

Constitution further provides that “[t]he Judges, both of the supreme and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good Behaviour, and shall, at stated Times, receive for their Services, a Compensation, which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.”

Court officers assist the Court in the performance of its functions. They include the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice, the Clerk, the Reporter of Decisions, the Librarian, the Marshal, the Director of Budget and Personnel, the Court Counsel, the Curator, the Director of Data Systems, and the Public Information Officer.

Appellate Jurisdiction Appellate jurisdiction has been conferred upon the Supreme Court by various statutes under the authority given Congress by the Constitution. The basic statute effective at this time in conferring and controlling jurisdiction of the Supreme Court may be found in 28 U.S.C. 1251, 1253, 1254, 1257–1259, and various special statutes. Congress has no authority to

change the original jurisdiction of this Court.

Rulemaking Power Congress has from time to time conferred upon the Supreme Court power to prescribe rules of procedure to be followed by the lower courts of the United States.

Court Term The term of the Court begins on the first Monday in October and lasts until the first Monday in October of the next year. Approximately 8,000 cases are filed with the Court in the course of a term, and some 1,000 applications of various kinds are filed each year that can be acted upon by a single Justice.

Access to Facilities The Supreme Court is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays. Unless the Court or Chief Justice orders otherwise, the Clerk’s office is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Federal legal holidays. The library is open to members of the bar of the Court, attorneys for the various Federal departments and agencies, and Members of Congress.

For further information concerning the Supreme Court, contact the Public Information Office, United States Supreme Court Building, One First Street NE., Washington, DC 20543. Phone, 202-479-3211. Internet, www.supremecourtus.gov.

Lower Courts

Article III of the Constitution declares, in section 1, that the judicial power of the United States shall be invested in one Supreme Court and in “such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.” The Supreme Court has held that these constitutional courts “. . . share in the exercise of the judicial power defined in that section, can be invested with no other jurisdiction, and have judges who hold office during good behavior, with no power in Congress to provide otherwise.”

United States Courts of Appeals The courts of appeals are intermediate appellate courts created by act of March 3, 1891 (28 U.S.C. ch. 3), to relieve the

Supreme Court of considering all appeals in cases originally decided by the Federal trial courts. They are empowered to review all final decisions and certain interlocutory decisions (18 U.S.C. 3731; 28 U.S.C. 1291, 1292) of district courts. They also are empowered to review and enforce orders of many Federal administrative bodies. The decisions of the courts of appeals are final except as they are subject to review on writ of certiorari by the Supreme Court.

The United States is divided geographically into 12 judicial circuits, including the District of Columbia. Each circuit has a court of appeals (28 U.S.C. 41, 1294). Each of the 50 States is assigned to one of the circuits. The

territories and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are assigned variously to the first, third, and ninth circuits. There is also a Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, which has nationwide jurisdiction defined by subject matter. At present each court of appeals has from 6 to 28 permanent circuit judgeships (179 in all), depending upon the amount of judicial work in the circuit. Circuit judges hold their offices during good behavior as provided by Article III, section 1, of the Constitution. The judge senior in commission who is under 70 years of age (65 at inception of term), has been in office at least 1 year, and has not previously been chief judge, serves as the chief judge of the circuit for a 7-year term. One of the justices of the Supreme Court is assigned as circuit justice for each of the 13 judicial circuits. Each court of appeals normally hears cases in panels consisting of three judges but may sit *en banc* with all judges present.

The judges of each circuit (except the Federal Circuit) by vote determine the size of the judicial council for the circuit, which consists of the chief judge and an equal number of circuit and district judges. The council considers the state of Federal judicial business in the circuit and may "make all necessary and appropriate orders for [its] effective and expeditious administration . . ." (28 U.S.C. 332). The chief judge of each circuit may summon periodically a judicial conference of all judges of the circuit, including members of the bar, to discuss the business of the Federal courts of the circuit (28 U.S.C. 333). The chief judge of each circuit and a district judge elected from each of the 12 geographical circuits, together with the chief judge of the Court of International Trade, serve as members of the Judicial Conference of the United States, over which the Chief Justice of the United States presides. This

is the governing body for the administration of the Federal judicial system as a whole (28 U.S.C. 331).

