

Political system of the United States of America

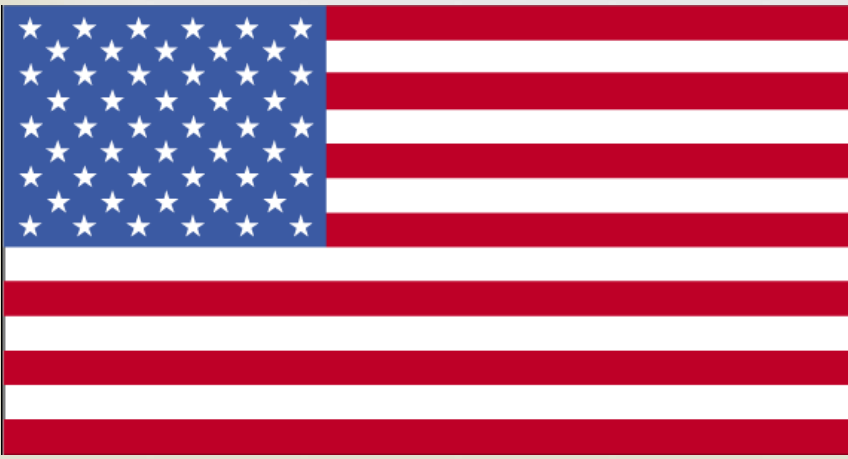


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12B
English

Generalities



- 50 states
- North America
- Canada/Mexico
- Pacific/ Atlantic Ocean



History



- ❧ Declaration of Independence → 4/7/1776
- ❧ May, 1787 → Federal Convention (New frame of government)
- ❧ 17/09/1787 → Constitution adopted
- ❧ “**Founding Fathers**” ("Signers of the Declaration of Independence" ; “Framers of the Constitution”)

History



✧ Richard Morris (historian) → John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and George Washington.





Generalities



- ❧ Federal constitutional republic
- ❧ Declaration of Independence (1776)
- ❧ The Constitution (1787)
- ❧ The *Federalist Papers* (1788)
- ❧ The Bill of Rights (1791)
- ❧ Suffrage



IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.
A DECLARATION
 BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
 IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

WHEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

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—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

He has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.

He has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance.

He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our Legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.

He is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and

Introduction



“Six Foundational Principles”

❧ Popular Sovereignty

❧ (From and for the people)

❧ Limited Government

❧ (Limited power)

❧ Separation of Powers

❧ (Three branches)

❧ Checks and Balances

❧ (Control among powers)

❧ Judicial Review

❧ (Unconstitutional)

❧ Federalism

❧ (Not all power in central government)

Constitution



- ❧ Basic structure of the federal government
- ❧ Democracy
- ❧ “Living Constitution” → Apply to modern times

