



EDITION

7

# **POLITICS** of the **ADMINISTRATIVE** **PROCESS**



Donald F. Kettl



# POLITICS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

SEVENTH EDITION

Donald F. Kettl

University of Maryland





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# PREFACE

With this seventh edition of *The Politics of the Administrative Process*, I'm celebrating eighty years of intellectual history. The book stands on the shoulders of James W. Fesler, one of the greatest scholars that the field of public administration ever produced. He established himself as an assistant professor during Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. He contributed to winning World War II by serving as historian of the War Production Board, a position that might sound dull but which, in fact, helped keep track of the critical decisions the country made in allocating rubber and steel to the war effort. After the war, he went to Yale University, where he served as chair of the political science department and built it into the number-one-ranked program in the country. He helped develop a generation of scholars. His last doctoral student is the author of this seventh edition.

The culmination of his career was his public administration textbook, *Public Administration: Theory and Practice*, which appeared in 1980.<sup>1</sup> That book morphed into *The Politics of the Administrative Process*, whose first edition appeared in 1991, and we coauthored the book through its fourth edition in 2009. Jim brought to the book insights into history and current affairs. Many of the historical references in the book come from Jim's deep appreciation for the lasting issues. He loved the story of the struggles to keep the windows clean in a king's palace. Cleaning the outside was the job of one department, the inside of another, and the two departments were never in sync. Coordination of such a basic issue was something the king never mustered.

And Jim loved puns, especially bad ones—the more tortured the pun, the better. In fact, one of his proudest moments came in a column by William Safire, the distinguished *New York Times* columnist, who wrote a regular column called "On Language." In a 1996 column, Safire cited a pun Jim had concocted. It's worth quoting Safire directly:

The Roman orator Cicero, launching his attack on the politician he suspected of plotting an assassination, expressed his revulsion at the degeneration of high principle in his era with *O tempora! O mores!* ("O, the times! O, the bad new principles!") With this as background comes the cry of the Latin-trained Japanese chef deep-frying an eel: "*O tempora! O morays!*"<sup>2</sup>

Jim celebrated the pun's publication in the *Times*. He loved the way it told a bigger story: Jim's affinity for history, connections across cultures, and the knack for bringing lasting issues into today's focus (even if, in this case, the connections are especially painful).

With the book's seventh edition, it's not only worth celebrating the eighty years of intellectual life captured in this book (Jim's first edition long predated the dawn of personal computers), not only from his own typewriter but in the work carried forward since his death

in 2005. It's also worth going back to the foundation that Jim so carefully built: a search for fundamental questions that endure, the deeper their roots the better; the quest for a connection between theory building and practical applications; and the commitment to making government work well for its citizens. That last point was especially important for Jim. After all, he cut his professional teeth during the New Deal, when the country faced enormous challenges, it wasn't clear whether the government was up to solving them, and a new generation of scholars worked hard to figure out how government could best help millions of Americans deal with enormous hardship.

I point to Jim's great contributions to the field—and to this book—in launching this new edition, because today's historic distrust of government would greatly worry him. He would understand from history that there are deep roots to many of these issues. He would point to the fact that other nations have struggled with similar issues. And, more than anything else, he'd want to find ways of making government work better so it could serve citizens—and rebuild their trust in the organizations to which he devoted his life.

That's the focus of this edition. "Public administration" sometimes takes on an aura of something just the insiders need to worry about. It's sometimes something that seems almost no one can do anything about. Students sometimes think it's boring, or a career to which they can't imagine devoting themselves.

But here's my request: just read the first few pages of Chapter 1, which tells the story of lead poisoning in the water of Flint, Michigan. It's hardly just an inside game. It's certainly not boring. It's worth figuring out how to do it right. It is central to the Trump administration's challenges. And it's one of the most important things to which it's possible to devote a career.

