

# Vote Missouri!

ELECT YOUR SENATORS



## Senators—The Voice of Missourians

The men who wrote our U.S. Constitution in 1787, the Framers, knew the people should have a big voice in their own government. But they knew that direct democracy—where all of the people vote all of the time on all of the issues—would not work very well.

They decided that the best way for people to have a voice in their government was to have them elect people who would make the laws for them. They called this lawmaking body Congress. They decided there would be two parts to Congress—a House of Representatives and a Senate. The House of Representatives would be based on population, but every state, regardless of size, would have two Senators. That is why there are 100 Senators today—two from each of the 50 states.

When Missouri became a state in 1821, the men who wrote our state constitution used almost the same idea. They called Missouri's lawmaking body the General Assembly, and it had two parts—a House of Representatives and a Senate.

### HELP WANTED

#### Senator for the State of Missouri

He or she must be:

- 1 at least 30 years of age
- 2 a qualified Missouri voter for 3 years before election
- 3 a resident of the district chosen for representation for 1 year before election

The number of Missouri senators has changed through the years. The last change to the number of senators was in 1966 when Missouri voters decided there would be 34 state senators who would come from 34 equally divided districts. That is why you have three senators—one who makes laws that affect our state and two who make laws that affect our nation. Missouri senators are elected every four years, and U.S. senators are elected every six years.

## Senator Facts

1. Missouri's most famous U.S. senator was Harry S. Truman — the 33rd president of the United States.
2. Missouri's first U.S. woman senator was Jean Carnahan. Her husband, Mel Carnahan, was the Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate when he died in a plane crash October 16, 2000. He won the election anyway and the governor appointed Jean Carnahan. Claire McCaskill became Missouri's second woman senator in 2006.
3. The Lieutenant Governor of Missouri presides over the Missouri Senate.
4. U.S. senators can run for re-election as many times as they want. Missouri senators have term limits — they can be in office only 8 years, which is two 4-year terms.

## LEARNING EXTENSIONS

- 1 Find out who your Missouri and U.S. senators are at [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov) using your zip code. Write down the contact information for your state senator and email to ask what he/she thinks is the most important thing about being a state senator. Do the same thing for your U.S. senator. Go to [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) to the Senators link. Senators are listed alphabetically by state.
- 2 As a class or in groups, read through a newspaper and look at what issues and events are reported on. Decide if the issue or event is something that would most likely be of interest or concern to your state senator or to your U.S. senator.
- 3 Discuss the qualifications for being a Missouri senator. Are these reasonable? Should there be more, for example a requirement that senators be high school graduates? Why or why not?

### MISSOURI STANDARDS ALIGNMENT:

GLE—SS3-A1, C, CA2, 3, 1.6 (for grades K-8)

CLE—SS2C, CA 2, 3, 1.6 (for grades 9-12)