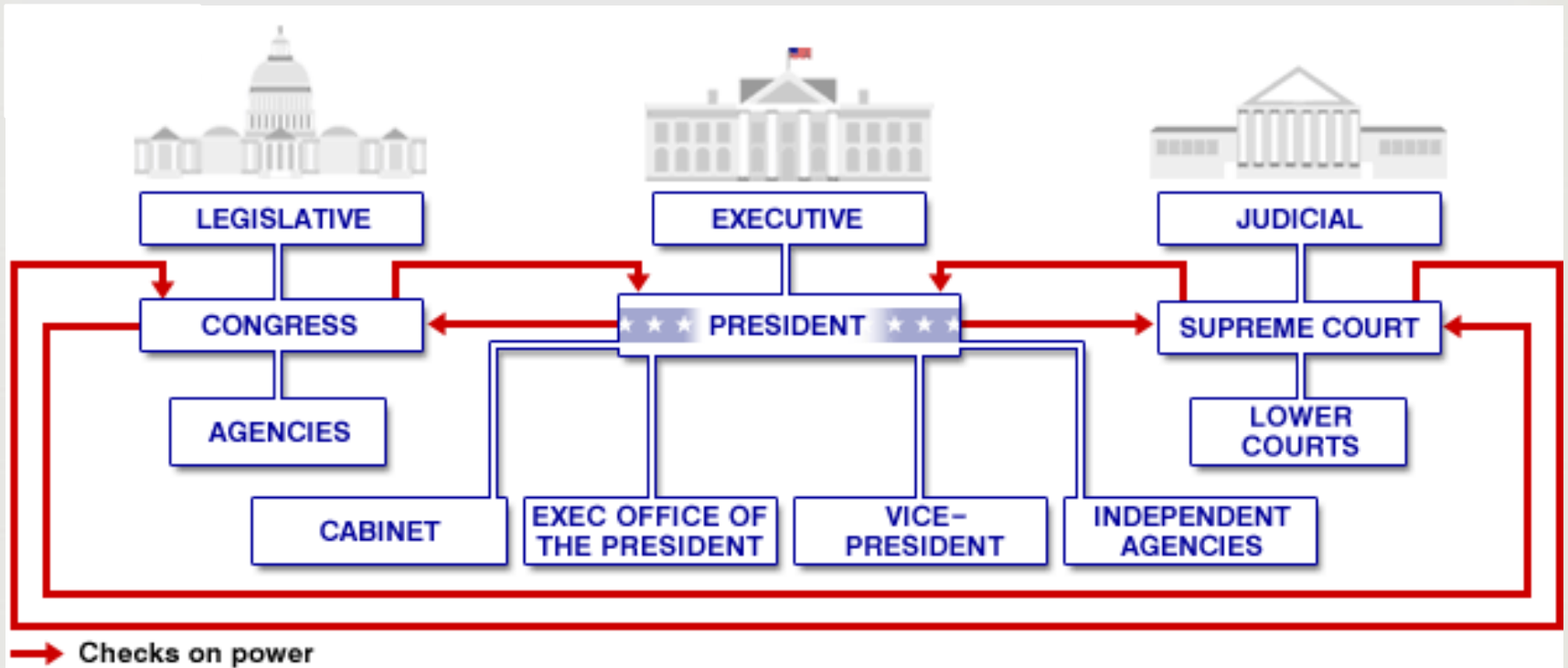


Bill of Rights



- ❧ Set of ten amendments added to the Constitution in 1791
- ❧ Fundamental freedoms and rights of the individual citizens
- ❧ Further 17 amendments were added (Total=27)