So this book is not only a celebration of Jim Fesler's life and career (and his occasional penchant for punning). It's a call to focus our energy on making government work and restoring our confidence in it.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Following a careful look at politics and administration in **Chapter 1**, *The Politics of the Administrative Process* explores the important issues in five parts. Part I considers what government does and how it does it. **Chapter 2** lays out government's strategies and tactics, as well as the growth of government's reliance on nongovernmental partners to do its work. **Chapter 3** examines the basic issues of administrative responsibility and the meaning of the "administrative state."

Part II moves on to probe the theories underlying organizations and their structure. **Chapter 4** charts the basics of organizational theory. **Chapters 5** and **6** analyze the structure of the executive branch and the problems that periodically hamper good organizational performance. **Chapter 7** examines the enduring instinct of policymakers and administrators alike to reform organizational structure.

Part III addresses the role of people inside these organizational structures and looks at the challenge of recruiting younger employees to public service, as baby boomers move to retirement. Civil service systems have long defined the basic rules and procedures for hiring and firing government workers, and that constitutes the focus of **Chapter 8**. **Chapter 9** asks how government can make the most of the intellectual capital its employees bring to the job.

Part IV carefully examines how administrative agencies accomplish their missions. Administration is about making decisions, and **Chapter 10** analyzes the theories about this



process. **Chapter 11** applies these theories to budgeting, which is the most important administrative decision and which drives much of administrative action. **Chapter 12** explores how implementers transform decisions into practice.

Part V takes on the theme of government accountability, with **Chapter 13** probing the strategies of regulation and the courts. **Chapter 14** concludes the book by returning to the central overarching themes of executive power, politics, and accountability and examines, in particular, the control of administration by legislatures.

## KEY FEATURES

Building on the book's full-color design, this edition offers several new features. First, each chapter has a **Diving into Data** feature, which explores how numbers and evidence can help sort through the fundamental questions of public administration. Many of the "data dives" have especially lively graphics to help the issues come alive. These sections are important, not only to bring new insight into the basic issues but also to give students practice in some of the cutting-edge approaches in especially high demand by employers.

Second, all of the graphs and most of the photos are new for this edition. I've kept some of the old classics—ones that Jim Fesler would have especially appreciated—but the graphic arts in the book are fresh and lively.

The book explores three big themes and how they affect public administration—politics, performance, and accountability. There is a special **Ripped from the Headlines** box in each chapter to examine how one of the themes connects with the topic of the chapter. Each of the "Ripped from the Headlines" boxes is new for this edition. For example, a box on harsh news coverage of a NASA space mission cuts to the underlying issues of what *good* public administration looks like. One box examines the surprising coordination issues that came from a small community's decision to license a marijuana farm, while another box looks at challenges for rooting out sexual harassment in the National Park Service. In one chapter, a box asks: Can state governments play a role in stopping earthquakes? These boxes bring alive the theoretical issues in each of the book's chapters.

**Learning objectives** open each chapter. Readers will also find **key concepts** bolded within the text and listed at the end of each chapter for ease of review, and a comprehensive **glossary** at the back of the book defines all of the key concepts. Each chapter concludes with a list of resources **for further reading** and a discussion of **suggested websites** to aid further study.

Each chapter features a new **case study**, as well as favorites from previous editions. The cases play a crucial role in bringing home the key points in the chapter text. The issues and situations presented in each case bring the chapter material to life—they show how these concepts actually play out in the real world. For example, in Chapter 12, on implementation, I discuss the complications arising in the rollout of President Obama's health insurance program, a major reform initiative that proved to be a tremendously complicated undertaking. This was the signature program in the president's agenda, but the launch of its website undermined the president's promises, weakened his credibility, and set the stage for Donald Trump's election. For thousands and thousands of health insurance hopefuls, negotiating the website proved painful or impossible. The case provided one more example of why management matters—no policy idea can be good if it fails in execution, and failed execution itself can become a point of enormous political contention.



