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POSC 350-50

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August 29, 2021

### What the office of the Presidency owes to Washington?

The office of the Presidency owes George Washington a great deal. Washington warned against partisan fighting, knowing when to say no to international fighting, and how to leave office gracefully. Washington is responsible for contributing to the United States government organizational structure, public administration, and set the precedent for political officials. Due to Washington's wise words of wisdom he continues to be the standard of a traditional president. He encourages Americans to showcase grit and pride in their country by having faith in their leaders. Despite never attending college or receiving a formal education, Washington is the only President to be elected unanimously to the office of the President of the United States.<sup>i</sup> George Washington is most know for his decision to step away from the presidency and not make himself a ruler or dictator of the United States of America.<sup>ii</sup>

Washington shaped the role and function of the Presidency by starting the tradition of electing cabinet advisors.<sup>iii</sup> Washington's cabinet only had four members: the attorney general, secretary of war, secretary of treasury, and secretary of state. This tradition has now grown to reflect sixteen members of the presidential cabinet. Washington created the cabinet of chief executive members because it brought together different political perspectives and set the precedent for how heads of executive agencies should interact with the President.<sup>iv</sup> During Washington's presidency he also set the tone for how a President should balance their social life

and political/professional life.<sup>v</sup> This included having dinner parties with invited guests, public meetings, and interacting with the general public. By having Washington set the precedent for social life of the president, today this has grown into allowing presidents to seem more relatable. For instance, the references such as, the saying you could sit back and relax and have a beer with President George W. Bush. Lastly, George Washington is known for issuing a proclamation for the first Thanksgiving celebration being marked as a formal holiday on November 26, 1789.<sup>vi</sup>

George Washington wrote his farewell address to the American people in 1796. Washington's Farewell address is one of the most celebrated speeches given by a President in American history.<sup>vii</sup> In his address Washington stated that whoever comes to hold the office of the Presidency should be a loyal and trustworthy individual. That the office of the presidency should be held in high regard and presidents should exemplify excellence through their service to the American people. Washington's farewell address is so significant because he informed the American people that he should not be among the individuals considered for Presidency after his second term in office. In his speech he reassured and instilled confidence in the American government by telling citizens it was time for everyone to move on.<sup>viii</sup> In his Address he taught future American Presidents how to say goodbye to a life of civil service with grace and confidence for America's bright future, "In the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire."<sup>ix</sup> He states, that while he is leaving the intense political scene he will never stop being a patriot and striving for this country.

Towards the end of Washington's address, he warns against bipartisanship fighting. This is important because he wanted the country to stay unified because this promotes a support system, peace abroad, safety of American citizens, economic prosperity, and the freedom of liberty. He encourages citizens to "cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable" country by

focusing on education, morality, family, and unity.<sup>x</sup> Also, he reinforces the notion to watch out for bipartisanship fighting between political parties. Washington states this in his address by telling citizens to pay close attention to “preservation with jealous anxiety and frowning upon every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest.”<sup>xi</sup> This point that Washington makes in his farewell address is one of the main reasons the office of the presidency owes him. Simply because Washington knew bipartisanship fighting was going to be an issue for Americans going forward, so he wanted to ensure that he emphasized unity and coming together as American citizens as the best way to keep a prosperous country growing. Washington’s Farewell Address is such a commendable and inspiring speech, since 1896 on George Washington’s birthday on February 22, 1962 there is an annual reading of his farewell address.<sup>xii</sup>

The office of the Presidency owes George Washington a great thank you for his honorable and tremendous service he did as the first President of the United States. He should always be remembered as the Father of this country due to his role in shaping the executive branch of government. His legacy lives on based on his heartfelt Farewell Address, precedent of selecting cabinet advisors, the balance between being President and a social life, and teachings against bipartisanship fighting.

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<sup>i</sup> “Ten Facts About Washington’s Presidency, Mount Vernon.

<sup>ii</sup> Nick Tasler, “Three Decisions that Defined George Washington’s Leadership Legacy,” Harvard Business Review.

<sup>iii</sup> “Ten Facts About Washington’s Presidency, Mount Vernon.

<sup>iv</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>v</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>ix</sup> “Transcript of President George Washington’s Farewell Address, Our documents.

<sup>x</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>xi</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>xii</sup> *Ibid.*,