**Constitution USA: Federalism**

The Constitution is all around us; it affects each of us, every day. We are told that it is the most important document to our daily lives, yet most people cannot remember what it says or the difference between the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Americans are known for standing up for their rights and insuring their voices are heard, but where does this almost instinctual aspect of the American psyche come from? It can be found in the American people and in our founding document, the Constitution. In this episode, you we will explore the delicate balance of federalism. This guide will help build your understanding of the Constitution in your life.

**Constitutional Battle Ground State**

1. Is it fair that a local business owner has to be caught between the laws of the state and federal government? Whom should he listen to? Why?

2. What did the Founding Fathers have in mind when they created a shared power system?

3. Why don’t DEA agents shut down the Harborside Health Center in Oakland, CA?

**The Big Bang Theory**

4. Why does Akhil Reed Amar consider the writing of the Constitution the “hinge of history?”

5. After fighting a war to leave a strong government (Britain), why did the Founding Fathers want to create a yet another strong government?

**Philadelphia and the Constitutional Convention**

6. What were some of the issues the delegates found with creating a strong central government?

7. In this new system, what were some negative outcomes of the balance of power?

**Power Struggle: Tug of War**

8. In what ways does the federal government step on the rights of the states? Why?

9. What is the advantage of the state government making laws for the people?

**We Can’t Go it Alone!**

10. Why would the government concern itself with building a dam in the middle of the desert?

11. How did the Great Depression put our nation in crisis? What actions did the federal government take to ensure the general welfare of the United States?

**Separate but NOT Equal**

13. What federal body ruled that segregation in public education was illegal? How did the state government push back against that decision?

**The Commerce Clause**

14. In the case of Wickard v. Filburn, why did Wickard believe he was right? Why did he not win his case?

What is your opinion on the issues below—who should have the final word, the state governments or the federal government? Justify each decision.

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| ISSUE | STATE | FEDERAL | JUSTIFICATION |
| *Marijuana* |  |  |  |
| *Gun control* |  |  |  |
| *Toilets (energy conservation)* |  |  |  |
| *Coal plants for energy (air quality)* |  |  |  |
| *Wheat Farmers* |  |  |  |