

Chapter 24: Governing the States

Section 3

Lecture Notes

The title 'AMERICAN GOVERNMENT' is centered on the page. 'AMERICAN' is in a white, serif font with a thin black outline. 'GOVERNMENT' is in a larger, bold, yellow, sans-serif font with a thick black outline. The text is set against a background of a stylized American flag with blue stars and red and white stripes.

AMERICAN
GOVERNMENT

PEARSON

► Objectives

1. Describe the main features of the office of the governor.
2. Summarize a governor's roles, powers, duties, and the limitations of the office.
3. List and describe the other executive offices at the State level.

▶ Key Terms

- **recall:** a petition procedure by which voters may remove an elected official
- **item veto:** the power to eliminate one or more items from a bill without rejecting the entire measure
- **clemency:** powers of mercy that may be shown to persons convicted of a crime
- **pardon:** the power to relieve someone of the consequences of a crime

▶ Key Terms, cont.

- **commutation:** the power to reduce a sentence to a less severe punishment
- **reprieve:** the power to postpone the execution of a legal sentence
- **parole:** the power to release a prisoner before a sentence is completed

▶ Introduction

- What are the roles and powers of a governor?
 - Governors act as executives, administrators, legislators, party leaders, and ceremonial figures.
 - Many gubernatorial powers are executive in nature, such as appointing and removing officials and preparing the State budget.
 - Governors also have some legislative and judicial powers as part of the system of checks and balances between government branches.

► Qualifications

- The **formal qualifications** for governor are not many.
 - One must typically be 25 or 30 years old, have lived in the State for at least five years, and be a qualified voter.
- **Informal qualifications** vary from State to State.
 - These include qualities such as race, sex, religion, party, and experience.

► Overview of Governors

- Checkpoint: What are common characteristics of governors?
 - Today, most governors are white male lawyers in their 40s and 50s.
 - Most governors have been State legislators or held another elected office.
 - Only 29 women have been governors; eight women are governors today.
 - Only two African Americans have ever been governors.

