

22-Independent Agencies and the Federal Bureaucracy

Independent Agencies

- ❖ The 15 executive departments only handle a portion of the government's functions
- ❖ Special parts of government were formed to meet special needs
- ❖ 3 types (Executive Agencies, Regulatory Commissions, Government Corporations)

Executive Agencies

Agencies that are under the direct control of the Presidency

- **Social Security Administration**-oversees pension system for elderly and disabled
- **Central Intelligence Agency**-in charge of collecting and interpreting information about foreign nations
- **Small Business Administration**-promotes the growth of small businesses
- **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)**-created to develop and administer the nation's space program
- *National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities*-created to promote the growth of art
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**-enforces environmental laws

Regulatory Commissions

Groups with the power to regulate and oversee a certain industry or activity

- **Federal Reserve**-regulates and works to stabilize the nation's system of banks
- **Federal Trade Commission**-regulates the affairs of businesses to protect consumers and ensure fair business practices through competition
- *National Transportation Safety Board*-oversees investigations into traffic accidents and affairs
- **Federal Communications Commission**-regulates the telecommunications industry (radio, TV, cell phones, etc.)
- National Labor Relations Board-oversees the practices of labor unions and employers
- **Consumer Product Safety Commission**-oversees the safety of products sold to the public

Government Corporations

Government agencies that are operated and run as if they were private for profit businesses

- Usually provide a service to the public but try to do so at minimal cost due to the government's budget constraints
- **United States Postal Service (USPS)**
- Corporation for Public Broadcasting

Bureaucracy

US population has grown to over 300 million people

Along with population growth our expectations for what government should provide has grown

Because of this the amount of government employees has risen from just over 1,000 employees in 1790 to more than 3,000,000 today.

Government employees are referred to as bureaucrats or civil servants; thus they are part of the **bureaucracy** or **civil service system**.

Red Tape

Red tape refers to the extra hassle and paperwork it takes to get things done when dealing with the government.

So, why do we have Red Tape?

Red tape is often necessary to reduce the amount of decision makers in the bureaucracy. So, you are dealing with procedures not people. It is designed to make a system where the government treats us equally.

Spoils System

Presidents have the responsibility of appointing many people to lead the executive departments and organizations. (currently over 2,000 appointments)

How would you pick 2,000 people?

Often jobs are given to members of the president's political party, his advisors, supporters, and even family members.

This is called the **spoils system** or **patronage**.

Gave government positions as political rewards. Can lead to graft and corruption.

Civil Service System

Attempts have been made to end the spoils system
Americans grew tired of corrupt government of the late 1800s

Pendleton Act (1883)

Set up the **merit system** for getting government jobs instead of political ties

Civil Service

Commission-commission formed to enforce the merit system, uses testing to give jobs to most qualified applicants