

Second Branch The Executive



The Second Branch: Understanding the Executive Branch's Complexities

The United States government, a marvel of checks and balances, is often simplified to its three branches: legislative, judicial, and executive. But a closer look reveals a fascinating complexity within the executive branch itself, sometimes referred to as a "second branch" - a sprawling network of agencies, departments, and individuals that implement and enforce the laws passed by Congress. This post delves into the intricacies of this "second branch," exploring its structure, power, and crucial role in American governance. We'll uncover the key players, analyze the potential for overreach, and examine its evolving relationship with the other branches. Understanding this crucial aspect of American government is key to navigating the complexities of modern political discourse.

H2: Decoding the "Second Branch": What Does it Encompass?

The term "second branch" isn't an official designation, but it aptly describes the vast administrative apparatus that operates under the President. It encompasses the numerous executive departments (like State, Defense, and Treasury), independent agencies (such as the EPA and the Federal Reserve), and government corporations (like the USPS). These entities, though subordinate to the President, wield immense power in shaping policy through rule-making, enforcement, and budgetary allocation. They represent the day-to-day workings of government, translating broad legislative mandates into tangible actions affecting the lives of all Americans.

H3: The President's Role: Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief

The President, as head of the executive branch, appoints the heads of departments and agencies, influencing their direction and priorities. This power, however, is subject to Senate confirmation, illustrating the interplay between the executive and legislative branches. The President also holds the power of executive orders, allowing for direct policy implementation, albeit with limitations and potential legal challenges. The President's role as Commander-in-Chief further underscores the executive branch's influence on national security and foreign policy.

H3: The Cabinet: Advisors and Department Heads

The President's Cabinet, comprising the heads of the 15 executive departments, serves as a key advisory body. Each Cabinet member oversees a significant area of government responsibility, providing expertise and policy recommendations. While the Cabinet's influence can vary depending on the President, it plays a significant role in shaping the executive branch's agenda.

H2: The Power and Potential Pitfalls of the "Second Branch"

The expansive nature of the "second branch" gives it enormous power, but this power also presents potential pitfalls. The sheer size and complexity of the administrative state can lead to bureaucratic inertia, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability. Furthermore, the accumulation of power within numerous agencies raises concerns about regulatory overreach and potential conflicts of interest.

H3: Regulatory Power and its Impact

Agencies within the "second branch" possess significant regulatory power, issuing rules and regulations that have a profound impact on various sectors of the economy and society. This power, though vital for public protection and market regulation, can also be abused, leading to excessive burdens on businesses and individuals. The process of rule-making, though subject to certain procedures, often lacks transparency and public participation, leading to criticisms about democratic deficit.

H3: Accountability and Oversight

Holding the "second branch" accountable is a constant challenge. While Congress has oversight powers through hearings, investigations, and budget control, the sheer volume of agencies and their complex operations make effective oversight difficult. Judicial review provides another check, but legal challenges can be lengthy and expensive. This lack of robust accountability mechanisms contributes to the perception of an overly powerful, unresponsive bureaucracy.

H2: The Evolving Relationship with Other Branches

The relationship between the "second branch" and the other branches of government is dynamic and constantly evolving. Conflicts often arise between the executive branch and Congress over budgetary issues, policy disagreements, and the scope of executive power. Similarly, tensions exist between the executive branch and the judiciary over the interpretation of laws and the limits of presidential authority. These inter-branch conflicts are inherent in the system of checks and balances, but they also highlight the complexities of governing a modern nation.

Conclusion

The "second branch" of the executive branch, though not formally recognized, plays a vital role in American governance. Its vast network of agencies and departments translates legislative mandates into action, shaping policy and affecting the lives of citizens in countless ways. Understanding its structure, powers, and challenges is crucial for informed participation in the democratic process. Recognizing its potential for both positive impact and overreach requires ongoing debate and vigilant oversight to ensure accountability and protect the balance of power within the American system.

FAQs

Q1: What is the difference between an executive department and an independent agency?

A1: Executive departments are directly under the President's control, with their heads serving in the Cabinet. Independent agencies are less directly controlled by the President, often having independent boards or commissions that oversee their operations, providing a layer of insulation from direct political influence.

