**Politics and Administration**

**According to Frank Goodnow, what is the difference between politics and administration? What new division of powers does Goodnow seek to replace the old separation of powers with? How will this affect the way Congress functions in the twentieth century and beyond? How does Goodnow describe the role of Congress in supervising the administrative branch of government?**

**What common themes are present in both Goodnow’s and Woodrow Wilson’s critique of the separation of powers (**[Constitutional Government in the United States](https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/constitutional-government-in-the-united-states/)**)? How would Goodnow’s vision for Congress advance the ideal Congress that Wilson outlines at the end of**[***Congressional Government***](https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/congressional-government/)**? How would Congress’s structure and activity change as a result of decreased lawmaking and increased oversight? Is this what happened in the twentieth century (**[Debate on repeal of the 21-day rule](https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/debate-on-repeal-of-the-21-day-rule/)**and**[Debate to Expand the Rules Committee](https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/debate-to-expand-the-rules-committee/)**)?**

##### Introduction

Frank Johnson Goodnow (1859–1939) was an established academic who served as the first president of the American Political Science Association. He was the first to teach administrative law, understood as the law governing the powers and conduct of administrative agencies, in the United States, a course he taught at Columbia University. Goodnow’s work offered a new understanding of the separation of powers. Instead of understanding the American constitutional system as a division of three powers, represented by the three branches of government (legislative, executive, and judicial), Goodnow suggested that there were only two: politics and administration. Politics was the expression of the popular will while administration was the implementation of that will. In light of this new division of power, he argued, Congress should merely express the will of the people in a general sense, and leave the specific rules and regulations that carry out the public will to administrators in the other branches. Goodnow therefore envisioned a very different Congress that did not address the details of policies but merely left itself to expressing the general goals that other parts of the government should pursue.

*—Joseph Postell*