United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit This court was established under Article III of the Constitution pursuant to the Federal Courts Improvement Act of 1982 (28 U.S.C. 41, 44, 48), as successor to the former United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals and the United States Court of Claims. The jurisdiction of the court is nationwide (as provided by 28 U.S.C. 1295) and includes appeals from the district courts in patent cases; appeals from the district courts in contract, and certain other civil actions in which the United States is a defendant; and appeals from final decisions of the U.S. Court of International Trade, the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. The jurisdiction of the court also includes the review of administrative rulings by the Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. International Trade Commission, Secretary of Commerce, agency boards of contract appeals, and the Merit Systems Protection Board, as well as rulemaking of the Department of Veterans Affairs; review of decisions of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Ethics concerning discrimination claims of Senate employees; and review of a final order of an entity to be designated by the President concerning discrimination claims of Presidential appointees.

The court consists of 12 circuit judges. It sits in panels of three or more on each case and may also hear or rehear a case *en banc*. The court sits principally in Washington, DC, and may hold court wherever any court of appeals sits (28 U.S.C. 48).

Judicial Circuits—United States Courts of Appeals

Circuit	Judges	Official Station
District of Columbia Circuit		
(Clerk: Mark J. Langer; Circuit Executive: Elizabeth H. Paret; Washington, DC)	Circuit Justice Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.	
	Circuit Judges	

Judicial Circuits—United States Courts of Appeals—Continued

Circuit	Judges	Official Station
	David Bryan Sentelle, <i>Chief Judge</i> Douglas H. Ginsburg Karen LeCraft Henderson A. Raymond Randolph Judith W. Rogers David S. Tatel Merrick B. Garland Janice Rogers Brown Thomas B. Griffith Brett M. Kavanaugh (2 vacancies)	Washington, DC Washington, DC
First Circuit		
Districts of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Puerto Rico (<i>Clerk</i> : Richard C. Donovan; <i>Circuit Executive</i> : Gary Wentz;	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Justice David H. Souter <i>Circuit Judges</i> Michael Boudin, <i>Chief Judge</i> Juan R. Torruella Sandra L. Lynch Kermit V. Lipez Jeffrey R. Howard (vacancy)	Boston, MA San Juan, PR Boston, MA Portland, ME Concord, NH
Second Circuit		
Districts of Vermont, Connecticut, northern New York, southern New York, eastern New York, and western New York (<i>Clerk</i> : Catherine O'Hagan Wolfe; <i>Circuit Executive</i> : Karen Greve Milton; New York, NY)	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg <i>Circuit Judges</i> Dennis G. Jacobs, <i>Chief Judge</i> Guido Calabresi Jose A. Cabranes Chester J. Straub Rosemary S. Pooler Robert D. Sack Sonia Sotomayor Robert A. Katzmann Barrington D. Parker, Jr. Reena Raggi Richard C. Wesley Peter W. Hall Debra Ann Livingston	New York, NY New Haven, CT New Haven, CT New York, NY Syracuse, NY New York, NY New York, NY New York, NY New York, NY White Plains, NY New York, NY New York, NY New York, NY New York, NY
Third Circuit		
Districts of New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, middle Pennsylvania, western Pennsylvania, Delaware, and the Virgin Islands (<i>Clerk</i> : Marcia M. Waldron; <i>Circuit Executive</i> : Toby D. Slawsky; Philadelphia, PA)	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Justice David H. Souter <i>Circuit Judges</i> Anthony J. Scirica, <i>Chief Judge</i> Dolores Korman Sloviter Theodore A. McKee Marjorie O. Rendell Maryanne Trump Barry Thomas L. Ambro Julio M. Fuentes D. Brooks Smith D. Michael Fisher Michael A. Chagares Kent A. Jordan Thomas M. Hardiman (3 vacancies)	Philadelphia, PA Philadelphia, PA Philadelphia, PA Philadelphia, PA Newark, NJ Wilmington, DE Newark, NJ Duncansville, PA Pittsburg, PA Newark, NJ Wilmington, DE Pittsburgh, PA
Fourth Circuit		
Districts of Maryland, northern West Virginia, southern West Virginia, eastern Virginia, western Virginia, eastern North Carolina, western North	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. <i>Circuit Judges</i> Karen J. Williams, Chief Judge	Orangeburg, SC

