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## MARYLAND GOVERNMENT

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Maryland government is based on a written compact known as the Constitution of Maryland. The State has had four constitutions. The first was adopted in 1776 during the Revolutionary War, the second in 1851, and the third in 1864. The fourth and present constitution was adopted in 1867. It consists of a declaration of rights, the operational sections of the Constitution proper, and those amendments ratified to date.

The source of all power and authority for governing the State of Maryland lies with its citizens. The Constitution's Declaration of Rights makes clear "That all Government of right originates from the People, is founded in compact only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole; and they have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter, reform or abolish their Form of Government in such manner as they may deem expedient." (Art. 1)

Thus, while responsibility for promoting the public interest is vested in specific officers and agencies of State government, actual governing authority remains with the registered voters of Maryland. A registered voter must be eighteen years of age or older, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Maryland thirty days prior to the date of an election.

Believing that it would be too cumbersome for all persons to participate directly in the operation of government, the framers of Maryland's Constitution of 1867 followed precedent established in earlier Maryland constitutions by delegating power to elected representatives. They also continued to separate powers of government into three distinct branches—the executive, legislative, and judicial—which exercise certain checks and balances on each other.

### *EXECUTIVE BRANCH*

The Executive Branch, consisting of various constitutional officers and agencies, implements and enforces Maryland's laws and provides executive direction within a centralized administration. The chief executive officer is the governor, elected by the voters for a four-year term each even-numbered year that is not a presidential election year. The governor is responsible for ensuring that Maryland's laws are effectively executed; that certain appointments as provided by the Constitution or by law are made; that a budget is presented annually to the legislature; and, as commander in chief of the military, that the armed forces of the

State are able to meet any emergency. The governor may veto legislation passed by the legislature, and the governor appoints judges to the State judiciary. The governor is assisted by the lieutenant governor, who runs for election on a joint ballot with the gubernatorial candidate. Duties of the lieutenant governor are limited to those assigned by the governor. The governor and lieutenant governor each must be at least thirty years old and a resident and voter of Maryland for the five years immediately preceding election.

Other statewide executive officers are also provided for in the Constitution. The comptroller of the treasury superintends the fiscal affairs of the State. The State treasurer accounts for all deposits and disbursements to or from the State treasury. The secretary of state attests to the governor's signature on all public documents and oversees all executive orders, commissions, and appointments. The attorney general serves as legal counsel to the governor, the legislature, and all State departments, boards, and most commissions. Each of these executive officers serves a four-year term. The voters elect the comptroller and attorney general. The treasurer is selected by joint ballot of both houses of the General Assembly, and the secretary of state is appointed by the governor. An important agency of the executive department is the Board of Public Works, composed of the governor, the comptroller, and the treasurer. The Board approves all sums expended through State loans, most capital improvements, and the sale, lease, or transfer of all real property owned by the State.

Until recently, Maryland, like most states, had experienced a steady proliferation of governmental agencies, boards, and commissions as the need for public services increased. Between 1969 and 1972, the executive branch of government was reorganized to bring agencies with related functions together under a new departmental structure. The General Assembly passed legislation creating twelve new cabinet-level departments, encompassing nearly 250 separate governmental entities. In order of their creation, the twelve departments were: Health and Mental Hygiene, Budget and Fiscal Planning, Natural Resources, State Planning, Personnel, General Services, Human Resources, Public Safety and Correctional Services, Licensing and Regulation, Economic and Community Development, Transportation, and Agriculture. The State Department of Education became a principal