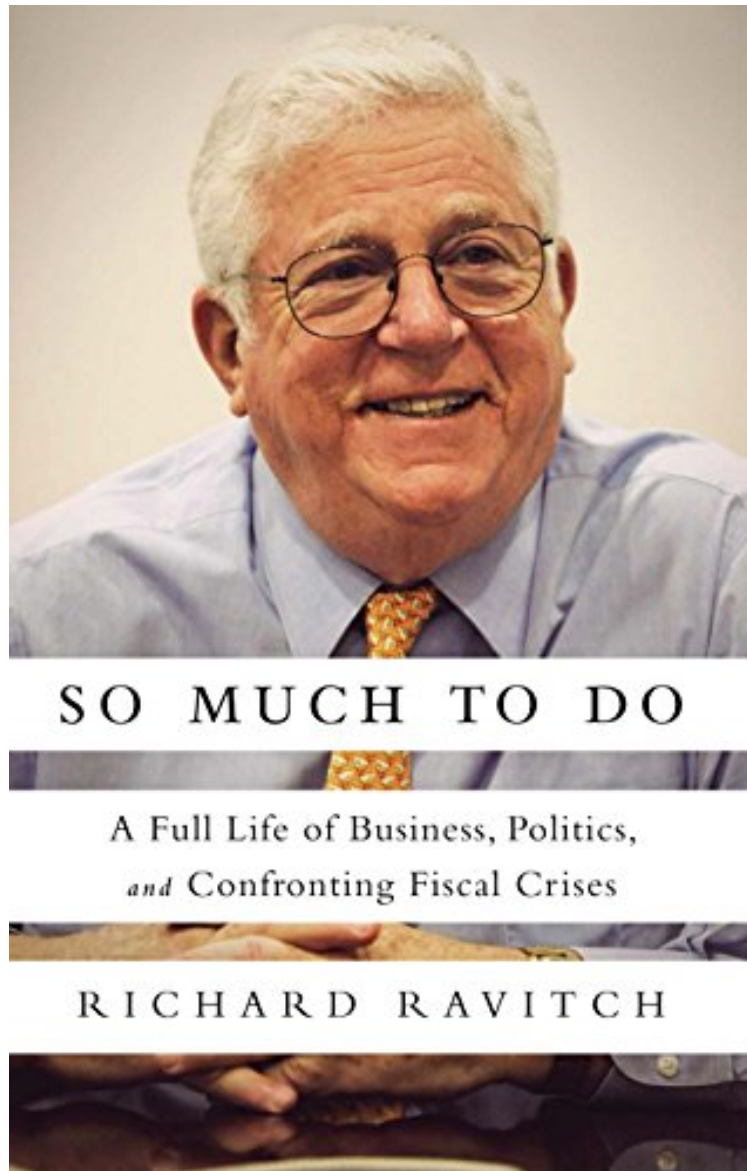


[Free] So Much to Do: A Full Life of Business, Politics, and Confronting Fiscal Crises

So Much to Do: A Full Life of Business, Politics, and Confronting Fiscal Crises

Richard Ravitch

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Richard Ravitch : So Much to Do: A Full Life of Business, Politics, and Confronting Fiscal Crises before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised So Much to Do: A Full Life of Business, Politics, and Confronting Fiscal Crises:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very readable. By ABQ girl I heard this gentleman on NPR and he made a lot of sense as to why our politics is so dysfunctional. Besides explaining that, he offers several examples as to

