

Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy  
Thirteenth Edition, and Texas Edition  
Edwards/Wattenberg/Lineberry

# Chapter 13

# The Presidency

# The Presidents








- Great Expectations
  - Americans want a president who is powerful and who can do good like Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Kennedy.
  - Yet Americans do not like a concentration of power because they are individualistic and skeptical of authority.

# The Presidents





- Who They Are
  - Formal Requirements:
    - Must be 35 years old
    - Must be a natural-born citizen
    - Must have resided in U.S. for 14 years
  - Informal “Requirements”:
    - White, Male, Protestant (except one)
  - All manner of professions, but mostly political ones (former state governors, for example)

# The Presidents

**Table 13.1 Recent Presidents**

PRESIDENT	TERM	PARTY	BACKGROUND	SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
Harry S. Truman 	1945–1953	Democrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. senator from Missouri</li> <li>chosen as FDR's running mate in 1944</li> <li>became president when FDR died</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>made decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan to end World War II</li> <li>presided over postwar recovery</li> <li>laid foundation for Cold War policy</li> <li>relatively unpopular during term</li> </ul>
Dwight D. Eisenhower 	1953–1961	Republican	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commander of Allied forces in Europe in World War II</li> <li>never voted until he ran for president</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presided over relatively tranquil 1950s</li> <li>conservative domestic policies</li> <li>cool crisis management</li> <li>enjoyed strong public approval</li> </ul>
John F. Kennedy 	1961–1963	Democrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. senator from Massachusetts</li> <li>from very wealthy family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>known for personal style</li> <li>presided over Cuban missile crisis</li> <li>ushered in era of liberal domestic policies</li> <li>assassinated in 1963</li> </ul>
Lyndon B. Johnson 	1963–1969	Democrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senate majority leader</li> <li>chosen as Kennedy's running mate; succeeded him after the assassination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>skilled legislative leader with a coarse public image</li> <li>launched the Great Society</li> <li>won passage of major civil rights laws</li> <li>escalated the Vietnam War</li> <li>war policies proved unpopular; did not seek reelection</li> </ul>
Richard M. Nixon 	1969–1974	Republican	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. senator from California</li> <li>served two terms as Eisenhower's vice president</li> <li>lost presidential election of 1960 to John F. Kennedy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>presided over period of legislative innovation</li> <li>renewed relations with China</li> <li>ended Vietnam War</li> <li>resigned as result of Watergate scandal</li> </ul>
Gerald R. Ford 	1974–1977	Republican	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>House minority leader</li> <li>only person ever nominated as vice president under Twenty-fifth Amendment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pardoned Richard Nixon</li> <li>helped heal the nation's wounds</li> <li>lost election in 1976 to Jimmy Carter</li> </ul>
Jimmy Carter 	1977–1981	Democrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>governor of Georgia</li> <li>peanut farmer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>viewed as honest, but politically unskilled</li> <li>hurt by economic downturn</li> <li>managed Iranian hostage crisis</li> <li>lost bid for reelection 1980</li> </ul>

**Table 13.1 Recent Presidents (continued)**

PRESIDENT	TERM	PARTY	BACKGROUND	SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
Ronald W. Reagan 	1981–1989	Republican	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>governor of California</li> <li>well-known actor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>won a substantial tax cut</li> <li>led fight for a large increase in defense spending</li> <li>advocated conservative politics</li> <li>known as the Great Communicator</li> </ul>
George Bush 	1989–1993	Republican	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. representative from Texas</li> <li>director of CIA</li> <li>ambassador to UN</li> <li>served two terms as Reagan's vice president</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>led international coalition to victory in Gulf War</li> <li>presided over end of Cold War</li> <li>popular until economy stagnated</li> <li>lost reelection bid in 1992</li> </ul>
William J. Clinton 	1993–2001	Democrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>governor of Arkansas</li> <li>Rhodes Scholar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>moved Democrats to center</li> <li>presided over balanced budget</li> <li>benefited from strong economy</li> <li>tenure marred by Monica Lewinsky scandal</li> <li>impeached</li> </ul>
George W. Bush 	2001–	Republican	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>governor of Texas</li> <li>son of President George Bush</li> <li>elected without plurality of the vote</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>launched war on terrorism</li> <li>won large tax cut</li> <li>established Department of Homeland Security</li> <li>began war with Iraq</li> </ul>

# The Presidents

- How They Got There
  - Elections: The Normal Road to the White House
    - Once elected, the president serves a term of four years.
    - In 1951, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment limited the number of terms to two.
    - Most presidents have been elected to office.

