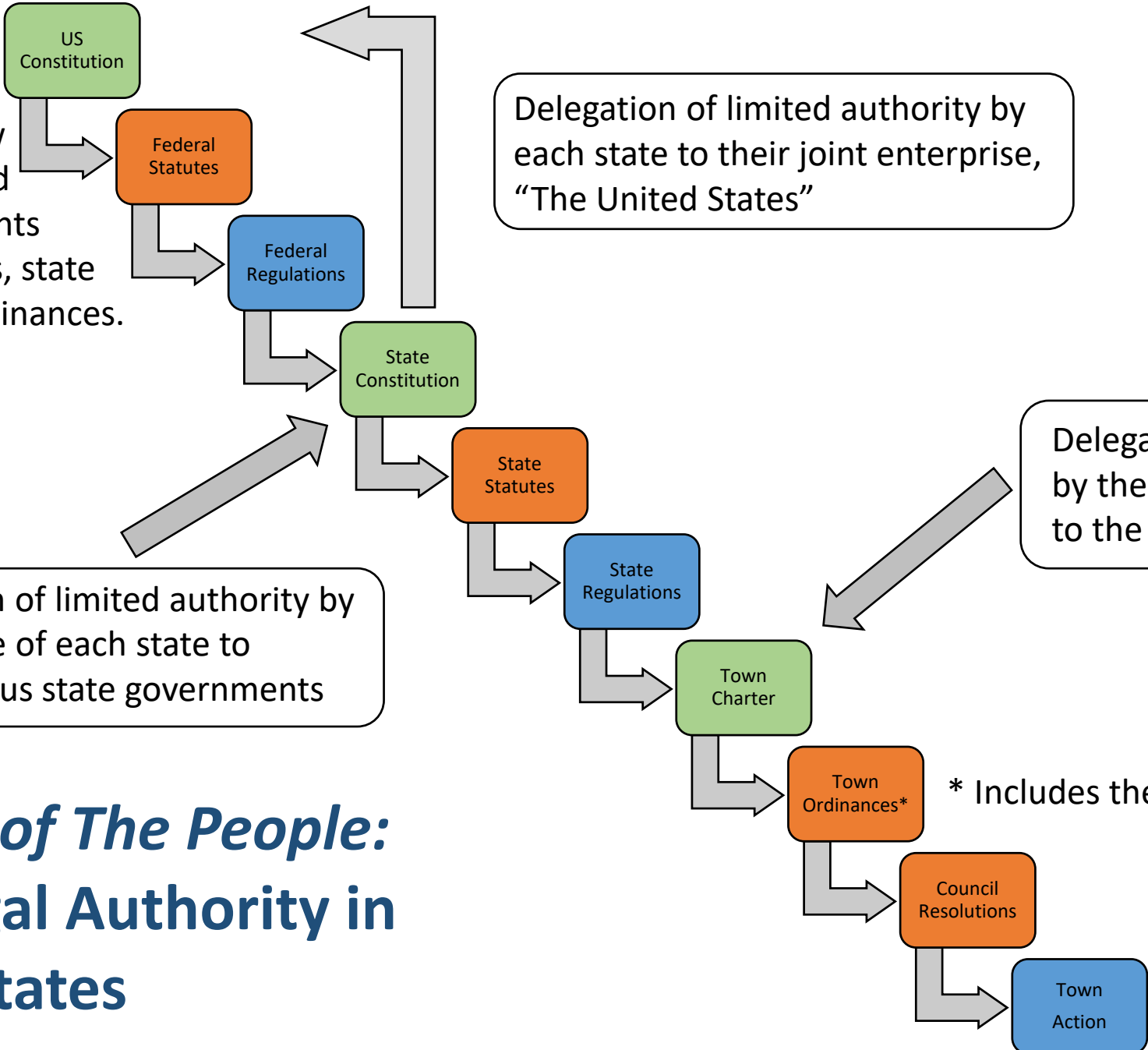


# How Town Government Works in 4 Slides

For additional information, please contact  
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The Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution provides that federal law supersedes state law and because local governments are created by the states, state law supersedes local ordinances.



