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Missouri Unit

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“I will tell you now what I do not like. (There is no) bill of rights, providing . . . what the people are entitled to against every government on earth.” — Thomas Jefferson commenting on the Constitution

The authors of the Constitution trusted Congress would make good and just laws, and the court system would see that every person was treated fairly. However, many people feared the new government would be too strong and, perhaps, take away individual freedom, just as the British government had done.

Therefore, during the fight to ratify the Constitution, the Federalists were obliged to propose a *bill of rights* that would safeguard the rights of the people. The Federalists promised this bill of rights would be added to the Constitution as soon as the new Congress met.

As the delegates gathered in May 1787 to revise the Articles of Confederation, a Virginia delegate, George Mason, voiced his disappointment with the new constitutional proposals because “... there is no declaration of individual rights.” Mason had earlier written the *Virginia Declaration of Rights* and that declaration had influenced Thomas Jefferson when he wrote the first part of the Declaration of Independence. Ultimately, Mason's views were accepted by James Madison. Madison would come to be called the “Father of the Constitution” because of his negotiating power and suggestions of compromise.

In 1789, the new Congress took action when Madison proposed 15 amendments. In 1791, 10 of them were approved. They make up what we call the *Bill of Rights*, or the first 10 amendments.

These amendments provide certain guarantees that had not been written into the Constitution. Their purpose was to protect the rights of the people against any misuse of governmental powers. These first 10 amendments guaranteed fundamental freedoms, including:

- *freedom of religion, speech, and the press*
- *the right to assemble and petition the government*
- *the right to keep and bear arms*
- *freedom from unreasonable search and seizure*
- *that no person be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law*
- *the right to a fair and speedy trial*
- *the right to a trial by jury*
- *protection against excessive bail or unusual punishment*

These were the rights the colonists had fought for against the English king, and they did not intend to give them up.

People are guaranteed these freedoms as long as they do not take away the freedom of others. Even today these important freedoms can be threatened. Controversial subjects are under the protection of the Bill of Rights, such as religion, unpopular ideas, censorship, membership and activity in unpopular organizations, and expressions of minority opinions. It is the job of the courts to interpret the Constitution and decide the rights of individuals.

It is human nature to believe strongly in one's own beliefs and think those holding opposing views must be wrong. Many of us find opinions expressed by others offensive and distressing. We often wish others' opinions could be suppressed. However, we must remember, freedom to express only popular opinions is no freedom at all.

Especially in times of emergency, it is easy to believe that measures infringing upon individual rights can or should be taken “for the good of the country.” But this attitude is dangerous to our country since it strikes at the very foundation of our democratic system. More and more rights could be taken away under the justification that it is “for the good of the country.”

Before you decide “it doesn't matter” if the rights of someone you do not agree with are violated, stop to consider whether you are willing to risk the loss of your rights because other people disagree with you.

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The first 10 amendments were adopted a month after the Constitution was approved.
- ___ 2. Jefferson supported the idea of a bill of rights.
- ___ 3. The Bill of Rights applies to all levels of government.
- ___ 4. The Bill of Rights was proposed in an attempt to defeat the Constitution.
- ___ 5. The Bill of Rights does not give a person the right to criticize a government official.
- ___ 6. The Bill of Rights protects freedom of speech, even if the speech is unpopular.
- ___ 7. The right to a trial by jury is in the Bill of Rights.
- ___ 8. The first 10 amendments make up the Bill of Rights.
- ___ 9. George Mason wrote the Virginia Declaration of Rights.
- ___ 10. There are times when the courts must interpret the Constitution affecting someone's rights.

The authors of the Constitution could not have imagined that, in 200 years, people would be exploring outer space or going from coast to coast in a few hours. Nor could they have imagined all the changes in daily living that would occur. Today, we claim the protection of the Constitution, written when there were only a few million people in the United States. The Constitution now protects more than 300 million Americans. Almost everything about the United States has changed, except the Constitution. It is truly an outstanding document that has withstood the test of time.

Yet, the Constitution changes in some very important ways. In upcoming units, you will see how the Constitution is officially amended. Officials, who operate the government under the rules of the Constitution, constantly interpret its meaning. The Constitution allows a great deal of freedom to do this (and is referred to as a *living* document). It's a basic guide for government and safeguards our freedom. It's flexible and brief enough to allow for adjustments. For example, the Constitution sets up strict rules for making laws to ensure they are just and democratic. But, the Constitution also gives Congress the power to make laws. This provides our Congress with the ability to make laws in areas that did not even exist when the Constitution was written. Space exploration and the internet are two examples. Can you think of others?

