

LATINOS READY TO VOTE (LRTV) ©

- **BE PART OF THIS GREAT COUNTRY**

- **BE PART OF THE DEMOCRACY**

- **BE PART A VOICE THAT IS HEARD**

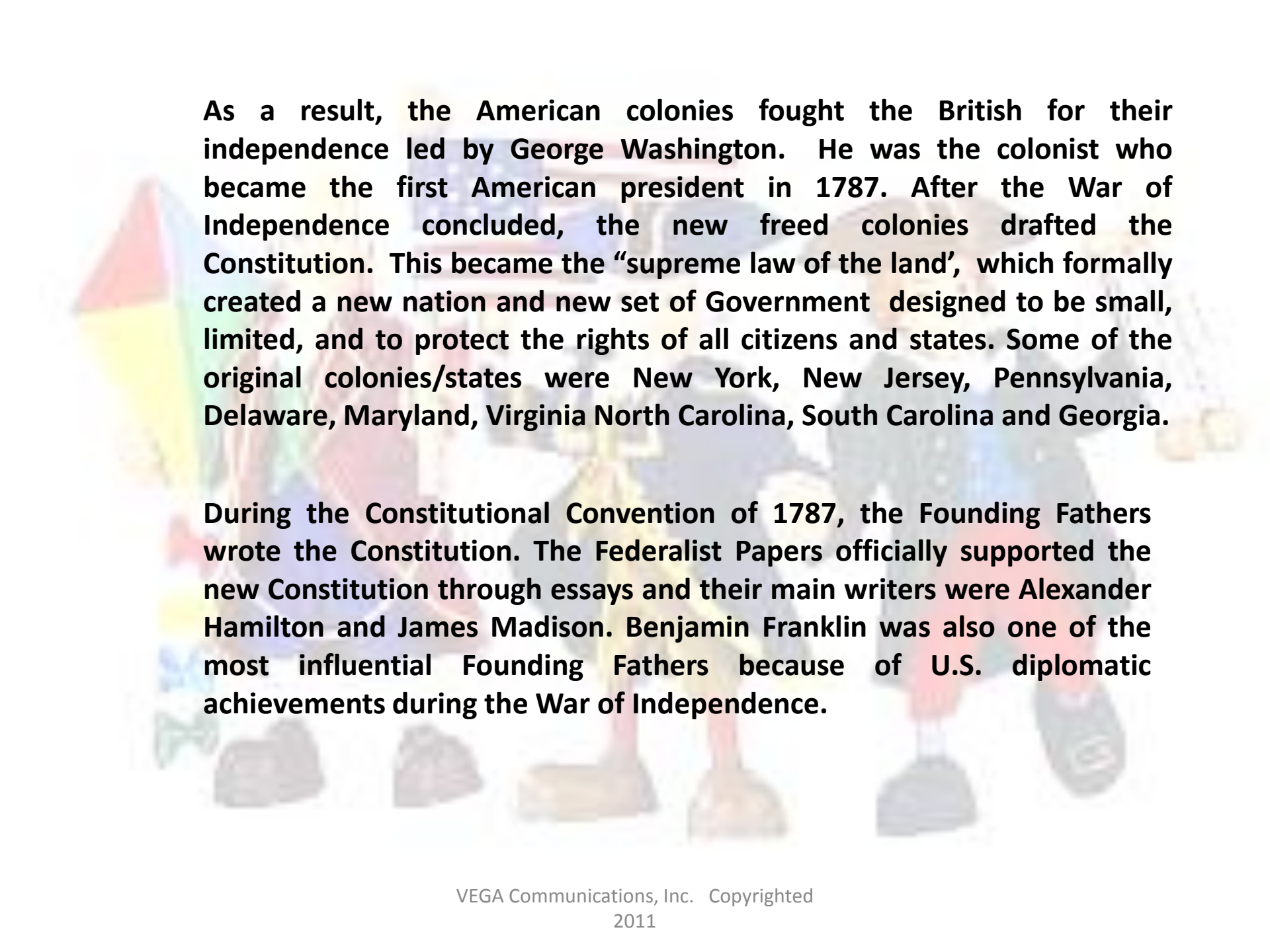
BECOME A CITIZEN AND

VOTE!



When the British Puritan Immigrants came to America, they came here seeking religious freedom, political liberty and to escape persecution. They settled in North America throughout New England and shared the land with Native Americans. Eventually, they established 13 American colonies and also brought Blacks as slave from Africa. And although they were separated into 13 colonies, all colonies kept the ideals of religious and personal freedom as their important idea. So when king George tried to overtax the American colonies, the colonies fought the British over taxes. British soldiers stayed in private homes, and fought the government because settlers felt they did not have self-government, or self-determination.

