

Texas Constitutions Cheat Sheet

Constitution of Coahuila y Tejas (1827)

- Texas was united with Coahuila as a single state unicameral legislature with twelve deputies: two from Texas
- Catholicism was official state religion
- Judiciary tried cases, but no interpretation
- Community property system
- Homestead exemption
- Education a constitutional mandate
- Slavery Outlawed.

Constitution of Republic of Texas (1836)

- Modeled after U.S. Constitution
- Bill of Rights
- Separation of Powers & Checks & Balances
- Bicameral legislature
- Community Property & Homestead exemption
- President & Vice President

Constitution of 1845

- Bicameral legislature
- Sep. of Powers & Checks & Balances
- Elected representatives
- Democratic form of government
- Appointed judicial positions
- Limited debt, uniform taxation, income taxes

Civil War Constitution (1861)

- Adopted after Secession
- Adapted 1845 to Confederate Constitution
- No emancipation
- Resumed slave trade
- Preserved causes of states' rights
- Kept laws that did not contradict Confederate changes

Constitution of 1866

- Required to conform to U.S. Constitution
- Major changes to institutions of state government
 - 4 year governor's term
 - Comptroller & Treasurer elected
 - Specified judicial jurisdictions
- Created plans for education & public improvements systems
- Mostly restored 1845 Constitution

Reconstruction Constitution (1869)

- Heavy policy content
- Piecemeal constitution:
 - Tried to accomplish a lot, but mostly failed
- Centralized power in executive branch
- Limited power of legislature
- Often seen as being "forced" upon Texas by northerners
 - Massive public opposition
 - Led to Constitution of 1876

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The Texas Constitution (Constitution of 1876)

- 16 Working Articles:
 - Art. 1: Bill of Rights
 - Arts. 2-5: Powers of Government and Branches
 - Art. 6: Suffrage
 - Art. 7: Education
 - Art. 8: Taxation & Revenue
 - Art. 9: Counties
 - Art. 10: Railroads
 - Art. 11: Municipal Corporations
 - Art. 12: Private Corporations
 - Art. 13: Repealed
 - Art. 14: Public Land & Office
 - Art. 15: Impeachment
 - Art. 16: General Provisions
 - Art. 17: Amending
- Statutory Constitution:
 - Long and detailed
 - 440+ amendments since 1876
- Principles:
 - Bicameralism
 - Democratic Government
 - Separation of Powers
 - Checks & Balances
 - Limited Government
- Amending:
 - 2/3 margin in both chambers of state legislature to propose
 - Printing in official newspapers
 - Simple majority of voters approve in order to ratify
- Problems:
 - Weak powers for governor
 - Limited legislature
 - Most offices, including all of judiciary, are elected
 - Overly specific provisions for local government
 - A 19th Century Constitution that allows for adequate governance in the 21st Century