

Federalism: the Division of Power

In the 1990s, the Supreme Court issued several rulings that decreased the power of the Federal Government, resulting in increased power for the States. Some people think that decreased federal power leaves the most vulnerable groups in our society with less protection. Study the cartoon below and answer the following questions.

John Sherffius/St. Louis Post-Dispatch



Interpreting Political Cartoons

1. What do the three branches of the tree represent?
2. Who are the people in the black robes and the people on the far right?
3. What is the significance of the judge sawing into the branch with a saw marked “STATES RIGHTS”?
4. Do you think the cartoonist is supporting federalism or State’s rights? Why?
5. **Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment** Who do you think should be responsible for the figures on the right—the Federal Government or the States? Explain.