In 1776, Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. He made it clear that all American citizens had the right to be free from oppression. When the American colonies signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776, they demanded independence from Great Britain and wanted to officially be recognized as “free people.” Thus, the Declaration of Independence stated that American colonies had Natural Rights to life, liberty and, pursuit of happiness.



As a result, the American colonies fought the British for their independence led by George Washington. He was the colonist who became the first American president in 1787. After the War of Independence concluded, the new freed colonies drafted the Constitution. This became the “supreme law of the land”, which formally created a new nation and new set of Government designed to be small, limited, and to protect the rights of all citizens and states. Some of the original colonies/states were New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

During the Constitutional Convention of 1787, the Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution. The Federalist Papers officially supported the new Constitution through essays and their main writers were Alexander Hamilton and James Madison. Benjamin Franklin was also one of the most influential Founding Fathers because of U.S. diplomatic achievements during the War of Independence.



Government

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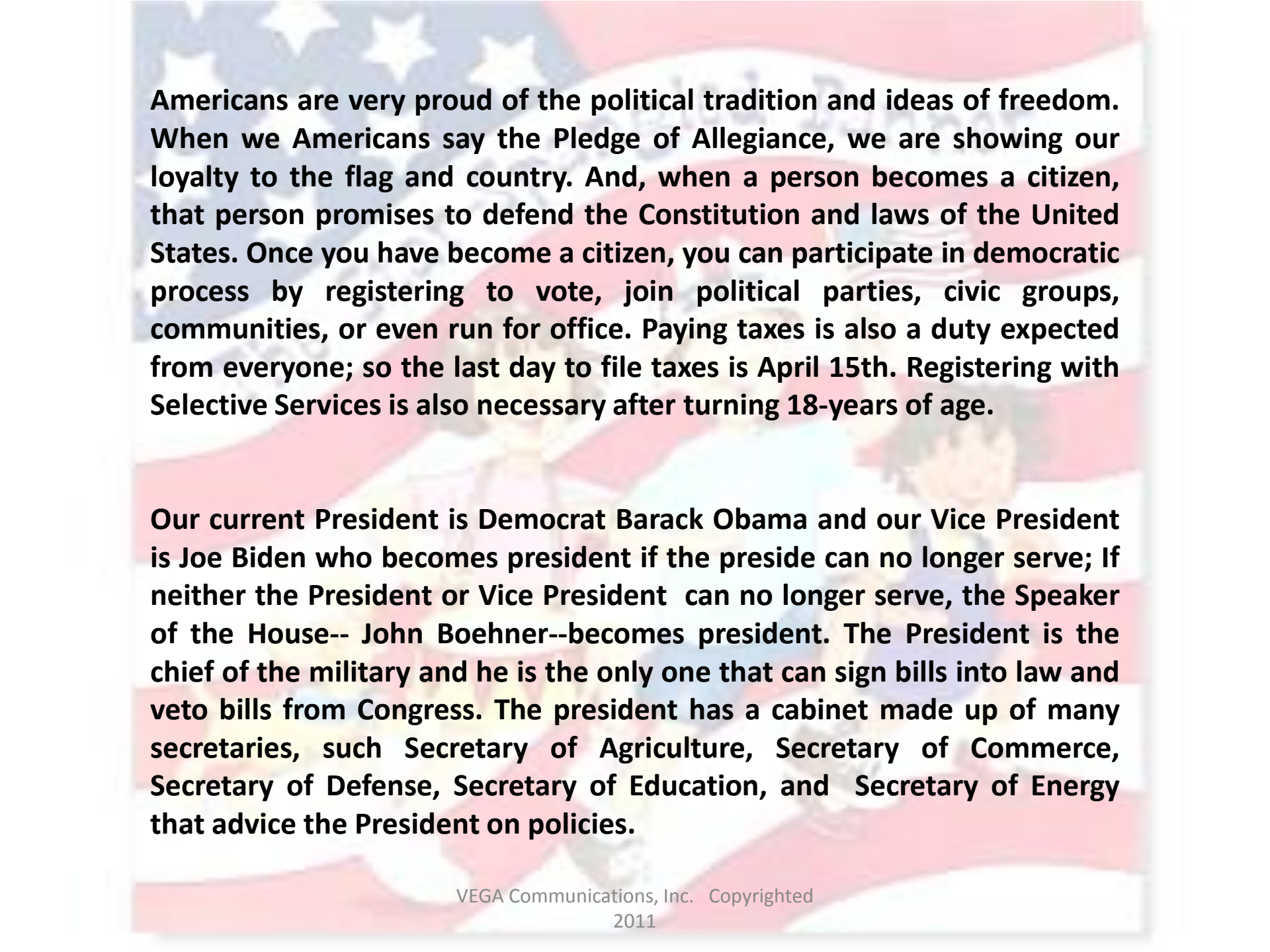
United States of America

Based on these ideals of personal freedom, self-determination, and limited government, the new Constitution officially created 3 branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial. These are also a system of “checks and balances”, or separation of powers. Also, Under the Constitution, the president is in charge of the executive branch. The Congress--House and Senate--is in charge of making federal laws. The Judiciary branch is in charge of reviewing and explains laws. The most important court is the Supreme Court. It interprets the laws to see if they protect the Constitution.

