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Reconstructing the Commercial Republic: Constitutional Design after Madison

By Stephen L. Elkin

The University of Chicago Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Reconstructing the Commercial Republic: Constitutional Design after Madison, Stephen L. Elkin, James Madison is the thinker most responsible for laying the groundwork of the American commercial republic. But he did not anticipate that the propertied class on which he relied would become extraordinarily politically powerful at the same time as its interests narrowed. This and other flaws, argues Stephen L. Elkin, have undermined the delicately balanced system he constructed. In *Reconstructing the Commercial Republic*, Elkin critiques the Madisonian system, revealing which of its aspects have withstood the test of time and which have not. The deficiencies Elkin points out provide the starting point for his own constitutional theory of the republic—a theory that, unlike Madison's, lays out a substantive conception of the public interest that emphasizes the power of institutions to shape our political, economic, and civic lives. Elkin argues that his theory should guide us toward building a commercial republic that is rooted in a politics of the public interest and the self-interest of the middle class. He then recommends specific reforms to create this kind of republic, asserting that Americans today can still have the lives a...



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