# ***Important Supreme Court Cases***

**Baker v. Carr (1962)**

* The Tennessee Legislature set the amount of representatives per county in 1901 but certain counties grew into urban areas but had the same amount of representatives
* The Nashville Mayor (Baker) sued the Secretary of State of Tennessee (Carr) citing the 14th amendment
* The Federal Courts refused to hear the case
* The Supreme Court said that Federal Courts could say if sate districts were constitutional or not

**Barron v. Baltimore (1833)**

* John Barron owned a successful dock in Baltimore
* As the town grew, sand accumulated at the bottom and denied him the deep water he needed
* He sued Baltimore for his lost profit siting the 5th amendment for just compensation for taking public lands
* The Supreme Court didn’t hear the case but said that the 5th amendment and bill of rights didn’t apply to the states but only to the national government

**Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)**

* The schools at that time were segregated between white and black children by law. They were “separate but equal” under the law
* Linda Brown and her family sued the Board of Education of Topeka to attend a white school closer to their house
* The Supreme Court Ruled that segregated school violated the 14th amendment which desegregated public schools

**Buckley v. Valeo (1976)**

* After the Watergate scandal the government tried to stop corruption
* They limited how much a single person could donate to a campaign and required that campaigns disclose donations over a certain amount. This created the Federal Election Commission to enforce this.
* Senator James Buckley filed suit against Francis Valeo citing these new laws violated the 1st amendment rights of free speech
* The Supreme court reached a decision stating that restricting donations from a single person did not violate the 1st amendment
* However they also said that limiting total campaign funds, candidates using their own money and what campaigns can spend money on did violate the 1st amendment

**Dred Scott v. Sandford (1857)**

* Dred Scott was a slave from 1833-1843
* He resided in Louisiana and Illinois
* He returned to Missouri and sued for his freedom
* The Supreme court ruled he was a slave under article III of the constitution and held up slavery in the south

**Engel v. Vitale (1964)**

* A school in New York sated a short prayer at the beginning of the school day
* The Jewish families in the school district sued saying it violated the 1st amendment
* The Court ruled that it indeed violated the 1st amendment which started the trend of getting rid of all religious practices

**Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)**

* New York had a law for letting selected individuals operate steamboats within the state
* Tomas Gibbons, who operated between New York and New Jersey, challenged the licenses of Aaron Ogden and the monopoly
* The court ruled in favor of Gibbons and said the monopoly was unconstitutional and allowed more power under the commerce act

**Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)**

* Clarence Earl Gideon was charged with a felony and denied a lawyer in court because it was not a capital offense
* He found guilty but he filed a habeas corpus but was denied by the state. Then the supreme court picked up the case
* The court ruled that for any crime you have the right to be represented

**Gitlow v. New York (1925)**

* Benjamin Gitlow – who was a member of the socialist party – was handing out his manifesto and was arrested for anarchy
* He argued that his manifesto posed no real threat because no one did anything.
* The court ruled that the law was constitutional, people could be convicted if their works resulted in violence, and set the standard that states could convict publications

**Griswold v. Connecticut (1965)**

* Griswold was a director at a plan parenthood center that offered counseling for presenting conception
* She was convicted under a law that prohibited counseling
* The Supreme Court ruled that the Bill of Rights, even though it doesn’t say it, has a right to privacy in marital affairs

**Grutter v. Bollinger (2003)**

* Barbara Grutter, a white student at the University of Michigan, applied for the university’s law school and got denied. The school admitted to using race as a factor in admissions
* The school said they used it to achieve diversity among the students
* The Court ruled that using race in determining admissions does not break the Equal Protection Clause and protected affirmative action

**Korematsu v. United States (1944)**

* During WWII an executive order moved people of Japanese ancestry from areas around the country to avoid espionage
* Korematsu refused to move from his home in California and sued the government
* The Supreme Court ruled that the protection from espionage was more important than his rights

**Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971)**

* In Rhode Island and Pennsylvania funds were given to private Christian school
* The Court ruled that funding Christian schools violated the 1st amendment and set up the “Lemon Test” that dealt with religious laws

**Mapp v. Ohio (1961)**

* Dollree Mapp was convicted of having obscene materials
* This was after an illegal search by police
* She argued that she had protection under the 1st amendment
* The Court upheld the 4th amendment saying any evidence found illegally couldn’t be used in any court

**Marbury v. Madison (1803)**

* John Adams named forty-two justices of the peace and sixteen new circuit court justices for the District of Columbia under the Organic Act to try to keep power with the federalists
* Thomas Jefferson refused to honor the commissions, claiming that they were invalid because they had not been delivered by the end of Adams’s term.
* Marbury who was supposed to be appointed sued the Secretary of State – James Madison – to deliver the commissions
* The Marbury v. Madison decision resulted in establishment of the concept of judicial review

**McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)**

* The Bank of the United States opened a branch in Baltimore, Maryland
* Maryland imposed a tax on the bank which cause a lawsuit
* The Court ruled the government had no power to create the bank and that Maryland could not tax national government institutions

**Miranda v. Arizona (1966)**

* Ernesto Miranda was arrested but not read his rights by the police
* He confessed but his attorney said the confession should not count because he was not read his rights
* The supreme court ruled that the confession could not be used and that police had to say the Miranda rights while arresting people

**New York Times v. Sullivan (1964)**

* Civil rights leader bought an ad in the New York Times saying that they arrested MLK to stop his mission to desegregate public facilities
* City commissioner L.B. Sullivan sued citing a libel offense and won $50,000 in the case because he didn’t have to prove he was harmed
* The Supreme Court ruled that anything can be printed about public officials as long as it wasn’t malicious

