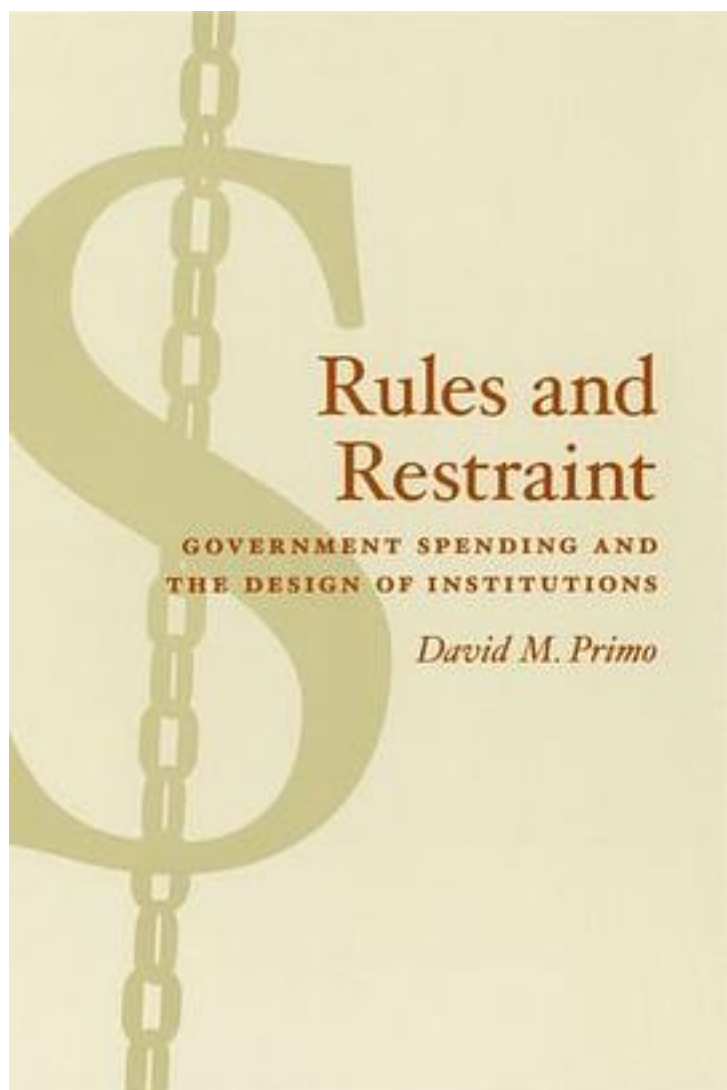


Rules and Restraint



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Government spending has increased dramatically in the United States since World War II despite the many rules intended to rein in the insatiable appetite for tax revenue most politicians seem to share. Drawing on examples from the federal and state governments, "Rules and Restraint" explains in lucid, nontechnical prose why these budget rules tend to fail, and proposes original alternatives for imposing much-needed fiscal discipline on our legislators. One reason budget rules are ineffective, David M. Primo shows, is that politicians often create and preserve loopholes to protect programs that benefit their constituents. Another reason is that legislators must enforce their own provisions, an arrangement that is seriously compromised by their unwillingness to abide by rules that demand short-term sacrifices for the sake of long-term gain. Convinced that budget rules enacted through such a flawed legislative process are unlikely to work, Primo ultimately calls for a careful debate over the advantages and drawbacks of a constitutional convention initiated by the states - a radical step that would bypass Congress to create a path toward change.

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