Quotes on the Constitution

Two centuries of growth and unrivaled prosperity have proven the foresight of the 55 men who worked through the summer of 1787 to lay the foundation of American government. In the words of Archibald Cox, former solicitor general of the United States, "The original Constitution still serves us well despite the tremendous changes in every aspect of American life because the framers had the genius to say enough but not too much.... As the plan outlined in the Constitutional Convention succeeded, as the country grew and prospered both materially and in the realization of its ideals, the Constitution gained majesty and authority far greater than that of any individual or body of men."

Quotes from the Founding Father's give insight into the attitude and mindset of the time:

"Let our government be like that of the solar system. Let the general government be like the sun and the states the planets, repelled yet attracted, and the whole moving regularly and harmoniously in several orbits."
— John Dickinson

"The happy Union of these States is a wonder; their Constitution a miracle; their example of Liberty throughout the world."
— James Madison

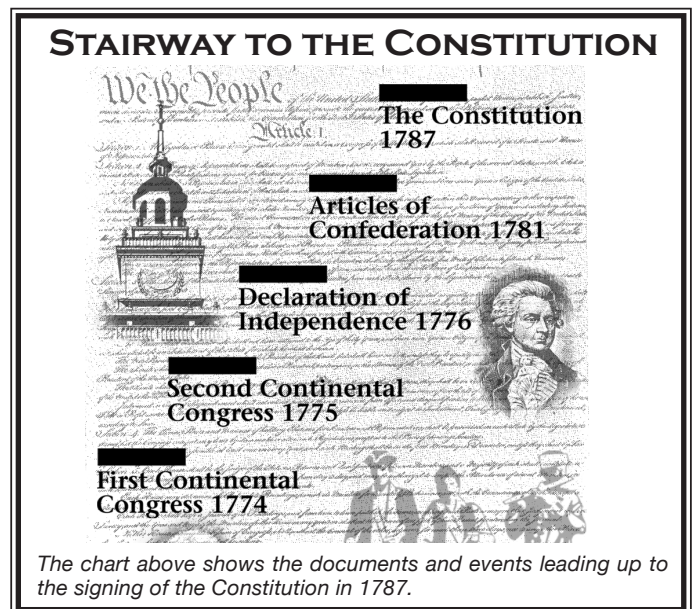
"Our new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."
— Ben Franklin

"The Constitution is the guide which I will never abandon."
— George Washington

Within the framework of the Constitution, as interpreted by the courts, we are governed by laws, treaties, and customs. Later, you will study judicial review and the amending process, helping you better understand how the Constitution is changed.

The Constitution has lasted because it:

- provides for a government by the people;
- provides for a government that can act when in danger;
- provides for a federal union where people retain certain rights and powers in their states;
- guarantees individual rights even when the individual's views are unpopular or in the minority;
- has preserved the Union;
- provides the leaders of our government an opportunity to interpret the Constitution and apply it to changing times;
- has provisions for orderly changes.



QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

- ___ 1. Changing the interpretation of the Constitution is what makes our Constitution weak.
- ___ 2. The Constitution allows laws to be made for subjects that did not exist in 1787.
- ___ 3. The Constitution can be changed only through rebellion and revolution.
- ___ 4. The Articles of Confederation were written after the Declaration of Independence.
- ___ 5. Over 500 delegates attended the Constitutional Convention and signed the Constitution.

DISCUSSION OR REPORT TOPICS

1. Should a person be allowed to pass out notices on a street corner in your town if the notices are very unpopular with the people in your town? Why?
2. Should a person be allowed to give a street-corner speech in your town if he/she desires? Why?

QUESTIONS

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. In Congress, where are bills sent for consideration?

2. What is the president's role in lawmaking? _____

3. What is a pocket veto? _____
4. Which group of Congress has more members, the Senate or House? _____
5. After a bill has passed the two houses of _____, it is sent to the _____.

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

- _____ 1. The Congress vetoes laws.
- _____ 2. The Supreme Court helps in making laws.
- _____ 3. Bills may start in either house of Congress.
- _____ 4. Revenue bills start in the Senate.
- _____ 5. A three-fourth vote is necessary for Congress to override a president's veto.
- _____ 6. The president can declare laws unconstitutional.

