

# The Federal Court System

## Supreme Court of the United States

- 1 Chief Justice and 8 Associate Justices
- Has both original and appellate jurisdiction
- NOT required to accept all cases, 4 Justices must agree to hear a case and grant a writ of certiorari
- Typically accepts cases involving Constitutional matters or conflicting rulings from lower Circuit Courts



Highest Level - Final Appeal



State Supreme Court decisions can be appealed to SCOTUS if the case deals with a federal issue.

### APPEALS

**Civil Case:** Either party may appeal the verdict.  
**Criminal Case:** If the defendant is found guilty, they may appeal.

## United States Circuit Courts of Appeals (13)

*United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit*

- 12 Geographic Circuits and 1 Federal Circuit
- Appellate jurisdiction
- The First Circuit is the smallest with 6 judges and the Ninth Circuit is the largest with 29 judges



Mid Level - First Appeal

- 3 judges are randomly selected to form a panel for each appellate case
- In special cases, an appeal can be reheard by an *En Banc* panel of all the judges in a Circuit

### APPEALS

**Civil Case:** Either party may appeal the verdict.  
**Criminal Case:** If the defendant is found guilty, they may appeal.

## United States District Courts (94)

*United States District Court for the District of Maryland*

- States have 1-4 districts
- Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. have 1
- U.S. Territories have Territorial Courts
- Original jurisdiction



Lowest Level - Trial Courts

- The number of judges per district varies widely and is determined by caseload  
For Example: Wyoming has 1 district and 3 judges while California has 4 districts and 61 Judges
- District judges can appoint Magistrate judges to help with the caseload



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