CE 7 a; State Government

The form and structure of the government of the State of Virginia is decided in the Constitution of Virginia. The branches of the state government are set up basically the same way they are in the national government. We have a judicial, executive, and a legislative branch. These branches act the same way they do in the national system but they do it for the state. The national government worries about things that happen to the whole country. The state government only worries about things that happen inside the state.

The **legislative branch** for Virginia is known as the *General Assembly*. Like the federal government, it is a bi-cameral (2 house) legislature. The houses are called the ***Senate*** and the ***House of Delegates.***

The **executive branch** for the state is run by the *governor*. He has the same basic

responsibilities as the president but on the state level. You can think of the governor as the president of the state. He is helped by a lieutenant governor which would be the same as the vice president on the national level.

The state judicial system has 4 levels of courts. From highest to lowest they are:

The ***Supreme Court of Virginia***- this court is the most powerful in the state. It interprets the laws of the state and the Virginia Constitution. It hears mostly appeals cases. Next is the ***Appeals Court of Virginia*** which hears all appeals cases from the lowers courts.

The 2 lower courts are consider “local” courts but are still part of the state system.

The Circuit Court hears all felony cases as well as larger civil cases for the first time. It also hears appeals cases from the District Court. The District Court is the lowest court in the state system. It hears misdemeanor criminal cases as well as small civil cases. On the same level is the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. This court is responsible for cases that involve juveniles (people under 18 years old) as well as divorce, child support, and child custody cases.

What do you know?

1. How many branches of government does the State of Virginia have?
2. 1 c)2
3. 3 d) 4
4. What are the 2 houses in the General Assembly called?
5. Senate/House of Delegates c)Senate/House of Representatives
6. House of Delegates/Congress d)Congress/Senate
7. What is the official name for the president of the state?
8. Lieutenant Governor c) Bill
9. Governor d) Executive