

Handbook for Appointed Officials in America's Governments

Richard P. Nathan



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Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Why People Become Appointed Officials	6
3. Getting to Be — and Being — an Appointed Leader	22
4. Team Building	33
5. Making Policy.	41
6. Implementing Policy	50
7. Dealing with the Media.	59
8. Wielding Power and Expanding the Talent Pool in America's Governments	62
Appendix: American Federalism	68

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An earlier version of the Handbook for Appointed Officials in America's Governments was published by the Rockefeller Institute in 2000. The Institute is reissuing this pamphlet electronically in a revised abbreviated form. It is intended as a tool for students of government and public affairs — encouraging them to consider careers that include periods of public service in appointive positions in the top layers of America's governments.

The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government

411 State Street, Albany, NY 12203-1003

www.rockinst.org

(518) 443-5522 / (518) 443-5788 (fax)

For further information, contact Mark Marchand, Press Officer, at

(518) 443-5283 / marchanm@rockinst.org

1

Introduction

This *Handbook* is for a special group in American government: appointed public officials — “inners and outers” — who serve in between top elected officials and the leaders and staff of the nation’s vast public bureaucracies. These officials play a major role in implementing policy — translating public purposes into governmental actions. There are thick layers of appointed officials in all of America’s governments (national, state, and local), a much bigger group than in other Western democracies. Appointed officials typically serve for two to four years in any one position.

This is not a new feature of American government. The first transition of presidential party control in 1800, the “Republican ascendancy,” which occurred with the election of Thomas Jefferson, saw a reaping of the top layers of political power. President Jefferson viewed Federalist officials working in the federal government as enemies within. After cleaning house, he boasted in 1803 that of the 316 “offices of the United States subject to the President’s appointment and removal, only 130 were now held by Federalists.”¹ Jefferson maintained that he had effected this influx of Republicans “by means so moderate and just as cannot fail to be approved in future.”² He was right.

¹ Jefferson to William Duane, Monticello, July 24, 1803, as described in Adrienne Koch, *Jefferson and Madison: The Great Collaboration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 224.

² Adrienne Koch, *Jefferson and Madison: The Great Collaboration*, p. 224.

Why This Handbook?

Students I taught at the Woodrow Wilson School of Princeton University in the 1980s influenced me to write about how one can gain and use influence as an appointed official inside America's governments. I felt that we (the faculty — myself included) did not tell our students enough about what they needed to know to become leaders in appointive public service. I kept my thoughts in a mental file, supplemented by experiences I had as an appointed federal official (U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the 1967 Commission on Civil Disorder), as a congressional aide, as a member of federal and state commissions and advisory groups, and as an observer of politics and U.S. domestic public affairs.

A subsidiary theme of this book is that in the United States the national government is not the key to domestic public affairs; the country has 89,000 local governments.³ Although the media give the impression that ideas for government action originate and flow from Washington, most domestic policies take their real shape in the field. People with energy and purposes interested in public service can often accomplish more at the state and local levels than in Washington.

So many stakeholders put their fingerprints on new laws and domestic policies throughout American governments that the resulting policies are complex, unclear, even vague. This means that people who want to achieve things can do a lot as managers

³ Based on the Census of Governments conducted every five years by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. For an explanation and discussion of these data on American federalism, see the appendix on American federalism, pp. 68.

inside government in appointive posts engaged in refining and implementing policies. This is not to say that people interested in public service should eschew opportunities to influence public purposes outside of government. There are periods and situations where being an outsider pressing for change is likely to be one's most effective venue. Change agents are freer on the outside, less constrained by other actors in the governmental process. However, insiders generally have more horses (people) and resources (money) to get things done on a larger scale and in greater depth.

Aim of the Handbook

In the final analysis, the most important thing a person manages in public life is his or her career. The aim of this *Handbook* is to present what I hope is useful advice about how one gets to be an appointed official in America's governments and how one can effectively wield power once in office. Sections 2 and 3 describe routes to appointed officialdom and the role of appointed officials. Sections 4 through 7 discuss skills of appointive leadership — team building, making and implementing policy, providing feedback and evaluation, and dealing with the media. The final section calls for broadening the talent pool of people who serve as appointed leaders in America's governments.

When I revised this *Handbook* in 2002, there were new stirrings about problems with public service, particularly at the national level. The Brookings Institution formed a commission, chaired by former Federal Reserve chairman Paul A. Volcker, to “focus on

the need for a comprehensive reform for the federal public service.”⁴ Underlying this concern is what an earlier Volcker commission called a “quiet crisis” of decline in the attractiveness and capacity of the federal career service. The headline for the press release announcing the new Brookings group was “The Quiet Crisis Roars.”

As this new Volcker Commission was forming and focusing on the role of *careerists* in the federal service, other experts were highlighting the role of shorter-term appointed officials. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, urged the creation of a commission “to develop a new type of public service that will allow bright young people from the private and nonprofit sectors to move in and out of middle levels of government for specified periods.” The aim of this *Handbook* is to advance the thesis that appointed public officials are a vital and influential source of talent, leadership, and expertise in America’s governments.

⁴ The Brookings Institution, “The Quiet Crisis Roars: Brookings Institution Convenes Second National Commission on the Public Service,” *press release* (Washington, DC: February 13, 2002).

2

Why People Become Appointed Officials

The energy of elected officials is so dominated by media relations, campaigning, and political fundraising that there is little left to devote to the substantive work of making public policies and carrying them out. Therefore, the officials they appoint play a key role and have abundant opportunities to make and administer public policy.

Three groups of people work for America's governments — elected, appointed, and career employees. Close to half a million people serve as elected officials, the highest level of whom are famous and visible, often virtual media celebrities. British political scientist and long-time observer of American politics Anthony King called U.S. electoral campaigns “never-ending.” “In other countries election campaigns have both beginning and ends and there are even periods, often prolonged periods, when no campaigns take place at all.”⁵ King also observed that in few countries “do elections and campaigns cost as much as they do in the United States,” which surely is an understatement. Some elected chief executives and legislators in the U.S. care about the serious business of governing. But for most high-level elected officials, the tasks of developing policies and managing government agencies are difficult to pursue while they continuously have to

⁵ Anthony King, “Running Scared,” *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1997, p. 41.

raise funds and campaign for reelection.

The great bulk of government jobs are held by career government workers — civil servants who have tenure in their position. They are employed in national, state, and local civil service systems grounded on the merit principle. They can be members of public-sector unions, which actually is the fastest-growing area of unionization in recent decades. A major aim of both merit systems and public-sector unions is to shield career government employees from the constant political jockeying of elective politics. Workers in career positions like these constitute the great mass of America’s public employees, most in local government.

This was not always the way it was. In the early 19th century, nearly all positions in government were patronage appointments. This was the “spoils system” (to the victors go the spoils). Getting rid of the spoils system by creating civil service jobs outside of politics was a hot-button political reform issue in the late 19th and early 20th century just as campaign contributions are a high-salience issue today. Over the long haul, the civil service reformers prevailed — but not completely.

The remaining group of workers in government, appointed officials, are *selected*, *not elected*. Although data are not available on the precise number of people in this category, I estimate that upwards of 400,000 people serve in appointive positions in national, state, and local governments. These officials are called *inners and outers*. Many of them do the heavy lifting of policymaking and management inside America’s

governments and play a significant role as change agents in the nation's political system. Yet books about American government tend to ignore them and focus instead on elected office holders — the president, key legislators, governors, and big-city mayors. Although such figures dominate the political stage, if one really wants to understand leadership in American government examining what elected officials do is not enough.

As America's governments over the years have become increasingly involved in funding and regulating more and more areas of national life, so has the role of appointed officials increased — not just in Washington but throughout the country.

Government expenditures account for 17.5 percent of the nation's gross domestic product; governments (federal, state, and local) directly employ nearly 15 percent of the nation's total labor force.

Arrangements of government employees in other industrial democracies are strikingly different from ours in the United States. Career tracks for top-level leaders are much more highly professionalized. A talented person who enters the British civil service can look forward to becoming a permanent secretary, which is the position in British cabinet departments just below that of minister. These positions are typically filled by graduates from elite preparatory schools and the most prestigious universities. In France, exceptional students admitted to L'École National d'Administration similarly can look forward to careers of high responsibility in government. Although public policy graduate schools at American universities have tried (to their credit) to play a similar role in

preparing exceptional students for leadership careers in government, nothing like the British or French arrangements exists here.

The U.S. System

States and local governments do the heavy lifting of domestic government. We could not live without them. They police communities; build, pave, and maintain roads and bridges; administer traffic safety, airports, and parks; collect trash; and assure the provision of drinking water. State and local employees are engaged in teaching, training, and counseling in public schools, community colleges, and universities. They staff prisons and administer the courts. They are responsible for environmental protection. They care for and supervise the care of the elderly and administer programs to lift needy families out of poverty. They provide poor families and also elderly people with subsidized housing. They operate public hospitals, oversee private and not-for-profit hospitals, and provide health care for the indigent. And this is just a partial list.

As for appointed officials who head these large public and publicly aided activities, we know the most about officials in the federal executive branch — a large and influential group. Every four years, after a presidential election, Congress publishes a “Plum Book” (in some years it actually has a plum-colored cover) listing upwards of 8,000 appointive positions in the federal executive branch. This quadrennial listing is the bible for people seeking to enter a new administration. Roughly the same number of appointed employees work for Congress. Even larger numbers of appointed officials,

both executive and legislative, work at the state and local levels. All these officials in America's governments serve at the pleasure (the phrase is important) of whoever appointed them.

