

# THE PERIODIC TABLE OF THE PRESIDENTS™

## The Seventeenth Amendment

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### Introduction:

The Seventeenth Amendment allowed for a direct election of senators by the people of the states. Prior to this, senators were selected by the state legislatures. James Madison wanted the states, by way of the Senate, to have a check on the federal government. Among other problems, Progressives felt that this system created corruption and the “purchasing” of Senate seats. The Seventeenth Amendment corrected their concerns and placed more power into the hands of the American people.

The text of this amendment begins, “The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years;”

### Questions:

1. What is the Seventeenth Amendment?
2. What year was the Seventeenth Amendment ratified?
3. Who elected senators prior to the ratification of the Seventeenth Amendment?
4. What is a state legislature?
5. Why did Progressive politicians want to add the Seventeenth Amendment?
6. Who elects senators today?
7. In most states the governor appoints a new senator when a vacancy occurs. Why would this be beneficial?
8. What does “bicameralism” mean?
9. Why did James Madison want senators to be appointed by the state legislatures?
10. Why is the Senate sometimes called “The Millionaire’s Club”?