

Texas government assignment



Texas wanted a really limited government because of their bad experience with Governor Davis. Legislature meets one every two years in odd year for 140 days. (They barely get to do anything). It's because they didn't want the government to do much. (Sometimes the legislature would hurry in passing laws so they would have a lot of mistakes.)(like in 1971 the Texan legislature honored a serial killer named Albert Solar who was a Boston strangler. SO Texas was laughed at throughout the US). Popularly elected Judges Jackson democracy: its where the people elect everyone)

However just letting people choose the Judges could be bad. Its because most of the people don't even know the Judges they are voting for. They just vote by party or even if they just like how his name sounds!) Legislature has limited ability to enact laws. (US constitution is 7000 words. Texas constitution is 90000 words! It's so detailed so every time the legislature wants to pass a law they might find themselves in conflict with the constitution.) (Since 1789 the US has passed 27 amendments. But since 1879, Texas has passed 467 amendments!

That's a lot of amendments!) Public debt limitations (limit how frequently it can borrow money) No income tax (at the state and local level.)

Decentralized government (we even have independent school districts)

Criticisms of the Constitution: Excessive wording Statutory detail (statute meaner a legislative act passed into law) (there's a lot of laws in the constitution itself) Confusing and obsolete language (those terms belong to the 19 the century. SO they don't make sense anymore today) Excessive amendments (467 amendments)

Major Reform Efforts: Governor Preston Smith wanted this >> Constitutional Revision Commission 1972 (the commission will come up with a new proposed constitution) o One-fourth length of 1876 constitution o Four-year terms for executives and senators o Annual legislative sessions o Broader legislative authority (too it was much shorter, it took all of those details)

Constitutional Convention of 1974: Legislature unable to pass revisions (the new Governor opposed Governor Proton's views) (so unfortunately they didn't pass that proposed new constitution) Poor lattice leadership

Opposition of special interests (there were many interest groups who thought that the new constitution negatively affect them) Disagreement over right to work provision (created a split among the Democrats) Constitutional Vote of 1975: (all of the special interest groups condemned the new constitution and they flooded the TV with negative ads) Voters were defeated in 250 of 254 counties!

Distrust of government (the people don't trust their government) Piecemeal Reform - Amendment Extended executive and state senators terms County Tax Appraisal (one tax bill for all of the cities, school districts, etc.) Texas Bill of Rights: Freedom of Speech Freedom of Press Freedom of Religion Right to keep and bear arms Prohibits seizing property without Just compensation (Eminent Domain: taking your property for public use, but they have to pay you fair market value) Prohibits imprisonment for debt Prohibits outlawry (outlawry used to mean in 1876: a person is now outside the protection of the law. So you can just shoot him and nothing would happen. Prohibits transportation (transportation used to mean in 876: to exile or banish someone from the state) Prohibits monopolies No unreasonable searches

and seizures Right to trial by Jury Amendments to the Bill of Rights: Equality under the law -1972 (for women too) Rights of victims - 1979 (when you're assaulted, and the criminal who attacked you is released, the state of Texas has to notify you) Texas Amendment Process: How to propose and amendment in Texas: approval of 2/3 of both the State Senate and 2/3 of the State House. It doesn't require governor's approval. Approval: approval of a simple majority of voters in a special election Preparation for election: Attorney General approves wording of amendment.

Secretary of state prepares the ballot Advertised in a local general newspaper Posted at County Courthouse for 30 days Criticisms of this process: Low voter turnout (most of the time the turnout is only 8%) (There are only two times in which there was a turnout over 20%: one for gambling (25%) and one against gay marriage (28%)) Poor wording of amendments Amendments that have little importance for the average voter Though voters articulate in amendment process, there is no statewide participation for initiative, referendum, and recall Texas doesn't have initiative, referendum, and recall. But some states do. Initiative: a procedure by which citizens propose the adoption of a law or an amendment by gathering a prerequisite number of signatures. Referendum: an election that permits voters to determine if a law will go into effect. However this might lead to mob rule. This isn't representative democracy, instead this is direct democracy. Recall: an election that permits voters to remove an elected official.