Being part of this governing class of insiders and outsiders in America's governments is not a career path. People in these positions enter, exit, and often reenter public service over the course of their professional life. When not in government, they may be lawyers, business executives, professors, journalists, hospital directors, university officials, or officials of nonprofit organizations that often provide publicly funded services. These outer periods often are a time for former officials to regroup, to recharge their batteries, and perhaps to earn a higher salary than in the public sector, thus enabling them to return later on to the public service. In fact, sometimes people who seek to advance public purposes can do so more effectively outside government rather than inside. Periods in between periods of public service can be when individuals advance their purposes by writing and researching or working with major outside organizations. There is less constraint in such venues, more chance to do one's own thing and say one's piece.

Why Serve?

The most important insider jobs, those of agency heads and top policymakers, entail exciting challenges and can have a major effect on society and the economy. Public service like this can produce a gratifying sense of accomplishment along with recognition and prestige. But there is even more to it than this. Successful leadership in the public

service and the professional contacts it involves can enhance the likelihood of landing a well-paid job after one exits government. Although this does not sound noble, it has its good side. It enables the American governmental system to attract people to public service who might otherwise never participate in government.

But appointive leadership in America's governments is not for the faint of heart. The politics of getting appointed and then being in the public service are intense. One appeal of appointive office is that, unlike elective offices, most people in these jobs are not constantly caught up in political fundraising and campaigning. Still, one cannot succeed in government without being political. A thick skin, the courage to take a stand, and the quickness of wit to defend it are essential qualities for appointive public service. It is exhilarating at the top, but it can also be nerve-racking too. Successful appointed leaders need a keen intuitive feel for the constant bargaining that the American political process requires.

The Academic View

Most academic experts on government do not like this politicization of leadership in the public service. They downplay its scale and significance and frequently advocate reducing the number and curbing the role and power of appointed officials. The National Academy of Public Administration periodically takes this position. In 1985, the academy warned that "in a country as heavily dependent as ours on in-and-outers as executive leaders, deficiencies in the appointments system pose a serious risk to public

management.” The academy maintained that

The number of positions filled by political appointment has grown too large and must be reduced. The House Government Operations and Senate Governmental Affairs Committees should conduct a government-wide assessment to identify and reconvert many of those positions where career executives have been replaced by political appointees.⁶

In an influential book, *A Government of Strangers*, political scientist Hugh Heclo called appointed federal executives “birds of passage,” noting that their most obvious characteristic is “transience.” He called for “selectively centralizing, cutting, and pooling partisan appointments.”⁷ Likewise, the 1989 Volcker Commission on the Public Service held that

... the growth in recent years of the number of presidential appointees, whether those subject to Senate confirmation, noncareer senior executives, or personal and confidential assistants, should be curtailed. Although a reduction in the total number of presidential appointees must be based on position-by-position assessment, the Commission is confident that a substantial cut is possible, and believes a cut from the current 3,000 to no

⁶ National Academy of Public Administration, *Leadership in Jeopardy: The Fraying of the Presidential Appointments System* (Washington, DC, November 1985), p. 28.

⁷ Hugh Heclo, *A Government of Strangers* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 1977), p. 198.

more than 2,000 is a reasonable target.⁸

More recently, a report issued in 2003 by the successor commission to the earlier Volcker panel on the public service took the same position, urging Congress and the president to “work together to significantly reduce the number of executive branch political positions.”

The Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Presidential Appointment Process reached a similar conclusion:

Reducing the number of presidential appointments will improve the appointment process while simultaneously increasing opportunity, raising morale and enhancing the appeal of careers in public service. This reduction would be good for the president, good for appointees, good for the public service, and good for the country.⁹

There is no question that having large numbers of officials serve on a time-limited basis in America’s governments entails costs. One cost is that people may leave government at precisely the point at which they have learned enough to be effective. This cost can be measured in terms of the time new leaders take to learn the ropes. It is the reason they sometimes act too slowly, too quickly, or unwisely. Another cost occurs

⁸ Volcker Commission Report, *Leadership for America: Rebuilding the Public Service* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), p. 7.

⁹ Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Presidential Appointment Process, *Obstacle Course* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996), p. 9.

when elected officials select political hacks for leadership posts in government, unfortunately not an isolated occurrence.

Despite drawbacks, many of the nation's highest-level appointed officials are more qualified for their roles and dedicated to them than most academic experts are willing to admit. When David T. Stanley and colleagues at The Brookings Institution studied 1,000 top appointed leaders from Franklin Roosevelt's presidency through Lyndon Johnson's, they found the executives a "well-qualified group."¹⁰ Noting that these officials served for relatively short periods of time, the authors urged longer tenure, but also pointed out that many of their subjects were "well prepared" because they had held previous governmental positions. A study of federal political appointees conducted by the National Academy of Public Administration said that despite calls to the contrary, the number of top-level jobs is steadily growing.¹¹ Political scientist Linda L. Fisher commented that "our expectations about their qualifications have increased as well," pointing out that "we now expect political executives to be effective managers of large government bureaucracies."¹² In her study of 50 years of appointees, Fisher reported a marked increase in the proportion of people who "came into their positions directly from some other position involving public service,"¹³ although they often had those positions for only short periods (an average of about two years for federal cabinet and subcabinet officials).

¹⁰ David T. Stanley, Dean E. Mann, and Jameson W. Doig, *Men Who Govern: A Biographical Profile of Federal Political Executives* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 1967).

¹¹ National Academy of Public Administration, *Presidential Appointee Project* (Washington, DC: The National Academy of Public Administration, 1985).

¹² Linda Fisher, "Fifty Years of Presidential Appointments," in G. Calvin MacKenzie, ed. *The In- and Outers: Presidential Appointees and Transient Government in Washington* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 1.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 15.

A Debatable Assumption

The easy assumption of opponents of the politization of high-level leadership jobs in the public service that these jobs should be walled off from politics is very debatable. The contrary argument is that all leaders in American life — both public and private — tend to understand each other better in the United States than in other countries precisely because so many of them move back and forth between the governmental and nongovernmental worlds. The fact that appointed officials gain first-hand familiarity with government activities defuses the “we-versus-they” mentality between public servants and the private citizens that can be dangerous to the social order. Another advantage of the existence of this distinctly American appointed governing class is that when top officials want to change a policy, they often can do so relatively easily (or at least more easily than officials in other political systems) simply by changing horses, appointing a new person to a particular job.

Although elected officials are tempted to appoint political hacks, and aspiring candidates to appointive office often seek such positions as a way to advance their professional, business, or policy purposes, there are checks. The highest-level appointees have to be confirmed by the legislature. Moreover, the ubiquitous media are always watching. Conflict-of-interest laws, in addition, help to prevent appointed officials from securing inordinate personal monetary gain from public office. And most of all in the American governmental milieu, the policy process, divided as it is among branches and levels of government, guarantees constant scrutiny of anyone who is influential in public

life.

In sum, appointed officials are a fixture of America's governments. Efforts to downplay appointive leadership can have the effect of discouraging good people who might otherwise be interested in public service. Greater knowledge, which this book seeks to promote, is needed to stimulate more people — talented, dedicated, politically skilled people, both young and older — to consider appointive public service in their career, learn how to succeed in such jobs, and view public service as an integral part of their life experience.

Turnover at the Top

When a new administration takes office, its leaders are confronted by a situation in which many public agencies (national, state, or local) are staffed with noncareer employees (either in appointed jobs or special-status jobs exempt from the civil service) who can be replaced when the new administration takes office. The new administration faces a gray area, deciding which officials to replace and which to keep. If retained, many carryover officials can help a new administration accomplish its purposes; however, pressures for a clean sweep are great. Political operatives who gave their all to elect the new administration will want to obtain as many jobs as they can for themselves and their troops.

Some state governments and large local governments have a tradition of re-staffing new administrations wholesale. Other states and localities are selective about the types of jobs that should turn over when there is a change at the top. Smaller states, and even some relatively large states with a “good government” tradition, retain senior officials when the political party in power changes despite the fact that they may be serving in ostensibly political positions. Even in sensitive policy areas, I have met state officials who have served under many governors, sometimes governors with very different political ideologies. However, in the very biggest states, the practice tends to be the same as at the federal level. Every appointed official automatically resigns with a changeover in the party in power. Sensitivity is necessary even in these situations in deciding which incumbent officeholders are likely to be so helpful to a new administration that they should be retained. Good advice for newly elected officials is to go easy on revenge and build on existing strengths, or at least to wait awhile to decide which politically vulnerable officials should be asked to stay and which asked to leave. A good test of the political smarts of a new regime is whether it blithely sweeps everybody out or selectively retains valuable holdovers.

Types of Inners and Outers

Despite the pressures, snares, and instability of American political processes, good people take, and indeed seek, high-level appointive posts. Their reasons are varied. Most people in these jobs could not tell you everything you would like to know about their motives for entering public service. They may not even be able to sort them out for

themselves — the desire to serve versus the value of a high-level government job as a stepping stone to future opportunity. The most admirable appointed leaders are men and women who are dedicated to the serious work of government. These members of the appointive governing class strike a delicate balance between their private goals and their public purposes. Even when outside government, they maintain contacts (formal and informal) with leaders in the public agencies that involve their interests and expertise. In fact, because of the insecurity of America's appointive governing class, it is necessary that appointed officials have an outside professional, business, or organizational base. Law is one of the main outsider careers of appointed leaders; law is a good career choice generally for young people who aspire to challenging high-level leadership jobs but are not sure what their career track should be. Lawyers who specialize in substantive areas like transportation, the environment, energy, housing, trade, or labor relations are the logical people to fill policy jobs in government, especially if (as is true of many lawyers) they have ties to a political party or an elected leader.

