

A rustic wooden sign with the word 'WELCOME' in white, block letters is mounted on a teal-painted wooden plank wall. The sign is made of a single piece of weathered wood with rough, splintered edges. It is held in place by two small wooden pegs. Above the sign, a piece of light-colored twine is strung in a triangular shape, with a small metal fastener at the top vertex. To the right of the sign, a vibrant red rose with green leaves is tucked behind the wood. The teal background consists of vertical wooden planks with a distressed, peeling paint finish.

WELCOME

American Culture 1

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Unit 4:

Government and Politics in the United States

Key term

- Branch(es)
- Legislative
- Executive
- Judicial
- Congress
- Senate
- Senator
- House of Representatives
- President
- Vice president
- Cabinet
- Governor
- Mayor
- Bill
- Bill of Rights

Group Work

- ▶ **Government and Politics in the US**
- ▶ Why don't Americans want to have a strong government?
- ▶ **Because they are afraid it will put limits on the personal freedom.**

The organization of the American Government

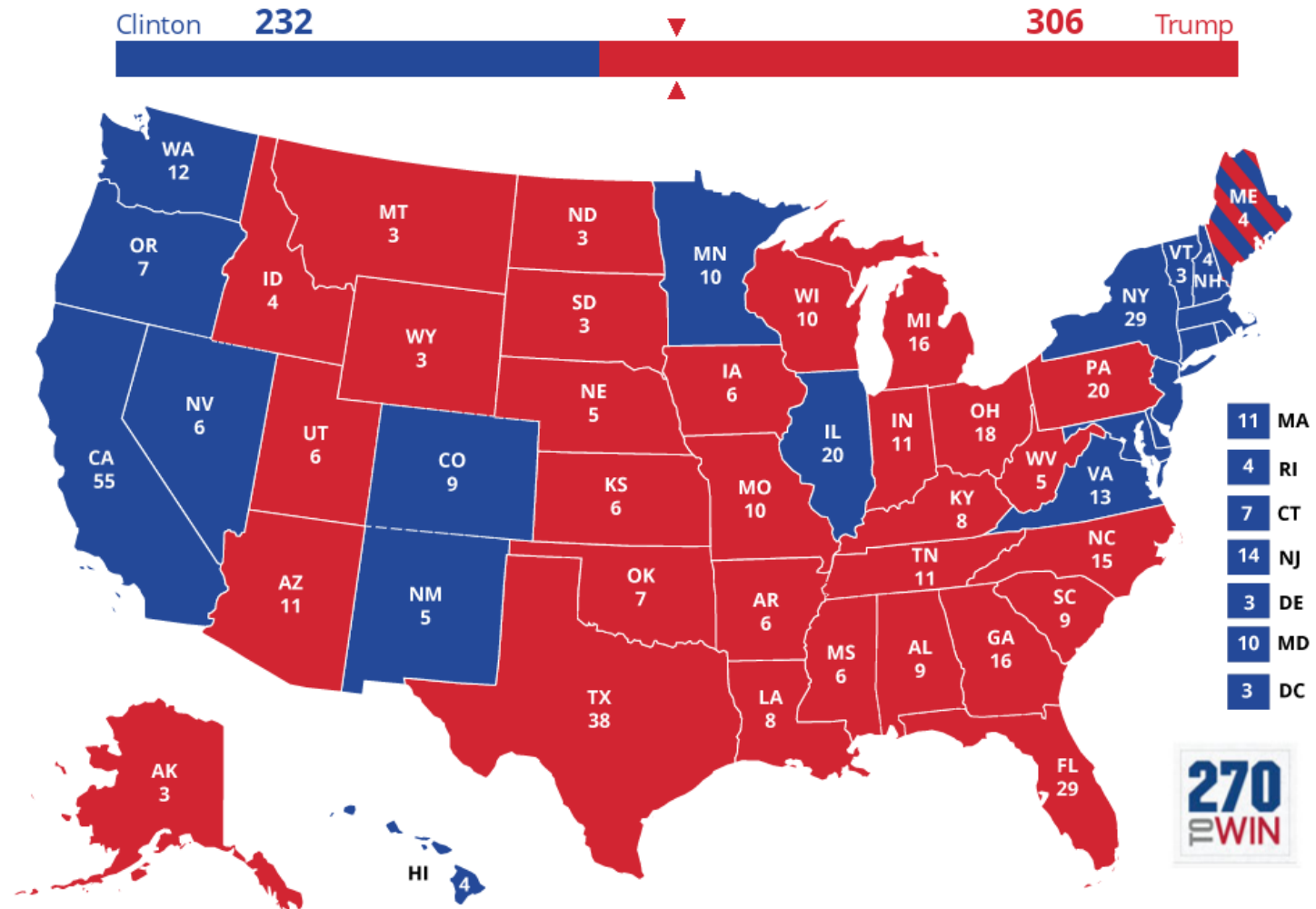
- ▶ The U.S. Federal Government is divided into three branches.
- ▶ What are the three major branches?
legislative, executive, judicial branches
- ▶ What is each branch's major responsibility?
Legislative branch: writes laws
Executive branch: carries out laws
Judicial branch: interprets laws
- ▶ Known as “the separation of powers”

