Chapter 17 – Domestic Policy

Chapter Learning Objectives
After reading this chapter, students should be able to:

- Summarize the stages of making public policy.
- Analyze the century-long debate surrounding the U.S. health care system and the 2012 health care reform that produced near-universal coverage.
- Explore Social Security’s complex financial structure, the pressures it faces as baby boomers begin to retire, and the implications for policy making.
- Compare and contrast U.S. policy goals of energy security and environmental protection.
- Describe federal intervention and strategies to improve U.S. education and discuss the tension such federal policies have created with the states.

Chapter Summary
Chapter 17 opens with a Perspective that compares the reform of the Dutch healthcare system to the reform of the U.S. health care system. It then moves into a discussion about how public policy is made, followed by an overview of the steps from formation to implementation. The remaining sections of the chapter cover three additional key policy areas: Social Security, Energy and the Environment, and Education. The authors examine the history of each policy area and analyze the challenges to reform.

Chapter Outline
I. Perspective
   a. Must Policy Solutions Reflect a Nation’s Uniqueness?
   b. How does the highly fragmented decision-making system in the United States affect public policies?

II. Making Public Policy
   a. An Idealized Model of Policy Making
      1. Agenda Setting
      2. Policy Formulation
      3. Policy Adoption
      4. Policy Implementation
      5. Policy Evaluation

III. Health Care
   a. Background
   b. Problems and Solutions
      1. Basic Design
      2. Access
      3. Quality
      4. Costs
   c. Politics

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d. Picture Yourself looking for a Doctor on the Canadian-U.S. Border

IV. Social Security
   a. Background
   b. Problems and Solutions
      1. Changing Demographics
      2. The Gap Between Benefits and Revenue
      3. Policy Alternatives
   c. Politics

V. Energy and the Environment
   a. Background
   b. Problems and Solutions
      1. Dependence on Imported Oil
      2. Clean Coal
      3. Nuclear Power
      4. Inefficient Electrical Grid
      5. Consumer Attitudes

VI. Education
   b. Background
   c. Problems and Solutions
      1. Gaps in Achievement
      2. Unequal Funding
   d. Politics

VII. Why Are We the Way We Are? . . . And Why Does It Matter?
   a. Fragmented Decision Making
   b. Preference for Market Solutions
   c. Difficulty of Long-Range Planning

Key Terms

Accountability (p. 621) – education policies that hold educators individually or collectively responsible (or accountable) for the progress made by students.

Agenda-setting (p. 597) – stage in the policy-making process where officials identify the problems that government needs to address.

Baby boom generation (p. 609) – millions of Americans born between 1946 and 1964 whose approaching retirement poses financial problems for Social Security and Medicare.

Cap and trade system (p. 619) – strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage technological innovation by allowing industries to emit carbon dioxide and to buy and sell pollution permits.

Cost of living adjustment (COLA) (p. 608) – automatic increase in benefits paid by Social Security to retirees to keep pace with rising prices.

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De facto segregation (p. 623) – racial separation in schools that results from the private decisions of citizens on where to live.

Delegation (p. 599) – reliance by elected officials on career bureaucrats to provide the details needed to translate broad policy goals into specific actions.

De jure segregation (p. 623) – racial separation in the schools that results from official policies of states or localities.

Energy security (p. 613) – the ability of the United States to meet its own energy needs.

Entitlement program (p. 601) – programs such as Medicare and Social Security, in which benefits are provided to all citizens who meet eligibility qualifications established by law.

G.I. Bill (p. 621) – federal education program following World War II that paid the college tuition fees of former servicemen and women.

Greenhouse gas (p. 614) – several gases emitted by human consumption of fuels that retain solar heat rather than allowing it to radiate back into space, therefore producing global warming.

Issue briefs (or white papers) (p. 598) – discussions of public problems and possible solutions developed and released by non-governmental groups.

Negative view of government (p. 597) – a perception that government actions intrude on the privacy and individual rights of citizens.

No Child Left Behind (p. 621) – Bush education reforms adopted by Congress in 2011 that monitored student progress toward mastery of state-defined math, reading and science standards.

Pay for performance (p. 622) – education reform that links teachers’ pay to the academic progress of students in their classrooms.

Policy adoption (p. 599) – stage in the policymaking process in which officials decide whether action will be taken and what that action should be.

Policy evaluation (p. 599) – final stage in the policy-making process in which the programs put into place are achieving the desired goals.

Policy formulation (p. 598) – stage in policymaking process in which government officials and non-government activists identify solutions to address the nation’s problems.

Policy implementation (p. 599) – programs or regulations designed to achieve the goals identified in legislative statutes.

Positive view of government (p. 597) – a perception that government actions are necessary for citizens to realize their full potential.
Public assistance program (p. 601) – policy that provides help to beneficiaries who meet a means test – that is, whose incomes are low enough for them to qualify to receive benefits from public sources.

Public policy (p. 597) – products of political pressures and governmental decision making that result in governmental action or inaction that affects the lives of citizens.

Regulated multi-payer system (p. 603) – health care systems where government regulates private health insurance companies that reimburse for medical services provided to citizens.

Rugged individualism (p. 597) – widespread belief in the United States that citizens must provide for their own needs rather than rely on government to do so.

Single-payer system (p. 603) – health care system in which the government collects revenues and pays the providers for services delivered to citizens, as in Canada and the United Kingdom.

Social insurance program (p. 607) – government program such as Social Security or Medicare that spreads the risk of income loss or illness across a broad population rather than requiring each individual to bear the risk alone.

Social safety net (p. 601) – the collection of policies designed to meet the needs of poor and disadvantaged citizens in a nation.

Universal health care (p. 600) – policies ensuring that all citizens of a nation receive adequate health care.