

U. S. CONSTITUTION STUDY GUIDE

I. Background: Declaration of Independence.

A. Year written: 1776

B. Authors: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, R. Livingston

C. Purposes:

1. 1st section: Announce intent to break away from England.
2. 2nd section: Provide “political rationale” / “logic” to justify independence.
 - a. Cites “**basic human rights**”
 - b. States governments are created to serve the people who create them.
3. 3rd section: List specific grievances / complaints against King George and Parliament.
4. 4th section: Cite attempts made by Americans to resolve their differences with British.
5. 5th section: Conclusion - The colonies assert their right to declare their independence.

D. Underlying Philosophy: “**LIBERTY**” (freedom) > “**order**” (laws, regulations)

E. Historical Perspective: The Declaration is **not a part / section of the Constitution**

II. History of the Constitutional Convention.

A. Background

1. Name the United States’ first document of government:

Articles of Confederation

___ 2. **Underlying Philosophy:** “**LIBERTY**” (freedom) > “**order**” (laws, government regulations)

___ 3. Features of the first “**national**” government:

- a. “**Confederation:**” association of states in which a “national” government has (**excessive OR limited**) powers.

b. **Structure:**

- 1) It had a “legislative branch” that could enact laws.
- 2) It **did not** include an “executive branch” that could enforce laws.
- 3) It **did not** include a “judicial branch” to interpret laws.

4. **Weaknesses** of the first national government under the Articles of Confederation:

- a. There was no way to enforce laws passed by the Congress (national legislature).
- b. There was no way to settle disputes between or among different states.
- c. There was no way to settle disputes between or among citizens of different states.
- d. Congress did not have the power to tax; Congress could only “ask” states to contribute money.
- e. **Both** the national government and the states could issue “currency” (money): this made it very confusing and difficult to conduct business transactions.
- f. Congress could not regulate trade between or among the states or with foreign nations.

B. The Constitutional Convention.

1. Date: Summer, 1787

2. Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

3. Purposes:

- a. **Original:** Consider amendments to the Articles of Confederation

- b. **Eventual:** Write an entirely new Constitution
- 4. "Consensus" or "Shared" feelings:
 - a. A stronger national government was needed.
 - b. Some method was needed to "control" this more powerful government.
 - c. The average citizen must be involved in the new national government but at the same time not have too much power.
 - d. **Underlying Philosophy:** "**ORDER**" (laws, government regulations) > "**liberty**" (freedom)
- 5. **Key Individual** at the Convention: James Madison of Virginia.
 - a. Known as the "Father of the Constitution."
 - b. Main **Contribution:** Proposals became the "agenda" / issues discussed at the convention.

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C. Key "Conflicts" and "Compromises.

Major Conflicts among Delegates

1. **Distribution of Power:** Who Does What?

2. **Representation** in the **Legislature.**

- a. States with **large** populations favored representation based on population.
- b. States with **small** populations favored equal representation for each state.

3. **Slavery, Representation and Taxation.**

- a. Views of **southern states:**
 - 1) Slaves should be counted to determine representation.
 - 2) Slaves should not be counted for purposes of taxation..
- b. Views of **northern states:**
 - 1) Slaves should not be counted to determine representation.
 - 2) Slaves should be counted for purposes of taxation.

"Compromise" Solutions to Conflicts

1. The Federal System :

- a. Reserved powers : those that remained with the states.
- b. Delegated powers : those that the states given / assigned to the new national government.
- c. Concurrent powers: those that would belong to **both** the states and the new national government.

2. The "**Great Compromise:**"

- a. Create a "**bicameral**" or (#) two branch or house legislature.
 - 1) **House of Representatives:** representation based on population
 - 2) **Senate:** each state would have (#) two members regardless of population.

3. **Compromise Solution:**

- (#) five slaves would count as (#) three whites for **both** representation and taxation.

4. The Slave Trade.

a. View of **southern states**:

The slave trade should not be ended.

b. View of the **northern states**:

Maybe this is the time to stop the slave trade.