# The Presidents

- How They Got There

- Succession and Impeachment

- The vice president succeeds if the president leaves office due to death, resignation, or removal.
- Impeachment: a majority vote in the House for “Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors”
  - If impeached, the president is tried by the Senate with the Chief Justice presiding.
  - Only two presidents have been impeached--Andrew Johnson and Clinton—neither was convicted.
- The 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment clarifies what happens if the president becomes disabled.
  - The vice president becomes acting president if the vice president and president’s cabinet determine that the president is disabled.

# The Presidents

**Table 13.2 Incomplete Presidential Terms**

PRESIDENT	TERM	SUCCEEDED BY
William Henry Harrison	March 4, 1841–April 4, 1841	John Tyler
Zachary Taylor	March 4, 1849–July 9, 1850	Millard Fillmore
Abraham Lincoln	March 4, 1865–April 15, 1865 <sup>a</sup>	Andrew Johnson
James A. Garfield	March 4, 1881–September 19, 1881	Chester A. Arthur
William McKinley	March 4, 1901–September 14, 1901 <sup>a</sup>	Theodore Roosevelt
Warren G. Harding	March 4, 1921–August 2, 1923	Calvin Coolidge
Franklin D. Roosevelt	January 20, 1945–April 12, 1945 <sup>b</sup>	Harry S Truman
John F. Kennedy	January 20, 1961–November 22, 1963	Lyndon B. Johnson
Richard M. Nixon	January 20, 1973–August 9, 1974 <sup>a</sup>	Gerald R. Ford

<sup>a</sup>Second term.

<sup>b</sup>Fourth term.



# Presidential Powers

**Table 13.3 Constitutional Powers of the President**

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## National Security Powers

Serve as commander in chief of the armed forces  
Make treaties with other nations, subject to the agreement of two-thirds of the Senate  
Nominate ambassadors, with the agreement of a majority of the Senate  
Receive ambassadors of other nations, thereby conferring diplomatic recognition on other governments

## Legislative Powers

Present information on the state of the union to Congress  
Recommend legislation to Congress  
Convene both houses of Congress on extraordinary occasions  
Adjourn Congress if the House and Senate cannot agree on adjournment  
Veto legislation (Congress may overrule with two-thirds vote of each house)

## Administrative Powers

“Take care that the laws be faithfully executed”  
Nominate officials as provided for by Congress and with the agreement of a majority of the Senate  
Request written opinions of administrative officials  
Fill administrative vacancies during congressional recesses

## Judicial Powers

Grant reprieves and pardons for federal offenses (except impeachment)  
Nominate federal judges, who are confirmed by a majority of the Senate

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# Presidential Powers

- The Expansion of Power
  - Presidents may develop new roles for and expand power of the office.
- Perspectives on Presidential Power
  - During the 1950's and 1960's people favored a powerful president.
  - By the 1970's, presidential power was checked and distrusted by the public.

# Running the Government: The Chief Executive

- As Chief Executive, the president presides over the administration of government.
  - Constitution: “take care that the laws be faithfully executed”
  - Today, federal bureaucracy spends \$2.5 trillion a year and numbers more than 4 million employees.
  - Presidents appoint 500 high-level positions and 2,500 lesser jobs.

