A photograph of a classic office desk. On the left is a vintage typewriter. In the center is a pen holder with two pens. On the right is a large, glowing desk lamp. The desk surface is dark wood with a patterned mat. The background shows a tufted leather chair.

The Federal Bureaucracy

Executing the Laws

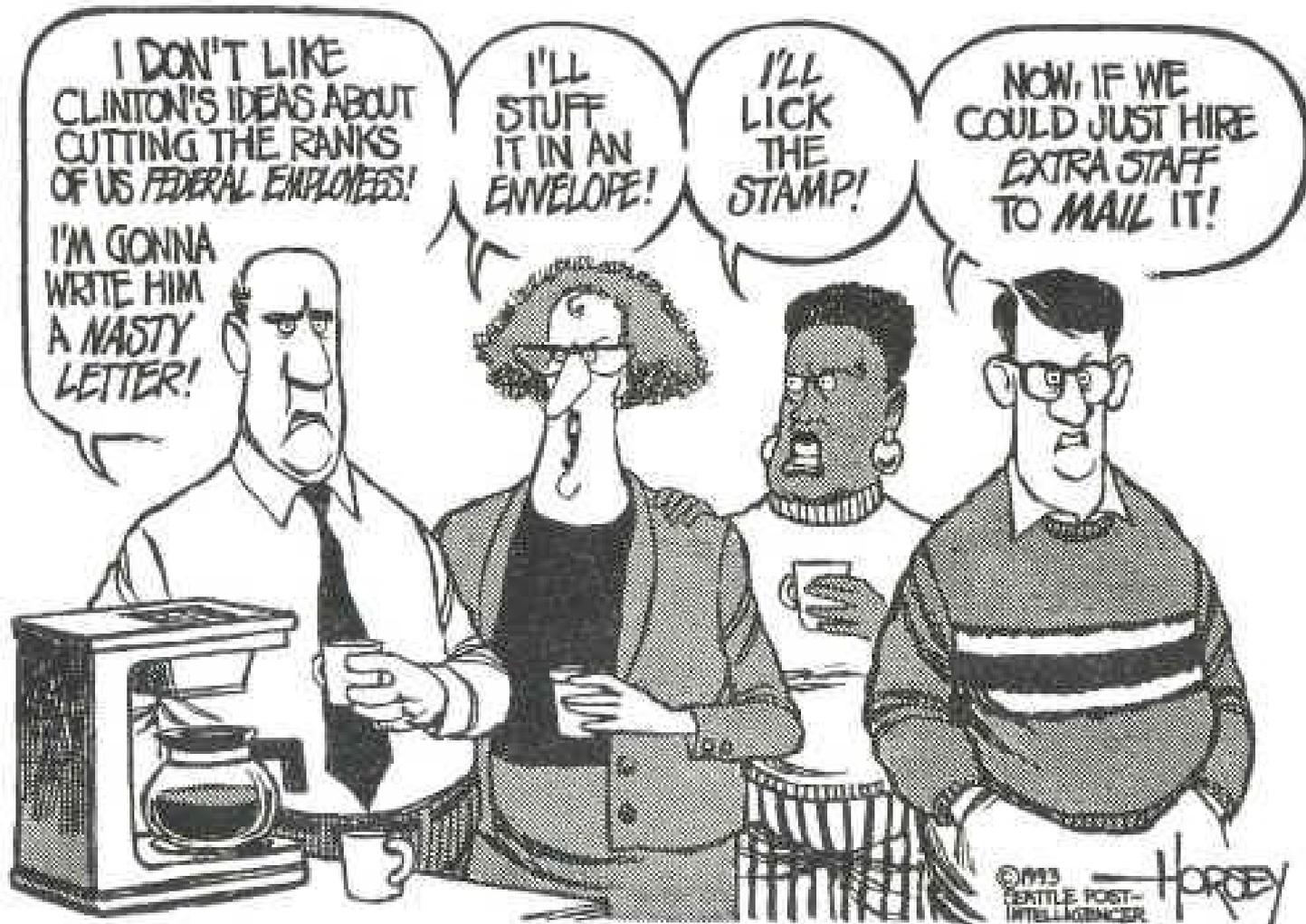
The Federal Bureaucracy Today

- 2.7 million federal employees → another 1.4 million in the armed forces
- 15 Cabinet Departments employ 70% of civil servants and spend 93% of federal dollars
- Department of Defense (DOD) is by far the largest → 2 million employees
- U.S. Postal Service → 2nd largest → 800,000 employees