Delegation of limited authority by each state to their joint enterprise, "The United States"

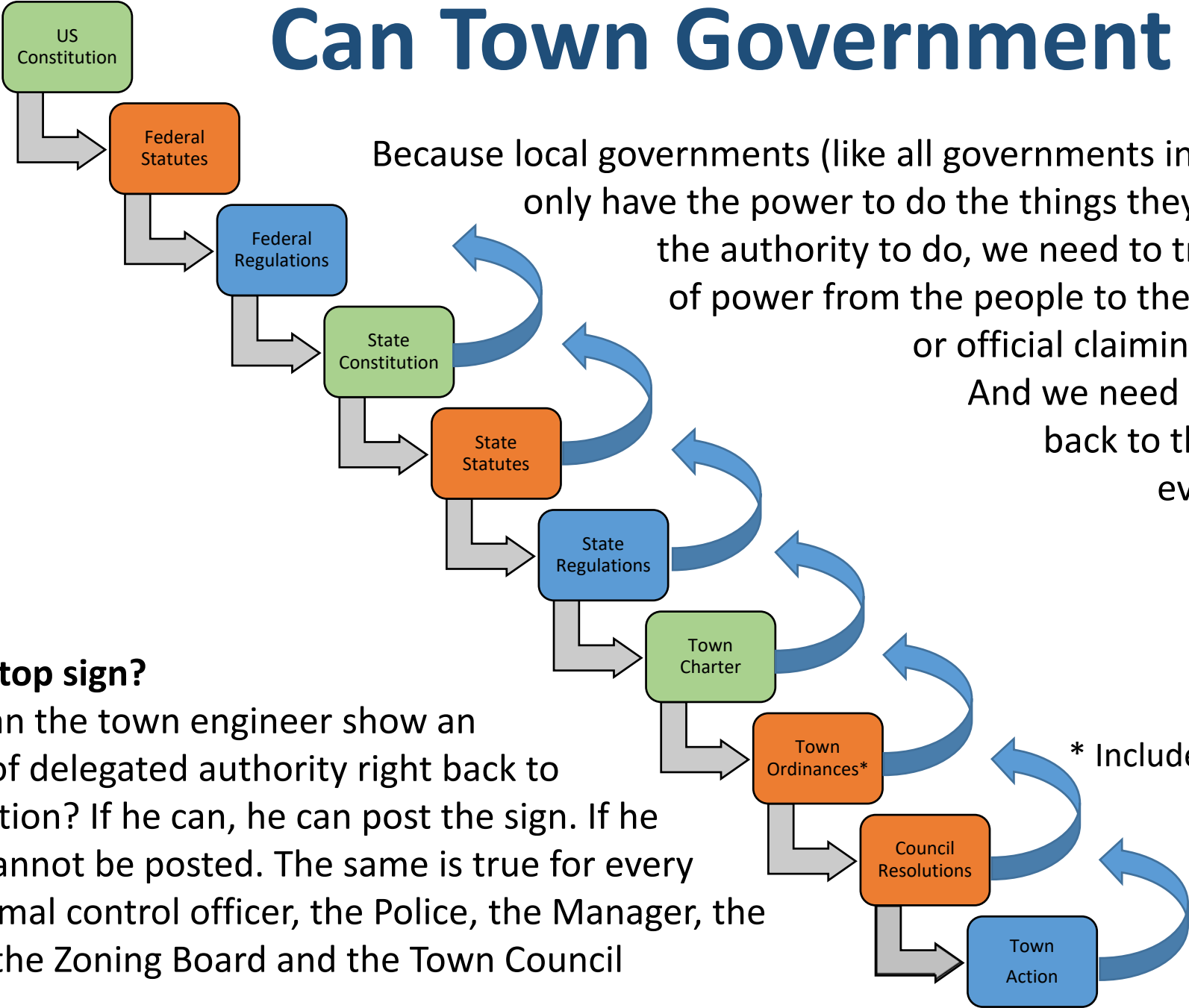
Delegation of limited authority by the people of the city or town to the municipal government

Delegation of limited authority by the people of each state to their various state governments

