



American Dreams: Restoring Economic Opportunity for Everyone

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In 1956, Marco Rubio's parents came to America as poor immigrants with grade-school educations. They found a land of opportunity where anyone could work hard, play by the rules, and build a better future for themselves and their children. His family proved the reality of the American Dream, where the children of maids and bartenders could become doctors, lawyers, small business owners, and maybe even a U.S. senator.

But now the American Dream is on life support. Years of government-centered, tax-and-spend liberalism have failed to lift the poor or sustain the middle class. Millions of everyday Americans have been left behind by an economy that doesn't value their skills and a government that would rather give them a handout than a hand up.

In this follow-up to his bestselling memoir, *An American Son*, Senator Rubio offers a road map for restoring the land of opportunity. He explains why we now stand at a critical junction and why the next few years will determine the future for our children and grandchildren. He shares his plan for scaling back the nanny state, helping families save for college and retirement, and making it easier for small businesses to create millions of good jobs. Above all, he urges us to return to the values and can-do spirit that made our country exceptional in the first place.

American Dreams: Restoring Economic Opportunity for Everyone Details

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Marco Rubio

From Reader Review American Dreams: Restoring Economic Opportunity for Everyone for online ebook

Rosalinda Villagomez says

I really enjoyed this book. His parents were humble people. His dad was a bartender and his mother was a maid. They are normal people trying to make a living like everyone else. They struggled as others do but yet they managed to help Marco thru college. Marco's dream is to get the economy in a healthy state, to help people go to college so they can be ready for the jobs of the 21st century thereby building a better life for their children. His visions are grand for the future but it will take a lot of dedication as well as a lot of work.

Lamar Latrell says

Interspersed in his derision of the "current administration" (read: president), liberals in general, or anyone who does not align ideologically with him are some actually valuable economic policy ideas. It's just so difficult to get to them because of all of the filler derision all over the place. There's preaching to the converted, preaching to the choir, and then there's this—which was like preaching to himself. He invokes the name Obama like it's a pejorative. It isn't. It's the name of the President. You can disagree with decisions he's made, but simply adding his name to something does not automatically make whatever you're talking about a bad thing. It was the literary equivalent to saying, "thanks, Obama".

I am amazed that we can read the same information and come to such vastly different conclusions about the same data. But I guess that's why I read the book. I wanted to see his ideas. Specifically, his ideas about economy and how to change/improve it. I agree with a lot of his ideas. I may disagree with the reasons or results, but the ideas are sound and I would like to see some of them taken seriously and implemented in some way or another.

Lastly, as is common with these kinds of political books, he has the "human touch" element. The story of some "real" person included to manipulate the reader into empathizing with someone. Mostly I could accept these completely unverifiable stories as being true, and I suspect that they were because if you read into some of them, there are so many flaws in the characters, it would be a shame to make them up. (I'm thinking of the woman who bemoans the state of social security when both she and her husband retired early, lost a large portion of their retirement in the stock market after the husband retired, and declined obamacare to help with sudden medical costs, getting themselves into massive debt—in fact, the only part of the story that wasn't directly in their control was the wife getting fired—twice.) Specifically, however, the story of India. This was possibly the most insulting story he could have chosen. Not only did it not really make the point that he wanted to make—strong families are a source of strength and stability and single-parent families are a source of weakness and less likely to succeed (she came from a home where the father was only partially present and the mother was alcoholic), but it was literally a white savior narrative. Yes, the poor black girl in the ghetto was lifted out of this dire situation by a nice red-haired, blue-eyed white lady who encouraged her and taught her that she could own a house! Yes, it may have actually happened, but did you really actually have to find one of the most tired and insulting tropes to illustrate your point?

All in all, it was about what I expected: I expected to agree with many of his economic points. I generally like a lot of conservative fiscal concepts. I expected to disagree with his conclusions. I generally dislike conservative social policy. The worst part, however, were the ideological assumptions. They were really off-putting and made me have to take a long time reading in order to accept what he was saying as having value. I know that tone-policing is a horrible thing, but if you're going to make an argument that something is bad, have something other to say about it than, "Obama's failed policy..."