**Oregon v. Smith (1990)**

* Two Native Americans were fired for using drugs during a religious ceremony
* They were denied unemployment benefits because they were fired
* The Court ruled that the state could deny benefits because citing religious beliefs does not grant you amnesty from the laws

**Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)**

* Homer Plessy was arrested while sitting in a white only train car even though he was 7/8th white
* The Supreme Court ruled that the law separating white and blacks on trains was constitutional and upheld segregation

**Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (1978)**

* Allan Blakke twice applied for the University of California medical school and was twice rejected even though his scores and GPA exceeded those of the minorities accepted
* This was a part of the affirmative action at the University of California
* The court ruled that racial quotas were unconstitutional however using race as a part of admissions was constitutional

**Reynolds v. United States (1879)**

* George Reynolds was convicted of polygamy under a Utah law
* He argued that disallowing plural marriage was against the first amendment
* The Supreme Court Ruled that no the state could convict someone of a crime regardless of their religious beliefs. This upheld the separation of Church vs. State

**Roe v. Wade (1973)**

* Jane Roe was pregnant in Texas and unmarried
* She sued to have an abortion during the first trimester citing a bunch of amendments
* The court agreed and said any law prohibiting abortions during the first trimester was unlawful

**Roth v. United States (1951)**

* Roth owned a book selling business in New York that sold obscene books
* She was convicted under an anti- obscene law which she argued violated the 1st amendment
* The Supreme Court ruled that the law was constitutional and that the 1st amendment didn’t cover all forms of expression

**Schenck v. United States (1919)**

* Schenck refused to take part in the draft and encouraged people to do the same and protest
* He was arrested by violating the Espionage Act
* The Supreme Court ruled that he was guilty and during wartime, utterances tolerable in peacetime can be punished

**Texas v. Johnson (1989)**

* Gregory Johnson, as a form of protest, burned the American flag in front of a Texas court
* He was sentenced to a year and prison and a fine
* The Supreme Court ruled that he was protected by the 1st amendment
* They said that “Government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable."

**Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District (1969)**

* A group of students were suspended after wearing armbands as a protests of Vietnam
* The students sued the school for denying their right of expression
* The Supreme court ruled that the school did violate their right of free speech
* The dissent said that the free speech applies if they distract from their work

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

* After the Watergate scandal the special prosecutor tried to find the missing tapes
* Nixon stated he didn’t have to hand them over because of his “executive privilege”
* The Court ruled that the president cannot have an executive privilege. This lead to Nixon’s resignation

**Weeks v. United States (1914)**

* The police seized papers used to convict weeks of a crime without a warrant
* He fought citing the 4th amendment
* The court agreed the police need a warrant to seize property and was the first application of the exclusionary rule

**Wesberry v. Sanders (1963)**

* James Wesberry sued the governor of Georgia against the voting districts
* His larger county had the same amount of representatives as a much smaller county
* The Court ruled that the appointment scheme violated the 14th amendment and reinforced everyone’s vote is equal

# ***Important Acts of Congress***

**Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)**

* Prohibits discrimination of disabled people in employment, employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and governmental activities
* The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Department of Transportation, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Department of Justice all enforce the laws provisions
* **Positive Impact:** Set regulations for and reduced discrimination of disabled people in the United States
* Didn’t effect states much

**No Child Left Behind Act (2001)**

* **Education reformed that aimed to make all schools in the US give a good education**
* More funding to poor schools and high achieving for minority students
* Standardized testing became more prevalent
* **Negative:** Too much emphasis on standardized testing
* Required the states to set accountability standards and set standardized tests

**The Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974**

* Changed budget laws in the US
* Created sub-committees in both house and senate, created the Budget Office and moved the fiscal year from July to October
* **Negative:** Congress has to work together to make one which doesn’t always happen
* Doesn’t really effect states

**The Civil Rights Act of 1964**

* Ended Segregation in public places
* Banned discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin
* **Positive:** It was a major milestone in equality in America
* Many southern states resisted this new act and racism was still an issue. For example, Governor Wallace and the national guard

**The Clean Air Act (1970)**

* Regulated air emission and gave the EPA the power to create the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)
* **Positive:** Helps with hazardous air pollution for the public health
* Forced the states to make implementation plans

**The Federal Election Campaign Act (1974)**

* Set limits on contributions by individuals, political parties and PACs in presidential campaigns
* **Positive:** Reduced how much money and donors can play a role in campaigns
* Didn’t affect the states

**The Voting Rights act of 1965**

* Prohibited the denial or discrimination against voting nationwide
* **Positive:** made voting for minorities a lot easier and followed up on the Civil Rights Act of 1964
* Stopped voting fraud and discrimination in the southern states which again caused some tension

**The War Powers Resolution (1973)**

* Requires the president to notify congress within 48 hour of sending the armed forces into combat
* **Negative:** Lets the president go into any conflict without a declaration of war
* States have people, President sends people, people die

**USA Patriot Act (2001)**

* After 9/11 this act allowed better anti-terrorism capabilities and powers
* **Negative:** Increased surveillance and the NSA’s powers
* Asked states and local law enforcement to conduct interviews and questionings

**Welfare Reform Act (1996)**

* Changed welfare for families to a time-limited program, assisted need families, reduced dependency of parents on aid
* **Positive:** Increase in work and income for single household families
* Let the states decide their own models for welfare