- _____ 7. Lobbies are illegal in Washington, D.C.
- _____ 8. After a law is passed, if it is in conflict with the Constitution, it can be made void by the Supreme Court.

WHICH BRANCH? Answer **Executive (E)**, **Legislative (L)**, or **Judicial (J)** branch.

- _____ 1. Makes the country's laws.
- _____ 2. Enforces the country's laws.
- _____ 3. Tries cases under the laws.
- _____ 4. Is the court system of the country.
- _____ 5. Has two houses.
- _____ 6. The president is the head of this branch.
- _____ 7. The Supreme Court is the chief body.
- _____ 8. Members are not elected.
- _____ 9. Uses pocket veto.
- _____ 10. Uses joint committees.


LAWMAKING BY THE NUMBERS. Choose the correct number from the bank that matches the statement.

Number Bank: 1/2, 2/3, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 50, 100

- _____ Lawmaking is in which Article of the Constitution.
- _____ President has this many days to take action.
- _____ Number of U.S. senators in Congress.
- _____ A U.S. representative's term in years.
- _____ Fraction of votes Congress needs to override a veto.

LEARNING AID

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH FACT SHEET

Main Body	Congress, consisting of a Senate and House of Representatives	
Membership	Senate: 100 House of Representatives: 435	
Terms of Office	Senate: 6 years House of Representatives: 2 years	
Salaries	Senate: \$174,000 Majority and Minority Leaders, President pro tempore: \$193,400 House of Representatives: \$174,000 Speaker of the House: \$223,500	
Requirements	Senate: 30 years old, a citizen for 9 years, resident of the state represented. House of Representatives: 25 years old, a citizen for 7 years, resident of the state represented.	
Officers	Senate: President of the Senate (Vice President of the United States), president pro tempore, majority leader, minority leader. House of Representatives: Speaker of the House, majority leader, minority leader.	
Meeting Place	Capitol Building, Washington, D.C.	
Duties	Main duty of the legislative branch is to make laws. Senate: Pass bills, decide guilt of impeached federal officers, approve presidential appointments, approve treaties. House of Representatives: Pass bills, charge federal officers in impeachment cases, select president when no candidate has a majority in the Electoral College, start all revenue bills. Joint Duties: Raise, borrow, and coin money; have defense powers; control immigration; grant copyrights and patents; control commerce; govern Washington, D.C.; investigate executive branch. Forbidden Powers: No ex post facto laws, no suspension of habeas corpus, no tax on exports, no title of nobility, no bill of attainder, no mid-term pay raises.	
Article Number	Article 1 of the U.S. Constitution	

How the Federal Government and States Divide Powers

The Constitution Says...



Certain Powers Belong to the Federal Government:

- ★ Regulate Interstate Commerce
- ★ Conduct Foreign Affairs
- ★ Coin and Issue Money
- ★ Establish Post Offices
- ★ Make War and Peace
- ★ Maintain Armed Forces
- ★ Admit New States and Govern Territories
- ★ Punish Crimes Against the U.S.
- ★ Grant Patents and Copyrights
- ★ Make Uniform Laws on Naturalization and Bankruptcy

(Also considered expressed powers.)



Certain Powers Belong to State Governments:

- (Mainly comes from an interpretation of the reserved powers.)
- ★ Authorize Establishment of Local Governments
 - ★ Establish and Supervise Schools
 - ★ Provide for State Militia
 - ★ Regulate Commerce Within the State
 - ★ Charter Corporations
 - ★ Regulate Labor, Industry, and Business Within the State
 - ★ All Other Powers Not Delegated to the United States Government or Specifically Prohibited to the States

Certain Powers Are Shared by Both Governments

Tax...Establish Courts...Promote Agriculture and Industry...Borrow Money...
Charter Banks...Protect the Public Health...Provide For Public Welfare



Certain Powers Are Prohibited to Both Governments

The personal rights of citizens of the United States, as listed in the Bill Of Rights (first 10 amendments to the Constitution) and in state constitutions, cannot be reduced or destroyed by the federal or the state governments. Also, certain specific prohibitions in the Constitution itself, such as no title of nobility, no ex post facto laws, no duty on exports, no bill of attainder, etc.

