**Clarion Review**

Political Science

**What You Must Do for Your Country**
Claude Gendreau
CreateSpace
978-1-4564-9599-2
Four Stars (out of Five)

A multitude of problems face the United States and other nations as they endeavor to deal with the environmental, social, and economic realities of the twenty-first century. Claude Gendreau, a Canadian-born veterinarian, thinks the solution lies in changes that individual citizens can make and lobbying efforts they can undertake to influence the future of the nation and the world.

*What You Must Do for Your Country* spends a lot of time looking at the environmental implications of the present American lifestyle. Americans use tremendous amounts of energy—particularly from nonrenewable, polluting resources—with dire consequences, not just for people in the United States but everywhere else as well.

Other issues faced by the US that Gendreau touches on include trade deficits, the national debt, the housing glut, excesses in defense spending, immigration, and free trade. For each of these problems Gendreau lists potential solutions. Sadly, many require such broad and fundamental changes to the American way of life, public policy, governance, and institutions that readers will likely feel powerless in the face of such daunting concerns.

Admonitions that Americans must, for example, “create a favorable political climate for fuel-tax increases,” “lobby for the adoption of measures to stop the construction of new single-family homes,” “support the legalization of undocumented immigrants,” and “support cap-and-trade legislation,” to name just a few, only prove that these massive problems have no easy solutions and won’t be solved by the action of a few individuals (at least so long as those individuals are not members of Congress).

Gendreau suggests actions, particularly in the area of energy use, that Americans can accomplish on their own, such as buying more efficient lightbulbs, appliances, and cars; choosing to live more frugally; eliminating credit card debt; and choosing smaller homes. In those areas, the concerted efforts of a large number of citizens will make a difference, though it

remains to be seen whether individuals lobbying Congress in the same numbers could lead to all of the other things Gendreau would like to see happen: immigration reform, a carbon tax, free trade with South and Central America, and significant changes to Social Security.

Gendreau's ideas are well reasoned and researched, and he uses ample statistics for support. Many sources are referenced throughout the text, though each is cited only once. As such, footnotes on a particular page might take the reader all over the book should he or she want more information on a given source.

Still, Gendreau does make compelling arguments about what he believes must be done to help the United States maintain its measure of prominence in the world. The bigger question is actually how to get those things done, what forms of lobbying and social protest might be effective to get Washington on board, and, indeed, what might happen to the country and the world if such changes are not made.

*Sarah E. White*