

Chapter 10

The Federal Bureaucracy



Why It's Important

They Have Your Number As an American citizen you deal with several government bureaus and agencies. How is the federal bureaucracy organized to serve you and millions of other people? This chapter will help you answer that question.



To find out how the federal bureaucracy operates to help Americans, view the *Democracy in Action* Chapter 10 video lesson:

The Federal Bureaucracy



GOVERNMENT

Online



Chapter Overview Visit the *United States Government: Democracy in Action* Web site at gov.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 10—Overview** to preview chapter information.

Bureaucratic Organization

Reader's Guide

Key Terms

bureaucrat, embassy, government corporation, deregulate, procurement

Find Out

- What is the general organizational structure of the 15 cabinet level departments?
- How are independent government agencies different from regulatory commissions?

Understanding Concepts

Public Policy How does government bureaucracy serve the executive branch in carrying out the will of the people's representatives?

COVER STORY

Plans to Investigate FBI

WASHINGTON, D.C., JUNE 20, 2001

Two senators—Charles Schumer, a Democrat from New York, and Orrin Hatch, a Republican from Utah—introduced legislation calling for a thorough review of the FBI by a commission of law enforcement experts. They identified record-keeping and data retrieval as important areas to be examined. Less than an hour later, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft called for a thorough investigation. The probe is an effort to respond to increasing criticism of the FBI surrounding several investigations, raids, and internal problems.



FBI Seal

Hundreds of agencies like the FBI help to make up the federal bureaucracy. Most of these departments and agencies are part of the executive branch that carries out the laws passed by Congress. The people who work for these organizations are called **bureaucrats**, or civil servants.

The federal bureaucracy is organized into departments, agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and advisory committees. Most of these organizations are responsible to the president, although some of them report to Congress. Acts of Congress created almost all of them.

The Constitution provides indirectly for the bureaucracy. Article II, Section 2, states that:

“He [the president] may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, . . .”

—The Constitution


Article II also gives the president the power to appoint the heads of those departments.

Thus, the Founders anticipated the need for creating federal agencies that would carry on the day-to-day business of government. At the same time they would probably be shocked by the size the federal bureaucracy has grown to today.

In the early years of the Republic, the federal bureaucracy was quite small. When Jefferson became president in 1801, the federal government employed only 2,120 people. These employees were mainly commissioners of Native American affairs, postmasters, customs collectors, tax collectors, marshalls, and clerks.

Today, nearly 3 million civilians work for the federal government. Federal agencies are located in more than 440,000 buildings scattered across the nation and around the world.

The Cabinet Departments






 The 15 cabinet departments are a major part of the federal bureaucracy. One of President Washington’s first acts in 1789 was to ask Congress to create the Departments of Treasury, State, and War and the office of attorney general. Since 1789, 11 additional departments have been created. A secretary who is a member of the president’s cabinet heads each of the departments in the executive branch. Departments usually have a second in command, called the deputy secretary or under secretary. In addition, departments have assistant secretaries. The president appoints all these officials.

The next level under these top officials includes the directors of the major units that make up the cabinet department, along with their assistants. These units have various names, including bureau, agency, office, administration, or division.

The top officials in each department—the secretaries, agency directors, deputy directors, and their assistants—set overall department policy. These top leaders rely on ideas and information from career officials who are specialists and business managers in the department. Often, these career workers, who frequently have many years of experience, do the research to provide the alternatives from which the top leaders choose.

Department of State The secretary of state is one of the president’s most trusted advisers. The **Department of State** is responsible for the overall foreign policy of the United States. The agency also protects the rights of United States citizens traveling in foreign countries. It staffs **embassies**, or offices of ambassadors in foreign countries, analyzes data about American interests in other countries, and speaks for the United States in the United Nations.

The Cabinet Departments

Departments	Year Established	
Defense Department	1789	 Originally the Department of War, it became the Defense Department in 1949
State Department	1789	
Treasury Department	1789	 Originally named the Department of Foreign Affairs
Interior Department	1849	
Agriculture Department	1862	
Justice Department	1870	 Before 1870 the attorney general was a cabinet officer but not head of the department
Commerce Department	1903	
Labor Department	1913	 Originally a bureau within the Department of Commerce
Housing and Urban Development Department	1965	
Transportation Department	1966	
Energy Department	1977	 These became separate departments in 1979. They were established in 1953 as the Health, Education, and Welfare Department.
Health and Human Services Department	1979	
Education Department	1979	
Veterans Affairs Department	1989	
Department of Homeland Security	2002	

Source: thomas.loc.gov.

Critical Thinking Presidents throughout American history have given their cabinet members varying degrees of authority. *Why might the president call on the secretary of transportation to deal with drug smuggling along the Pacific Coast?*



Department of the Treasury Managing the monetary resources of the United States is the primary responsibility of the **Department of the Treasury**. The Bureau of the Mint manufactures coins. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing produces paper money. The Treasury Department also oversees a variety of other duties. One branch—the Internal Revenue Service—is the largest bureau in the Treasury Department. The IRS is responsible for operating the nation’s tax code and collecting those taxes each year. The Bureau of Public Debt is responsible for borrowing the additional money needed to operate the federal government.

Department of the Interior To protect public lands and natural resources throughout the nation and to oversee relations with Native Americans, Congress established the Department of the Interior in 1849. The Bureau of Mines helps oversee the mining of natural resources. The National Park Service manages national monuments, historic sites, and national parks.

Department of Agriculture Created to help farmers improve their incomes and expand their markets, the Department of Agriculture develops conservation programs and provides financial credit to farmers. It also safeguards the nation’s food supply.

Department of Justice Congress established the office of attorney general in 1789 to oversee the nation’s legal affairs. The Department of Justice was created in 1870. Among its well-known agencies are the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Marshals Service, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice enforces antitrust laws. The Civil Rights Division helps enforce civil rights legislation.

Department of Commerce To promote and protect the industrial and commercial segments of the American economy, the Department of Commerce was founded in 1903. Three agencies of this department carry out constitutional directives. The Bureau of the Census counts the people every 10 years. Census figures are used to redraw congressional district boundaries. The Patent



TIME
For the Record

Neither Rain, Nor Sleet . . . Nor Meteors Since the U.S. Postal Service was established in 1777, it has tried to deliver mail as rapidly as possible, using stagecoach, steamboat, automobile, airplane . . . and rocket! On June 8, 1959, a guided missile delivered 3,000 letters from the navy submarine U.S.S. *Barbero* to a U.S. naval station in Mayport, Florida. Included in the mail was a letter written by President Dwight Eisenhower. The postmaster general at the time, Arthur E. Summerfield, said, “Before man reaches the moon, mail will be delivered within hours from New York to California, to Britain, to India or Australia by guided missiles.” Needless to say, Summerfield’s prediction didn’t come true.

and Trademark Office issues patents for new inventions and registers trademarks. The National Institute of Standards and Technology provides uniform standards for weights and measurements.

Department of Labor Congress created the Department of Labor in 1913. Charged with protecting American workers, the department ensures safe working conditions, safeguards a minimum wage, and protects pension rights. The Bureau of Labor Statistics analyzes data on employment, wages, and compensation. The Office of the American Workplace encourages cooperation between labor and management.

Department of Defense First called the Department of War and then the United States Military Establishment until 1949, the Department of Defense protects the nation’s security. Through the Joint Chiefs of Staff—the leaders of the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force—it oversees the armed forces. The government cut back the Defense budget after the Cold War ended, but budgets have since increased due to the war on terrorism.

Department of Health and Human Services

Directing programs concerned with the health and social services needs of the American people is the responsibility of this department. It also manages the federal Medicare and Medicaid programs and

helps senior citizens and less fortunate Americans through the Social Security Administration. Perhaps the most visible part of the Department of Health and Human Services—particularly since the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s—



Critical Thinking Each department in the cabinet is responsible for carrying out its duties as mandated by Congress. The Department of Homeland Security, established in 2002, coordinates many government agencies that work collectively to protect the nation from terrorism. *What division within the Department of Homeland Security is responsible for patrolling the nation's waterways?*

has been the Public Health Service. This agency helps implement a national health policy, conducts medical research, and ensures the safety of food and drugs. The Food and Drug Administration inspects food and drug processing plants and approves new drugs for treatment of diseases.

Department of Housing and Urban Development This department was created in 1965 to preserve the nation's communities and ensure Americans of equal housing opportunities. The Government National Mortgage Association helps make mortgage money available for people to buy homes.

Department of Transportation The Department of Transportation is divided into separate agencies to help it regulate all aspects of American transportation needs, policy development, and planning. The Federal Aviation Administration regulates air travel. The Federal Railroad Administration oversees the nation's railroads. The highways that crisscross the country are regulated by the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration is responsible for the nation's mass transit.

Department of Energy Created in 1977 in response to an energy shortage, the Department of Energy gathered together many separate policy groups. Some of these groups sprang from the Manhattan Project, which developed and tested the nation's first atomic bomb. The Department of Energy plans energy policy and researches and develops energy technology.

Department of Education An educated population of informed citizens is an essential feature of a democratic government. In 1979 Congress created the Department of Education to coordinate federal assistance programs for public and private schools. Today the department oversees programs to help students with limited English proficiency as well as programs for physically challenged students.