Q2: How can citizens participate in holding the "second branch" accountable?

A2: Citizens can engage in various ways, including contacting their elected officials to voice concerns, participating in public comment periods during rule-making processes, supporting organizations dedicated to government transparency and oversight, and staying informed about agency activities through media and research.

Q3: What are some examples of regulatory overreach by agencies within the "second branch"?

A3: Examples vary depending on political perspectives, but some argue that certain environmental regulations, labor standards, or financial regulations place undue burdens on businesses or individuals. These claims often spark debate over the balance between public good and economic liberty.

Q4: How does the judiciary check the power of the "second branch"?

A4: The judiciary acts as a check through judicial review, enabling courts to strike down regulations or actions deemed unlawful or unconstitutional. This power limits the arbitrary exercise of executive power and ensures adherence to the rule of law.

Q5: What role does the legislative branch play in overseeing the "second branch"?

A5: Congress plays a crucial oversight role through budgetary appropriations, hearings and investigations, and legislative amendments that modify agency powers or responsibilities. It can also impeach and remove executive branch officials for misconduct.

second branch the executive: [Executive Branch of the Government \(ENHANCED eBook\)](#) Julia Hargrove, 2000-03-01 What are the powers and duties of the President? How did the Executive Branch begin? What does the Cabinet do? Answers to those questions and more are revealed through interesting and informative activities that help students understand how their government works.

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second branch the executive: *The Law of the Executive Branch* Louis Fisher, 2014 The Law of the Executive Branch: Presidential Power places the law of the executive branch firmly in the context of constitutional language, framers' intent, and more than two centuries of practice. Each provision of the US Constitution is analyzed to reveal its contemporary meaning and in concert with the application of presidential power.

second branch the executive: American Government 3e Glen Krutz, Sylvie Waskiewicz, 2023-05-12 Black & white print. American Government 3e aligns with the topics and objectives of

many government courses. Faculty involved in the project have endeavored to make government workings, issues, debates, and impacts meaningful and memorable to students while maintaining the conceptual coverage and rigor inherent in the subject. With this objective in mind, the content of this textbook has been developed and arranged to provide a logical progression from the fundamental principles of institutional design at the founding, to avenues of political participation, to thorough coverage of the political structures that constitute American government. The book builds upon what students have already learned and emphasizes connections between topics as well as between theory and applications. The goal of each section is to enable students not just to recognize concepts, but to work with them in ways that will be useful in later courses, future careers, and as engaged citizens. In order to help students understand the ways that government, society, and individuals interconnect, the revision includes more examples and details regarding the lived experiences of diverse groups and communities within the United States. The authors and reviewers sought to strike a balance between confronting the negative and harmful elements of American government, history, and current events, while demonstrating progress in overcoming them. In doing so, the approach seeks to provide instructors with ample opportunities to open discussions, extend and update concepts, and drive deeper engagement.

second branch the executive: The President, Vice President, and Cabinet Elaine Landau, 2017-08-01 Audisee® eBooks with Audio combine professional narration and text highlighting for an engaging read aloud experience! What is the executive branch? It's the part of government that's led by our president. But who else is part of the executive branch? And just what does this branch do? Read this book to find out.

second branch the executive: The Presidential Branch John Hart, 1987

second branch the executive: The Federalist Papers Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, James Madison, 2018-08-20 Classic Books Library presents this brand new edition of "The Federalist Papers", a collection of separate essays and articles compiled in 1788 by Alexander Hamilton. Following the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776, the governing doctrines and policies of the States lacked cohesion. "The Federalist", as it was previously known, was constructed by American statesman Alexander Hamilton, and was intended to catalyze the ratification of the United States Constitution. Hamilton recruited fellow statesmen James Madison Jr., and John Jay to write papers for the compendium, and the three are known as some of the Founding Fathers of the United States. Alexander Hamilton (c. 1755-1804) was an American lawyer, journalist and highly influential government official. He also served as a Senior Officer in the Army between 1799-1800 and founded the Federalist Party, the system that governed the nation's finances. His contributions to the Constitution and leadership made a significant and lasting impact on the early development of the nation of the United States.