Business executives, too, often enter government as political appointees because like lawyers they develop special familiarity with functional areas of government and also may have ties to a political party. Another source of candidates for appointive posts is academics. Although sometimes depicted as motivated by noncareer goals, academics have much to gain by being inners and outers. Promotions, tenure, salary increases, publications and royalties (not to mention recognition, *oh fame!*) can ensue from public life. In fact, the hardest part for an academic as an inner and outer typically is not getting in, but behaving appropriately after getting out. The temptation (and it is great) is to continue to play politics

in academe. Newly learned behaviors — to seek headlines and advocate are hard to shake. Academics need strong capacity for self-control to play the role of an inner and outer without becoming just another voice in the policy process. The line between partisanship and scholarship, the latter of which should entail teaching people *how* to think, not *what* to think, is not an easy line to draw. This is not a reason academics should eschew public service, but it is a reason they should be especially vigilant in separating politics and scholarship in their teaching after they have served.

Ethics and Influence

Most appointed officials spend their careers within a functional subsystem called an “iron triangle,” which includes executive branch leaders, the chair and/or senior members of the counterpart legislative committees, and leaders of the relevant outside interests. As people move around in these political subsystems they develop extensive, if uncoded, knowledge of how to operate in these special environments. One result of the existence of these functionalized organizational arrangements is that cozy relationships present a challenge for the integrity of public life. Appointed officials face pressures to form ties to an industry or profession in which they used to work and/or may want to work in the future. People who are inside must of necessity keep in mind that sooner or later their bread will be buttered by people who are outside.

Along with governmental checks and balances and constant media scrutiny, legal requirements come into play in deterring officials from abusing this American system of

inners and outers. Federal conflict-of-interest laws prohibit a former official for a period of time, usually two years, from dealing with “a particular matter” that the former official “knows or reasonably should know was actually pending under his or her official responsibility.”¹⁴ Laws like this are not easy to enforce. What is a “particular matter”? However, while temptations exist, it is the *modus operandi* of U.S. governments to clamp down on abuses; democracy is supposed to give lots of interests a chance to exert influence, but always with a bright light shining on whether this occurs according to law and accepted rules and practices.

Foxes in the Chicken Coop

The strongest argument against the reliance on appointed officials as leaders of America’s governments is that the system can put the foxes in the chicken coop. Despite multiple checks and balances, ethics laws, confirmation requirements, and constant media scrutiny, elected officials are tempted to reward friendly interests. Interest group leaders (for the aged, banking, insurance, agriculture, or environmental protection) often like this facet of the system and work hard to arrange appointments for their own people. Troublesome issues arise when advocacy organizations that are major campaign contributors pressure elected leaders to name one of their own to a key post. Campaign contributions to buy access and influence are a special challenge for government in America.

¹⁴ 18 U.S.C.A. § 207

The bottom line is that governments need to enforce ethics laws, but even more importantly governments need to be ever vigilant in rooting out excesses and discouraging bad practices where special interests obtain undue power. Across the landscape in public affairs, the pluralism of American government is the ultimate protective device against abuses — including shoddy practices in the selection and deployment of appointed officials.

3

Getting to Be — and Being — an Appointed Leader

Section 2 dealt with the desirability of having citizens understand America's appointed officialdom so they can enter public service in a leadership role if the stars are aligned. This section looks at how one gets to be an appointed leader and includes suggestions about how to succeed in such positions.

The key phrase above is “if the stars are aligned.” To win appointment, you have to be at the right point in your career, knowledgeable about the pertinent subjects, and politically positioned so that your ideas and values fit the proclivities of appointing officials. This is not something you can plan ahead with any great precision for the obvious reason that no one can predict the often ephemeral shifts in politics and in political values. You can be ready. You can make useful contacts and build networks that will aid you as a candidate for high office. As a young person you can serve in staff jobs and campaign assistantships that hone your skills and provide networking contacts. You can support candidates and work on campaigns. But in the final analysis, no amount of planning for appointive office can assure you that you will be the right person, at the right time, in the right place, for the right job. People should not overbuild their hopes. I say this even though my message is that more citizens — younger and older — should understand the nature of appointive office and keep an eye out for opportunities for high-

level public service.

When that moment occurs, there are some things you can do as a candidate, and some things you can't. There are no hard and fast rules, but there are ways to think about how you can get to be chosen. Assume you are an aspirant with the experience, skills, and contacts to obtain a high-level appointment as an administrator or top policymaker. A new administration is forming or for some other reason a major post in your field opens up. What should you do? You can campaign, but this has to be done artfully. Leadership in public service is seen by observers, especially reporters, as a privilege one must earn without seeming to have gone all out to be selected. So how do you campaign subtly for a job you want?

You mobilize your friends, urging them to write and make phone calls on your behalf. You let them know who they should try to contact and how they should describe your experience and explain why your ideas would enable you to tackle a particular new post. Your supporters should talk to each other and share their feedback with you. You should identify someone you know with media experience to advise you about how to get mentioned in the press. I have heard of aspirants to appointive office hiring public-relations consultants to engineer a campaign for them, but as a rule I think this is unwise. One must at least appear to be called to serve.

Career bureaucratic officials on occasion bite the political bullet and move up to appointive jobs, which entails risk. The risk occurs when their job is done, that is when a

new leader or administration enters office. Sometimes these people can fall back into a civil service rating. Generally, however, moving up and then out is the best bet for career officials inside government who climb the leadership ladder into an appointive post.

The time right after an election is hectic. The first thing many winning candidates do is take a vacation, which is often both needed and deserved. Good as their intentions may be, candidates for elected office and their advisors and handlers are likely to have been so absorbed by campaigning for office that they devote relatively little time and attention before an election to what they will do once elected.

When the people who make the selections for top appointive posts get around to it, time is short, pressures to make decisions are great, and they often have a frenetic, almost chaotic, selection system, if a system at all. Getting your oar in as a candidate requires fast action.

Even if you succeed in getting named to a high-level job, this is not the end of it. At the national level especially, the next steps can be frustrating, owing to the need to clear appointments politically and with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. For the highest-level jobs, Senate confirmation can add further delays and frustration, even embarrassment at the airing of personal matters. Candidates, family members, and friends need to be prepared for shrill opposition tactics to embarrass a candidate. Spreading information about private finances and business relationships that are perfectly legal (otherwise stay clear of public office) is common. This scrutiny is especially tough when

legislators of the political party that is out of power in the executive branch control the confirmation process. The same points apply to large states and cities.

Which Political Party?

Routes to public service often involve networks of acquaintances and colleagues that are partisan. Both Republicans and Democrats have a sense of obligation to their own. Once adopted, partisan identification is like glue. It sticks to you. It is not smart to change parties. It makes a statement about your reliability, and in politics reliability has a high premium. Nobody likes a turncoat. Hence, a major decision for people who aspire to public service is which political party to join. Ideology is an important factor, although it is not the whole story. Family ties are also a factor that draws people to a political party; young people interested in politics often have life-shaping experiences working in campaigns.

While party identification is important, your reputation in a substantive policy area is often more important. Expertise on finance, economics, the environment, agriculture, housing, banking, health, or transportation is likely to be a key in the selection process. Moreover, one's subject area reputation usually encompasses a particular view of the world. These send a signal that politicians know how to receive.

Being Political

Your public identity, both political and substantive, can help you get in the door, but what do you do once you're inside? While you need to be known as substantively knowledgeable, once you have power there is no substitute for political skill in wielding it. Although many appointed leaders want to serve because of their commitment to their community or their field of interest, those who succeed do so because they also have political skills or because they learn on the job how to be effective politically.

There is no one way of conducting yourself inside government. You can't be too standoffish and you need to be thick skinned. People in leadership positions in America's government operate in a cauldron of constant jockeying. It is important to be bold when the occasion demands it. In many situations the give-and-take of high policymaking outweighs fine calibrations of strategy. Knowing when to hold and when to fold is a needed political sixth sense. Experienced players know when it is smart to take a radical position so the action will come to them; they also know when the better course is to bargain incrementally. Sometimes you have to make deals on unrelated matters, supporting a program in one area to get someone's help in another, or agreeing to a project or to appoint someone to an office to win a legislative vote on a wholly different matter. It is naïve to enter public office if you are unwilling to horse trade. But of this be certain, *get fair measure*. Do not make bargains you can't deliver on. And be careful not to make your reputation as a dealmaker, as opposed to being a person of substance standing for policy goals and ideas you care about.

Experienced hands in leadership positions in government learn, or know intuitively, how to relate to players in the governmental process in ways that can advance their purposes. One generalization that is almost always helpful: Give credit rather than take credit. Planting an idea with legislators about something they can take credit for is often the best way to accomplish one's purpose. Telling a legislator about a new project, or telling the member that a reporter is going to call to talk about it, can be the key to building your coalition. A former director of a state agency told me that this kind of base building — on a bipartisan basis — took one-third of his time. The point is that cultivating trust and sharing credit creates political currency of great value.

