

Constitutional Principles

1. Limited Government/Rule of Law

Belief that a govt's powers should be limited

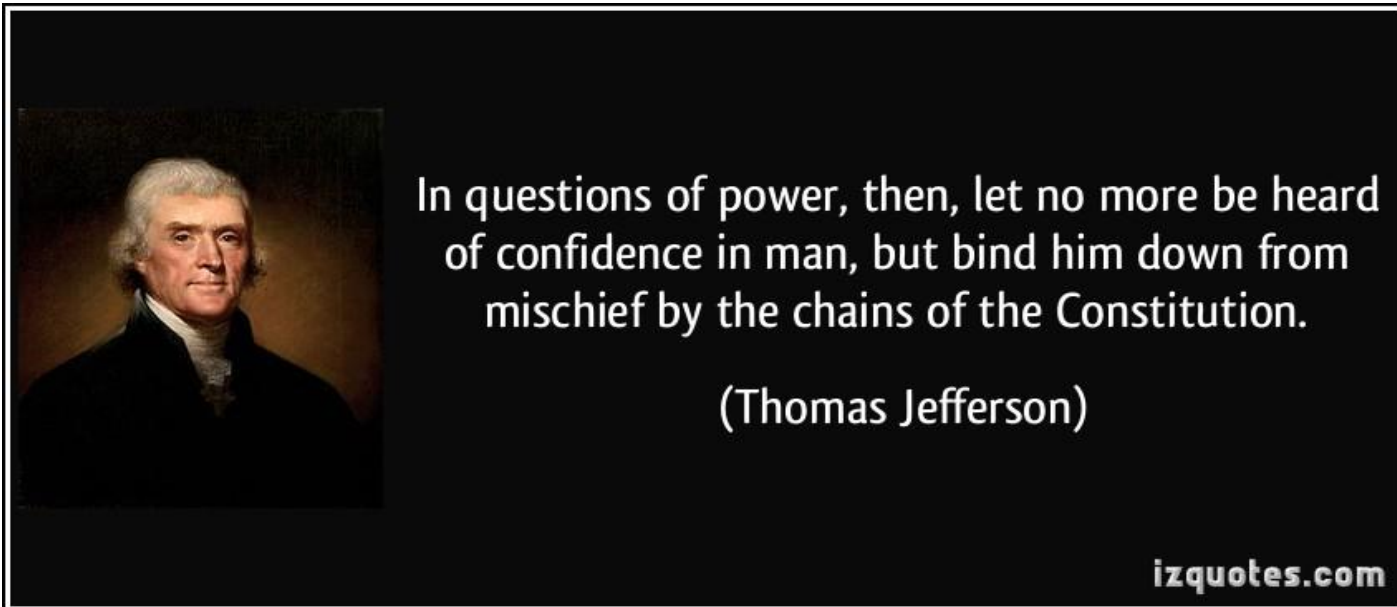
Rule of law: law(s) should govern a nation, as opposed to being governed by arbitrary decisions of individual govt officials

