

Editor's Note

This is the inaugural issue of the Missouri Policy Journal. In the “Guidelines for Authors” are the words “detached” and “analytical,” which we will strive to achieve.

In a political environment where there is a popular belief—no doubt perpetuated by a 24-hour news cycle dominated by cable television news shows—that everything needs to fit comfortably into an artificial existence of liberal versus conservative, with the Grand Canyon separating the two, it is difficult to take a step back and look at issues realizing that simple political labels often do not help in understanding. We seem to be living through a period where life is imitating art—television news needs to simplify the complex and, in the process, distortion seems to have replaced solid thought.

In a well-reasoned book about what ails America, *Why We Hate Us: American Discontent in the New Millennium*, Dick Meyer, executive editor of National Public Radio (NPR) news writes:

I actually am not a partisan and hold the two [political] parties in equally low regard. I am not a liberal or a conservative, I do not lurk in any particular wing, and my views are inconsistent. In all my writing, I try to be unpartisan and avoid doctrinal arguments. But I know that a large group of people will never believe me and will slot me into the pigeonhole of their choice. Thus are the times.

Here is a publication, the written word, and yet we wonder if many might have developed their ability to reason—informing how they evaluate this publication—through the visual medium of television, thereby shaping what they see and understand? Can this publication help to influence the level of political discourse that permeates television? Here is a goal that many publications hope to achieve, the *Missouri Policy Journal* among them.

Can ideology be put aside so any policy issue can be explored without the comfort of examining it through the prism of a particular political leaning? Can dilemma and conundrum, frustration and uncertainty, the “normal” in the study of public policy analysis, be fully explored? From this perspective, it is possible to develop hope that public policies analyzed and explored can contribute to good real-world policy making.

A public policy journal that just focuses on one state, Missouri, is rare, yet needed. Sometimes publications use a particular state issue as a case study article; here, everything is about Missouri and we hope that the depth and analysis of our articles can be carried beyond this publication.

Reaching out to other researchers, academics, and policymakers through the articles in the *Missouri Policy Journal* is nice, but not enough—we hope to reach a broader public. Again, referring to our “Guidelines for Authors,” we come back to the goal of presenting

articles “written so they can be read by the average educated adult reader.” The notion that there has to be a disconnect between people who specialize in the study of public policy issues and a broader general public also interested in issues that can affect them is something we wish to avoid. This is just to emphasize a point that is important to good writing: Think about your audience. This journal aims to write so that many can appreciate what we have to say.

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