

# Chapter 15

## The Federal Bureaucracy

# Introduction

- Classic conception of bureaucracy (Max Weber)—a hierarchical authority structure that use task specialization, operates on the merit principle, and behaves with impersonality
- Bureaucracies govern modern states; bureaucrats are responsible for implementation and regulation

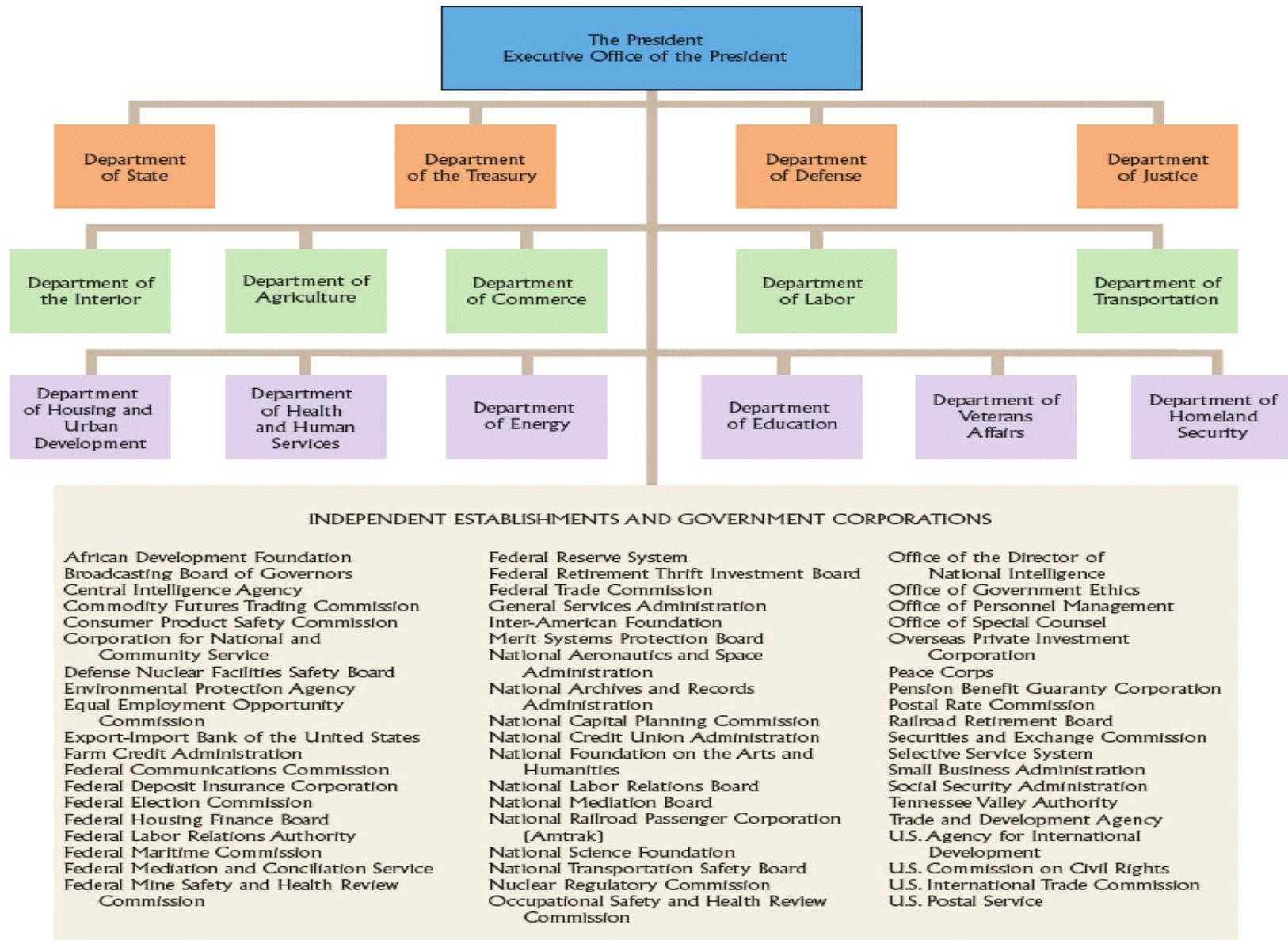
# The Bureaucrats

- Some Bureaucratic Myths and Realities
  - Americans dislike bureaucrats.
    - Americans are generally satisfied with bureaucrats.
  - Bureaucracies are growing bigger each year.
    - Not in the federal bureaucracy
  - Most federal bureaucrats work in Washington, D.C.
    - Only about 12 percent do
  - Bureaucracies are ineffective, inefficient, and always mired in red tape.
    - No more so than private businesses