David says

I like Marco Rubio because unlike a lot of his fellow republican colleagues, he is aware of what the word compromise means, he's not afraid to go across party lines to get something done, and his ideas for the country's future just might work. This book is titled American Dreams, restoring economic opportunity for everyone. It covers mostly economics. Everything from The Affordable Care Act, to jobs, to college and student loans, which especially for me who is going to graduate high school soon, really cares about. I do not agree with all of his policies but I do like a lot of them. Its just common sense things that he says, he is aware that college is not affordable and for that reason many people who have valuable skills cannot get a job, simply because they can't say they have a college degree. We spend way too much on welfare and things need to be done to address that, instead of handing people checks to help them make ends meet, hand them opportunities so they can eventually help themselves. If only Senator Rubio put more of his ideas about things like foreign policy in this book, it would have been a perfect tool to look at for his presidential run, he does put a little bit more goodies in the afterword though. So far of the books by candidates running for president that I've read, I think Marco Rubio's is the best.

Ellison says

Shares his agenda for running for President. Decries Federal Programs, then advocates Federal Programs. Shares stories of Florida residents and their situations. Advocates education in this 'New Economy' Voters will decide.

AnnieM says

He has a lot of good points. Too bad people are too busy fighting this pissing match to actually get anything fixed.

Jacob says

Oops! I didn't mean to read a political book. Some of his views I agree with but mostly, I hate politics. His solutions are interesting.

Don says

This was a typical campaign book circa 2014. It had a few interesting anecdotes, but it was primarily comprised of talking points. It seemed to lack significant details about the policy changes that it was proposing.

Lisa Beers says

In his own words

I wanted to learn more about Marco Rubio and this book gave me the information I was looking for. He reveals his thinking and reasoning for his campaign strategy, I just wish he would have done it without trying to drag others down.

Jeff Stockett says

I like what Marco has to say. This book was a pretty clear view of the direction he thinks the country should go. He outlines plenty of concrete plans, and it's clear he is a solid thinker.

As I read this, I realized I might be a little more libertarian than he is. There were definitely things where I'm not sure I 100% agreed with his worldview. I'll give you an example. He proposed an alternative to the minimum wage hike. His proposal was that the government could subsidize full time employees who are below the poverty level. The idea was that a minimum wage hike will price many low skilled workers out of a job while at the same time hurting businesses. This proposal solves both of those problems but helps to create a living wage for the poorest among us.

I like this proposal. It makes a lot of sense and it directly addresses my 2 biggest concerns with a minimum wage hike. The only problem is that for me, I'm not sure that this is a problem that I think should be addressed by the federal government. If I felt it was within the jurisdiction of the federal government, than I would probably think his proposal would be an excellent way to solve the problem.

So, while I may not directly agree with his view of what the government should and shouldn't solve, I like that he is an out of the box thinker. I think he could solve many of the problems our country faces.

I also really liked some of his proposals regarding economic issues. I really liked his simple proposal to help Americans with the retirement crisis. He proposes to offer all citizens the opportunity to have the same retirement plan as Congress. He's not offering the matching that Congress gets, but simply the ability to buy shares in the same funds so that people that switch jobs frequently don't have to worry about their 401(K) with have a dozen previous employers. This seems like an obvious and simple solution that has virtually no cost.

All in all, I like him. I could vote for him. We don't agree on everything, but I like his approach and way of thinking about problems.

Marla says

I thought I could listen to this because I like Marco but when he said if you raise minimum wage it will make people lose jobs and people won't spend money. I always thought if you gave more money to people they would spend more. People deserve a higher minimum wage.

Kristen Lauderdale says

I almost would have given him three stars until the marriage chapter.

Jeanne says

It was nice to be able to read about a politician's points of view in more than a television soundbite. I can't say I agree with all of his views, but I thought it was worth reading about his economic goals.

Joseph Reynolds says

Rubio is smart, even wonk-ish. When he digs deep he finds some interesting things. But sometimes he just likes to trudge along on the surface, 'innovation and growth' getting a look-in during most chapters. Innovation and growth isn't an answer, it's a catchphrase. Growth of almost 4% has not done much for the average schlub or schlubette. Rubio is a guy who needs to be braver. He's got good sense, and good instinct, but seems to shy away from them. He seems to fret too much politically. I wince sometimes. I don't know why he stalls at first hurdle so often. Just get out there and speak freely, Marco. You are better when you aren't worried about who is coming at you.