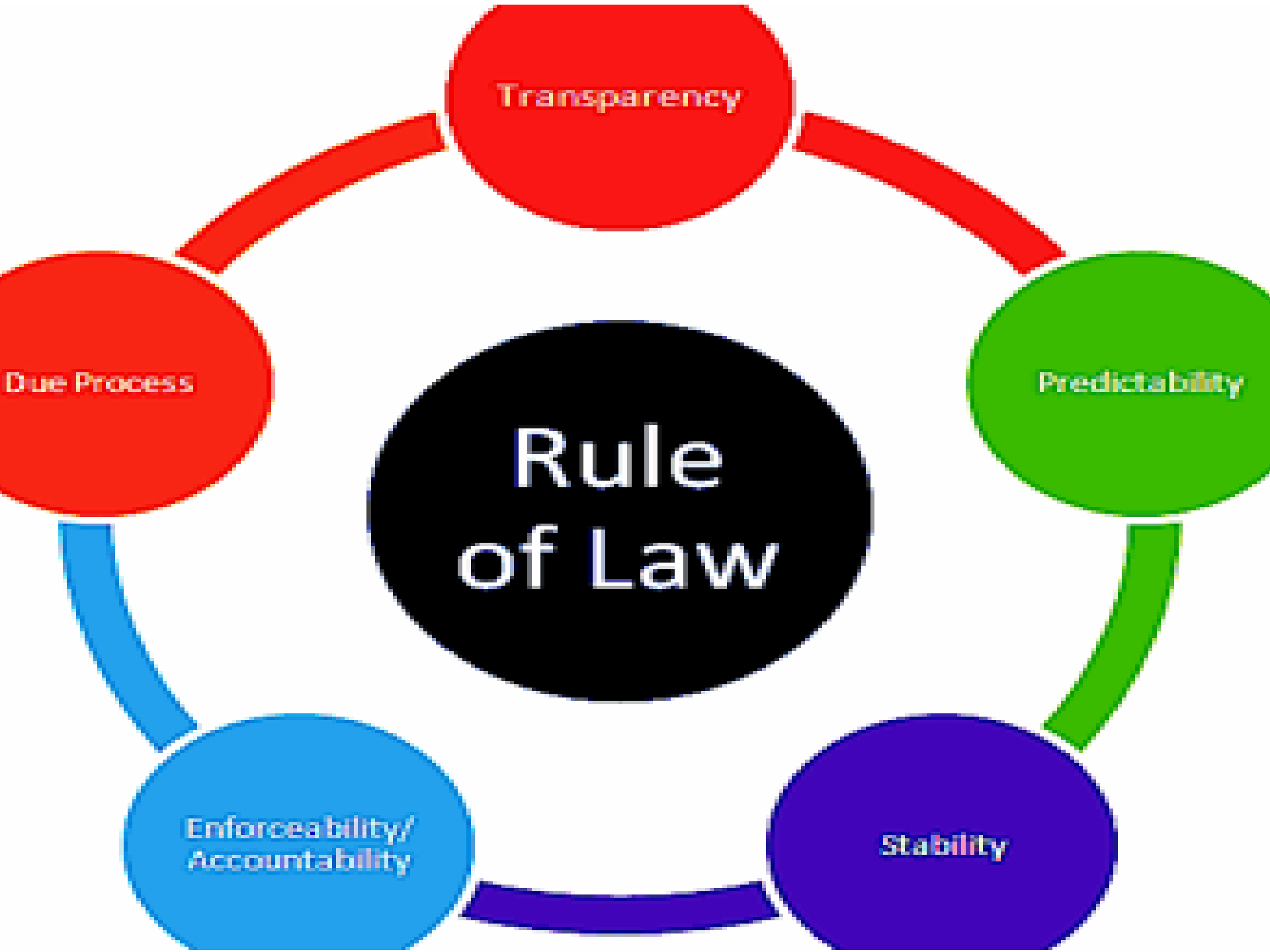
All citizens must abide by laws - even members of govt (Magna Carta, 1215)

Protects citizens against a govt that would not obey the concept of the **Social Contract**

Intended to prevent abuse by “**factions**” (aka political parties)

The U.S.C. lists powers of the federal govt & rights that are to be guaranteed to citizens (found in Articles I, II, III)





2. Republicanism/Representative Democracy

Ideology where the power is held not by a hereditary ruler, but leadership is chosen by the people to make decisions on their behalf

Ideally, republicanism keeps those leaders in check – if they do not act on behalf of the people, they will not be elected (or they could be removed)



The republican is the only form of government which is not eternally at open or secret war with the rights of mankind.

3. Checks and Balances

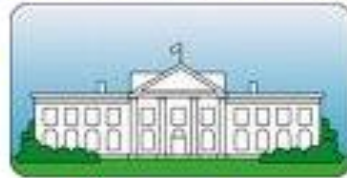
System designed to have the separate parts of govt watch over each other
(Rousseau)

“**Checks and Balances**”: the relationship between the three branches of govt; keeps any one branch from becoming more powerful than the others



SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES IN THE U. S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

EXECUTIVE BRANCH



Approve presidential appointments
Authority to bring impeachment hearings
Power to override presidential vetoes
Control appropriations
Ratify treaties
Declare war

Grant reprieves and pardons
Appoint judges to fill vacancies in the court

Interpret laws and Presidential actions
Judges appointed by the President
Serve for life

Authority to call special sessions of Congress
President is Commander-in-Chief
Power to veto bills

Arrows indicate the direction of a check one branch exerts over the other.