Department of Veterans Affairs Founded in 1989, this department was formerly known as the Veterans Administration. It administers several hospitals as well as educational and other programs designed to benefit veterans and their families.


Department of Homeland Security The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, led to the



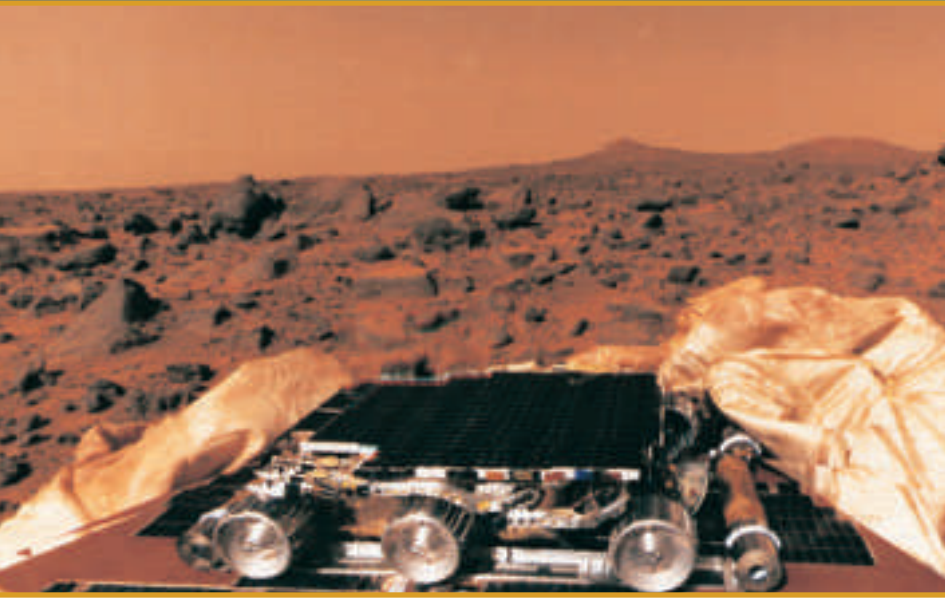
Federal Assistance The Department of Education helps schools meet the special needs of students who are disadvantaged or have disabilities. *What might be a national goal of the Department of Education?*

creation of this department in 2002. It controls the Coast Guard, the Border Patrol, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Customs Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and many other agencies. It also analyzes information collected by the FBI and the CIA.

Independent Agencies

 The federal bureaucracy also contains over 100 independent organizations that are not part of these departments. The president appoints the heads of these agencies.

A few of these agencies are almost as large and well known as cabinet departments. One example is the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Most independent agencies have few employees, small budgets, and little publicity. One example of this type of agency is the American Battle Monuments Commission.



A Bureaucratic Celebrity

NASA, an independent agency, gained further recognition by inaugurating a new era in space exploration with the Mars *Pathfinder*. The *Pathfinder* spacecraft landed on Mars on July 4, 1997, and became the first mobile explorer of another planet. It also sent back to Earth the first high-resolution color images of Mars. **Analyze why achievements such as NASA's mission to Mars are important to the continued existence of federal agencies.**

Assisting the Executive Branch Some independent agencies perform services for the executive branch. The General Services Administration (GSA) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) are two examples. The General Services Administration is responsible for constructing and maintaining all government buildings. It also supplies equipment for federal offices. The National Archives and Records Administration maintains government records and publishes all rules applying to various federal agencies.

The Central Intelligence Agency provides a very different kind of service. The CIA gathers information about what is going on in other countries, evaluates it, and passes it on to the president and other foreign-policy decision makers. The CIA uses its own secret agents, paid informers, foreign news sources, and friendly governments to collect such information.

Government Corporations Some independent agencies, such as the Small Business Administration, directly serve the public. Many of the major agencies are **government corporations**, or businesses the federal government runs.


Today, the executive branch has at least 60 government corporations. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is one. The TVA has built dams and supplies electric power for an eight-state area.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is also a government corporation. It insures bank accounts up to a certain amount. If a bank fails, the FDIC takes it over and repays the depositors.

The best known of the government corporations is the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). Originally an executive department called the Post Office Department, the USPS became a government corporation in 1970. As an executive department, the post office consistently lost money. Since becoming a corporation, the USPS has done a better job of balancing its budget. This is, in part, because Congress passed legislation giving the USPS “the exclusive right, with certain limited exceptions, to carry letters for others.” Only the USPS may deliver first-class mail.

Government corporations are organized somewhat like private businesses. Each has a board of directors and executive officers who direct the day-to-day operations. Government corporations are supposed to be more flexible than regular government agencies. They are more likely to take risks and to find innovative solutions to the challenges they are confronting. Most of the corporations earn money that is put back into the “business.” Unlike private businesses, however, money from Congress—not funds from private investors—supports government corporations.

Regulatory Commissions

 Regulatory commissions occupy a special place in the federal bureaucracy. They are independent of all three branches of the national government. To keep the regulatory commissions impartial, Congress has been careful to protect them from political pressure. Each commission has from 5 to 11 commissioners whom the president appoints with Senate consent. The terms of office of these board members are long—in some cases, as long as 14 years—and the starting dates of the terms are staggered. Unlike other bureaucrats, these commissioners do not report to the president, nor can the president fire them.

Purpose of the Commissions The independent regulatory commissions were created to make rules for large industries and businesses that affect the interests of the public. Commissions also regulate the conduct of these businesses and industries. The regulatory agencies decide such questions as who will receive a license to operate a radio station or to build a natural gas pipeline to serve a large city. The commissions may also act as courts. They may investigate a business for breaking one of the commission's rules. The

commission may hold hearings, collect evidence, and set penalties for any business that violates the rules.

Some Problems Decisions of regulatory commissions can involve millions of dollars and greatly affect businesses. As a result, these agencies are often under intense pressure from lobbyists. Lawyers for industries that the commissions regulate have sometimes tried to go in the “back door” to argue their clients’ cases in private with agency officials.

Critics of the commissions also charge that the commissions and the industries they are supposed to regulate sometimes have a “revolving door” relationship. Commissioners often are former executives in a regulated industry and sometimes leave the commission for high-paying jobs in the same industry. As a result, critics charge, some commissioners have seemed more interested in protecting regulated industries than in making sure that they serve the public interest.

Others point out that most agencies have had a good record of protecting the public interest. The Securities and Exchange Commission, for example, has protected investors in the stock market from fraud.

GOVERNMENT and You

Social Security

If you have a part-time job, 6.2 percent of your pay is probably being deducted for Social Security taxes. The programs funded by such deductions provide important benefits for workers and their families.

Eligibility for Social Security benefits depends on how much you earn and how long you contribute to the Social Security system. For example, to receive monthly payments when you retire, you must accumulate at least 40 work credits. You can receive up to 4 credits a year, based on your earnings. Currently, Social Security retirement benefits provide about 42 percent of a worker's salary.

In addition, statistics show that you have about a 3-in-10 chance of becoming unable to

work before you reach age 65. If you are disabled for a year or more, Social Security will pay monthly benefits to help make up for your loss of income. In many cases, minor children of disabled, deceased, or retired workers are also eligible for benefits.



Contributing taxes to Social Security

Participating IN GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY

An Informed Citizen How might the fact that people are living much longer after retirement affect Social Security benefits in the future?

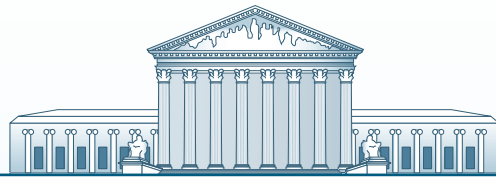
The Government of the United States

CONSTITUTION



LEGISLATIVE BRANCH Congress

- Senate
- House
- Architect of the Capitol
- U.S. Botanic Garden
- General Accounting Office
- Government Printing Office
- Library of Congress
- Congressional Budget Office



EXECUTIVE BRANCH President

- Executive Office of the President

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| ● White House Office | ● Vice President |
| ● Management and Budget | ● U.S. Trade Representative |
| ● Council of Economic Advisers | ● Council on Environmental Quality |
| ● National Security Council | ● Science and Technology Policy |
| ● National Drug Control Policy | ● Administration |
| ● Global Communications | ● National Science and Technology Council |
| ● Domestic Policy Council | ● USA Freedom Corps |
| ● National Economic Council | ● National AIDS Policy |



JUDICIAL BRANCH Supreme Court

- U.S. Courts of Appeals
- U.S. District Courts
- U.S. Court of International Trade
- U.S. Bankruptcy Courts
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces
- U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims
- Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts
- U.S. Sentencing Commission
- U.S. Court of Federal Claims
- U.S. Tax Court
- Federal Judicial Center

THE CABINET

- Agriculture
- Commerce
- Defense
- Education
- Energy
- Health and Human Services
- Homeland Security
- Housing and Urban Development
- Interior
- Justice
- Labor
- State
- Transportation
- Treasury
- Veterans' Affairs

SELECTED INDEPENDENT ESTABLISHMENTS AND GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| ● African Development Foundation | ● Federal Housing Finance Board | ● Nuclear Regulatory Commission |
| ● Central Intelligence Agency | ● Federal Maritime Commission | ● Office of Government Ethics |
| ● Commission on Civil Rights | ● Federal Reserve System | ● Office of Personnel Management |
| ● Consumer Product Safety Commission | ● Federal Trade Commission | ● Office of Special Counsel |
| ● Environmental Protection Agency | ● National Aeronautics and Space Administration | ● Peace Corps |
| ● Equal Employment Opportunity Commission | ● National Archives and Records Administration | ● Securities and Exchange Commission |
| ● Export-Import Bank of the U.S. | ● National Endowment for the Arts | ● Selective Service System |
| ● Farm Credit Administration | ● National Labor Relations Board | ● Small Business Administration |
| ● Federal Communications Commission | ● National Science Foundation | ● Social Security Administration |
| ● Federal Election Commission | | |

Source: www.firstgov.gov.