When an outsider enters government, insiders will proffer assistance. Long-time careerists can be really helpful. But one has to be careful not to let agency insiders so dominate your time and attention that it cuts into efforts to build relationships with other people and groups inside and outside of government. A second caution is not to overcommit to management systems that are excessively time consuming and involve relationships with more people than you can reasonably interact with. A decade ago a very popular management reform was total quality management (TQM). In its most extreme form, TQM can dominate the time of top managers in interactions with multitudes of people deep in agency structures. There is every advantage to getting around and developing a feel for agency operations, but extensive interaction with too many people can be self-defeating. Be careful also not to be taken in by management systems that involve a multitude of agency goals. I have in mind over-relying on

elaborate management systems (see section 5), which attempt to deal with reams of data about program performance, data that often are not accurate or really useful in the real world of pulling and hauling by the many interests attempting to influence agency operations.

Timing

One piece of advice that may provide comfort is that when a person takes on a new position, there is initially the luxury of a honeymoon. This presents an opportunity to ask dumb questions. As a new officeholder, you should talk to a lot of people, people in your own agency and in other agencies and jurisdictions, as well as “customers” (the organizations and individuals affected by your agency’s activities). Good listeners are a rare breed in politics, but a smart one. During this honeymoon period you can gauge the lay of the land and shape your approach to new tasks. There is no substitute for the feel you get from looking around and getting out and about when you enter a new office. Even if you held a previous position in the same agency, as the leader of a new office you have to develop a fresh perspective.

The length of the honeymoon period varies. In a crisis, it will be short. But whatever its length, once the honeymoon is over, it is really over. Then your dumb questions become just that — dumb questions. At that point, the time for action is hard upon the new leader. Generally speaking, you should strike while the iron is hot. Do the tough things early. As time goes by, you will acquire baggage and develop strained

relationships. Taking advantage of the excitement of a new start is generally a good strategy, but remember that you do not have to decide every question when it is raised. Knowing how to wait for the right moment is intuitive for many people. But you can also learn on the job, by thinking about the timing of major decisions carefully and patiently. Major decisions require astute judgment about the right time to act. In fact, the use of time — both early on and over the course of one's tenure in an appointed post — is an important subject. Leaders in government, both elected and appointed, often portray the near term (an hour, a day) as hectic and frenetic — never offering a moment to think and reflect. This may be a good impression to give to outsiders so you can move on to the next subject or person, but it is not an indication of good practice if it is always the way you think and act.

The worst thing you can do is to remain in such perpetual motion that you sacrifice making wise decisions on big issues at the right moment in order to deal with small matters that are better left unattended or delegated to others. President Jimmy Carter's practice of deciding who should use the White House tennis court and when they should play is often cited. Carter, formerly the commander of a nuclear submarine, was said to be a detail person. Some observers of his presidency believe this trait contributed to his lack of achievements in office. Although I think this is overdone, this point about the importance of not being consumed by details is critical. You should stay focused on the big issues.

Interpersonal Relations

Skill in handling interpersonal relationships is critical to leadership inside government. The academic literature on public administration tends to stress that political leaders should be nice. As a general rule, it is best to let people down easily, an iron fist in a velvet glove. But, despite the fact that gentleness and consideration to others often can win the day, leaders who do not recognize when the time is right to discipline subordinates are bound to learn the hard way that you should not sacrifice the courage to act to the desire to be nice. Shy flowers wilt in American politics. Being firm includes taking strong action, including expressing even angry concern about a particular problem or the way a particular matter has been handled. But a good rule of thumb is never to act when you are upset. It is okay to let people think you are angry, but always wise to rely on controlled anger.

Niccolò Machiavelli put his finger on the relationship between leaders and their associates: “When you see the servant thinking more of his own interest than of yours, and seeking inwardly his own profit in everything, such a man will never make a good servant.” He added, “To keep his servant honest the prince ought to study him, honoring him, enriching him, doing him kindness, sharing with him the honors and cares.”¹⁵ Personal gestures and kindnesses are an important part of leadership. Even casual gestures to people who depend on you can be deliberate and purposeful. Still, different people require different strokes. Some people need lots of stroking and thrive on it, others

¹⁵ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Ware, Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1993), p. 182.

need more mystery in their lives. One of the important intuitive skills of being a leader is knowing what makes people tick and how you can motivate them to work productively with you. What makes a particular team member perform effectively is not the same at all times and in all situations. Moods matter, and you also need to be sensitive to your own mood. If you are upset or tense, you need to be careful not to overreact when a person you need over the long haul makes a misstep. This is not to say that it is always right to forgive. You should discipline people if things go badly, and if that doesn't work, you should remove them. Firings should be rare; doing it too often can be a sign of failed leadership.

Besides exercising strength when needed, appointive leaders can sometimes obtain an advantage by being unpredictable. You need to be sure the action comes to you and that your staff and subordinates think in these terms. Overall, the people around you need to know that you care about their performance fulfilling *your* purposes, and that you can take strong action if people stray too far from these purposes.

Officials in government frequently talk extravagantly about other officials in government whom they respect, suggesting that they will always do the bidding of these respected leaders. Such statements, however, often do not reflect what an appointed official really thinks, because loyalties shift. Stroking, even flattering, people can be useful, but be careful if it is you that is being flattered. Calculations about loyalty must be private. You can be loyal to your chief on some issues but not others, at some times but not others, in some settings but not others. This may not be pleasant, but is unavoidable;

you have to be careful about over-relying on personal relationships and sharing confidences with others.

4

Team Building

This section draws a distinction between two types of leadership teams in government, the A-Team and the B-Team. The A-Team consists of people parallel to an appointed leader, such as cabinet or subcabinet colleagues. The B-Team is the appointed leader's support team. The focus first is on the B-Team because forming it is a crucial early step for political appointees and because appointed leaders usually have the most discretion in selecting and deploying their top aides and advisors.

First the B-Team

The word “team” suggests a group of people who share a knowledge of plays. Your support team should consist of a manageable number of people who work closely and well with you on a regular basis. Experts on management write about “span of control” — the point being that a leader can work regularly with a limited number of associates. There is no magic number. Maybe it is seven, maybe ten, but more than a dozen becomes problematic.

You should use three criteria in selecting members of your support team — balance, point of view, and chemistry. Other criteria include intelligence, experience, and

interpersonal skills, but those attributes are givens for associates on any leadership support team.

The most important attribute appointive leaders need to consider in forming their close-in support team is *balance*. Far and away the worst mistake you can make is to choose all one kind of associate. The wise leader knows that input from different types of people is essential — for example, from a political expert, a brainy type, a public-relations type, a hardball type, and a compassionate type. Also factored into this mix should be people from different generations with different professional backgrounds and prior experience. One person can bring several qualities and perspectives to bear — a young person with a Ph.D. in economics who previously worked at a different level of government, for example.

At critical moments, if everyone around you is too hard-boiled or soft-boiled, too analytical, too legalistic, or too political, mistakes are likely to occur. If your support team consists entirely of public-relations types, the group can be too shallow. If team members are all policy wonks, they are likely to lack political skills.

A well-known example of how an unbalanced support team can misfire is President Nixon's circling of the wagons to protect himself in the Watergate crisis. His close-in team was composed almost entirely of political operatives. No one with a sense of history or deep experience in other institutions was part of this inner circle. Bad traits reinforced each other, and the team made wrong decisions until there was no way out.

The other two critical attributes for selecting B-Team members are point of view and chemistry. As to the former, if someone has a decidedly different point of view and values and goals than you, he or she is not likely to be a good B-Team member no matter how talented. Knowing the views of the other side is important, but a close-in associate who is too wedded to these views can disrupt decision making.

The term “chemistry” refers to the elusive quality of people who relate comfortably to you as the leader and to each other. Good chemistry sometimes involves people with similar personalities, but it can also involve people with different qualities who fit together well. Some leaders are intense, impatient, humorless; they may work well with support-team members who are relaxed, patient, funny.

If a leader has a high enough position, many B-Team members are likely to be people the leader chooses. The appointee can tap people inside of government, former associates from outside government, or other outsiders recruited because of their experience or special knowledge relevant to the leader’s goals.

Complications arise if someone other than the leader selects B-Team members or has to approve their appointment, but even a very high-level appointee rarely has full authority in forming a support team. This is because at least some members are likely to hold permanent civil service jobs. They were there before you, and they will be there after you leave. They can wait you out. However, this is not an insurmountable obstacle.

The new appointee should not be categorically suspicious — as too many political types are — of all civil servants, assuming they will be uncooperative and that their perspectives, values, and goals are different from yours. If you inherit careerists around you, it is a good idea to let a little time elapse before deciding whether someone should be moved or removed, assuming you have the authority to do this.

The civil service is usually not so rigid that you cannot motivate people. Civil servants are evaluated regularly for reassignments as well as raises and rewards. Most high-level career officials in the federal government are members of a special corps called the Senior Executive Service.¹⁶ These officials must be canny politicians in their own right because appointed leaders can move them around, even remove them, much more easily now than in the past. This arrangement empowers appointed officials, and is another way in which the governing class of appointed officials can have a strong role.

