



A Time to Fight: Reclaiming a Fair and Just America

James Webb

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"I'm the only person in the history of Virginia elected to statewide office with a Union card, two Purple Hearts, and three tattoos."

Jim Webb—the bestselling author and now the celebrated, outspoken U.S. Senator from Virginia—presents a clear-eyed, hard-hitting plan of attack for putting government to work for the people, rather than special interests, and for restoring the country's standing around the world.

Infused with the intelligence, force, and firebrand style that has earned Senator Jim Webb enormous national attention from his earliest days in office, *A Time to Fight* offers a thorough and provocative assessment of the thorniest issues Americans face today, along with cogent solutions drawn from Webb's lifetime of experience as a much-decorated Marine, a widely traveled, award-winning journalist and novelist, a highly placed member of the Reagan administration, a Senator with a son who fought as a Marine in Iraq and, perhaps most important, a proud scion of America's vast but frequently ignored working class.

Webb exposes how America has entered a dangerous, unprecedented cycle of seemingly unsolvable unknowns. Our economic policies, particularly in this age of globalization, have produced widely divergent results leading to a country calcifying along class lines. Our demographic makeup has been altered dramatically and is set to keep on changing, through both legal and illegal immigration. Our editorialists and politicians talk about the American dream, and some urge us to bring democracy to the rest of the world. But more than two million Americans are now in prison, by far the highest incarceration rate in the so-called advanced world. Our foreign policy is confused, without clear direction; increasingly vulnerable to such largely unexamined long-term threats as China's emerging power while it has become bogged down in the never-ending struggles of the Middle East. As this drift toward societal regression has taken place, America's leadership has largely been paralyzed, unable or unwilling to stop the slide. "Where are the leaders?" Webb asks. "Has our political process become so compromised by powerful interest groups and the threat of character assassination that even the best among us will not dare to speak honestly about the solutions that might bring us back to common sense and fundamental fairness?"

Through vivid personal narratives of the struggles members of his family faced, and citing the courageous actions of presidents ranging from Andrew Jackson to Teddy Roosevelt to Dwight Eisenhower, *A Time to Fight* provides specific, viable ideas for restoring fairness to our economic system, correcting the direction of national security efforts, ending America's military occupation of Iraq, and developing greater government accountability. Webb brings a fresh perspective to political dynamics that have shaped our country. His stirring, populist manifesto calls upon voters to make the choices that will change America for the better in this election season.

A Time to Fight: Reclaiming a Fair and Just America Details

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Renaissance Marine says

I am a fan of James Webb's fiction. As a young marine I devoured his books on the corps and combat, and I have admired his life and what he has achieved. That's why I chose to read this book. I assumed it was an autobiography. I was wrong.

I don't quit on many books. I stopped on this one less than halfway thru. Rather than an autobiographical account, this book is a smarmy political commercial. Webb should stick to fiction.

Kent Lundgren says

If you love this country for its promise, for what it should be, for what it CAN be, Senator James Webb's book will make you cry at the loss of direction and focus, and fear for our future. This book is not the typical liberal jeremiad about America's sins and shortcomings, but the deeply-considered thoughts of a highly intelligent man with a strong sense of duty and love of country, about how the United States is betraying its promises to itself. He is a patriot of the best sort and he writes with sorrowful love of what's happening to our country.

He proposes solutions. I don't like all of them but universal approval is not what's called for to appreciate this book. It's his sense of "rightness", a sense of honor, and fundamental decency that engages the reader.

Webb is a decorated hero of the Viet Nam war, a boxer, an Undersecretary of Defense, Secretary of the Navy under President Reagan, (a Democrat by inclination, he became a Reagan Democrat in those years), a journalist, a writer, a student of history, and now a U.S. Senator, almost by default. He didn't want the job, but duty called.

He likes to say that in the Senate he is unique in that he has a union card, two Purple Hearts, and three tattoos. A protean man, is what he is. I like him and I like his books - he's written nine of them.

Kent Lundgren

David says

Heard him on NPR and was interested. It's really well done. I didn't realize that he was a novelist (the movie *Rules of Engagement* was based on one of his books) as well as the Secretary of Navy during the Reagan administration. Makes for some interesting perspectives. It is inspiring in the same way that Obama can energize, but he also gives voice to a few more pragmatic hard-core progressive concerns. Some of those rust-belt issues that seem to be dogging Obama. I particularly like his comparisons of our current income stratification to the conditions in the Gilded Age when a vaunted Republican, Teddy Roosevelt, was a trust buster and fighting for giving all Americans a square deal. He's very specific on military strategy and it is insightful. I think he challenges Democrats to become better Democrats and Republicans to become better

Republicans.