JUDICIAL BRANCH

Power to institute new courts
Authority to impeach
Approve Judicial appointments made by President



LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

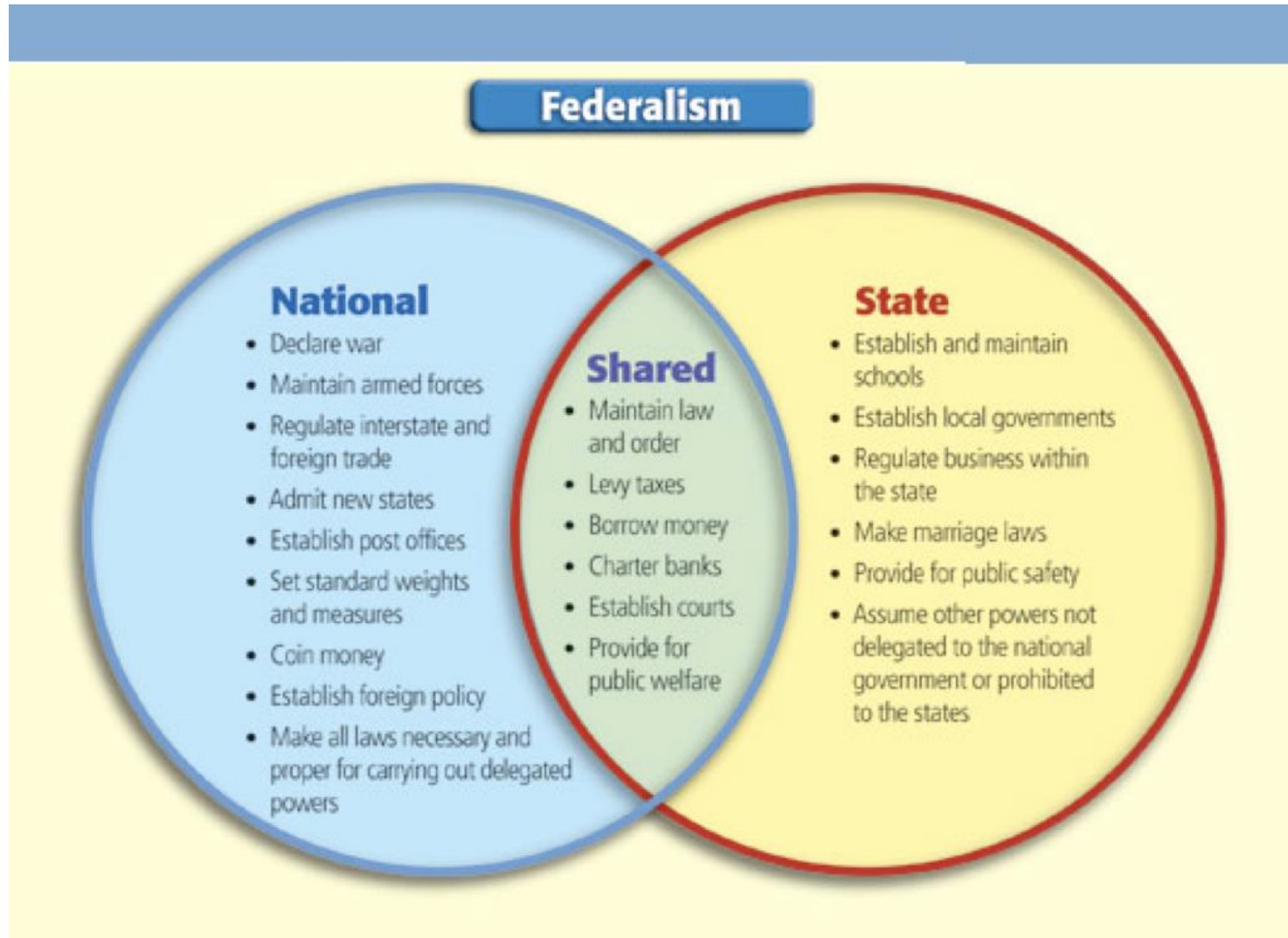
Interpret laws
Determine constitutionality
Serve for life



4. Federalism

Power is divided between the three levels of govt: federal, state, and local (10th Amendment)

A way of breaking down the govt into several smaller levels of govt that work together; gives more control to the govts closest to the citizen



The U.S. Federal System



The Nation

The Federal Government has authority over the whole nation.

