



The Collapse of the Common Good: How America's Lawsuit Culture Undermines Our Freedom

Philip K. Howard

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In pursuit of fairness at any cost, we have created a society paralyzed by legal fear: Doctors are paranoid and principals powerless. Little league coaches, scared of liability, stop volunteering. Schools and hospitals start to crumble. The common good fades, replaced by a cacophony of people claiming their “individual rights.”

By turns funny and infuriating, this startling book dissects the dogmas of fairness that allow self-interested individuals to bully the rest of society. Philip K. Howard explains how, trying to honor individual rights, we removed the authority needed to maintain a free society. Teachers don’t even have authority to maintain order in the classroom. With no one in charge, the safe course is to avoid any possible risk. Seesaws and diving boards are removed. Ridiculous warning labels litter the American landscape: “Caution: Contents Are Hot.”

Striving to protect “individual rights,” we ended up losing much of our freedom. When almost any decision that someone disagrees with is a possible lawsuit, no one knows where he stands. A huge monument to the unknown plaintiff looms high above America, casting a dark shadow across our daily choices. Today, in the land of free speech, you’d have to be a fool to say what you really think.

This provocative book not only attacks the sacred cows of political correctness, but takes a breathtakingly bold stand on how to reinvigorate our common good. Only by restoring personal authority can schools begin to work again. Only by judges and legislatures taking back the authority to decide who can sue for what can doctors feel comfortable using their best judgment and American be liberated to say and do what they know is right. Lucid, honest, and hard hitting, *The Collapse of the Common Good* shows how Americans can bring back freedom and common sense to a society disabled by lawyers and legal fear.

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