Dalton Harshfield says

This book is about Jim Webb, former Senator of Virginia. This book details his early life as a child. The book covers his life from the time he was ten years old with a father serving in the military, to when he served as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the Reagan administration. He uses his early childhood and his time spent serving as guides to his political career. He uses past experience and knowledge to make well-informed decisions as a Senator. He details his campaign for Senator for Virginia in 2006. Jim Webb had a hard campaign for the Senate because he was running as a Democrat, and before 2006 he had considered himself a Republican. Jim Webb faced many accusations ranging from being a communist to a racist by his opponent. Webb faced an opponent who had four times as much money for campaigning than he did. Webb kept his values and his stances strong and ended up being elected to the United States Senate. Webb's views on policies ranging from abortion to Affirmative Action come from his morals and past experiences. He finally talks about his placement on the political spectrum by calling himself a "Moderate Independent". The book ends with Jim Webb pledging his loyalty to the Constitution over any popular idea. People who enjoy books that involve politics or the military would enjoy this book. People who enjoy politics would love this book because of its in-depth analysis of politics. Also, Jim Webb gives great accounts of American politics and how it correlates to our everyday lives. He gives the famous quote, "Just because you do not have an interest in politics does not mean that politics does not have an interest in you." People who love the military and books about the military would also love this book because of its interaction with Webb's childhood with a father in the military. Also because it recounts the days of when Jim Webb himself served in the military during the Vietnam War. Lastly, people who love the military would love this book because of Jim Webb's past experience in the Defense Department as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

I give this book 5 out of 5 stars. I gave this book that rating because it appealed to my want to learn the ins and outs of politics and political debates over topics. This book turned politics into a lesson on how to be a better informed American citizen and how it is our duty to stay informed. Another reason is because Jim Webb's accounts of his early childhood reminded me of how much easier life is then it was in the 50's when he was growing up. It gave me more appreciation of what all I have, including my family. Webb makes his biography a testimony to the American people that God, country, and family are all we have in this world. We could survive without everything else in this world besides those 3 things. He makes it a point that us as Americans have a duty to protect our rights, property, family, and beliefs from all enemies, foreign and domestic.

ProgressiveBookClub says

A smart, tough-minded election-year manifesto for change.

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Jim Webb—the best-selling author and now the celebrated, outspoken U.S. Senator from Virginia—presents a clear-eyed, hard-hitting plan of attack for putting government to work for the people, rather than for special

interests, and for restoring the country's standing around the world.

Infused with the intelligence, force and firebrand style that has earned Senator Jim Webb enormous national attention from his earliest days in office, *A Time to Fight* offers a thorough and provocative assessment of the thorniest issues Americans face today, along with cogent solutions drawn from Webb's lifetime of experience as a much-decorated Marine, a widely traveled, award-winning journalist and novelist, a highly placed member of the Reagan administration, a senator with a son who fought as a Marine in Iraq and, perhaps most important, a proud scion of America's vast but frequently ignored working class.

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To learn more, visit The Progressive Book Club: <http://www.progressivebookclub.com/pb...>

Ray says

Webb describes his background as a decorated Marine officer serving in Vietnam, a novelist, and a former member of the Reagan Administration and U.S. Senate. He's an interesting guy with good political insights. While not a current candidate for higher office, his ideas and the solutions he offers for many of the difficult areas facing our Country might make him a viable candidate for a position in an Obama administration.

Brad says

It's refreshing to know that the senator of your state is probably the smartest man when he walks in a room. This book is not your typical policy book by a politician, but a smart and thoughtful call to action to

approach subjects from a new perspective and an idea of how to accomplish change as opposed to just speaking about it.

Kateparis12 says

Some of the most sense I have read from a politician in a long time. Webb does a great job of laying his strategy for Iraq, improving the prison system and working towards economic equality. However, his ideas don't come off as preachy because he has the experience to back up most everything he says. Makes you proud to be a Virginian and hopeful that Congress might get something done if there were more Jim Webbs in Washington.

