

Essay Topic and Objective:

You will be watching two 50 minute documentaries: The Storm and Coronavirus Pandemic in order to complete this essay.

1. The Storm: Hurricane Documentary

2. Coronavirus Pandemic Documentary

Federalism Overview: Considered together, Hurricane Katrina and Covid-19 both produced policy disasters in the United States that were both unnecessary and linked to federalism. These challenges produced by nature raise the question of whether certain disasters are beyond the capacities of state and local government.

Objective: While watching these films, the central theme to take away from these videos is a better and more comprehensive understanding of Federalism, through real life evidence and explanation. Critically analyze each of the elements and consequences of each different national disaster, based on different level of government's responses, actions. Leadership, communication processes, and decision-making. Despite, both Hurricane Katrina and Corona Virus being deemed as "national emergencies", the power organization resulted in vastly different responses by each level of government's leadership (across all levels: federal, state and local).

Introduction to Federalism: State and Local governments are the first line responders to crisis. The institutions encompass not only the national government and the American states, each with their own distinctive histories, but extend down to the local level of counties, cities, smaller communities, and special-purpose entities such as school districts. Support and opposition for Federalism rests on government leadership, power, decision-making, and response to national disasters. Response is a geographic and constitutional matter of design. The principles underlying federalism create a power system where multiple levels of government (local, state, and federal) coexist in an organization of power that is both exclusive and shared, depending on the event at hand. Though the federal government has a vital role to play in advancing national priorities through the powers enumerated to it by the U.S. Constitution, our founders recognized long ago that many of the challenges our citizens face can best be addressed at the state level. The Constitution set forth means for strengthening national government's power, intended to establish a more perfect union (Preamble). Federalism would be the new organization of power, between local, state and federal U.S. government, in order to the remedy weaknesses caused by the Articles of Confederation.

Principles of Federalism

- Limited government
- States' rights (10th amendment)

Goals of Federalism:

- Foster cooperation

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Goals of Federalism:

- Foster cooperation
- Prevent Federal Intrusion into State
- Protect State's utility as "laboratories" of democracy

Central Themes to Focus on and Think About

- comparisons and discussion of struggles between local,
- state and federal levels of government according to how federalism has manifested into a power tug-of-war in authority
- division of power
- division of duties and responsibilities
- division of expectations (citizens)
- financial obligations
- purpose of a government according to creation and constitutional existence
- communication confusion in expectations
- ignorance of rules and exclusionary application
- boundaries, overlap, and limitations

Hurricane Katrina: The Storm Introduction and Background

The preparations made in advance of the storm. Hurricane Katrina's impact on the nation, "The Storm" chronicles over 40 years of federal responses to Gulf Coast hurricanes and their effectiveness. The teaching activities are designed to help students evaluate how government helps citizens in times of crisis and examine how prepared students and their communities are for future natural disasters. Although the program and featured lesson plan focuses on the impact of Katrina on New Orleans, it is important to remind students that many communities on the Gulf Coast were devastated.

Coronavirus: Topic Introduction and Background The rapid spread of novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) across the United States has been met with a decentralized and piecemeal response led primarily by governors, mayors, and local health departments. This disjointed response is no accident. Federalism, or the division of power between a national government and states, is a fundamental feature of US public health authority. Current government's responses are reactive in the United States, rather than enabling policymakers to get ahead of the crisis.

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Prompt:

Apply what you learn from the video, to discuss key topics and questions, outlined in the prompt; show case to me what you learned, explaining how your understanding of the intricacies in the power distribution that exists under American system of government, has become enhanced. Focus, on articulating what you learned, by applying what you saw to address what I have asked to critically focus on, during your viewing. Use your voice. I have provided the platform and safe environment for students to participate in personalized, value added, political experience, whereby critical examination of current political issues and topics, result in structured and scholarly academic exchange and debate.

Identify an example of one goal and an example of one challenge federalism presented in each event (i.e. one for each Hurricane Katrina and Coronavirus). Evaluate the evidence to explain what you perceive to be the challenges of federalism compared to necessity or benefits of individualized crisis response. What principle of federalism do you believe to be the most important to meeting the goals of the United State's ideals in democracy, representation, and majority rule.

Helpful Resources and Links

- FEMA official govt Twitter @FEMA

Reflective Writing Assignments

Criteria

Ratings

Pts