# Running the Government: The Chief Executive

- The Vice President
  - Basically just “waits” for things to do
  - Power has grown over time, as recent presidents have given their VPs important jobs
- The Cabinet
  - Presidential advisors, not in Constitution
  - Made up of 14 cabinet secretaries and one Attorney General, confirmed by the Senate

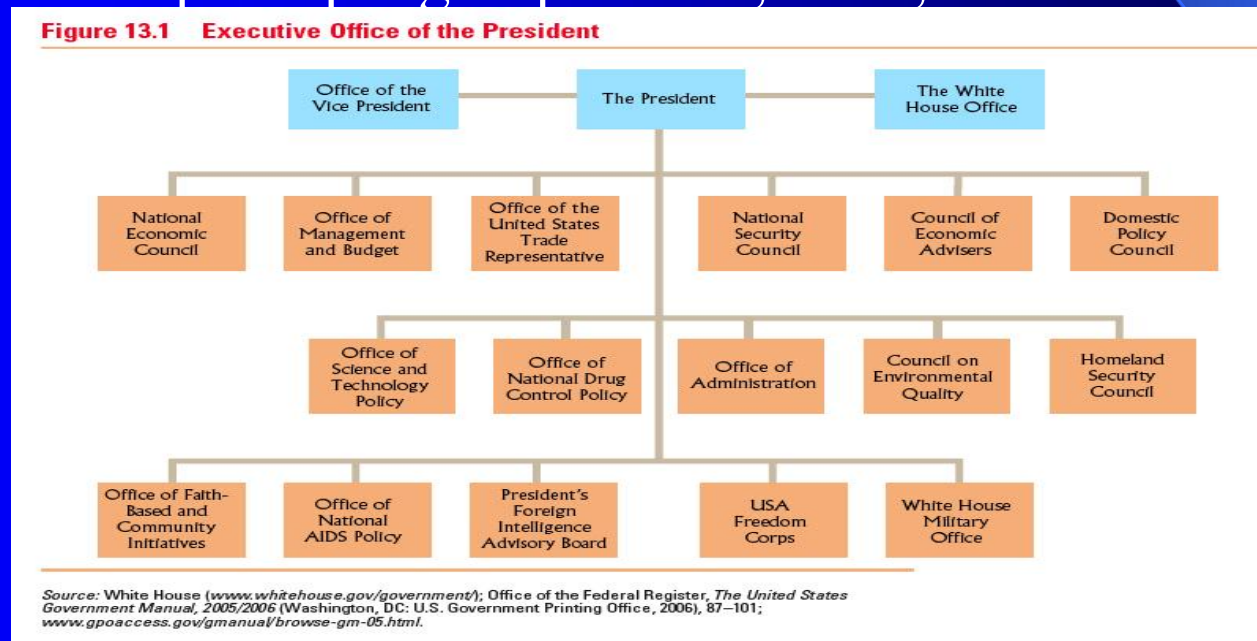
# Running the Government: The Chief Executive

**Table 13.4 The Cabinet Departments**

DEPARTMENT	YEAR CREATED	FUNCTION
State	1789	Makes foreign policy, including treaty negotiations
Treasury	1789	Serves as the government's banker
Defense	1947	Formed by the consolidation of the former Departments of War and the Navy
Justice	1870	Serves as the government's attorney; headed by the attorney general
Interior	1849	Manages the nation's natural resources, including wildlife and public lands
Agriculture	1862	Administers farm and food stamp programs and aids farmers
Commerce	1903	Aids businesses and conducts the U.S. census
Labor	1913	Formed through separation from the Department of Commerce; runs programs and aids labor in various ways
Health and Human Services	1953	Originally created as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, it lost its education function in 1979 and Social Security in 1995
Housing and Urban Development	1966	Responsible for housing and urban programs
Transportation	1966	Responsible for mass transportation and highway programs
Energy	1977	Responsible for energy policy and research, including atomic energy
Education	1979	Responsible for the federal government's education programs
Veterans Affairs	1988	Responsible for programs aiding veterans
Homeland Security	2002	Responsible for protecting against terrorism and responding to natural disasters