Critical Thinking The lower half of the chart represents the federal bureaucracy, one of the most powerful forces in the government. *How do government corporations differ from private businesses?*

CONTENTS

Deregulation In a 1976 campaign speech, presidential candidate Jimmy Carter called for a reduction in the number of federal agencies. He cited the increasing difficulty of tracking the effectiveness of existing programs in an overregulated society. According to Carter:

“ We need increased program evaluation. Many programs fail to define with any specificity what they intend to accomplish. Without that specification, evaluation by objective is impossible. . . . ”

—Jimmy Carter, 1976

In recent years Congress has responded to complaints of overregulation by taking steps to **deregulate**, or reduce the powers of regulatory agencies. In 1978, for example, Congress ordered the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) to simplify its procedures and cut back on regulation of the airlines. Congress also set a deadline that specified that the CAB was to go out of business in the year 1985.

Deregulation was a major issue in the 1980s and 1990s. As Republicans pushed for regulatory reform, President Clinton proposed to “reinvent government.” He signed an executive order that required federal regulations to avoid imposing undue economic burdens on businesses without assessing their costs and benefits. In addition, Congress passed deregulation laws dealing with paperwork reduction, risk assessment, and private-property rights.

Cutting the Federal Workforce One way to cut costs was to reduce the number of workers in federal agencies. After a study by Vice President Al Gore, the administration proposed a reduction of the federal workforce by 252,000 in 6 years. Congress passed a bill requiring the reductions and provided cash incentives for workers to resign. It wrote into law a bill that would reduce the size of the Department of Agriculture, cutting 7,500 jobs by 1999.

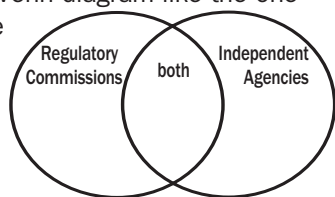
In 1994 Congress eliminated much of the federal regulation of the trucking industry and cut back the role of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC). Then, before the end of 1995, it passed a bill eliminating the ICC altogether. Some employees were transferred to the Transportation Department. The ICC was the oldest federal regulatory agency, founded in 1887.

Promoting Competition Both the president and Congress seemed to agree on the need to promote competition in traditionally regulated industries. Sweeping legislation rewrote the rules for telecommunications in 1996 as the president and Congress worked together in an effort to make the regulatory agencies themselves more efficient. Congress passed legislation streamlining regulation of the securities industry. Following a 1994 study, Congress also streamlined federal purchasing by repealing 300 laws that had made **procurement**, or purchasing of materials, complicated.

Section 1 Assessment

Checking for Understanding

- 1. Main Idea** Using a Venn diagram like the one to the right, analyze how regulatory commissions and independent agencies are alike and how they are different.
- 2. Define** bureaucrat, embassy, government corporation, deregulate, procurement.
- 3. Identify** Department of State, Department of the Treasury.
- 4.** How are cabinet departments organized?



Critical Thinking

- 5. Making Inferences** Why is it important that regulatory commissions be free from political pressures?

Concepts IN ACTION

Public Policy Imagine that you are on a presidential commission looking into the establishment of a new executive department. Decide on an important issue facing the country today. Think of a new executive department to deal with this issue. Present your suggestion, with reasons, as an oral presentation to the commission.

The Civil Service System

Reader's Guide

Key Terms

spoils system, civil service system

Find Out

- How did the civil service system attempt to reform the spoils system?
- What is the difference between a civil servant and a political appointee?

Understanding Concepts

Civic Participation How does the civil service system provide access to government jobs?

COVER STORY

Mail Scandal Spurs Reform

WASHINGTON, D.C., 1881

President James Garfield has released the results of an investigation into allegations against western mail carriers. *The New York Times* had charged the carriers with billing the government unjustified thousands of dollars for mail delivery. The mail carriers claim that delivering to remote areas is very expensive. However, the investigation verified the *Times* claim that many of these highly paid carriers are friends of government officials, and that some deliver mail to places on their routes only three times a year. These revelations have outraged many people and strengthened calls for civil service reform.



19th-century mail carrier

Many people think of a federal bureaucrat as a pencil pusher shuffling papers in Washington, D.C. This image, however, is not accurate for two reasons. First, only 11 percent of all federal government employees work in Washington, D.C. The rest of them work in regional and local offices scattered across the United States and the world. Second, FBI agents, forest rangers, and air-traffic controllers are as much a part of the federal bureaucracy as are secretaries and file clerks. Their activities have little to do with bureaucratic paperwork.

Federal government employees play a vital role in assuring the smooth functioning of the United States government. President Eisenhower addressed this role when he said:

“The government of the United States has become too big, too complex, and too pervasive in its influence on all our lives for one individual to pretend to direct the details of its important and critical programming. Competent assistants are mandatory.”


—Dwight D. Eisenhower

Who are the people who work for the many departments and agencies that make up the federal bureaucracy? The typical man or woman in the federal service is more than 40 years old and has worked for the government for about 15 years. The majority of federal civilian employees earn between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year.

About 30 percent of federal workers are members of minority groups, compared with about 22 percent in the private workforce. Women make up about 44 percent of federal workers, roughly the same percentage of women as in the total labor force. A recent survey found that 30 percent of all federal employees had family members who also worked for the government.

Federal workers hold a great variety of jobs. About half of the federal employees are administrative and clerical workers. The government also employs doctors, veterinarians, lawyers, cartographers, scientists, engineers, accountants, and many other professionals.

Origins

 Today almost all federal jobs are filled through the competitive civil service system. This system, however, was not in place when our government was established.

The Spoils System

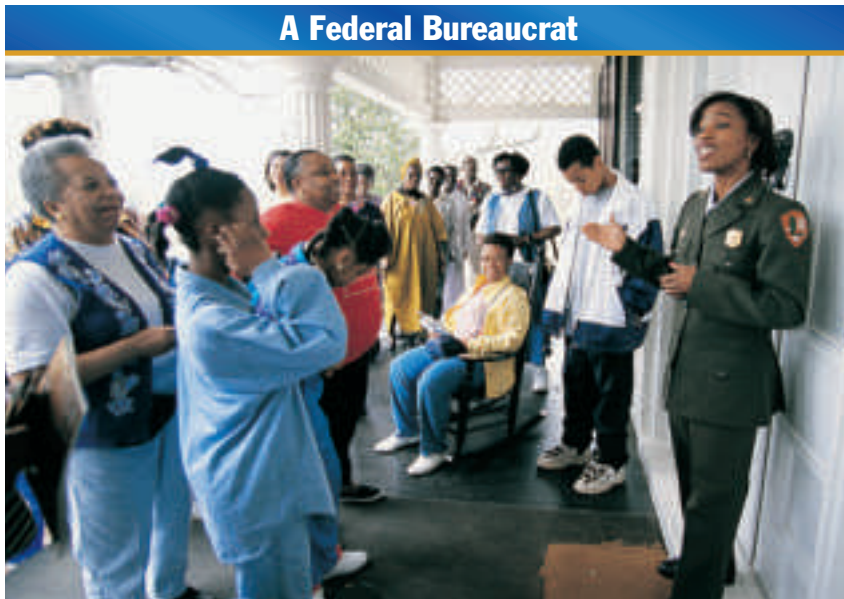
George Washington declared that he appointed government officials according to “fitness of character.” At the same time, however, he did favor members of the Federalist Party.

When Thomas Jefferson entered the White House, he found most federal workers opposed him and his political ideas. Consequently, Jefferson fired hundreds of workers who were Federalists. He replaced these workers with people from his own political party, the Democratic-Republican Party.

By the time **Andrew Jackson** became president in 1829, the federal government had begun to grow. Jackson fired about 1,000 federal workers and gave their jobs to his own political supporters. Jackson defended his actions by arguing that it was more democratic to have rotation in office. Long service in the same jobs by any group of workers, he claimed, would only promote tyranny.

A New York senator at the time put it another way. He defended Jackson’s actions by stating, “To the victor belong the spoils.” The spoils system came to be the phrase that was used for Jackson’s method of appointing federal workers. Today, the term **spoils system** describes the practice of victorious politicians rewarding their followers with government jobs.

