Nevertheless, I hope you find it helpful as you study for the HSA. Check out http://bit.ly/GovtHSA for more resources or scan the QR code.

### Unit 1: Government & Economic Basics
- In a federal government, power is shared and divided amongst the national, state, and local governments. (USA has a federal form of government.)
- In a confederate government, states and local governments are more powerful than the national government.
- In a unitary government, the national government is more powerful than the states and local governments.
- Monarchies, dictatorships, and oligarchies are examples of unlimited governments (governments with more power than the people).
- Presidential Democracy = citizens elect both the legislature & executive
- Parliamentary Democracy = citizens only elect legislature; legislature then picks executive
- In a market economy, buyers and sellers control the economy.
- In a command economy, the government controls the economy.
- In a mixed economy, buyers and sellers have freedom with some government restrictions.
- The United States of America utilizes a mixed economy.
- The opportunity cost describes what you could be doing, but you are not doing. What is the opportunity cost if the government spends $1 billion on education? (many possible answers)
- A resource that is scarce is something that people often desire, but a limited supply of it exists.

### Unit 2: The US Constitution
- The US Constitution describes how the US government operates.
- Making amendments can change the US Constitution. It is a hard task to accomplish (2/3 of Congress propose & 2/3 of states must ratify)
- The first ten amendments have a special name, the Bill of Rights.
- You need to know and understand the following constitutional principles (rules) and provide an example of each:
  - Popular Sovereignty: people control the government.
  - Limited Government: the US government was created to be restricted from becoming too powerful.
  - Federalism: power is shared & divided amongst the national, state, and local governments.
  - Rule of Law: laws apply to all people. 
  - Separation of Powers: government powers are divided into 3 branches
  - Checks & Balances: each branch is limited by the other branches
  - Judicial Review: the Supreme Court can declare government actions unconstitutional.
  - Due Process of Law: the government must provide people with certain rights before taking away their liberties (right to a lawyer, jury trial, etc. before the government can put you in jail and take your liberties away).

### Unit 3: Political Participation
- Political parties are groups of people that try to win elections and control government.
- What are the 2 biggest political parties in the USA today?
- Third parties are political parties, though not very popular—they often lack $$$ & resources to win elections, but they can offer new ideas that other parties adopt.
- Interest groups represent a specific group and lobby the government to make policies that help their members.
- A primary election is when members of a political party vote on who should represent the party in the upcoming general election.
- A general election consists of candidates from different parties competing to control a government position.
- In order to run a successful campaign, candidates need to raise lots of money in order to pay for expensive campaign commercials.
- People & businesses are limited in how much they can donate to candidates.

### Unit 4: The Legislative Branch
- The main power of a legislative branch is to make laws.
- The name of the national legislative branch is the US Congress (House & Senate).
- The name of Maryland's legislative branch is the Maryland General Assembly (House of Delegates & State Senate).
- Most legislatures in the USA are bicameral (two chamber organizations).
- Every 10 years the national government conducts a census (national population count) as stated in the US Constitution.
- A state's population determines a state's representation in the House of Representatives—the more people in a state, the more members (power) a state will have in the House of Representatives.
- Reapportionment of House seats occurs every 10 years—meaning some states gain/lose representatives if their populations changed drastically since the last census.
- Each state has 2 Senators.
- Some of Congress's main powers include: declaring war, raising/lowering taxes, regulating interstate commerce [business].
- The necessary and proper clause allows Congress to make laws not specifically written in the Constitution. Examples include: using nuclear weapons and providing healthcare.
- A bill is a proposed law. A bill must be passed by both the House & Senate and receive the president's signature.
- For a bill to become law, both chambers must pass the same bill.
- The president can veto (reject) a bill from becoming a law.
- People, interest groups, and the media persuade the legislative branch to pass or not pass laws.
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prevents schools & public places from discriminating based on race, gender, and ethnicity.
- The Voting Rights Act of 1965 removed discriminating laws that prevented people from voting in elections.
- Title IX forces schools to treat male and female students equally.
- Affirmative Action policies that provide assistance to groups of people who have historically faced discrimination in admittance to universities or receiving employment.
The Big 8 Court Cases:
You need to know the
PRECEDENTS (legal rulings)
for each of these landmark
cases!!