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George W. Bush

second branch the executive: *Institutions on the Edge* Gretchen Helmke, 2017-01-30 Why does institutional instability pervade the developing world? Examining contemporary Latin America, *Institutions on the Edge* develops and tests a novel argument to explain why institutional crises emerge, spread, and repeat in some countries, but not in others. The book draws on formal bargaining theories developed in the conflict literature to offer the first unified micro-level account of inter-branch crises. In so doing, Helmke shows that concentrating power in the executive branch not only fuels presidential crises under divided government, but also triggers broader constitutional crises that cascade on to the legislature and the judiciary. Along the way, Helmke highlights the importance of public opinion and mass protests, and elucidates the conditions under which divided government matters for institutional instability.

second branch the executive: *The Executive Branch of the Federal Government* Brian Duignan Senior Editor, Religion and Philosophy, 2009-12-20 Discusses the executive branch of government in the United States, including its purpose and relation to the other branches of government, and presents profiles of the Presidents of the United States.

second branch the executive: *Madison's Nightmare* Peter M. Shane, 2009-08-01 The George W. Bush administration's ambitious—even breathtaking—claims of unilateral executive authority raised deep concerns among constitutional scholars, civil libertarians, and ordinary citizens alike. But Bush's attempts to assert his power are only the culmination of a near-thirty-year assault on the basic checks and balances of the U.S. government—a battle waged by presidents of both parties, and one that, as Peter M. Shane warns in *Madison's Nightmare*, threatens to utterly subvert the founders' vision of representative government. Tracing this tendency back to the first Reagan administration, Shane shows how this era of aggressive presidentialism has seen presidents exerting ever more control over nearly every arena of policy, from military affairs and national security to domestic programs. Driven by political ambition and a growing culture of entitlement in the executive branch—and abetted by a complaisant Congress, riven by partisanship—this presidential aggrandizement has too often undermined wise policy making and led to shallow, ideological, and sometimes outright lawless decisions. The solution, Shane argues, will require a multipronged program of reform, including both specific changes in government practice and broader institutional changes aimed at supporting a renewed culture of government accountability. From the war on science to the mismanaged war on terror, *Madison's Nightmare* outlines the disastrous consequences of the unchecked executive—and issues a stern wake-up call to all who care about the fate of our long democratic experiment.

second branch the executive: *Executive Policymaking* Meena Bose, Andrew Rudalevige, 2020-10-06 A deep look into the agency that implements the president's marching orders to the rest of the executive branch The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is one of the federal government's most important and powerful agencies—but it's also one of the least-known among the general public. This book describes why the office is so important and why both scholars and citizens should know more about what it does. The predecessor to the modern OMB was founded in 1921, as the Bureau of the Budget within the Treasury Department. President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved it in 1939 into the Executive Office of the President, where it's been ever since. The office received its current name in 1970, during the Nixon administration. For most people who know about it, the OMB's only apparent job is to supervise preparation of the president's annual budget request to Congress. That job, in itself, gives the office tremendous influence within the executive branch. But OMB has other responsibilities that give it a central role in how the federal government functions on a daily basis. OMB reviews all of the administration's legislative proposals and the president's executive orders. It oversees the development and implementation of nearly all government management initiatives. The office also analyses the costs and benefits of major government regulations, this giving it great sway over government actions that affect nearly every person and business in America. One question facing voters in the 2020 elections will be how well the executive branch has carried out the president's promises; a major aspect of that question centers around the

wider work of the OMB. This book will help members of the public, as well as scholars and other experts, answer that question.

second branch the executive: *A More Perfect Constitution* Larry J. Sabato, 2010-07-23 The reader can't help but hold out hope that maybe someday, some of these sweeping changes could actually bring the nation's government out of its intellectual quagmire...his lively, conversational tone and compelling examples make the reader a more than willing student for this updated civics lesson. --The Hill The political book of the year, from the acclaimed founder and director of the Center for politics at the University of Virginia. *A More Perfect Constitution* presents creative and dynamic proposals from one of the most visionary and fertile political minds of our time to reinvigorate our Constitution and American governance at a time when such change is urgently needed, given the growing dysfunction and unfairness of our political system. Combining idealism and pragmatism, and with full respect for the original document, Larry Sabato's thought-provoking ideas range from the length of the president's term in office and the number and terms of Supreme Court justices to the vagaries of the antiquated Electoral College, and a compelling call for universal national service—all laced through with the history behind each proposal and the potential impact on the lives of ordinary people. Aware that such changes won't happen easily, but that the original Framers fully expected the Constitution to be regularly revised, Sabato urges us to engage in the debate and discussion his ideas will surely engender. During an election year, no book is more relevant or significant than this.