A Federal Bureaucrat



Not Your Typical Office This National Park Service ranger is actually a federal bureaucrat. A ranger’s office may be a national park, a national monument, or a national historic site. Park rangers patrol the parklands to protect them from damage and help visitors. **What other bureaucratic jobs besides park rangers offer people opportunities to work outside the nation’s capital?**

For the next 50 years, national, state, and local politicians used the spoils system to fill bureaucratic positions. Political supporters of candidates expected to be rewarded with jobs if their candidate won. As the federal government grew larger, the spoils system flourished.

Calls for Reform The spoils system fostered inefficiency and corruption. Inefficiency grew because, as government became more complex, many jobs required expert staff members. Yet most federal workers were not experts in their jobs. Their special talents lay in working in election campaigns to secure victory for their candidates.

Corruption developed as people used their jobs for personal gain. Government employees did special favors for interest groups in return for political support for their candidates. Jobs were often bought and sold. People made large profits from government contracts. Bureaucrats regularly gave jobs to their friends rather than the lowest bidder.

In the 1850s groups of citizens began to call for reforms. Influential newspapers and magazines pointed out the problems with the spoils system.

A System of Corruption



“PUBLIC OFFICE IS A ‘FAMILY SNAP’.”

Patronage System

Politicians often bestowed federal jobs on friends and family members, as is shown in this 1800s cartoon. Many of these people proved ill-equipped for their jobs and were mainly interested in making themselves rich. **What does the umbrella in the cartoon symbolize?**

President Grant, whose own administration was filled with corruption, persuaded Congress in 1871 to set up the first Civil Service Commission. By 1875, however, reform efforts faltered as Congress failed to appropriate money for the new commission.


It took a tragedy to restart the reform effort. In 1881 President James A. Garfield ignored Charles Guiteau's requests for a job in the diplomatic service. Infuriated at not being appointed, Guiteau shot President Garfield in the back at a Washington railway station on July 2, 1881. Garfield died 80 days later.

The Pendleton Act The public was outraged. Chester A. Arthur, the new president, pushed hard for reform. In 1883 Congress passed the **Pendleton Act**, creating the present federal civil service system. The **civil service system** is the principle and practice of government employment on the basis of open, competitive examinations and merit. The law set up the Civil Service Commission to administer examinations and supervise the operation of the new system.

The Civil Service Commission operated for 95 years. In 1979, two new agencies replaced it. The Office of Personnel Management handles recruitment, pay, retirement policy, and examinations for

federal workers. The Merit System Protection Board settles job disputes and investigates complaints from federal workers.

The Civil Service System Today

 Has the present civil service system created new problems while solving those problems linked with the spoils system?

Getting a Job Competition for federal jobs today is stiff. In recent years every job opening has had about 76 applicants. This competition will probably continue. While the federal bureaucracy is huge, the number of federal jobs has not changed much since 1950. Yet the number of people wanting federal jobs keeps on increasing.

The Office of Personnel Management, along with individual agencies, is responsible for filling federal jobs. Job notices are usually posted in post offices, newspapers, and Federal Job Information Centers located in many communities.

Most secretarial and clerical jobs require the applicant to take a written examination. For other jobs such as accountants, social workers, managers, and so on, applicants are evaluated on the basis of training and experience. Veterans are given special preference.

Benefits and Problems Government jobs are attractive because of the many benefits they offer. Salaries are competitive with those in private industry. Federal workers get from 13 to 26 days of paid vacation every year, depending on the length of their service. They have extensive health insurance plans and 13 days of sick leave every year. Government workers may retire at age 55. If they retire before then, their monthly benefit payment will be reduced.

Each government job is assigned a certain grade ranging from GS-1, the lowest level, to GS-15, the highest. All civil service workers have job security. They may be fired, but only for specific reasons and only after a very long, complex series of hearings. Many supervisors and top officials find it is easier to put up with an incompetent worker than fire one.

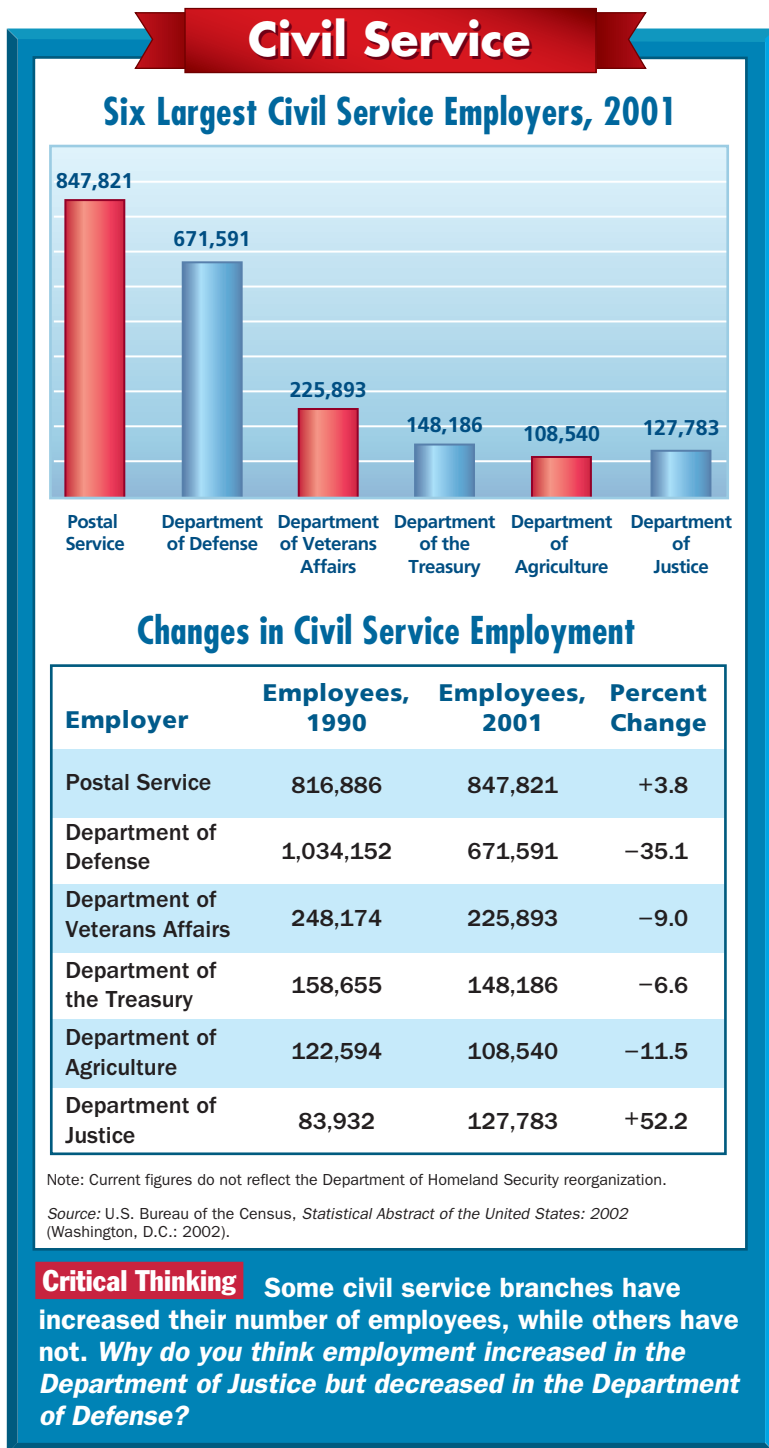
Thus, an ironic situation has developed. On the one hand, the civil service was designed to hire federal workers on merit and protect them from being fired for political reasons. In achieving this goal, however, the system also helps protect a small number of incompetent and inefficient employees.

The Hatch Act The Hatch Act limits how involved federal government employees can become in elections. In 1939 Congress passed this law—named after its chief sponsor, Senator Carl Hatch—to prevent a political party from using federal workers in election campaigns. If that happened, it would raise the dangerous possibility that workers’ promotions and job security could depend on their support of candidates from the party in power.

The law has been controversial since its passage, and its constitutionality has been the subject of two Supreme Court decisions. Many federal workers dislike the Hatch

Act, arguing that the law violates freedom of speech. They also claim the act discourages political participation by people who may be well-informed about political issues.

Supporters of the Hatch Act believe it is needed to keep the federal civil service politically neutral.



They claim the act protects workers from political pressure from superiors. They also argue it helps prevent employees from using their government positions to punish or influence people for political purposes.

In 1993 Congress revised the act to tighten on-the-job restrictions while loosening up off-duty limits on those employed by the federal government. As amended, the Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from engaging in political activities while on duty, including wearing a campaign button. While off duty, federal workers are allowed to hold office in a political party, participate in political campaigns and rallies, publicly endorse candidates, and raise political funds from within their own government agency's political action committee. However, they cannot run for partisan elective offices or solicit contributions from the general public.

Political Appointees in Government



In each presidential election year, the House or Senate publishes a book known by Washington insiders as the *plum book*. The word *plum* stands for *political plum*—a job the new president may fill. The plum book lists all such jobs.