"Laws are a dead letter without courts to expound their true meaning and operation." – Alexander Hamilton

Judicial review is the name given to the process by which the courts interpret the meaning of the Constitution and the laws passed under it. It is clear that the Constitution is the supreme law of our land and takes precedence over any law passed or any action taken by any state or federal official.

But the Constitution is not a detailed legal code, and it is not always easy to see how the Constitution can be applied to particular cases. As conditions change, new interpretations may be placed on the Constitution; actions may be taken in areas that are not directly covered by the Constitution.

Someone, then, must have the authority to say exactly what the Constitution means and to decide if the government is acting within constitutional limits. Most historians agree that the members at the Constitutional Convention meant the courts to have the power of judicial review, even though they did not write it out in detail. Apparently, they thought that the idea had been conveyed adequately through the wording of Article 3, the judicial article, and Article 6, the "supreme law of the land" clause.

There was some discussion of this question after the Constitutional Convention, but nothing was settled until 1803 when the Supreme Court handed down its decision in the case of *Marbury v. Madison*. The court ruled that one section of a 1789 law was contrary to the Constitution and, therefore, was not a valid law.

This case established the precedent for judicial review, an important addition to the system of checks and balances to prevent any one branch of the federal government from becoming too powerful. Judicial review in the United States has been a model for other countries.

The Supreme Court's right to interpret the Constitution has been challenged at times but has always been upheld. In a sense, all of our courts contribute to the interpretation of the Constitution through the rulings they hand down on various cases involving the Constitution. The Supreme Court has used its power of judicial review to overturn more than a hundred acts of Congress and more than a thousand state laws. In addition, the Supreme Court can, and often does, overturn the rulings of lower courts. It is the final authority on the meaning of the Constitution.


QUESTIONS

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. This name is given to the process by which courts interpret the meaning of the Constitution and the laws passed under it. _____
2. What Article in the Constitution discusses the judicial branch? _____
3. What important case came before the Supreme Court in 1803? _____
4. What court is the final authority on the meaning of the Constitution? _____

LEARNING AID

JUDICIAL BRANCH FACT SHEET

Main Courts	The <i>Supreme Court</i> , <i>Court of Appeals</i> , and <i>District Courts</i> .	
Number of Courts	<i>Supreme Court</i> : 1 <i>Court of Appeals</i> : 13 <i>District Courts</i> : 94	
Number of Judges	<i>Supreme Court</i> : 9 <i>Court of Appeals</i> : 3 to 9 <i>District Courts</i> : 1 to 24	
Supreme Court Salaries	\$223,500 for Supreme Court chief justice \$213,900 for Supreme Court associate justices	
Terms of Office	For life; may be removed only by impeachment.	
Duties	Main duty of the judicial branch is to interpret laws and administer justice. <i>Supreme Court</i> : Decide if laws are constitutional <i>Court of Appeals</i> : Hear appeals from lower courts <i>District Courts</i> : Ordinary trial courts, federal cases begin here Other courts handle special cases, examples include U.S. Claims Court and U.S. Tax Court.	
Meeting Place	<i>Supreme Court</i> : Washington, D.C. <i>Court of Appeals</i> : various circuits <i>District Courts</i> : various districts	
Article Number in Constitution	Article 3 of the U.S. Constitution	

The following test will help you prepare for your final Constitution test. It has questions similar to ones you will find on your final. It is suggested you write your answers on a piece of paper so you can take the test multiple times. You will find the correct answers at the bottom of Page 51.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Write the letter of the correct answer in the space provided.

