

Federal Law Enforcement

Federal Law Enforcement

A Primer

SECOND EDITION

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Preface

The increasing importance of federal law enforcement in today's society cannot be overstated. Criminal justice is primarily addressed in the scholarly literature at the local level, despite the significance of federal law enforcement. This book provides an overview of federal law enforcement, with a particular focus on the more prominent federal law enforcement agencies. The need for such a book stems primarily from the increased emphasis on federal-level criminal justice following the 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States, the significant student interest in federal law enforcement careers, the increasing number of academic programs offering courses in homeland security and federal law enforcement, and the void in the literature regarding federal law enforcement.

The organizational structure of federal law enforcement changed following the terrorist attacks against the U.S. in 2001. Among the notable changes in federal law enforcement was the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The DHS plans, coordinates, and integrates U.S. government activities pertaining to homeland security. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (the legislation responsible for creating DHS) transferred all or part of 22 existing federal agencies to DHS. The significance of this change is evidenced in the DHS surpassing the Department of Justice as the federal department employing the greatest percentage of federal officers with arrest and firearms authority. In addition to the reorganization of federal agencies, there has recently been an increase in the hiring of federal agents and projections of substantial growth in the coming years.

Students studying criminal justice are often interested in careers in federal law enforcement. However, most criminal justice programs structure their curriculum around crime and justice at the local level. In turn, one could make the argument that greater scholarly emphasis in this area is needed, particularly in the form of updated and recent reading material. Among other things, the 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States highlighted the need for greater cooperation among federal law enforcement agencies and prompted these agencies to bulk up their forces with additional agents. These additional agents, many of whom have yet to be hired and are currently enrolled in colleges and universities across the country, should be versed in the nature, structure, and responsibilities of federal law enforcement agencies.

The federal government is the United States' largest employer with almost three million employees working both domestically and abroad in over 2,000 different occupations. From a law enforcement perspective, federal law enforcement agents and officers are found in roughly 100 federal departments, independent agencies,

and sub-agencies. Many students are familiar with the more popular federal law enforcement agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) or the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). However, there are many other federal agencies that have law enforcement responsibilities, such the U.S. Park Police, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and the U.S. Supreme Court Police.

This book attempts to partly address the void in academic literature regarding federal law enforcement. It does so by: 1) expanding reader knowledge of the more popular federal law enforcement agencies; 2) introducing readers to numerous lesser-known federal law enforcement agencies; and 3) exposing readers to the history and nature of federal law enforcement in general. Chapters in this book which focus on specific federal law enforcement agencies are organized in a similar manner to one another to ensure consistency with regard to coverage. Particularly, each agency-specific chapter begins with an overview of the agency, followed by examination of the agency's history, organization, personnel, and functions.

In sum, students and others will come away from this book with a thorough understanding the federal law enforcement community in the United States today, as well as an appreciation for its history and a sense for what might lie ahead in its future.