second branch the executive: *Unmaking the Presidency* Susan Hennessey, Benjamin Wittes, 2020-01-21 This is a book for everyone who has developed an unexpected nostalgia for political 'norms' during the Trump years. . . . Other books on the Trump White House expertly detail the mayhem inside; this book builds on those works to detail its consequences. —Carlos Lozada (one of twelve books to read to understand what's going on) Perhaps the most penetrating book to have been written about Trump in office.—Lawrence Douglas, *The Times Literary Supplement* The definitive account of how Donald Trump has wielded the powers of the American presidency The extraordinary authority of the U.S. presidency has no parallel in the democratic world. Today that authority resides in the hands of one man, Donald J. Trump. But rarely if ever has the nature of a president clashed more profoundly with the nature of the office. *Unmaking the Presidency* tells the story of the confrontation between a person and the institution he almost wholly embodies. From the moment of his inauguration, Trump has challenged our deepest expectations of the presidency. But what are those expectations, where did they come from, and how great is the damage? As editors of the “invaluable” (The New York Times) Lawfare website, Susan Hennessey and Benjamin Wittes have attracted a large audience to their hard-hitting and highly informed commentary on the controversies surrounding the Trump administration. In this book, they situate Trump-era scandals and outrages in the deeper context of the presidency itself. How should we understand the oath of office when it is taken by a man who may not know what it means to preserve, protect, and defend something other than himself? What aspects of Trump are radically different from past presidents and what aspects have historical antecedents? When has he simply built on his predecessors' misdeeds, and when has he invented categories of misrule entirely his own? By setting Trump in the light of history, Hennessey and Wittes provide a crucial and durable account of a presidency like no other.

second branch the executive: *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution* Merrill Jensen, 1976

second branch the executive: *The Particularistic President* Douglas L. Kriner, Andrew Reeves, 2015 As the holders of the only office elected by the entire nation, presidents have long claimed to be sole stewards of the interests of all Americans. Scholars have largely agreed, positing the president as an important counterbalance to the parochial impulses of members of Congress. This supposed fact is often invoked in arguments for concentrating greater power in the executive branch. Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves challenge this notion and, through an examination of a diverse range of policies from disaster declarations, to base closings, to the allocation of federal

spending, show that presidents, like members of Congress, are particularistic. Presidents routinely pursue policies that allocate federal resources in a way that disproportionately benefits their more narrow partisan and electoral constituencies. Though presidents publicly don the mantle of a national representative, in reality they are particularistic politicians who prioritize the needs of certain constituents over others.

second branch the executive: The Art of Policymaking George E. Shambaugh IV, Paul J. Weinstein Jr., 2015-12-14 *The Art of Policymaking: Tools, Techniques and Processes in the Modern Executive Branch, Second Edition* is a practical introduction to the specific tools, techniques, and processes used to create policy in the executive branch of the U.S. government. George E. Shambaugh, IV and Paul Weinstein, Jr. explain how government officials craft policy, manage the policymaking process, and communicate those policies to stakeholders and the public at large. The authors draw on both their academic and government experience to provide real-world advice on writing memos, preparing polling questions, and navigating the clearance process. An abundance of case studies show how actual policies are developed and how and why policies and processes differ across administrations. Practice scenarios allow students to apply the tools and techniques they have learned by working through both domestic and foreign policy situations.