The 3 Branches

The Legislative Branch

- ▶ Commonly known as Congress
 - ▶ Congress has two “houses”
 - ▶ The Senate = 100 Senators
 - ▶ 50 states x 2 senators from each state = 100
 - ▶ The House of Representatives = 435 Representatives
 - ▶ The number of representatives each state has depends on how many people live in that state
- ▶ Basic responsibility: to write laws, ratify treaties

House of Representative Numbers by State



The 3 Branches

The Executive Branch

- ▶ Includes the president, vice president, and the Cabinet
 - ▶ President: Sign or veto bills
 - ▶ The Cabinet: Administer government programs
- ▶ Basic responsibility: to carry out law

The 3 Branches

The Judicial Branch

- ▶ Includes the Supreme Court and lower national courts
- ▶ Decides if laws passed by Congress and signed by the president are “constitutional”
- ▶ Basic responsibility: to interpret the law and determine whether the law is **constitutional**

The Separation of Powers

Why?

- ▶ To prevent any part of the government from becoming too powerful
- ▶ To protect the rights of the citizens

Checks and Balances

Through system of “checks and balances”

- ▶ The Constitution of the United States tries to give each branch enough power to balance the others
 - Each branch has its own responsibility
 - Each branch has power to limit the power of the other branches

Bill of Rights

- ▶ Protect/Guarantee specific person rights and freedom from government interference

The Parties

There are **TWO** important political parties

- Democrats (progressive)
- Republicans (conservative)

Election

- ▶ Members of the House of Representatives are elected for two- year terms while senators serve six-year terms
- ▶ Presidential elections are held every four years on the first Tuesday in November

Requirements to be president:

- ▶ Natural-born citizen
 - ▶ At least 35 years old
 - ▶ Resident of U.S for 14 years
 - ▶ Hasn't served 2 consecutive terms
- ▶ **Watch video on Canvas**

The ideal of free individual

- ▶ Before the Civil War (1861-1865), the American ideal of the free individual was the frontier settler and the small farmer.
- ▶ From the end of Civil War until the Great Depression, the American ideal of the free individual was the successful businessperson.
- ▶ => Government remained small and inactive in order to create the conditions most favorable to the development of the free individual

