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## Preface

Why write this book? Technological advances in biology have enormous potential impacts on our lives, and there is a need for citizens and policymakers alike to understand the scientific, political, and ethical issues that underlie the policy decisions that might be made. Many issues arising from new advances in biology do not have simple answers. Conflicting goals and beliefs influence the discussions that are associated with the development of policy, and compromise between conflicting views may be difficult. This book is intended as an introduction to science policy. Additional readings are suggested for those who wish to dig deeper into their areas of interest.

This book examines those interactions between science and government in which policy (and political) decisions are made, using examples drawn from the biological sciences. These examples are selected to demonstrate the different ways in which science and politics intersect. Policy may take various forms, such as international laws and treaties, federal or state laws, court decisions, and specific regulatory measures (to control but not proscribe particular behaviors). Policy may be reflected too in the lack of adoption of any formal regulations. What causes government to step in and regulate a biological technology? Does the public have a right—or the ability—to control science? We attempt to show the limits of scientific knowledge and its ability to contribute to effective policymaking.

Writing any book on government policy inevitably results in a sea of acronyms. We have tried to limit our use of acronyms to common ones, and redefine them frequently. Nevertheless, acronyms are unavoidable, and we encourage readers to use patience in their first perusals of the text. It takes a little time to become conversant with the alphabet soup of government.

The issues we discuss are controversial, and our goal is to present them in a balanced manner, reflecting the range of current viewpoints. We try to avoid polemics—but it is almost impossible to avoid the insertion of at least some of our own opinions. We urge readers to draw their own conclusions from the information presented.