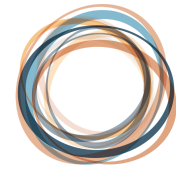


The Executive Branch

Discussion Guide



THE POLICY
CIRCLE®

Let's Review

At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. Use a timer as you go around the room. And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone brings a unique perspective. Listen first, focus on the facts, and stay curious.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Ensure everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment. Support and encourage participation from all. Remember: What's said in the Circle stays in the Circle.
- **Be focused and concise:** Anchor the conversation to the issue and the Brief. Respect the timekeeper. *Use the "Table-It" Rule for off-topic ideas—note them and revisit them in a future session.*

Let's Begin

Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a two-minute reaction to the Brief:

- Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this Brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global).
- What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the Brief? What matters most?

Spread the Word: Facts to share during your discussion

- The executive branch employs over 2.5 million federal workers and includes the president, vice president, 15 Cabinet departments, and dozens of agencies responsible for enforcing federal law.
- Presidential use of executive orders has increased dramatically, from 10–20 per presidency in the 19th century to roughly 200–300 in modern administrations, reflecting a shift toward faster, unilateral policymaking.
- Since George Washington, presidents have issued over 13,000 executive orders, which carry the force of law but can be reversed by future administrations, raising concerns about policy stability and long-term effectiveness.

Let's Discuss

Below are questions for the group to consider and discuss. For more questions, read our [Conversation Sparks](#) or choose your own.

- **Community:** Have you seen the executive branch in your state or municipality balanced by the judicial or legislative branches? Have you seen an overreach of executive power?

- **Government:** What are some advantages and disadvantages to the structure of the executive branch?
- **Business:** How have executive orders from presidents and agencies affected businesses?

Let's Act

1. **Take it local.** Talk to neighbors to identify how what happens in the executive branch at both the federal and state level affects your community. Identify opportunities to work with other community members in your area.
2. **Explore the impact of the executive branch in your community.** Explore [current executive orders](#) and see how they impact your state.
3. **Research your elected representatives' positions.** You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). State or municipality websites will also have information to contact leaders.
4. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).
5. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed** on your stance on the state of civic engagement in your local paper. Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present and share planned actions from group members. Post a meeting recap in your Circle on [the Community](#) and fill out this [form](#).
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to take action. View the [Conversation Sparks](#) for more ideas.