5. Ratification Vote:

a. Option #1: “Unanimous?”

b. Option #2: “Majority?”

4. Compromise Solution:

The importation of slaves into the United States could not be prohibited (ended) for (#) twenty years.

5. Compromise Solution:

A “nine” - thirteenths vote:

a. **More** than a majority.

b. **Less** than unanimous.

III. Structure of the U. S. Constitution.

Section	Definition	Key Numbers
A. Preamble: <u>introduction and goals</u>		1. (#) <u>six</u> goals for new gov't
B. Articles: <u>original sections</u>		1. (#) <u>seven</u> in total
C. Amendments: <u>additions and changes</u>		1. (#) <u>27</u> to date 2. #1-10: <u>Bill of Rights</u>

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IV. Basic Principles of U. S. Government.

a) Amendment Process	e) Democracy	j) Republic
b) Checks and Balances	f) Federal Supremacy	k) Reserved Powers
c) Concurrent Powers	g) Federal System	l) Separation of Powers
d) Delegated Powers	h) Impeachment process	m) Elastic Clause
i) Judicial Review		
“g”	01. Format or “plan” for government in which powers are divided between a national (central) government and state governments.	
“d”	02. Powers, like declaring war, that belong only to the national (central) government.	
“k”	03. Powers, like setting marriage and divorce laws, that belong only to the states.	
“c”	04. Powers, like taxation, that belong to both the national (central) government and the states.	
“l”	05. The powers needed for governing are divided into separate legislative, executive, and judicial branches within any level of government (national or state).	

- “b”** 06. Each branch of government limits the powers of the other branches.
- “i”** 07. The accepted authority of the U. S. Supreme Court to rule on the “constitutionality” of both federal (national) and state laws.
- j”** 08. The technical name for the type of government in the United States, one in which voters elect representatives who, in turn, enact or pass laws.
- “a”** 09. Procedure for making changes in the U. S. Constitution.
- “h”** 10. Procedure for removing federal office holders from their government position / office.
- “m”** 11. Measure that allows the Congress to pass very specific laws (i.e. building aircraft carriers) in order to carry out its general duties / responsibilities (i.e. raise and maintain the nation’s armed forces).
- “f”** 12. The U.S. Constitution and federal laws have higher authority than state or local laws.

V. Basic Principles of Government: Clarifications and Elaborations.

A. Separation of Powers: Who Does What?

“L” - Legislative Branch

“L” 01. Make laws.

“E” 02. Enforce laws.

“J” 03. Decides the meaning of a law.

“J” 04. Decides if a law is constitutional.

“E” 05. Carries out U.S. foreign policy.

“E” - Executive Branch

“L” 06. Enacts (passes) taxes.

“E” 07. “Suggests” new laws.

“E” 08. Appoints federal judges.

“E” 09. Appoints federal administrators.

“L” 10. Removes federal officials from office.

“L” 11. Decides how tax money is spent .

“J” - Judicial Branch

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V. Principles of Government: continued

B. Delegated, Reserved, and Concurrent Powers: Who Does What?

“D” - Delegated Powers
Federal government
ONLY

“R” - Reserved Powers
States ONLY

“C” - Concurrent Powers
SHARED between
states and federal govt

“C” 01. Borrow money.

“D” 02. Coin / print money.

“C” 10. Establish courts.

“R” 11. Set marriage and divorce laws.

- R 03. Conduct elections.
- D 04. Make treaties with foreign nations.
- D 05. Declare war.
- C 06. Enforce laws.
- D 07. Establish armed forces.
- C 08. Collects taxes
- D 09. Regulate "interstate" trade (trade that crosses state borders).

- D 12. Set standard weights and measures.
- D 13. Create a postal system.
- R 14. Provides a system of education
- R 15. Regulate "intrastate" trade (within a state).
- C 16. Propose amendments to the Constitution.
- R 17. Ratify (approve) amendments.