# Running the Government: The Chief Executive

- The Executive Office
  - Made up of several policymaking and advisory bodies
  - Three principle groups: NSC, CEA, OMB



# Running the Government: The Chief Executive

- The Executive Office
  - National Security Council (NSC)
    - Created in 1947 to coordinate the president's foreign and military policy advisers
    - Members include the president, vice president, secretary of state and defense, and managed by the president's national security adviser
  - Council of Economic Advisers (CEA)
    - A 3-member body appointed by the president to advise on economic policy
  - Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
    - Performs both managerial and budgetary functions, including legislative review and budgetary assessments of proposals

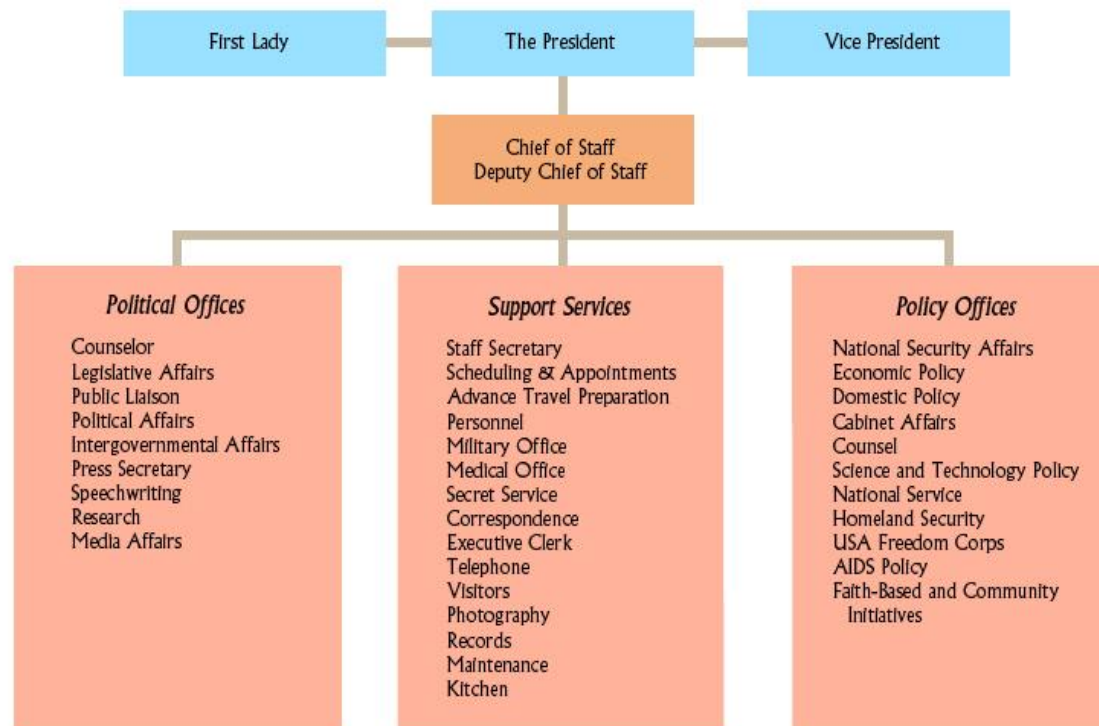
# Running the Government: The Chief Executive

- The White House Staff
  - Chief aides and staff for the president—some are more for the White House than the president
  - Presidents rely on their information and effort but presidents set tone and style of White House
- The First Lady
  - No official government position, but many get involved politically
  - Recent ones focus on a single issue
    - Hillary Clinton and health care



# Running the Government: The Chief Executive

Figure 13.2 Principal Offices in the White House



Source: Adapted from George C. Edwards III and Stephen J. Wayne, *Presidential Leadership*, 7th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005), figure 6.2.

# Presidential Leadership of Congress: The Politics of Shared Powers

- Chief Legislator
  - Veto: The president can send a bill back to Congress with his reasons for rejecting it. It may be overridden with 2/3 support of both Houses.
  - Pocket Veto: A president can let a bill die by not signing it when Congress adjourns within 10 days of submitting a bill.
  - Line Item Veto: ability to veto parts of a bill--some state governors have it, but not the president
  - Vetoes are most used to prevent legislation.

