



Building a Legislative-Centered Public Administration: Congress and the Administrative State, 1946-1999

David Rosenbloom

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Before 1946 the congressional role in public administration had been limited to authorization, funding, and review of federal administrative operations, which had grown rapidly as a result of the New Deal and the Second World War. But in passing the Administrative Procedure Act and the Legislative Reorganization Act that pivotal year, Congress self-consciously created for itself a comprehensive role in public administration. Reluctant to delegate legislative authority to federal agencies, Congress decided to treat the agencies as extensions of itself and established a framework for comprehensive regulation of the agencies' procedures. Additionally, Congress reorganized itself so it could provide continuous supervision of federal agencies.

Rosenbloom shows how these 1946 changes in the congressional role in public administration laid the groundwork for future major legislative acts, including the Freedom of Information Act (1966), Privacy Act (1974), Government in the Sunshine Act (1976), Paperwork Reduction Acts (1980, 1995), Chief Financial Officers Act (1990), and Small Business Regulatory Fairness Enforcement Act (1996). Each of these acts, and many others, has contributed to the legislative-centered public administration that Congress has formed over the past 50 years.

This first book-length study of the subject provides a comprehensive explanation of the institutional interests, values, and logic behind the contemporary role of Congress in federal administration and attempts to move the public administration field beyond condemning legislative "micromanagement" to understanding why Congress values it.

2001 Louis Brownlow Award from the National Academy of Public Administration

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