



# Inside the Statehouse: Lessons From the Speaker

*Ralph G Wright*

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"Don't believe any of these guys that try to tell you that they ran for office because a lot of folks begged them. I ran nine times, and though I was aware of lots of people who wished I hadn't, I never recall being begged . . ."

And so begins *Inside the Statehouse*, Ralph G. Wright's first-hand account of what life in state legislatures is *really* like. Wright takes us behind the scenes through the processes and after-hours exploits of the Vermont State House. Serving as Speaker for a decade, Wright chronicles the ups and downs of his career with insight, humor, and a bluntness that will leave students both enlightened and entertained. He offers a range of provocative lessons from sixteen years in the legislature--from how to lead your party to victory to why your best friend might vote against you.

An introduction by Alan Rosenthal sets the stage, giving students important context for how to place and process Wright's experiences within the larger study of state politics. From there on out, *Inside the Statehouse* illuminates the edicts and anomalies of representation, lawmaking, and balancing the executive branch in a personal and humanizing way. Wright details his experiences working with three governors: Madeleine Kunin (Dem.), the first woman governor in Vermont; Richard Snelling (Rep.), who became Wright's close friend and ally; and Howard Dean (Dem.), the prominent 2004 presidential candidate. Through the successes, pratfalls, and pathos of a remarkable legislative career, students discover what it means and what it takes to succeed in the statehouse.

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