The Federal Bureaucracy Today

- Bureaucracy → French for desk (*bureau*) + suffix “ocracy” to describe gov’t = bureaucracy (rule by people at desks)
- At one time bureaucracy meant efficient gov’t → well-trained, highly-motivated bureaucrats
- Over time → slow, confusing, self-serving, red tape, waste

The Federal Bureaucracy



The Federal Bureaucracy Today

- Bureaucracy Challenges:
 - Difficult to manage b/c of size
 - Interest group connections
 - Political history
 - Duplication and overlap across depts and agencies = confusion

The Federal Bureaucracy Today

– Example:

- Dept. of Agriculture Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service → keeps diseased cattle out of U.S.
- Dept. of Health and Human Services FDA → monitor cattle feed to prevent mad cow disease
- Dept. of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service → inspects cows as they go to slaughter
- All FAILED in 2003



The Federal Bureaucracy Today

- Suppose you **do** spot a problem with a cow → each cattle inspector reports to...
 - A local supervisor who reports to...
 - A deputy district office director who reports to...
 - The district office director who reports to...
 - An executive assistant administrator for regulatory operations in Washington who reports to...
 - The deputy assistant administrator for field operations who reports to...
 - The assistant administrator for field operations who reports to...
 - A deputy administrator who reports to...
 - The administrator of the Food Safety Inspection Service who reports to...
 - The deputy undersecretary and undersecretary for food safety who reports to...
 - The deputy secretary of agriculture who reports to...
 - The deputy chief of staff to the secretary who reports to...
 - The chief of staff who reports to...
 - The secretary of agriculture who reports to...
 - The president

The Federal Bureaucracy Today

- 10,000 senior executives in the federal bureaucracy → “thickening” → more layers of leadership and more leaders in each layer
- Some argue Congress created the pressure for “thickening” → highly complex programs that demand close supervision
- Others argue “thickening” is driven by competition among competing organizations → constantly seek to enhance their power (creating new titles, adding staff, increasing budgets, etc.)

How the Federal Government is Organized

- Federal Bureaucracy is classified in four broad categories:
 - Departments → tend to be the largest fed organizations and have the broadest missions
 - Independent Agencies → tend to be smaller and have more focused responsibilities
 - Independent Regulatory Commissions → similar to agencies but are designed to be free from direct presidential control
 - Government Corporations → designed to operate like a private business

How the Federal Government is Organized

- Departments → 15 Cabinet depts. (headed by secretary, except Justice headed by Attorney General → appointed by pres. w/ Senatorial confirmation)
- Largest depts. by employees → DOD, Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security, Treasury, Justice
- Largest depts. by budget → Health & Human Services, DOD

How the Federal Government is Organized

- Creating a department:
 - “Umbrella” department → combining a number of related programs (ex. Homeland Security → 22 agencies including Coast Guard, INS, Customs, FEMA, Secret Service, etc.) → H&HS, DOD, & Commerce reflect this approach
 - Single-Purpose department → owes survival to a constituency group (ex. Veterans Affairs created in 1989 under pressure from SIGs such as the American Legion) → others include Agriculture, Commerce, Education & Labor

How the Federal Government is Organized

- Independent Regulatory Commissions → agency or commission whose independence is protected by Congress
- Designed to “get on the backs” of people
 - Consumer Product Safety Commission → protect consumers
 - Securities & Exchange Commission → regulate stock markets
 - Federal Election Commission → oversee federal elections
 - Federal Communications Commission → monitor TV & radio
 - Federal Trade Commission → regulate business
 - Federal Reserve Board → control the money supply

How the Federal Government is Organized

- Headed by a small number of commissioners, appointed by the pres. w/ Senate confirmation for fixed terms → cannot be removed from office w/out cause defined as “inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office” = less responsive to political pressures → quasi-legislative, -executive, -judicial
- Not completely independent
 - Appointed by pres. & subject to confirmation
 - Annual budgets approved by Congress
 - Decisions subject to judicial review
 - Leaders often disagree (FEC *must* have 3 Democrats & 3 Republicans)

How the Federal Government is Organized

- Independent Agencies → “independent” here means “separate” → regulatory commissions do not report to the pres. but agencies do
- Headed by an administrator appointed by the president
- 60 agencies → Environmental Protection Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, National Aeronautics & Space Administration, National Security Agency, etc.
- Independence increases focus, but weakens willingness to cooperate

How the Federal Government is Organized

- Agencies often get more attention than departments → CIA or EPA usually get more attention than HUD or Agriculture → especially in foreign affairs
- “Agency” does not just apply to “independent” agencies → some exist *within* departments → ex. Forest Service (Agriculture), National Parks Service (Interior), Occupational Safety & Health Administration (Labor), Census Bureau (Commerce) → these agencies report to the dept. secretary who reports to the pres.