Legislative

Executive

Judicial

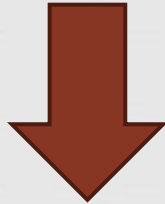


the **LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

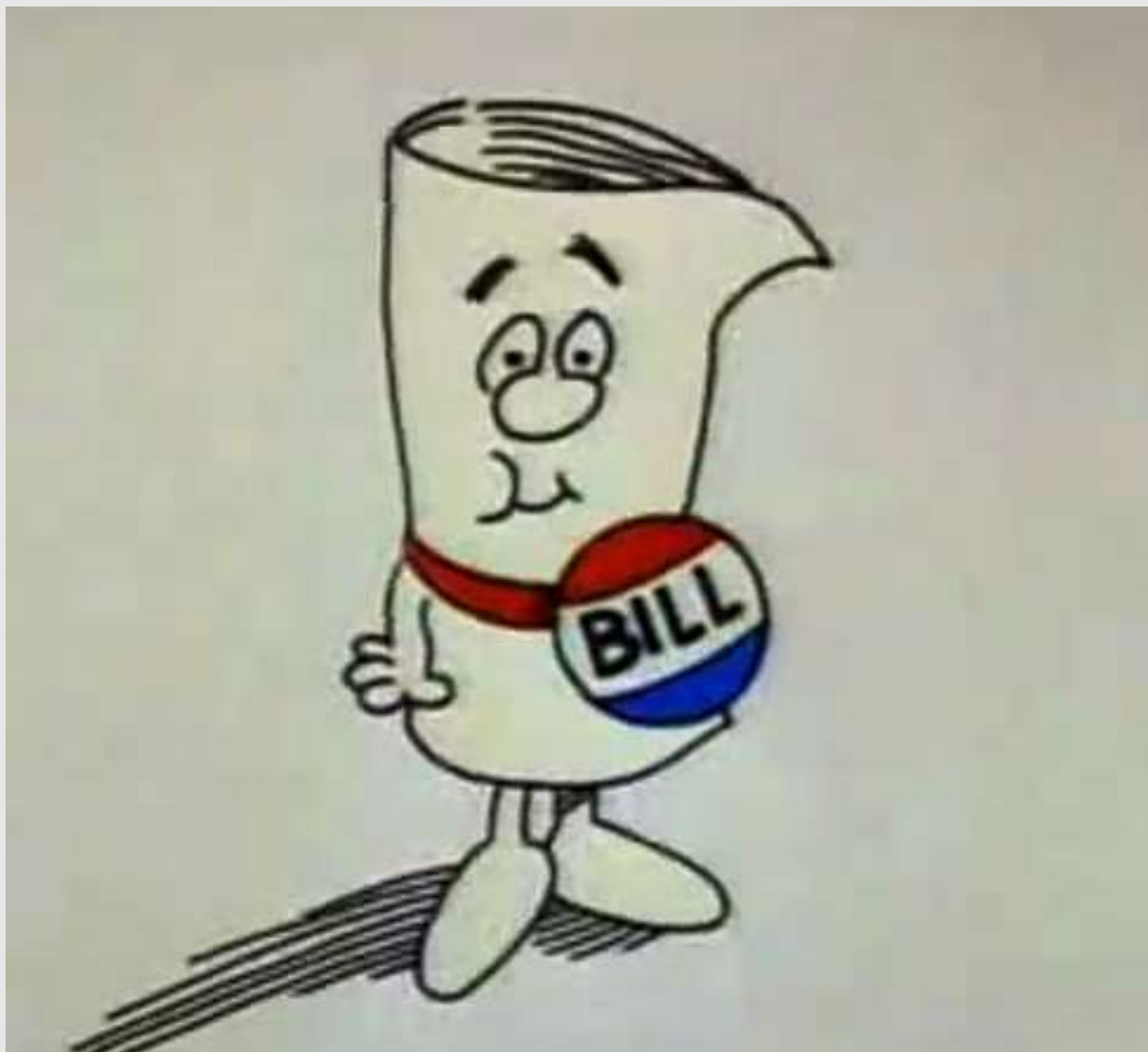
Legislative



❧ Carried out by Congress



- ❧ New national laws
- ❧ Modify existing ones
- ❧ Federal taxing and spending
- ❧ Coin money
- ❧ Declare war on other countries
- ❧ Oversee the executive branch of government



Congress



⌘ Capitol in Washington, D.C

⌘ **Bicameral body**

⌘ House of Representatives/Senate



Article. I.
Section 1.

“All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.”

Two chambers of Congress

House of Representatives

- ❧ Lower house
- ❧ Specific district
- ❧ Proportion to population
- ❧ 435 voting members
- ❧ Serve two-year terms

Senate

- ❧ Upper house
- ❧ Each state → Two senators (regardless of population)
- ❧ Six-year terms
- ❧ 100 members

Two chambers of Congress

House of Representatives

- ✧ “first-past-the-post voting” in every district

Senate

- ✧ ++deliberative;+ +prestigious (longer terms, smaller size, and statewide constituencies)
- ✧ Must approve the Cabinet members and Supreme Court justices
- ✧ “first-past-the-post voting”

May reject each other's bills!





Executive



❧ Enforces the laws

❧ Employees over 4 million people

❧ **President (Head)**

❧ Vice-president

❧ Cabinet

❧ Independent agencies

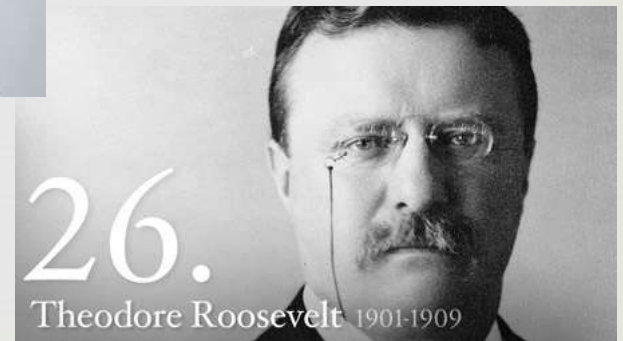
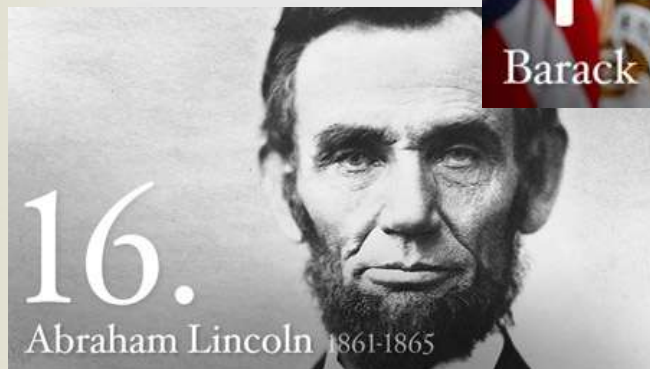
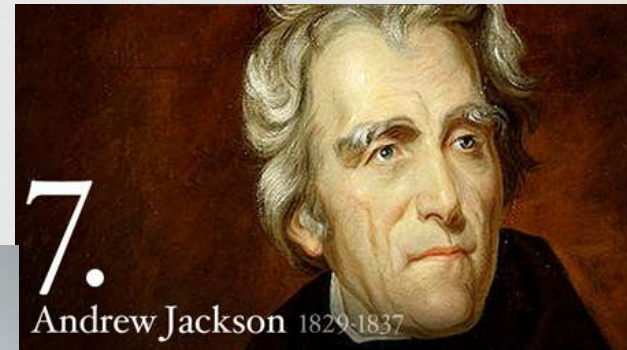
❧ Executive office of the President