In addition, each case ends with a “Questions to Consider” section, which challenges students to think critically about the big issues at play, to connect the ideas in the chapter with real-world examples, and to foster discussion among students about how they would solve the problems.

New cases for this edition include the following:

- Permission Slips for Oreos
- Are Private Markets Better than Government?
- Humvees in Ferguson
- What Should Government Do about Sharks?
- How to Fix the VA?
- Who’s in Charge When Fires Strike?
- The War on Zika
- What Do We Owe Vets?
- Big Reform Ideas from House Republicans
- What Are You Eating for Breakfast?
- Lessons on Budgeting from *House of Cards*
- Better Numbers, Lower Crime
- What a Box of Honey Nut Cheerios Says about Today’s Politics
- Lobbying for EpiPens and Uber

## DIGITAL RESOURCES



**SAGE edge** offers a robust online environment featuring an impressive array of tools and resources for review, study, and further exploration, keeping both instructors and students on the cutting edge of teaching and learning. I am thankful for the work of Michael Keeney, who revised or authored many of the resources listed below.

## SAGE EDGE™ FOR INSTRUCTORS

Instructors receive full access to the password-protected **SAGE edge Instructor Resources Site**. **SAGE edge for Instructors** supports your teaching by making it easy to integrate quality content and create a rich learning environment for students. Instructors can access these resources at <http://edge.sagepub.com/ket17e>.

- A **Microsoft® Word test bank** of more than 700 multiple-choice, true-or-false, and essay questions has been crafted specifically for the book. The test bank provides you with a diverse range of pre-written options as well as the opportunity for editing any question and/or inserting your own personalized questions to effectively assess students’ progress and understanding.
- An **electronic test bank** contains multiple-choice, true-or-false, and essay questions for each chapter. The test bank provides you with a diverse range of pre-written options as

well as the opportunity for editing any question and/or inserting your own personalized questions to effectively assess students' progress and understanding.

- Editable, chapter-specific **Microsoft® PowerPoint® slides** offer you complete flexibility in easily creating a multimedia presentation for your course.
- **Sample course syllabi** provide suggested models for structuring your course for six, fourteen, or sixteen weeks.
- An **instructor's manual** provides chapter overviews, lecture outlines, and chapter-by-chapter talking points for discussion.
- **Graphics from the book**, including all of the tables, figures, and infographics, are available in .ppt, .pdf, and .jpg formats for use in lectures, assignments, or tests.

## SAGE EDGE™ FOR STUDENTS

**SAGE Edge for Students** helps improve performance, enhance learning, and offers a personalized approach to coursework in an easy-to-use environment. Students can access these resources at <http://edge.sagepub.com/kettle7e>.

- Mobile-friendly **eFlashcards** strengthen understanding of key terms and concepts.
- Mobile-friendly **practice quizzes** allow for independent assessment by students of their mastery of course material.
- Access to a **case study archive** with 39 additional cases written by me, along with questions to consider that encourage critical analysis and help students apply concepts.
- Access to a selection of annotated full-text **journal articles**, from such SAGE journals as *Public Personnel Management*, *Public Policy and Administration*, *The American Review of Public Administration*, and *Administration and Society*, among others. Each article comes with **Critical Analysis** questions to help students link this scholarship to discussion in the text.
- **Data-based exercises** offer students the opportunity to use publicly available federal data, from sources such as OMB and GAO, to apply concepts learned in the text.
- Annotated links to **video and multimedia content** support and add depth to the book's case studies.
- **Chapter summaries with learning objectives** reinforce the most relevant material.
- A customized online **action plan** includes tips and feedback on progress through the course and materials, which allows students to individualize their learning experience.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I've noted, this book builds heavily on the pathbreaking work that Jim Fesler did, in his career and especially in the early editions of the book. He would be the first to remind us that the problems we're struggling with—determining what government should do and how best to do it—stretch to the very meaning of government. Moreover, Jim found great reassurance in discovering those roots. That did not lessen the huge conflicts over big issues, but it did help explain why the battles were worth fighting—and which fundamental issues will continue to shape the enduring issues about government and its administration. Jim's great

contribution lays in explaining which fights we can win, which will endure, and why the battles matter.

