

Bureaucracy



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Bureaucracy Introduction Bureaucracy is an administrative system, especially in government that divides work in to specific categories and are performed by non-elected officials and special departments of the government (Meier & O'Toole, 2006). Bureaucracy is often referred as the 'fourth' arm of government and plays a critical role in shaping public policies and supporting the elected government officials. Proponents of bureaucracy assert that it should be equal to the other three arms of government while opponents assert that bureaucracy is not necessary and should not be equal with other three arms of the government.

Arguments for bureaucracy

Proponents of bureaucracy claim that the elected officials including the President cannot monitor all affairs of the country and there is need of institutions to support the other three arms of government (Meier & O'Toole, 2006). In this case, the proponents assert that bureaucrats have technical expertise that is essential for smooth running of the country since the elected officials may not have the necessary knowledge and skills to manage certain aspects of the society such as technology development or defense of the county (Meier & O'Toole, 2006).

The opponents of bureaucracy assert that public agencies assist in policy formulation and implementation since the Congress only passes the laws and allows the relevant agencies to implement such laws in terms of government policies (Stillman, 2004). The proponents are of the idea that the capacity of government to administer public policies depends on the ability and authority of appointed officials since politicians may have self-interests in certain policies thus jeopardizing the benefits that would have accrued from implementation of the public policy (Wilson, 1989). On the other hand,

opponents of this type of administration claim that the legislature can pass the laws in terms of public policies and thus government agencies must not be equated with the other three arms of the government that are outline in the constitution (Meier & O'Toole, 2006). The opponents claim that the Congress is the representative of people voices and allowing bureaucrats to participate in creating the laws and regulations overrides the need of voting and having a representative government as guaranteed by the US constitution. Indeed, the opponents assert that bureaucrats are unreachable and this limits public participation in setting up public policies (Stillman, 2004).

Argument against bureaucracy

The opponents of bureaucracy argue that government agencies are wasteful and offer minimal services to the citizens who support their activities through taxes. The opponents are of the idea that agencies such as Social Security Administration are inefficient, overstaffed and offer minimal productivity compared to the government funds that are spend in supporting their activities (Meier & O'Toole, 2006). However, the proponents counter this argument by asserting that certain government functions that are performed by public agencies such as refuse collection, public transportation, electrical utilities and social security administration offer invaluable benefits to the general society and their productivity cannot be quantified in monetary terms (Stillman, 2004).

The opponents of bureaucracy claim that the Constitution is clear on powers, functions and formation of the three arms of government and public agencies are not outlined in the constitution (Wilson, 1989). They assert that government departments and agencies can be formed or scrapped by

Congress. Indeed, bureaucracy takes up certain roles of the Congress such as the power to regulate international trade and collect taxes as outlined by Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution (Meier & O'Toole, 2006). The opponents counter this argument by asserting that congress is limited to making laws that regulate these functions while the government agencies are necessary to run day-to-day activities related to these functions and enforce the rules outlined by the Congress (Stillman, 2004).

Conclusion

I believe that bureaucracy is necessary for the smooth functions of the three arms of government since it is important to establish institutions and departments that ensure smooth transition from outgoing government to the incoming government. The fourth arm should not be equal to the three arms of government since its functions and powers are not outlined in the constitution. Bureaucracy is good for administrative purposes since it facilitates implementation of public policies and supports the other arms of government with technical expertise and advice.

References:

- Bardes, B. A., Shelley, M. C & Schmidt, S. W. (2010). American government and politics today: the essentials. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Meier, K. J & O'Toole, L. J. (2006). Bureaucracy in a democratic state: a governance perspective. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Stillman, R. J. (2004). The American bureaucracy: the core of modern government. New York: Thomson Learning.
- Wilson, J. (1989). Bureaucracy: what government agencies do and why they do it. New York: Basic books.