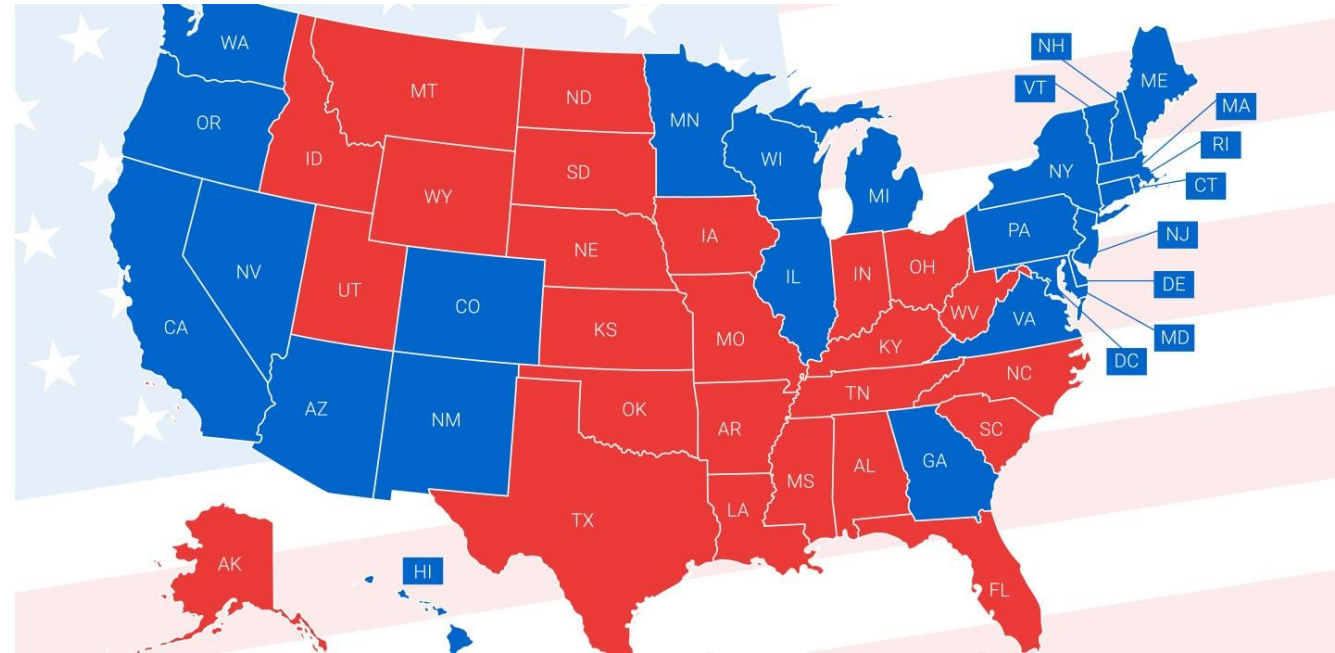
Welfare and Entitlements

- ▶ **Welfare:** Programs such as unemployment benefits, food stamps, and Medicaid (health care for the poor)
- ▶ **Entitlements:** Social Security and Medicare (health care for the retired)
- ▶ Now, the term **welfare is almost never used**, all these government **benefits are referred to as entitlements**

Special Interest groups

- ▶ the group of people who share a common interest and work together to more effectively influence the actions of government
- ▶ These group are often called “ lobbying groups” or “pressure groups”
- ▶ Example: The National Rifle Association (NRA), American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

Blue States Vs Red States



Blue States: giving electoral votes to Democratic candidate/Democrats

Red States: giving electoral votes to Republican candidate/Republicans

Branch	People	Responsibilities
Executive	(1) <u>President</u> <u>Vice President</u> (2) <u>Cabinet</u>	(3) <u>Carry out laws</u>
(4) <u>Legislative</u>	Congress (5) <u>Senate</u> and (6) <u>House of Representatives</u> 100 (7) <u>Senators</u> (8) <u>435</u> <u>Representatives</u>	(9) <u>Write laws</u>
(10) <u>Judicial</u>	(11) <u>Supreme Court</u> and lower national <u>Courts</u>	(12) <u>Interpret laws</u> —

Thank
You

