Policy making process in the united states essay sample

Government

Public policy refers to the actions taken by government and its decisions that are intended to solve problems and improve the quality of life for the citizens of the United States. At the federal level, public policies are enacted to regulate different industries and business, that will protect citizens at home and abroad, aid state and city governments and people through funding programs, and to encourage social goals.

A policy that is established and carried out by the government goes through several stages from the beginning to end. These are agenda building, formulation, adoption, implementation, evaluation and termination.

The first stage in policy making is Agenda Building. A problem must exist and be called to the attention of the government, before a policy can be created. For example we can look at the problem of Illegal immigration. This issue has been going on for many years. As these years went by, people begin to consider Illegal immigration such a serious problem, that it required increased government action. Another example we can look at is crime. When crime increasingly rises or is perceived to be rising, it is another issue that policymakers look at address.

The next stages are formulation and adoption. The meaning of policy formulation is finding a way to solve a problem. The Executive Branch, Congress and the courts, and any interest groups may be involved in solving the problem. Proposals that oppose the original policy are often made. One example in this stage is welfare reform. The president may have one approach to welfare reform, and the opposing party members of Congress may have another. Policy formulation has a noticeable outcome. A bill that

goes before Congress or an other legal agency drafts proposed rules. Once this is done, the process will continue with adoption stage. For a policy to be an adopted, Congress passes legislation, or the regulations become final, or the Supreme Court renders a decision in a case.

After formulation and adoption stage, we look at the Implementation (carrying out) stage. Carrying out of policy is most often done by institutions other than those that formulated and adopted the policy. A broad outline of a policy is usually provided by a statute. An example of implementation: Congress may mandate improved drug quality standards, but the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) provides the details on those standards and the procedures for measuring compliance through regulations. The Supreme Court has no mechanism to enforce its decision; other branches of government must implement its determinations. Successful implementation depends on the complexity of the policy, coordination between the ones putting the policy into effect, coordination between the ones putting the policy into effect and compliance.

Now we will look at the last stages Evaluation and termination. Evaluation means determining how well a policy is working. To find the answer of how well a policy works, a cost-benefit analysis is used. In other words, if the government is spending so many billions of dollars on this policy, are the benefits derived from it worth the cost? The Cost-benefit analysis is based on data that is somewhat hard to come by, because the data is subject to different, and sometimes contradictory, interpretations.

Implemented policies throughout history have shown to be difficult to terminate. Once a policy is terminated, it is usually because the policy has become out-dated, did not work, or the policy lost its support among the interest groups and elected officials that placed it on the agenda in the first place. An example we can look at is the national speed limit of 55 miles per hour that Congress enacted. The speed limit was effective in reducing highway fatalities and gasoline consumption. The law also increased costs for the trucking industry and was widely viewed as an unwarranted federal intrusion into an area that belonged to the states to regulate.

Policies are developed by the officials within institutions of government to address all public issues through the political process.

References

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