

# 15 SCOTUS “landmark” cases

| Case & Year |                                                   | Significance: Why is this case important?!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Chief Justice         |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1           | <b>Marbury v. Madison (1803)</b>                  | Congress cannot pass laws that contradict Constitution. This case featured 1st example of judicial nullification of a federal law & was point at which Supreme Court adopted a monitoring role over gov't actions "judicial review"                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Marshall              |
| 2           | <b>McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)</b>               | Necessary & Proper Clause grants Congress implied powers for implementing Constitution's express powers, & state actions may not impede valid exercises of power by federal gov't                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | John Marshall         |
| 3           | <b>Schenck v. United States (1919)</b>            | Expressions in which circumstances are intended to result in crime that poses a clear & present danger of succeeding can be punished without violating 1 <sup>st</sup> Amendment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Edward Douglass White |
| 4           | <b>Brown v. Board of Education (1954)</b>         | Segregated schools in states are unconstitutional because they violate Equal Protection Clause of 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment. Court found that separate but equal doctrine adopted in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) "has no place in field of public education"                                                                                                                                                                                         | Earl Warren           |
| 5           | <b>Baker v Carr (1961)</b>                        | Baker v. Carr opened the doors of the federal courts to a long line of apportionment cases. Redistricting of state legislative districts is not a political question, so it is justiciable by federal courts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Earl Warren           |
| 6           | <b>Engel v. Vitale (1962)</b>                     | Gov't-directed prayer in public schools, even if it is denominationally neutral & non-mandatory, violates Establishment Clause                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Earl Warren           |
| 7           | <b>Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)</b>                | All defendants have right to an attorney & must be provided one by state if they are unable to afford legal counsel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Earl Warren           |
| 8           | <b>Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)</b>                | Public school students have free speech rights under 1 <sup>st</sup> Amendment. Therefore, wearing armbands as a form of protest on public school grounds qualifies as protected symbolic speech                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Earl Warren           |
| 9           | <b>New York Times Co. v. United States (1971)</b> | Federal gov't's (Nixon) desire to keep Pentagon Papers classified is not strong enough to justify violating 1 <sup>st</sup> Amendment by imposing prior restraints on material.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Warren Burger         |
| 10          | <b>Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)</b>                  | Parents may remove their children from public schools for religious reasons                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Warren Burger         |
| 11          | <b>Roe v. Wade (1973)</b>                         | Allowed right to privacy & any laws that restrict a woman's ability to have an abortion prior to viability are unconstitutional. Most restrictions during 1st trimester are prohibited, & only health-related restrictions are permitted during second trimester.                                                                                                                                                                                   | Warren Burger         |
| 12          | <b>Shaw v. Reno (1993)</b>                        | Redistricting based on race must be held to a standard of strict scrutiny under equal protection clause of 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | John Paul Stevens     |
| 13          | <b>US v. Lopez (1995)</b>                         | Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990 is unconstitutional. Commerce clause of Constitution doesn't give Congress power to prohibit mere possession of a gun near a school because gun possession by itself is not an economic activity that affects interstate commerce even indirectly. Notable because it was 1st time since New Deal that Supreme Court invalidated a law which was passed by Congress ostensibly permissible under Commerce Clause. | John Paul Stevens     |
| 14          | <b>Citizens United v. FEC (2010)</b>              | Limits on corporate & union political expenditures during election cycles violate Free Speech Clause of 1 <sup>st</sup> Amendment. Corporations & labor unions can spend unlimited sums in support of or in opposition to candidates as long as spending is independent of candidates.                                                                                                                                                              | John Roberts          |

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| 15 | <b>McDonald v. Chicago<br/>(2010)</b> | Individual right to keep & bear arms for self-defense is <b>incorporated</b> against states through Due Process Clause of 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendment | John<br>Roberts |
|----|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|