



South Carolina State Government: The Basics (Info/Answer Sheet)

How is the SC State Government structured?

Like the federal government, the South Carolina government is divided into THREE BRANCHES: the EXECUTIVE branch, the LEGISLATIVE branch, and the JUDICIAL branch. The executive branch's power lies with the GOVERNOR, the legislative branch's power lies with the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, and the judicial branch's power lies with the COURTS. The South Carolina Youth in Government program primarily centers on the legislative branch.

What does the Legislature do?

The South Carolina Legislature is the group of men and women that work to create the LAWS that govern our state. All members of the Legislature must be chosen by the citizens of South Carolina to represent them and the area where they live. These areas are called districts. Each member of the Legislature must live in the district that they represent. This helps the members to get to know the people in their district.

The South Carolina Legislature is divided into two parts called bodies. The HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES and the Senate together are called the General Assembly. The General Assembly normally meets from January through June of each year. The House of Representatives has 124 members. The Senate has 46 members.

During the General Assembly's session, they participate in making new laws, changing old laws and studying what outcome laws will have on the people in their districts and our state. Each member of the General Assembly also works on several House or SENATE committees where the effects of laws are studied.

Any member of each body can make suggestions for new laws. These suggestions are called BILLS. When a bill is first presented, it is read so that every member in that body can hear it. Then the bill is sent to a COMMITTEE to be studied. The committee can change (or amend) the bill, accept the bill or reject the bill. If the bill is changed or accepted by the committee it is then sent to the full body who in turn vote whether to accept the bill as it is, change the bill or reject the bill. When a bill is accepted by all the members of one body, it is considered passed.

The passed bill must then be sent to the other body of the General Assembly for their review. For example, if a bill is passed in the House, it must be sent to the Senate for their review.

The bill then goes through the same process in the second body as it did in the first body. When a bill is passed by both bodies it is sent to the Governor for his or her signature. When the Governor signs the bill it becomes a law. The signed bill is then called an ACT. All the laws are combined to form the South Carolina CODE OF LAWS.



South Carolina State Government: The Basics Worksheet

Word Bank:

THREE BRANCHES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES JUDICIAL ACT COMMITTEE
LAWS EXECUTIVE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COURTS CODE OF LAWS SENATE
GOVERNOR BILLS LEGISLATIVE

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