❧ Commands military

President



[Launch the Slideshow of the Presidents ▶](#)



“Most powerful man on Earth”

Characteristics

- ❧ Head of executive branch
- ❧ Head of state
- ❧ Commander in chief of the military
- ❧ Chief diplomat

Duties

- ❧ Negotiates international treaties
- ❧ Signs or vetoes bills
- ❧ Appoints members of the Cabinet, federal justices and ambassadors
- ❧ Issues pardons for federal offences

Impeachment!



Presidential elections



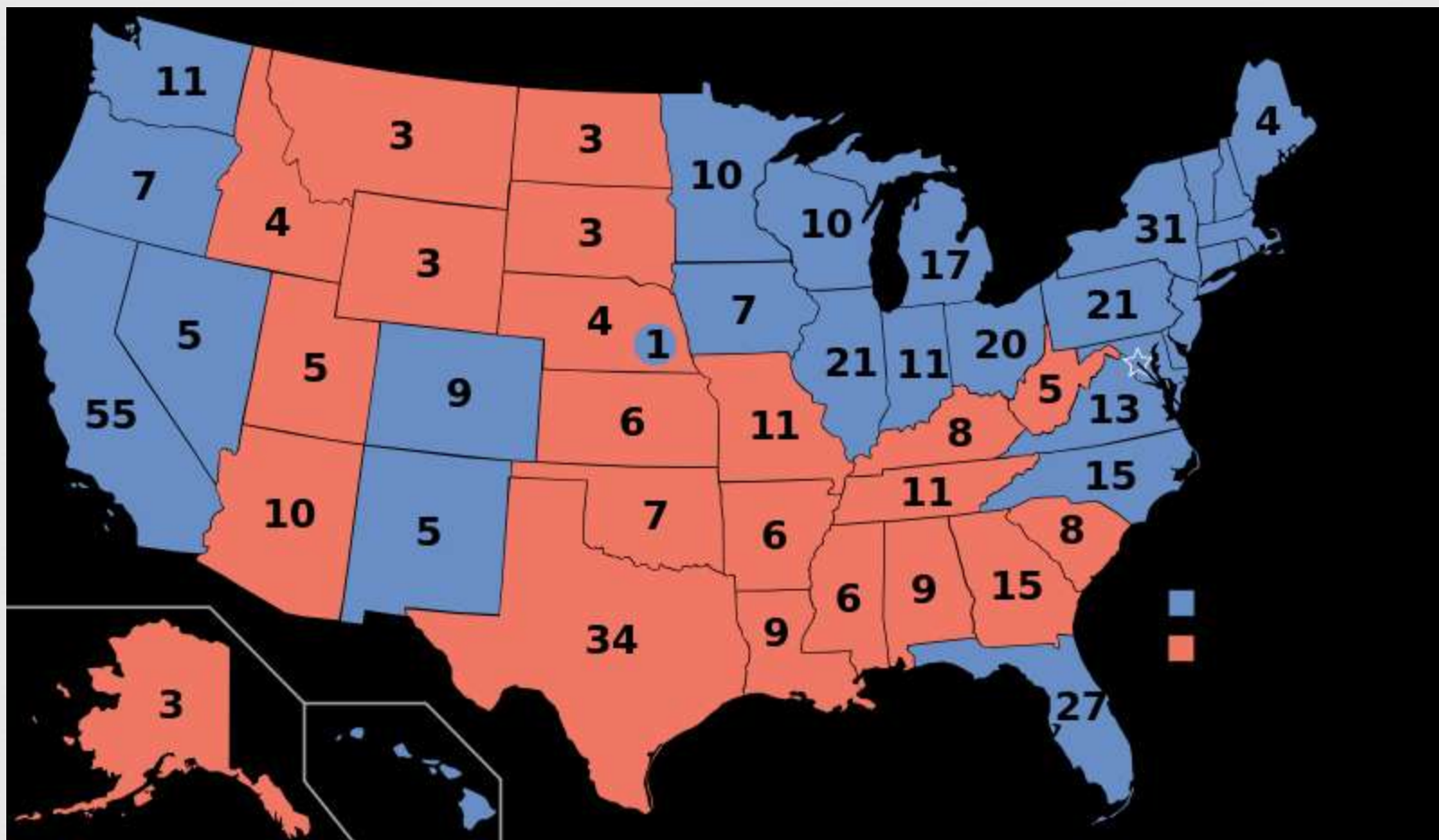
- ❧ Four years (two terms)
- ❧ First Tuesday after the first Monday in November (Congressional elections)
- ❧ Indirect vote (Electoral College)