# Presidential Leadership of Congress: The Politics of Shared Powers

**Table 13.5 Presidential Vetoes**

PRESIDENT	REGULAR VETOES	VETOES OVERRIDDEN	PERCENTAGE OF VETOES OVERRIDDEN	POCKET VETOES	TOTAL VETOES
Eisenhower	73	2	3	108	181
Kennedy	12	0	0	9	21
Johnson	16	0	0	14	30
Nixon	26	7	27	17	43
Ford	48	12	25	18	66
Carter	13	2	15	18	31
Reagan	39	9	23	39	78
G. Bush	29	1	3	15	44
Clinton	37	2	5	1	38
G. W. Bush*	1	0	0	0	1

\*Through 2006.

# Presidential Leadership of Congress: The Politics of Shared Powers

- Party Leadership
  - The Bonds of Party
    - Being in the president's party creates a psychological bond between legislators and presidents, increasing agreement.
  - Slippage in Party Support
    - Presidents cannot always count on party support, especially on controversial issues.
  - Leading the Party
    - Presidents can offer party candidates support and punishment by withholding favors.
    - Presidential coattails occur when voters cast their ballots for congressional candidates of the president's party because they support the president. Races are rarely won in this way.

# Presidential Leadership of Congress: The Politics of Shared Powers

**Table 13.6 Congressional Gains or Losses for the President's Party in Presidential Election Years**

Presidents cannot rely on their coattails to carry their party's legislators into office to help pass White House legislative programs. The president's party typically gains few, if any, seats when the president wins election. For instance, the Republicans lost seats in both houses when President George W. Bush was elected in 2000.

YEAR	PRESIDENT	HOUSE	SENATE
1952	Eisenhower (R)	+22	+1
1956	Eisenhower (R)	-2	-1
1960	Kennedy (D)	-22	-2
1964	Johnson (D)	+37	+1
1968	Nixon (R)	+5	+6
1972	Nixon (R)	+12	-2
1976	Carter (D)	+1	0
1980	Reagan (R)	+34	+12
1984	Reagan (R)	+14	-2
1988	G. Bush (R)	-3	-1
1992	Clinton (D)	-10	0
1996	Clinton (D)	+9	-2
2000	G. W. Bush (R)	-2	-4
2004	G. W. Bush (R)	+3	+4
	Average	+5.6	+7

# Presidential Leadership of Congress: The Politics of Shared Powers

**Table 13.7 Congressional Gains or Losses for the President's Party in Midterm Election Years**

For decades the president's party typically *lost* seats in midterm elections. Thus, presidents could not be certain of helping to elect members of their party once in office. The elections of 1998 and 2002 deviated from this pattern, and the president's party gained a few seats.

YEAR	PRESIDENT	HOUSE	SENATE
1954	Eisenhower (R)	-18	-1
1958	Eisenhower (R)	-47	-13
1962	Kennedy (D)	-4	+3
1966	Johnson (D)	-47	-4
1970	Nixon (R)	-12	+2
1974	Ford (R)	-47	-5
1978	Carter (D)	-15	-3
1982	Reagan (R)	-26	0
1986	Reagan (R)	-5	-8
1990	G. Bush (R)	-9	-1
1994	Clinton (D)	-52	-8
1998	Clinton (D)	+5	0
2002	G. W. Bush (R)	+6	+2
2006	G. W. Bush (R)	-29	-6
	Average	-22	-3

# Presidential Leadership of Congress: The Politics of Shared Powers

- Public Support
  - Public Approval
    - A source of presidential leadership of Congress
    - Public approval gives the president leverage, not command; it does not guarantee success
  - Mandates
    - Perception that the voters strongly support the president's character and policies
    - Mandates are infrequent, but presidents claim a mandate anyway



