

Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)

<p><b>Facts Behind the Case</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Question(s) For the Court to Consider</b></p>	<p>In this court case, the primary question that the Court had to answer was: "Does the Commerce Clause give Congress authority over interstate navigation?"</p>
<p><b>Amendment or Constitutional Clause in Question</b></p>	<p>The Commerce Clause of the Constitution was in question, as well as New York State law regarding interstate commerce.</p>
<p><b>Court Vote</b></p>	<p>Unanimous (6) in favor of Gibbons, Justice Thompson was absent</p>
<p><b>Court Decision (Precedent)</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Reason for Court's Decision</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Facts Behind the Case</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Question(s) For the Court to Consider</b></p>	<p>Does the National Labor Relations Board have the right to force Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation to obey orders pertaining to labor relations?</p>
<p><b>Amendment or Constitutional Clause in Question</b></p>	<p>Commerce Clause, NLRB and National Labor Relations Act</p>
<p><b>Court Vote</b></p>	<p>5-4 Decision</p>
<p><b>Court Decision (Precedent)</b></p>	<p>The National Government has the power to regulate labor relations as part of the Commerce Clause</p>
<p><b>Reason for Court's Decision</b></p>	<p>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.</p>

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

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

<b>Facts Behind the Case</b>	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.
<b>Question(s) For the Court to Consider</b>	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?
<b>Amendment or Constitutional Clause in Question</b>	Commerce Clause, Civil Rights Act of 1964
<b>Court Vote</b>	Unanimous in favor of United States
<b>Court Decision (Precedent)</b>	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.
<b>Reason for Court's Decision</b>	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.

United States v. Morrison (2000)

<b>Facts Behind the Case</b>	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.
<b>Question(s) For the Court to Consider</b>	Could Congress enact the Violence Against women Act of 1994 under the Commerce Clause or Fourteenth Amendment?
<b>Amendment or Constitutional Clause in Question</b>	Commerce Clause; 42 USC Section 13981, Violence Against Women Act of 1994; Fourteenth Amendment
<b>Court Vote</b>	5-4
<b>Court Decision (Precedent)</b>	Congress did not hold authority to enact a statute under the Commerce Clause or Fourteenth Amendment.
<b>Reason for Court's Decision</b>	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.

Sources:

"Gibbons v. Ogden." *Oyez*, 14 Aug. 2018, [www.oyez.org/cases/1789-1850/22us1](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1789-1850/22us1).

"National Labor Relations Board v. Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation." *Oyez*, 15 Aug. 2018, [www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/301us1](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/301us1).

"Heart of Atlanta Motel, Inc. v. United States." *Oyez*, 15 Aug. 2018, [www.oyez.org/cases/1964/515](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1964/515).

"United States v. Morrison." *Oyez*, 15 Aug. 2018, [www.oyez.org/cases/1999/99-5](http://www.oyez.org/cases/1999/99-5).