Book says

American Dreams: Restoring Economic Opportunity for Everyone by Marco Rubio

"American Dreams" is an insightful look at Marco Rubio's economic plan for America. Senator Rubio provides readers with an easy-to-follow blueprint of his plans. Find out what this secular-progressive reviewer likes and dislikes about his ideas. This worthwhile 256-page book includes the following seven chapters: 1. The American Dream Downsized, 2. Making America Safer for Uber, 3. Equal Opportunity, Equal Dignity, Equal Work, 4. Making College a Good Investment Again, 5. Economic Security In An Insecure Time, 6. Retirement In Your Own Time, On Your Own Terms, and 7. Values---And The Families That Teach Them.

Positives:

1. A well-written, well-thought out book.
2. Interesting look at Rubio's economic plan to restore America. "Through the stories of an ambitious small-business man, a struggling single mother, an out-of-work and in-debt college graduate, among others, I focus on the three central elements to the achievement of the American Dream: equal opportunity, economic security and family."
3. This is a much more substantive book than most of the candidates that I've read. It's not a matter of whether I agree with him or not (and I disagree quite a bit) it's a matter of laying out his ideas for all to see.

4. A plea for new leadership. "America needs leaders who understand the new world we live in and who will promote and implement new ideas for a new era. We can't solve our twenty-first-century challenges by simply investing more into twentieth-century solutions. And yet this is precisely what those who would succeed President Obama show every intention of doing."
5. A pardon the pun, "liberal" use of facts to illustrate points.
6. Makes good economic points. "The reason big government fails now more than ever is that it makes it harder for us to win this competition. If we want to restore the American Dream, we need tax policies, regulatory policies and spending policies that make America the best place in the world to invest, and the easiest place in the world to create new businesses and new jobs through innovation."
7. The need to improve education. "...we need to transform our education system to meet the employment needs of this new, innovation-driven economy."
8. Rubio's keys to the American Dream. "These are the two things—getting an education and avoiding having children until marriage—that are increasingly key to achieving the American Dream."
9. Uses Uber as an excellent example of how lobbyists co-opt big government which results in higher prices and fewer choices.
10. In support of free-enterprise. "Fostering a strong and growing free-enterprise economy in the twenty-first century means meeting four fundamental challenges: making America the best place in the world to invest and create jobs, keeping America the global leader in innovation, ensuring access to markets and consumers for American products, and winning the global competition for the most talented and innovative people."
11. The issue of corporate rates. "Combining federal and state taxes, our corporate rate is nearly 40 percent. The global average is under 25 percent."
12. Discusses some plans in detail. "One of the best ways I know to ease this burden on the American people—not to mention cut down on the crony capitalist habit of using regulations to stifle competition—is to establish a National Regulatory Budget. This would be an absolute dollar limit on what federal regulations could cost the economy in any given year."
13. "Free from government interference, the Internet has been hailed as the greatest 'deregulatory' success of all time." Agreed.
14. The need to modernize our immigration system. "The only way we are going to be able to break this impasse and make progress on this issue is in a sequential and piecemeal way, with a series of bills that build upon one another until ultimately we have put in place the kind of immigration system our nation needs."
15. The keys to reducing poverty. "A similarly well-intentioned desire to help the poor must now make work pay again. This can be accomplished through two significant but achievable changes in policy. First, give the states real freedom to create innovative programs to encourage work among the poor. Second, improve the current federal wage subsidy to keep them working."
16. Interesting chapter on higher-education issues. "American higher education today is an entrenched monopoly protected by government policy. Think Ma Bell before the breakup. Like all protected monopolies, colleges and universities set their own prices and are resistant to innovation and change. They use the power of government to keep competitors out and protect their monopoly power." "In short, the accreditation agencies control the market for higher education."
17. The push for tax reform. "Our tax code is too complicated, punishes productivity and is full of loopholes and carve-outs created by special interests. A simpler tax code with lower tax rates would do more than just about anything else to create jobs and unleash America's potential."
18. A look at retirement. "Today, each of the three legs of our traditional retirement stool—personal savings, pensions and Social Security—is wobbling." Presents some good ideas here.
19. Clearly illustrates why there is a strong link between single parenting and poverty. "Elizabeth Sawhill of the left-leaning Brookings Institution reports that of the children born to low-income women, the children born to never married mothers are three times more likely to stay poor than children born to continuously married mothers."
20. Notes included.