C. Checks and Balances.

"Situation"

- 01. President vetoes bill passed by Congress.
- 02. Congress overrides a presidential veto.
- 03. Congress approves a presidential appointments to the Executive and Judicial branches.
- 04. President calls a special session of Congress.
- 05. Congress impeaches and tries the President.
- 06. The President "suggests" a new law.
- 07. Congress approves a treaty (an agreement with another country made by the President.
- 08. Supreme Court declares a federal law "unconstitutional."
- 09. Congress impeaches, convicts, and removes a federal judge.
- 10. President "pardons" (frees) a person found guilty in a federal court trial.
- 11. Congress and states pass a new J. amendment to overturn a Supreme Court decision.
- 12. President appoints a justice to the Supreme Court

Analysis: Who's Checking Whom? L? E? J?

- 01. "E" is checking "L."
- 02. "L" is checking "E."
- 03. "L" is checking "E."
- 04. "E" is checking "L."
- 05. "L" is checking "E."
- 06. "E" is checking "L."
- 07. "L" is checking "E."
- 08. "J" is checking "L" and "E."
- 09. "L" is checking "J."
- 10. "E" is checking "J."
- 11. "L and states" are checking
- 12 "E" is checking "J."

A. Official name: **Congress**

1. Key Feature: It is “**bicameral**” which means **it has two branches or houses**.

B. Basic Responsibilities:

1. Enact **laws**.

3. Create **federal courts**.

5. Admit new **states**.

2. Declare **war**.

4. Govern federal **territories**.

6. Set **naturalization**
(citizenship) require-
ments.

C. **Comparison: U. S. House and U. S. Senate.**

Concern	House of Reps.	Senate
1. # of members.	1. <u>435</u>	1. <u>100</u>
2. Representation for each state	2. Based on <u>census</u> : a population count taken every <u>ten</u> years.	2. (#) <u>two</u> per state.
3. How Selected.	3. Voters of a Cong. district .	3. Voters statewide .
4. Term of office	4. (#) <u>two</u> years.	4. (#) <u>six</u> years.
5. % elected every 2 years	5. (#) <u>100</u> %.	5. (#) <u>33</u> % (1/3).
6. Age requirement	6. (#) <u>25</u> years old.	6. (#) <u>30</u> years old.
7. Residency requirement	7. Live in <u>state</u> .	7. Live in <u>state</u> .
8. Presiding Officers	8. <u>Speaker of the House</u>	8. a. <u>Vice-President</u> b. <u>Pres. Pro-tempore</u>
9. Special (“Sole”) Powers / Responsibilities	9. a. <u>Impeach</u> (accuse) officials of wrong doing. b. Elect <u>president</u> when <u>Electoral College</u> fails to. c. Start all <u>revenue</u> (<u>tax</u>) bills.	9. a. Try (hear) <u>impeach-ment</u> cases. b. Approve presidential <u>appointments</u> c. Approve <u>treaties</u> (agreements with other nations)

D. **The Law - Making Procedure: Key Facts**

01. A “bill” is not a law. A bill is a “proposal” for a new law. A “new law” is a bill that “made it” through the law-

making procedure. All new laws were once bills. Most bills never become laws: they fail to successfully make it through the law-making procedure.

02. Anyone can suggest a bill but only members of Congress can formally or officially introduce bills in either the U.S. House or the U.S. Senate. Put another way, all 261 million+ Americans can suggest bills but only 535 individuals (the total number of House and Senate members) can introduce them in Congress.

03. After introduction in either the House or the Senate, all bills are labeled by subject matter and sent to a

specific House or Senate committee. These committees are made up of members of the House or Senate who are considered “experts” in a subject area. A committee can respond in one of four ways to bills. First, if the bill is viewed as well-written, the committee may approve it “as is.” A committee also can “amend” or make changes in a bill. The committee has as a third option the right to submit a substitute bill which proposes an alternative to the original bill. Lastly, a committee can veto or kill any

bill it views as weak or unnecessary. Committee play an important role in the passage of all new laws.

