



AP[®] United States Government & Politics 2002 Sample Student Responses

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1

The president's appointments can live on for a long time after he leaves office, so it is important that these are the best candidates for the job. Unfortunately, divided government makes this difficult.

That is the first problem of divided government for the presidential appointments, the president can not make the appointments that he wants to make. An example is President Clinton's appointment of Attorney General. He promised he would appoint a minority, but when his first few were rejected, he had to go with Janet Reno, when there were more qualified people that were not minorities. Appointments therefore become a political football, allowing the Congress to exhibit greater influence over the executive branch.

The first problem then leads to the second. The president's first appointment is very strong conservative judge, but he is rejected. So he nominates a more liberal ~~more~~ person who is still too conservative. This keeps going until the person who gets the seat is not as conservative as the president wanted. Therefore, the Liberal Senate has allowed for a liberal judge on the court, who will rule in their favor and not the president's, even after the president is gone. This gives ~~Congress~~ the Senate the ability to reject people until they get who they want, making them just as important as the president while appointments are made.

The first way the president can overcome the Senate is rather obvious, he can veto legislation supported by the Senate. If there is a piece of legislation largely supported by his adversaries in the Senate, the president can make a deal that if they accept this appointment,

1

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then ~~when~~ ~~can~~ ~~have~~ he will not veto this legislation. It all depends on how important the legislation is. If plan one fails because there is no legislation that important, then the president can do what he can always do, appeal to the people. Being the most visible person in the government, the president can use the media as a powerful tool to show the ~~constituents~~ people how the evil Senate will let nothing happen. Then the Senators, one by one will support the president saying it must have been "that other guy's senator", therefore making them good in the eyes of the constituents.

The framers intended there to be gridlock in the government, this is all very healthy. But there also has to be a way to compromise. It is how the United States works; compromise. It ~~also~~ allows for the government to be as fair as possible and to function best for the people.

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QUESTION * 1

"DIVIDED GOVERNMENT" HAS MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE TO AGREE ON APPOINTMENTS ~~ALONG~~ ALONG WITH MANY OTHER ASPECTS OF GOVERNMENT THE SENATE MUST CONFIRM FEDERAL APPOINTMENT APPOINTMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT, AND DIFFERENT POLITICAL VIEWS CAN CREATE CONTROVERSY IN THIS AREA.

ONE PROBLEM THAT DIVIDED GOVERNMENT POSES FOR THE PRESIDENT MAKING FEDERAL APPOINTMENTS IS THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO GET THE PRESIDENT'S SUPREME COURT APPOINTMENTS THROUGH THE SENATE, WHICH MUST CONFIRM THIS APPOINTMENT. PRESIDENTS USUALLY CHOOSE A JUSTICE WHO HOLDS THE SAME POLITICAL VIEWS AS THEM, AND IF THE MAJORITY OF THE SENATE HOLDS DIFFERENT VIEWS, THEY WILL OPPOSE APPROVING THE PRESIDENT'S APPOINTMENT. A SECOND PROBLEM IS THAT IF A PRESIDENT ASKS A SENATOR WHO ~~IS~~ WOULD MAKE A GOOD FEDERAL JUDGE FROM THEIR STATE, THROUGH WHAT IS KNOWN AS SENATORIAL COURTESY, THE SENATOR MAY GIVE A RECOMMENDATION FOR A JUDGE WHO HOLDS THE OPPOSITE VIEWS OF THE PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT CANNOT POSSIBLY KNOW ~~THE~~ WHO WOULD MAKE A GOOD FEDERAL JUDGE IN ALL FIFTY STATES, SO HE ASKS CONGRESSMEN FOR THEIR ADVICE. HOWEVER, IF THERE IS NO SENATORIAL COURTESY, A LIBERAL PRESIDENT MIGHT END UP APPOINTING A CONSERVATIVE JUDGE.

A PRESIDENT CAN OVERCOME THE PROBLEM OF GETTING SUPREME COURT JUSTICES THROUGH THE SENATE, BY APPOINTING A MORE MODERATE JUSTICE, OR WOMAN WHO COMES FROM A SPECIFIC BACKGROUND. IN ORDER TO GET APPROVAL BY A DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS, REAGAN APPOINTED JUSTICE O'CONNOR TO THE SUPREME COURT. ALTHOUGH SHE WAS SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE, SHE REPRESENTED THE WOMEN'S MINORITY GROUP, WHICH HAS A HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT. TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF NO SENATORIAL COURTESY, PRESIDENTS OFTEN HIRE STAFF MEMBERS TO ~~DO~~ RESEARCH FEDERAL JUDGE APPOINTMENTS IN DIFFERENT STATES.

1a. When the President is making federal appointments, two problems that divided government poses for him are the president might appoint a majority of one party and hardly any of another. Thus making votes seem unfair, and the majority will lead. The other problem is that each party wants so many things to pass or people to be on their side. And when those people aren't picked, people get mad and unhelpful.

b. Two ways the President could try to overcome the problems described in (a), are for one thing ~~if~~ he can try to equally appoint federal offices among the parties making it a little more fair in votes and such. Next he can listen to what the parties think and compromise w/ them on who they think should be appointed.