# The Roman Republic: Checks & Balances

**American System -- based on balance of powers/functions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive</th>
<th>Legislative</th>
<th>Judicial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The only legitimate *interest* is that of the *people*

**Roman System -- based on balance of interests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monarchical</th>
<th>Aristocratic</th>
<th>Democratic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Consuls + other magistrates</td>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>Assembly of Tribes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tribune</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Directed government and army
- Acted as judges
- Could issue edicts
- Acted as chief priest
- Controlled state budget
- Could pass laws
- Approved/rejected laws
- Decided on War
- Tribune could veto actions of magistrate
- Acted as final court

**Basis of power:**

- Possess *imperium*, the right to rule
- Need for leadership
- Members were richest men in Rome.
- Provided most of the soldiers

**Limits on power:**

- One year term
- Each could veto
- Could not control army
- Needed majority as soldiers
- Could not suggest laws
- Often paid as clients by the elite

*Source: Chart by Paul Halsall*