

Comparitive political
systems questions on
the government and
constitutions of ch...



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Chilean System of Government Regime The government of Chile is a presidential government in which the president is elected by popular vote. The constitution mandates a runoff election if no candidate receives more than 50% of the popular vote. The presidential term is four years and the president cannot be reelected to a second term. 1 The president serves as the head of state as well as the head of the government. The government is comprised of an executive branch, the legislature, and the judicial branch that share a balance of power. The executive branch is also composed of sixteen ministries and four cabinet level agencies that serve exclusively at the president's discretion. 1, 2 The president is responsible for maintaining public order, assuring external national security, and serving as commander in chief of the armed forces. 3 In addition, the president has the sole authority to appoint Supreme Court judges, Army commanders, and diplomats without the confirmation of the legislature. 4 Many of these broad presidential powers were granted by the constitution adopted in 1980. 5

Legislative

The Chilean legislature is a bicameral structure known collectively as the National Congress. It is composed of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, which co-legislate and share oversight responsibilities. 6 These branches are noted as the lower and upper house. The Chilean legislature has a committee system that writes legislation and approves bills for voting. In addition, there is an amendment process that allows legislators and sometimes the presidential branch to offer amendments to bills before coming to a vote. 7 The National Congress is presided over by the President of the Senate who is elected by the body of senators. In addition to the senators elected by public vote, groups such as former ministers of the <https://assignbuster.com/comparitive-political-systems-questions-on-the-government-and-constitutions-of-chile/>

Supreme Court, former Comptroller General, former Commanders in Chief of the Army, Navy and Air Force, and former Presidents of the Republic are also represented in the Senate. 8 The executive branch may at times act as a legislature with the power to introduce bills, make amendments, and submit constitutional amendments. 9

Elections and Electoral System

Chiles constitution, adopted in 1980, discusses at length the electoral system for the President as well as the National Congress. In addition, it determines the requirements of age and citizenship required to run for office. The Presidency requires that the candidate get an absolute majority of the popular vote, which may require a runoff election if there are more than two candidates. 10 The legislature is also elected by direct ballot from electoral districts established by law. Several select groups are also represented in the Senate. These are former government leaders who have previously served and are nominated and elected by the current government bodies such as the Supreme Court. 11 The presidential term is four years and is limited to one consecutive term. 12 Election for the Chamber of Deputies is held every four years when the entire body is reelected. 13 The term of the Senate is eight years and half the Senators come up for reelection every four years. 14

Rights and Freedoms

The constitution of Chile states, " Equality before the law. In Chile there are no privileged persons or groups. In Chile there are no slaves, and those who should set foot on her territory become free". 15 This implies that there are no special constitutional protections for individual groups. These

constitutional guarantees extend to all races and ethnicities without
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prejudice. However, there is a continued dissent for the protection of the indigenous population for the protection against economic exploitation. 16 The constitution provides for freedom of religion and a 1999 law prohibits discrimination based on religion. 17 The constitution also establishes economic rights of the citizenry. It states, " Freedom to acquire ownership over all types of property except that which nature has made common to all men or which should belong to the entire Nation, and that the law so declares. The above is without prejudice to what is prescribed in other precepts of this Constitution". 18 All Chilean citizens have the right to private property and economic activity, though there are no special protections granted by the constitution.