In the final analysis, insiders and outsiders have to work wisely and well with many members of the permanent government. Despite reservations appointed officials may have about careerists, they need support from them. Civil servants know the rules and the ropes. Their knowledge of the laws and regulations that define how governments conduct their business is often a crucial ingredient to success. A good example is contracting. Much of what modern governments do today occurs through contracts with private companies and nonprofit organizations. Contracting laws and procedures may seem

¹⁶ The Senior Executive Service was established by the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act under President Jimmy Carter as a “good government” reform. However, some management experts think the legislation backfired because it ultimately gave more power and prominence to appointed officials. Reagan’s administration, which succeeded Carter’s, used this authority in ways that enhanced the power of cabinet and subcabinet officials.

arcane, slow, and needlessly complex. Still, appointed leaders must be sure they are well advised on what is possible and permissible in selecting contractors and overseeing their work. Friends and contributors often seek business from government, and indeed their bids may be the best ones you receive, but you need to be absolutely sure. In some cases, you need to recuse yourself from the selection process. There is no substitute for developing trusting working relationships with civil servants who can protect you and help ensure that you are following proper procedures.

There is of course another side to this coin. No matter what their status (whether or not they are members of the Senior Executive Service), career officials have many reasons for wanting to work effectively with political appointees. One reason may be that they agree with appointees' point of view. Another reason may be that civil servants care about the reputation and smooth functioning of their agency. Still another may be that appointed chiefs have leverage — some of it subtle, some less so — such as the ability to assign career employees to remote branch offices.

The A-Team

The A-Team consists of people with parallel jobs, such as the members of a president's or governor's cabinet. In describing the A-Team, we need to be careful about the "team" metaphor, although it is basically useful. Depending on the style of a particular elected chief executive, the cabinet may not be a team in the sense that its members meet frequently and work together closely. But they are nonetheless usefully

viewed as a group. Inept cabinet making can undo a political chief executive in ways that he or she may never be able to correct.

Although the same three criteria apply to the selection of members of the A-Team as to the B-Team (balance, point of view, and chemistry), the ranking of these criteria differs. While balance is the most essential criterion for the B-Team, a chief executive's foremost consideration in choosing cabinet-level and other top officials should be compatibility of point of view. In American government, alliances are evanescent; today's collaborator may be tomorrow's adversary. It is important to seek as much point-of-view compatibility at the top as possible, despite the tendency in American political practice to do just the opposite.

Because stakeholders pull agency heads in so many different directions, there is bound to be trouble if the goals the agency heads care about are decidedly different from those of their chief. Under such conditions cabinet members are likely to build their strongest alliances with other power centers, such as legislative committees, interest groups, corporations, and unions. There are huge temptations to do this. The executive branch of an American government (federal, state, or local), never a cohesive entity, is likely under these conditions to become a collection of unhappy people whose relationships with their chief and with each other are decidedly strained, even antagonistic.

Some readers may find the caution that top elected officials and their principal aides should avoid ideologically fragmented cabinet making exaggerated, but habits die hard in American government. Elected chief executives too often choose ideologically diverse cabinets. Most presidents, governors, and mayors are elected by centrist coalitions of organizations and voters representing a mix of ideas. Elections tend to be won in the middle of the ideological spectrum, and the center is by nature squishy. An eclectic approach to cabinet making stressing ideological diversity may seem logical, but be careful of that. It is unwise to choose cabinet members who are more beholden to other drummers than to the chief. It is difficult enough to maintain even a reasonable level of policy cohesion amid the pluralism of American government. A strategy that gives up the game before the kickoff is not a good one.

The Subcabinet

Presidents, governors, and chief executives of large cities and counties need to have a strong hand in choosing the members of their top cabinet officials and their own personal close-in staff. Although they can delegate some portion of these tasks to a chief of staff, it is not a good idea to delegate too much, as the person who chooses the members of cabinet or of the White House staff or a governor's top aides is likely to win and hold those appointees' loyalty. However, the elected chief should not and probably can't select everyone appointed to the subcabinet (undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, agency heads, etc.) Which subcabinet appointments should be made centrally, and which delegated to cabinet appointees?

There are pulls in both directions. On the one hand, making these appointments centrally enables the elected chief to more easily achieve point-of-view compatibility. If the director of, say, the highway department, which is part of the department of transportation, is chosen by the governor, one would expect decisions about major highway routes to be in line with the governor's policy preferences and political needs. But on the other hand, if the cabinet secretary who heads the transportation department does not have at least some hand in this selection process, it is hard for the governor to hold that cabinet secretary accountable.

No single approach to choosing subcabinet appointees is right for all seasons. Elected chiefs can establish tight clearance procedures for all agency appointments or delegate all of them to cabinet members. An elected chief is unlikely to take an all-or-nothing position. Even for delegated subcabinet appointments, it is wise for the elected chief to maintain vetting or consultative processes. Likewise, when subcabinet appointments are centralized, it is wise for a chief executive to consult cabinet agency heads about the choices.

5

Making Policy

How does a leader inside America's governments decide which policy goals to pursue and how to pursue them? Policymaking includes influencing the legislative process, responding to legal challenges regarding public services, issuing regulations and policy guidelines, and appointing other officials — all of which require constant decisionmaking on strategies and goals. This section juxtaposes two social science disciplines, economics and political science, to discuss the intellectual underpinnings of policymaking.

Macroeconomics is the study of how economies operate in the aggregate. It exerted its greatest influence on the U.S. federal government in the 1960s. The Kennedy administration drew on the writing of John Maynard Keynes to achieve noninflationary economic growth by cutting taxes to avoid “fiscal drag” and thereby enable the economy to operate at full capacity. Later, in the Johnson years, microeconomics, the more detailed study of economic behavior, came to exert a similarly strong influence inside government. This section of the *Handbook* focuses on microeconomics and theories of public administration to government policymaking.

The Budget Process

The budget process is the spinal column of public policymaking. Appointed officials often enter government with only general ideas about budgeting. But, like it or not, they are soon caught up in the budgetary process, which inevitably includes processes and regulations that heavily influence the content of public policy and its implementation.

An influential school of thought regarding government budgeting is derived from political science, and is best reflected in the writings of Charles E. Lindblom, an economist by training. Lindblom published a seminal article in the *Public Administrative Review* in 1959 called “The Science of ‘Muddling Through.’” He began by noting that there are two ways to solve complex policy problems — by root and by branch. The root approach looks at the whole. It is grounded in theory, examines all possible solutions to a problem, and weighs the costs and benefits of each to allow the decisionmaker to choose the best one. This rational-planning approach, said Lindblom, is “of course impossible.... It assumes intellectual capacities and sources of information that men simply do not possess, and it is even more absurd as an approach to policy when the time and money that can be allocated to a policy problem is limited, as is always the case.”¹⁷

By contrast, the branch method, which Lindblom sought “to clarify and formalize,” is the method of making successive limited comparisons in order to adjust

¹⁷ Charles E. Lindblom, “The Science of ‘Muddling Through,’” *Public Administration Review* 19 (Spring 1959): 80.

policy at the margins. According to Lindblom, this method is best suited to policymaking in democracies. It is unfortunate, he added, that “the literatures of decision-making, policy formulation, planning, and public administration formalize the first approach rather than the second, leaving public administrators who handle complex decisions in the position of practicing what few preach.”¹⁸ Although Lindblom called this process of muddling through a science, it was with tongue in cheek. The point is that the policy process is dynamic. It is an art form. Judgment, skill, and timing by jockeying stakeholders in budget processes determine the outcome of most policy issues. Moreover, once a decision is made, it rarely stays made. Public policies constantly need to be tended and amended.

My reason for discussing Lindblom’s views is to compare the “branch method” with theories in microeconomics that reflect the root method. An explicit and revealing illustration of the difference between these two methods played out in President Lyndon Johnson’s effort in the mid-1960s to remake the budgetary process in the style of microeconomics by establishing the “planning-programming-budgeting system” (PPB).

A Case Study: The PPB System

The PPB approach to budgeting, based on systems analysis in the private sector, was applied by Robert S. McNamara, former president of Ford Motor Co., who was originally appointed by President Kennedy as secretary of defense. McNamara and his staff of “whiz kids” used systems analysis to compare alternative weapon systems. Their

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 80

goal was to increase the leverage of the secretary in relation to the individual armed services. Before the Vietnam War escalated, McNamara was riding high. In 1965, President Johnson decided that because of his success, McNamara's approach should be applied not just in the defense sector but across the board in government.

In an executive order issued in August 1965, Johnson, in characteristically ebullient fashion, directed all federal agencies to apply the PPB approach to the entire budgetary process. Federal agencies were to prepare planning documents and then issue analytical papers backing up their budget recommendations to the Bureau of the Budget. (This was before the bureau was reorganized and renamed the Office of Management and Budget in 1970.) Agencies were supposed to identify program objectives and subject different methods of fulfilling them to systematic comparison. Formally, this process was to consist of three kinds of reports prepared by each agency: *program memoranda*, describing the agency's strategy and comparing the cost and effectiveness of major alternative programs; *special analytic studies*, examining current and longer-run issues; and *program and financial plans*, summarizing program choices in terms of their outputs and costs, usually over a five-year period.

The experience with PPB was, to say the least, disappointing. The paper did not flow, or it overflowed. Federal agencies used familiar bureaucratic strategies to continue to operate the budget process the way they were used to doing it. In some cases, they simply did not submit the required planning memoranda and analysis. Agency officials and often also the staff of the Budget Bureau operated as if nothing had changed. In other

cases, agencies used the tactic of swamping the Budget Bureau with thick planning documents and elaborate issue papers that few, if any, high officials of the submitting agency had ever read. Agencies sometimes sent documents to the bureau in cardboard boxes containing material that top officials could not possibly have thoughtfully considered.

