**II. Supreme Court**

1. Supreme Court Justices

* Nine justices make up the Supreme Court
* Number established by Congress in 1869
* **Chief Justice –**
* 8 associate justices
* Justice’s roles are not defined in the Constitution but have developed through laws and tradition
* Main job of Supreme Court Justices is to hear and rule on cases involving federal laws

1. Appointing Justices

* President appoints justices for life or until they retire with good behavior
* President usually selects individuals with similar beliefs to become justices
* Senate must approve the president’s nominations

1. Removing a Justice

* Can be impeached for “treason, bribery, and other high crimes of misdemeanors”

1. Justice’s Background

* More than 100 men have held the position and only 4 women
* Most justices have a law degree and were previously judges
* **William Howard Taft –**

1. How Cases Reach the Court

* **Writ of Certiorari –**
* Court will hear these types of cases when the lower court made an error in handling the case
* Cases also reach the Court on appeal
* Occurs when lower courts rule a law unconstitutional
* If the Supreme Court dismisses an appeal the lower court’s decision becomes final

1. Selecting Cases

* Justices recommend which cases should be heard
* Chief Justice puts cases on a “discuss list”
* Justices meet on Fridays to vote on which cases they will hear
* **Rule of Four –**

1. Court’s Procedures

* **Continuous Session –**
* Take periodic “recesses” as breaks
* Following 2-week sitting the Court has recess
* Justices work on paperwork, review potential cases, and write opinions
* **Opinions –**
* Any justice can write an opinion on any of the cases that the rule on
* Dred Scott Decision (1857) – All 9 justices wrote opinions explain their opinion about the case

1. Four Types of Opinions

* **Unanimous Opinion –**
* **Majority Opinion –**
* **Concurring Opinion –**
* **Dissenting Opinions –**