

reform so energetic as to overcome congressional antipathy. Senator Pendleton's bill to introduce the merit system, which had been pending for nearly two years, was passed by the Senate on December 27, 1882, and by the House on January 4, 1883. The importance of the act lay in its recognition of the principles of the reform and in its provision of means by which the President could apply those principles. A Civil Service Commission was created, and the President was authorized to classify the Civil Service and to provide selection by competitive examination for all appointments to the service thus classified. The law was essentially an enabling act, and its practical efficacy was contingent upon executive discretion.