

# CRASH COURSE: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

## EPISODE 17: CONTROLLING BUREAUCRACIES

### STUDENT QUESTIONS

#### TRUE OR FALSE:

1. According to the host, the only thing that Americans hate more than bureaucracies is presidential overreach.
2. It is easier to try to limit the activities of a bureaucracy than to try to shrink it or get rid of it.
3. Congress can only try to control the behavior of a bureaucracy when they first set it up. After that, there is nothing Congress can do.
4. Congress frequently forbids agencies from paying for or even discussing abortions.
5. Agencies following the rules for reporting requirements usually fill out forms and send them directly to Congress.
6. If the Senate does not approve of an agency head proposed by the President, they can appoint their own choice instead.
7. If an appointed agency head disappoints Congress, the Senate has the power to veto them "after the fact."
8. One way for Congress to check up on agencies, known as exercising oversight over them, is to hold public hearings.
9. Holding hearings to call the public's attention to a problem in a government agency is a strategy that Congress usually finds less effective the more they use it.
10. The Army-McCarthy hearings proved to the public that the U.S. army was full of communists.
11. The General Accounting Office checks up on bureaucracies to see how they are spending their money.
12. Congress must hold hearings to exercise oversight as it is barred by federal law from ordering investigations or issuing reports.
13. Because politicians so often call for getting rid of executive departments, it happens on a fairly often basis.
14. "Deregulation" means limiting the number of regulations that an agency is allowed to enforce.
15. Deregulation is intended to lower costs so people pay less for things, but when it came to the airlines, it backfired horribly and made air fares much more expensive than before.
16. The tactic of "devolution" refers to situations where states and cities refuse to take care of certain functions in an effort to force Congress to assume responsibility.
17. Privatization means turning over government functions to corporations. President George W. Bush proposed doing this with the Department of Defense.
18. President Bush created a new cabinet department.

#### Extra Credit Questions / Discussion Prompts

Consider this list of the current executive departments:

- |                                |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> State    | <input type="radio"/> Agriculture               | <input type="radio"/> Housing and Urban Development | <input type="radio"/> Veteran's Affairs |
| <input type="radio"/> Treasury | <input type="radio"/> Commerce                  | <input type="radio"/> Transportation                | <input type="radio"/> Homeland Security |
| <input type="radio"/> Defense  | <input type="radio"/> Labor                     | <input type="radio"/> Energy                        |   |
| <input type="radio"/> Justice  | <input type="radio"/> Health and Human Services | <input type="radio"/> Education                     |   |
| <input type="radio"/> Interior |   |   |   |

- Assume you are a politician who has pledged to eliminate one of these executive departments in an effort to cut the size of the federal bureaucracy. Which cabinet agency will you target?
- Research the agency you chose to find out more about what it does. Develop a plan to explain which of its functions you still want performed, and how you will accomplish this. If you decide to let any major functions simply go undone, explain how this would change life in the U.S.
- Examine the list again and propose a new cabinet agency whose job will be to take care of some issue that is currently being neglected. Defend the existence of your proposed new executive department.