

Constitutional Principles



Limited Government

- belief that a gov'ts powers should be limited - prevent gov. from having too much power
 - the rule of law: everyone must obey the law, even those who rule
- protects against abusive government
 - People have rights against gov.
- majority rule is not always acceptable
 - prevents abuse by factions
 - Small groups of people who try to take all the power
- Constitution listed powers not given to the government and rights that are to be guaranteed.

Checks and Balances

-system designed to have the separate parts of government watch over each other

• One branch can block actions of another branch to keep them from having too much power

-Executive

• President can veto Congress' laws

• Nominates Supreme Court justices

-Legislative

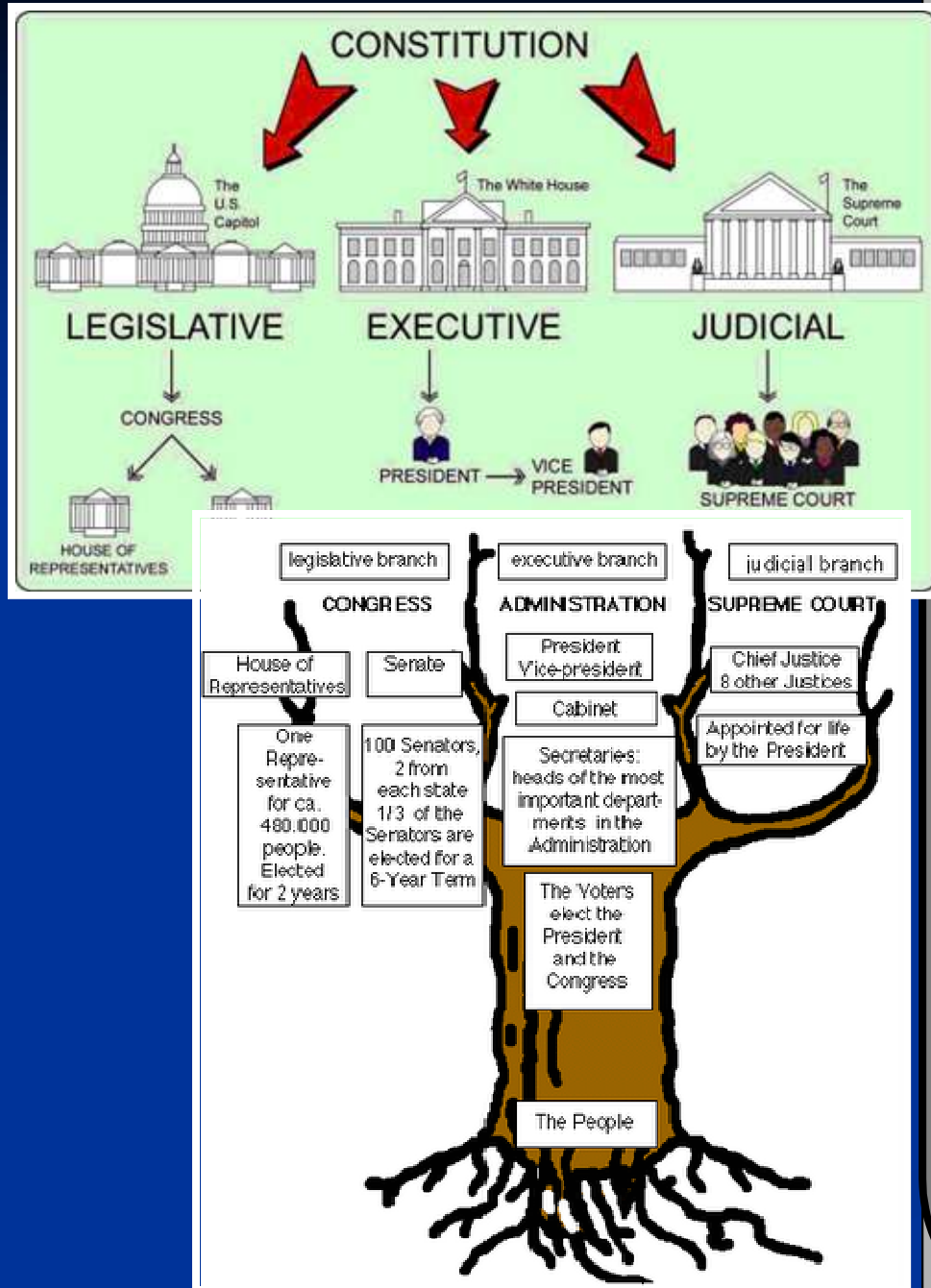
• Can override Presidential vetoes

• Approves Presidential appointments

-Judicial

• Rejects unconstitutional laws

• Rejects unconstitutional treaties



Checks and Balances in the Federal Government

Powers

Checks on Powers

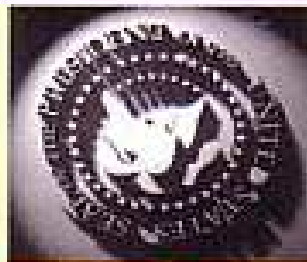
- Passes bills into laws
- Can pass laws over the president's veto if two thirds of the Congress approve the law
- Approves appointments of federal court judges



The Congress

- President can veto bills.
- The Supreme Court can rule that a law is unconstitutional.

