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Titolo	Liberty in peril : democracy and power in American history // Randall G. Holcombe ; foreword by Barry R. Weingast
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ISBN	1-59813-334-9
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Soggetti	Democracy - United States United States Politics and government
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Note generali	"This revised and updated text is based on the text of From Liberty to Democracy which was published by the University of Michigan Press in 2002"--Title page verso.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Liberty : the revolutionary cause -- Liberty and democracy as economic systems -- Consensus versus democracy : politics in eighteenth-century America -- Constitutions as constraints : The Articles of Confederation and the Constitution of the United States -- The growth in parties and interests before the War Between the States -- The impact of the War Between the States -- Interest groups and the transition to government growth: 1870-1915 -- Populism and progressivism -- The growth of the federal government in the 1920s -- The New Deal and World War II -- Democracy triumphs : The Great Society -- The dangers of democracy
Sommario/riassunto	"In the twenty-first century, Americans tend to think of their government as a democracy, in the sense that they view the proper function of government as carrying out the will of the people, as revealed through democratic elections. This differs substantially from the vision of the American Founders, who deliberately designed their government to be insulated from democratic pressures. The role of government, as they saw it, was to protect the rights of individuals, and the biggest threat to individual liberty was the government itself. So they designed a government with constitutionally limited powers, constrained to carry out only those activities specifically allowed by the

Constitution. As its title suggests, this book describes the decline of liberty as the guiding principle of American liberty in favor of the idealization of democracy. In a nation that views itself as a democracy, any criticism of democracy might appear anti-American. The material that follows shows that liberty, not democracy, was the principle underlying American government, and the American Founders clearly understood that unconstrained democracy can undermine liberty just as much as autocracy. The idea that government should carry out the "will of the people" as revealed through democratic elections may be even more dangerous, because it legitimizes the actions of democratic governments by claiming those actions were approved by a majority"--
