



## **SECTION V**



# **Tennesseans in National Government**



## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the state's rich political heritage, Tennesseans have played important roles in shaping the character of our nation's government. Three presidents — Jackson, Polk, and Johnson have called Tennessee home. Many other elected and non-elected offices have been held by Tennesseans as well. Albert Gore Jr. served as vice president; former Senator Howard Baker served as Republican leader of the U.S. Senate and White House chief of staff under President Ronald Reagan; current Senator Lamar Alexander served as secretary of education under President George H. W. Bush; former Senator Bill Frist served as majority leader of the U.S. Senate; Cordell Hull served as secretary of state under Franklin Roosevelt; Jo Byrns served as speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and there have been many others.

Today, Tennesseans remain influential in all levels of the federal government. This has proven to be an asset for the people of the state, as the federal government has assumed an increasing role in the many facets of state government. Over one-third of the state's annual budget is derived through federal programs. Individually, many Tennesseans are employed by the U.S. Government. Others rely on benefits received through the Social Security System, the Veterans Administration, and numerous other federal programs.

The value of having fellow Tennesseans in national government is important to Tennessee both as a state and individually.

Members of Congress also carry out a vital role for Tennesseans in the federal government. Members of Congress are not only responsible for making federal law and overseeing the administration of the U.S. Government, but they are heavily involved in assisting citizens in dealing with federal agencies as well. Much time is spent by the members and their staffs in handling constituents' requests.

The congressional delegation also is vital to the generation of the state government. Since in many areas federal law determines the way in which state government must operate, the interactions between state officials and members of the Congress are essential in providing the most effective and economical government services possible.