

## Chapter 15 Notes:

State Government divided into 3 branches

Executive- Governor and his offices/departments

- Enforce the laws

Legislative- General Assembly

- Make the laws

Judicial- Courts

- Interpret the laws

From the state constitution, all government comes from the people and must work on for everyone's good

## Executive Branch

- Largest branch of state government
- Governor is the chief executive
- Elected by majority for a four year term
- Can serve two consecutive terms, can come back and serve two more terms after sitting
- Must be at least 30 years old
- Been a citizen of the US for at least 15 years
- Been a resident of GA for at least 6 years
- If governor dies, lieutenant governor takes over
- If both die, speaker of the house takes over until new governor can be elected
- Formal Powers of the governor:
  - Executive powers- appoint state officials, enforcing civil and criminal laws
  - Legislative powers- sending requests to Gen Assembly, signing bills into law, vetoing bills, calling for a special session of congress
  - Judicial powers- pardon persons convicted of crimes, appoint state justices
- Informal Powers of the governor
- Some are the Result of tradition and customs
  - Some necessary to enforce the formal powers
  - Ability to appoint boards and executive offices (Like Board of Regents)
- Office of the Lieutenant Governor
  - Elected in same election as governor
  - Same qualifications as governor
  - Can serve unlimited terms
  - Takes over for governor in case of incapacitation or if governor is out of state
  - Presiding officer of the state senate
  - Makes committee appointments (power)

- Controls discussion on Senate floor
- Can affect which bills are passed into law
- Other elected officials
  - Attorney General
  - Commission of Agriculture
  - Commissioner of Labor
  - Insurance Commissioner
  - Public Service Commissioner
  - Secretary of state
  - State School Superintendant

## Legislative Branch

- State constitution gives legislature the power to create laws
- Bicameral (originally unicameral)
- House or Representatives
- State Senate
- Only house can write appropriate bills (spending)
- Only senate can confirm appointments
- All bills must be approved by both houses before it becomes law
- 180 members in the House
- 56 members in the Senate
- two year terms, no limits
- House districts are roughly the same size
- Senate districts are roughly the same size
- Districts are redrawn after each census (every ten years)
- Members of the Senate must be at least 25 years old, citizens of the US and residents of GA for at least two years, also residents of their district for at least one year
- Members of the house must be at least 21 years old citizen of the US, citizens of GA for at least two years and residents of their district for at least one year

## Legislative Sessions

- Meets for 40 days per year
- Starts second Monday in January
- Lasts longer because of breaks and recesses
- Lieutenant Governor presides over the Senate
- Speaker of the house presides over the House
- They appoint committees, and chairs, assign bills to committee
- Lieutenant Governor does not vote, Speaker votes when there is a tie

## Committees

- Review bills before they reach the House or Senate

- Allow representatives to screen and become familiar with legislation
- Standing Committees- permanent from one session to the next
  - Appropriations Committee- budget
  - Judiciary Committee- courts and laws
  - Ways and Means- taxes
- Special Committees- called for special purposes
  - Interim Committees- between sessions
  - Conference Committees- reconcile bills
  - Joint Committees- both bodies, working together on a special topic

### Writing Laws

- Can be proposed by any citizen or legislator
- Bills that affect how money is raised or spent comes from House
- Bills must be passed by both chambers of the assembly before approval (Crossover Day)
- Conference committee reconciles differences and both chambers re-vote

### Drawing Districts

- Occurs after each census
- Often contentious
- Gerrymandering

### Judicial Branch

- Roles
  - Interpret state constitution
  - Protect legal rights of citizens
  - Enforce laws of state
- Types of enforcement
  - Constitutional laws
  - Administrative laws (regulations)
  - Case laws (interpretation of laws)
- Due process
  - Citizens are entitled to their rights
  - Government cannot supersede the law
- Felony Crimes
  - More serious crimes (murder, burglary)
  - Punishable by more than a year in prison
  - Fine greater than \$1000
- Misdemeanor
  - Less serious crimes
  - Punishable by less than a year in prison
  - Fine less than \$1000
- Courts

- Supreme Court
  - Seven Justices
  - Elected for six year terms
  - Governor appoints for a vacancy
  - Appellate court (deals with appeals of other decisions)
  - Interpret constitution
  - All death penalty cases are appealed here automatically
  - No witnesses
  - Sets rules for Judicial conduct
- Court of Appeals
  - Appellate court
  - Twelve judges
  - One elected to serve as chief judge
  - Only hears cases appealed to them
- Trial Courts
  - Criminal and civil cases
  - 188 superior courts
  - 49 circuit courts (regional)
  - 70 state courts
  - 159 probate courts
  - 159 magistrate courts
  - 400 municipal courts
  - Each level of court has its own jurisdiction
- Jury System
  - Grand Jury
  - Trial Jury
- Juvenile Justice System