

THE CABINET DEPARTMENTS

Article 2, Section 2, Clause 1: *The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.*

Each of the fifteen cabinet departments is headed by a secretary, except for the Department of Justice, which is headed by the Attorney General.

- All of the heads are **chosen by the President** and **confirmed by the Senate**
- Manage a specific policy area with responsibility further divided among various agencies
- Secretaries often develop a strong loyalty to their departments. They become closer to the department than to the President.
- Secretaries have varying levels of influence on presidential decisions
- Secretaries can be fired by the president

The fifteen cabinet departments, in order of creation, are:

- 1) State (1789)** - advises the president on foreign policy, negotiates treaties, represents the United States in international organizations
- 2) Treasury (1789)** - collects federal revenues, pays federal bills, mints coins and prints paper money, enforces alcohol, tobacco and firearm laws
- 3) Defense (1789)** - manages the armed forces, operates military bases
- 4) Interior (1849)** - manages federal lands, refuges, and parks, operates hydroelectric facilities, manages Native American affairs
- 5) Justice (1870)** - provides legal advice to the president, enforces federal laws, represents the United States in court, operates federal prisons
- 6) Agriculture (1889)** - provides agricultural assistance to farmers and ranchers, inspects food, manages national forests
- 7) Commerce (1903)** - grants patents and trademarks, conducts the national census, promotes international trade
- 8) Labor (1913)** - enforces federal labor laws (child labor, minimum wage, safe working conditions), administers unemployment and job training programs
- 9) Health and Human Services (1953)** - administers Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid Programs, promotes health care research, enforces pure food and drug laws
- 10) Housing and Urban Development (1965)** - provides home financing and public housing programs, enforces fair housing laws
- 11) Transportation (1967)** - promotes mass transit programs and programs for highways, railroads, and air traffic, enforces maritime law
- 12) Energy (1977)** - advances the energy security of the U.S. and takes care of the nation's nuclear security
- 13) Education (1979)** - administers federal aid programs to schools, engages in educational research
- 14) Veterans Affairs (1989)** - promotes the welfare of veterans of the armed forces
- 15) Homeland Security (2002)** - prevents terrorist attacks within the United States, reduces America's susceptibility to terrorism, minimizes damage and helps recovery from attacks that do occur