Negatives:

1. The best nonfictional books are the ones that consider the strongest arguments against their positions and refute them. This is not one of those books. Rubio presents his positions (in his defense some resonate) but says very little about the strengths of the opposition.
2. Misrepresentations, strawmen arguments. “Perhaps the most famous articulation of this view came in the summer before the 2012 election, when President Obama told a campaign audience in Virginia, “If you’ve got a business, you didn’t build that.” In this case, he didn’t explain the whole picture. President Obama meant you didn’t build that by yourself, we need support and many people to build businesses.
3. “After decades of growing incomes for the middle class, the years between 2000 and 2011 were what the Pew Research Center calls a “lost decade.” Policies in large part by President G.W. Bush.
4. “The success of the wealthy, they told us, accounts for the lack of good jobs, the stagnant wages and the growing cost of living for everyone else.” Once again, misrepresenting the opposition. It’s the abuse of the wealthy: golden parachutes, endless lobbying, corporate welfare, abuse of loopholes, to name a few.
5. “But if there’s one thing we learned from the Obama administration’s failed taxpayer subsidies of companies like Solyndra, it’s that the government is a lousy venture capitalist.” Actually, Obama’s success ratio is higher than your average venture capitalist.
6. “The abject failure of the Affordable Care Act—visible to all but the administration’s most ardent true believers—has tempted some of my colleagues to sit back and allow the law to collapse of its own weight, bringing its supporters down with it.” Abject failure? It provides health insurance to millions who didn’t have it before and it allows countless others to keep their children on until they reach 26, not to mention covers pre-existing conditions. Rubio does make some good points but wouldn’t it be best to modify the existing system by keeping those features that work while eliminating those features that didn’t (like bailouts for the big insurance companies).
7. “Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal likes to say that the American Dream begins with education.” Is this the same Bobby Jindal that doesn’t accept evolution as the best scientific explanation for how life evolved over time? No, thank you.
8. “I have an additional responsibility, though: the responsibility that belongs to all who are elected to serve. My responsibility—to the American people, to my parents, to myself—is to save these programs. But many of my colleagues in Washington—especially big-government liberals—don’t seem to feel the same way.” Yet another misrepresentation. You may not agree with the left on how to preserve popular government programs but to say that they don’t feel the same way is incorrect.
9. “It is to deny the powerful pull of a culture that regards unwed childbearing as nothing more or less than a lifestyle choice—and vilifies those who would criticize it as perpetrators of a ‘war on women.’” Terrible policies like defunding organizations like Planned Parenthood will only lead to more unwanted babies. It’s time we respect women’s reproductive rights and provide them tools that would actually help them prevent this cycle of poverty that Rubio alludes to.
10. “In our contemporary discussions on marriage, we must also acknowledge the national debate regarding the very definition of marriage. On this point, I—along with millions of my fellow Americans—firmly believe that marriage is a unique societal institution so important to the formation of strong and successful people that we have traditionally defined it and enshrined it in our laws as the union of one man and one woman.” How could you be pro-family while denying same-sex couples the same dignity of marriage?
11. Nothing on climate change.
12. No charts, diagrams or any type of visual supplements to complement the narrative.

In summary, despite my differences with Senator Rubio there is a lot to like here. It’s a fairly easy and practical book to read. It clearly illustrates his views on how to improve the economy and discusses specific plans and pieces of legislation that he has worked on. Some of his ideas come across as being sound to me. On the other hand, I have much disagreement to. There is also a tendency of the Senator to raise strawmen

arguments from the opposition to make his points look better. This is a worthwhile book, do so and make your own call.

Further right-wing suggestions that will help you get acquainted with their views: “Unintimidated” by Scott Walker, “A Time For Truth” by Ted Cruz, “Time to get Tough” by Donald J. Trump, “Rising to the Challenge” by Carly Fiorina, “Taking a Stand” by Rand Paul, “What I Believe” and “One Nation” by Ben Carson, “Immigration Wars” by Jeb Bush, “God, Guns, Grits, and Gravy” by Mike Huckabee, “Fed Up!” by Rick Perry, “Blue Collar Conservatives” by Rick Santorum, and “Our Lost Constitution” by Mike Lee.

Mckinley says

Definitely a politician speaking here. He's got his rhetoric down.