Judicial Circuits—United States Courts of Appeals—Continued

Circuit	Judges	Official Station
Carolina, middle North Carolina, and South Carolina (Clerk: Patricia S. Connor; Circuit Executive: Samuel W. Phillips; Richmond, VA)	James Harvie Wilkinson III Paul V. Niemeyer M. Blane Michael Diana Gribbon Motz William B. Traxler, Jr. Robert B. King Roger L. Gregory Dennis W. Shedd Allyson K. Duncan (5 vacancies)	Charlottesville, VA Baltimore, MD Charleston, WV Baltimore, MD Greenville, SC Charleston, WV Richmond, VA Columbia, SC Raleigh, NC
Fifth Circuit		
Districts of northern Mississippi, southern Mississippi, eastern Louisiana, middle Louisiana, western Louisiana, northern Texas, southern Texas, eastern Texas, and western Texas (Clerk: Charles R. Fulbruge III; Circuit Executive: Gregory A. Nussel; New Orleans, LA)	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Justice Antonin Scalia <i>Circuit Judges</i> Edith Hollan Jones, <i>Chief Judge</i> Carolyn Dineen King E. Grady Jolly W. Eugene Davis Jerry Edwin Smith Jacques L. Wiener, Jr. Rhesa H. Barksdale Emilio M. Garza Harold R. DeMoss, Jr. Fortunado P. Benavides Carl E. Stewart James L. Dennis Edith Brown Clement Edward C. Prado Priscilla Richman Owen Jennifer Walker Elrod Leslie H. Southwick	Houston, TX Houston Jackson, MS Lafayette, LA Houston, TX New Orleans, LA Jackson, MS San Antonio, TX Houston, TX Austin, TX Shreveport, LA New Orleans, LA New Orleans, LA San Antonio, TX Austin, TX Houston, TX Jackson, MS
Sixth Circuit		
Districts of northern Ohio, southern Ohio, eastern Michigan, western Michigan, eastern Kentucky, western Kentucky, eastern Tennessee, middle Tennessee, and western Tennessee (Clerk: Leonard Green; Circuit Executive: Clarence G. Maddox II; Cincinnati, OH)	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Justice John Paul Stevens <i>Circuit Judges</i> Danny J. Boggs, <i>Chief Judge</i> Boyce F. Martin, Jr. Alice M. Batchelder Martha Craig Daughtrey Karen Nelson Moore Ransey Guy Cole, Jr. Eric L. Clay Ronald Lee Gilman Julia Smith Gibbons John M. Rogers Jeffrey S. Sutton Deborah L. Cook David W. McKeague Richard A. Griffin (2 vacancies)	Louisville, KY Louisville, KY Medina, OH Nashville, TN Cleveland, OH Columbus, OH Detroit, MI Memphis, TN Memphis, TN Lexington, KY Columbus, OH Akron, OH Lansing, MI Traverse City, MI
Seventh Circuit		
Districts of northern Indiana, southern Indiana, northern Illinois, central Illinois, southern Illinois, eastern Wisconsin, and western Wisconsin (Clerk: Gino J. Agnello; Circuit Executive: Collins T. Fitzpatrick; Chicago, IL)	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Justice John Paul Stevens <i>Circuit Judges</i> Frank H. Easterbrook, <i>Chief Judge</i> Richard A. Posner Joel M. Flaum Kenneth F. Ripple Daniel A. Manion Michael S. Kanne Ilana Diamond Rovner Diane P. Wood Terence T. Evans	Chicago, IL Chicago, IL Chicago, IL South Bend, IN South Bend, IN Lafayette, IN Chicago, IL Chicago, IL Milwaukee, WI

