



**THE EXPANSION AND MANAGEMENT OF EXECUTIVE POWER AND THE ROLE  
OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS IN THE UNITED STATES, 2001 – 2017**

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As exclusive holder of executive power, the President of the United States bears the constitutional responsibility to ensure faithful execution of the law. Yet since George Washington's administration, the president has adopted additional outlets to exercise power towards influencing national policy. Among the most well-known of these is the executive order. Executive orders allow presidents to impose sweeping change on the executive branch, without the need of explicit Congressional approval. Recent presidents have arguably made use of executive orders for their own purposes, to achieve major policy goals when legislative means fail. But in doing so, has the presidency as an office overreached in its constitutional authority to enforce the law through such actions? By assessing for content beyond administrative directions, connection to the president's political agenda, and applicability of expansive theories of executive authority, this thesis examined Executive Order #13199, part of George W. Bush's faith-based initiative, and Barack Obama's DACA program for overreach into legislative activity. Executive Order #13199 qualified as an example of executive overreach, especially for connection to President Bush's political agenda and applicability of Unitary Executive Theory. DACA only partially qualified, as the program contained only administrative directives in response to an issue President Obama faced while in office but many points of Unitary Executive Theory also applied to this case study. From conclusions drawn, this paper also gave implications on growing unilateral executive power within the United States. This thesis established that when presidents use executive orders for their own policy priorities, going beyond administrative issues, their unilateral actions usurp the Constitution's lawmaking process.