

2.1: Introduction

In the United States, law and government are interdependent. The US Constitution establishes the basic framework of the federal government and imposes certain limitations on the powers of government. In turn, the various branches of government are intimately involved in making, enforcing, and interpreting the law. Most law comes from Congress and the state legislatures. Courts interpret the laws and apply them to cases. We will learn more about the US Constitution's framework in [Chapter 6](#), but we will begin learning about the American court system by introducing [Article III](#) of the US Constitution.

Laws are meaningless if they are not enforced. Companies have to make many decisions daily, from product development to marketing to maintaining growth. These decisions are based on financial considerations and legal requirements. If a company violates a law, it is often held accountable through litigation in courts.

Sidebar

Because federal judges are appointed for life, businesses cannot directly influence the actions of the judicial branch. However, they can do so indirectly by lobbying Congress on laws that it considers and lobbying the president concerning enforcement priorities. While all states have a comparable three-branch system, in some states [such as Wisconsin], judges obtain office through partisan elections. In such states, businesses can seek to influence the judicial branch by supporting judges whose philosophy favors business generally or a particular industry. For these reasons, in choosing whether to litigate in state or federal court, businesses should consider that federal judges may be more likely to take politically unpopular actions. ~ John W., Judge

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