1. _____ The president may serve how many terms? A. 1 B. 2 C. 3 D. 4
2. _____ What is NOT a rule of the flag code?
A. worn flags should be thrown in trash C. nothing should be attached to the flag
B. should be in the front of a parade D. exact likeness should not be used in ads
3. _____ How many amendments have been added to the Constitution? A. 10 B. 21 C. 27 D. 41
4. _____ How many years is the president's term of office? A. 2 B. 4 C. 6 D. 9
5. _____ What is the age requirement to become president? A. 18 B. 21 C. 35 D. 45
6. _____ After a bill has gone through both houses of Congress successfully, it is sent to:
A. the President C. the Speaker of the House
B. the States D. the Supreme Court
7. _____ Which amendment explains that the president may serve only two terms?
A. 17th B. 19th C. 22nd D. 27th
8. _____ How many U.S. senators come from each state? A. 1 B. 2 C. 3 D. 4
9. _____ Each state receives at least _____ representative(s) in the U.S. House of Representatives.
A. 1 B. 2 C. 3 D. 4
10. _____ Who may veto a bill proposed by Congress?
A. the President of the United States C. the Vice President
B. the Secretary of State D. all Cabinet members
11. _____ The president of the Senate is:
A. the President of the United States C. the Secretary of State
B. the Speaker of the House D. the Vice President
12. _____ Which of these rights is not an unalienable right from the Declaration of Independence?
A. liberty B. education C. pursuit of happiness D. life
13. _____ The Declaration of Independence was written largely by:
A. Hamilton B. Washington C. Jefferson D. Adams
14. _____ The national budget is presented annually to Congress by the:
A. the Vice President C. the Secretary of State
B. the Governors D. the President
15. _____ There are how many branches of government? A. 1 B. 2 C. 3 D. 4
16. _____ The president takes the oath of office on:
A. January 4th B. January 20th C. November 7th D. September 5th
17. _____ In our First Amendment, which is NOT a "freedom"?
A. freedom of the press C. freedom of speech
B. freedom of employment D. freedom of religion
18. _____ The vote of what group really decides who will be president?
A. Electoral College C. United Nations
B. popular vote by the people D. House of Representatives
19. _____ What is described in Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution giving Congress broad powers to write laws about new situations?
A. war power B. insight clause C. elastic clause D. inventional clause
20. _____ Which body has the power to borrow money?
A. Congress C. Executive Branch
B. Supreme Court D. State Legislatures



State History

The history of the state of Missouri is rich and distinguished. The state has played a vital role in the development of the United States.

Indians, known as the *mound builders*, inhabited the region of Missouri long before the coming of the white man. Many different tribes, including the Missouri, Osage, Fox, and Sauk, lived and hunted in the area.

The French were probably the first whites to explore the area. Names such as Father Jacques Marquette, Louis Joliet, and Sieur de LaSalle were important in the early exploration of the territory they claimed for the French government. French missionaries and trappers continued to explore and settle the area. Although the French gave up claim to the territory to the Spanish, Napoleon Bonaparte reclaimed the area for France. Because of France's involvement in a series of expensive wars, Napoleon decided to sell the entire Louisiana Territory, which included Missouri, to the United States. This 1803 land sale doubled the size of the United States.

In 1812, the United States Congress organized the Missouri Territory. There were more than 20,000 people living in the territory at the time. The territory, because of its fine land, attracted many settlers. Like other areas of the country, increased numbers of settlers led to trouble with the Indians, who saw their traditional hunting grounds being taken away. For several years, the Indians made bloody attacks on frontier settlements.

In 1818, Missouri applied for admission to the United States. This application for admission started a controversy leading to the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Because many of the settlers in the territory had brought slaves with them, anti-slavery forces felt that the slave-holding states would gain more power in Congress if Missouri were added as another slave state. The issue was finally settled with the Compromise, when Missouri was admitted as a slave state and Maine was admitted as a free state, thus keeping the balance of power in Congress equal. Missouri was admitted to the Union on August 10, 1821, as the 24th state.

The first capital of Missouri was St. Louis. In 1821, it was moved to St. Charles, and finally, in 1826, to Jefferson City.

Missouri played a key role in settling the West. Independence, Missouri, was the beginning of both the Santa Fe Trail to the Southwest and the Oregon Trail to the Northwest. Wealth poured into Missouri from the Southwest and thousands of settlers began moving west from Independence.

Prior to the Civil War, the people of Missouri were divided over the slavery issue, and scattered fighting broke out among Missourians. In 1861, a convention was called to determine whether the people of Missouri desired to *secede* (withdraw) from the Union and join the Confederacy. Although the people voted to remain in the Union, when the Civil War started that same year, many Missourians sided with the Confederacy. Many battles were fought in the state throughout the Civil War with bands of both Union and Confederate guerrillas terrorizing the Missouri countryside.

During this same period, the state became an important transportation center. Fur trading subsided, and tenant farmers replaced slaves as field workers. The early 1900s brought political, social, and industrial reforms to Missouri. Working conditions improved and laws were established regulating child labor. The state grew steadily over the years in population, agricultural production, and industrial production. Because of its rich soil, favorable climate, and abundant resources, many saw the state as a land of opportunity.

