POLITICS, POLICY, AND PUBLIC OPTIONS

A public option is a government-provided social good that exists alongside a similar privately provided good. While the public option is typically identified with health care policy, public options have been a long-standing feature of American life in a variety of sectors, ranging from libraries to swimming pools. Public schools, for example, coexist alongside private schools. However, there is surprisingly little research on "public options" as a general category. Rather, over the last few decades, considerable scholarly and popular efforts to ensure access to important social goods have focused on market subsidies (like vouchers) or privatization – which both face increasing criticism. Uniting scholars from across disciplines, this volume delves into the theory of the public option, explores several important case studies, and shows how public options could be a corrective to the trend toward privatization and subsidies. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

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