how to get things done. Granted, he may be exceptional in his people skills and determination ... but there must be more people out there who could do similar feats of bringing people together to solve our problems. The real surprise was HOW readable it was. I thought I would have to slog through to get his points. Quite the opposite. There were times I couldn't put it down. A really good read for seeing how solutions can be found when they seem impossible. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The country's financial future is in your hands. By Ronald Sugarman Mr Ravitch is an amazing public spirited citizen. In his book he took me through his more than fifty years of involvement in national, state and municipal financial and policy issues. There is a lot to be learned about how our country gets into and out of problems, often created by well-intended policies that back-fire, at times created by 'politics', and (more often than we recognize) caused by incumbents with tendencies to 'kick the can down the road', looking good in the process but leaving a real mess for the 'inheritors'. Mr Ravitch is particularly astute in alerting the reader to the facts that many states and local governments are facing huge financial obligations, (bonds, pensions, borrowings) beyond their current capacity to honor. I found this revealing, riveting and very scary. But in my opinion, the best reason to read this well-written chronicle is that the author goes beyond listing the problems to inform us of solutions to remedy. How refreshing is that! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Recipes for Governmental Fiscal Sanity By Stanislaus This is a fast read by a man who skips most of the details of growing up, but does give us brief personal background - including his becoming a successful builder in private industry. However, he has been repeatedly tapped for public service - as head of the Metropolitan Transit Authority for the NYC area, lieutenant governor of the State of New York, etc., etc. I am so thankful we had him as a fiscal watchdog-public servant, and I wish we had more like him. He gives a few basic fiscal rules, based on his experiences in government, to avoid, as he puts it, kicking the can down the road. I would say that this book should be required reading for every executive and legislator in the country, but I realize that their desire to be re-elected would make them ignore his obviously sound rules. But as citizens who live in a democracy, it's important for each of us to understand his few rules so that we can prod our executives and legislators to do the right thing financially so that we live within our means. This is not a conservative tract, but a sound fiscal approach. An important book for all of us.

Every city and every state needs a Richard Ravitch. In sixty years on the job, whether working in business or government, he was the man willing to tackle some of the most complex challenges facing New York. Trained as a lawyer, he worked briefly for the House of Representatives, then began his career in his family's construction business. He built high-profile projects like the Whitney Museum and Citicorp Center but his primary energy was devoted to building over 40,000 units of affordable housing including the first racially integrated apartment complex in Washington, D.C. He dealt with architects, engineers, lawyers, bureaucrats, politicians, union leaders, construction workers, bankers, and tenants—virtually all of the people who make cities and states work. It was no surprise that those endeavors ultimately led to a life of public service. In 1975, Ravitch was asked by then New York Governor Hugh Carey to arrange a rescue of the New York State Urban Development Corporation, a public entity that had issued bonds to finance over 30,000 affordable housing units but was on the verge of bankruptcy. That same year, Ravitch was at Carey's side when New York City's biggest banks said they would no longer underwrite its debt and he became instrumental to averting the city's bankruptcy. Throughout his career, Ravitch divided his time between public service and private enterprise. He was chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority from 1979 to 1983 and is generally credited with rebuilding the system. He turned around the Bowery Savings Bank, chaired a commission that rewrote the Charter of the City of New York, served on two Presidential Commissions, and became chief labor negotiator for Major League Baseball. Then, in 2008, after Governor Eliot Spitzer resigned in a prostitution scandal and New York State was in a post-financial-crisis meltdown, Spitzer's successor, David Paterson, appointed Ravitch Lieutenant Governor and asked him to make recommendations regarding the state's budgeting plan. What Ravitch found was the result of not just the economic downturn but years of fiscal denial. And the closer he looked, the clearer it became that the same thing was happening in most states. Budgetary pressures from Medicaid, pension promises to public employees, and deceptive budgeting and borrowing practices are crippling our states' ability to do what only they can do—invest in the physical and human infrastructure the country needs to thrive. Making this case is Ravitch's current public endeavor and it deserves immediate attention from both public officials and private citizens.

Wall Street Journal "Mr. Ravitch's recommended solutions to the fiscal problems of America's cities—government transparency and public education—are elusive. But the rest of the country would doubtless benefit from having more scrupulous civic leaders like Mr. Ravitch." New York Times "So Much to Do gracefully synthesizes a serendipitous memoir illustrating the education of a public man; an enlightening, prescriptive citizen's manual into making government work; and a passionate 'ode to democracy' (as Mr. Ravitch's friend Paul A. Volcker calls it in his blurb on the back cover) into a remarkably accessible book." New York Post "He could have called it 'Love Story,' and the title would have been faithful to its theme. The book by Dick Ravitch, "So Much to Do," is the story of his love affair with public service... a delightful and insightful journey through a life of business, politics and emergencies... Fortunately, the book arrives as a new generation of leaders exhibits a shaky understanding of what

fiscal prudence means, and the dangers of ignoring it. The book ought to be required reading by the new team at City Hall before it is too late.”