Don says

letting perfect be enemy of good, substance over politics, tsunami forces change, debating club shrewd cunning, scorpions in a jar, 2/3 wrong track 06 election Rove and next Obama disinformation vote for least harm, safety nets make rebellion, economic America social justice, write faction facts and fiction, poor VA service poor special ed class self important jerk no tip, thank good Lord for Nrotc, guaranteed equal outcome what about opportunity, dis Schivo dis TR, use govt to get rich manipulate system, wage decline Bush and more Obama, top 1% richer and democrat bail outs billions for, govt benefit one class of people, culture wars caused democrats to shift focus off worker, only 1% environmental concern, Iraq tyrant beloved Japan emperor, MacArthur arrogance defended, dems want to drop marines and carrier groups weak, Eisenhower identified concern of mil ind complex, growth of ind contractors while at dod, conservative citizen soldiers, McNamara with whiz kids, dems diss mil, non-violent drug possession with mandatory sentencing yield 25% of worlds prison pop with only 5% of pop, too blind to Bush bias, 1917 Soviet redistribution also failed, define good leaders and hold accountable, solve problems from bottom up.

Ron Grunberg says

It is rare and satisfying to read a book by a member of the U.S. Senate that bespeaks an enormous intelligence, diplomacy and directness, befitting a gentleman with no ax to grind, and which teaches so profoundly subject matter based on long experience and no long windedness.

I speak of this book by Senator Jim Webb, who took a quite unusual path into politics: he was a writer for 30 years. This is his ninth book. He was Secretary of the Navy under Reagan, has worked all over the world in the Marines, as a journalist, a movie maker, a consultant, and so on.

He brings all those years of inside military knowledge to these pages, and the book's a real eye-opener. He gives us real history, in contrast to many stereotypes we've grown up with. He tells us how deeply trained and knowledgeable soldiers are, how Russian spies created disaster for us in the Korean theater, how Douglas MacArthur was not so much an insubordinate as a brilliant commander who ran up against an insane bureaucracy back in Washington, which quite clearly is the case today as well, regarding certain so-called "insubordinate" generals and the hell-bent-for-war administration of Bush and Cheney.

There's a lot of common sense discussion of problems we face today. For example, as important as Global

Warming is, Senator Webb says the problem can't be given the full attention it needs until more essential needs are met by a growing number of Americans, for example, food clothing and housing, which current economic crises are exacerbating: without fed bellies, a roof over one's head, it is impossible to address further out issues.

He also in a chapter on our humongous prison system, which boasts the largest percentage of its citizens incarcerated in the world, Webb chronicles the huge population there for minor drug crimes, who are mainly Black, and illustrates how this creates a permanent, usually not-able-to-vote underclass who can't find good jobs when they get out, and the volatility this brings about, how it bodes little well for a reconciliation within society. And he laments how hard it is to deal with this issue, because politicians fear to touch it, because they would have to be bold and declare we should decriminalize marijuana, for example, and then they run the reality of being dubbed "soft on crime" which could cripple them politically. Note, in this long election campaign, I can't remember a single time our prison population is brought up in the debates.

Webb tellingly gives us a history of the Democratic Party moving away from its most notable support of unions, of the average American worker, which debate with the Republicans over the past few decades has morphed instead into "cultural issues" which most of the civilized world would never relegate to public debate: gay marriage, flag lapel pins; nonsense. As a result, many blue collar workers have been led astray, as it were, into Republican hands, and Webb urges the Democrats refocus on what made them strong.

Well, it's up to Senator Obama to listen. Webb's been talked about as a running mate. Maybe he could have a high position in the cabinet. One thing's for sure: Webb should sit down with Obama and highlight the important parts of this book. I hope Obama gives him a good read.

James says

A carefully thought-through manifesto from a wise, brave, and unselfish patriot. Senator Webb has long been one of my heroes, and my regard for him has deepened as I've read this book.

Like this author, when I was training as a young Marine officer, one of the many things I learned by heart is that whenever possible, if you're pointing out a problem you should offer at least one possible solution. In this book Senator Webb points out deep-rooted problems in several areas in our country today, and in each case he proposes solutions. He cuts past surface clutter to the deeper causes of the problems and seeks to propose constructive changes at that level.

Over the years, this man's political label has changed, but that seems to be more due to the shifting of the culture around him than to changes in his fundamental values. From his college days to now he has focused on service to his fellows and on trying to make the world a better place for everyone.

I would love to have had the chance to serve under him when he was a Marine officer, but our times in uniform didn't overlap - in a way I did, at a great remove, when I was on active duty and he was Secretary of the Department of the Navy. I hope to have the chance to volunteer for his presidential campaign someday.

Neil says

As a Virginian waking up happily to a newly blue state on November 5th, I had mixed feelings about Senator Webb's book.

In the chapter where he directly addresses his subtitle "reclaiming a fair and just America," Webb is very good. He makes an excellent case for why the rich/poor gap in America has become untenable and how the Republicans have used power not just to defend business interests but actively to make the wealthiest Americans even wealthier. Everyone ought to read this chapter.

