Political History (California/Milbank Books on Health and the Public) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974: A Political History (California/Milbank Books on Health and the Public):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy FrancescaA great book for ERISA junkies.7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Interesting from numerous anglesBy SeanGI hope the author of this book reads this review, because he's probably just some regular guy who doesn't write a bunch of books and as such has no particular reason to believe he's some great writer. So I would like to tell that guy he has done a really nice job with this book.I happened on this in a bookstore (not exactly the kind of place that carries NY Times bestsellers prominently displayed) and was interested in it as a political scientist, wanting an in depth treatment of the American policy process with more verisimilitude than Schoolhouse Rock's "I'm Just a Bill." The book nicely shows the sometimes surprising relationships between administrative agencies, the White House, Congress, and lobbyists in what was supposedly the apex of "iron triangle" government. The great depth provides fertile ground to spin lots of stories about the key moving parts in the policy process, which to me is one of the most valuable aspects of case studies in the research process. Agenda setting, expertise and information, legislative attention to issues, etc.: a lot of stuff familiar to contemporary political scientists is well illustrated in this book. I was secondarily very interested in the book's demonstration -- as a bonus, I think, rather than something the author set out to do -- of the effects of non-selfish preferences of individual actors in the policy process, for things resembling equity and fairness on the policy agenda and ultimate policy outcomes.While (aside from the content of this book) I know next to nothing about pension policy except what one might learn by paying sporadic attention to statements from a (fully vested, I might add) TIAA-CREF account, I will confidently aver that the book will also be valuable to the most sophisticated audiences interested in public policy related to retirement, the aged, and pensions.The book could not unjustly be accused of being ever so slightly repetitive, especially in the first couple chapters, but it's not so bad and the review is actually helpful in spite of the feeling of *deja vu*. It could probably come in about 25 pages shorter than it is, and that's not terribly inefficient in the end.

This study of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) explains in detail how public officials in the executive branch and Congress overcame strong opposition from business and organized labor to pass landmark legislation regulating employer-sponsored retirement and health plans. Before Congress passed ERISA, federal law gave employers and unions great discretion in the design and operation of employee benefit plans. Most importantly, firms and unions could and often did establish pension plans that placed employees at great risk for not receiving any retirement benefits. In the early 1960s, officials in the executive branch proposed a number of regulatory initiatives to protect employees, but business groups and most labor unions objected to the key proposals. Faced with opposition from powerful interest groups, legislative entrepreneurs in Congress, chiefly New York Republican senator Jacob K. Javits, took the case for pension reform directly to voters by publicizing frightening statistics and "horror stories" about pension plans. This deft and successful effort to mobilize the media and public opinion overwhelmed the business community and organized labor and persuaded Javits's colleagues in Congress to support comprehensive pension reform legislation. The enactment of ERISA in September 1974 recast federal policy for private pension plans by making worker security an overriding objective of federal law.

About the AuthorJames A. Wooten is Professor at the SUNY Buffalo School of Law.