Major Powers

- Foreign Relations
- National Defense
- Trade Among the States
- Foreign Trade
- Money System

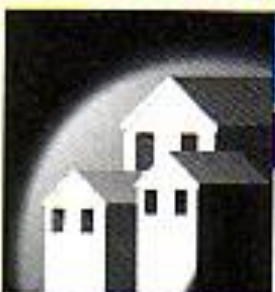


The States

State Government has authority over most affairs within the state's borders.

Major Powers

- Elections
- Education
- Police
- Public Building Programs
- Health and Safety
- Highways



Local Communities

Local Government has authority over the affairs of its community.

Major Powers

- Schools
- Police
- Fire Protection
- Libraries
- Zoning and Building Codes
- Parks and Playgrounds
- Sewage Systems
- Public Utilities
- Streets and Traffic

Enumerated Powers

**AKA delegated, expressed,
exclusive, listed**

These are duties that **ONLY** the federal govt have the authority over as listed in the Constitution

Powers of the National Government

Maintain army and navy
Declare war
Coin money

Regulate trade between states and with foreign nations

Make all laws necessary for carrying out delegated powers

Shared Powers

Enforce laws
Establish courts
Borrow money
Protect the safety of the people
Build roads
Collect taxes

Powers of the State Government

Conduct elections
Establish schools
Regulate businesses within a state
Establish local governments
Regulate marriages
Assume other powers not given to the national government or denied to the states

Reserved Powers

Duties that are reserved only for the state govts

10th Amendment

Powers of the National Government

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Declare war

Coin money

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Shared Powers

Enforce laws

Establish courts

Borrow money

Protect the safety of the people

Build roads

Collect taxes

Powers of the State Government

Conduct elections

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Regulate businesses within a state

Establish local governments

Regulate marriages

Assume other powers not given to the national government or denied to the states

Concurrent Powers

Powers that are *shared* by the different levels of gov

Powers of the National Government

Maintain army and navy
Declare war
Coin money

Regulate trade between states and with foreign nations

Make all laws necessary for carrying out delegated powers

Shared Powers

Enforce laws
Establish courts
Borrow money
Protect the safety of the people
Build roads
Collect taxes

