



## Roles of Executive Branch

### Executive - Carries Out Laws

The executive branch is composed of the President, Vice President, and Cabinet members.

#### President

- The President is the head of state, head of the U.S. government, and the commander-in-chief of the U.S. military.
- The President serves a four-year term and can be elected twice, serving a maximum of eight years.
- The President can veto legislation created by Congress and nominates heads of federal agencies.

#### Vice President

- The Vice President supports the president but also acts as the presiding officer of the Senate.
- If the President is unable to serve, the Vice President becomes president.
- The Vice President can be elected and serve an unlimited number of four-year terms as Vice President, even under a different President.

#### Cabinet

- The Cabinet members are nominated by the President and must be approved by the Senate (with at least 51 votes). They serve as the President's advisors and heads of various departments and agencies.
- The Cabinet includes the Vice President, and the heads of 15 executive departments — the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, State, Transportation, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs, as well as the Attorney General.
- The Cabinet's role is to advise the President on any subject relating to the duties of each member's respective office. For example, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development advises on issues related to housing and cities including public housing, homelessness, equal opportunity, etc.



## Roles of Legislative Branch

### Legislative - Makes Laws

- The legislative branch of the Congress is composed of two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- The legislative branch drafts proposed laws, confirms or rejects presidential nominations for heads of federal agencies, federal judges, and the Supreme Court, and has the authority to declare war.

#### Senate

- The Senate is the upper chamber of Congress, in which each state has two representatives regardless of population size.
- It has a total of 100 members.
- Each senator serves a 6-year term.
- There is no limit to the number of terms an individual Senator can serve.

#### House of Representatives

- The House of Representatives is the lower chamber of Congress, in which the number of representatives per state is determined by the state's population.
- It has 435 members.
- Each representative serves a two-year term and may be re-elected and, similar to the Senate, there is no limit to the number of terms an individual representative can serve.



## Roles of Judicial Branch

### Judicial - Evaluates Laws

The judicial branch of government is made up of the court system.

#### Supreme Court

- The Supreme Court is the highest court in the country.
- The court is composed of nine Justices, who are nominated by the president and must be approved by the Senate with at least 51 votes.
- There is a Chief Justice and eight Associate Justices.
- There are no fixed terms for Justices. They serve until their death, retirement, or removal in exceptional circumstances.
- The Justices of the Supreme Court can overturn unconstitutional laws.

#### Other Federal Courts

- There are lower Federal courts but they were not created by the Constitution. Congress established them around the country to handle federal business as the country grew, using power granted by the Constitution.

**POWER**

# Separation of Powers

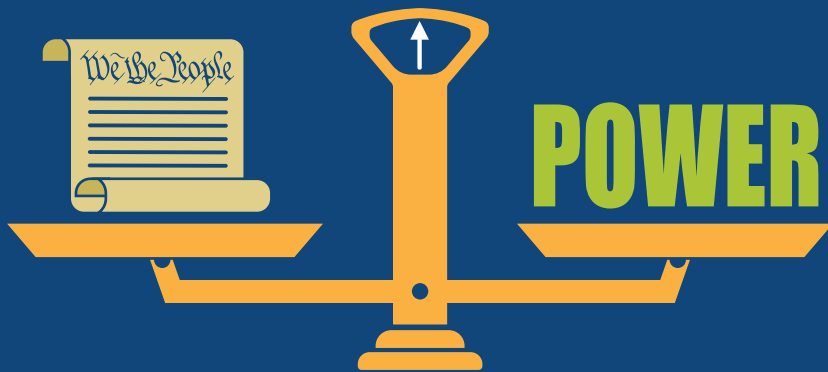
The Constitution of the United States divides the federal government into three branches to make sure no individual or group will have too much power:

- **Executive — Carries out laws**  
President, Vice President, Cabinet, most federal agencies.
- **Legislative — Makes laws**  
Congress, comprised of the House of Representatives and Senate.
- **Judicial — Evaluates laws**  
Supreme Court and other courts.

Each branch of government can change acts of the other branches:

- The **President** can veto legislation created by **Congress** and nominates heads of federal agencies.
- **Congress** confirms or rejects the **President's** nominees and can remove the president from office in exceptional circumstances.
- The **Justices** of the **Supreme Court** are nominated by the **President** and confirmed by the **Senate**. They can overturn unconstitutional laws.

This ability of each branch to respond to the actions of the other branches is called the system of **checks and balances**.



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