Missouri is today one of the nation's leading agricultural producers, with soybeans and corn as leading crops. Industrial production has also grown at a rapid rate. Missouri's factories produce a wide variety of products. World War I caused Missouri's industry to supply the needed goods of war. The Depression of the 1930s hit Missouri very hard and recovery came slowly and painfully. World War II again found Missouri's contributions to be a vital part of the war effort and helped to further develop the industry of the state.

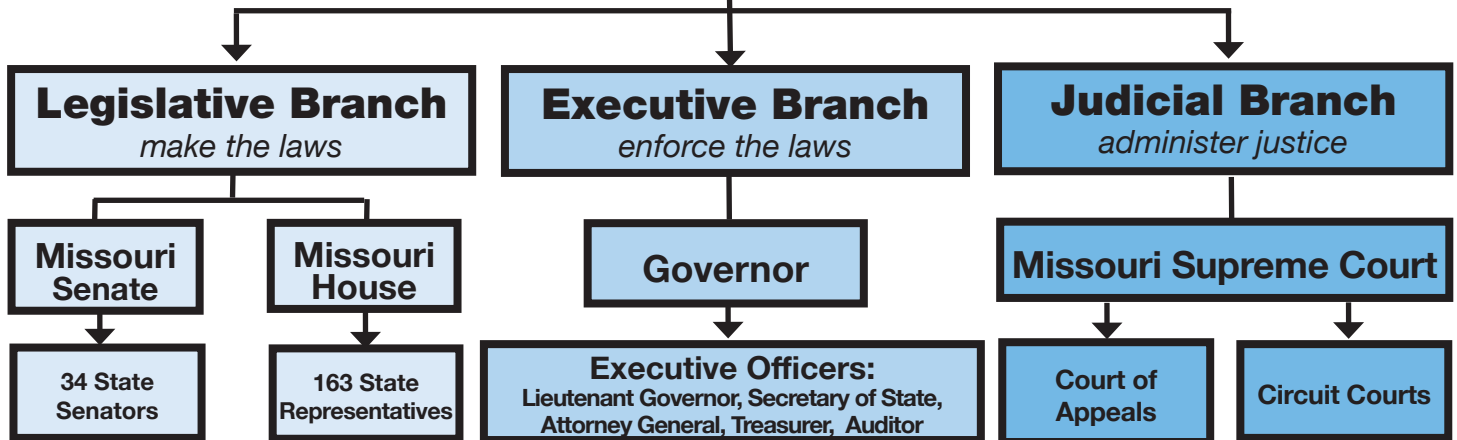
Missouri Quick Facts

Capital	Jefferson City
Federal Representatives	Senators - 2, Representatives - 8, electoral votes - 10
State Nickname	"Show Me State"
State Motto	"Liberty and Prosperity"
Statehood	August 10, 1821 (<i>24th state in the U.S.</i>)
Land Area	69,709 square miles
Population	6,083,672 (<i>as of 2015</i>)
Largest City	Kansas City
State Bird	Bluebird
State Flower	Hawthorn

The Missouri Constitution

Present one was adopted in 1945

The Voters of Missouri
Qualified voters choose our elected officials



Legislative Branch Quick Facts

The Missouri General Assembly is made up of the state Senate and state House of Representatives.

body	members	terms	annual salary	qualifications
Senate	34	4 years (2-term max.)	\$35,915	30 years old, qualified voter for 3 years, resident citizen for 3 years, resident of district for 1 year
House	163	2 years (4-term max.)	\$35,915	24 years old, qualified voter for 2 years, resident citizen for 3 years, resident of district for 1 year

Executive Branch Quick Facts

Headed by the Governor and responsible for executing the laws of the state.

executive officer	terms	annual salary	qualifications
Governor	4 years (2-term max.)	\$133,821	To be eligible for each of the executive offices of Missouri, you must be a U.S. citizen for 15 years, at least 30 years old, and a resident of Missouri for 10 years.
Lieutenant Governor	4 years (no term limit)	\$86,484	
Secretary of State	4 years (no term limit)	\$107,746	
Attorney General	4 years (no term limit)	\$116,437	
State Treasurer	4 years (2-term max.)	\$107,746	
State Auditor	4 years (no term limit)	\$107,746	

