**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| **What do you know about the American system of government?**  **What do you want to know about the American system of government?**  **List things that are happening (current events) associated with American government.**  **Is American government a relevant topic for our current issues class?** |

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| **Watch the video clip and list the main ideas:** |

**State & Local Government**

https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/state-and-local-government

Powers not granted to the federal government are reserved for states and the people, which are divided between state and local governments.

Most Americans have more daily contact with their state and local governments than with the federal government. Police departments, libraries, and schools — not to mention driver's licenses and parking tickets — usually fall under the oversight of state and local governments. Each state has its own written constitution, and these documents are often far more elaborate than their federal counterpart. The Alabama Constitution, for example, contains 310,296 words — more than 40 times as many as the U.S. Constitution.

**State Government**

Under the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, all powers not granted to the federal government are reserved for the states and the people. All state governments are modeled after the federal government and consist of three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. The U.S. Constitution mandates that all states uphold a "republican form" of government, although the three-branch structure is not required.

**Executive Branch**

In every state, the executive branch is headed by a governor who is directly elected by the people. In most states, the other leaders in the executive branch are also directly elected, including the lieutenant governor, the attorney general, the secretary of state, and auditors and commissioners. States reserve the right to organize in any way, so they often vary greatly with regard to executive structure. No two state executive organizations are identical.

**Legislative Branch**

All 50 states have legislatures made up of elected representatives, who consider matters brought forth by the governor or introduced by its members to create legislation that becomes law. The legislature also approves a state's budget and initiates tax legislation and articles of impeachment. The latter is part of a system of checks and balances among the three branches of government that mirrors the federal system and prevents any branch from abusing its power.

Except for one state, Nebraska, all states have a bicameral legislature made up of two chambers: a smaller upper house and a larger lower house. Together the two chambers make state laws and fulfill other governing responsibilities. (Nebraska is the lone state that has just one chamber in its legislature.) The smaller upper chamber is always called the Senate, and its members generally serve longer terms, usually four years. The larger lower chamber is most often called the House of Representatives, but some states call it the Assembly or the House of Delegates. Its members usually serve shorter terms, often two years.

**Judicial Branch**

State judicial branches are usually led by the state Supreme Court, which hears appeals from lower-level state courts. Court structures and judicial appointments/elections are determined either by legislation or the state constitution. The Supreme Court focuses on correcting errors made in lower courts and therefore holds no trials. Rulings made in state supreme courts are normally binding; however, when questions are raised regarding consistency with the U.S. Constitution, matters may be appealed directly to the United States Supreme Court.

**Local Government**

Local governments generally include two tiers: counties, also known as boroughs in Alaska and parishes in Louisiana, and municipalities, or cities/towns. In some states, counties are divided into townships. Municipalities can be structured in many ways, as defined by state constitutions, and are called, variously, townships, villages, boroughs, cities, or towns. Various kinds of districts also provide functions in local government outside county or municipal boundaries, such as school districts or fire protection districts.

Municipal governments — those defined as cities, towns, boroughs (except in Alaska), villages, and townships — are generally organized around a population center and in most cases correspond to the geographical designations used by the United States Census Bureau for reporting of housing and population statistics. Municipalities vary greatly in size, from the millions of residents of New York City and Los Angeles to the 287 people who live in Jenkins, Minnesota.

Municipalities generally take responsibility for parks and recreation services, police and fire departments, housing services, emergency medical services, municipal courts, transportation services (including public transportation), and public works (streets, sewers, snow removal, signage, and so forth).

Whereas the federal government and state governments share power in countless ways, a local government must be granted power by the state. In general, mayors, city councils, and other governing bodies are directly elected by the people.

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| Notes: State and Local Government  Legislative Branch: |
| Executive Branch: |
| Judicial Branch: |
| Describe the pros and cons of the Legislative Branch: |
| Lehi City Government: |

Deseret News 2/1/17

**Utah Federalism Commission Begins Wish List of Returning Power to the State**

SALT LAKE CITY — It feels like Christmas among lawmakers on Utah's Capitol Hill, where they're making a list and checking it twice to detail those areas where they feel the federal government should back off, get out and let Utah run its affairs.

The list, shepherded by the Commission on Federalism, comes at the request of Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, and finds its impetus in the inauguration address by President Donald J. Trump, who promised to return power to the people.

"We are in a unique time," said Utah House Speaker Greg Hughes, R-Draper, during a Wednesday meeting of the commission. "We have a changing administration, we have a committment from this new administration that there is a desire to transfer power back to the states. That is a conversation we have not heard in a long time."

Senate President Wayne Niederhauser, R-Sandy, said lawmakers in Utah and around the country see the changing administration as an opportunity to correct a course that has veered off in the wrong direction.

"I am involved with the Assembly of State Legislatures and a couple other organizations to try to stop this craziness, this drift of power of the states to the federal government," he said. "I say, 'Let's go for it.'"

Sen. Allen Christensen, R-North Ogden and Senate commission chairman, said lawmakers have a blank slate to decide how far they want to take restoration of state's rights and the various committee chairpeople should plunge deep into the details. From those details due in late February, there will be a specific wish list cobbled into a resolution for a vote before the Utah Legislature.

Christensen added that much of the discussion is necessarily philosophical.

"Do we want to reform Medicaid, or do we want to do away with it completely? How far do you want us to go on changing these issues? Do we want to define the level of poverty that we want to assist or do we say it is not government's business?"

Christensen added that he wished the arena of health and human services was a simple as public land issues.

"That is very cut and dried. Give us the land and quit. Let us manage it," he said.

Commission members said there has been a steady erosion of power from the states, which have largely acquiesced that authority to the federal government.

"The states have not done their role in being a check on the federal government," said Rep. Brian Greene, R-Pleasant Grove.

3 comments on this story

The presentation included details about an executive order issued by President Ronald Reagan on federalism, which required a careful analysis of a new federal policy's necessity and consultation with states where possible.

Ten years after that order, a General Accountability Office report looked at how many directives were issued by federal agencies and if there had been a review to see if they complied with the principles outlined in the executive order on federalism.

Rep. Lowry Snow, R-Santa Clara, said the Department of Transportation had issued in one year 3,980 directives and 2,053 had been reviewed. In the case of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, there were 1,914 directives issued in a year, but Snow said none were reviewed.

"The reality is that we have lost track of that," Snow said. "We say in physics that nature abhors a vacuum, but that is also true in political power. And that is, if we don't push back and if we don't assert our rights with respect to what our jurisdiction is, that vacuum will be filled, is being filled by the federal government."

Amy Joi O'DonoghueAmy Joi O'Donoghue

Amy Joi is the environmental reporter for the Deseret News.