04. After a committee approves a bill, it is sent to the full House or Senate for debate. The full House or Senate also may pass, amend, substitute for or veto a bill. The passage or approval of a bill requires at least a simple majority vote. Once a bill passes in one branch of Congress it is sent to the other branch. The same “consideration” process is repeated in the other branch of Congress.

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D. Law-Making Procedure . . . continued

05. The law-making procedure requires the House and Senate to pass identical versions of a bill before it will sent to the President for further consideration. If the House and Senate pass different versions of a bill, then a House-Senate “Conference Committee” is created to try to write a compromise version. Compromise bills must be submitted to and approved (by simple majority vote) by both branches of Congress to continue through the law-making procedure.

06. Bills passed by Congress are sent to the President. The President has ten days to consider a bill. The President has three options. He/she may sign the bill into law. He/she may veto the bill to prevent it from becoming a new law. If the President takes no action, that is, neither signs nor vetoes, within the ten day consideration period, the bill will become law on day eleven provided the Congress is still in session. If Congress adjourns before the ten day consideration period is over and no presidential decision has been made, the bill is “dead.”

07. Bills vetoed by the President can still become laws if both branches of Congress formally vote to override the veto. A two-thirds or better vote is needed in both branches of Congress to override a presidential veto.

VII. The Executive Branch.

A. Members.

1. Mentioned in Constitution: a. President b. Vice-President

2. Cabinet :

a. Created out of need and continued by tradition .

b. Not mentioned in the Constitution.

c. Duties:

1) Help enforce laws. 2) Advise the President.

B. Terms:

1. President: a. (#) four years. b. (#) two full terms. c. Maximum of (#) ten years.

2. Cabinet: as agreed upon by president and cabinet member .

C. Duties of the President:

1. Supervise the enforcement of laws.

2. Commander in Chief of the armed forces .

3. Prepare a State of the Union message once a year.
4. Negotiate treaties with foreign nations.
5. Appoint federal judges and executive branch officials.
6. Recommends an annual federal budget.
7. Suggest bills and laws.
8. Approve bills.
9. Veto bills.

D. Presidential Succession.

1. 1947 Presidential Succession Act.

- a. 1st: Vice-President
- b. 2nd: Speaker of the House
- c. 3rd: President Pro-tempore of the U.S. Senate
- d. Cabinet members in the order their departments were established.

2. 25th Amendment

- a. Fills vacancies in the office of Vice-President. This person immediately goes to the top or head of the succession list.
- b. Number of appointed Vice-Presidents to date who went to the top of the list: (#) two

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VII. Executive Branch . . . continued

E. Election and Selection of Executive Branch members.

1. President:
 - a. 1st attempt: by Electoral College. If it fails, then
 - b. 2nd attempt: by the House of Representatives
 - c. Never by popular (peoples) direct vote!!!!!!
2. Cabinet:
 - a. Nominated by President.
 - b. Approved by Senate

3. Election Year Time Line.

- a. **Pre - November:**
 - 1) In each state, major parties nominate their candidates for positions as Presidential Electors (Electoral College)
 - 2) Nationally, major parties hold conventions (tradition) to officially nominate their presidential candidate.
- b. **November:**
 - 1) Voters in each state "technically" elect their state's presidential electors.
 - 2) **Important:** Candidate who receives the most popular votes (does not even have to be a majority) "wins" all the electoral votes.
- c. **December:**
 - 1) Presidential electors elected in November in each state go to their state capitals to cast their votes for president.
 - 2) Ballots are sealed and sent to the Congress in WDC.

- d. **January:** (next calendar year)
- 1) **Vice-President** opens and then counts the Presidential Elector ballots in the presence of **Congress**:
 A **majority** (**270/538**) vote is needed to win.
 - 2) If the Electoral College fails to elect a president, then the names of the top (#) **four** vote getters in the Electoral College will be sent to the **House of Representatives** which will elect a president by **majority** vote of the **states**, not members.