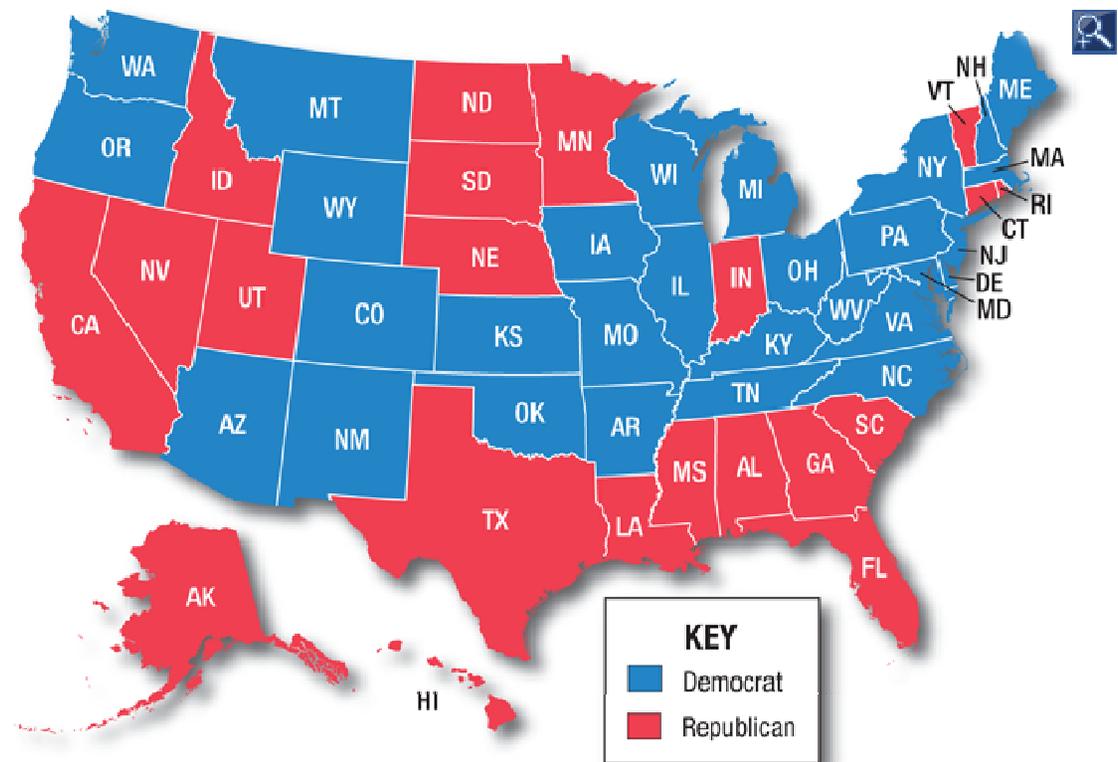
▶ Selecting the Governor

- Governors are elected by popular vote.
 - Major party candidates are usually chosen in party primaries. In some States they are picked by conventions.
 - In half the States, the governor and lieutenant-governor run as a team.
- Most governors serve four-year terms and are limited to two terms.
 - In most States, if the governor dies or resigns, the lieutenant governor becomes governor.

▶ Party Control

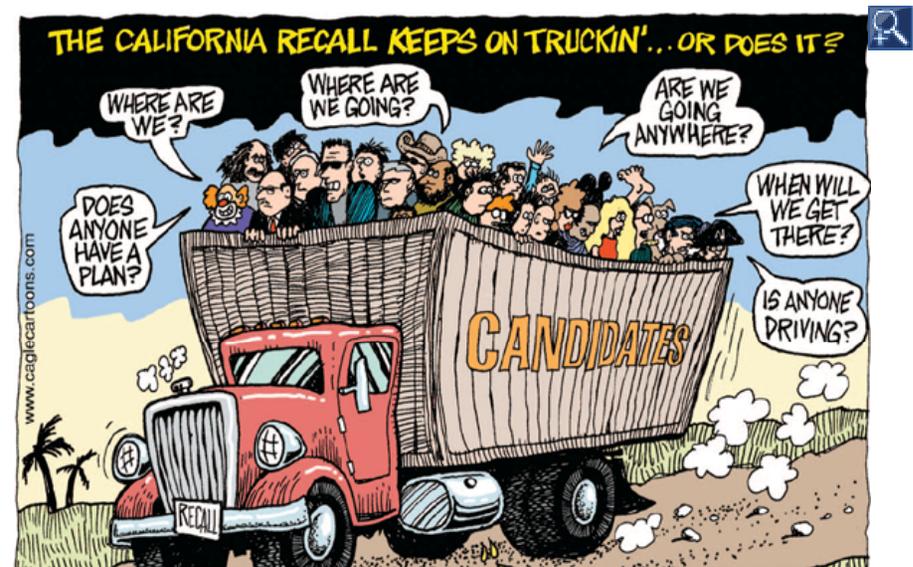
- The two major parties compete in gubernatorial elections in every State.

- Which party did your state's governor belong to in this year?



► Removal

- Governors can be impeached or, in 18 States, recalled by the voters in a special election.
 - In 2003 California had a recall followed by a special election with 135 candidates.



Why did the cartoonist include a clown in this picture?

▶ Executive Powers

- The governor shares executive powers with other officials, many of whom are popularly elected.
 - The governor is thus “first among equals.”
- The governor commands a State’s national guard units.
- The governor can appoint and remove many State officials.
 - Major appointees must often be approved by the State senate and meet qualifications set by the legislature.

▶ Executive Powers, cont.

- The governor is the State's chief administrator, ensuring that State laws are faithfully executed.
 - Day-to-day administrative responsibility must be delegated to State agencies supervised by the governor.
- In most States the governor prepares the budget that goes to the legislature for approval.
 - This gives the governor great influence over State spending.

▶ Legislative Powers

- The governor has three key legislative powers.
 - The **message power** lets the governor recommend legislation through public appeals and State addresses.
 - Governors can call **special sessions** to deal with extraordinary situations.
 - Governors can **veto bills** passed by the legislature. In most States a veto can be overridden by a two-thirds majority of the legislature.

▶ Legislative Powers, cont.

- In most States, governors have only a few days to sign or veto a bill.
 - In most States a bill that is neither signed nor vetoed becomes law.
 - Most States give governors an item veto, letting them strike out part of a bill with out vetoing the whole measure.



