MONEYBALL ★ FOR ★ GOVERNMENT

BOOK OVERVIEW

The Problem: Investing in what works is necessary to make dramatic progress against our nation's greatest challenges, but government today doesn't work this way.

In the summer of 2002, the Oakland A's baseball team went on a 20-game winning streak, the longest in American League history. And they did so, incredibly, on a budget of just $40 million—less than a third of the league's richest teams. Oakland's success came about not in spite of their smaller budget, but because of it. Recognizing that his team could never outspend its wealthier opponents, Billy Beane, the team's general manager, focused on statistics, instead of unscientific scouting reports, to determine his draft picks. While the rest of the league played baseball; Billy Beane and the Oakland A's were playing "Moneyball."

It's a compelling story, now well-known because of the Michael Lewis book and major motion picture of the same name. At its heart, Moneyball is about crunching data and relying on hard evidence—not emotion or tradition—to determine how to allocate scarce resources.

Can data, evidence, and evaluation revolutionize America's government in a similar way? Can we build the evidence necessary to determine which practices, policies, and programs work and which don't; invest in those that work most effectively; and shift resources away from those that consistently fail to achieve desired outcomes? In short, can government play Moneyball?

The Solution: We must work "across the aisle" to create a bipartisan path forward that urges government at all levels to invest in what works.

This book is about changing the way government works – so that policy and funding decisions by governments at all levels are informed by the best possible data, evidence and evaluation about what works. We believe this can be achieved in a bipartisan way. For proof, look no further than the great leaders and thinkers from across the political spectrum who have joined together in this book to help make the case for Moneyball for Government.

In the second edition of the book, Michael Gerson, former Assistant to the President for Policy & Strategic Planning under President George W. Bush and Raj Shah, former Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development under President Barack Obama, join together to write a new chapter explaining ways to apply this revolution of rigor to foreign assistance.

Book Outline:

Preface — Michele Jolin, Results for America co-founder and managing partner, prefaces the book and puts the Moneyball for Government effort in context.

Chapter 1 – Let's Play Moneyball: Jim Nussle, former U.S. Budget Committee Chairman and White House OMB Director (G.W. Bush), and Peter Orszag, former White House OMB Director (Obama), describe the philosophy behind Moneyball, how it has been used effectively in the private sector, and how it should be used in the public sector.

Chapter 2 – The Pursuit of Evidence: Glenn Hubbard, former White House Council of Economic Advisers Chairman (G.W. Bush), explains the difference between data and evidence and discusses the economic case for using evidence and evaluation when allocating public funds.

Chapter 3 – A Continuum Approach: Gene Sperling, former White House National Economic Council Director (Clinton and Obama) highlights the importance of leveraging data, evidence, and evaluation for continuous learning and improvement, not just for increasing or eliminating public funding.

Chapter 4 – Making Moneyball Work: Melody Barnes and John Bridgeland, former White House Domestic Policy Council Directors (Obama and G.W. Bush, respectively) describe the structural changes necessary for the federal government to more effectively play Moneyball.

Chapter 5 – Embracing the Politics of Moneyball: Kevin Madden, former Romney 2012 presidential campaign senior advisor, and Howard Wolfson, former Clinton 2008 presidential campaign co-chief strategist and communications director, outline the political barriers policymakers will have to overcome in order to truly play Moneyball.
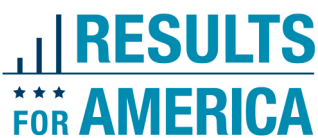
Chapter 6 – Foreign Assistance and the Revolution of Rigor: Michael Gerson, former Assistant to the President for Policy and Strategic Planning (G.W. Bush) and Raj Shah, former USAID Administrator (Obama) present a bipartisan blueprint for continuing to transform foreign assistance efforts through evidence.

Chapter 7 – A Call to Play Ball: U.S. Senators Mark Warner (D-VA) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) from the U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget issue a bipartisan call to action – to elected officials, to policymakers, to business, non-profit, and philanthropic leaders, and to the American public - to support Moneyball for Government at all levels.

Afterword – A Bipartisan Moneyball Agenda: Robert Gordon, former White House OMB acting deputy director (Obama), and Ron Haskins, former White House senior adviser for welfare policy (G.W. Bush), come together to propose a pragmatic set of recommendations our government should develop and implement in order to play Moneyball.

Moneyball Leaders: Appendix 1 profiles leaders who are leading the Moneyball for Government charge across sectors.

Examples of Moneyball at Work: Appendix 2 describes many organizations across the country that are using data, evidence and evaluation to improve outcomes for young people, their families, and communities.