- Can approve or veto laws
- Carries out the laws
- Appoints federal court judges



The President

- Congress can pass laws over the president's veto by a two-thirds vote.
- Congress can impeach and remove the president for high crimes or for misdemeanors.
- Senate approves the president's appointments to the federal courts.

- Interprets the meaning of laws
- Can rule that laws passed by Congress and actions taken by the executive branch are unconstitutional



The Supreme Court

- Congress (or the states) can propose an amendment to the Constitution if the Supreme Court rules that a law is unconstitutional.
- Senate can refuse to approve the appointments to the federal courts.
- Congress can impeach and remove a federal judge from office.

Separation of Powers

- philosophy that the best government is one where the functions of governing are divided.
- Each branch of government has its own duties and responsibilities
- keep the individual parts from becoming abusive
- Keeps each branch from gaining too much power
- executive
- Makes sure that the laws are being followed by all people
- legislative
- Makes the laws people will follow
- judicial
- Interprets the laws and makes sure that they are fair

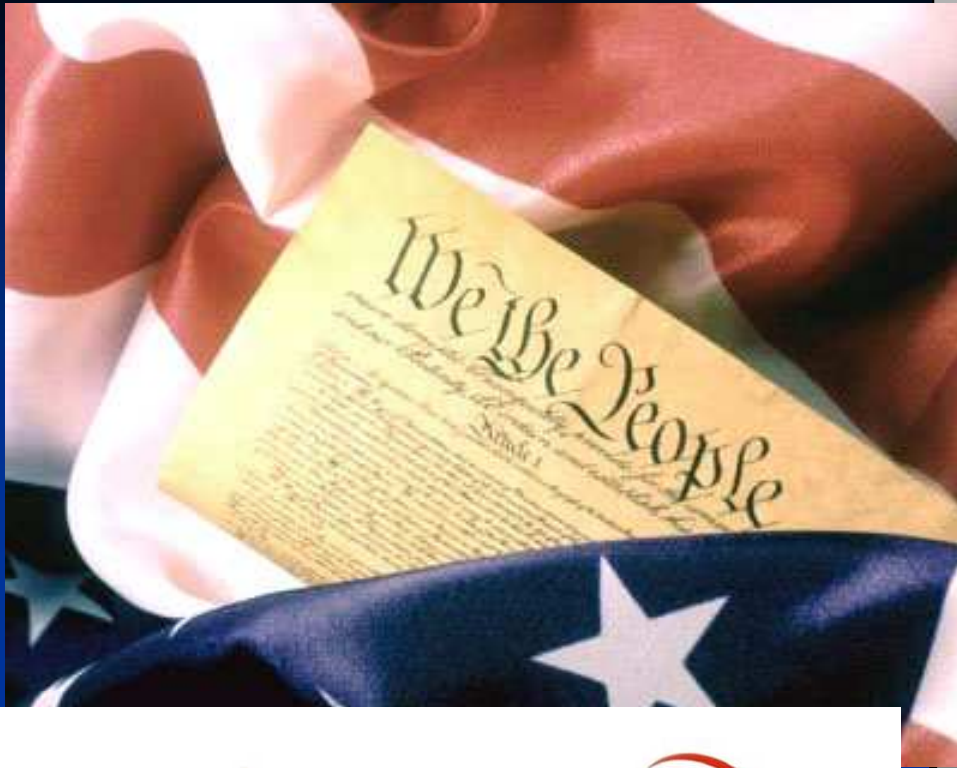


The U.S. Constitution separates the governing powers of the three branches:

