

**The Deciding
Factor.**

**The U.S.
Supreme Court**



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Major Supreme Court Cases

1. Marbury v. Madison (1803)

Decision: It set a legal precedent for judicial review. The court decided that Congress cannot pass laws that are contrary to the Constitution and that it is the role of the judicial system to interpret what the Constitution permits.

"It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is." Chief Justice John Marshall

2. Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

Decision: A 7-5 decision that upheld the constitutionality of state laws requiring racial segregation in public facilities under the doctrine of "separate but equal". This was nullified later the decision of Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

"We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it." Justice Henry W. Brown

3. Mapp v. Ohio (1961)

Decision: The court decided that evidence obtained in violation of the 4th Amendment, which prohibits general unreasonable searches and seizures, may not be used in state courts. The ruling overturned a longstanding precedent in state courts.

4. Engel v. Vitale (1962)

Decision: The court determined that a non-denominational prayer offered by a group of officials at public schools was unconstitutional. The ruling was a landmark case in the history of the separation of church and state. The Court held that the government cannot sponsor or endorse any religious activity.

6. *Roe v. Wade* (1973)

Decision: The right to privacy under the due process clause of the 14th Amendment extended to a woman's decision to have an abortion, affirming that a person has the right to an abortion until viability. The court defined viability as being potentially able to live outside of the mother's womb. The term limit for being able to have an abortion was set at seven months or 28 weeks.

7. *United States v. Nixon* (1974)

Decision: The court decided unanimously that no person is above the law, including the president. This was an important ruling pertaining to President Richard Nixon and the Watergate scandal.

8. *Texas v. Johnson* (1989)

Decision: The court invalidated prohibitions on desecrating the American flag, which was enforced in 49 of 50 states. A ruling that invalidated the desecration of the American flag violates the 1st Amendment.

9. *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010)

Decision: 1st Amendment prohibited the government from restricting independent political expenditures by corporations and unions. This decision is related with the creation of Super PAC's. Corporations can now accept unlimited amounts of money and do not have to disclose where the money is coming from.

10. *National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius* (2012)

Decision: The court upheld Congress's power to enact most of the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act under Congress's "Commerce" and "Spending" Clause. The congressional authority for forcing people to purchase government health insurance to help fund the program is upheld. Congress's authority to define or to alter the legal consequences of failure to do so was not upheld.

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Text on a white card displayed on a stand, likely a Supreme Court opinion or a historical document.



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