

The Georgia Constitution of 1777

As a state, Georgia needed a more permanent form of government than the "Rules and Regulations." An election was held to elect **delegates** to a state convention to write a new constitution for Georgia. The constitution was completed in February of 1777. The new constitution not only recognized the concept of **popular sovereignty**, it also recognized a new principle of **separation of powers**. This meant that each part of the new state government would have separate and distinct powers that no other branch could share.

Although the new constitution appeared to create three branches of government, it gave the most power to the **legislative branch**. The constitution set up a unicameral, or one-house legislature, named the House of Assembly. The legislature had the power to create laws, and to appoint officials to the **executive** and **judicial** branches.

The **framers** of the Georgia Constitution of 1777 made sure that the power of government did not rest with any one person. Because of their experiences with the king, they made sure that the governor had limited powers and could only serve a one-year term. They also made sure that the governor could not serve **consecutive** terms. Also, the governor did not have the power to veto laws. The governor was an **executive** in name only.

The legislature, or House of Assembly, voted twelve of its own members to serve on an executive council. This council had the power to **veto** the governor and grant **pardons**.

Counties Not Parishes

The constitution set up [eight counties](#) to replace the colonial [parishes](#). To see a map of the counties, click on the hyperlink in the previous sentence. Each county would have its own officials, courthouse, schools, and [militia](#). In addition, each county had their own court called the [superior court](#). The constitution also stated how the cases could be tried.

Let's Review

The GA Constitution of 1777 established the following:

- Unicameral Legislature
- Legislature elected the governor
- Governor 1-year term
- Superior court in each county
- Freedom of religion, press, and Trial by jury

Strengths and Weaknesses of the GA Constitution of 1777

The Strengths of the GA Constitution of 1777

- Separation of Powers
- Republican form of government
- Basic Rights Protected

The Weaknesses of the GA Constitution of 1777

- One chamber legislature too powerful
- No Check on legislative power
- Weak governor