

**UNITED STATES  
CONSTITUTION**

# 7 Principles of Government

Republicanism

Separation  
of Powers

Limited  
Government

Popular  
Sovereignty

Federalism

Checks and  
Balances

Individual  
Rights

# Popular Sovereignty

- The power to rule comes from the **people**.
- “*Consent of the Governed*”
- The Constitution established popular sovereignty in the preamble,  
“We the People. . . establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”



# Republicanism



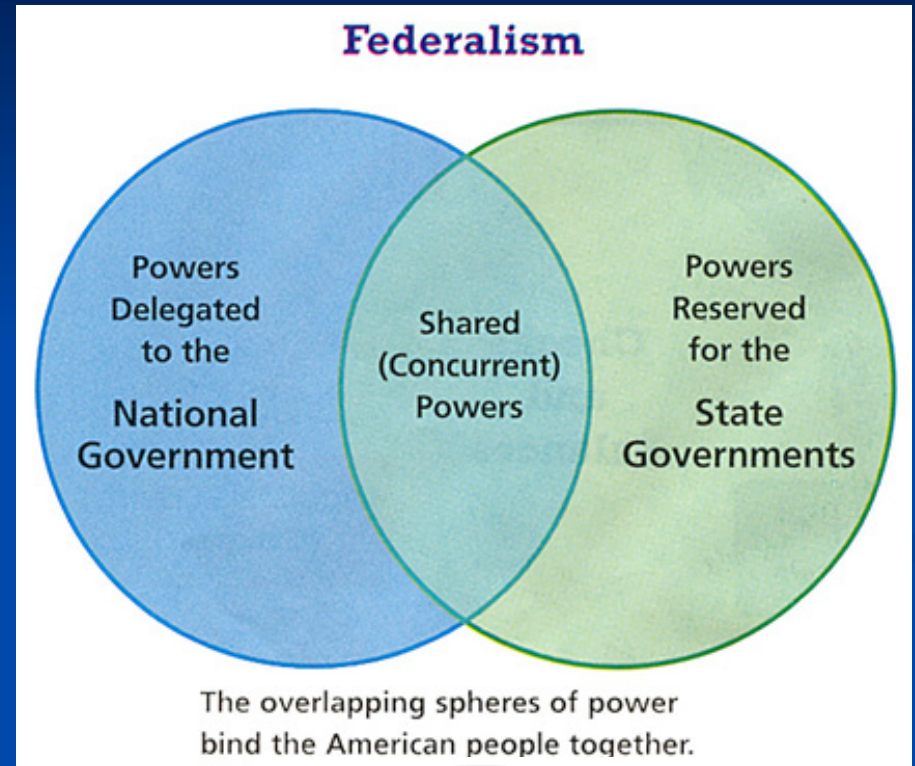
- Republicanism is based the belief that people exercise their power by voting for their political representatives.
- Article 4, Section 4, of the Constitution also calls for every state to have a "republican form of government."
- A **republic** is a form of government in which the supreme power rests in the body of citizens entitled to vote and is exercised by representatives chosen directly or indirectly by them.
- In a republic, people elect others to represent them in the government.

# Federalism

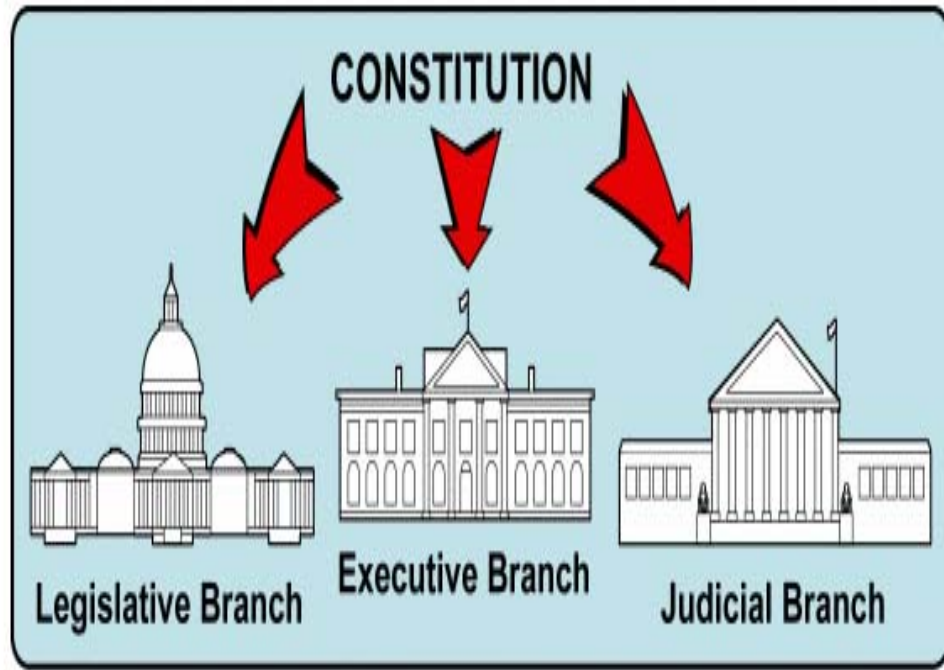
- **Federalism** is a system of government in which the states and national government share powers.