▶ Judicial Powers

- Checkpoint: What are a governor's judicial duties?
 - Most governors have several tools allowing them to show mercy to people convicted of crimes.
 - Governors can pardon a convicted person or commute their sentence to a lesser punishment.
 - They can also delay sentences with reprieves or shorten them with parole.

► Miscellaneous Powers

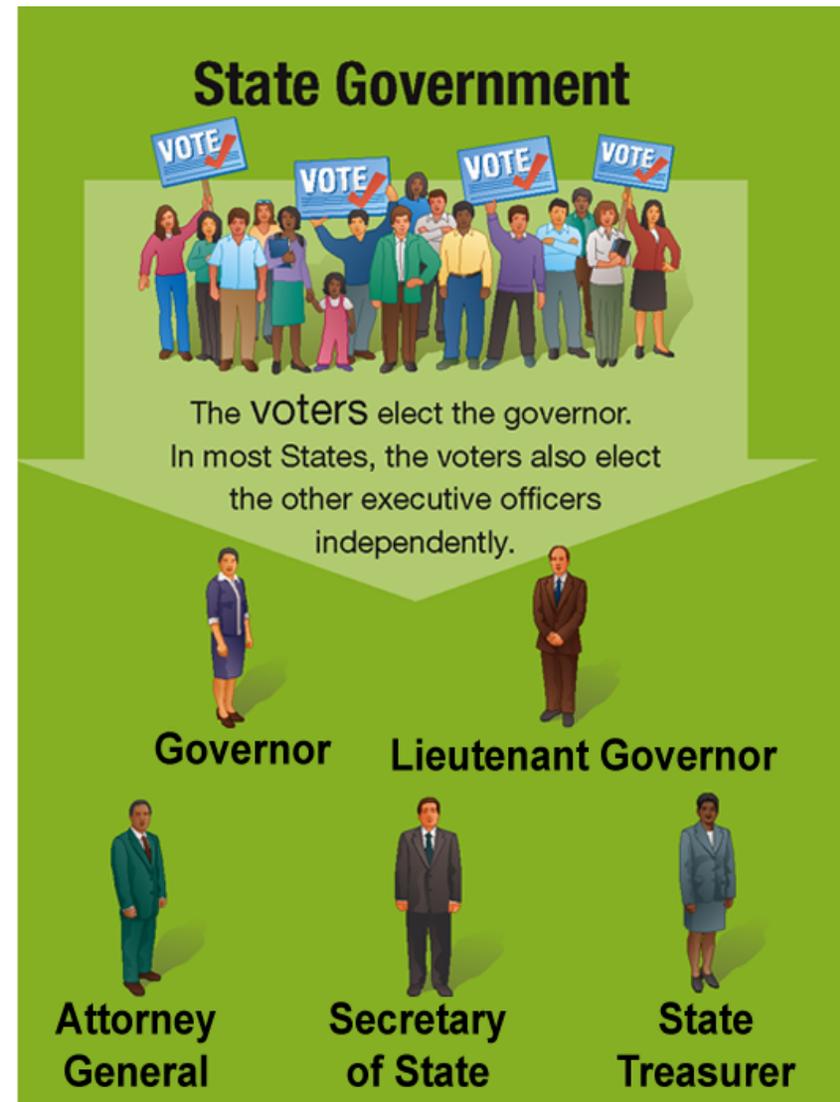
- Governors have a number of time-consuming duties not specified in their official powers.
 - These duties come from the governor's public status and visibility.
 - Governors receive official visitors and distinguished guests.
 - They also address many organizations, settle labor disputes, promote State interests outside the State, dedicate buildings, and endorse causes.

▶ Other Executive Officers

- Most States have the following four popularly elected executive offices:
 - **Lieutenant governor**: In half the States, this officer presides over the senate. In many others this is a part-time office that comes into play mainly when the governor must be replaced.
 - **Secretary of State**: The chief clerk and records-keeper of the State, usually responsible for administering election laws.

▶ Other Executive Officers, cont.

- The **treasurer** manages the State's funds and is often the chief tax collector and the person who pays State salaries and bills.
- The **attorney general** is the State's chief lawyer. He or she acts as a legal advisor, supervises local prosecutors, and represents the State in court.



▶ Review

- Now that you have learned about the roles and powers of a governor, go back and answer the Chapter Essential Question.
 - How much power should State government have?