F. Key Electoral Vote Numbers.

1. Total of number of Electoral Votes nationwide: (#) **538**
2. "Formulas" for determining the number of Electoral Votes for each state:
 - a. # of **U.S. Representatives** + # of **U.S. Senators** = # Electoral votes
 - b. # of **U.S. Representatives** + 2 = # of Electoral Votes
3. Fewest Number of Electoral votes a state can have: (#) **three**
4. **Current "E" Votes:** IL = 22; WI = 11; IA = 7; MO = 11; IN = 12; CA = 54; NY = 33; TX = 32; FL=25
5. # of "E"Votes needed to win the Presidency in the Electoral College: (#) **270** (**simple majority**)

VIII. The Judicial Branch of Government.

A. The Federal Court System.

1. **Top:** The **Supreme Court**
 - a. (#) **nine** judges / justices since 1869 (fewest ever: (#) **six**; most ever: (#) **ten**)
 - b. possesses **Original Jurisdiction** (first hearing rights) in:
 - 1) cases involving disputes between **states**.
 - 2) cases involving other **countries**.
 - c. possesses **Appellate Jurisdiction** in that it can:
 - 1) "review" decisions of lower **federal** and **state** courts.
 - 2) exercise **Judicial Review**: rule on the **constitutionality** of federal and state **laws**.
 - d. **Most important power:** Has the final authority to interpret the Constitution.

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VIII. Judicial Branch

A. Federal Court System . . . continued

2. **Middle:** Federal **Appellate Courts**
 - a. Number: (#) **thirteen** courts with a total of (#) **thirty-nine** judges.
 - b. possess "appellate jurisdiction" in that they can "review" decisions of federal **district** courts.
3. **Bottom:** Federal **District Courts**
 - a. Number: (#) **eighty-nine** covering the U.S., WDC, Puerto Rico, Virgin Is., Guam & Marianas Is.
 - b. possess **Original Jurisdiction:** most federal cases **start** here.

B. Selection Process:

- a. Nominated by **President**.
- b. Approved by **Senate**.

C. Term of Office: Life Why? To remove judges from politics.

D. Removal:

1. Impeach and convict.
2. Resign.
3. Death.

IX. The Amendment Process and the Amendments.

A. The Amendment Process:

1. Step #1: Proposal

- a. by two-thirds (fraction) of the states.
- b. by two-thirds (fraction) of each branch of Congress.

2. Step #2: Ratification

- a. by three-fourths (fraction) of the states.

B. The Amendments:

1. Amendments #1 - 10: The Bill of Rights

- a. Purpose: protect individuals from the government.

b. Key Principles:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 01) Freedom of <u>Religion</u> | 10) <u>Prompt</u> and <u>Public</u> trials. |
| 02) Freedom of <u>Speech</u> | 11) Right to know <u>charges against you</u> . |
| 03) Freedom of the <u>Press</u> | 12) Right to "face" (know) <u>accusers</u> . |
| 04) Right to <u>Assemble</u> . | 13) Right to "compel" (force) <u>witnesses</u> |
| 05) Right to <u>Petition</u> . | to testify on your behalf. |
| 06) Right to "bare arms" (keep <u>weapons</u>) for purpose of militia service. | 14) Right to <u>legal counsel</u> (a <u>lawyer</u>). |
| 07) No forced <u>quartering</u> of troops in home in peacetime. | 15) Choice of a <u>jury</u> or <u>bench</u> trial. |
| 08) No illegal <u>searches</u> or <u>seizures</u> of property. | 16) No excessive <u>bail</u> . |
| 09) Do not have to <u>testify</u> against self in court. | 17) No <u>cruel</u> or <u>unusual</u> punishments. |

2. Amendments #11 - 27.

- a. #11 - Residents of another state or country cannot sue a state in federal court.