How the Federal Government is Organized

- Government Corporations → b/c designed to operate like a business corps. get more freedom from rules that control traditional agencies (greater authority to hire & fire, can make \$, etc.)
- So loosely defined there is not exact count → between 31 & 47
- Examples
 - Corporation for Public Broadcasting (PBS)
 - U.S. Postal Service
 - National Railroad Passenger Association (Amtrak)
 - Americorps (national service programs)

How the Federal Government is Organized

- Make money? The Postal Service lost \$1.5 billion in 2002...it has borrowed \$12 billion over the years
- Required to deliver mail **anywhere** unlike FedEx or UPS

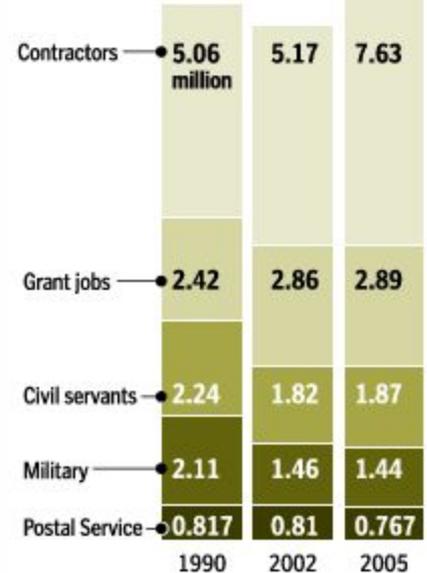
To Work Or Not To Work...?

- Only about 15 % of civilian employees work in D.C.
- 25 % of civilian employees work for the Army, Navy, Air Force, or other defense agency
- Civil servants resemble the country much more closely in terms of race, sex, religion, education, & disability than the political appointees or members of Congress who make the laws they execute
- Majority of jobs are white collar – lawyers, contract managers, analysts, engineers, auditors, etc.

A Full Accounting

Scholar Paul C. Light says examining the “hidden workforce” of the government — contractors and grant recipients — together with civil servants, postal workers and military personnel, provides a better accounting of the “true size” of government. Contractors have increased more than any other classification.

Government workers, in millions



SOURCE: Research brief on “The New True Size of Government,” by Paul C. Light, New York University Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

By Tobey, The Washington Post

The Bureaucracy's Job

- Implementation → the process of putting a law into practice thru bureaucratic rules or spending
- Congress gives federal depts. and agencies administrative discretion → reasonable judgment in implementing the laws
- Laws are implemented thru two means:
 - Administrative regulations → formal instructions for running an agency or controlling people's behavior
 - Spending → the transfer of \$ to and from gov't

The Bureaucracy's Job

- Regulations or Rules:
 - Drafted & reviewed by the quasi-legislative rule-making process governed by the Administrative Procedure Act
 - APA requires rules to be made public in the *Federal Register* (“notice and comment” period)
 - Affected parties are encouraged to make their opinions known to the agency
 - Rules are subject to change and judicial review

The Bureaucracy's Job

- Spending

- Uncontrollable Spending → spending (such as Social Security) Congress & the president are unwilling to cut
- Entitlement Programs → provide financial benefits for any American who is eligible (S.S., disaster relief, disability, student loans, etc.)
- Sharply limits the portion of the budget that is up for debate each year
- Uncontrollable spending is not growing just b/c more people are eligible → indexing → automatic increases to compensate for inflation

Holding the Bureaucracy Accountable



Establishing agencies,
appropriating funds,
confirming personnel,
authorizing new programs,
conducting hearings,
terminating agencies



Appoint sympathetic
personnel, mobilize public
opinion & congressional
pressure, influence budget
decisions, shifting agency's
assignment (w/ approval)



“Police patrol” → Watch
agencies thru reports,
budgets, general
performance
“Fire alarm” → wait for
citizens or interest groups
to find problems

Accountability