Three years after President Johnson established the government-wide PPB system, President Nixon quietly issued a memorandum abolishing it that began: “Agencies are no longer required to . . .” and then summarized the steps of the PPB system. Budget expert Allen Schick, in an article on this little-noticed “death in the bureaucracy,” pointed out, “No mention was made in the memo of the three initials which dazzled the world of budgeting when the PPB system was announced.”¹⁹

Economist Charles Schultze, an accomplished inner and outer in the federal government, was a central figure in this story. As director of the Budget Bureau when PPB was put in place, he was at the forefront of this effort to apply microeconomics in government. After leaving the Johnson administration, Schultze discussed his experience in trying to implement PPB in a series of lectures at the University of California.²⁰ The lectures are a fascinating retrospective on the application of the root method to governmental policymaking.

¹⁹ Allen Schick, “A Death in the Bureaucracy,” in C. Albert Hyde and Jay M. Shafritz, eds., *Government Budgeting: Theory, Process, Politics* (Oak Park, IL: Moore, 1978), p. 191.

²⁰ Charles L. Schultze, *The Politics and Economics of Public Spending* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 1968).

Schultze specifically indicated sympathy with Lindblom's argument about the difficulty of specifying the objectives of every possible policy alternative and comparing those alternatives. Then, citing Lindblom's idea of muddling through, Schultze maintained that the PPB approach needed to adapt to the political process. In fact, he said, this is what actually happened under President Johnson. According to Schultze, "program planning and evaluation staffs in the agency head's immediate office, created by the PPB system, strengthen the role of the agency head in relations with the operating units."²¹ The legacy of PPB was that it made policy analysts (new agency staff members) players in policymaking. They became a permanent force, adding an analytical dimension to budgeting. They were empowered. Although not customarily discussed in these terms, this is what all budget reforms are all about — *power*. Although federal government budgeting became more analytical, it didn't change all that much. It was still, and still is, an inherently political process.

Other "Reforms"

The PPB system is not the only effort by reformers to make government decisionmaking more rational. Under President Carter in the late 1970s, the aim of applying the root method to governmental budgeting was advanced under the banner of "zero-based budgeting" (ZBB). This approach, as its name implies, required that every budget decision be made as if it were an entirely new decision, with planners systematically evaluating all the options for pursuing the contemplated purposes. President Nixon had earlier advanced a similar reform called "management by

²¹ Ibid, p. 94.

objectives” (MBO). Both Nixon’s MBO system and Carter’s ZBB system, like PPB before them, called for new processes, players, and documents, and both bit the dust unceremoniously. Still, they added to PPB’s legacy of empowering policy analysts in decisionmaking.

Aaron Wildavsky, a political scientist who played a major role in both interpreting and influencing public budgeting, published a widely read book in 1964 calling all of these budget “reforms” not rational, but *non-rational*. He argued that despite assertions to the contrary, most budget decisions are *incremental*.²² Each year, he said, decisionmakers look at what is being spent and decide how much to add to or subtract from each account, sometimes changing the way programs work but rarely deeply analyzing whether a given program is justified.

Fifteen years after the first edition of Wildavsky’s book on the budgetary process, he published a new version that announced a further evolution in his thinking. Although he had written the first edition to show that the “accepted paradigm does not describe either how budgetary decisions are made or how they might be made,” now he wanted to go further: “This third edition claims (how well the reader will have to judge) that putting objectives first, alternatives second, and choices third is inefficient as a method of calculation, ineffective in relating thought to action, and inappropriate as a design for learning.”²³ Specifically referring to PPB and Carter’s zero-based budgeting system, Wildavsky asserted: “Rational choice (it is always right to be rational) limits calculations

²² Aaron Wildavsky, *The Politics of the Budgetary Process* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1962), p. 13, emphasis added.

²³ Aaron Wildavsky, *The Politics of the Budgetary Process*, third edition (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), p.v.

so choices can be made, uses history to correct mistakes, harnesses power through organizational incentives, and never, never ranks objectives or resources alone but always together.”²⁴ PPB and ZBB, said Wildavsky, take the exact opposite tack.²⁵

Since the earlier version of this *Handbook*, similar reforms have appeared under the rubric of the “performance management movement,” discussed in the next section.

Ironically, management fads in government are not in sync with thinking on business management. Experts on business management warn against micromanagement, sometimes called “paralysis by analysis.” A book that circulated widely in the 1980s called instead for the ‘*tight/loose*’ approach — tight concerning goals and loose about giving subsidiaries the flexibility to achieve them.²⁶

Where Do New Ideas Come From?

Although much of what happens in government policymaking is incremental, new ideas do happen. In the 1980s, political scientist John W. Kingdon conducted an influential study on new ideas in government.²⁷ Kingdon’s study consisted of interviews with elected and appointed federal officials, career officials, and people outside government representing interest groups, the media, and academe. He interviewed 247 people who were involved in health and transportation policymaking from 1976 to 1979.

²⁴ Ibid, p. v.

²⁵ Ibid, p. vi.

²⁶ Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America’s Best-Run Companies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982).

²⁷ John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984).

Kingdon's focus was on "policy entrepreneurs," whom he defined as people who operate in three streams that flow into the policy process — problem streams, policy streams, and political streams. When the three streams converge, Kingdon said the result can be policy change. Kingdon added that "focusing events" cause these convergences to occur, often in ways that are unpredictable at moments when "policy windows" open, allowing policy entrepreneurs to build coalitions.

Kingdon's sensible book makes one point that fits especially well with this *Handbook* on the role that appointed officials play in this process. "If any one set of participants in the policy process is important in the shaping of the agenda, it is elected officials and their appointees, rather than career bureaucrats or nongovernmental actors."²⁸ Compared with elected and appointed officials, Kingdon said, interest groups are important, but more in blocking than originating in policy changes. He found academics, policy researchers, and consultants important actors in shaping policy alternatives.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 20.

6

Implementing Policy

Participants in policymaking positions in government are engaged in multiple arenas that involve incessant bargaining and jockeying. Most elected officials have little time to devote to what happens to policies after they are made. Moreover, public policies, once made, almost never are so precise and transparent that they can be self-executing. This provides opportunities for appointed officials, but they need to carefully weigh how best to proceed and how best to obtain feedback and evaluate policy implementation.

At their roots, most public policies represent efforts to change the behavior of large institutions and organizations. They are important only if they do so. No matter how well-crafted a public policy, how pure its intent, all is for naught unless the policy is implemented. This process of converting “good” intentions into “good” results is a good basis for the public to judge the performance of leaders in government. In “The Hollow Men,” T. S. Eliot wrote,

Between the idea

And the reality

Between the motion

And the act

Falls the Shadow

It is in this shadowland of policy implementation that appointed officials often do their most important work.

Implementation as Exploration

The first piece of advice for appointed leaders who care about policy implementation is to move around, get out and about, especially early in your tenure. There are few things as harmful to effective management in government as spending all or most of one's time in Washington, Albany, or Sacramento. Distant observation deadens sensitivity to the work state and local governments and myriad for-profit and nonprofit organizations do at ground level. This is not to say that appointed leaders can grapple personally with all the details of implementing all public policies and micromanage them. However, unless a leader has a feel for what occurs at ground level, it is hard to provide direction for implementation. Not only do appointed leaders need to develop a feel for ground-level administration, it is good to be seen doing so. You signal in this way that you are watching.

An important book on policy implementation published in 1984 included three words from a chapter by Angela Browne and Aaron Wildavsky that encapsulate my point. "*Implementation is exploration.*"²⁹ To succeed, appointed leaders must be alert to constant changes in public policy that occur in its implementation.

Textbooks on American government often define away this role in policy implementation for top political leaders in government by drawing a distinction between making policies and carrying them out. They depict making policy as political, whereas

²⁹ Angela Browne and Aaron Wildavsky, "Implementation Is Exploration," in Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, eds., *Implementation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 254, Italics added.

implementation is seen as an administrative task for career officials who take charge of policies once they are agreed upon and do the things necessary (write regulations and exercise oversight) to put them into effect.

Nice as it might be to adopt such a neat distinction, it doesn't work. Most public policies are vague, and their character and purposes change frequently. Different leaders inside governments, both elected and appointed leaders, define policy goals in different ways, at different times — often in an effort to assemble or hold the political coalition necessary to adopt or sustain a given policy. Also, a different participant in the policy process is likely to put a different spin on policy goals at different times depending on the audience being addressed. Leaders of outside groups know the game. It is not unusual for them when trying to influence policy implementation to change the essence of governmental action. Oversight of implementation by appointed officials can make a big difference. However, the higher up you go in government, the harder it is to exercise oversight. Although good feedback is essential both for policymakers and the public, obtaining it is a challenge because of the vast number and diversity of agents that carry out domestic public policies.

How to Keep Track?

Increasingly, private and nonprofit organizations have become the agents of domestic public purposes. Privatization and “*nonprofitization*” are intrinsic to public management.

Officials have to be clear about the type and level of feedback about policy implementation they can realistically obtain and use from both other levels of government as well as from private and nonprofit contractors. Trying to micromanage activities too far down in the governmental food chain can be a source of great frustration.

