

# Foreword

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The essays in this volume were collected as part of an ongoing American Academy project, *Stewarding America: Civic Institutions and the Public Good*. The project brings together leading scholars and experts to analyze the institutions that are critical for inspiring good citizenship. Institutions such as Congress, the courts, the media, the military, corporations, unions, the nonprofit sector, and the education system are held in public trust. They provide a continuity of law and procedure, of practice and participation, and of information and knowledge from one generation to the next. When they serve the short-term interests of particular individuals or groups, they erode public trust; they erode the faith of citizens in the longest functioning constitutional democracy.

Several of the essays suggest ways for our government, our schools, and our businesses to pursue the “common good.” They demonstrate what it would take, personally as well as collectively, to inspire a greater commitment to good citizenship. This volume is intended to promote a much-needed public conversation about how to reclaim a sense of decency in American politics and American life.

We are grateful to Norman Ornstein, of the American Enterprise Institute, for leading this Academy effort; to William Galston, of the Brookings Institution, for coediting this issue of *Dædalus* with Norman; to the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation for inspiring and supporting our work; and to the distinguished authors in this volume who have contributed their thinking about our nation and its future.

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