Congress has 100 senators with 2 senators representing each state (we have 50 states). The House of Representatives has 435 House members each representing an equal number of citizens from their respective state's districts. Senators are elected for 6-years terms and House members are elected for 2-years term. Some states have more House members because their populations are greater. The president also can only get elected in the month of November for 4 years. All elected members to Congress come from the 2 major political parties, Democrats and Republicans.

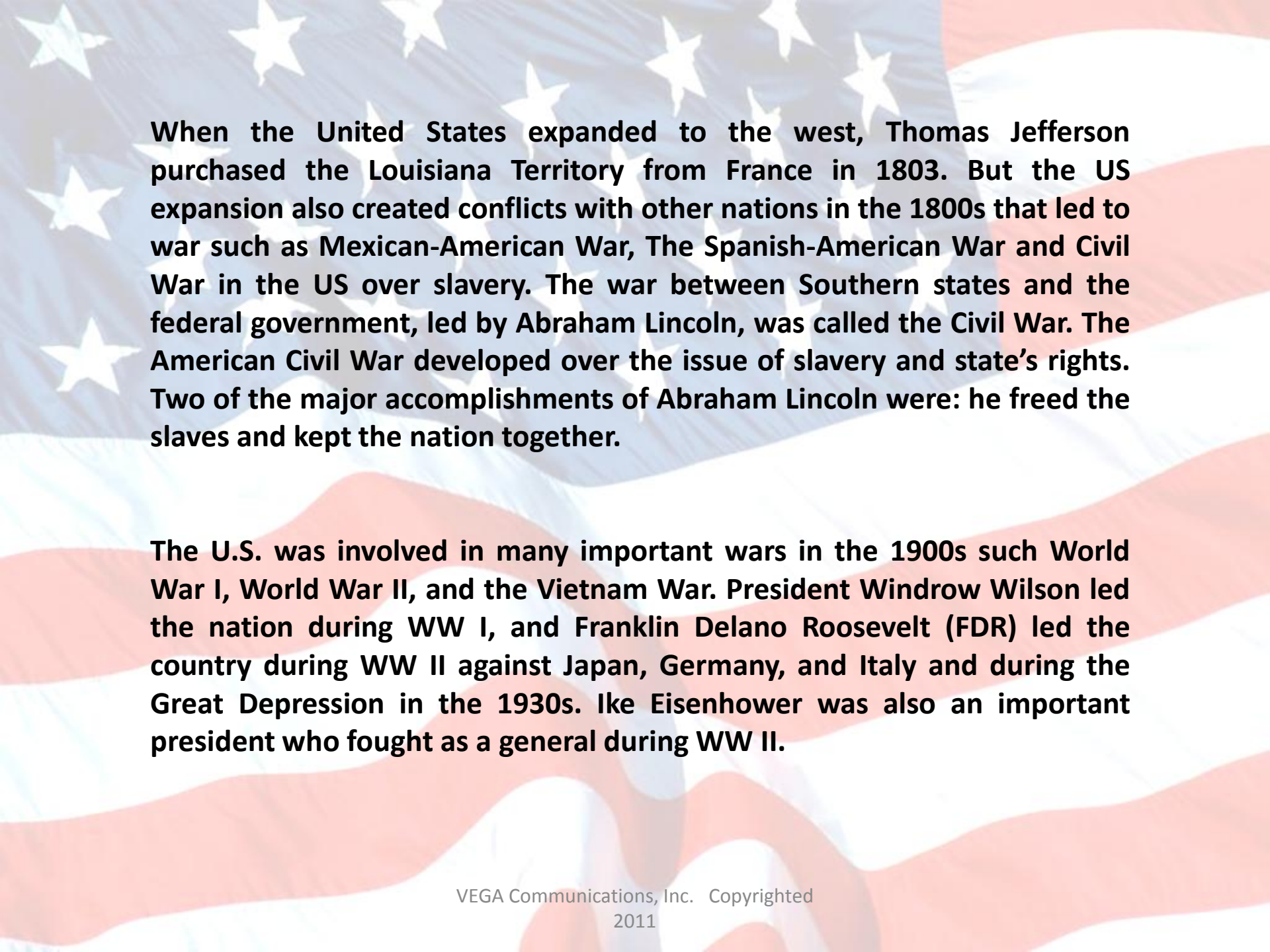
The ideas behind these new principles of government meant that the “We The People” are in charge of our destiny, not government. The Founding Fathers also made possible for the new Constitution to be changed with Amendments. The first amendment to the constitutions was the incorporation of the “Bill of Rights” guaranteeing freedom of religion, freedom of press, and freedom of assembly among others. The Constitution has been amended 27 times since its ratification in 1787. Under the Constitution and “the rule of law”, nobody is above the rule of law, including legislators and the President. Too, Americans also established a Free Market Capitalist System that embodied the ideals in the Constitution of freedom to make choice under a free market economy.

