

insights

TYPES NOT MAPPED YET April 06, 2023 | TTR not mapped yet | Christopher T. Murray

Statement of Administration Policy

Executive declarations outlining an official administration position on legislation under consideration in Congress.

We Go Together

Statements of Administration Policy (SAPs) are produced by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which is part of the Executive Office of the President at the White House. SAPs provide either an endorsement of or objection to particular legislation and, if in the latter category, can be accompanied by a veto threat. Not every bill garners a SAP. Presidents may use SAPs to foreshadow another type of executive pronouncement, known as [signing statements](#), which differ from SAPs in that signing statements are issued at the time a bill is signed into law (and generally raise constitutional questions on their applicability).

There Are Worse Things I Could Do

The first statement of administration policy occurred during the Reagan Administration as a way to express opposition to the [Interstate Highway Funding Act of 1985](#). President Clinton issued over eight hundred SAPs, with most of those coming during his second term as he faced divided government. Usage of SAPs was highest in the late 1980s and 1990s. However, [research](#) indicates their use related to high-stakes legislation has increased over time.

Tears on My Pillow

President Biden's OMB has already released 150 SAPs, with many focusing on [major legislation](#) at the heart of our current [culture wars](#). None has received more attention than the February 2023 SAP expressing opposition to the Senate's [disapproval resolution](#) of the DC Council's decision to approve the Revised Criminal Code Act of 2022. This SAP helped Congress to swiftly pass the resolution with President Biden signing it on March 20. Progressive Democrats were outraged because their party is often vocal in their support for DC Statehood. But the Biden Administration made clear that their concern for the DC Council's decision to overhaul the city's criminal code took precedent.

With the Biden Administration once again facing divided government, President Biden may follow his predecessors by using SAPs with increasing frequency to signal the White House's position on major legislation.

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