Judicial Circuits—United States Courts of Appeals—Continued

Circuit	Judges	Official Station
	Ann C. Williams Diane S. Sykes John Daniel Tinder	Chicago, IL Milwaukee, WI Indianapolis, IN
Eighth Circuit		
Districts of Minnesota, northern Iowa, southern Iowa, eastern Missouri, western Missouri, eastern Arkansas, western Arkansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota (Clerk: Michael Ellis Gans; Circuit Executive: Millie B. Adams; St. Louis, MO)	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr. <i>Circuit Judges</i> James B. Loken, <i>Chief Judge</i> Roger L. Wollman Morris S. Arnold Diana E. Murphy Kermit E. Bye William Jay Riley Michael J. Melloy Lavenski R. Smith Steven M. Colloton Raymond W. Gruender Duane Benton Bobby E. Shepherd	Minneapolis, MN Sioux Falls, SD Little Rock, AR Minneapolis, MN Fargo, ND Omaha, NE Cedar Rapids, IA Little Rock, AR Des Moines, IA St. Louis, MO Kansas City, MO El Dorado, AR
Ninth Circuit		
Districts of northern California, eastern California, central California, southern California, Oregon, Nevada, Montana, eastern Washington, western Washington, Idaho, Arizona, Alaska, Hawaii, Territory of Guam, and District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands (Clerk: Molly Dwyer; Circuit Executive: Cathy A. Catterson; San Francisco, CA)	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Justice Anthony M. Kennedy <i>Circuit Judges</i> Alex Kozinski, <i>Chief Judge</i> Harry Pregerson Stephen Reinhardt Mary M. Schroeder Diarmuid F. O'Scannlain Pamela Ann Rymmer Andrew J. Kleinfeld Michael Daly Hawkins Sidney R. Thomas Barry G. Silverman Susan P. Graber M. Margaret McKeown Kim M. Wardlaw William A. Fletcher Raymond C. Fisher Ronald M. Gould Richard A. Paez Marsha S. Berzon Richard C. Tallman Johnnie B. Rawlinson Richard R. Clifton Jay S. Bybee Consuelo Maria Callahan Carlos T. Bea Milan D. Smith, Jr. Sandra S. Ikuta Norman Randy Smith (vacancy)	Pasadena, CA Woodland Hills, CA Los Angeles, CA Phoenix, AZ Portland, OR Pasadena, CA Fairbanks, AK Phoenix, AZ Billings, MT Phoenix, AZ Portland, OR Seattle, WA Pasadena, CA San Francisco, CA Pasadena, CA Seattle, WA Pasadena, CA San Francisco, CA Seattle, WA Las Vegas, NV Honolulu, HI Las Vegas, NV Sacramento, CA San Francisco, CA Pasadena, CA Pasadena, CA Boise, ID
Tenth Circuit		
Districts of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Kansas, eastern Oklahoma, western Oklahoma, northern Oklahoma, and New Mexico (Clerk: Elisabeth A. Shumaker; Circuit Executive: David J. Tighe; Denver, CO)	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Justice Stephen G. Breyer <i>Circuit Judges</i> Robert H. Henry, <i>Chief Judge</i> Paul J. Kelly, Jr. Reece Tacha Mary Beck Briscoe Carlos F. Lucero Michael R. Murphy Harris L. Hartz Terrence L. O'Brien Michael W. McConnell	Oklahoma City, OK Santa Fe, NM Lawrence, KS Lawrence, KS Denver, CO Salt Lake City, UT Albuquerque, NM Cheyenne, WY Salt Lake City, UT

