



# American Indian Constitutional Reform and the Rebuilding of Native Nations

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Since 1975, when the U.S. government adopted a policy of self-determination for American Indian nations, a large number of the 562 federally recognized nations have seized the opportunity to govern themselves and determine their own economic, political, and cultural futures. As a first and crucial step in this process, many nations are revising constitutions originally developed by the U.S. government to create governmental structures more attuned to native people's unique cultural and political values. These new constitutions and the governing institutions they create are fostering greater governmental stability and accountability, increasing citizen support of government, and providing a firmer foundation for economic and political development.

This book brings together for the first time the writings of tribal reform leaders, academics, and legal practitioners to offer a comprehensive overview of American Indian nations' constitutional reform processes and the rebuilding of native nations. The book is organized in three sections. The first part investigates the historical, cultural, economic, and political motivations behind American Indian nations' recent reform efforts. The second part examines the most significant areas of reform, including criteria for tribal membership/citizenship and the reform of governmental institutions. The book concludes with a discussion of how American Indian nations are navigating the process of reform, including overcoming the politics of reform, maximizing citizen participation, and developing short-term and long-term programs of civic education.

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