

Lawmaking

Street Law, Chapter 2

Chapter 2: Lawmaking

- ▶ Legislatures make laws in the United States.
- ▶ However, the executive and judicial branches of government also have a role in lawmaking.
- ▶ Sometimes, government agencies, appellate courts, and even voters themselves can act as lawmakers.

Legislatures

- ▶ Federal and state legislatures and local lawmaking bodies all have the power to pass laws.
- ▶ Federal law prevails when statutes conflict.
- ▶ Lawmaking bodies respond to the needs of citizens by introducing legislation in the form of bills.

New Laws

- ▶ **When bills are approved and passed by legislatures they become laws.**
- ▶ **If disputes arise regarding the meaning of laws, they may be resolved in court.**

Agencies

- ▶ **Legislative bodies usually write only general laws.**
- ▶ **Government agencies then develop rules and regulations that make laws more specific.**
- ▶ **Although rules made by government agencies become law without being voted on by lawmakers, the agencies themselves often hold public hearings before issuing proposed rules and regulations.**

Courts

- ▶ **Courts also make laws by establishing precedents.**
- ▶ **A person who loses a trial can sometimes ask a higher court to review and change the result of that trial.**
- ▶ **When an appellate court decides a case, its written opinion sets a precedent for similar cases in the future.**

International Lawmaking

- ▶ In addition, international laws are established through treaties, or agreements between nations.
- ▶ Various international laws regulate international commerce, ownership of property, and other multinational issues.
- ▶ The United Nations, formed in 1945, maintains a system of international courts and has become the most important institution in the area of international law.