# The Bureaucrats

- Who They Are and How They Got There
  - Civil Service: From Patronage to Protection
    - Patronage: job given for political reasons
    - Civil Service: system of hiring and promotion based on merit and nonpartisanship, created by the Pendleton Civil Service Act (1883)
    - Merit Principle: entrance exams and promotion ratings to find people with talent and skill
    - Hatch Act: prohibits government employees from active participation in partisan politics

**Figure 15.3 Organization of the Executive Branch**



**TABLE 15.1** Federal Civilian Employment

| EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS                         | NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES <sup>a</sup> |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Defense (military functions)                  | 708,000                          |
| Veterans Affairs                              | 279,200                          |
| Homeland Security                             | 176,100                          |
| Justice                                       | 119,400                          |
| Treasury                                      | 113,000                          |
| Agriculture                                   | 95,300                           |
| Interior                                      | 70,100                           |
| Health and Human Services                     | 65,000                           |
| Transportation                                | 57,000                           |
| Commerce                                      | 141,400**                        |
| State   | 33,600                           |
| Labor   | 18,000                           |
| Energy  | 16,900                           |
| Housing and Urban Development                 | 9,700                            |
| Education                                     | 4,300                            |
| Larger Noncabinet Agencies                    |                                  |
| U.S. Postal Service                           | 656,800                          |
| Social Security Administration                | 68,300                           |
| Corps of Engineers                            | 21,700                           |
| National Aeronautics and Space Administration | 18,700                           |
| Environmental Protection Agency               | 17,500                           |
| Tennessee Valley Authority                    | 12,400                           |
| General Services Administration               | 12,600                           |

<sup>a</sup>Figures are for 2010.

\*\*Figure includes approximately 90,000 temporary employees for the 2010 census.

Source: *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2011: Analytical Perspectives* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010), Tables 23-1 and 23-2.

# How Bureaucracies Are Organized

## ■ The Cabinet Departments

- 15 Cabinet departments headed by a secretary
- Department of Justice headed by Attorney General
- Each has its own budget, staff and policy areas
- Republicans have tried to disband Departments of Education, Energy, and Commerce

# How Bureaucracies Are Organized

- **The Independent Regulatory Agencies**
  - responsible for some sector of the economy, making/enforcing rules, and judging disputes to protect the public interest
    - Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
    - Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
    - Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
- **Independent Executive Agencies**
  - NASA, FBI, CIA

# How Bureaucracies Are Organized

- **The Government Corporations**
  - Business like—provide services like private companies and typically charge for them
    - Postal Service and Amtrak

# Policymaking Process

1. Problem Identification
2. Setting the Agenda
3. Policy Formation
4. Policy Adoption
5. **Implementation**-bureaucrats
6. Policy Evaluation

# Bureaucracies as Implementers

## ■ What Implementation Means

- It involves translating the goals and objectives of a policy into an operating, ongoing program
- Stage of policymaking that takes place between establishment and consequences of a policy
- Implementation includes:
  - Creating and assigning an agency the policy
  - Translating policy into rules, regulations and forms
  - Coordinating resources to achieve the goals

# Bureaucracies as Implementers

- Why the Best-Laid Plans Sometimes Flunk the Implementation Test
  - Program Design
  - Lack of Clarity
    - Congressional laws are ambiguous and imprecise.
    - Sometimes the laws conflict with each other.
  - Lack of Resources
    - Agencies may be big, but may not have staff to carry out policy goals.

# Bureaucracies as Implementers

- Why the Best-Laid Plans Sometimes Flunk the Implementation Test
  - Lack of Resources (continued)
    - Many different types of resources are needed: personnel, training, supplies & equipment
    - May also lack the authority to act
  - Administrative Routine
    - Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) bring uniformity to complex organizations.
    - It is often difficult to change the routines.

**TABLE 15.2** Departments and Agencies with Responsibility for Border Security in 2002

**Department of Agriculture**

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

**Central Intelligence Agency**

**Department of Commerce**

Critical Infrastructure Assurance Office

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**Department of Defense**

Defense Intelligence Agency

Inspector General

National Guard

National Reconnaissance Office

National Security Agency

North American Aerospace Defense Command

**Department of Energy**

Office of Science and Technology Policy

**Environmental Protection Agency**

Office of International Activities

**Department of Justice**

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms

Drug Enforcement Administration

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Immigration and Naturalization Service

