



Red to Blue: Congressman Chris Van Hollen and Grassroots Politics

Sanford Gottlieb

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With a close eye on a rising star in the Democratic party, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, this book examines the movement toward a Democratic majority in American politics. Van Hollen, a state senator from suburban Maryland, was one of only two Democrats to defeat an incumbent Republican House member in the Republican sweep of 2002, the first congressional election after 9/11. He did it with the assistance of a grassroots army attracted by his outstanding leadership on progressive issues in the Maryland legislature and determined to "take back the House" from an increasingly right-wing Republican Party. The author had an inside view of Van Hollen's 2002 victory as campaign coordinator of his precinct. Gottlieb provides a detailed account of the nuts and bolts and spirit of the Van Hollen campaign and extends his analysis into 2008, the election year for which Nancy Pelosi appointed Van Hollen chief of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, responsible for recruiting, assisting, and mentoring candidates in an effort to expand the Democratic majority in the House. Grassroots politics is a key to the Democrats' progress, whether at the congressional or presidential level. Chris Van Hollen points the way to achieving new alignments that could help move the country from red to blue. Including hundreds of interviews with voters, activists, candidates, campaign staffers, members of Congress, pollsters, journalists, and scholars, Red to Blue provides a nuanced understanding of America's shifting politics.

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