In preparing this new edition, I'm especially grateful to the entire SAGE/CQ Press team. In particular, let me thank Charisse Kiino, Executive Director; Carrie Brandon, Senior Acquisitions Editor; Anna Villarruel, Associate Development Editor; Bennie Clark Allen, Project Editor; John Scappini, Associate eLearning Editor; and Duncan Marchbank, Editorial Assistant. Christina West did an outstanding job of copyediting the manuscript. In addition, I want to thank the following individuals for their exceptionally useful and perceptive reviews: Terry Curl, Golden Gate University–San Francisco; Joan Gibran, Tennessee State University; Herbert Gooch, California Lutheran University; Dave Ivers, Eastern Michigan University; Charley Jacobs, St. Norbert College; Patricia Jaramillo, University of Texas at San Antonio; Miguel Gonzalez Marcos, George Washington University; Ramona Ortega-Liston, University of Akron; Michelle Pautz, University of Dayton; Luke Perry, Utica College; Carlene Thornton, University of West Florida; Joe Wert, Indiana University Southeast; and Su Xuhong, University of South Carolina.

I want to thank the instructors around the country who have used this book to help their students understand the genuine excitement of this field—and the students, who will be leading the next generation of efforts to deliver better services to citizens.

Finally, let me especially thank my wife, Sue. She's been an invaluable friend, partner, strategist, and touchstone. She's lived every chapter of this book, and her insights have made every edition better. She has my deep and lasting thanks.

## NOTES

1. James W. Fesler, *Public Administration: Theory and Practice* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980).
2. William Safire, "Punmeister," *New York Times* (September 22, 1996), <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/09/22/magazine/punmeister.html>.



# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| AARP    | American Association for Retired Persons                              |
| ACLU    | American Civil Liberties Union  |
| AFL-CIO | American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations |
| AFSCME  | American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees         |
| AIDS    | Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome                                    |
| APA     | Administrative Procedure Act of 1946                                  |
| ATF     | Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives                   |
| BBA     | British Bankers' Association  |
| BIA     | Bureau of Indian Affairs  |
| BOB     | Bureau of the Budget  |
| CBO     | Congressional Budget Office   |
| CDC     | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention                            |
| CFR     | Code of Federal Regulations   |
| CIA     | Central Intelligence Agency   |
| CMS     | Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services                            |
| CPSC    | Consumer Product Safety Commission                                    |
| DHS     | Department of Homeland Security                                       |
| DMV     | Department of Motor Vehicles  |
| DOD     | Department of Defense   |
| EPA     | Environmental Protection Agency                                       |
| FAA     | Federal Aviation Administration                                       |
| FBI     | Federal Bureau of Investigation                                       |
| FCC     | Federal Communications Commission                                     |
| FDA     | Food and Drug Administration  |
| FDIC    | Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation                                 |
| Fed     | Federal Reserve Board   |
| FEMA    | Federal Emergency Management Agency                                   |
| FHWA    | Federal Highway Administration  |
| FLRA    | Federal Labor Relations Authority                                     |
| FPS     | Federal Protective Service  |
| FTC     | Federal Trade Commission  |
| GAO     | Government Accountability Office (formerly General Accounting Office) |
| GDP     | Gross domestic product  |
| GIS     | Geographic information system   |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| GPP    | Government Performance Project                         |
| GPRA   | Government Performance and Results Act                 |
| GS     | General Schedule of Classification and Pay             |
| GSA    | General Services Administration                        |
| HHS    | Department of Health and Human Services                |
| HIV    | Human immunodeficiency virus                           |
| HR     | Human resources  |
| HUD    | Department of Housing and Urban Development            |
| ICE    | Immigration and Customs Enforcement                    |
| IRS    | Internal Revenue Service                               |
| KSA    | Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities                       |
| MBO    | Management by objectives                               |
| MSPB   | Merit Systems Protection Board                         |
| NAPA   | National Academy of Public Administration              |
| NASA   | National Aeronautics and Space Administration          |
| NATO   | North Atlantic Treaty Organization                     |
| NHTSA  | National Highway Traffic Safety Administration         |
| NIH    | National Institutes of Health                          |
| NIMBY  | "Not in my backyard"                                   |
| NMA    | National Motorists Association                         |
| NPR    | National Performance Review                            |
| NSC    | National Security Council                              |
| NYPD   | New York Police Department                             |
| OECD   | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OFPP   | Office of Federal Procurement Policy                   |
| OGE    | Office of Government Ethics                            |
| OMB    | Office of Management and Budget                        |
| OPA    | Office of Price Administration                         |
| OPM    | Office of Personnel Management                         |
| OSHA   | Occupational Safety and Health Administration          |
| PART   | Program Assessment Rating Tool                         |
| PhRMA  | Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America   |
| PPBS   | Planning-Programming-Budgeting System                  |
| RIF    | Reductions in force                                    |
| SCOTUS | Supreme Court of the United States                     |
| SEC    | Securities and Exchange Commission                     |
| SEPTA  | Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority     |
| SES    | Senior Executive Service                               |
| SSA    | Social Security Administration                         |
| SWAT   | Special Weapons and Tactics                            |
| TABOR  | Taxpayer Bill of Rights                                |
| TQM    | Total quality management                               |
| TSA    | Transportation Security Administration                 |
| TVA    | Tennessee Valley Authority                             |
| USDA   | U.S. Department of Agriculture                         |
| VA     | Department of Veterans Affairs                         |
| WSSC   | Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission                |
| ZBB    | Zero-base budgeting                                    |