Marshals Service

Office of Special Investigations

**Department of State**

Bureau of Consular Affairs

Bureau of Intelligence and Research

Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Agencies

Passport Office

**Postal Service**

**Department of Treasury**

Customs Service

Financial Crimes Enforcement Network

Internal Revenue Service

Office of the Inspector General

Secret Service

**Department of Transportation**

Coast Guard

Federal Aviation Administration

Federal Motor Carrier Administration

Maritime Administration

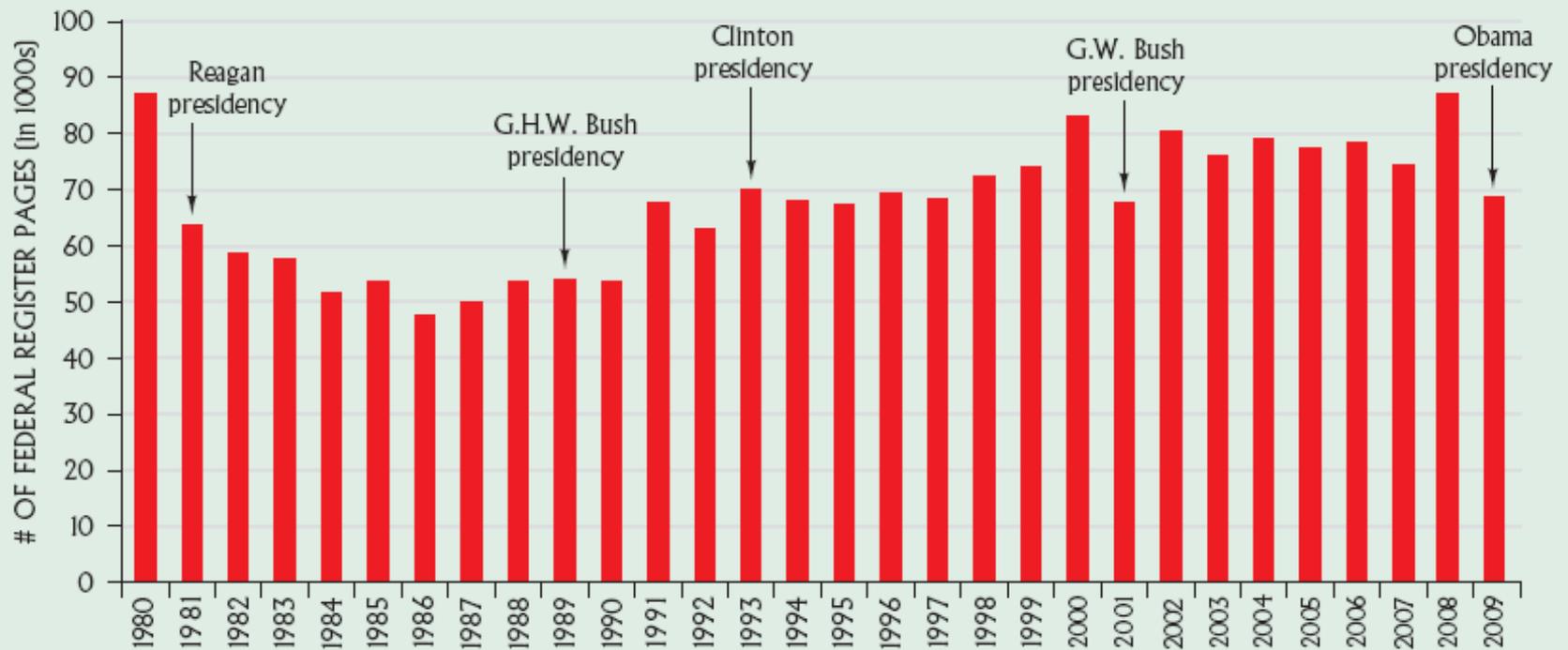
# Bureaucracies as Regulators

- **Regulation: How It Grew, How It Works**
  - All regulation contains these elements:
    - A grant of power and set of directions from Congress
    - A set of rules and guidelines by the regulatory agency itself
    - Some means of enforcing compliance with congressional goals and agency regulations



## Trends in Regulation

Some people call the *Federal Register* the bureaucracy's bulletin board because it is where new regulations are posted. You can see that the number of pages of regulations fell sharply in 1981 at the beginning of the Reagan administration and then gradually increased. Every White House wants to put its stamp on regulatory policies.



Source: Federal Register.

