

3-21-2013

## Introduction

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### Recommended Citation

Jackson, Ira A. (2013) "Introduction," *New England Journal of Public Policy*: Vol. 24: Iss. 1, Article 3.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.umb.edu/nejpp/vol24/iss1/3>

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## **Introduction**

*Ira A. Jackson*

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**W**hen Pdraig O'Malley informed me that the *New England Journal of Public Policy* that he edited so wisely and well for nearly 25 years was about to resume publication—albeit, electronically—I was thrilled and really overjoyed. As a new (interim) dean of a school of policy and global studies at a public research university, who wouldn't be excited about re-launching a journal that has been a crossroads between the academy and policymakers, a meeting ground between theory and politics, a safe place to explore relevant ideas that matter from a variety of valued perspectives?

The prior forty-one issues of the *New England Journal of Public Policy* have tackled topics ranging from AIDS and homelessness to regional economic recovery; to just wars and women in politics. The four hundred contributing authors have ranged from serious scholars to path-breaking practitioners. What rings through across topics is openness to both new ideas and reality as lived on the ground, and a desire to courageously tackle some of the biggest and most intractable and even uncomfortable issues of our time. In reading past issues, I sense a normative approach that explicitly seeks to make our world, both locally and nationally, not only better understood, but also more equitable and just. Nothing could better exemplify our mission as a school.

John W. McCormack, for whom our school is named, was raised in Andrew Square in South Boston and was renting an apartment on Columbia Road in Dorchester when he died. He served in influential roles in Congress during eight presidencies - from Coolidge to Nixon, and played an instrumental role in legislation from Social Security to Medicare, Medicaid, and the Civil Rights Acts. He was there at the birth of the New Deal and as Speaker of the House helped secure the Great Society—and enabled the Manhattan Project and championed immigration reform, among many other legislative legacies. Needless to say, I am honored to serve as steward of the school that bears his name. I am also proud to have Pdraig O'Malley, the John Joseph Moakley Chair for Peace and Reconciliation and the editor of the *New England Journal of Public Policy*, on our faculty. Pdraig's pioneering scholarship and leadership have made an enduring difference to understanding, justice and progress from Northern Ireland to South Africa.

*Ira A. Jackson is Dean of the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Graduate Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston.*

We here at the University of Massachusetts Boston take seriously our obligations and opportunities to advance and disseminate knowledge and to contribute to our community, regionally and globally.

As the *New England Journal of Public Policy* reemerges, I have every confidence that it will advance what we seek here at the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies: intellectual excellence, a focus on significant and meaningful issues, and a desire to have a positive impact on the society that we serve. Please join us—as an author, as a consumer, as a participant—in a public conversation that bridges the world of thought and action, the realms of thinkers and doers, analysts, and decision-makers, about issues that matter to our entire community.