

The Three Power Branches

The **executive branch** implements laws and coordinates defense. The president is assisted by an elected vice president, the Cabinet and other officials. Laws must be signed by the president to take effect. If the president chooses to reject (veto) a bill, a two-thirds majority vote in Congress can override that veto. Only the executive branch can negotiate treaties.

The **judicial branch** consists of the Supreme Court, the nation's highest court, and federal district courts and courts of appeal. Courts make findings of fact, set procedures, interpret laws and determine whether laws violate the Constitution -- a power known as judicial review, which restricts the powers of the legislative and executive branches.

The **legislative branch** is Congress, in which authorities and responsibilities are divided between the Senate, where each state has equal representation, and the House of Representatives, where the size of state delegations is based on population. Only Congress can enact laws; only Congress can levy taxes; and only Congress can authorize spending of federal funds.