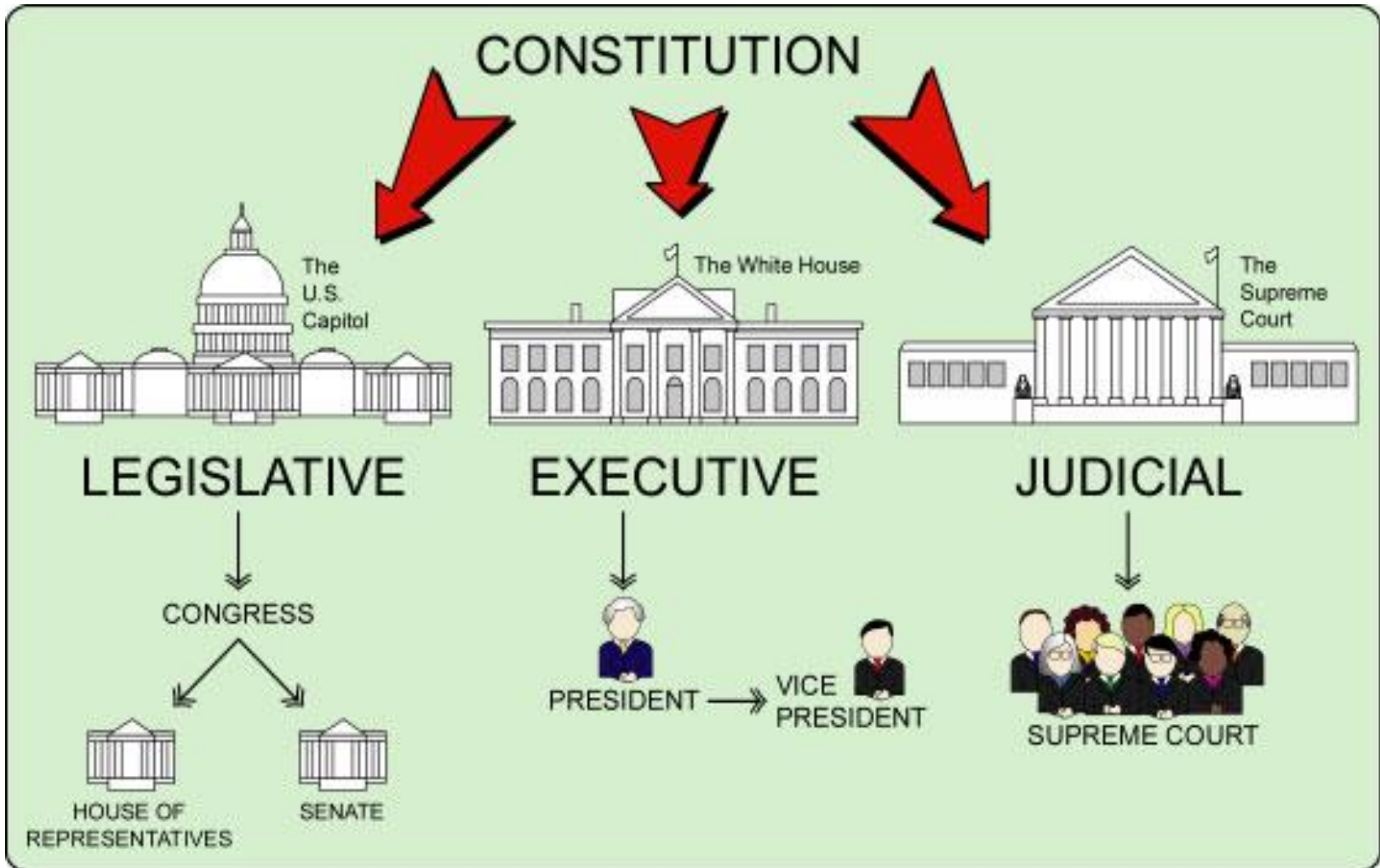
Powers of the State Government

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5. Separation of Powers

Idea that the best govt is one where the functions of governing are separated
(Montesquieu)

Keeps the three branches from becoming abusive: LEJ



6. Popular Sovereignty/Consent of the Governed

Popular: the populace, the people

Sovereignty: the right to rule

The people + have the right to rule themselves

Govt is only given its power by the “**Consent of the Governed**”

Carried out through the process of voting

Direct democracy: every citizens has an actual say in the govt

i.e. Mayflower Compact

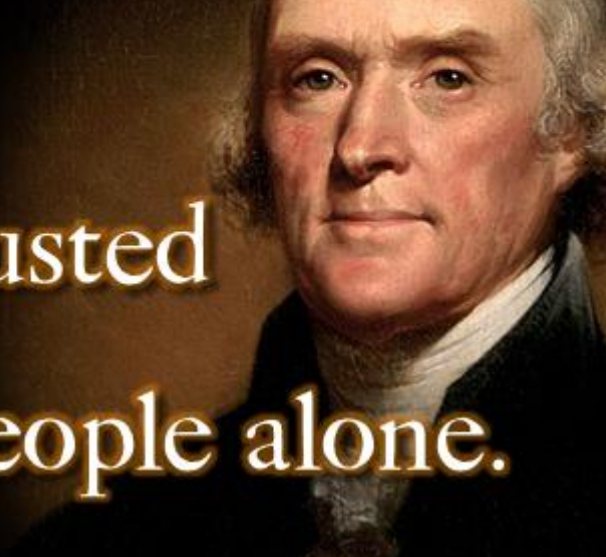
Representative democracy: we elect people who represent us in voting

i.e VA House of Burgesses

The power and authority in a democracy is in the “will of the people”

*Found in Amendment IX and the Preamble



A portrait of Thomas Jefferson, an older man with white hair, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat, looking slightly to the right.

“Every government
degenerates when trusted
to the rulers of the people alone.
The people themselves, therefore,
are its only safe depositories.”

– THOMAS JEFFERSON

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7. Individual Rights

- Natural/unalienable/inalienable rights are guaranteed to all citizens
- Rights not specifically listed for the govt are reserved for the people
- Supreme Court upholds these rights by ruling on other laws that challenge the U.S.C.

