

Harold J. Krent

*Federal Agency Ombuds: The Costs, Benefits, and Countenance of Confidentiality*

52 Admin. L. Rev. 17 (2000)

Abstract by Cara T. Grayer

In this article, Professor Krent discusses the role of ombuds as well as the benefits and risks of ombuds in a federal agency. This article originated from discussions as a part of a consultant project with the Coalition of Federal Ombuds. Federal agencies have increasingly employed ombuds after learning from the significant benefits that corporate America and foreign governments have experienced. Federal agencies use ombuds to work with agency employees and private parties to resolve agency-related problems before they escalate. In this article, the author provides an abbreviated summary of the increasing use of ombuds. The author extensively discusses how the Federal Records Act and record-keeping requirements affect federal agency ombuds. Finally, the author explores the risks and harms that flow from retaining records and disclosure. The article concludes with the author's argument for potential legislative reform.