\* Includes the annual budget

# Government of The People: A Map of Legal Authority in The United States

# Can Town Government Do That?



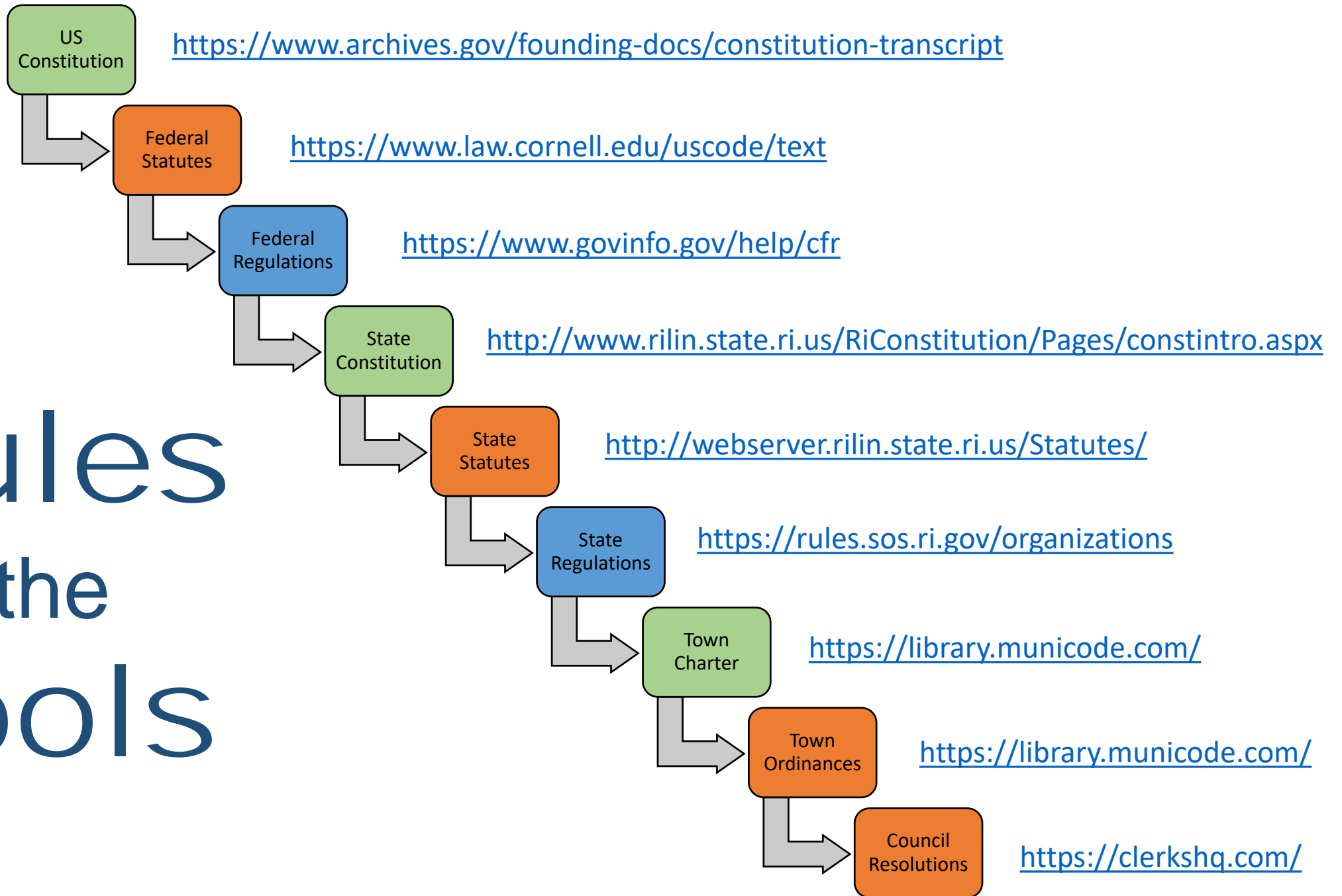
Because local governments (like all governments in the United States) only have the power to do the things they've been given the authority to do, we need to track the delegation of power from the people to the government body or official claiming the power to act. And we need to track all the way back to the US Constitution, even for the smallest municipal actions.

## Can DPS post a stop sign?

It depends . . . Can the town engineer show an unbroken chain of delegated authority right back to the U.S. Constitution? If he can, he can post the sign. If he can't, then the cannot be posted. The same is true for every action by the animal control officer, the Police, the Manager, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board and the Town Council

\* Includes the annual budget

# the Rules are the Tools



the  
Rules  
are the  
Tools

- [The Town Council Rules of Conduct and Procedure](#)
- [Robert's Rules of Order \(a summary sheet\)](#)
- [Rhode Island Open Meetings Act](#)
- [Rhode Island Access to Public Records Act](#)