- b. #12 - Separate Electoral College ballots for President and Vice-President

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IX. Amendments

2. Amendments #11 - 27 continued

- c. #13 - Abolished slavery.
- d. #14 - Granted citizenship and accompanying rights to minorities.
- e. #15 - Prohibited discrimination in voting based on race or color.
- f. #16 - Congress was given the authority to enact income taxes.
- g. #17 - Direct election of Senators; by the people of a state rather than by state legislature.
- h. #18 - Prohibition: banned manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages.
- i. #19 - Gave women the right to vote.
- j. #20 - Set January 20 instead of March 4 as inauguration day for President.
- k. #21 - Canceled the (#) Eighteenth Amendment.
- l. #22 - Limits a person to (#) ten years total as president. (Two full terms and up to two years of someone else's term.)
- m. #23 - Residents of Washington D.C. (city) made eligible to vote in presidential elections. in
- n. #24 - States cannot enact poll taxes for voting.
- o. #25 - Vacancy in office of Vice-President will now be filled. **ALSO:**
Procedure for temporary transfer of presidential powers to Vice-President.
- p. #26 - (#) Eighteen year old can vote.
- q. #27 - Congress can enact but not accept pay increases during current session of Congress.

X. Flag of the United States.

- A. Three "colors:" 1. red 2. white 3. blue
- B. Three main "sections:" 1. stars 2. stripes 3. union (blue)
- C. Symbolism: 1. Stripes = the thirteen original colonies / states
2. Stars = the individual states
- D. Display Rules:
 - 1. Appropriate time of day: anytime
 - 2. Requirement for night-time display: should be lighted
 - 3. Appropriate occasions:
 - a. national holidays.
 - b. Historical occasions.
 - c. Near polling places on election days.
 - d. On days when school is in session.
 - 4. Placement Rules:
 - a. Highest when displayed flags of other nations, states, or cities.
 - b. In middle in a group of three.
 - c. On speaker's right on a stage.
 - d. "Blue" always in upper left.
 - 5. Symbolic Usages:
 - a. "Half-Staff:" mourning

- b. "Upside Down:" distress / danger
6. Proper Disposal: burning

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XI. Voting.

A. Types of Elections.

1. Primary elections: Nominate candidates for office.
2. General election: Elect public officeholders.
3. Referendum: a "Yes / No" vote on a specific proposal.

B. Election Dates:

1. Primary elections: anytime prior to general election. In March in Illinois.
2. General elections: First Tuesday after first Monday in November.

C. Voter Qualifications:

1. Age requirement eighteen
2. Citizenship requirement: a. native - born b. naturalized
3. Registration: Must be assigned a precinct (voting site) prior to an election.
 - a. Location: Near one's place of residence.
 - b. "Reregistration" is **not required** prior to each election: Only when one **changes** his/her **permanent** address.
4. Citizens serving time in prison (**can OR cannot**) vote.

D. Methods of "Australian Ballot" (secret ballot) voting:

1. Paper Ballot
 - a. Key requirements: two lines must 1) intersect and 2) be inside the box.
2. Machine Voting.
 - a. Key requirement: pull lever in front of a party's or candidate's name.
3. Punch Card Ballot
 - a. Key requirement: Use stylus to "punch" out numbered hole on ballot card.
 - b. Key point: This system currently is used in **suburban Cook County**.

E. Absentee Ballot.

1. If voters knows beforehand that he/she will not be able to visit their polling place on an election day,
he/she may vote **prior** to election day provided they obtain an "absentee ballot" from their local Board of Elections commission.

F. Voting Strategies:

1. "Straight" Ticket: voting for all the candidates of a specific party.
2. "Split" Ticket: voting for candidates from different parties in the same election.