There have been 4 amendments to guarantee the rights of citizens to vote. Citizens must be 18-year of age, any citizen can vote, and citizens can be of any race or gender. But citizens also have the responsibility to serve in juries and vote in federal elections. So, running for political position and voting are rights exclusive for citizens. In addition, other rights that everyone has in the United States are Constitutional Rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom to worship, and the right to bear arms.



Americans are very proud of the political tradition and ideas of freedom. When we Americans say the Pledge of Allegiance, we are showing our loyalty to the flag and country. And, when a person becomes a citizen, that person promises to defend the Constitution and laws of the United States. Once you have become a citizen, you can participate in democratic process by registering to vote, join political parties, civic groups, communities, or even run for office. Paying taxes is also a duty expected from everyone; so the last day to file taxes is April 15th. Registering with Selective Services is also necessary after turning 18-years of age.

Our current President is Democrat Barack Obama and our Vice President is Joe Biden who becomes president if the preside can no longer serve; If neither the President or Vice President can no longer serve, the Speaker of the House-- John Boehner--becomes president. The President is the chief of the military and he is the only one that can sign bills into law and veto bills from Congress. The president has a cabinet made up of many secretaries, such Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Education, and Secretary of Energy that advice the President on policies.


The background of the slide is a stylized American flag with a blue field of white stars in the upper left and red and white stripes in the lower right.

When the United States expanded to the west, Thomas Jefferson purchased the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803. But the US expansion also created conflicts with other nations in the 1800s that led to war such as Mexican-American War, The Spanish-American War and Civil War in the US over slavery. The war between Southern states and the federal government, led by Abraham Lincoln, was called the Civil War. The American Civil War developed over the issue of slavery and state's rights. Two of the major accomplishments of Abraham Lincoln were: he freed the slaves and kept the nation together.


The U.S. was involved in many important wars in the 1900s such World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War. President Woodrow Wilson led the nation during WW I, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) led the country during WW II against Japan, Germany, and Italy and during the Great Depression in the 1930s. Ike Eisenhower was also an important president who fought as a general during WW II.

But not all great American Leaders were involved in military conflict. Martin Luther king Jr. led the fight for civil rights and equality for all Americans in the 1960s. He led the Civil Rights movement that ended racial discrimination. But during the same period, the Cold War created the fear of the spreading of Communism among Americans during in the 1960s. The most recent events in American History occurred in 9/11, 2001, when terrorists attacked the U.S.

The American flag has 13 bars representing the original 13 colonies and 50 stars representing each state in the union. Also, the traditional American national anthem is called the Star-Spangled Banner. Americans celebrate their Independence Day on the 4th of July. But some other important national holidays include New Year's Day, Labor Day, Thanks Giving, and Memorial Day.

An illustration featuring three children holding a large American flag. The flag has a white banner across it with the text "The Star-Spangled Banner" written in a stylized font. The background consists of red and white stripes, and a blue field with white stars. The children are depicted in a simple, cartoonish style.

One of the most important rivers in the U.S. is the Mississippi River. The U.S. is surrounded by two oceans; the Atlantic Ocean to the East and the Pacific Ocean to the West. Some of the territories of the U.S. include Puerto Rico and Guam. The U.S. shares a border to the South with Mexico, which includes states like California, Arizona and Texas. In the North, the U.S. shares borders with Canada, which includes states like Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Pennsylvania. The Capital of the U.S. is Washington DC which is located in the District of Columbia. The Statue of Liberty is located in New York, Liberty Island.

The background features a stylized American flag with stars and stripes, and a banner that reads "PROUD TO BE American".

YOU ARE GOING TO BE A U.S. CITIZEN WHO WILL HAVE A
VOICE IN THE UNITED STATES.

REMEMBER TO USE IT BY EXERCISING YOUR RIGHT TO

VOTE!