

# **Civics Quarter Assignment**

**Mr. Primeaux**

#### 12.4.4

Article II of the Constitution talks about the President, Vice President and the powers they hold in the Executive branch. The President has the power to enforce the laws passed by Congress. For a person to be eligible for office, he has to be a citizen of the United States by birth, be at least 35 years old, and live in the United States for 14 years. Once elected, his term is up to four years, and he can serve for two terms.

The way a President is elected is by an “indirect election.” Two candidates are nominated by presidential electors from each state on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The presidential electors, or the Electoral College, are 538, which represents the number of senators and representatives in a state and 3 for the District of Columbia. The candidate who receives the most popular votes in a state wins all the electoral votes.

After the President is elected, he has to be inaugurated into office at noon on January 20. The ceremony takes place at the Capitol in Washington D.C. The newly elected President and the old President ride together from the White House to the Capitol for the ceremony. Then the new President gives his Inaugural Address, administered by the chief justice or any other official that is allowed to do it.

A President can also be removed from office if he dies, resigns, unable to carry out his duties or is impeached. If this is the case, the Vice President will take his place. After the issue with Nixon, Congress set up the Presidential Succession Act of 1947. After the President and Vice President are unable to serve, the line is first the Speaker of the House, the *pro tempore* of the Senate, cabinet officers starting with the secretary of state and then the rest of the 13 departments in the cabinet. Sometimes a President does something bad and goes on trial for an impeachment. An impeachment is brought forth by the House and the Senate serves as a court.

The Chief Justice is the judge and the Senate is the jury. With a two thirds vote, a President can get impeached.

#### 12.4.5

Judicial power rests in the Supreme Court. There are nine justices on the Supreme Court and they stay Supreme Court Justices as long as they are on “good behavior”, which practically means for life or when they want to retire. The Supreme Court follows “in law and equity”, taken from Great Britain. They cover cases that have to do with representatives from foreign governments and cases where a state is a party. They also hear cases that are appealed from lower courts, from the federal district courts when an act of Congress was unconstitutional, or cases that are appealed from the highest court of a state.

#### 12.5.1

During the years, the Bill of Rights has not changed but has been applied in different ways. Our basic freedoms that had one meaning and purpose when our Founding Fathers decided on them have different meanings now. When the Constitution was written, the Bill of Rights was there in order to protect citizens from congressional acts and state/ local governments that might threaten someone’s rights. It also placed limits on government’s regarding our right to religion, speech, press and other liberties we have. Now, we have gone even further to protect our rights to freedom stated in the first amendment. We made the Establishment Clause that says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.” This means the government cannot make a specific religion for our country and make us practice it. We, as Americans, are not all known as “Catholics” or “Buddhists.” We all have our rights to believe in

what we want and there is a diversity of religions. There is also the Free Exercise Clause, which doesn't let the government get in the way with our free exercise of religion. This just takes our freedom of religion even further. The government cannot take away our beliefs, but if the beliefs violate a state or federal law, the government has the right to act on it. One example of this is the case of *Reynolds v. United States*. George Reynolds was a Mormon that lived in Utah with two wives. His religion permitted this but the state prohibited it. According to the government, people can worship whatever they want, as long as it doesn't violate laws that protect the safety, health and morals of the community. Freedom of press stated in the first amendment has been taken a little further too. The media and newspapers are allowed to talk about others, as long as there is fact in them. For example, a radio station cannot just go out and say that Tom Cruise is a homosexual, without any facts to back it up.

The 14<sup>th</sup> amendment talks about citizenship and the due process clause. Someone that is born or naturalized in the United States is a citizen in his or her country and ours. It has been applied to the state and how it can't take away anyone's freedom of speech, press, assembly, or religion. The Bill of Rights also protects a citizen's protection of unreasonable search and seizures, right of an accused to have a lawyer, and protection from cruel and unusual punishment.

#### 12.6.4

As citizens of the United States, we have the rights stated by the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment to freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion. If we don't like how the government or a corporation works or acts, we can express ourselves. Some ways of expressing ourselves are voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing,

and running for political office. Voting is a very easy way of expressing ourselves. We vote to elect our state Senator, which listens to us and does what we need. We vote for our President, which represents our country and keeps it safe. Campaigning is something else citizens can do to be active their country. You can join committees and help support the person you want to get into office. When someone makes direct contact in order to persuade government officials to support the policies that interest their group, they are lobbying. Lobbyists are usually former government officials, lawyers or public relations experts that want to sway a certain group. Groups of people can also voice their opinions by demonstrating, petitioning, and picketing. An example of that are the Union worker strikes at the supermarkets. They didn't like their benefits, so they demonstrated and tried to change them and get what they want. Finally, the biggest way a person can participate in the government is by running FOR political office. I think that it is the best way because you can make sure your opinion is heard, even though it is the hardest.

### 12.8.1

Because we were given our right to the freedom of press and speech, the media and talk and write about anything they want to, as long as there is fact in it. This can be good and bad. It is good because it shows the public the different angles of a story and lets us decide on what we want to believe. It is bad because it can sometimes be bias again a certain group or minority. For example, the War on Iraq is broadcasted on NBC. NBC is owned by GE, which makes smart bombs for the war that aren't that good. Now, they don't go out and say that our bombs miss; they only say what our bombs do hit. There is truth in it, just not complete truth. Now-a- days, our media is filled with sensationalism, teasers and propaganda. The press (newspaper) states the facts more and therefore, is better if you just want the facts. You can also reply to the stories in

the newspaper by editorials. Editorials are good because it gives people the chance to express their feelings on a certain subject. We are lucky to be a country where the government lets us talk about what we want and even put it in the paper, as long as there are facts to back it up, of course.

### 12.9.3

There are several advantages and disadvantages of the federal, confederal, and unitary system of government. A federal government is one that divides the powers of government between the national government and the state. A confederal government is a government with a loose union of independent states. A unitary government is one that gives all of its main powers to the national or central government. An advantage of a federal government is that both the state and the national government have power. It is balanced so neither have too much power. A disadvantage is that the people don't have as much say because all the power goes to the state and nation as a whole. An advantage of a confederal government is that each state has its own say and own rules that only apply to them. It's good for them and other states because they can have the laws they want to and other states don't have to have them if they don't want too. A disadvantage is that a confederal government can sometimes be unorganized because all of the different laws. Travelers would not know what is going on in each state and might break laws they weren't aware of. I think that a unitary government is all-together bad. A strong central government cannot be good in my eyes because then the nation has too much power. We, as a people would not be able to express ourselves and it would be more like a realistic Communist country, where everything is influenced by the government, not the people.