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## Preface

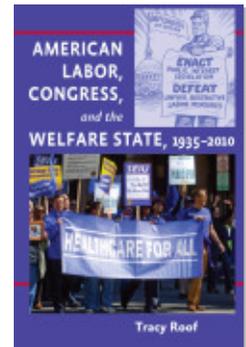
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# PREFACE

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When I first began this project, I was interested in why rising income inequality went largely unaddressed in the political system. This led me to the question of which groups were most likely to push these issues on the national stage, which quickly led me to the labor movement. After reading a wide range of critical assessments of the American labor movement, particularly those dealing with the decline of the power and influence of organized labor, I initiated my own research into why labor had failed in pushing for a more comprehensive welfare state that could have mitigated worker insecurity and income inequality. I found that organized labor repeatedly pursued a range of policies addressed to these issues throughout the postwar period, but it was routinely thwarted at one stage of the legislative process or the other, even during periods when scholars considered labor to be much stronger than it is today. The project thus came to focus on the hurdles organized labor faced in the legislative process and how labor leaders attempted to overcome them, with occasional successes, but more frequent failures. I became a lot more cognizant of and sympathetic to the necessity of compromise in the American political system that has so fre-

quently frustrated the ambitions of both the Left and the Right in American politics and often created inefficient or ineffective public policies.

Many people have made this long project possible. I would like to thank all of my colleagues in the Political Science Department at the University of Richmond, especially Jennifer Erkulwater and Dan Palazzolo for their scholarly engagement and advice on numerous chapters and Sheila Carapico and Andrea Simpson for their encouragement and help in navigating the publishing process. I would also like to thank Deb Candreva and Doug Harris, who have provided crucial advice since graduate school. I would like to thank Ira Katznelson, who on short notice provided valuable comments on several chapters at the end stages of the manuscript preparation, as well as the anonymous reviewers who provided many helpful suggestions. I would also like to thank Henry Tom and Suzanne Flinchbaugh with the Johns Hopkins University Press for their professionalism and efficiency. The archival research was made possible by travel grants from the Harry S. Truman Library Institute and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation. The project was generously funded by several faculty research grants from the University of Richmond's School of Arts and Sciences. I also gained invaluable insight into the legislative process from my fellowship in the office of Senator Tom Harkin through the American Political Science Association's Congressional Fellowship Program. Finally, I would like to thank my mom, Billie, and my dad, Rick, for their enduring support and my two little girls, Clara and Lucy, who never fully understood why Mom had to spend so much time at the office. Finally, I owe the most to my husband, Mike, without whom I could have never completed this book.

**AMERICAN LABOR, CONGRESS,  
and the WELFARE STATE,  
1935–2010**

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