

## The US political system

By Erik Ottengren

Build like a pyramid, with a wide base and a narrow top, the US political system with the constitution, the written law, and the President on top runs this huge country. Soon the pyramid is spreading out into a three-part level; The legislative, the executive and the judicial. They all have equal power and are meant to be checking each other out.

The *legislative*: represented by the congress located in the Capitol Building, with the House of representative and the Senate inside. The *executive* represented by the President and the *judicial* by the US Courts. All three of them with their own departments belongs to the federal government.

One hundred senators, two from each state, with the Vice President in command are located on the right wing of the Capital Building. It is called the Senate. In the left wing of Capital Building 435 representatives rules the House of representatives where their boss is the Speaker of the House. If they are performing well, both the Senate and the House might get their seats real warm and comfortable, since they in that case most likely will be reelected. All of them, or actually their seats, are elected by the people in public elections every second year. The same goes for the President, though he is elected every fourth year.

From this second level the pyramid swell out fast, with separate departments representing each level. As the pyramid is getting wider, the State Government, represented by the governors and the state legislative turns up. Each of them working in and for their own state. The mayor and the city council forms the next level, representing the local government.

When a member of the US society wants to give a proposition to a law a long journey through a bureaucratic machinery will begin. First, before *any* actions

can be taken, at least one senator must sponsor the proposition. He can then introduce it to a committee of twenty-two members from the House of representatives. After discussions and maybe improvements, a discussion among all the representatives will take place.

The ball will now be thrown to the Senate who quickly kick it over for discussion, to a sixteen-member committee from the Senate. Next step is a vote of acceptance from the whole Senate. If they vote yes, another committee with members from both the Senate and the House will work out an agreement of the propositions content. Reaching this far the rest of these proceedings are mostly formality. A final consideration is made by the Senate and the House and then the proposition is printed and signed. Finally the Congress throws the ball to the President.

The President now has three choices: He can *approve and sign* the proposition within ten days and it will become a law. He can *give his veto* if he does not approve with the proposition and it will go back to the Congress for further consideration. He might also be lazy and *not take any action* at all. If this happens the proposition automatically becomes a law. Although, the congress still must be in session after ten days. If the Congress adjourns within ten days and the President is being lazy again the proposition dies and no further actions will be taken.

After having traveled back and fourth, all this time, the last person to determine if the proposition, made by a citizen, will become a law or not; is the President of The United States.