Upon taking office every president has the chance to fill about 2,200 top-level jobs in the federal bureaucracy. These jobs are outside the civil service system. Those who fill these jobs are sometimes called unclassified employees, as opposed to the classified employees hired by the civil service system. About 10 percent of executive branch jobs are appointed by the president. They include 15 cabinet secretaries, about 300 top-level bureau and agency heads, over 170 ambassadorships, and about 1,700 aide and assistant positions.

Filling these jobs gives presidents an opportunity to place loyal supporters in key positions. These political appointees head agencies, offices, and bureaus and make key political decisions. They are expected to try to implement the president's decisions. Unlike career civil service workers, their employment usually ends when a new president is elected. Who are the people with these plum political jobs?

People at the Top The people appointed to the non-civil service positions are first and foremost the president's political supporters. Most are well-educated. Nearly all are college graduates. The great majority have advanced degrees, mostly as lawyers. Others are successful leaders from businesses or professions.

The people holding these types of positions usually are not experts in the work of the agency they head, though they may have served in government before. When the president leaves office, most of them return to other jobs outside the government.

Federal Employees



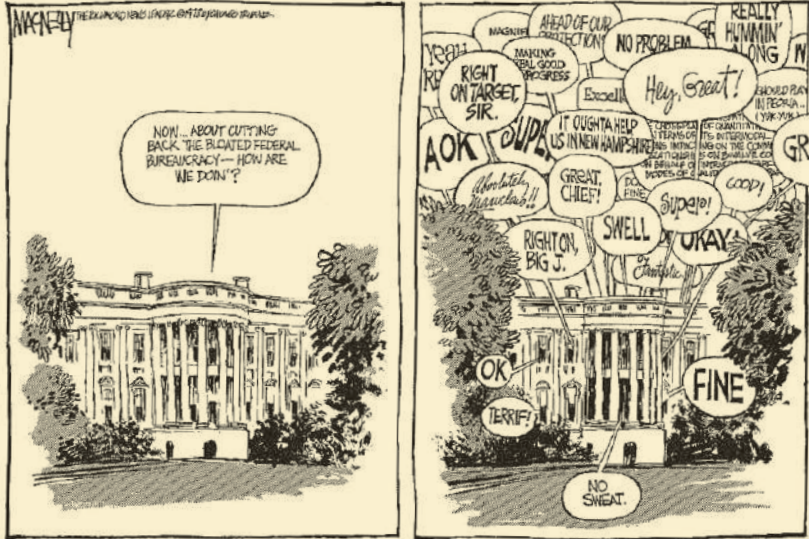
Civil Servants at Work Beginning in the 1800s, civil service staffing has been largely based on merit. President Jimmy Carter urged Congress to pass the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. This law reorganized and reformed the civil service. **How do you think the qualifications for a civil servant of today might differ from those for a civil servant from the mid-1800s? Describe the differences.**

A Ballooning Federal Bureaucracy

Paring Down Government

Historically the federal bureaucracy has expanded to meet the increasing complexities and issues facing the government.

How do you think the increasing size of the federal bureaucracy affects the president's control of the government?



A Short Tenure Many new people enter the bureaucracy by presidential appointment. However, these top political appointees hold their positions for only a few years. Because federal agencies are so large and complex, the short tenure makes it difficult for appointees to learn about their jobs. It can take the head of a large agency a year or more to learn all the issues, programs, procedures, and personalities involved in running the agency. One new political appointee discovered, “I was like a sea captain who finds

himself on the deck of a ship that he has never seen before. I did not know the mechanism of my ship, I did not know my officers—and I had no acquaintance with the crew.”

The result of the short tenures of presidential appointees is that much of the real power over daily operations remains with the career civil service officials. Many of their day-to-day decisions do not make headlines or the nightly newscast, but they do shape the policy of the national government on key problems facing the nation.

Section 2 Assessment

Checking for Understanding

- Main Idea** Using a graphic organizer like the one below, note the advantages and disadvantages of the spoils system and the civil service system.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Spoils		
Civil service		

- Define** spoils system, civil service system.
- Identify** Andrew Jackson, Pendleton Act, Hatch Act.
- What two agencies now make up the former Civil Service Commission?

Critical Thinking

- Synthesizing Information** Why do you think political supporters are so eager to fill the plum jobs?

Concepts IN ACTION

Civic Participation Imagine that you want to obtain employment in a civil service position. You need to evaluate the negative and positive aspects of such employment. Make a list of the pros and cons of a career in the civil service. Discuss your list with your classmates.



Supreme Court CASES TO DEBATE

government workers? Should federal employees be free to participate in partisan political activities, or can Congress limit such participation? The case of *Civil Service Commission v. Letter Carriers* addressed this question.

Civil Service Commission v. Letter Carriers, 1973

Do First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech apply to



A government employee

Background of the Case

The Hatch Act, passed by Congress in 1939, limited federal employees' participation in campaigns or political party activities. The law said federal workers could not campaign for or against a political party, serve as an officer or delegate of a party, raise funds for a party, or run for political office. The purpose of the law was to protect democracy from the influence of partisan government employees. The act did allow workers to vote, join a political party, attend political rallies, and express their opinions.

In 1972, six federal employees, a union, and certain local Democratic and Republican Party committees claimed the act violated the First Amendment. A district court recognized a "well-established governmental interest in restricting political activities by federal employees" but ruled the law was indeed unconstitutional because it was too vague. The court held that free speech was so important that laws limiting speech had to be clear and precise. The Supreme Court ruled on the case in 1973.

The Constitutional Issue

There was no question that the Hatch Act put restrictions on free speech, but were such restrictions justified? Over the years the Court had developed the principle that the right to free speech was not absolute; Congress could put some limits on speech when it was necessary in order to protect the public good. Was this one of those times? The Court also asked whether the restrictions in the law were applied evenly and not aimed at particular political parties, groups, or points of view.

In its 1973 decision the Court referenced the 1947 case of *United Public Workers of America v. Mitchell*. In that case George Poole, a federal worker, lost his job for serving as a Democratic ward committeeperson and working as a poll watcher. The Court upheld the law's limitations on political activity, stating that Congress had the power to pass a law "to promote efficiency and integrity in the public service." Justice Hugo Black, in a strong dissent, stated that any law limiting speech must be "narrowly drawn to meet the evil aimed at."

Debating the Case

Questions to Consider

1. What problem did the Hatch Act address?
2. Would allowing government employees to become involved in political campaigns and activities have positive or negative consequences?
3. Did the law's aim outweigh the right to freedom of speech for government employees?

You Be the Judge

Earlier the Supreme Court had found the Hatch Act to be constitutional. In your opinion, should that decision be overturned? Does the Hatch Act violate the First Amendment guarantee of free speech, or is it an acceptable limitation on speech?

The Bureaucracy at Work

Reader's Guide

Key Terms

client group, liaison officer, injunction, iron triangle

Find Out

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of bureaucrats taking a greater role in policy making?
- Why do you think people sometimes get frustrated with government bureaucracy?

Understanding Concepts

Separation of Powers What role does the government bureaucracy play in setting policy?

COVER STORY

Ban on Deadly Sweaters

WASHINGTON, D.C., DECEMBER 18, 1996

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) today recalled some 32,000 highly flammable women's and girls' sweaters. The sweaters are made of very soft-textured chenille and come in a variety of styles and colors. They sell for up to \$130 in department stores and fashion boutiques across the nation. The CPSC surveyed over 100 stores in major U.S. cities to test for the fire hazard. It found that the sweaters burned faster than newspaper. The CPSC urges that consumers immediately stop wearing any sweater they believe may be involved in this recall and return it to the retailer for a refund.




Shopping for chenille

Simply defined, public policy is whatever action the government chooses to take or not to take. The decision of Congress, for example, to provide federal funds for businesses run by disabled persons is a public-policy decision. The decision of the president to refuse to send military aid to a Latin American country is also public policy.

In theory, federal bureaucrats only carry out the policy decisions the president and Congress make. In practice, however, federal bureaucrats today also help make public policy. They often play key roles both in choosing goals the government will try to meet and in selecting programs to achieve those goals. By choosing what or what not to do in various situations, federal bureaucrats are setting policy. Should people who were not elected make policy? Administering federal programs seems to require that they do.

In recent years federal agencies have made key decisions about many policy issues. These include establishing safety requirements for nuclear power plants and deciding the extent to which the nation will depend on oil for energy. Federal agencies are also responsible for setting the eligibility requirements for federal health and welfare programs.

Influencing Policy

 Federal bureaucrats help make policy in several ways. The most important of these involves administering the hundreds of programs that have an impact on almost every aspect of national life. Administering these programs requires federal bureaucrats to write rules and regulations and set standards to implement laws Congress passes.

Making Rules When Congress passes a law, it cannot possibly spell out exactly what needs to be done to enforce it. The bureaucracy shapes what the law actually means.

The chief way federal agencies do this is by issuing rules and regulations designed to translate the law into action. One study has shown that, on an average, the bureaucracy formulates 20 rules or regulations to carry out each law.

In 1935, for example, Congress passed the **Social Security Act** establishing the Social Security system. The law makes it possible for disabled workers to receive payments from the government. What does the word *disabled* mean? Are workers disabled if they can work only part-time? Are they disabled if they can work, but not at the same job they once had?

