

A JOURNAL OF LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICY AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

STEVEN DAVIS
AND SEAN O. BURTON

In September 1995 we set out to start a journal of legislation at New York University. With so many student periodicals in publication, why the need for another? And why focus on legislation? We had two reasons.

First, despite the proliferation of student legal journals, the academic community by and large has ignored the study of the legislative process.¹ Important trends, such as the federal government's efforts to devolve significant lawmaking responsibility to state governments, have developed with scarcely any rigorous academic scrutiny.

Second, a journal on legislative topics can be of great practical value to legislators and the larger legal community. Although the intermingling of disciplines such as economics and philosophy has contributed substantially to the study of law, we agreed with Judge Harry T. Edwards's² observation that "significant contingents of 'impractical' scholars . . . produce[] abstract scholarship that has little relevance to concrete issues, or addresses concrete issues in a wholly theoretical manner. As a consequence, . . . judges, administrators, legislators, and practitioners have little use for much of the scholarship that is now produced by members of the academy."³ We believe this journal will fill that void by providing a forum for timely, practical

Steven Davis, B.A., 1992, University of Virginia, J.D., 1996, New York University, is a Cofounder and Alumni Advisor of the *New York University Journal of Legislation and Public Policy*.

Sean O. Burton, B.A., 1993, University of California at Irvine, J.D., 1997, New York University, is a Cofounder and Alumni Advisor, *New York University Journal of Legislation and Public Policy*.

1. See, e.g., Mary Ann Glendon, *Comment to ANTONIN SCALIA, A MATTER OF INTERPRETATION* 95, 95-99 (1997).

2. Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

3. Harry T. Edwards, *The Growing Disjunction Between Legal Education and the Legal Profession*, 91 Mich. L. Rev. 34, 35 (1992).

scholarship, thus contributing to a greater understanding of the legislative process and the lawyer's role within it.

However laudable our reasons, this project would never have gotten off the ground without the efforts and support of many individuals.

Tom Stoddard, the late professor of legislation at NYU and in whose memory this issue is dedicated, was the first person we approached. Professor Stoddard enthusiastically endorsed our undertaking and served as a "soundboard" throughout the approval process, helping us to define the scope and mission of our proposed periodical.

Oscar Chase, Vice Dean of the School of Law, served as our day-to-day contact with the administration, leading us through the many stages of the approval process. He provided the guidance and support necessary to create the *Journal*.

We would like to extend special thanks to Jennie Dorn and Laura Smith, the NYU journal managers, who gave us much needed advice and made sure we crossed every "t" and dotted every "i."

And, of course, we could not have begun any work without the support of Dean John Sexton. His willingness to give us the green light for the project continued a long-standing tradition of support for student activities and exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit that in many ways defines the NYU law school community.

We would also like to recognize those who worked with us on our co-sponsorship of the November 1996 symposium on ballot initiatives. The following professors were instrumental: Tom Stoddard, Burt Neuborne, Norman Dorsen, Larry Kramer, Lawrence Sager, James Jacobs, and Ronald Noble of NYU; William Eskridge of the Georgetown University Law Center; and the late Julian Eule of the University of California at Los Angeles School of Law.

Once our symposium proposal received formal approval, NYU's *Annual Survey of American Law* agreed to co-sponsor the event. Working together, members of the Madison Society—a student group we created to inform the broader NYU community about issues in legislation and to promote the establishment of this periodical—and the staff of *Annual Survey* organized the symposium and edited its papers. We are deeply indebted to the students of *Annual Survey* for their leadership and cooperation in co-hosting the symposium. Jodi King, Evan Nadel, Mark Berube, and Sabrina Comizzoli deserve special mention for overseeing the entire editing process and for dealing with logistical problems. In addition, we would like to thank Joshua Rosenkranz, Executive Director of the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU, for co-sponsoring the symposium and for providing sage advice.

Lastly, we must acknowledge the contributions of our cofounder, Jeff Goldberg. The *Journal's* inaugural editor-in-chief, Jeff assumed a leadership role soon after joining the Madison Society in October 1996. But for his incredible organizational skills and unparalleled drive, the *Journal* would not have been approved.

We wish Jeff and the rest of the editorial staff wisdom and success in guiding NYU's latest contribution to legal scholarship: the *Journal of Legislation and Public Policy*.