

2.6 Expansion of Presidential Power



ESSENTIALS

1. A powerful president was foreshadowed in Federalist #70. Hamilton argued for an “energetic president.” Energetic presidents would be allowed to unilaterally respond to crises and emergencies. Certain events should not be subject to democratic deliberation.
2. Presidents fulfill a number of formal and informal roles. There is little agreement as to which roles are most important.

1. What is the main idea of this cartoon? [Write your response as a claim statement. Include a “because” statement]

2. Why did the Founding Fathers decide to put the power of the military in the hands of a civilian? Had their intent worked? Explain.

Federalist #70 (1788)

In Federalist #70 Hamilton turns to address the disputes targeting the U.S. President. Isn't an energetic president inconsistent with a republic? Hamilton postulated that we all could agree that a poorly executed government is a poor government. Therefore, creating a weak president would in fact be creating a weak government. An energetic president would be essential to the protection of the community against foreign attacks; for the steady administration of the laws; for the protection of property; for securing our liberty against the assaults of personal ambition. But what are the ingredients of an energetic president? In this essay Hamilton emphasizes the unity of the office. The U.S. presidency cannot be shared. To be truly energetic it must be held by one person. Later Hamilton would unpack the president's length of term, the adequate provisions of power and expected set of prerequisite skills. Under the Articles of Confederation there was no independent executive branch. The young government had little power to enforce its policies. The new constitution was written, in part, to address this weakness. In Federalist #70 Hamilton argues forthrightly that a king, perhaps, was too strong but a president just right.

Explain in your own words why a single president, the unity of the office, was important to our Founding Fathers? Would you still advocate for this today?

PRESIDENTIAL ROLES

Role CHIEF EXECUTIVE	Examples from two presidents
Role CHIEF LEGISLATOR	Examples from two presidents
Role CHIEF DIPLOMAT	Examples from two presidents
Role CHIEF of PARTY	Examples from two presidents
Role CHIEF of STATE	Examples from two presidents
Role COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF	Examples from two presidents

Rank the role #1 - #6. Most import #1, least important #6. Explain your rationale.

ARGUMENTATION ESSAY

Despite their fear of tyranny and the ills inherent to an autocratic monarch, the Founding Fathers created a president with unity of command. Assess the energetic presidency as created in our constitution and present an argument for why it should or should not be feared.

In your essay, you must:

- Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning.
- Support your claim with at least TWO pieces of accurate and relevant information. At least ONE piece of evidence must be from one of the following foundational documents – U.S. Constitution, Federalist 70, Federalist 78
- Use a second piece of evidence from another foundational document from the list or from your study of the electoral process
- Use reasoning to explain why your evidence supports your claim/thesis
- Respond to an opposing or alternative perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal