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Bureaucratic Control Still Growing

AS centralization of government in Washington has increased, states rights and local government have steadily diminished.

Two of the most objectionable aspects of this trend are the numerous federal bureaus and agencies with authority to make rules that have the effect of law, and the withholding of federal funds to force local governments to comply with them.

This procedure takes on the appearance of "economic blackmail", and often becomes ridiculous.

The City Council of Marietta, Ohio, didn't want to join a federal flood insurance subsidy program, because they were afraid building restrictions would discourage construction. Members decided to join after they were told the town would be unable to get flood insurance or other federal aid in case of flood, which sometimes occurs at Marietta.

The issue was so hot that the council members drew straws to see which four members would vote for joining and which three could vote against the federal subsidy program.

"We feel we don't need (building) requirements that stringent, but the federal government had us over a barrel," said the council president. The federal government, meaning Congress and the bureaucrats, has the entire country over a barrel.

A lively issue right now in Oklahoma is whether the federal Department of Transportation (DOT) can compel the Highway Patrol to require all but 30 per cent of the motorists to obey the 55 mph federal speed limit. DOT has proposed a compliance quota as a condition for states to receive road-building money.

The Legislature is creating an ad-

visory committee whose task will be to keep the state in line with federal corrections grant guidelines, so that matching funds for prisons won't be shut off.

The state Employment Security Commission recently filed suit to settle questions about who is in charge, claiming that millions of dollars in federal funds might be lost if the question was not settled. The question was a political dispute.

Legislators and state officials were working furiously near the end of the session to pass a state "certificate of need" bill for health services, not because of urgent health problems but because officials were afraid if they didn't have such a law, they might lose some federal funds.

Schools and colleges are subservient to the bureaucrats, in addition

to federal courts. Dr. Garland Godfrey, retiring president of Central State University, said "It would be great if we could find a way not to have to depend on federal funds. They hold the threat over our heads that if we do not comply with their rules, then our federal funds will be cut off."

Case histories of this kind could be cited by the scores, dealing with welfare, water pollution and many other essentially local matters. The governmental costs are huge, but in addition, the regulations add billions of needless dollars to costs of doing business and to costs of consumer purchases yearly.

The bureaucrats are still clamoring for more. It's time for the public to start demanding less of such controls.