



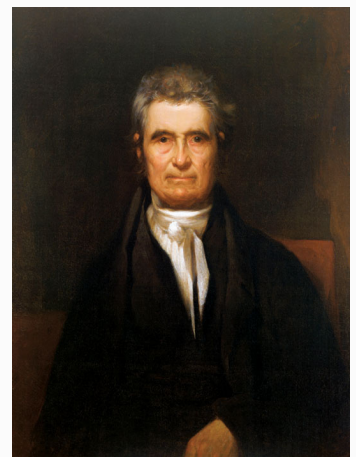
Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how “We the People” interact with the government and each other. Let’s help each other expand our civic literacy.

In order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19/Novel Coronavirus, many [states](#) have implemented the [social distancing guidance](#) of the Centers for Disease Control. This includes restrictions on large gatherings, such as religious services. Some citizens believe that these restrictions are an unconstitutional limitation on the First Amendment's freedom of religious exercise.



In California, a group of these citizens sued the governor over his executive order that implemented CDC guidelines. The case went quickly to the U.S. Supreme Court for review. In a [5-4 decision](#), the Court ruled in favor of Governor Newsom. In his opinion, Chief Justice John Roberts stated that "Although California's guidelines place restrictions on places of worship, those restrictions appear consistent with the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment." Why does the Supreme Court have the power to make such decisions?

According to [Article III](#) of the United States Constitution, "The judicial power of the United States, shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish." Article III, [Section II](#) lays out the types of cases that the Court will address. The U.S. Supreme Court also has the power of judicial review. In 1803 the concept of 'judicial review' was established by [Marbury vs Madison](#). In this landmark case, the Court said it had the power to decide whether certain laws and government actions are unconstitutional. As Chief Justice John Marshall [wrote](#), "It is emphatically the duty of the Judicial Department to say what the law is." In addition to ensuring accurate representation Congress, census information helps determine funding for government services such as public housing and neighborhood construction, helps communities thrive, and helps businesses learn about their existing and potential base. Census information helps health provides predict the spread of disease through communities with children or elderly people. When natural disasters occur, the census helps rescuers estimate how many people will need their help. The numbers are also used to help determine the distribution of hundreds of billions of dollars in federal and state funds. These fund support hospitals, highways, stadiums and school lunch programs.



Chief Justice John Marshall

To Think and To Do: Even during difficult times, the Constitution remains the law of the land. How does the Court's power of judicial review help levels of government determine what they can and cannot do during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Learn MORE about the Supreme Court and the court system. Free registration may be required.

- [Press Announcements About COVID-19](#), from The Supreme Court
- [State and Federal Courts](#), from Civics360.org
- [Judicial Review](#), from Crash Course