That said, however, too much of the rest of the book is given over to recounting Webb's accomplishments and not political analysis. He has lived a remarkable life, and it is great that someone who admits that he has made his living from writing has been elected to the U.S. Senate, I don't dispute that. But there's just a little bit too much self congratulation going on here.

I also have mixed feelings about Webb's foreign policy. While on one hand I think he is very clearly on the right side when he analyzes how America was manipulated by a few neocons into pursuing their agenda in the morass that is Iraq, I couldn't help but feel that on the other hand, Webb was awfully obsessed with his own Vietnam experience. Other than getting out of Iraq, I was left unclear about what kinds of foreign policy goals he would pursue.

I also think his dismissal of environmental issues is too abrupt.

In the end, this is a book worth reading. Obviously, my political beliefs color my view of it somewhat. I do think it is a bit mistitled. This is more about how Jim Webb's life has led him to the beliefs he has now, than it is the set of arguments and policies that one might expect from the title.

David says

James Webb considers himself to be a journalist; He wrote six books and was the executive producer of the movie *Rules of Engagement*. *He was a lecturer at the US Naval Academy*. Nevertheless, he is better known as a Vietnam War hero while he was a US Marine Platoon Commander, as a Secretary of the Navy under President Reagan, and as a Senator (Democrat) from Virginia. He is well known for his outspoken views during just about every job he ever held; for example, he is known for his opposition to the war in Iraq. He considers himself to be a redneck, and he wrote, "*I'm the only person in the history of Virginia elected to statewide office with a Union card, two Purple Hearts, and three tattoos.*"

As I think of it now, James Webb's life is in some ways parallel to "Jack Ryan", the famous fictional character in many of Tom Clancy's books.

Webb's book is a refreshing, hard-hitting narrative about his family, his life, the US military, politics and foreign affairs. He writes about the growing inequality among Americans--much greater than in other countries. He writes about the shame of the enormous prison population, and contrasts American prisons with those in Japan. He writes about the military-industrial complex, about military bureaucracies, and recounts some histories of a few of America's brilliant generals.

Webb has plenty of criticism for both Democrats and Republicans. He shows how the Democrats damaged the military during the Vietnam War, and how more recently, Republicans are attempting to bring down the military. Webb points out many problems in the United States, but he poses some practical solutions.

While you might think that a book that features politics, published in 2008 might be a bit outdated by now, I am struck by how apropos his comments about Iraq and foreign affairs are today. It's almost as if the book were written yesterday. I heartily recommend this book.

Raul says

A "must" book for anyone considering participation in the forthcoming 2008 US presidential election.

Although largely autobiographical, Jim Webb point out some of the major problems his country is facing, and offers, as the best and indeed urgent solution, that Americans should take advantage of the privileges they have under the US Constitution to speak out, and demand better performance from the leaders the elect to represent them. In choosing among candidates, voters should not be distracted by dirty campaign tactics which, rather than spell out a direction for the country, aim at character assassination, often based on lies, exaggerations, words taken out of context, often using surrogates, as Karl Rove employed in the past. Jim's concerns are manifold, beginning with the increasing economic stratification of this country with the rich getting richer and the poor having fewer and fewer opportunities, while the middle class is under attack. In foreign policy he decries the absence of a governing strategy, with over-reliance on sending the military into situations that cannot be won militarily. His hero is Dwight Eisenhower, but he also uses the experiences of many other presidents, from Theodore Roosevelt, to Harry Truman, Nixon and Johnson to make his points. Indeed one of the thrusts of his book is that there is a big difference between military and civilian government. Our military is top notch because it builds on past military experience, whereas the civilian government, especially lately, never bothers with the lessons of history (the Iraq war being a prime example ... guided more by neo-conservative ideology than by facts, experience, and knowledge of the culture of the Middle East). He has some interesting perspectives on the effects of the Vietnam war on the political climate in the US and the role of the military in our society. He decries the growth of the military-industrial complex. A striking characteristic of the book (and one that makes it less titillating to read!) is that he seldom attacks individuals, only their actions. For example, he manages to heavily criticize the tactics of his opponent in his 2006 senatorial race without ever mentioning George Allen by name. Cheney is mentioned only once in connection with Halliburton.

Jessica King says

It's a shame Mr. Webb backed out of the elections. This book alone would have won my vote.

This is a must read for anyone interested in history and politics. Webb is intelligent. The book covers his own life (which is interesting enough all on its own - this guy has done so many interesting things and is a writer), recent history, his stand on interpreting the constitution, and the problem he sees with politics over the last 40 years or so.
