

Current events

Presidents and Domestic Policy Leadership

Clashing standpoints in domestic policy

The president – make a mark in the office

Congress – parochial concerns

The courts – a long term concern, with independence

The states – diverse, and now polarized - politics

The Policy Streams:

Problems and Issues

Solutions

Political Factors

The Case of the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”)

Problems: Healthcare access and cost

Solutions: Romneycare & Obama’s Promise

Political Factors:

Democrats in control of the White House and Congress, 2009

With 60 Senators, Democrats have a “filibuster-proof”
majority (in theory)

(Ted Kennedy (D-Massachusetts, died in late August)

Despite strong opposition, Obama & Pelosi nurse a bill through
the House

Obama and Harry Reid deal with huge setbacks to get the bill through
the Senate

& the Senate bill squeaks thru the House

Republicans in the states fight “Obamacare”

Republicans win back the House in 2010

The Supreme Court upholds the law – twice

Republicans win back the Senate in 2014

Republicans sweep in 2016

– how will President Trump change the law?

Presidents and the Economy Prosperity, Presidents, and Politics

The Politics of Monetary Policy: Expertise

The Federal Reserve Board aims to separate monetary policy from politics

The Politics of Fiscal Policy: Selective Benefits against General Consequences

Keynesianism: A fiscal policy approach

Governments should fine-tune spending and taxing;

Government should spend more and tax less when the economy is going too slow,

Government should spend less and tax more when the economy is growing too fast.

But presidents have limited power to use Keynesianism because

1. A majority of Federal spending is fixed by law (mandatory spending) and is hard to change
Example: Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid
2. Congress has to approve discretionary spending every year.
3. Bureaus resist cuts; sometimes, their allies in Congress and interest groups protect their budgets.
4. In the polarized 2000s, partisan opponents will resist you on principle.
5. Elected Officials' standpoint:
6. Elected officials' standpoint:
 - try to provide selective benefits through direct government spending to their constituencies
 - but minimize the tax burden that pays for these projects

BUT increasing spending without increasing taxes increases the budget deficit

The Great Recession

2008: Markets collapse

Keynesianism versus Political Polarization: The 2009 Obama stimulus package

The Deficit, the Debt, and the Budget

Federal spending and revenues

The deficit

The national debt

The Debt Ceiling battle, 2011

American opinion on Federal spending – versus reality

Presidents and National Security Policy

1. The Constitution, the President, and National Security

Presidential Power in national security

Protections against the abuse of executive power

2. The Emotions unleashed by threats to National Security

The subhuman enemy

Total Mobilization

3. Growing Presidential Power in National Security

The growth of the American military role led to growing presidential responsibility

President George W. Bush and the Prerogative Theory of the National Security presidency

The Unitary Presidency