The Framers used federalism to structure the Constitution.

- The Constitution assigns certain powers to the national government. These are *delegated powers*.
- Powers kept by the states are *reserved powers*.
- Powers shared or exercised by national and state governments are known as *concurrent powers*.



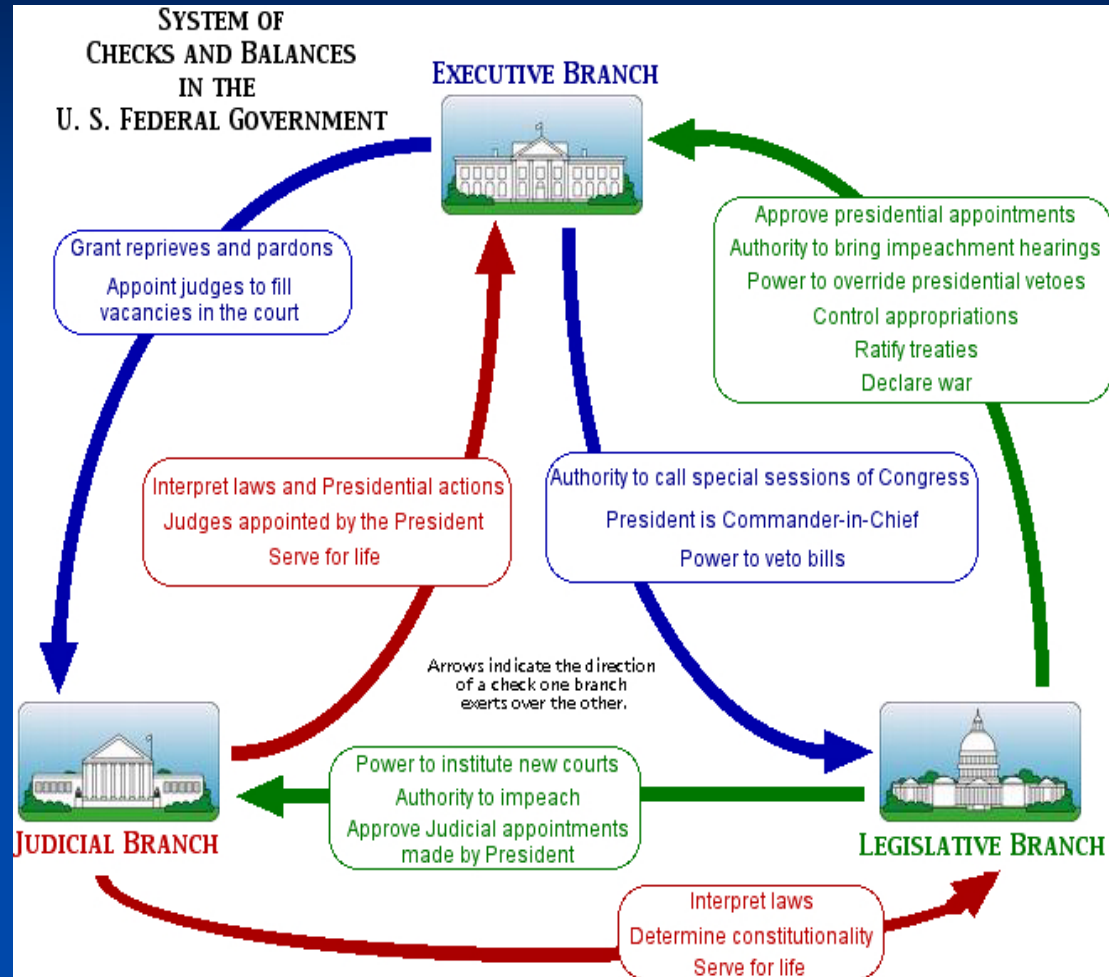
# Separation of Powers



- Established in order to avoid having too much power might fall into the hands of a single group
- This principle creates the **division of basic government roles into 3 branches**. No one branch is given all the power.
- **Articles 1,2, and 3 of the Constitution** detail how powers are split among the three branches

# Checks and Balances

- Based on the philosophy of **Baron de Montesquieu**, an 18th-century French thinker, "Power should be a check to power."
- Each branch of government can exercise **checks, or controls**, over the other branches. Though the branches of government are separate, they rely on one another to perform the work of government.
- This ensures that the branches work together fairly.



# Limited Government

*"That government is  
best which governs  
least."*

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

- In the American government **everyone, citizens and powerful leaders alike, must obey the law.** Individuals or groups cannot twist or bypass the law to serve their own interests.
- **Article 1, Section 9**, of the Constitution lists the powers denied to the Congress. Article 1, Section 10, forbids the states to take certain actions.
- The **10<sup>th</sup> Amendment** reserves for the states and people all powers not given to the national government nor denied to the state governments .

# Individual Rights

- The first ten amendments to the Constitution shield people from an overly powerful government. These amendments are called the Bill of Rights.

The Bill of Rights guarantees certain individual rights, or personal liberties and privileges.

