

Foreword

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FOREWORD

AUTHORED BY: U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAMIE RASKIN

In 2008, while Serving as the Director of the American University (AU) Washington College of Law (WCL) Program on Law and Government, it was my honor to help three inspired students—Tiana Butcher, Lauren Gilius, and Elizabeth Chernow—bring into being the AU Legislation & Policy Roundtable. This entirely student run publication provided timely analysis of legislative and policy initiatives of the day, focusing first on voter disenfranchisement and expanding to other topics in 2011 as the AU Legislation & Policy Brief via a regularly updated blog to provide insight into legislative deliberations and process.

Now a decade later, it is my honor, alongside WCL Professor Fernando Laguarda, to help three equally inspired students—Rachael Soloway, Andrew Balland, and Marissa Ditekowsky—reintroduce the American University Legislation & Policy Brief to the governmental and academic arena. The timing on revitalizing is excellent. The need for timely and thoughtful analysis of legislative process is pressing and critical.

The Brief gave its authors, editors, and participants support in their efforts to become legislative lawyers upon graduation by providing a publishing forum and helping galvanize interest in courses related to legislative drafting and process at WCL. Past articles and blog posts addressed the need for the Election Assistance Commission to be fully staffed, appropriate methods to place checks on Russia's efforts to expand its sphere of influence through asymmetric warfare, and state efforts to push back against the *Citizens United* decision such as the Maryland Shareholders United Act, a bill I was proud to introduce in the Maryland Senate, and which may reappear in a different form in Congress. Most of the issues addressed in the last year of the Brief's publication in 2015 remain alive and pressing.

That is why I am pleased that the renewed iteration of the Brief is already reviving its mission by picking up where the first run left off. The Brief has reimplemented its running blog tackling matters like practical approaches to battling the opioid crisis and the status of the lapsed Violence Against Women's Act. It has held discussion panels on topics such as the Brett Kavanaugh Supreme Court nomination. And, it is providing a channel to ensure that students are able to take advantage of the legislative networking opportunities incumbent with attending law school in the nation's capital.

The Brief is pursuing its mission in a bipartisan manner so that students of all political persuasions will feel welcome to participate. Notably, the Editor-in-Chief of this new inaugural year of the Brief is the President of WCL's conservative Federalist Society, and the Publications Editor is the President of the progressive American Constitution Society.

Though the 2018 midterm elections returned Democrats to power in the House and brought divided and balanced government back to Washington for the first time during the Trump administration, I hope we will not take the result as a signal for everyone to retreat to partisan corners. On the contrary, we are called to come together, to develop the most creative and pragmatic bipartisan proposals for change to confront the problems of our time.

I welcome the return of the American University Legislation & Policy Brief and commend its new leaders for their commitment. I have no doubt that the Brief will again serve as a source for significant legislative analysis and a springboard into the greater policy world for the students who participate.

Best Regards,

Jaime Raskin