One useful way to think about the governmental process is that all governmental activities have three dimensions — setting policies, paying for their execution, and carrying them out. A health program, for example, can have national goals, be partially paid for by the federal government, and be administered by a state government or by a local consortium of hospitals and clinics. The key to exercising oversight is knowing what level of government or types of institution has *preponderate* responsibility. If the national government sets goals and pays part (but not most) of the costs of a given service, but does not administer that service, it is not realistic for federal officials to know everything about every aspect of program implementation. In a nutshell, managerial oversight has to reflect who's in charge.

Reporters are notorious for demanding information in a way that misunderstands this reality of American federalism. Yet when a conscientious public official tries to set them straight, the press often regards that as trying to fend off responsibility. Unfortunately, the failure to face up to this challenge and deal with accountability questions directly and candidly feeds resentment of governmental bureaucracies.

In the nineties, innovations for policy oversight have been expanded to subject public governmental policy implementation to the appealing test — *what works?* The ultimate criterion, it is said, should not be whether a given policy was carried out exactly as intended (that’s an input), but whether it made a difference to the people or groups it was supposed to affect. The goal of the performance-management movement is to “manage for results,” to measure the outcomes of governmental actions.

In 1993 the U.S. Congress enacted a law requiring the federal government to manage for results. Called the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA or the “Results Act” for short), the legislation set up procedures for scoring the performance of all federal agencies.³⁰ Then House Majority Leader Dick Arme y stated the purpose of the law as follows in a letter to the director of the Office of Management and Budget. The Results Act is “designed to systematically provide Government decision-makers and the public with reliable information on what actual results federal programs and activities are achieving — i.e., what is working, what is wasted, what needs to be improved, and what needs to be rethought.”³¹ Under the terms of the act, each agency is required to submit a plan to the Office of Management and Budget setting out its goals and indicating specifically how they will be achieved.

³⁰ The Rockefeller Institute assembled expert views on this law, especially as it affects domestic programs and state and local governments. See Dall W. Forsythe, ed., *Quicker, Better, Cheaper: Managing Performance in American Government* (Albany: Rockefeller Institute Press, 2001).

³¹ Dick Arme y, letter to Franklin D. Raines, “*RE: Results Act Implementation*,” August 7, 1997.

Regrettably for its authors, the 1993 law got off to a bad start according to a task force of House staff members assigned to monitor the GPRA process, which assigned numeric scores to agency plans submitted under the act. The task force scored plans for 10 factors, with up to 10 points for each so that with a possible 5-point bonus the best-performing agency could receive a score of 105. However, the highest score in the task force review was less than half of that — 62, given to the Social Security Administration. The lowest score was 6.5 for the Labor Department. Other agency scores ranged from 60 to 11. The mean score was 26.5.

It is notable that among federal agencies the Social Security Administration, which received the highest score, also stands out for having *preponderate* responsibility for administering the programs under its jurisdiction. By contrast, the Labor Department carries out almost all its programs through grants and contracts for states, localities, and contractors for training and employment programs.

Representative Arney's early assessment was hopeful but concerned. "Much remains to be done," he said, adding that these scores "illustrate rather starkly how far agencies are from the ideal."³² Subsequent reports from the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) were less upbeat. GAO in 1997 said that "examples of substantial performance improvements were relatively few, and that many agencies did not appear to be well positioned to provide in 1997 a results-oriented answer to the fundamental

³² Ibid.

Results Act question: What are we accomplishing?”³³ The GAO has repeatedly pointed out that one of the main barriers to implementing the GPRA is the difficulty of measuring results for “programs that deliver services to taxpayers through third parties, such as state and local governments.”³⁴ In point of fact, the bulk of domestic social services are performed this way — under grants and contracts with literally thousands of administrative agents. The bottom line is that when higher levels of government (national or state) do not themselves pay the piper, they cannot call the tune. It is unwise to obligate them to collect data in a way that assumes that they can do so.

Take a federal grant-in-aid to states for intensive reading remediation for high school students that is disbursed initially by the state to local school districts. A school in a suburb may spend the same amount of grant money per student under this program as a school in a distressed urban neighborhood, and yet reading scores in the suburb may be much higher than those in the city. Does this mean that the students in the suburb performed better because of the grant? One obviously has to take into account the environmental conditions that make it hard to teach kids in the distressed urban schools.

There are several ways one can ask for feedback about the results school districts and schools achieve. One can ask what activities they funded with the federal money. This is *process evaluation on inputs*. One can also try to measure *outputs*: How many students passed a particular reading test? The next level of results is the hardest of all: *outcomes* — measuring whether a given program made a difference.

³³ U.S. General Accounting Office, “*Managing for Results: Prospects for Effective Implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act*” (Washington, DC: June 3, 1997), GAO/T- GGD-97-113, p. 5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

A research expert is likely to say that what is really needed to assess outcomes is a social experiment with a control group that gets at what is called the *counterfactual*. What would have happened in the absence of the federally aided reading remediation program? Far and away, the preferred method for conducting social experiments is to randomly assign some students in each school district to a treatment group (that gets the special reading curriculum) and a control group (randomly assigned similar students who don't get the special reading curriculum) and then observe the differences in the performance of the two groups. That can be the basis for answering the hardest questions: Did the money spent on the remediation curriculum make a difference? By how much? Where? For whom?

Unfortunately, social experiments are very expensive, time consuming, and extremely difficult to conduct in the real world. They cannot be carried out for every goal or social program. For this reason, the ideal of measuring the outcomes of government programs runs the risk of deterring even the most conscientious government officials from trying to hold all agencies and agents accountable. Officials have to conduct social experiments *selectively*, and then use random-assignment methodologies to produce *benchmarks* for assessing other programs, not to try to, or expect to be able to, measure the results of every program. In the example just given, policymakers would like to be able to argue that if students in a particular reading program with certain kinds of characteristics score above a certain benchmark reading level, that program is viewed as

having produced its results.³⁵ Admittedly, such restraint is hard to apply in the typical political environment in which overpromising is endemic to winning support for something you want to do. Realism and subtlety are called for in establishing goals and evaluating public programs.

A pragmatic approach using multiple techniques for ratcheting up goals requires the leader to meet and work closely with managers using the best, most appropriate, and understandable data available about processes, outputs, and outcomes. A leader who keeps an eye on the clearest management data available in this way can bring incentives to bear — promotions, bonuses, and opportunities for advanced training and networking that enhance the careers of high-performing program managers. Regular report cards on outputs can be used to showcase successes. Leaders can achieve a great deal this way by using practical day-to-day accountability tools in give-and-take relationships with program officials. Experts and policy analysts can aid the leader in selecting the best benchmarks, but the key point is that skillful leaders have to blend rigorous evaluation tools with informed, active oversight grounded in the best available data and expertise.

³⁵ For a longer discussion of the author's views, see *Social Science in Government: The Role of Policy Researchers* (Albany: Rockefeller Institute Press, 2000).

7

Dealing with the Media

An appointed official in government must cultivate the media and always appear to be talking candidly to them. This is hard because there is so much hype in public relations and because there is so little time to get one's point across, especially on television. Telegenic elected leaders who are good at sound bites and have celebrity status often make government unpopular because they oversimplify and play on people's emotions about the foibles of bureaucracies. What is most irritating is that these leaders set the tone. Their simplistic treatment demeans hardworking people inside government carrying out its day-to-day business.

One of your biggest problems as an appointed official in government will be that you will get publicity when you don't want it and can't get it when you do. Reporters seek controversy — better yet, a good fight. You get noticed if you mess up or if you take somebody on or vice versa. Most of the time, it is not worth the trouble to try to find journalists who write about success stories and the serious work of governing. Look at it from their side. Media competition for audiences is intense. It is hard for journalists to get noticed with ever-growing information sources — television, newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and web sites. Given this reality, here are ideas for dealing with the press:

- *Maintaining your image and making it as good as you can is one of the hardest and subtlest challenges you will face as an appointed official in government.* Some reporters are not going to like what you are doing, seeing it as too conservative, too liberal, or just not what they think you should be doing. While they may profess and believe that they adhere to high standards of journalistic objectivity, after a while bad relationships develop if the chemistry is just wrong. The higher up you go in government and the more visible you become, the more likely it is that such animosities will emerge. Where there are weaknesses in your record and vulnerabilities in your performance (and there are bound to be some), a reporter who has it in for you will find them. Therefore, you need to be scrupulous in protecting your integrity. The bolder you are in trying to change policies or win the adoption of new policies, the more likely your success as a government official will hinge on this advice.
- *Calls from reporters should get your quick personal attention.* The higher you go in government, the more likely it is that you will have a press assistant. Still, there is no substitute for taking press calls yourself when a subject you are working on is timely and hot. News is perishable and reporters care about hearing you talk in your own voice and asking you questions.
- *There is a corollary: You don't need to be accessible all the time.* If you don't want to answer certain questions, don't take calls from reporters who are likely to ask them. "No comment" is a bad answer.

- *Be sparing about going “off the record.”* In effect, you are saying I will give you a tip, or a story, or help you on a story, but you can’t use my name. You aren’t identified because someone would not like what you are saying. The main reason you do this (and you should do it selectively) is that it creates chits. The next time you are in a hot spot, the reporter owes you one.
- *Some adversaries you acquire along the way in government should be treated deferentially in the press, some not so deferentially.* These are basically two different groups. Some adversaries will never be anything else. Having them on the other side can even be helpful to you. Other adversaries will be adversaries one day and friends the next. You should reserve the attack mode for the first group.
- *Care about your style.* If you are shrill and always hurling lightning bolts, you may get ink, but you won’t get respect. The saying “I don’t care what they say about me as long as they spell my name right” is not good guidance.

