

1. Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)

- a) Robert R. Livingston and Robert Fulton were given significant control over waterway navigation within state jurisdiction in New York as a result of state law. Thomas Gibbons operated a steamboat along the coast between New York and New Jersey under a federal license, but a suit was filed by Aaron Ogden, a competitor to Livingston and Fulton, after Gibbons' partnership with Ogden fell apart and Gibbons operated a boat alongside a route under Ogden's ownership. Gibbons argued that U.S. Congress controlled interstate commerce, and therefore Ogden and New York law was invalid, but the state courts ruled in favor of Ogden. In this court case, the question was, "Does the Commerce Clause give Congress authority over interstate navigation?" New York State Law regarding commerce was also held in question. The Court decided unanimously in favor of Gibbons. The Constitution's Supremacy Clause meant that New York law conflicted with federal law and was therefore void. Regulation of waterway navigation for purposes of interstate commerce and trade was to be exercised only by the Federal Congress in accordance with the Commerce Clause. The national government exclusively held power over interstate commerce, meaning that state laws that conflicted with federal laws exercising that power were made void. The Commerce Clause reserved this power to Congress and the Supremacy Clause meant that federal law trumped state law.

2. National Labor Relations Board v. Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation (1937)

- a) Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation was found by the National Labor Relations Board to be practicing unfair labor practices and subsequently brought the issues to court. Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation was accused of discriminating against union employees and firing those involved in unions. The Court had to ask, "Does the National Labor Relations Board have the right to force Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation to obey orders pertaining to labor relations?" As a result of this case, the entire National Labor Relations Act was essentially called into question, as well as the power of the National Labor Relations Board. The decision was narrow at 5-4, it being that the National Government has the power to regulate labor relations as part of the Commerce Clause. The reasoning for this decision was that collective bargaining, the basis of union activities, was deemed necessary for "industrial peace", thereby meaning that companies that restricted the ability of workers to partake in such collective bargaining were subject to orders from the national government as part of measures to manage interstate commerce.

3. Heart of Atlanta Motel Inc. V. United States (1964)

- a) Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Heart of Atlanta Motel continued to refused to accept African-American guests in Atlanta, GA, a practice it had partaken in since before the Act was passed. Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 specifically mentioned that racial discrimination could not be practiced "in places of public accommodation if their operations affected commerce." The Heart of Atlanta Motel aimed to challenge the authority of the national government and Congress to force them to abandon their practice. Questions considered by the court were: Does the Commerce Clause give Congress the authority to enforce regulations regarding incidents of local business under certain circumstances? Is the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Constitutional in its provisions or does the Commerce Clause not cover it? At the very least, the Heart of Atlanta Motel was successful in questioning the legality of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but not successful in establishing the answer as "no"; it was instead decided unanimously that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was Constitutional and Congress was permitted by the Commerce Clause to resolve certain matters involving business incidents if they potentially involved interstate commerce. This was because the Motel, being positioned near I-75 and I-85, was likely significantly involved in interstate commerce, and therefore matters of its business were matters of interstate commerce under Congressional jurisdiction due to the Commerce Clause.

4. United States v. Morrison

- a) The case's origins trace back to a 1994 incident in which Antonio Morrison and James Crawford were accused of having raped Virginia Tech student Christy Brzonkala, who filed a complaint the following year as per Virginia Tech's Sexual Assault Policy. Crawford received no punishment and Morrison was suspended for two semesters for being guilty of sexual assault, yet Brzonkala pursued the issue after dropping out and sued the two individuals as well as Virginia Tech itself in Federal District Court. Much like how the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was questioned in *Heart of Atlanta Motel Inc. v. United States*, it was asked of VAWA: "Could Congress enact the Violence Against women Act of 1994 under the Commerce Clause or Fourteenth Amendment?" The decision was narrow at 5-4, but it was held that Congress did not hold authority to enact a statute under the Commerce Clause or Fourteenth Amendment. The activity in question was not significantly associated with interstate commerce, and no harm was perpetrated by the state against Brzonkala directly, and as such, it was Virginia's job to resolve the situation and provide any justice to Brzonkala, not the Federal Government of the United States. Justice Breyer wrote the dissenting opinion on this case.