XII. Current Officeholders:

- A. President: Barack Obama

- B. Vice-President: Joe Biden
- C. Speaker of the House: John Boehner: (R-Ohio)
- D. President Pro-Tempore of the Senate: Robert Byrd (D - WV)
- E. Chief Justice, Supreme Court: John Roberts
- F. Senior U.S. Senator from Illinois: Richard Durbin (D) since 1996
- G. Junior U.S. Senator from Illinois: Mark Kirk (R) since 2010
- H. U.S. Representative, (#) 8th District of Illinois: Joe Walsh (R)
- i. Governor of Illinois: Pat Quinn (D)

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Illinois Constitution Information Sheet

I. Introduction.

A. **Effective Date** of the current Illinois Constitution: **1970**

1. **Previous** Illinois constitutions: a. 1818-1848 b. 1848-1870 c. 1870-1970

B. **Structure: Two main sections**

1. **The Preamble:** states the **purposes** of Illinois state government

2. **The Articles: Fourteen (14)** in all

a. **1st - State of Illinois "Bill of Rights:"** twenty provisions / guarantees

b. **2nd - Separation of Powers:**

1) **Legislative Branch: The General Assembly** (bicameral: State House and State Senate)

2) **Executive Branch:** Governor and other state executive officials.

3) **Judicial Branch: State Supreme Court, State Appellate Courts, Circuit courts**

c. **7th - Home Rule Provision:**

All **municipalities** over **25,000** in population can automatically:

1) levy taxes

2) borrow money (go into debt)

3) license businesses

d. **14th - Amendment Procedure:**

Step #1: Proposal

By: 3/5 of each branch of the
General Assembly requesting
the people vote on the question:
Should a state constitutional

Step #2: Ratification

By the voters of Illinois in a state-wide
referendum election

convention be called?
Or: by 3/5 of each branch of the
General Assembly

II. Legislative Branch

A. Name: General Assembly

B. Required meetings: once a year

C. Structure: "Bicameral"

1. **State House of Representatives: 118 members**

2. **State Senate: 59 members**

D. Qualifications:

1. age: 21
2. residency: live in the legislative district one represents
3. citizenship: U.S. citizen

E. Terms of Office:

1. State Representative: **2 years**
2. State Senator: **4 years**; staggered elections: **one half** elected every **two years**

F. Responsibilities:

1. Enact laws
2. Checks and Balances: Can **override** a governor's **veto** by a **3/5's (60%)** vote

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III. Executive Branch.

A. Members

1. **Governor:** chief **executive officer** of the state
2. **Lieutenant Governor:** the state's **vice-president**
3. **Attorney General:** chief **legal officer** for the state
4. **Secretary of State:** official **record keeper** for the state
5. **Comptroller:** decides which bills will be paid with available money
6. **State Treasurer:** keeps **safe** and **invests** state's money; writes checks to pay the bills the
Comptroller tells him to pay.

B. Qualifications:

1. Age: 25 years old
2. Residency: 3 years in the state

C. Terms of Office:

1. **four years**
2. Elected in **even-numbered, non-presidential election years** (1998, 2002, 2006, etc)
3. **No limits** on **number to terms** that can be served (unlike the U.S. President).

D. Veto Powers of Governor: (Checks and Balances)

1. **Regular Veto**: can veto an entire bill
2. **Amendatory Veto**: governor can make **specific changes** in a bill after it has passed the General Assembly.
3. **Item Veto**: governor can **reduce** the amount of **money** appropriated in a revenue bill.

E. Veto- Override Rules.

1. Number of days governor has to consider a veto: **sixty (60)**

III. Judicial Branch

A. Structure

1. Top: **State Supreme Court (7 judges)** - hears final appeals of cases
2. Middle: **State Appellate Courts - reviews** decisions of state **circuit courts**
3. Bottom: **Circuit Courts** - general **trial courts**

B. Qualifications:

1. Education: Law degree
2. Registration: Licensed to practice law in Illinois
3. Residency: Live in the judicial district he/she represents

C. Terms:

1. **Key Point: Illinois judges are elected, not appointed.**
2. Supreme Court: **10 years**
3. Appellate Courts: **10 years**
4. Circuit Courts: **six years.**

D. Reelection: Retention Ballots

1. Judges must receive a **"YES"** vote from at least **60%** of the voters voting in the election.

E. Major Responsibilities:

1. Conduct trials involving state laws.
2. Interpret state laws.
3. Rule on the constitutionality of state laws (**checks and balances**).
4. State Supreme Court reviews decisions of lower state courts.