

1. In 1970, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was established in order to more effectively enforce federal environmental protection laws. As an independent agency within the federal bureaucracy, the EPA's mission is "to protect human health and the environment." Throughout its history, the EPA has supported the executive branch by enforcing legislation intended to regulate automobile emissions, increase household recycling, and ban the use of harmful pesticides.

Americans have debated how much flexibility the EPA should have to enforce and interpret existing law. Some prefer the EPA to have more flexibility in implementing laws so that it can better protect common interests like clean water and biodiversity. On the other hand, others claim that the EPA has too much flexibility in implementing laws, allowing the agency to impose unnecessary and burdensome regulations that hurt business, and that its flexibility in implementing policy should be limited.

Recent actions are consistent with this debate. For example, under one administration, the EPA interpreted existing environmental laws in new ways, further limiting toxic emissions from automobiles and power plants. However, under the following administration, the EPA implemented a narrower interpretation, which led to the rollback of recent restrictions in the name of free enterprise and limited government.

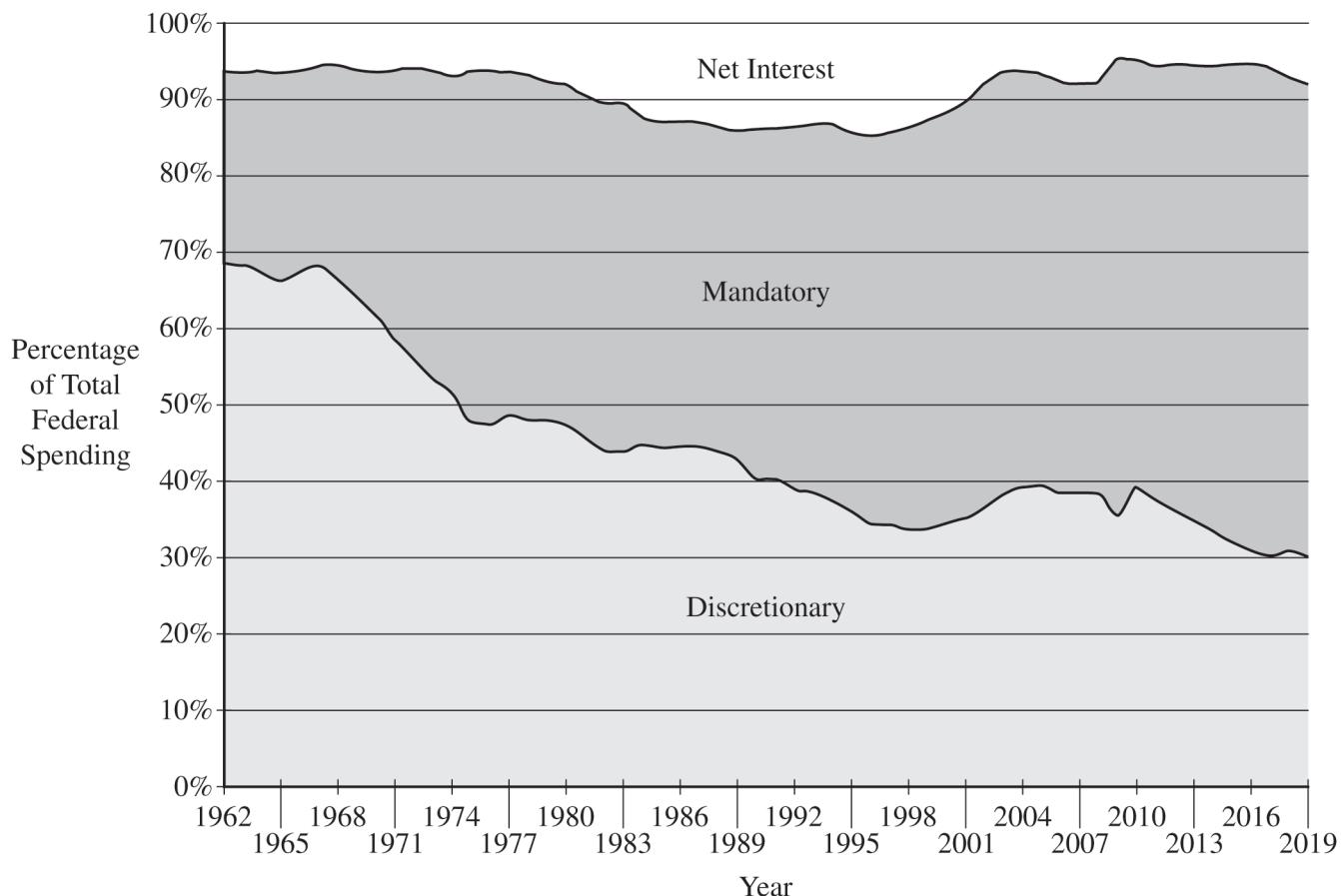
After reading the scenario, please respond to A, B, and C below.

- A. Describe the power that the EPA used in the scenario to change how it implemented environmental laws under different administrations.
- B. Explain how the power described in part A could be affected by the president.
- C. Explain how Congress could attempt to influence the actions of the bureaucratic agency in the scenario.

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**Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.**

## COMPOSITION OF FEDERAL SPENDING FOR FISCAL YEARS 1962–2019



Source: Tax Policy Center, 2020

2. Use the line graph to answer the questions.
- Identify the type of spending that comprised the greatest percentage of the federal budget in 2016.
  - Describe the difference in the trends in mandatory versus discretionary spending as illustrated in the graph.
  - Draw a conclusion about Congress's budgetary choices based on trends in the data.
  - Explain how an interest group might respond to trends shown in the graph.

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## Question 1: Concept Application

3 points

- A. Describe the power that the EPA used in the scenario to change how it implemented environmental laws under different administrations. **1 point**

**Acceptable descriptions include:**

- The EPA has the power to interpret legislation.
- The EPA used its discretion to make decisions about environmental policies.
- The EPA has rule-making authority to interpret and implement environmental laws.

- B. Explain how the power described in part A could be affected by the president. **1 point**

**Acceptable explanations include:**

- The president could limit the bureaucracy's power by ordering it to implement environmental laws consistent with the president's agenda.
- The president could pressure Congress to give the EPA discretionary authority which could help the president's agenda.
- The president could replace the head of the EPA which could affect how its power is used.
- The president could issue an executive order that gives the bureaucracy specific guidance on how to interpret a new law.

- C. Explain how Congress could attempt to influence the actions of the bureaucratic agency in the scenario. **1 point**

**Acceptable explanations include:**

- Congress could pass a law requiring the EPA to take a specific action.
- By using their powers of oversight and investigation, Congressional committees can ensure that the EPA is implementing legislation.
- Congress could adjust the EPA's funding, which would affect the agency's ability to pursue its goals.

Total for question 1 **3 points**