Presidential elections



- ❧ “Electoral College representing each state on the basis of a combination of the number of members in the Senate and the number of members in the House of Representatives.”
- ❧ California (55), Texas (34) and New York (31).
- ❧ Smallest states (3) → (D.C also 3)
- ❧ Total vote=538=435+100+3 → President(at least 270)



Presidential elections



- Members of Electoral College → direct vote
- Choose President directly
- “Winner-take-all system”
- Plurality of votes = All state electors
- Electors gather in December to vote (formality) → “Faithless electors”
- Candidate → largest number of votes nationwide
- NOT largest number of votes in the Electoral College
- NOT President.



Gore vs. Bush

11/2000

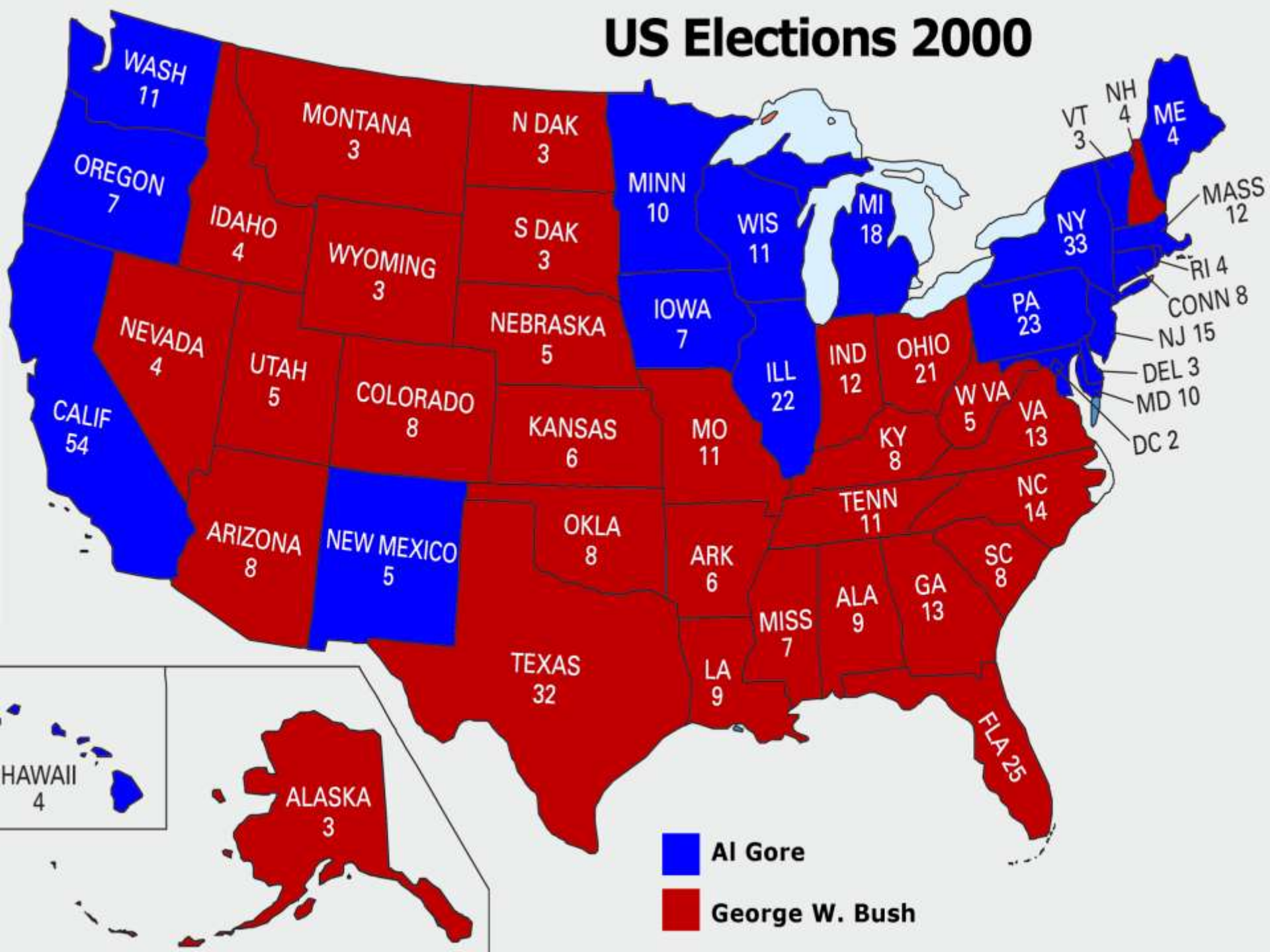
	George W. Bush	Al Gore
Party	Republican	Democratic
Electoral vote	271	266
States carried	30	20 + DC
Popular vote	50,456,002	50,999,897
Percentage	47.9%	48.4%

