

Federal Bureaucracy: Another Branch of the Federal Government?

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Complex means that authority is divided among several managers; no one person is able to make all the decisions. Large corporations, universities, and government agencies are all examples of bureaucracies. With its sizeable staff, even Congress has become, to some degree, a bureaucracy.

The American federal bureaucracy shares common characteristics with other bureaucracies, but it has its own characteristics that distinguish it from others:

⇒ 1) _____ :

The Constitution permits both the President and Congress to exercise authority over the bureaucracy. Hence, the bureaucracy operates under "divided supervision". Every senior appointed official has at least two "bosses": one in the executive branch and one in the legislative. Divided authority encourages bureaucrats to play one branch of government off against the other and make heavy use of the media.

⇒ 2) _____ :

Some federal agencies deal directly with American citizens (Internal Revenue Service, Postal Service) while some agencies work with other levels of government (Department of Education giving money to school districts).

⇒ 3) _____ :

The institutions and traditions of American life have contributed to the growth of what is called "adversary culture", in which the definition and expansion of personal rights and defense of rights and claims through lawsuits as well as political action are given central importance.

★Who are the bureaucrats? Where do they work?

- Five biggest employers: Departments of Army, Navy, Air Force, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the U.S. Postal Service
- 3.2 million civilians and 1.8 military are employed by the Executive Branch
- Only 10% of bureaucrats work in and around Washington D.C.; 90% work in other parts of the United States
- About 56% are male, 44% are female
- About 68.6% are white, 31.4% are minority
- About 35% in the Defense Department, 13% Department of Homeland Security, 9% Department of Veterans Affairs, 43% "other" agencies

Source: <http://www.opm.gov/feddata/factbook/2005/factbook2005.pdf>

★Organization of the Federal Bureaucracy:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each cabinet is headed by a secretary.• Appointed by the President and must be confirmed by the Senate.• Directly responsible to the President.• Responsibility is further divided among undersecretaries and assistant secretaries.• Total of 15 cabinet departments.• The cabinet departments carry out the President's policy in specific areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulate almost every aspect of everyday life for most Americans.• Make rules for specific areas of business or the economy and other areas that effect public interest.• Each is directed by five to ten presidential appointees. Each agency or commission is usually balanced with members of both major political parties.• They operate independently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smaller and less complex than cabinet departments and have narrower areas of responsibility• Agency heads usually are appointed by and responsible to the President.• Some of the agencies are responsible for specialized areas of policy but largely fulfill administrative responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blend of a private corporation and government agency.• More control over their budgets and more freedom and flexibility to decide how to use their earnings.
<u>Examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Department of State◆ Department of Treasury◆ Department of Defense◆ Department of Justice◆ Department of Education◆ Department of Homeland Security	<u>Examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Interstate Commerce Commission◆ Federal Trade Commission◆ Securities & Exchange Commission◆ Federal Reserve Board◆ National Labor Relations Board	<u>Examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ CIA◆ FEC◆ GSA◆ EPA◆ NASA	<u>Examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ U.S. Postal Service◆ TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority)◆ Amtrak◆ Corporation for Public Broadcasting