

FEDERALIST 70

ALEXANDER HAMILTON

from *The U.S. Constitution: A Reader*, pp. 345-351

To prevent the president from becoming monarchical, Anti-Federalists recommended a plural executive, shorter terms, and a one-term limit. Publius argues for the presidency as structured in the Constitution, and explains the necessity of an energetic executive.

MARCH 14, 1788

THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT FURTHER CONSIDERED

There is an idea, which is not without its advocates, that a vigorous executive is inconsistent with the genius of republican government. The enlightened well-wishers to this species of government must at least hope that the supposition is destitute of foundation; since they can never admit its truth, without at the same time admitting the condemnation of their own principles. Energy in the executive is a leading character in the definition of good government. It is essential to the protection of the community against foreign attacks; it is not less essential to the steady administration of the laws; to the protection of property against those irregular and high-handed combinations which sometimes interrupt the ordinary course of justice; to the security of liberty against the enterprises and assaults of ambition, of faction, and of anarchy....

There can be no need, however, to multiply arguments or examples on this head. A feeble executive implies a feeble execution of the government. A feeble execution is but another phrase for a bad execution; and a government ill executed, whatever it may be in theory, must be, in practice, a bad government....

The ingredients which constitute energy in the executive are unity; duration; an adequate provision for its support; and competent powers.

The ingredients which constitute safety in the republican sense are a due dependence on the people, and a due responsibility....

Alexander Hamilton, "No. 70: The Executive Department Further Considered," in Clinton Rossiter, ed., *The Federalist Papers* (New York: Mentor, 1999), 421–29.