# Presidential Leadership of Congress: The Politics of Shared Powers

- Legislative Skills
  - Bargaining: concessions for votes, occurs infrequently
  - Being strategic, presidents increase chances for success by exploiting “honeymoon” at beginning of term
  - Presidents may set priorities to influence Congress’ agenda; president is nation’s key agenda builder
  - Skills must compete with other factors that may affect Congress; they are not at the core of presidential leadership of Congress

# The President and National Security Policy

- Chief Diplomat
  - Negotiates treaties with other countries
    - Treaties must be ratified by 2/3 vote in the Senate
  - Use executive agreements to take care of routine matters with other countries
  - May negotiate for peace between other countries
  - Lead U.S. allies in defense and economic issues

# The President and National Security Policy

- Commander-in-Chief
  - Writers of the Constitution wanted civilian control of the military.
  - Presidents often make important military decisions.
  - Presidents command a standing military and nuclear arsenal - unthinkable 200 years ago

# The President and National Security Policy

- War Powers
  - Shared War Powers in Constitution
    - Congress has the power to declare war.
    - President, as Commander-in-Chief, can commit troops and equipment in conflicts
  - War Powers Resolution (1973)
    - Intended to limit the president's use of the military
    - Requires president to consult with Congress prior to using military force and withdraw forces after 60 days unless Congress declares war or grants an extension
    - Presidents see the Resolution as unconstitutional
  - Presidents continue to test the constitutional limits of using the military in foreign conflicts.

# The President and National Security Policy

- Crisis Manager
  - Crisis: a sudden, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous event
  - The role the president plays can help or hurt the presidential image.
  - With current technology, the president can act much faster than Congress to resolve a crisis.
- Working with Congress
  - President has lead role in foreign affairs
  - Presidents still have to work with Congress for support and funding of foreign policies.

# Power from the People: The Public Presidency

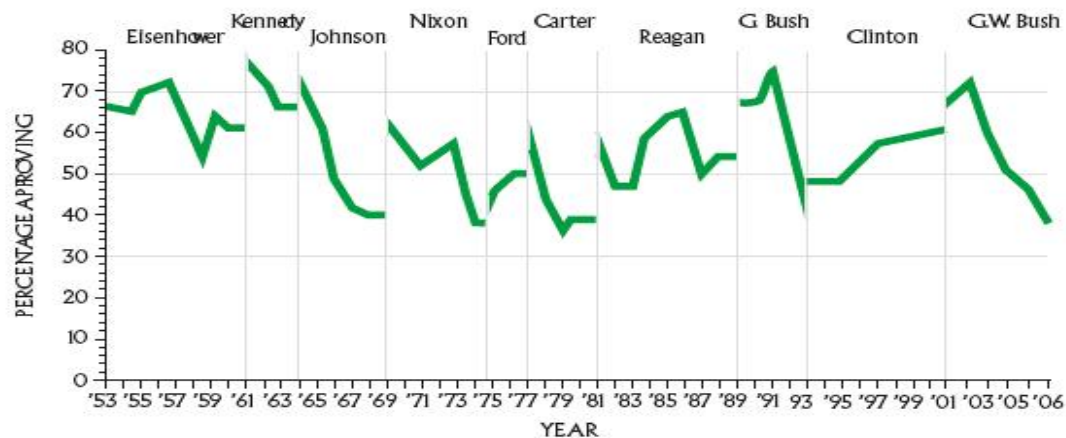
- Going Public

- Public support is perhaps the greatest source of influence a president has.
- Presidential appearances are staged to get the public's attention.
- As head of state, presidents often perform many ceremonial functions, which usually result in favorable press coverage.

# Power from the People: The Public Presidency

- Presidential Approval
  - Receives much effort by the White House
  - Product of many factors: predispositions, “honeymoon,” rally events
  - Changes can highlight good or bad decisions.