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second branch the executive: The Executive Branch Joel D. Aberbach, Mark A. Peterson, 2005 Presents a collection of essays that provide an examination of the Executive branch in American government, explaining how the Constitution created the executive branch and discusses how the executive interacts with the other two branches of government at the federal and state level.

second branch the executive: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Governance in Federal Countries Katy Le Roy, 2006-09-19 Comparative studies examine the constitutional design and actual operation of governments in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, India, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United States. Contributors analyze the structures and workings of legislative, executive, and judicial institutions in each sphere of government. They also explore how the federal nature of the polity affects those institutions and how the institutions in turn affect federalism. The book concludes with reflections on possible future trends.

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reading experience helps foster a sense of informed and active citizenship--

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second branch the executive: *The Hardest Job in the World* John Dickerson, 2020-06-16 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • From the veteran political journalist and 60 Minutes correspondent, a deep dive into the history, evolution, and current state of the American presidency, and how we can make the job less impossible and more productive—featuring a new post-2020-election epilogue “This is a great gift to our sense of the actual presidency, a primer on leadership.”—Ken Burns Imagine you have just been elected president. You are now commander-in-chief, chief executive, chief diplomat, chief legislator, chief of party, chief voice of the people, first responder, chief priest, and world leader. You're expected to fulfill your campaign promises, but you're also expected to solve the urgent crises of the day. What's on your to-do list?

Where would you even start? What shocks aren't you thinking about? The American presidency is in trouble. It has become overburdened, misunderstood, almost impossible to do. "The problems in the job unfolded before Donald Trump was elected, and the challenges of governing today will confront his successors," writes John Dickerson. After all, the founders never intended for our system of checks and balances to have one superior Chief Magistrate, with Congress demoted to "the little brother who can't keep up." In this eye-opening book, John Dickerson writes about presidents in history such as Washington, Lincoln, FDR, and Eisenhower, and in contemporary times, from LBJ and Reagan to Bush, Obama, and Trump, to show how a complex job has been done, and why we need to reevaluate how we view the presidency, how we choose our presidents, and what we expect from them once they are in office. Think of the presidential campaign as a job interview. Are we asking the right questions? Are we looking for good campaigners, or good presidents? Once a candidate gets the job, what can they do to thrive? Drawing on research and interviews with current and former White House staffers, Dickerson defines what the job of president actually entails, identifies the things that only the president can do, and analyzes how presidents in history have managed the burden. What qualities make for a good president? Who did it well? Why did Bill Clinton call the White House "the crown jewel in the American penal system"? The presidency is a job of surprises with high stakes, requiring vision, management skill, and an even temperament. Ultimately, in order to evaluate candidates properly for the job, we need to adjust our expectations, and be more realistic about the goals, the requirements, and the limitations of the office. As Dickerson writes, "Americans need their president to succeed, but the presidency is set up for failure. It doesn't have to be."

second branch the executive: *Gender and Elections* Susan J. Carroll, Richard L. Fox, 2013-12-23 The third edition of *Gender and Elections* offers a systematic, lively, and multifaceted account of the role of gender in the electoral process through the 2012 elections. This timely yet enduring volume strikes a balance between highlighting the most important developments for women as voters and candidates in the 2012 elections and providing a more long-term, in-depth analysis of the ways that gender has helped shape the contours and outcomes of electoral politics in the United States. Individual chapters demonstrate the importance of gender in understanding and interpreting presidential elections, presidential and vice-presidential candidacies, voter participation and turnout, voting choices, congressional elections, the political involvement of Latinas, the participation of African American women, the support of political parties and women's organizations, candidate communications with voters, and state elections. Without question, *Gender and Elections* is the most comprehensive, reliable, and trustworthy resource on the role of gender in US electoral politics.

second branch the executive: *The President and Immigration Law* Adam B. Cox, Cristina M. Rodríguez, 2020-08-04 Who controls American immigration policy? The biggest immigration controversies of the last decade have all involved policies produced by the President such as President Obama's decision to protect Dreamers from deportation and President Trump's proclamation banning immigrants from several majority-Muslim nations. While critics of these policies have been separated by a vast ideological chasm, their broadsides have embodied the same widely shared belief: that Congress, not the President, ought to dictate who may come to the United States and who will be forced to leave. This belief is a myth. In *The President and Immigration Law*, Adam B. Cox and Cristina M. Rodríguez chronicle the untold story of how, over the course of two centuries, the President became our immigration policymaker-in-chief. Diving deep into the history of American immigration policy from founding-era disputes over deporting sympathizers with France to contemporary debates about asylum-seekers at the Southern border they show how migration crises, real or imagined, have empowered presidents. Far more importantly, they also uncover how the Executive's ordinary power to decide when to enforce the law, and against whom, has become an extraordinarily powerful vehicle for making immigration policy. This pathbreaking account helps us understand how the United States has come to run an enormous shadow immigration system—one in which nearly half of all noncitizens in the country are living in violation of the law. It also provides a

