

What You Need to Know About the Legislative Branch

1. The jobs of the legislative branch of the government are the following:

- To make laws
- To impose and collect taxes
- To borrow and coin money
- To regulate commerce between the states and with foreign countries
- To declare war
- To raise and support an army and navy
- To establish federal courts below the Supreme Court
- To establish post offices
- To fix the standard of weights and measures
- To help individual constituents in dealing with the government

2. Define the following terms:

- ❖ **Legislature:** a deliberate body of persons, usually elective, who are empowered to make, change, or repeal the laws of a country or state; the branch of government having the power to make laws
- ❖ **Legislative:** known as parliament or Congress; the main job of the legislature branch is the make laws
- ❖ **Congress:** the legislative branch of government; represents the people

3.

The Two Houses of our Bicameral Legislature

	House of Representatives	Senate
Qualifications of Members	- members must be at least 25 years old - must be a citizen of the United States for at least seven years - must live in the state from which he or she is elected	- must be at least 30 years old - be a citizen of the United States for at least nine years - live in the state he or she represents
How they are Elected	- elected by the people	- elected by the state legislatures
How often elections are held	- elections are held every two years	- elections are held for every six-year term - however every two years, one-third of the senate is up for reelection
How each house is organized	-	-
How often Congress meets and where	- the congress has to meet twice in the two-year term - the Congress meets in the U.S capital in Washington, D.C - the meeting begin on the third day of January every	- the House of Representatives and the Senate meet in different chambers on opposite sides of the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

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	odd-numbered years -the meetings are called terms and they last two years with a recess, or break, during the summer	
Privileges of members	-they cannot be arrested when going to or coming from Congress, or while attending a session of Congress	- a member cannot be sued or punished for anything he or she might say in Congress
Congressional Record		

4. A **bill** is first introduced in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. The bill is then sent to the **committee**, where they could table (delay an action) amend (amend), or veto it. Then it is sent to the **subcommittee** to be looked over. If the committee passes the bill, it goes to that House of Congress to be voted on by all members. If it is a majority vote, it is then passed to the other house, the Senate. If the Senate passes the bill, it then goes to a **conference committee** to straighten out any differences. Finally the bill goes to the President who can either approve of it and sign it or veto (reject) the bill.

5. Laws between the federal government and the state government terms:

- **Expressed** –
- **Enumerated** – powers specifically granted in the Constitution
- **Delegated Powers**- powers that are given to the national government in Washington, D.C., such as the power to declare war
- **Implied powers** – powers not specifically stated in the Constitution
- **Elastic Clause** – Clause in the Constitution that allows Congress to pass laws necessary to carry out its enumerated powers
- **Reserved Powers** – are powers that only the state have, such as the power to create a school system
- **Denied or Prohibited powers** –
- **Concurrent Powers** – are powers that are shared between the national and state governments, such as the power to tax

7. Definition:

- **Constituents** – empowered to elect or designate; authorized to make or amend a constitution
- **Congressional District** – one of a fixed number of districts into which a state is divided, each district electing one member to the national House of Representatives
- **Lobbyists** – a person who tries to influence legislation on behalf of a special interest; a member of lobby

8. Terms & Definition:

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- **Revenue** –the income from a government from taxation, excise duties, customs, or other sources, appropriated to the payment of the public expenses
- **Appropriation of money** – authorized of a government unit to spend and handle money
- **Census** – an official enumeration of the population; a count of the people every ten years
- **Naturalization** –defined as making a foreign-born person a citizen of the United States
- **Bankruptcy**- occurs when a person builds his debts to a point far beyond his ability to pay them
- **Ex Post Facto** – a law that punishes people for a crime that was not a crime when they did it
- **Bill of Attainder**- an act of legislature finding a person guilty of crime and punishes them without a trial

The Living Constitution Notes:

- **The Preamble** – introduction that sets out to do two things; show legitimacy of the new government, or its right to rule. Second is to state why this government is being formed. (Ex: to improve the structure of the government, to create justice and peace within the nation, to protect the nation from outside attack etc.)
- **Congress** – set up by the framers of the constitution; known as the legislature, or law-making branch of government. Represents the people most directly.
- Congress is made up of two houses (The House of Representatives and the Senate)
- **House of Representatives** (the lower house) is based on population and is reelected every two years
- **The Senate** (the upper house) chosen by state legislatures; chosen for six year term
- Impeachment- bring charges of misbehavior in office against officials in other branches of government, including president
- **Checks & Balances** – to make sure that the president does not take too much power; the Constitution prevents any branch from dominating the others
- **Bill** – is an idea that a representative or a senator had that he would like to see become a law
- All bills for raising money-such as taxes-must begin in the House of Representatives.
- **Enumerated powers**- particular powers of the Congress; include the power to tax, to borrow money, and to set up courts.
- **Implied powers**- powers not specifically stated in the Constitution
- The **Chief Executive** or administrator of the nation is the President; responsibility to take care that laws b faithfully executed or carried out
- **Electoral college** – electors chosen by the states to elect the president and vice president
- **Succession** – order in which the office of president is filled if it becomes vacant before an election
- **State of the Union address**- it is a report to the other branches of government and to the people; its subject is the condition, or state, of the nation; the address includes the president's plans and policies for the year
- the federal courts have jurisdiction, or authority, only in certain kinds of cases
- the constitution gives the courts judicial power – the authority to decide cases involving disputes over the law or behavior of people
- **judicial review** – the authority to decide whether a law is constitutional

The legislative branch of the United States government or the Congress takes role of the most important job in the nation. Its major job is to make our country's laws. Representatives carry out the will of the people, or they are replaced during the next election. Laws are passed by a majority vote (over a half). The legislative branch of our Federal Government is called Congress – made of up the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Congress makes its own rules governing its meetings. It can expel or remove a member by a two-thirds vote.

House of Representatives:

- ✓ there are 435 representatives in the House
- ✓ based on the number of people, or population, in the state
- ✓ one representative for every 500,000

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- ✓ the term of office for a representative is two years
- ✓ a representative must be at least 25 years old, must be a citizen of the United States for at least seven years, and must live in the state from which he or she is elected
- ✓ the Speaker of the House is the presiding officer – selected by the members of the House is usually a member of the majority party –second in line to take over the presidency, after the vice president, in the event of an emergency
- ✓ sole power to begin impeachment proceedings against a government official
- ✓ the trial is carried out by the Senate

The Senate:

- ↓ has only 100 members; each state has only two senators
- ↓ each senator is elected of a six-year term, but every two years, one third of the senate is up for reelection
- ↓ chosen by the State Legislatures
- ↓ a senator must be at least 30 years old, a citizen of the United States for at least nine years, and live in the state he or she represents
- ↓ The Vice President of the United States is in charge of all meetings of the Senate
- ↓ President pro tempore (temporary president) – is third in line to take over the presidency if the event of an emergency
- ↓ The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court acts the judge
- ↓ Two thirds of the senators present must find the official guilty in order to remove him or her from office.

A Bill:

- a bill is an idea that a representative or a senator had that he would like to see become a law
- a bill may either start in the House of Representatives of the Senate, except for money bills which must start in the House
- The President can do the following with the bill:
 - could agree with the bill and sign it to become a law
 - the bill can also become law of the President does not respond to it within ten working days
 - if the president does not agree with the bill, he vetoes it
 - if the president does not sign the bill within ten days after Congress adjourns, the bill dies, known as a pocket veto