Gore vs. Bush



- ❧ Florida controversy (246 Bush- 266 Gore)
- ❧ Results too close to make a final decision
- ❧ Speculation by media (false affirmations)
- ❧ Vote difference narrowed down to 900 votes
- ❧ Bush declared winner
- ❧ Gore asks for recount
- ❧ Result: 537 votes difference

US Elections 2000







Judicial



- ⌘ Interpret laws
- ⌘ Use them to settle disputes
- ⌘ Supreme Court and lower federal courts



Supreme Court



- ❧ Highest court in the US
- ❧ One chief justice and eight associate justices
- ❧ “Guardian of the Constitution”
- ❧ Decisions are definitive
- ❧ Job for life

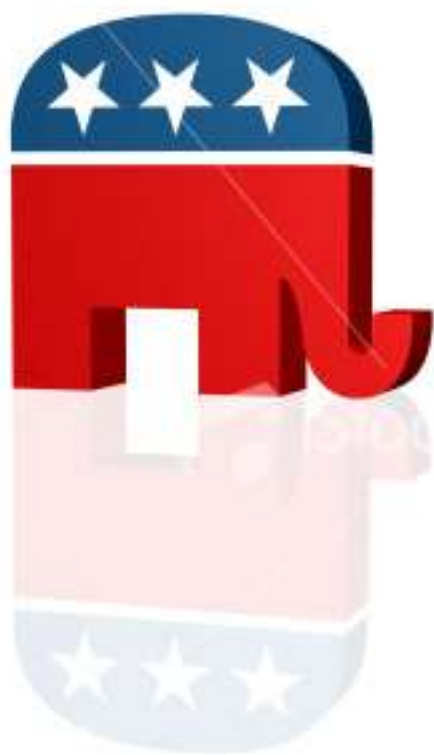




Dred Scott Case (1857)



- ❧ Slave sues owner
- ❧ Freedom obligatory
- ❧ Court: “We think (slaves)... are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word “citizens” in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States.”



Political parties



- ❧ Two-party system
- ❧ Republican Party (1854) and Democratic Party (1824)
- ❧ Great investment (No amount limit; buying broadcasting time allowed)
- ❧ Geography and religion are factors in ideological positioning
- ❧ “Red states” → won by Republican party
- ❧ “Blue states” → won by Democratic

Ideologies



Republican Party

- ❧ Pro free markets and individual achievement
- ❧ Against universal health care

Democratic Party

- ❧ Favored farmers, laborers and religious and ethnic minorities
- ❧ Against unregulated business and finance
- ❧ Interventionism

**SOCIALLY CONSERVATIVE,
ECONOMICALLY LIBERAL**

**Socially liberal,
Economically conservative**

"Politics is more difficult than physics."
- *Albert Einstein*

"Politics is supposed to be the second-oldest profession.
I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the
first."
- *Ronald Reagan (R)*

We'd all like to vote for the best man, but he's never a candidate.
~Frank McKinney "Kin" Hubbard

Thank you!

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