

United States of America Government & Constitution

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Early American History

1607: Colonists land in Jamestown



1619: African Blacks brought to Jamestown, beginning of Slavery in the Virginia colony

1636: First University founded in colonies (Harvard College)

1773: Boston Tea Party



1775-83: Revolutionary War (American War of Independence)

1776: July 4th, Declaration of Independence is signed

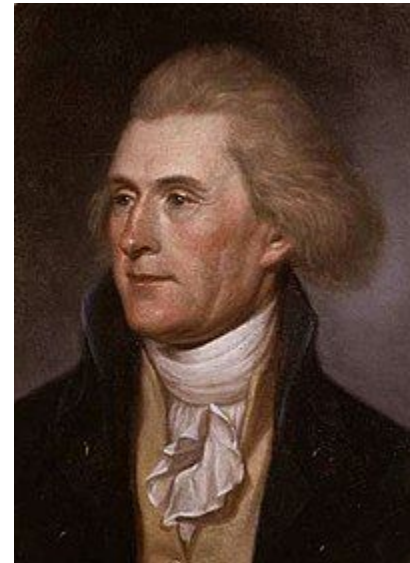
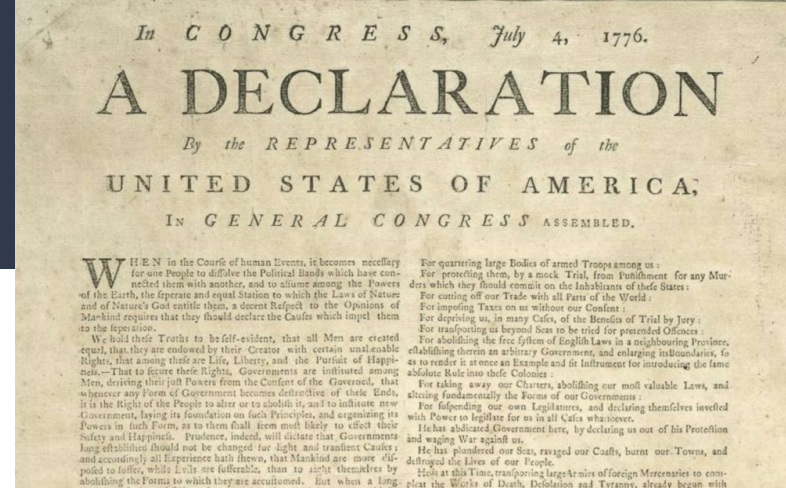
1788: Constitution is Ratified

1789: George Washington is inaugurated as the first President



Declaration of Independence

- Written by Thomas Jefferson (future President)
- Signed on July 4th, 1776
- The ultimate break up letter
 - **“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”**
- 13 Colonies were already at war with Great Britain, but said that they were now officially independent
 - New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia