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Donald F. Kettl** is professor and former dean in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland. He is also a nonresident senior fellow at the Volcker Alliance, the Partnership for Public Service, and the Brookings Institution.

Kettl is the author or editor of many books and monographs, including *Escaping Jurassic Government: How to Recover America's Lost Commitment to Competence* (2016), *The Politics of the Administrative Process* (2015), *System under Stress: The Challenge to 21st Century Governance* (2014), *The Next Government of the United States: Why Our Institutions Fail Us and How to Fix Them* (2008), and *The Global Public Management Revolution* (2005). He has twice won the Louis Brownlow Book Award of the National Academy of Public Administration for the best book published in public administration. In 2008, Kettl won the American Political Science's John Gaus Award for a lifetime of exemplary scholarship in political science and public administration. He was awarded the Warner W. Stockberger Achievement Award of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources in 2007 for outstanding contributions in the field of public-sector personnel management.

He holds a PhD in political science from Yale University. Prior to his appointment at the University of Maryland, he taught at the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, the University of Virginia, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is a fellow of Phi Beta Kappa and the National Academy of Public Administration.

Kettl has consulted broadly for government organizations at all levels in the United States and abroad. He has appeared frequently in national and international media, including National Public Radio, *Good Morning America*, *ABC World News Tonight*, *NBC Nightly News*, *CBS Evening News*, CNN's, *Anderson Cooper 360*, and *The Situation Room*, the Fox News Channel, the *Huffington Post*, *Al Jazeera*, as well as public television's *News Hour* and the BBC. He is a regular columnist for *Governing* magazine, which is read by state and local government officials around the country. He chaired two gubernatorial blue-ribbon commissions for the Wisconsin state government, one on campaign finance reform and the other on government structure and finance. Kettl is a coshareholder of the Green Bay Packers, along with his wife, Sue.



# ACCOUNTABILITY



Brett Carlsen/Stinger

In March 2016, Flint Mayor Karen Weaver talked with residents about the continuing problems with the city's water system. The National Guard helped city officials distribute bottled water to residents struggling with lead-contaminated water.

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