

# Understanding Federalism

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## Worksheet 5

This worksheet draws on two famous pieces of legislation that shifted the balance of authority between the Federal government and the states during the 20th century. Each example reflects an interpretation of the relationship between state and Federal governments at one time. Balancing Federal and state powers is a complex process, and the balance of power has shifted at different times in American history.

### The Social Security Bill (1935) (excerpt)

The committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred the bill... to provide for the general welfare by establishing a system of Federal old-age benefits, and by enabling the several States to make more adequate provision for aged persons...

This bill provides for various grants-in-aid to the States; establishes a Federal old-age benefit system and a Social Security board; and imposes certain taxes...

Title 1: Grants-in-aid are to be made to the States for old-age pensions to persons who have reached the age of 65. In making these grants the Federal government will match what the States put up, within certain limits.

Title II: A system of Federal old-age benefits, payable to people who have reached the age of 65 will begin in 1942..."

1. Briefly summarize this legislation.
2. What constitutional duty of government is cited to justify a Federal old-age pension program?
3. Which level(s) of government will fund the program?
4. What change in the authority of state or Federal government is reflected in this legislation?
5. Place an X on the line to show where the balance of authority between the Federal government and the states over old age pensions is located in this example.

Federal \_\_\_\_\_ State



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