



May 30, 2012

Dear Friend,

I am a 14 year old girl living in Lebanon. Lebanon is a country that is north of Israel and south of Syria. To our west is the Mediterranean Sea. It is a beautiful country! Lebanon is about 120 miles from north to south, and about 50 miles from east to west. It is 4,015 square miles. I can be at the beach in the morning and in the mountains in the afternoon!

My family is getting ready to move to North Carolina. I would like to know more about your government. Of course, we are a country and you are a state, so I know there will be some differences. In Lebanon, we have a parliamentary democratic republic. We have Parliament elections every four years, but some of the positions have to represent specific religious groups. For example, since 1990, half of the members of Parliament must be Christians and half must be Muslims. The President is a Christian (Maronite Catholic), the Speaker of the Parliament is a Shi'a Muslim and the Prime Minister is a Sunni Muslim. Is that the way your state does it? Do the members of your law-making body have to represent certain religious groups? If not, what do they represent? How often are they elected? What decisions can they make?

In Lebanon, you can vote if you are 21 if you are male, and if you are female and have at least an elementary education. People in the military cannot vote. Who can vote in your state, and where would you vote?

Thanks so much for helping me! My family will be so grateful.

Sincerely,

Maha