

Attachment D: The Big Picture

Virginia’s government is made up of three branches: the Legislative branch, the Executive branch, and the Judicial branch.

The Legislative branch consists of the General Assembly. The General Assembly is charged with making the laws of the Commonwealth, appointing state agency heads and board members, approving the budget, electing State Supreme Court justices; Court of Appeals, circuit, and district court judges; members of the Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission; the Auditor of Public Accounts; the commissioners of the State Corporation Commission; and members of the Virginia Worker’s Compensation Commission.

The Executive branch is made up of the Governor of Virginia and his cabinet. The Governor is the head of the Executive branch. He prepares the biennial budget, administers the state bureaucracy, appoints cabinet officers, and grants pardons.

The Judicial branch consists of the courts, which decide when the citizens of the Commonwealth have broken laws and whether laws agree with Virginia’s Constitution.

All three of these branches of government are interconnected. The General Assembly makes the laws, and the Judicial branch makes sure those laws are constitutional. The courts have judges, and the General Assembly elects those judges to their positions. The Governor introduces the biennium budget and the General Assembly must approve that budget. These are just a few examples of how the branches of government work together. All three branches work together under a system of checks and balances to ensure that the citizens of the Commonwealth have a fair and just system of governance.

Source: <http://legis.state.va.us/CapitolClassroom/TeacherResources/GeneralAssemUnit.htm>

The Big Picture Virginia Government			
Branch of Government	Made Up Of	Primary Responsibility	Example of a Check on Another Branch
Legislative			
Executive			
Judicial			