The Social Security Administration in the Department of Health and Human Services has developed 14 pages of rules and regulations describing disability. These regulations even state what blindness means and specifically how it is to be measured. Without such rules, people who are not blind might receive benefits they do not deserve. At the same time, the rules help ensure that anyone who meets the established standard cannot unfairly be denied benefits. It is through thousands of decisions such as these that bureaucrats make federal government policy affecting disabled people.

Often, rule making by federal agencies is the same as lawmaking. For example, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has

created guidelines for building contractors to follow when hiring minority employees. These guidelines are used to decide whether contractors can work on federally funded construction projects. The HUD guidelines have the force of law. In order to work on the projects, contractors must follow them.

Paperwork For many years the number of rules and regulations federal agencies issued had been growing. Agency regulations totaled more than 50,000 printed pages a year. Along with more regulations came more paperwork. More than 2 billion forms were filled out and submitted to the federal government each year. The Small Business Administration estimated that companies spent at least 1 billion hours per year filling out forms—at a cost of about \$100 billion annually.

Congress in 1995 cleared a bill to reduce the amount of federal paperwork. The president signed the bill, requiring the Office of Management and Budget director to set a paperwork reduction goal of at least 10 percent in each of the first 2 years and 5 percent per year to fiscal 2001.

Involvement in Lawmaking The bureaucracy also shapes public policy by helping draft new bills for Congress, testifying about legislation, and providing lawmakers with technical information they may not otherwise have access to. In addition, lawmakers know that it can be difficult to pass major bills without the advice of the federal agencies most concerned with the bills' contents.

Often, the ideas for new laws come from within the bureaucracy itself. Lawyers within the Justice Department, for example, drafted the Safe Streets Act of 1968, which created a new division within the Justice Department—the Law Enforcement

Assistance Administration—that existed into the 1980s. In the same way, bureaucrats in what is now the Department of Health and Human Services, along with some hospital administrators and labor unions, worked hard and over a long period of time for the law that set up the Medicare program.



Bureaucratic Policy Making

Federal Policy Decisions made by federal bureaucrats affect the lives of all Americans every day. **Why do you think the Department of Health and Human Services has 14 pages of rules describing disability?**


Settling Disputes Some federal agencies shape public policy by deciding disputes over the application of a law or set of rules. When agencies do this, they act almost as courts. The regulatory commissions in particular make government policy in this way. They have the authority to hear and resolve disputes among parties that come under their regulatory power. The rulings of these agencies have the same legal status as those of courts.

Providing Advice Bureaucrats also help shape public policy by providing top political decision makers with information and advice. Many career bureaucrats are experts in their areas. In addition, federal agencies collect information on an incredible variety of subjects. These range from the number of bald eagles left in the United States to the effects of secondhand smoking on newborn infants.

Federal agencies may use their information to support or oppose a particular public policy. Several years ago, for example, studies by the Public Health Service on the effects of smoking led to new laws and regulations designed to cut down on the use of cigarettes.

Thus, the federal bureaucracy does more today than simply fill in the details of laws. The bureaucracy plays a role in determining what those policies will be.

Why the Bureaucracy Makes Policy

 The federal bureaucracy has grown and assumed an important role in making public policy for five reasons: (1) growth of the nation, (2) international crises, (3) economic problems at home, (4) citizens' demands, and (5) the nature of bureaucracy itself.

Paper Shuffling in the Capital



Reducing Government Waste Surrounded by bureaucratic paperwork, Vice President Al Gore presented his proposal “Reinventing Government,” also called The National Performance Review, to President Clinton on the White House lawn. Gore attempted to streamline the federal bureaucracy and eliminate waste and duplication. *Why do you think trimming the bureaucracy and its paperwork is such a difficult task?*

National Growth and Technology The growth of the federal bureaucracy mirrors the growth of the United States. For almost 60 years, the 3 original cabinet departments and the attorney general’s office handled the work of the executive branch. As the population grew, so did the government. The same number of officials who ran a country of 50 million people cannot govern a country of more than 250 million.

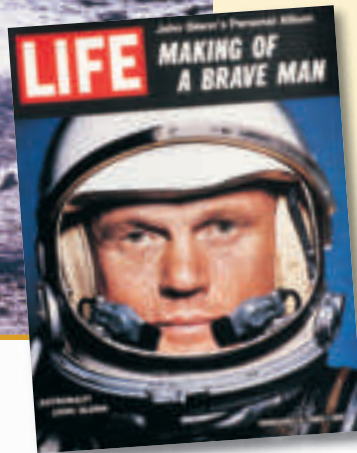
In addition, rapid advances in technology have made life much more complex. Today, a single president and 535 lawmakers in Congress cannot possibly have all the knowledge and time needed to

The Space Race Expands the Government



Competition and Expansion The United States felt threatened by the Soviets' launching of *Sputnik* in 1957. President Dwight Eisenhower immediately increased military funding and established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), which worked feverishly to close the gap in the space race. Later, President John F. Kennedy authorized the Apollo program to challenge the Soviets in space. This program allowed Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr., (left) and Neil Armstrong to be the first humans to walk on the moon. **How did the launching of *Sputnik* increase the size of the United States government?**

John Glenn, first American to orbit the earth



deal with the many complicated issues that face the nation. These issues include nuclear power, education reform, space exploration, environmental protection, cancer research, health care, and many others.

Many other tasks such as regulating atomic energy or launching communications satellites also require some government involvement. The president and Congress establish bureaucracies and give them the money and authority to carry out their tasks.

International Crises Competition with the Soviet Union and international crises following World War II furthered the growth of the federal bureaucracy. During the Cold War, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. developed new weaponry, and both countries gave aid to other countries they wanted as allies. The Department of Defense was organized in 1947 by combining the Departments of War and Navy. Until the end of the Cold War, it was the largest department in the federal government. The Defense Department shrank in size during the 1990s, but President George W. Bush began to build it up again as part of the war on terrorism after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

After the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik I*, the first space satellite, in 1957, the federal government started a large-scale program to improve science and mathematics instruction in the United States. The government established NASA in 1958 to direct the nation's space exploration program. As a further result of the Cold War, the government created several other new agencies. These included the Central Intelligence Agency, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the United States Information Agency, and the Peace Corps.

The Korean War (from 1950 to 1953) and the Vietnam War (from 1964 to 1973) involved millions of American soldiers. Both wars led to the continued need for the Veterans Administration, which was elevated to the cabinet level in 1989 and renamed the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is one of the largest federal agencies.

Economic Problems President Franklin D. Roosevelt greatly expanded the size of the federal bureaucracy as he attempted to combat the Depression during the 1930s. By 1940 the number of federal workers had almost doubled. Many people accepted the idea that the federal government had a duty to assist the ill, the disabled, the



elderly, and the neglected. As a result, the federal government today spends billions of dollars each year on hundreds of assistance programs.

The Depression years also led to the idea that the federal government has a special responsibility both to stimulate the nation's economy and to regulate unfair business practices. Thus, agencies that help businesses, such as the Department of Commerce, have grown along with agencies that regulate businesses, such as the Federal Trade Commission.

Citizen Demands The bureaucracy has also grown in response to issues raised by various interest groups within the country. This is not a new phenomenon. Congress, for example, created the Departments of Agriculture (1862), Commerce (1903), and Labor (1913) in part to meet the increased demands of farmers, businesspeople, and workers.

Once it is established, each agency has client groups that it serves. **Client groups** are the individuals and groups who work with the agency and are most affected by its decisions. The client groups of the Department of Defense, for example, include the defense contractors who make weapons and supplies for the armed forces. The client groups of the Department of Agriculture are largely the farmers and others in the business of agriculture.

Client groups often lobby both Congress and the agency itself for more programs and services. Sometimes competition develops. If business leaders can have “their” people in the Commerce Department, labor leaders want “their” people in the Labor Department to make sure they get their “fair share.”

The Nature of Bureaucracy Another reason for the increase in the number of federal agencies is that the country's needs change. Once created, however, federal agencies almost never die. They seem to exist for their own sake. Several years ago Congress created the Federal Metal and Non-Metallic Safety Board of Review. A bureaucrat named Jubal Hale was appointed as its director. The board, however, never received any cases to review. As a result, Hale had no work to do. He spent the next four years reading and listening to phonograph records in his office. Finally, he suggested the agency be abolished, and it was.


Former president Ford put it this way:

“One of the enduring truths of the nation's capital is that bureaucrats survive. Agencies don't fold their tents and quietly fade away after their work is done. They find something new to do.”

—Gerald Ford

These observations are what led to reform. President Clinton's “reinventing government” and the Republican Congress's “Contract With America” both targeted government waste.

Influencing Bureaucratic Decisions

 The federal bureaucracy does not make public policy in isolation. The president, Congress, the courts, and client groups influence federal agencies as they conduct business.

Meeting the Country's Needs



Economics and Expansion Roosevelt's New Deal programs changed the federal government. The FDR Memorial in Washington, D.C., honors the president. **Why did Roosevelt expand the government during the Depression?**

Influence of Congress Bureaucrats carefully build relationships with the congressional committees that have authority over their agencies. Each cabinet department has **liaison officers** who help promote good relations with Congress. Liaison officers keep track of bills moving through Congress that might affect the agency, as well as responding to requests for information from lawmakers.