From 13 to 50 States

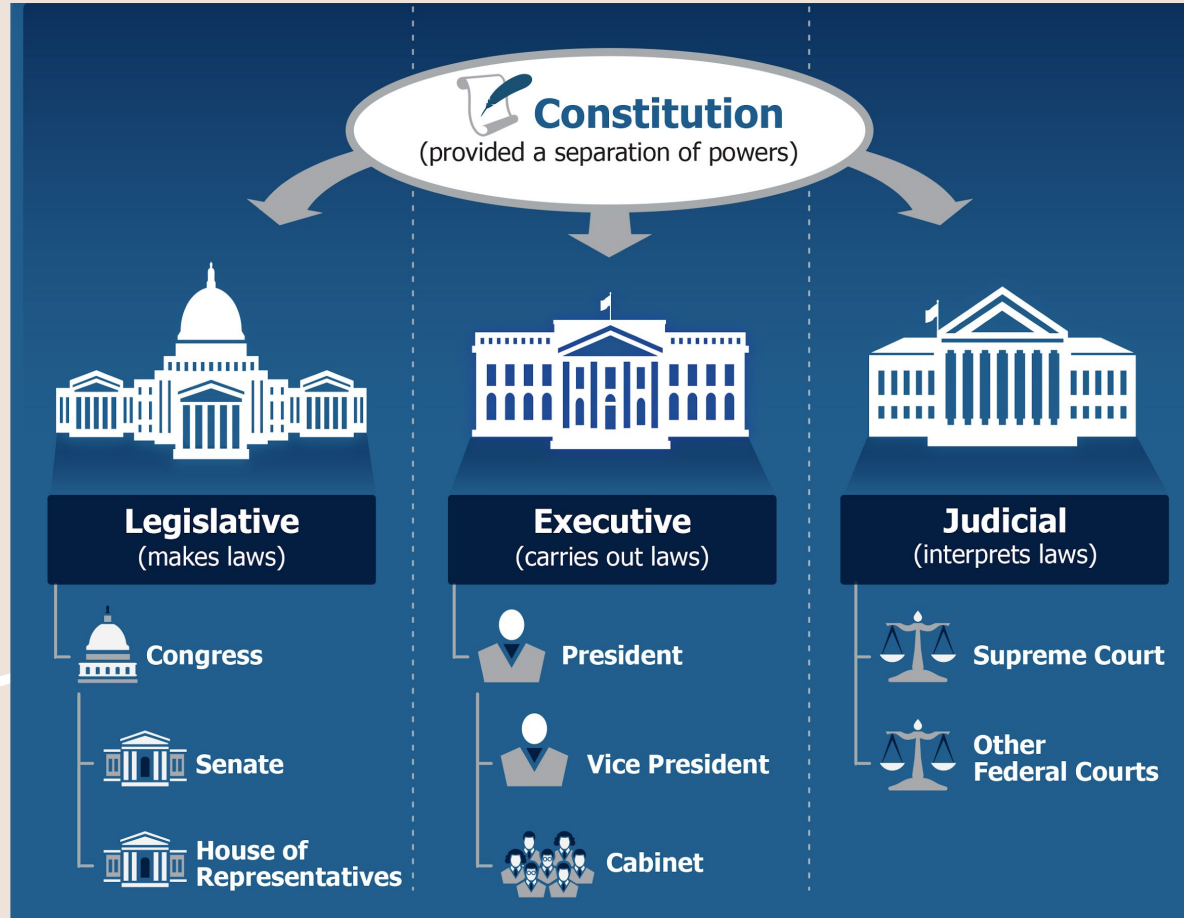


Constitution

- **Oldest** constitution still in use in the world
- Written by the **Founding Fathers**
 - George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison
- Explains the **basic rights** of citizens and the **organization of the new government**
 - 7 Articles
 - 27 Amendments
 - First 10 are known as the **Bill of Rights**
- Signed on September 17, 1787
- Ratified on June 22, 1788