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- Marbury v. Madison:
Established Judicial Review
McCullough v. Maryland:
Explained the "necessary and
proper clause" & the
"Supremacy Clause"
Plessy v. Ferguson:
Legalized "separate but equal
racial segregation"
Brown v. Board of
Education: Overturned Plessy;
segregation finally declared
illegal
Gideon v. Wainwright: the
govt. must provide a lawyer for
person accused of crime
Miranda v. Arizona: Before
police questioning, the accused
must know their due process
rights
Tinker v. Des Moines:
Students do have limited free-
speech rights, but their speech
cannot disrupt learning
New Jersey v. T.L.O.: School
officials can search students if
they have "reasonable
suspicion," no warrant

Unit 5- The Executive Branch
- The main power of the executive branch is to enforce laws
- The leader of the national executive branch is called the 
President
- The leader of Maryland’s executive branch is called the 
Governor
- The president and vice president are elected through the Electoral
College
- A presidential candidate cares more about winning electoral votes
- The cabinet is responsible for advising the president
- Regulatory agencies enforce millions of specific laws
Food & Drug Administration (FDA): regulates food/drugs sold in
the USA
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): enforces clean air &
water laws
- Federal Communication Commission (FCC): regulates the
media
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA): enforces air safety laws
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC): enforces fair business laws
- The president can veto (reject) bills passed by Congress
- The Senate must approve of any cabinet leader or federal judged
nominated by the president
- Executive orders: commands given by the president that have the
force of law—do not need the approval of Congress

Unit 6- The Judicial Branch
- The main power of the judicial branch is to interpret laws
- The highest court in the national govt. = US Supreme Court
- The highest court in Maryland’s judicial branch = Court of Appeals
- The government must provide due process to all persons accused of a
crime before the govt. takes away a person’s freedom. Examples include:
4th amendment: bans illegal search & seizures
5th amendment: protects from self-incrimination; no double jeopardy;
eminent domain protections
6th amendment guarantees a speedy & public trial
8th amendment prevents extreme bail and punishments
- The Supreme Court uses judicial review to declare acts of the legislative or
executive branch unconstitutional.
- The Supreme Court has original and appellate jurisdiction.
- Under criminal law, the prosecution (govt.) is trying to prove a defendant
committed a crime.
- A person can be subpoenaed to be a witness in a criminal case
- In a criminal case, the all jurors on a petit jury must be certain beyond a
reasonable doubt (close to 100% sure) to find a suspect guilty
- If a defendant takes a plea bargain, they admit guilt in order to receive a
smaller punishment; 90% of criminal cases end this way
- In a civil law case, a plaintiff is filing a formal complaint against a
defendant—a person wins by having a preponderance of evidence (more
evidence than their opponent)
- Torts, contracts, divorces, buying property = types of civil law

Unit 7: Domestic, Foreign, And Economic Policy
Economic Policy:
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measures amounts of goods/stuff made by a country
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures inflation changes in a country
- Unemployment Rate measure the amount of people who don’t have a job,
- Fiscal Policy consists of the president & Congress deciding the spending and taxing policies of the
government
- Monetary Policy consists of the Federal Reserve deciding how to keep the money supply stable
in order to keep inflation balanced
- During a recession, the government tries to increase the money supply (higher spending, lower
interest rates/reserve requirement/discount rate, buy securities)
- During high inflation, the government tries to decrease the money supply (lower spending, higher
interest rates/reserve requirement/discount rate, sell securities)

Domestic Policy:
- The local/state governments decide how land will be developing using zoning boards
- Two land development theories: Urban Sprawl (develop on open land—destroy green space;
heavy on driving/traffic) & Smart Growth (rejuvenate cities that already exist—save green space;
focus on making communities walkable and use public transport)
- The federal government assists people using 3 main programs:
  - Medicare = Healthcare assistance to senior citizens
  - Medicaid = Healthcare assistance to low income people
  - Social Security = Money assistance to senior citizens & disabled people

Foreign Policy:
- Treaty: agreement made between the US and other countries→ need Senate approval
- Sanction: punishment→ Ex: Embargo (refusing to trade with a country)
- Red Cross: provides humanitarian assistance after disasters
- NATO: military alliance between US, Canada, and Europe
- NAFTA: free trade agreement between US, Canada, Mexico
- World Bank: provides loans to developing countries to help them become more industrialized
- IMF: provides loans to counties in a financial crisis