

# BACKBONE

MAVERICK ESSAYS IN PRAISE OF MIDDLE AMERICA

**WHY AMERICAN POPULISM  
SHOULD BE WELCOMED, NOT FEARED**

BY KARL ZINSMEISTER



*Is the popular revolt that returned Donald Trump to the White House dangerous?*

A new book by Karl Zinsmeister...

**BACKBONE**  
**Why American Populism Should Be Welcomed, Not Feared**

...will help readers understand the sources and likely outcomes of today's grassroots uprising.

This timely tale combines engrossing profiles of real people with brisk history and helpful data. Color photos bring to life the middle-American individuals and locales presented in the storytelling.

Reporting from across the country uncovers the wisdom of ordinary Americans—and suggests that the new assertiveness of common citizens should be welcomed.

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## BOOK DESCRIPTION

Middle America is in rebellion today. People are objecting to bureaucratic coercion, manipulations of speech, redefinitions of sex and family, racial nostrums, strictures on economic freedom, and pressure to conform with new progressive narratives and dictates. Similar revolts are taking place in other developed nations. But America has a special tradition of mass backlash against heavy-handed grandees.

This book pulls together rich evidence from 1994 to 2024 to show that the remonstrance which returned Donald Trump to the White House has been building for three decades. Reporting and data ignored by conventional media are mixed with vivid storytelling about the lives of everyday citizens. A central observation: the working- and middle-class Americans who make up our nation's backbone possess deep stores of good sense, decency, and insight.

Is our populist rising a threat? Or will it pull the U.S. away from decadence, division, and decline? Today's ruling caste has so seriously blundered in matters of economics, public health, education, personal identity, cultural values, foreign affairs, and Constitutional freedoms, Zinsmeister concludes, that middle-America's resistance should be embraced as a necessary corrective to managerial coercion from above.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karl Zinsmeister's two-dozen books include political analysis, an historical novel, embedded war reporting, authoritative reference volumes, children's works, a storytelling cookbook, even a nonfiction graphic novel commissioned by Marvel Comics. He has produced a major PBS film (*Warriors*), a podcast series, and been Editor-in-Chief of two national magazines. He graduated from Yale and also studied at Ireland's Trinity College Dublin, researching the history of revolutions and winning national athletic championships at both universities. He has created pioneering schools and charitable programs as an expert philanthropy adviser. Early in his career he was an assistant to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and from 2006 to 2009 he served in the White House as chief domestic policy adviser to President George W. Bush. See more at [KarlZinsmeister.com](http://KarlZinsmeister.com)

### WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

"So accessible, and so wise. Makes visible the whole side of America that is so often sidelined and replaced."

—*poet Frederick Turner*

Timely, super engaging, substantive, inspiring.

—*Thomas Tierney, co-founder Bridgespan, former CEO Bain & Co.*

What a wonderful read! I couldn't put it down. Read until 3:45 am on a "school night"!

—*Zak Dentes, U.S. Marine Corps*

Beautiful. Brilliant. Enlightening.

—*John Pound, WSJ Conversation*

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