# How the President tries to control the Bureaucracy

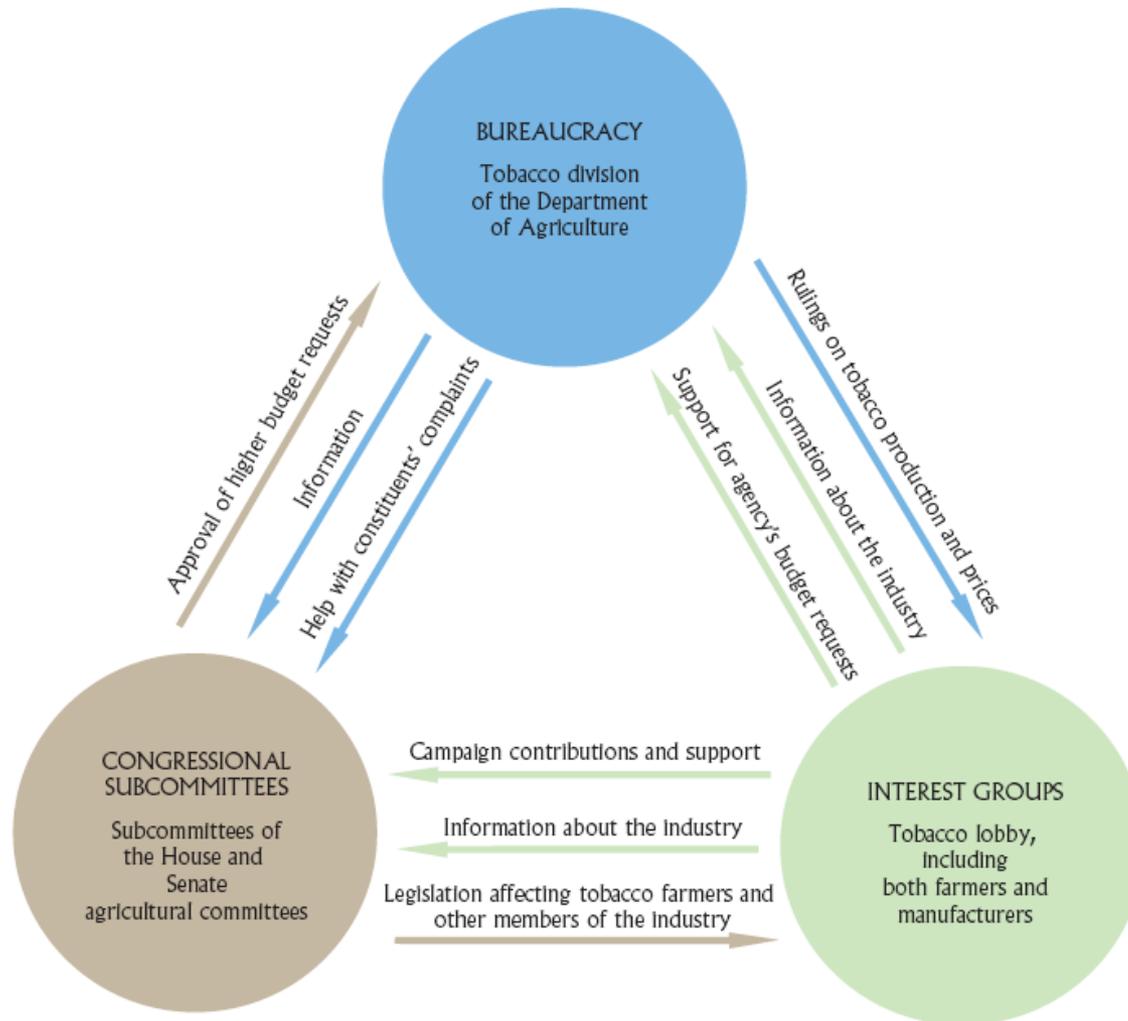
- Bureaucracy and Democracy
  - Presidents Try to Control the Bureaucracy
    - Appoint the right people
    - Issue executive orders
      - Carry force of law and are issued by the President to US executive officers to help direct their operation
      - Executive orders DO NOT require Congressional approval
    - Alter an agency's budget
    - Reorganize an agency
      - Creation of Department of Homeland Security

# How Congress tries to control the Bureaucracy

- Bureaucracy and Democracy
  - Congress Tries to Control the Bureaucracy
    - Influence appointment of agency heads
      - Senate confirms presidential nominees
    - Alter an agency's budget
    - Hold oversight hearings
    - Rewrite legislation or make it more detailed

**FIGURE 15.4** Iron Triangles: One Example

Iron triangles—composed of bureaucratic agencies, interest groups, and congressional committees or subcommittees—have dominated some areas of domestic policymaking by combining internal consensus with a virtual monopoly on information in their area. The tobacco triangle is one example; there are dozens more. Iron triangles are characterized by mutual dependency in which each element provides key services, information, or policy for the others. The arrows indicate some of these mutually helpful relationships. In recent years, a number of well-established iron triangles, including the tobacco triangle, have been broken up.



# Understanding Bureaucracies

- Bureaucracy and Democracy
  - Iron Triangles and Issue Networks
    - Iron Triangles: a mutually dependent relationship between bureaucratic agencies, interest groups, and congressional committees or subcommittees
    - Exist independently of each other
    - They are tough, but not impossible, to get rid of
    - Some argue they are being replaced by wider issue networks