

THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY: OVERSIGHT AND SUPERVISION

Class Notes | US Gov/Ms. Strong

The president, congress and the federal courts all have supervisory/oversight powers that hold the federal bureaucracy accountable:

I. The President can:

- Appoint and remove agency heads > helps the President carry out his policy agenda
- Reorganize the bureaucracy (with congressional approval)
- Make changes or reduce an agency's annual budget proposal through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
- Issue executive orders to impact an agency's function or power
 - Example: President Truman's executive order to desegregate the U.S. military

II. Congress can:

- Increase, cut or reduce federal agency/department funding
- Create new or abolish existing agencies, departments
 - Example: Department of Homeland Security (2002)
- Investigate agency activities
- Convene committee hearings to hold agencies accountable
- Influence or even fail to confirm presidential appointments as agency heads
- Pass legislation that alters an agency's functions
 - Example: Pendleton Act of 1883
 - Problem: *The Spoils System* (aka Patronage) - practice of rewarding political supporters and friends with jobs in the federal government
 - Reform:
 1. Hire 90% of federal jobs through the merit system
 2. Institute a competitive Civil Service Exam
 3. Apply for jobs through Office of Personnel Management

III. Federal courts can:

- *Judicial Review* - courts can rule on whether the bureaucracy has acted within the law and the U.S. Constitution
- Provide due process for individuals affected by a bureaucratic action