Branches of Government = Checks and Balances

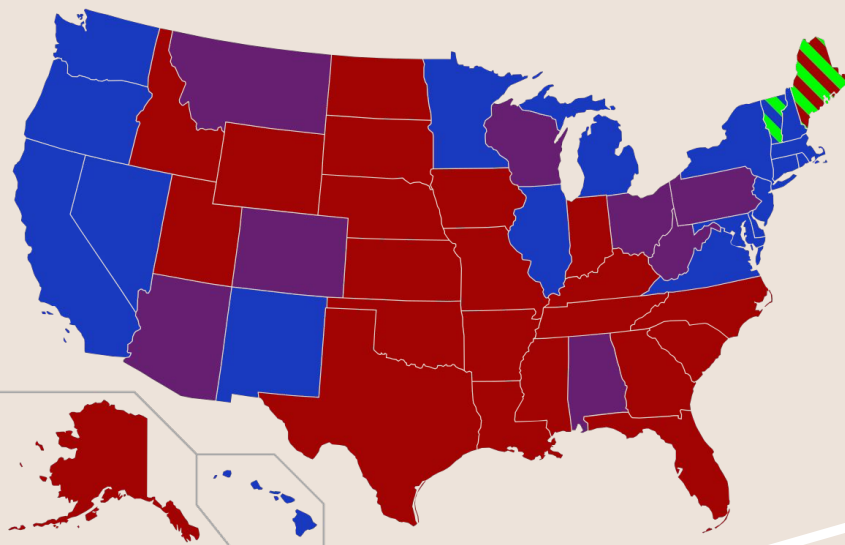


Federal versus State Powers

- Constitution divided **Federal** and **State** Government
- Each State has their **own government** with their **own constitution**
- The Constitution describes what the Federal Government is allowed to do -- **everything else** is left for the states to decide
- The Federal Government decides disputes **between states**
- Examples:
 - Marijuana



Equal and Proportional Representation



Senate

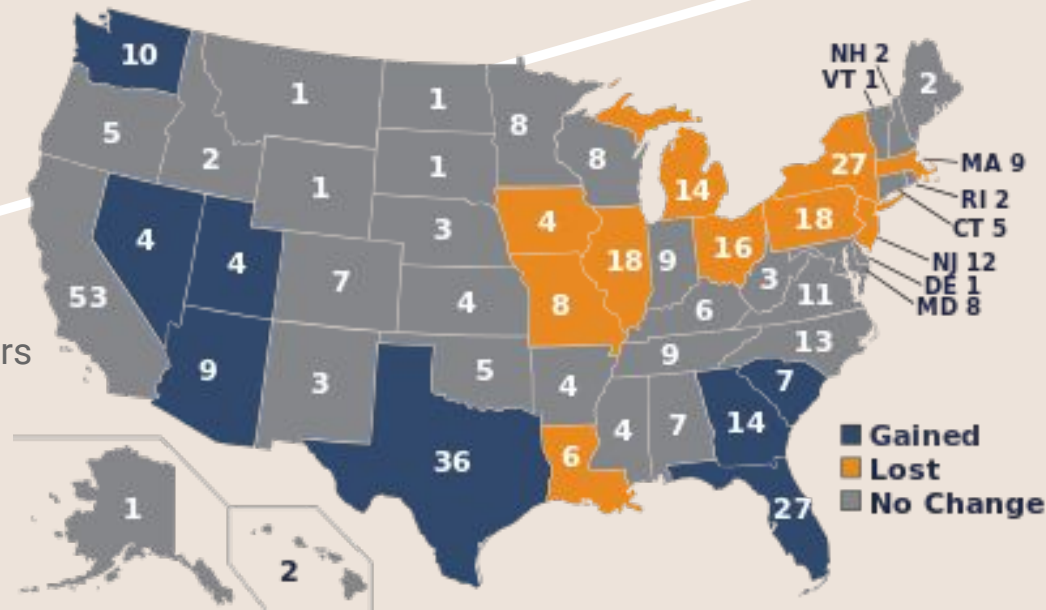
Each state elects 2 Senators (100 total) every 6 years

- Red: 2 Republican
- Blue: 2 Democrat
- Purple: 1 Republican, 1 Democrat
- Green stripes: Independent

House of Representatives

Number based on State Population

- Determined by Census (every 10 years)
- Total of 435
- Elected every 2 years
- Will change in 2020





- Sign or veto legislation
- Command the armed forces
- Ask for the opinion of the Cabinet
- Convene or adjourn Congress
- Grant pardons
- Receive ambassadors

Executive Powers

Judicial Powers

- **Supreme Court**
 - 9 Justices who **serve for life**
 - Appointed by current President, confirmed by Congress
 - Can declare laws **unconstitutional**
- Example:
 - Gay Marriage
 - On June 26, 2015, SCOTUS legalized same-sex marriage in all 50 states

