



A CIVICS IN  
REAL LIFE SERIES  
**THE DOCKET**

Civics is all around us. The United States Supreme Court is the highest court in the land. Through its power of judicial review, its decisions have a lasting impact on "We the People". So what is the Court hearing this session and how might the justices rule? Let's help each other expand our civic literacy.

**2023-2024**  
**U.S. Supreme Court Cases**  
**UPDATES**

In the closing days of the 2023 Supreme Court term, the Justices delivered opinions in key cases from our **CRL: The Docket Series**. Below is a matrix highlighting the constitutional questions asked in these cases and how the Court ruled on these questions. Included are resources to explore the impact these decisions may have on society.

Case & Constitutional Question	Ruling & Impact
<p>In <a href="#">City of Grants Pass v. Johnson</a>, the Court is being asked to address one question. Does the enforcement of generally applicable laws regulating camping on public property constitute "cruel and unusual punishment" prohibited by the Eighth Amendment?</p>	<p>On June 28, 2024, in a 6-3 decision, the Court ruled in favor of the city of Grants Pass. The justices ruled that the city's general laws prohibiting camping on public property do not constitute cruel and unusual punishment as defined by the 8th Amendment. The Court focused on the historical application of the 8th Amendment's use of punishment following criminal convictions and not behaviors that governments may criminalize, in this case, the status of homelessness. (Adapted from <a href="#">Oyez</a>.) View the <a href="#">SCOTUSblog</a> post on the ruling and potential impact on future cases.</p>
<p>In <a href="#">Fischer v. United States</a>, the Court is being asked to address one question. Does 18 U.S.C. 1512(c)(2), which prohibits obstruction of congressional inquiries and investigations, include acts unrelated to investigations and evidence?</p>	<p>On June 28, 2024, in a 6-3 decision, the Court ruled in favor of Fischer. The justices ruled that the obstruction of an official proceeding applies to tampering with evidence (such as destruction of records or documents). The ruling was made to avoid potential constitutional issues arising from an overly broad criminal statute in the future. (Adapted from <a href="#">Oyez</a>.) View the <a href="#">SCOTUSblog</a> post on the ruling and potential impact on future cases.</p>
<p>In <a href="#">Alexander v. South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP</a>, the Court is being asked two questions. Did the district court commit legal or clear error in concluding that South Carolina Congressional District 1 is an unconstitutional racial <a href="#">gerrymander</a>? Did the district court err in concluding that the South Carolina General Assembly engaged in unconstitutional intentional race discrimination in enacting District 1?</p>	<p>On May 23, 2024, in a 6-3 decision, the Court ruled in favor of Alexander. The district court's ruling that race predominated the design of South Carolina's first congressional district was reversed. Because district courts must presume legislatures acted in good faith while drawing up the congressional maps, there wasn't enough evidence to support the accusation that the South Carolina General Assembly racially gerrymandering. The plaintiffs also failed to provide a substitute map that would have shown racial balance and political objectives. (Adapted from <a href="#">Oyez</a>.) View the <a href="#">SCOTUSblog</a> post on the ruling and potential impact on future cases.</p>
<p>In <a href="#">Moody v. NetChoice &amp; NetChoice v. Paxton</a>, the Court is being asked two questions. Do the Texas and Florida laws' content-moderation restrictions comply with the First Amendment? Do the Texas and Florida laws' individualized-explanation requirements comply with the First Amendment?</p>	<p>On July 1, 2024, in a unanimous decision, the Court vacated the judgments and remanded the cases back to the Fifth and Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals because neither circuit conducted a proper analysis of the First Amendment challenges. (Adapted from <a href="#">Oyez-Moody &amp; Oyez-Paxton</a>.) View the <a href="#">SCOTUSblog</a> post on the ruling and potential impact on future cases.</p>
<p>In <a href="#">Lindke v. Freed &amp; O'Connor-Ratcliff v. Garnier</a>, the Court is being asked one question. Does a public official engage in state action subject to the First Amendment by blocking an individual from the official's personal social media account, which the official uses to communicate about job-related matters with the public?</p>	<p>On March 15, 2024, in a unanimous decision, the Court ruled in favor of Lindke. The decision allows state officials to retain their First Amendment rights to speak as private citizens. However, in order to determine if the official was working as an official or private citizen, the court has to take multiple factors into consideration, like what the account was created for (government purposes or private) and whether the individual was speaking in an official state capacity. Due to Lindke's ruling, <a href="#">O'Connor-Ratcliff v. Garnier</a> was vacated and remanded. (Adapted from <a href="#">Oyez-Freed &amp; Oyez-Garnier</a>.) View the <a href="#">SCOTUSblog</a> post on the ruling and potential impact on future cases.</p>



**Lou Frey  
Institute**