Legislative – Makes Laws

Executive – Enforces Laws

Judicial – Uses Constitution to justify laws, punishes lawbreakers



Popular Sovereignty

• the right of the people to rule themselves by voting

Power to rule comes from the consent of the governed - social contract

direct democracy

- history of town meetings to practice self gov't

Mayflower Compact, New England still

representative democracy

- carried out through elections

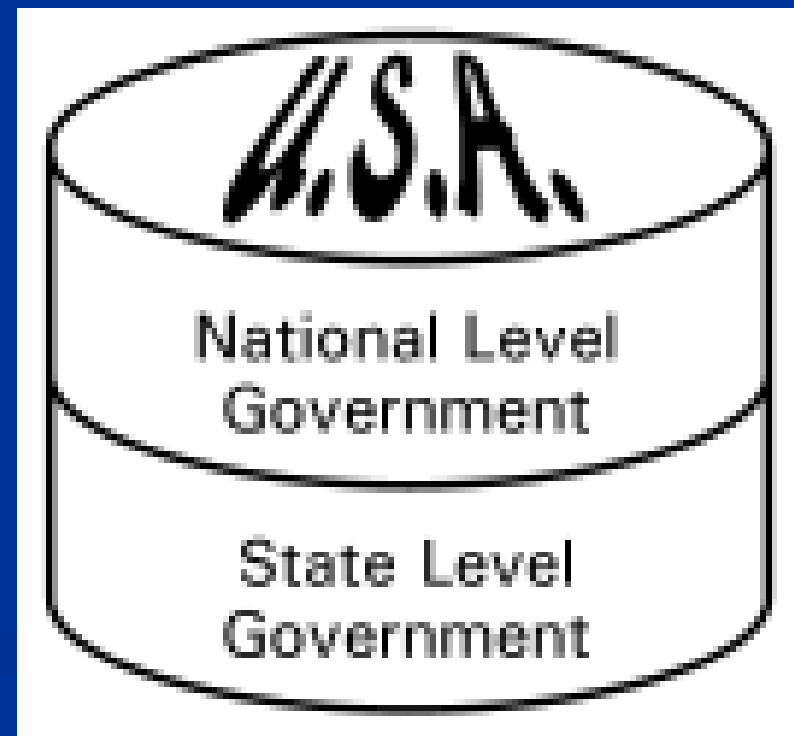
- elected representatives rule on our behalf

- President, Congress, etc.
- Makes America a republic

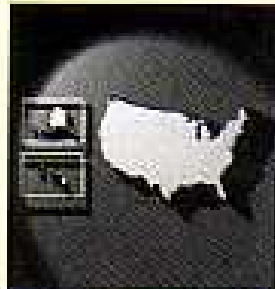
Federalism

- Federalism

- system of two or more governments that operate together and share powers over citizens (federal, state, local)
- Multiple governments operating at the same time, federal is supreme
- gives greater control to the governments closest to the citizen
- local
- Make ordinances the community must follow, laws impact directly
- state
- Make statues the whole state must follow
- national
- Make laws the whole nation must follow



The U.S. Federal System



The Nation

The Federal Government has authority over the whole nation.

Major Powers

- Foreign Relations
- National Defense
- Trade Among the States
- Foreign Trade
- Money System



The States

State Government has authority over most affairs within the state's borders.

Major Powers

- Elections
- Education
- Police
- Public Building Programs
- Health and Safety
- Highways



Local Communities

Local Government has authority over the affairs of its community.

Major Powers

- Schools
- Police
- Fire Protection
- Libraries
- Zoning and Building Codes
- Parks and Playgrounds
- Sewage Systems
- Public Utilities
- Streets and Traffic



Enumerated Powers

- Enumerated, delegated, expressed, exclusive

- these are the names given to powers that are given to the Federal government by the Constitution

- Only the federal government can do them (President, Congress, Supreme Court)

- declare war, make peace, make treaties, naturalization and citizenship, immigration, printing currency, regulate interstate commerce, postal system...

Concurrent Powers

- Concurrent powers

- powers that are shared by the different levels of government
 - Both the federal and state (and sometimes local) governments can do them
- making laws, enforcing laws, borrowing money, taxing, provide for welfare and safety of citizens





Reserved Powers

- Reserved Powers

- 10th Amendment, powers just for the states (states' rights)

-these are powers that are **given to the state governments** under the Federalism system

-state commerce, education, local government, control voting, welfare and safety of citizens