Congress uses two major tools to influence decision making in federal agencies—new legislation and the budget. Lawmakers can pass laws to change the rules or regulations a federal agency establishes or to limit an agency in some way. In 1979, for example, the Internal Revenue Service ruled that donations to private schools were not tax deductible unless the schools enrolled a certain number of minority students. The ruling caused a great deal of controversy, and Congress overturned it with new legislation.

Congress has also attempted to hold agencies more accountable for their activities by passing the Government Performance and Results Act. This law requires federal agencies to write strategic plans, set annual performance goals, and collect data that measures how well the goals are being

met. Starting in 2000 each agency began publishing reports on their performance. Over time these reports are supposed to allow lawmakers and taxpayers to determine which programs produce the best results for the money spent.

Congress's major power over the bureaucracy is the power of the purse. The nation's lawmakers control each agency's budget. They can add to or cut an agency's budget and, in theory at least, refuse to appropriate money for the agency. What happens more often, however, is that Congress can threaten to eliminate programs that are important to the agency.

Even the power of appropriation has limits as a way for Congress to influence agency decisions. Much of an agency's budget may be used for entitlement expenditures. These expenditures are for basic services already required by law, such as Social Security or pensions for retired government employees. Such services are almost impossible for Congress to cut. If budget cuts must be made, agencies may sometimes target their cuts in the districts or states of key members of Congress who have the power to get budget cuts restored. In 1975, for example, Congress said it

We the People

Making a Difference

Heidi Landgraf



DEA
badge



Hearing the words, “My name is Heidi Landgraf. I’m an agent with the DEA,” two drug cartel bosses stared in disbelief. This time they were the victims—of a Drug Enforcement Administration sting operation. Heidi Landgraf was at the center of Operation Green Ice, playing the part of a drug lord’s daughter. Her two-year performance won Landgraf a 1993 DEA Administrator’s Award. As one of more than 100 federal agents involved in the worldwide operation, she helped police in the United States and six other countries arrest a total of 140 suspected criminals and seize about \$50 million. Landgraf’s identity

as Heidi Herrera was created carefully with tax returns, Visa cards, and a passport. Although she was always under the watchful eyes of fellow agents, she was in constant danger. From a phony business location Landgraf collected cash from major drug dealers across the country and laundered it through banks. After two years of collecting evidence, the DEA scheduled the “take down.”

Because her face and name appeared in press accounts of the operation when the news broke, Landgraf had to give up her work as an undercover agent. She continued to work within the DEA, however, in media relations and drug prevention education.

wanted to reduce the budget for Amtrak, the federal agency that operates passenger trains in the United States. Amtrak almost immediately announced plans to comply with the reduced budget by cutting vital passenger service in the districts of key congressional leaders. The announcements had their desired effect: these leaders succeeded in restoring most of the Amtrak funds.

The Influence of the Courts

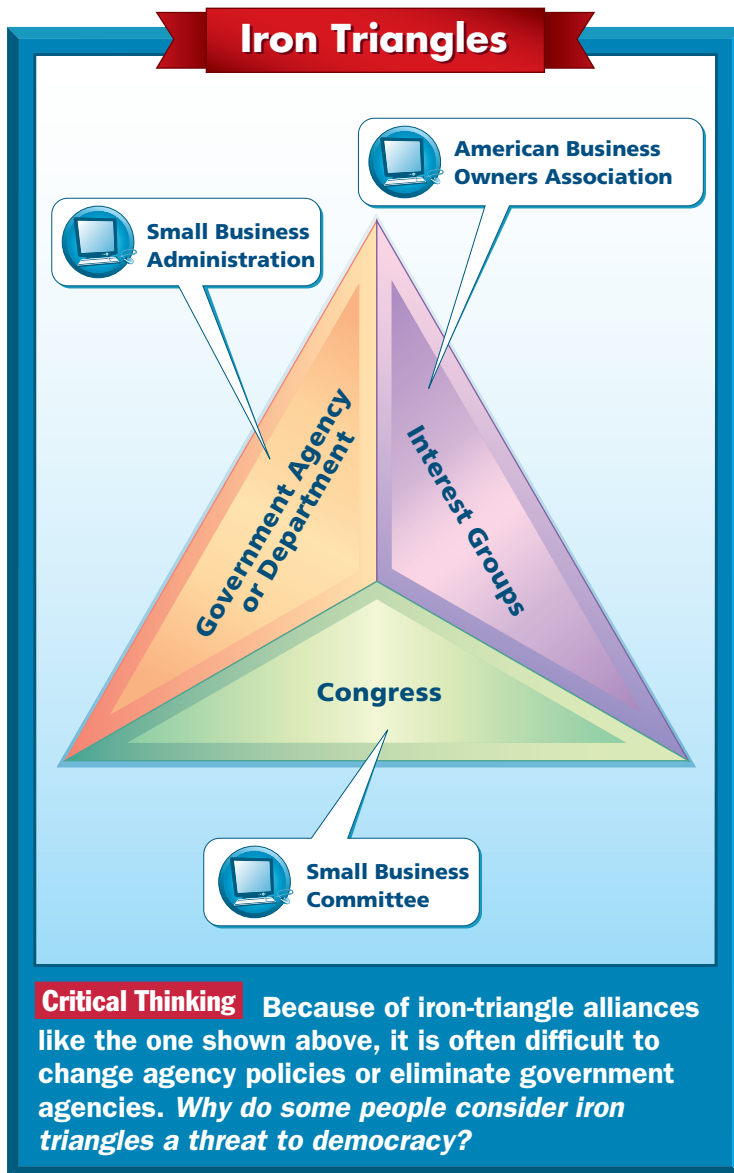
Federal courts do not actively seek to influence the federal bureaucracy. The courts, however, can have an important impact on policy making. The Administrative Procedures Act of 1946 allows citizens directly affected by the actions of federal agencies to challenge those agencies' actions in court. A federal court may issue an **injunction**—an order that will stop a particular action or enforce a rule or regulation.

Success in Court Cases While the courts can have a real impact on the bureaucracy, citizens have not had much success in court cases against the bureaucracy. One study shows that the courts do not usually reverse the decisions of federal regulatory commissions. For example, the Federal Power Commission and the Federal Trade Commission have won 91 percent of the cases they have argued before the Supreme Court. The National Labor Relations Board and the Internal Revenue Service have won 75 percent of their cases.

The Influence of Client Groups



As stated earlier, each agency has client groups. The Department of Education spends much of its time dealing with state and local school administrators. The Food and Drug Administration works closely with major drug companies. The Commerce Department identifies with and promotes business interests.



Critical Thinking Because of iron-triangle alliances like the one shown above, it is often difficult to change agency policies or eliminate government agencies. Why do some people consider iron triangles a threat to democracy?

The Department of Labor has a similar relationship with labor unions.

Client groups often attempt to influence agency decisions through lobbyists in Washington, D.C. These lobbyists work to reach agency officials. Lobbyists may testify at agency hearings, write letters, keep track of agency decisions, and take other steps to support their groups' interests.

Iron Triangles Congressional committees, client groups, and a federal department or agency often cooperate closely to make public policy. When agencies, congressional committees, and

client groups continually work together, such cooperation is called an **iron triangle**, because together the three groups have the necessary resources to satisfy each other's needs. The adjective *iron* is used because the relationship is so strong that it is often difficult for other individuals and groups outside the triangle to influence policy in the area.

Public policy toward veterans' affairs is an example of an iron triangle. The **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)** provides important services such as hospital care, but the VA needs resources to continue offering such services to veterans. Lawmakers on congressional committees responsible for veterans' affairs supply the VA with money but need electoral support to remain in office. Congressional committees also need political support to win internal struggles for power in Congress. Client groups, such as the American Legion, provide the political support that the lawmakers need to remain in office. Client groups in turn need the VA's goods and services to satisfy the demands of their members. It is the working combination of these three groups that basically determines the policy of the national government toward veterans. Similar iron triangles operate in many policy areas such as agriculture, business, labor, and national defense.

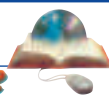
People often move from one side of the triangle to another. In the area of national defense, for example, a general in the Department of Defense

may retire and become a Washington lobbyist for a defense contractor that sells weapons to the Department of Defense. A staff member of the Senate Armed Services Committee may leave Congress and go to work in the Defense Department. Later, the same person may take a job with a defense contractor.

Many critics believe that because iron triangles allow interest groups undue influence outside the control of the executive branch, Congress should pass laws to regulate them.

Agencies Influence One Another Interactions among agencies also influence decisions and policy making in the bureaucracy. For example, rules made by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration about noise standards in factories may contradict regulations established by the Environmental Protection Agency. Decision makers in each agency may attempt to influence the others to accept their programs or rules. Often, such disputes are settled by interagency task forces or committees.

GOVERNMENT Online

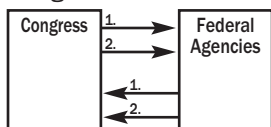


Student Web Activity Visit the *United States Government: Democracy in Action* Web site at gov.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 10-Student Web Activities** for an activity about the bureaucracy at work.

