



Florida State and Local
Government: SS.7.CG.3.7
Legislative Branch
READING #2

Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.3.7 Benchmark Clarification 2: Students will compare local, state and national lawmakers (e.g., city/county commissioners/council members; state legislators [representatives and senators]; and U.S. Congressmen/Congresswomen [representatives and senators]).

The U.S. **federal system (federalism)** allows the national and state governments to share powers and responsibilities. Lawmaking is a power that is shared at each level of government – local, state, and federal.

At the local level, depending on how the local government is organized, lawmakers could be called **city commissioners**, **city council** members, **county commissioners**, or **mayors**. The number of commissioners and/or council members depends on how the city or county government is organized. These local government officials pass **ordinances** that govern the people who live in villages, towns, cities, and counties.

The Florida state government is organized like the federal government. There is a state house of representatives and a state senate made up of **state representatives** and **state senators**. They are all called **state legislators**. State representatives are elected for two-year terms, and state senators are elected for four-year terms. State legislators create state laws (**statutes**) that govern the people who live in the state.

At the federal level, each state has a certain number of U.S. Representatives based on the state's population. Each state also has two U.S. Senators. **U.S. Representatives** serve two-year terms and have no term limits. **U.S. Senators** serve six-year terms and have no term limits. Together, U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators make up the Congress. Congress enacts federal laws, called **acts**, which govern the people of the entire nation.

act - legislation that has passed both houses of Congress, has been signed into law by the president or passed despite his veto, and therefore becomes a law

city commissioner/council member - a member of the governing body of a city

county commissioner - a member of the governing body of a county

federalism - a system of government in which power is divided and shared between national, state, and local government

mayor - the head of government for a city or town

ordinance - a law passed by a city or county that affects local affairs such as traffic, noise, and animal control

state legislator - a member of the Florida House of Representatives (state representative) or Florida Senate (state senator)

state representative - a member of the lower house of a state legislature (Florida House of Representatives)

state senator - a member of the upper house of a state legislature (Florida Senate)

statute - a law passed at the state level

U.S. Representative - a member of the U.S House of Representatives; representatives are elected in districts throughout each state

U.S. Senator - a member of the U.S. Senate elected to represent an entire state, there are two senators per state