**Figure 13.3 Average Yearly Presidential Approval**



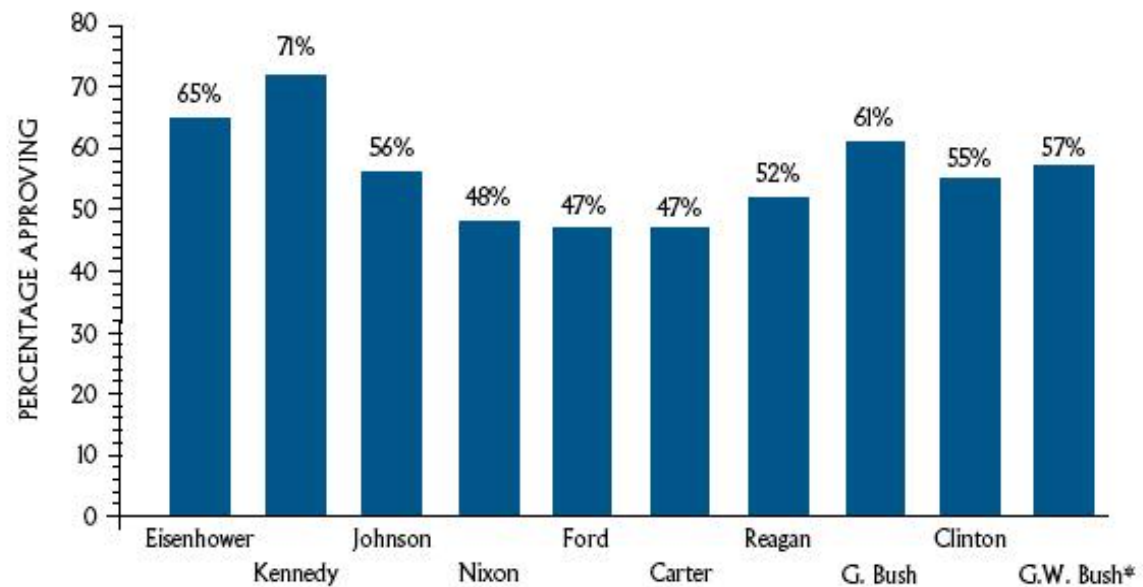
For years the Gallup Poll has asked Americans, “Do you approve or disapprove of the way [name of president] is handling his job as president?” Here you can track the percentage approving of presidential performance from Eisenhower to George W. Bush. Notice that most presidents seem to be most popular when they first enter office; later on, their popularity often erodes. Bill Clinton was an exception who enjoyed higher approval in his second term than in his first. George W. Bush had high approval following 9/11, but public support diminished steadily after that.

Source: George C. Edwards III, *Presidential Approval* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); updated by the authors.



# Power from the People: The Public Presidency

**Figure 13.4 Average Presidential Approval for Entire Terms in Office**



Source: George C. Edwards III, *Presidential Approval* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); updated by the authors.

\*Through 2006

# Power from the People: The Public Presidency

- Policy Support
  - Presidents attempt to gain public support through televised messages, with little success
    - The public may not be receptive to the president's message or misperceive it all together.
- Mobilizing the Public
  - The president may attempt to motivate the public to contact Congress.
  - A difficult task, given inattentive and apathetic public
  - May backfire: a lack of response speaks loudly

# The President and the Press

- Presidents and media are often adversaries due to different goals.
  - Media need stories; presidents want to convey their messages to the public
- Many people in the White House deal with the media, but the press secretary is the main contact person.
  - Press conferences are best-known direct interaction of president and media
- Media do not focus on substance of policies but on the “body watch.”
- News coverage of presidents has become more negative.

# Understanding the American Presidency

- The Presidency and Democracy
  - Concerns over the president having too much power often tied to policy concerns
  - Others argue there are too many checks and balances on the president
- The Presidency and the Scope of Government
  - Some presidents have increased the functions of government.

# Summary

- Americans expect a lot from presidents.
- Presidents work as part of an organization.
- Presidential leadership of Congress is central but difficult
- Presidential roles and responsibilities, even national security, tied to Madisonian system of checks and balances