Judicial Branch Quick Facts

The Missouri Court System

court	overview
Missouri Supreme Court	7 judges (Chief Justice & 6 associate justices), governor appoints judges from a list of candidates supplied by a nonpartisan commission, serve 12-year terms with no limit, state's highest court, supervises other state courts
Court of Appeals	divided into 3 districts, intermediate appellate court handling appeals from Circuit Courts, governor appoints judges from a list of candidates supplied by a nonpartisan commission, serve 12-year terms with no limit
Circuit Courts	courts of original civil or criminal jurisdiction, organized into 45 judicial circuits, circuit court judges serve 6-year terms, associate judges serve 4-year terms

In a democracy, a citizen has the responsibility for the government under which he or she lives. By voting and staying informed on the issues he or she takes part in the business of government. With every freedom we enjoy, there are also corresponding duties. We must perform these duties, such as voting if we expect to enjoy our freedom.

Voting is a constitutional right. Early in American history, only white men over the age of 21 could vote. Then it took two constitutional amendments, one in 1870, and the other in 1920, to give Black people and women, respectively, the right to vote. Then, when Americans 18 and over were in the military fighting in wars, people began to think that if young people were old enough to die for their country, they were surely old enough to vote. So in 1971, the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave 18 year-olds the right to vote and so did the state of Missouri.

Voting Requirements

In Missouri, like any state, a citizen must obey the election laws. Citizens living in Missouri must register to vote. You can vote if you are:

- at least 18 years old on election day
- a United States citizen
- a resident of your election district for 30 days
- registered to vote approximately 28 days before the election (by the 4th Wednesday before the election)
- not deemed incompetent or not serving a jail sentence

Qualified citizens may register in person at the office of their local election authority, by mail, at the driver's license facility or at some state agencies. The deadline for registration is the fourth Wednesday before an election. New residents may register immediately, and citizens that are 17 years and six months of age or older may register. A verification or rejection of registration is sent by the election authority to the applicant.

Certain people may be granted special voting provisions. Handicapped voters and persons prevented from voting because of absence or illness may vote absentee. To be counted, the completed ballot must be received by their election district no later than Election Day.

Missouri Past Election Results

As we now know, President Donald Trump defeated Democratic Challenger Hillary Clinton in the 2016 Presidential Election. In Missouri, Trump was the overwhelming choice capturing 56 percent of the vote and the 10 electoral votes. In the governor's race, Republican Eric Greitens defeated the Democratic challenger, Attorney General Chris Koster. For the U.S. Senate, incumbent Roy Blunt (R) retained his seat by beating Democrat Jason Kander. All eight members of the U.S. House of

Representatives were up for reelection, with all incumbents winning.

Elections and Dates in Missouri

The first type is the election of representatives to operate the government. These legislative, executive, and judicial representatives have been discussed in past sections of this book.

The second type of election is voting on constitutional amendments. Such elections take place when the citizens desire to change the Constitution and call for a constitutional convention.

The third type is the election in which the people are asked whether or not they favor a proposal (*referendum*). One example of a referendum is the local school district asking if they may increase taxes to build a new school.

Although there are six official election dates hosting a variety of elections, the most popular are the *primary*, *general*, and *general municipal* elections. Primaries are elections held before the general election for the purpose of electing one candidate from a specific political party (usually Republican or Democrat) to represent that party in the general election. *Partisan* means running with an established political party. *Nonpartisan* means having no party affiliation.

The most publicized elections in Missouri are the general elections. This is the *biennial* election (every two years) at which all the representatives and half of the senators of the General Assembly are elected. Other elections take place at this time as well, such as the election of county and state officers. Every four years this coincides with the presidential election, and in those years more people vote than in the so-called "off years." The next presidential election will be held in November of 2020. We have learned that President Trump will be eligible for one more term (as stated in the 22nd Amendment). The next *gubernatorial* (governor) election will also be held on this date. Incumbent Republican Governor Eric Greitens will be eligible to run, having served only one of the two-term maximum.

Your Right to Vote

The Missouri Constitution ensures the right of citizens to vote. For example, a voter cannot be arrested on Election Day unless he or she has committed a serious offense. A person serving in the military is guaranteed the right to vote unless the situation makes it impossible to do so. And as discussed earlier, you may make an absentee vote if you are unable to make it to a polling place on Election Day. All eligible citizens have a voice in their government, if they execute their right to vote.