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Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America (Princeton Studies in American Politics: Historical, International, and Comparative Perspectives)

Kristin A. Goss

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More than any other advanced industrial democracy, the United States is besieged by firearms violence. Each year, some 30,000 people die by gunfire. Over the course of its history, the nation has witnessed the murders of beloved public figures; massacres in workplaces and schools; and epidemics of gun violence that terrorize neighborhoods and claim tens of thousands of lives. Commanding majorities of Americans voice support for stricter controls on firearms. Yet they have never mounted a true national movement for gun control. Why? *Disarmed* unravels this paradox.

Based on historical archives, interviews, and original survey evidence, Kristin Goss suggests that the gun control campaign has been stymied by a combination of factors, including the inability to secure patronage resources, the difficulties in articulating a message that would resonate with supporters, and strategic decisions made in the name of effective policy. The power of the so-called gun lobby has played an important role in hobbling the gun-control campaign, but that is not the entire story. Instead of pursuing a strategy of incremental change on the local and state levels, gun control advocates have sought national policies. Some 40% of state gun control laws predate the 1970s, and the gun lobby has systematically weakened even these longstanding restrictions.

A compelling and engagingly written look at one of America's most divisive political issues, *Disarmed* illuminates the organizational, historical, and policy-related factors that constrain mass mobilization, and brings into sharp relief the agonizing dilemmas faced by advocates of gun control and other issues in the United States.

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