

1.01 govt flvs notes

Sociology, Human Rights



This document outlines the structure and functions of the US government. Americans follow the laws and policies within three levels of government: Local, state, and federal. The Constitution guides us through the correct processes in the creation and implementation of a law. Laws place limitations on citizen behavior. Most citizens agree with the laws because the law benefits the common good and protects most basic rights. Common good: greatest possible conditions of society for the greatest number of people living in it. Citizens' duty is to abide by the laws. Helps protect order and rights of all. No one, not even the president, is above following the law. US citizens can challenge the laws through courts. Citizen consent to laws and upholding the rule of law affirms the legitimacy of government. Consent to agree or give permission. Rule of law: The principle that those who govern and those who are governed must obey the law and are subject to the same laws. Legitimacy: lawful, complying with recognized rules, standards, or traditions. The US Constitution protects the natural rights of human beings. The principle of natural rights has origins in ancient civilizations and religious teachings but the modern concept traces to the Enlightenment. Enlightenment: time of change in Europe in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when philosophers focused on reason as a way to solve problems. John Locke: natural rights = life, liberty, and estate. Locke and founders of the US believed God granted each person these natural rights as individuals. Other philosophers agree with the idea of natural rights but said human beings had them because of their ability to reason and act as rational beings. Either way, the idea of individual or natural rights is a vital principle of the US government. Social contract: idea that people agree or consent to government authority and in return the government protects the people and their rights. If the social contract is not upheld, the people could withdraw their consent.

abolish the govt and form a new one. Democracy means rule of the people. Two forms dem: direct and representative Direct democracy; every citizen vote or consent to every decision. Impractical Rep demo: people consent through their votes to give certain people the power to make decisions on their behalf. Majority rule determines decisions, the law, or policy supported by the majority of people through their representatives. Republic is aka for rep govt Rep govt: form of govt where peeps elect leaders to make decisions on their behalf In usa most official positions carry a term of office where people have the opportunity to choose someone else to represent them With each elec of new reps the peeps and gov are renewing citizen consent and the social contract. Founders of us want to prevent a govt grow to large where it would become unrestrained and infringe on peeps rights Small = limited power Peeps and reps ensure that govt continues to only use powers which the people consent as necessary Rule of law: NO ONE IS ABOVE OR BELOW LAW If law broken then cert procedures will be followed Laws exist to protect safety and order all citz must obey them it is their duty Fail rule of law: govt uses authority and chaos takes over. Rule of law protects safety and rights including rights to pursue goals and seek justice WHY ARE THESE PRINCIPLES SO IMPORTANT Idea of nat or indiv rights are fundamental Federalism: division of powers among the local, state, and federal governments Rule of law: the governed and the governing must obey the law and are subject to the same law Limited govt: idea that govt should be restricted to its basic function of protecting the people's natural rights Indiv rights: specific rights that belong to each person Consent of the governed or social contract: the idea that people agree or consent to the govt auth and in return the govt protects the peeps

ans rigts Sep of pwers: dividing the govt powers into legislative, executive and judicial branches.