

Our founding fathers believed that governments of the world were morally obligated to serve the citizens of their country by protecting their natural rights of life, liberty, and property. The Constitution of the United States divided the government into three equal branches to ensure a balance of powers by creating the separate branches. Each part of the government has a limited power to guarantee that one branch does not become too powerful. The United States government is composed of three branches: the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branch. The Legislative branch, which includes the House of Representatives and the Senate, creates the laws. The Executive branch, composed of the President, Vice President, and the President's cabinet, enforces and ensures that we carry out the laws. The Judicial branch, including the Federal and State courts, interprets the existing laws. I believe this arrangement supports a fair and balanced structure in our government to allow it to function in the best interests of the people it represents. Through the system of checks and balances, each branch has the ability to provide oversight. For example, the president can veto legislation created by Congress. However, Congress can then bypass the president's wishes with a majority, two-thirds vote. In addition, the Supreme Court has the power to overturn unconstitutional laws. These justices are nominated by the President before being confirmed by the Senate. All branches must collaborate with one another to create the country's policy.

We frequently can observe modern day political parties disrupting the bipartisanship system in order to promote their partisan agenda. Parties have begun utilizing tactics such as gerrymandering, filibusters, anonymous holds, and veto powers to gain an advantage and circumvent the balances of power. Gerrymandering's disrupting effects on bipartisanship has been mentioned in the previous blog.

According to the Senate.gov site, filibusters are planned long deliberations to delay or block legislative action from enactment. Historically, this occurred in both the House of Representatives and Senate but has later been revised that only the Senate allowed unlimited debate. The most recognizable filibuster was Strom Thurmond in 1957. Thurmond spoke for 24 hours and 18 minutes, the longest uninterrupted filibuster in history of the United States. Strom attempted to delay the Civil Rights Act of 1957 but ultimately was unsuccessful as it passed into law anyway. In some instances, the minority side utilizes filibusters in order to prevent certain legislation that they may not favor. In attempt to ban the filibuster, the Senate agreed to set regulations. The Senate Cloture rule mandates that 60 members of the U.S. Senate must agree and vote to end the debate. Currently, the Senate is divided evenly, 50 Republicans, and 50 Democrats. Kamala Harris, being the Vice President, holds the tie breaking vote that gives a small 51-50 majority to the Democrats. However, due to the filibuster rules, the Democrats are still short nine representatives to end any Republican opposition. Therefore, having a simple majority does not guarantee that you will be able to promote the policies of your party. Consequently, bipartisanship is even more important in order to create and pass vital new legislation. Unfortunately, we all too often witness the inability for our elected leaders to agree and work together towards common goals and policy. With both parties unlikely to switch sides, it creates a log jam in the Senate and they often fail to make positive momentum on new legislative policy. The inability to work together can negatively impact the people that the leaders are supposed to be representing. Today, President Biden and the Democrats are looking

to decrease the Senate Cloture rule in order to pass their legislation. We constantly hear rumors of attempting to eliminate the current filibuster rules. Obviously, Republicans are opposed to this since their voice will not be heard and the Democrats could easily push their agenda based on their 51 vote majority.

In the midst of all these obstacles to creating new legislation, the Executive branch often utilizes executive orders to bypass the legislative process and instantly make policy changes. Originally, they were designed to allow the President to create emergency acts in order to protect the nation. Executive orders seemingly are becoming a quick way to bypass the normal process of creating new legislation. President Biden has issued over 50 executive orders within his first month in office with 20 of them directly reversing President Trump's policies. Executive orders have the same power as federal law but are issued only by the President. Executive orders can be challenged though. Legal proceedings can be brought forward in courts of law to challenge the executive orders and in many cases render them void.

To operate efficiently, each branch must communicate with each other and work together to provide the best solutions that benefit American citizens. To date, we have witnessed way too much partisanship that has limited the ability for elected leaders to effectively govern and legislate. The original intention of the Founding Fathers created a co-equal set of branches that were designed to maintain a system of checks and balances while carrying out the will of the people. Regrettably, modern day politics have seemed to forget that original idea and all too many times create obstacles to effective leadership. Many of our political leaders speak about reaching across the aisle to work towards enacting the will of the people. In reality, I think we have actually observed very limited instances of this occurring in our political system. We continue to press for changes and positive movement towards a truly optimal working relationships that benefits all people.

Sources:

[https://www.usa.gov/branches-of-government#:~:text=Legislative%E2%80%944Makes%20laws%20\(Congress%2C,Supreme%20Court%20and%20other%20courts\)](https://www.usa.gov/branches-of-government#:~:text=Legislative%E2%80%944Makes%20laws%20(Congress%2C,Supreme%20Court%20and%20other%20courts))

https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Filibuster_Clature.htm

<https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/what-is-the-senate-filibuster-and-what-would-it-take-to-eliminate-it/>

<https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2021/politics/biden-executive-orders/>