Section 3 Assessment

Checking for Understanding

- 1. Main Idea** Using a graphic organizer like the one below, identify two ways Congress influences federal agencies and two ways federal agencies contribute to legislation.
- 2. Define** client group, liaison officer, injunction, iron triangle.
- 3. Identify** Social Security Act, Department of Veterans Affairs.
- 4.** What are five reasons that the federal bureaucracy has assumed an important role in making public policy?



Critical Thinking

- 5. Making Inferences** Do you think that iron triangles undermine or serve the public interest? Explain your answer.

Concepts IN ACTION

Separation of Powers The government bureaucracy, in theory, carries out the policy decisions of Congress and the president. In practice, however, the bureaucracy also helps influence policy. Create a political cartoon depicting one of the ways in which the federal bureaucracy influences policy.

Analyzing Secondary Sources

This textbook, like many other history books, is a secondary source. Secondary sources draw from primary sources to explain a topic. The value of a secondary source depends on how its author uses primary sources. Learning to analyze secondary sources will help you figure out whether those sources are presenting a complete and accurate picture of a topic or event.

Learning the Skill

To determine whether an author uses primary sources effectively, ask these questions:

- Are there references to primary sources in the text, footnotes, or acknowledgments?
- Who are the authors of the primary sources? What insights or biases might these people have?
- Is the information from the primary sources interwoven effectively to support or describe an event?
- Are different kinds of primary sources considered? Do they represent varied testimony?
- Is the interpretation of the primary sources sound and logical?

Practicing the Skill

In the following excerpt from *The Cold War, 1945–1987*, author Ralph B. Levering discusses President Carter’s China policy. Carter sent his national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, to China to encourage better relations and thus put pressure on the Soviets. As you read, identify the primary sources Levering uses to make his argument.

During his trip to Peking, Brzezinski did everything he could to please the Chinese leaders. . . . He stressed repeatedly the evil nature of the Soviet Union.



President Nixon and First Lady Pat Nixon visiting the Great Wall of China during their historic 1972 trip.

. . . Upon his return, Brzezinski told a New York Times reporter that the trip was intended to “underline the long-term strategic nature of the United States’ relationship to China.”

. . . Soviet leaders were deeply concerned. An editorial in Pravda on May 30, 1978, stated that Brzezinski “stands before the world as an enemy of détente.” Pravda also blamed China, stating on June 17 that “Soviet-American confrontation . . . is the cherished dream of Peking.” On the whole, U.S. officials were not displeased by the Kremlin’s anger and concern: perhaps it would make Soviet leaders more anxious to conclude the SALT negotiations and more inclined to show restraint in the Third World.

1. What kind of primary sources does Levering use twice in this passage?
2. Do you think this kind of primary source has any possible weaknesses?
3. Would the use of government documents strengthen the author’s argument? Explain.

Application Activity

Find and read an in-depth article in a newspaper. Then list the primary sources the article uses and analyze how reliable you think they are.

Assessment and Activities

GOVERNMENT

Online



Self-Check Quiz Visit the *United States Government: Democracy in Action* Web site at gov.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 10–Self-Check Quizzes** to prepare for the chapter test.

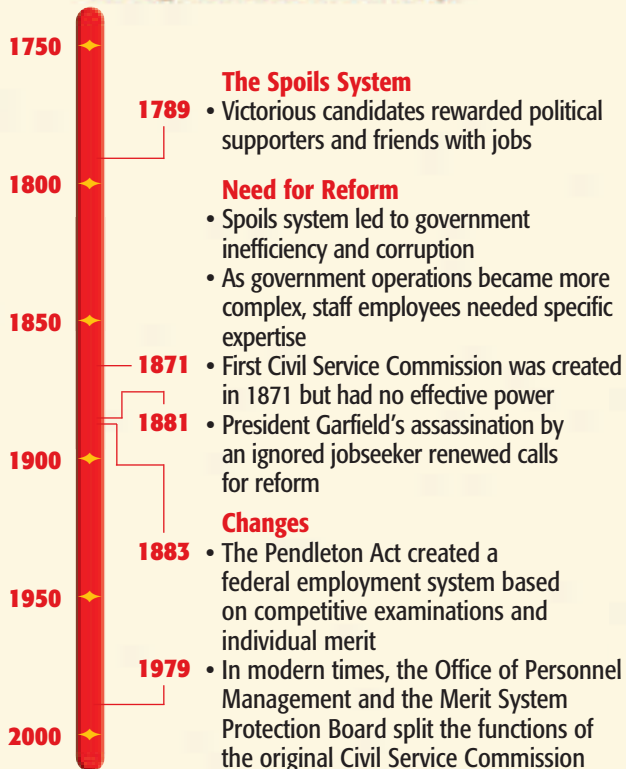
Reviewing Key Terms

Choose the letter of the correct term or concept below to complete the sentence.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| a. injunction | f. iron triangle |
| b. liaison officer | g. bureaucrat |
| c. government corporation | h. embassy |
| d. procurement | i. spoils system |
| e. client group | j. deregulate |

1. An individual who works for the federal government is a ____.
2. Before the civil service system, many people got government jobs through the ____.
3. Some people work for a ____, such as the Postal Service.
4. Some people lost their jobs when Congress began to ____ the Civil Aeronautics Board and cut down on its procedures.
5. An ____ is the office of an ambassador in a foreign country.
6. A ____, such as a special-interest group, is a key factor in influencing public policy.
7. In some cases, a court will issue an ____ to stop a particular action.
8. To make regulatory agencies more efficient, Congress repealed 300 laws that had made ____, or purchasing of materials, complicated.
9. A ____ helps promote good relations among Congress and cabinet departments.
10. A cooperative effort on the parts of congressional committees, a federal agency, and client groups is called an ____.

Chapter Summary



Recalling Facts

1. What three types of agencies make up the federal bureaucracy?
2. What is the special role of independent regulatory commissions in the federal bureaucracy?
3. Why was the civil service system created?
4. What event led to the practice of government assisting the ill and the neglected?
5. How do client groups attempt to influence the decisions that government agencies make?

Understanding Concepts

1. **Public Policy** Is evaluating existing programs important in a society with a large bureaucracy? Support your opinion.
2. **Civic Participation** With every new administration, new people are named to hold top management positions within the federal bureaucracy. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of this system.

Critical Thinking

- 1. Making Inferences** Why might strong presidents rely less on their cabinets' advice than weak presidents?
- 2. Synthesizing Information** Use an outline like the one below to organize a paper that would explain why the federal bureaucracy has grown. Use facts from the text and charts in Chapter 10.

The Growth of the Federal Bureaucracy

- Its size
 - A.
 - B.
- Its Complexity
 - A.
 - B.

Analyzing Primary Sources

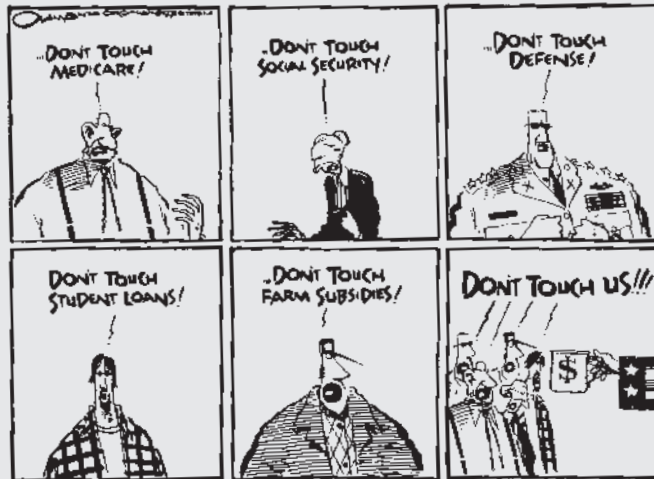
The Social Security Act (1935) was the first government program of its kind to ensure retirement and unemployment income. Social Security payments are funded by taxes on employers' and employees' incomes. Social Security funds are administered by the Treasury Department. Read the excerpt from a Social Security administration publication and answer the questions that follow.

"Your card shows you have an insurance account with the U.S. Government, under the old-age, survivors and disability insurance system provided for in the Social Security Act.

Your account is a record of the pay you receive which counts toward old-age, survivors and disability insurance benefits. The size of benefits will depend upon the amount of wages credited to your account."

1. What do you think are some of the benefits of having a social insurance program? Why is it beneficial to have this program administered by the Treasury Department (a part of the federal bureaucracy) and not directly by the federal government (Congress)?

Interpreting Political Cartoons Activity



1. What is the warning each of these people is giving?
2. How do you think these people's attitudes affect the size of the federal bureaucracy?
3. What governmental dilemma does this cartoon emphasize?

2. Although programs like Social Security were not outlined in the Constitution, they are part of the growing bureaucracy of the federal government. What are some of the positive and negative effects of this growth?

Participating in Local Government

You can find jobs within the government bureaucracy in all levels of government. This allows a greater number of citizens the opportunity to participate in political life. Using your local library or the Internet, research the different types of government jobs available in your community. Find out the procedure for applying for these jobs, the qualifications required, and the salaries. Present your findings in an illustrated pamphlet.