Reporters are powerful. They don’t always make the world a better place, but on the whole our political system is well served by their constant scrutiny. It helps to create what political scientist Wallace Sayre called the “self-cleaning” character of American politics.

8

Wielding Power and Expanding the Talent Pool in America's Governments

Appointed officials have substantial responsibilities for setting public policies and carrying them out. This is a challenging role that often brings satisfaction from public service. It can also bring a heady feeling of power and responsibility and pave the way to future successes. As a country, we need to find ways to convince the wisest and most talented citizens to seek appointive office and bring them to the attention of elected officials.

Ten Rules

The following suggestions are presented by way of a summary as to how you can be a success as an appointed official.

1. *Leaders are role models.* Your ideas, your administrative skills, and your politics are not all that matter. The leader sets a tone concerning responsibility, country, and respect for others.
2. *Care about partisanship.* Ultimately, the road to high office will label you politically and require that you choose a partisan label. Make a choice you can live with. This is not to say that being a Democrat means that you will never serve

under a Republican administration or vice versa. There are times when elected officials see advantages in appointing people of the opposition party to key posts. But this is the exception not the rule.

3. Failing to take account of the pluralism of American government, the barrier reef of federalism, can wreck your voyages. You need to be ever mindful of the states and huge number of local governments and key stakeholder groups that have a role to play in domestic affairs.
4. *Cultivate the press.* The hard challenge in doing so requires that you be a straight shooter and win and hold respect while at the same time being lively and interesting. This is a hard balance to strike. You have to think about which reporters to talk to and which not to call back, when to go on camera, when not. You will need a good press assistant to develop media contacts and write announcements and releases. But in the final analysis your image and public persona have to be of your own making.
5. *Be consistent.* Don't try on a lot of different personas and thus appear to be unpredictable. Think about what you stand for and stay on course.
6. *Be careful about confidences.* It is important to have trusted colleagues and associates, but trust has its limits. The political world changes all the time. There are bound to be situations in which you cannot rely on people you like to do what

- you want, or to work with you in ways you want. But in periods of intense political maneuvering, you should keep your private opinions to yourself.
7. *Pace yourself.* Conserve your energy so you are fresh for major tasks. A good sense of timing is necessary. You need to think about when to act and when to wait. Patience does not come easily to people who are action oriented. This is especially the case in big bureaucracies where delay is endemic. Nevertheless, patience is called for in situations where letting the action come to you will give you more options, more scope for action — more power.
 8. *Be careful about jokes.* Witty remarks about how somebody erred or has a flawed personality have a way of backfiring. The critical distinction is between gracious humor (a nice touch) and sarcasm. Sarcasm is dangerous in public life.
 9. *Think about your future.* Families have to eat. Kids have to go to college. The opportunities you have to maneuver when you are moving from an inner to an outer are limited. Still, you can cultivate relationships so that at the right moment you can make the right decisions.
 10. *Start early.* When you are young, you can try different roles in and around government and politics. If public service appeals to you, you need to be thinking even then about developing a professional base and type of expertise. Appointive posts are inherently time limited.

Expanding the Talent Pool for Appointive Public Service

Because there is so little generalized understanding of appointive leadership in America's governments, people who might be interested in high-level jobs tend not to know about the numbers, character, and roles of inners and outers in the public service. Often people learn about these roles when it is too late to set their sights on serving in them. As a nation we need to think about how to increase the talent pool for appointive posts. When a newly elected leader or different political party takes office, the process of assembling people tends to be short and hectic, sandwiched between the election and the inauguration. Most of the key actors are exhausted and need rest.

The American political system would be well served by steps to aid transitions and appointment processes. What I think is needed are measures to institutionalize processes that can provide trustworthy, well-vetted information on candidates for appointive office. Such institution building to broaden the talent pool for appointive office is made more complex by the need to pass a political litmus test. Another challenge is that many candidates for such positions tend not to be known because they operate in specialized areas. Also, the best candidates often are deferential (at least publicly), insisting they do not seek office. Salaries in the public sector, even for cabinet positions, tend to be lower than the best candidates receive in the private sector or in leadership positions at universities, foundations, or other organizations. In a 1998 survey of 1,000 recipients of master's degrees from 13 graduate schools of public policy, public

administration, and public affairs, Paul Light identified what he called “the end of government-centered public service.”³⁶ Many of the respondents chose positions in nonprofit organizations or the private sector. However, Light also confirmed that many people move among the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Government service at the right time in a career can appeal to people if they receive the right information. Indeed, public service can be the experience of a lifetime. What is needed are better ways to link appointing officials with qualified candidates. In the private sector, head-hunting firms fill this role and are well paid for doing so, but in the public sector there is resistance to paying as much as one-half of a new appointee’s first-year salary to a head-hunting firm. Inventive attention to preparing and using dossiers about potential candidates for appointive office is needed. This should include vetting candidates outside the immediate geographical and personal circle of the appointing official, men and women who nevertheless have similar values and the right qualities for rapport. Devoting institutional capability to increasing the supply of candidates for appointive office would send a signal about the importance of finding talented candidates for leadership positions in the public service.

People who have succeeded in their chosen field often feel they have not repaid the nation. We need mechanisms for networking to get to such people — to open the door to them to appointive public service. Identifying candidates, obtaining their consent to put their name forward, and presenting a case as to why a certain elected official should consider them for a post requires time, money, and ingenuity, but the stakes are high

³⁶ Paul C. Light, *The New Public Service* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 1999).

enough to make it worthwhile. Foundations could provide a support for expanding talent pools for appointive public service. As a first step, they should convene a group of former elected and appointed officials to support mechanisms to perform this role.

Public management is about getting things done. More than anything else, it involves selecting and working with a mix of people you trust — people you understand and deploy wisely. It is about showing them what you want to achieve by signaling your priorities and staying with them. It is about leading — creating an image that embodies your values and goals. Appointive positions involve learning and leading. Appointed officials must always remember that power in a democracy is on loan. The terms of the loan require good behavior and adherence to values that can win and hold support. The power of appointed officials is hard to retain; it is perishable if you abuse the public trust. There are plenty of people watching you — the politicians who appointed you, their adversaries who have different purposes from yours, the ubiquitous media, other branches and levels of government, interest groups, and the citizenry you serve. All have access to instruments for curbing — or eliminating — your power. Inners and outers can turn governmental purposes into results by setting and adjusting goals wisely and paying close attention to how they are carried out. America's governments are fragmented, diverse, and fast changing. American political pluralism, with its multiple actors and constant policy bargaining, tends to be rough and tumble. The bargaining of public life reflects an almost frontier-like spirit that resents people who have political power yet needs and respects its savvy exercise. You have to be strong.

Appendix

American Federalism

Appointed officials who work in domestic public affairs have to have a clear understanding of American federalism. The U.S. Bureau of the Census surveys America's governments every five years in years ending in "2" and "7" — dates that are as far away as possible from the decennial census years. The Census of Governments describes the characteristics, finances, and personnel of all "governmental units." Their total number is huge.

To be classified as a government, an entity must possess three attributes: existence as an organized unit, governmental character, and substantial autonomy. In 2002 the United States officially had 87,586 governmental units. With the exception of the federal government and the 50 state governments, about half are general-purpose local governments. The rest have special purposes. In 2002, general-purpose local governments included 3,034 counties, 19,429 cities, and 16,504 towns and townships. The remaining local units include 13,506 school districts and special-purpose districts for functions such as firefighting (5,725), housing and community development (3,399), water supply (3,405), sewerage (2,004), hospitals (711), and airports (510).

Illinois had the most local governments (6,904) in 2002 and Hawaii the least (20). Most local governments in the United States are small. Half of all municipalities (called villages or boroughs in some states) include fewer than 1,000 people. One-quarter of all counties have populations under 10,000.

The following are cardinal characteristics of the structure of American federalism:

- Fragmentation. Since the United States has so many local governments, it is clear that Americans must like localism. They want to be part of a community, living with people like themselves.
- Diversity. A second striking characteristic of American federalism is the diversity of local governmental arrangements, both among and within states. States determine both the roles and structure of local governments. Their practices are not uniform. In some states, counties are the most powerful local governments and have appreciable powers. This is the case, for example, in Maryland, New York, and California. In other states, counties perform few functions, as in Massachusetts and Connecticut where they are little more than the boundaries for judicial districts. In some states, towns are more important than cities. New York State had 8,246 towns in 1997, of which 1,133 had more than 300,000 people; no other state has towns of that size.
- Layering. Not only does America have many and diverse local governments, but they tend to be piled on top of each other. This adds to the challenge of all public officials in overseeing policy implementation. Most people live in multiple local jurisdictions and pay taxes to several local governments, often with relatively little idea of which local governments are receiving their tax money and for what purposes. An urban resident can live in a city, within a town, within a county,

within an independent school district, and also be a resident of special districts for a particular service — all of which collect taxes in ways that can confuse even the most conscientious citizen.

Reformers don't like this crazy quilt of American political localism. They press for measures to curb proliferation and simplify and clarify lines of accountability. A contrary view holds that the fragmentation and diversity of American federalism has benefits. This "public-choice" position says in effect that multiple governments provide more opportunities for more people to get involved in civic life. People who favor this position argue that different-sized regions reflect the varied scope needed to efficiently administer different public services.