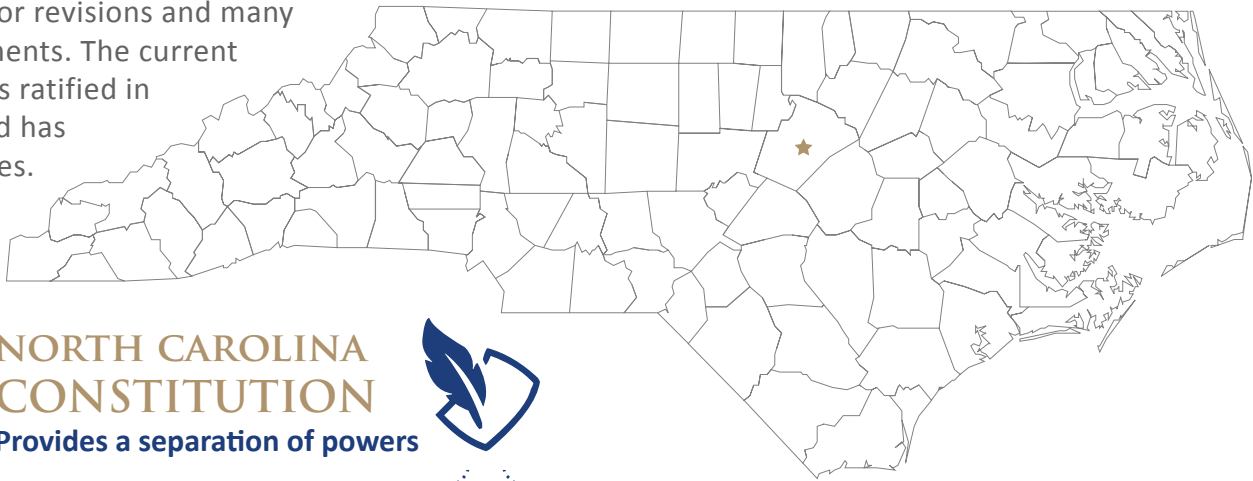


# NORTH CAROLINA'S 3 Branches of Government



**The Constitution establishes three branches of government.** Each branch is equally important and has its own specific job, but they also work together to make sure that the government is doing its best to take care of its people. This framework provides a separation of powers and prevents any one branch from becoming too powerful. The first North Carolina Constitution was created in 1776 followed by two major revisions and many amendments. The current form was ratified in 1971 and has 14 articles.



**NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION**  
Provides a separation of powers

## LEGISLATIVE

Makes laws

- **SENATE** — 50 elected senators total, one each from 50 districts
- **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES** — 120 elected representatives total, one each from 120 districts

## EXECUTIVE

Carries out laws

- **GOVERNOR** — the elected head of the Executive Branch
- **CABINET SECRETARIES** — chosen by the Governor to oversee the Executive Branch agencies

## JUDICIAL

Interprets laws and constitution

- **SUPREME COURT** — 1 Chief Justice (head of the Judicial Branch) and 6 associate justices elected to 8-year terms by North Carolina citizens
- **COURT OF APPEALS** — 15 elected judges sit in rotating panels of 3
- **SUPERIOR COURTS** — divided into 50 districts and empanels juries and hears all felony criminal cases, big civil cases, and appeals from district courts
- **DISTRICT COURTS** — divided into four categories (criminal, civil, juvenile, and magistrate) and are located in the county seat of each of North Carolina's 100 counties

### DID YOU KNOW?

*The Supreme Court of North Carolina is the state's highest court. It was founded in 1819 and is 200 years old. North Carolina's court system, called the General Court of Justice, is a state operated and state-funded unified court system.*

