

Check on the Presidency

Explain how the president's agenda can create tension and frequent confrontations with Congress.

1. Presidents promote their agendas by mastering the media in all of the following ways EXCEPT
 - a. Trade top security clearance for favorable coverage
 - b. Maintain permanent campaign mode
 - c. Routinely hold public events
 - d. Use new and old media outlets

2. The president is the leader of the Executive Branch. The Executive Branch is made up of agencies and commissions empowered to enforce the laws of the land. Millions work for the Executive Branch. Many serve for life. Nevertheless, the president is held responsible for the duties of the entire Executive Branch. Who does the president rely on the most for help in running the Executive Branch?
 - a. The First Lady
 - b. Vice President
 - c. Cabinet
 - d. White House Office

3. The influence of the president's Cabinet has grown weaker due to
 - a. Supreme Court precedent
 - b. Divided loyalties
 - c. Excessive partisanship
 - d. High profile impeachments

4. All of the following are common obstacles to a president realizing public policy success EXCEPT
 - a. Public disapproval
 - b. Confrontations with the Vice President
 - c. Unexpected foreign policy interruption
 - d. Confrontations with Congress

5. Which of the following, according to political science, is a relatively new obstacle to a president realizing public policy success?
 - a. Public disapproval
 - b. The prevalence of divided government
 - c. The increasing demands of foreign policy along with economic globalization
 - d. Senate confirmation holds and delays of presidential appointments

6. Presidents can use all of the following informal powers to circumvent Congressional obstructions EXCEPT
 - a. Recess appointments
 - b. State of the Union Address
 - c. Executive orders
 - d. Executive agreements

7. Our Founding Fathers feared anarchy as much as they feared monarchy. Yet they had just fought against the tyranny of King George of England. It was no surprise then that the new Constitution appeared to create a weak chief executive. The office of President, however, was given access to great potential power. That potential is found in the president's unilateral ability to execute the laws and the power to exploit public opinion. Alexander Hamilton in the Federalist Papers called this a (n)

- a. Capable chief executive
- b. Princely president
- c. Head of State
- d. Energetic president

8. Political activist William A. Niskanen has written:

“There's one more advantage to tension between our governmental branches: Major reform is more likely to last. Since passing any measure in divided government requires bipartisan support, a shift in majorities is less likely to bring on serious changes or adulterations. The Reagan tax laws of 1981 and 1986, for example, were both approved by a House of Representatives controlled by Democrats and have largely survived. The welfare reform of 1996 was approved by Clinton and a Republican Congress and also endures. By contrast, any efforts during the past several years to reform the federal tax code, Medicare, or Social Security have faltered, and any changes forced through by the GOP would almost certainly be undone as soon as Democrats returned to power. Reforms of real magnitude will almost certainly depend on preventing immoderation and securing bipartisan support, and little of that seems likely in a GOP-only government.”

Niskanen appears to be arguing for the benefits of

- a. Divided government
- b. A unified government
- c. A two-party system
- d. A multi-party system

9. The White House Office serves as the right-arm of the President. The White House Office is made up of 100s of advisers to the President. Many of them are

- a. Veterans of the president's campaign staff
- b. Former Congressional advisers
- c. State legislators
- d. Leftovers from the previous administration

10. Which of the following describe a unified government?

- a. When the president and a majority of Congress are from the same political party
- b. When the president and a majority of the Cabinet are from the same political party
- c. When the president and a majority of the Supreme Court are from the same political party
- d. When the president and a majority of the state governors are from the same political party

Critical Thinking Prompt: Who has the upper hand in our national government, Congress or the president? Explain.