

# High School Arizona Government Primer

**Arizona's state government is structured similarly to the federal government, with three primary branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The Arizona Constitution allocates power among these and has a Declaration of Rights (Article 2), like the US Bill of Rights, protecting individual liberties from state government intervention.**

## **(Article 4) Legislative Branch:**

Arizona State Legislature: This is the law-making body of the state. It consists of two chambers:

- Senate: Made up of 30 senators elected to represent districts across the state.
- House of Representatives: Made up of 60 representatives elected from districts within the state.

Responsibilities: The legislature is responsible for creating and passing laws for Arizona. Bills can originate in either chamber and must pass the Senate and the House before being sent to the Governor for approval.

Districts: Arizona's Senate and House districts are the same; each district elects one senator and two representatives to two-year terms.

Direct Democracy: unlike the US Constitution, Arizona allows citizens to influence the lawmaking process directly. **(Article 4, Part 1, Sections 1-2)**

- Initiative: This process lets citizens propose laws to be voted on by the people of Arizona rather than going through the legislature. This can even be used to propose amendments to the Arizona Constitution.
- Referendum: This process lets citizens block laws passed by the legislature rather than requiring the legislature to repeal them.

## **(Article 5) Executive Branch:**

The governor serves as the key figure in the executive branch, chosen by the citizens of Arizona. The Governor's responsibilities include enforcing state laws, managing the state budget, and overseeing state agencies.

Other Executive Officers: Arizona also **elects** executive officers such as the Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer, and Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each of these officials has specific duties related to their office.

## **(Article 6) Judicial Branch:**

Arizona Supreme Court: This is the highest court in the state, responsible for interpreting the state constitution and laws.

Lower Courts: Below the Supreme Court, Arizona has appellate courts and trial courts that handle different levels of legal cases, ensuring justice is served according to state laws.

## **(Article 7) Elections**

Voting: Arizona citizens 18 years or older have the right to vote in elections for state officials, including the Governor, legislators, and other executive officers, as well as on proposed initiatives and constitutional amendments.

## **(Article 12-13) Local Government**

Counties and Municipalities: Arizona is divided into counties, each with its local government structure. These counties' Cities and towns also have local governments responsible for local laws, public services, and infrastructure.