

## Federal and State Governments

During the constitutional convention, one of the most important issues on the minds of the members was making the central government of the United States strong without making the states weak. As a result, they created the *federal system* of government. Within this system, the central or federal government was given powers that related to governing the people in all the states. These powers are called the “delegated powers” because they were powers that were delegated or given over by the states to the federal government. The state governments were given powers related to governing people within each state. These powers are called the “reserved powers” because they were the powers that the states reserved or kept for themselves.

The federal government was given powers related to waging war. It can declare war against another nation and wage a war. In order to do this, it was also given the powers of raising and maintaining armed forces, including an army and a navy, It can also make treaties with other nations. Also, the federal government can regulate trade among the states and between the U.S. and other nations. Although the federal government can place tariffs on products from other nations, it cannot place tariffs on goods transferred between states. In addition, the federal government was given the power to coin money and to punish counterfeiters, people who make fake money. It can also collect taxes directly from the people across the nation rather than having to ask the states for money. The federal government can make laws and can try and punish violators of federal laws through a system of federal courts and prisons throughout the nation.

The state governments reserved for themselves powers related to governing the people within the states. For example, they kept what are called “police powers” which are the powers related to setting up and operating police, fire, health, sanitation, sewage, water supply, and welfare departments. A state can collect taxes from the people living within that state to pay for these services and other government functions. States also have control of how students are educated and how elections are conducted. States can raise and maintain armed forces. These forces are called the National Guard because they can be called to duty by the President of the United States in a national emergency or crisis. The states can also make laws and try and punish violators of state laws through a system of state courts and prisons.