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Finding Time: The Economics Of Work-Life Conflict



Synopsis

Employers today are demanding more and more of employees' time. And from campaign barbecues to the blogosphere, workers across the United States are raising the same worried question: How can I get ahead at my job while making sure my family doesn't fall behind? Heather Boushey argues that resolving work-life conflicts is as vital for individuals and families as it is essential for realizing the country's productive potential. The federal government, however, largely ignores the connection between individual work-life conflicts and more sustainable economic growth. The consequence: business and government treat the most important things in life—health, children, elders—as matters for workers to care about entirely on their own time and dime. That might have worked in the past, but only thanks to a hidden subsidy: the American Wife, a behind-the-scenes, stay-at-home fixer of what economists call market failures. When women left the home—out of desire and necessity—the old system fell apart. Families and the larger economy have yet to recover. But change is possible. *Finding Time* presents detailed innovations to help Americans find the time they need and help businesses attract more productive workers. A policy wonk with working-class roots and a deep understanding of the stresses faced by families up and down the income ladder, Heather Boushey demonstrates with clarity and compassion that economic efficiency and equity do not have to be enemies. They can be reconciled if we have the vision to forge a new social contract for business, government, and private citizens.

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Customer Reviews

A wonderful book on a crucial topic! This book tackles an issue affecting most American families: work-life conflict. Boushey does a comprehensive job tackling the problem from several angles. She provides rich historical details, a thorough overview of the most relevant data, a guide to the key economic mechanisms behind work-life conflict, and several well-considered policy responses. (Boushey also provides the reader with an appendix of detailed information on data sources and methods as well as a trove of rich source material.) This is an important scholarly work, yet Boushey presents her arguments in a captivating way, holding the reader's attention through a combination of reasoned analysis and lighter examples, including a few vivid metaphors. As one example, Boushey describes the disruptive transitions in the workforce as analogous in destructive force to the eruption of Mt. St. Helens. Yet, as time passed, the mountain recovered, and today, hikers can walk to the rim of the mountain's new summit, since there are numerous new paths up the mountain. Likewise, despite the disruption in labor markets and family life, there are important ways that policy can respond to give us new paths forward. Boushey describes four essential ways forward: (1) policies addressing family and health leave for workers, (2) policies focused on predictable and reasonable work schedules, (3) policies addressing high-quality childcare and elder-care, and (4) efforts to ensure that solutions reach those throughout society. Boushey makes compelling arguments that these policy responses to work-life conflict are within our means as a society, given the economic mechanisms at hand. This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the problems of work-life conflict.

excellent informative

Wonderful book!

Was looking forward to this book but I regret, it is a disappointment. The author rambles about her childhood and Mt St Helens or TV shows like Downtown-Abbey. Many sentences are vacuous e.g. "housing is one of the largest expenses for the typical middle class family." Really? As teenagers would say: Dah. Or, "the typical middle-class family looks different today than in the past." Really? Is that so? [Dah]. It's unfortunate because this is an interesting subject-matter especially in year 2016, with a large female labor force but Ms Boushey does this area of study a disservice. With an approbation from Mr Summers combined with an interesting topic, I was almost sure this would be a fun read; I was wrong.

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