blueprint for reform, one that accepts rather than laments the role the President plays in shaping the national community, while also outlining strategies to curb the abuse of law enforcement authority in immigration and beyond.

second branch the executive: *The Scandal of Empire* Nicholas B. Dirks, 2009-07-01 Many have told of the East India Company's extraordinary excesses in eighteenth-century India, of the plunder that made its directors fabulously wealthy and able to buy British land and titles, but this is only a fraction of the story. When one of these men—Warren Hastings—was put on trial by Edmund Burke, it brought the Company's exploits to the attention of the public. Through the trial and after, the British government transformed public understanding of the Company's corrupt actions by creating an image of a vulnerable India that needed British assistance. Intrusive behavior was recast as a civilizing mission. In this fascinating, and devastating, account of the scandal that laid the foundation of the British Empire, Nicholas Dirks explains how this substitution of imperial authority for Company rule helped erase the dirty origins of empire and justify the British presence in India. *The Scandal of Empire* reveals that the conquests and exploitations of the East India Company were critical to England's development in the eighteenth century and beyond. We see how mercantile trade was inextricably linked with imperial venture and scandalous excess and how these three things provided the ideological basis for far-flung British expansion. In this powerfully written and trenchant critique, Dirks shows how the empire projected its own scandalous behavior onto India itself. By returning to the moment when the scandal of empire became acceptable we gain a new understanding of the modern culture of the colonizer and the colonized and the manifold implications for Britain, India, and the world.

second branch the executive: The Functions of the Executive Chester I. Barnard, 1971-01-01 Most of Chester Barnard's career was spent in executive practice. A Mount Hermon and Harvard education, cut off short of the bachelor's degree, was followed by nearly forty years in the American Telephone & Telegraph Company. His career began in the Statistical Department, took him to technical expertness in the economics of rates and administrative experience in the management of commercial operations, and culminated in the presidency of the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company. He was not directly involved in the Western Electric experiments conducted chiefly at the Hawthorne plant in Cicero, but his association with Elton Mayo and the latter's colleagues at the Harvard Business School had an important bearing on his most original ideas. Barnard's executive experience at AT&T was paralleled and followed by a career in public service unusual in his own time and hardly routine today. He was at various times president of the United Services Organization (the USO of World War II), head of the General Education Board and later president of the Rockefeller Foundation (after Raymond Fosdick and before Dean Rusk), chairman of the National Science Foundation, an assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury, a consultant to the American representative in the United Nations Atomic Energy Committee, to name only some of his public interests. He was a director of a number of companies, a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was a lover of music and a founder of the Bach Society of New Jersey.

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second branch the executive: *Weird But True! Know-It-All: U. S. Presidents* Brianna DuMont, 2017 What's so weird about U.S. presidents? Plenty! Did you know that Abraham Lincoln was a great wrestler? You'll have a blast learning that there's a lot of substance and weirdness in every president's past.

second branch the executive: *Presidential Government* Benjamin Ginsberg, 2016-05-28 Noted political scientist Benjamin Ginsberg has written an essential text for courses on the United States presidency. An invaluable resource, Ginsberg's comprehensive analysis emphasizes the historical, constitutional, and legal dimensions of presidential power. He explores the history and essential aspects of the office, the president's relationship to the rest of the executive branch and to a

subordinated Congress, and the evolution of the American president from policy executor to policy maker. Compelling photo essays delve into topics of special interest, including First Spouses, Presidential Eligibility, and Congressional Investigations of the White House.

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Karen Orren, John W. Compton, 2018-03-22 Offers an accessible, interdisciplinary, and historically informed introduction to the study of American constitutionalism.

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