Executive Branch: Executive Orders/Profile Instructions

1. An executive order is a directive handed down directly from a president that has the strength of law, but not necessarily the permanence. The executive branch, how Executive Orders are addressed (or not addressed) in the U.S. Constitution, and checks & balances.

2. Next, discuss how executive orders impact the system of checks and balances and separation of powers. If needed, review the roles of the branches with respect to laws: the legislative branch makes laws, the executive branch carries out/enforces laws, and the judicial branch interprets and applies laws. Ask students, “where do executive orders fit in this system?”

3. Discuss the checks on executive orders. Executive orders, like laws, can be challenged for their constitutionality in the courts. Additionally, the legislative branch can create law that would reverse or alter the executive order. The President can veto\* the legislation but the Congress can override the veto. Discuss with students.

4. Tell students that they will now be researching an Executive Order of their choice from the options of the current administration. They can select one of the provided options based on their preference/interest. Distribute Student Handout 2. Students will fill in the Observation Station 1 box on Handout 2 with information about the Executive Order they have researched from Trump’s administration.

5. Students will examine executive orders issued in the past in a stations activity. Set up five stations in the classroom, placing one of the handouts from the Observation Stations #2-5 at each station. Station 1 will be where students analyze a current Executive Order from President Trump. Students will need to read the executive order (on the Observation Stations handout) and complete the appropriate section of Student Handout 2.