Judicial Circuits—United States Courts of Appeals—Continued

Circuit	Judges	Official Station
	Timothy M. Tymkovich Neil M. Gorsuch Jerome A. Holmes	Denver, CO Denver, CO Tulsa, OK
Eleventh Circuit		
Districts of northern Georgia, middle Georgia, southern Georgia, northern Florida, middle Florida, southern Florida, northern Alabama, middle Alabama, southern Alabama (Clerk: Thomas K. Kahn; Circuit Executive: James P. Gerstenlauer; Atlanta, GA)	<i>Circuit Justice</i> Justice Clarence Thomas <i>Circuit Judges</i> J.L. Edmondson, <i>Chief Judge</i> Gerald B. Tjoflat R. Lanier Anderson III Stanley F. Birch, Jr. Joel F. Dubina Susan H. Black Edward E. Carnes Rosemary Barkett Frank Mays Hull Stanley Marcus Charles R. Wilson William H. Pryor, Jr.	Atlanta, GA Jacksonville, FL Macon, GA Atlanta, GA Montgomery, AL Jacksonville, FL Montgomery, AL Miami, FL Atlanta, GA Miami, FL Tampa, FL Birmingham, AL

Federal Circuit—Washington, DC

Circuit Justice
Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.

Chief Judge
Paul R. Michel

Judges
Pauline Newman
Haldane Robert Mayer
Alan D. Lourie
Randall R. Rader
Alvin A. Schall
William C. Bryson
Arthur J. Gajarsa
Richard Linn
Timothy B. Dyk
Sharon Prost
Kimberly Moore

Clerk: Jan Horbaly

United States District Courts The district courts are the trial courts of general Federal jurisdiction. Each State has at least one district court, while the larger States have as many as four. Altogether there are 89 district courts in the 50 States, plus the one in the District of Columbia. In addition, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has a district court with jurisdiction corresponding to that of district courts in the various States.

At present, each district court has from 2 to 28 Federal district judgeships, depending upon the amount of judicial work within its territory. Only one judge is usually required to hear and decide a case in a district court, but in some limited cases it is required that three judges be called together to comprise the court (28 U.S.C. 2284). The judge

senior in commission who is under 70 years of age (65 at inception of term), has been in office for at least 1 year, and has not previously been chief judge, serves as chief judge for a 7-year term. There are altogether 645 permanent district judgeships in the 50 States and 15 in the District of Columbia. There are 7 district judgeships in Puerto Rico. District judges hold their offices during good behavior as provided by Article III, section 1, of the Constitution. However, Congress may create temporary judgeships for a court with the provision that when a future vacancy occurs in that district, such vacancy shall not be filled. Each district court has one or more United States magistrate judges and bankruptcy judges, a clerk, a United States attorney, a United States marshal, probation officers, court reporters, and their staffs. The jurisdiction of the district courts is set forth in title 28, chapter 85, of the United States Code and at 18 U.S.C. 3231.

Cases from the district courts are reviewable on appeal by the applicable court of appeals.

Territorial Courts Pursuant to its authority to govern the Territories (art. IV, sec. 3, clause 2, of the Constitution), Congress has established district courts in the territories of Guam and the Virgin Islands. The District Court of the Canal Zone was abolished on April 1, 1982, pursuant to the Panama Canal Act of

1979 (22 U.S.C. 3601 note). Congress has also established a district court in the Northern Mariana Islands, which presently is administered by the United States under a trusteeship agreement with the United Nations. These Territorial courts have jurisdiction not only over the subjects described in the judicial article of the Constitution but also over many local matters that, within the States, are decided in State courts. The district court of Puerto Rico, by contrast, is established under Article III, is classified like other "district courts," and is called a "court of the United States" (28 U.S.C. 451). There is one judge each in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, and two in the Virgin Islands. The judges in these courts are appointed for terms of 10 years.

For further information concerning the lower courts, contact the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building, One Columbus Circle NE., Washington, DC 20544. Phone, 202-502-2600.

United States Court of International Trade This court was originally established as the Board of United States General Appraisers by act of June 10, 1890, which conferred upon it jurisdiction theretofore held by the district and circuit courts in actions arising under the tariff acts (19 U.S.C. ch. 4). The act of May 28, 1926 (19 U.S.C. 405a), created the United States Customs Court to supersede the Board; by acts of August 7, 1939, and June 25, 1948 (28 U.S.C. 1582, 1583), the court was integrated into the United States court structure, organization, and procedure. The act of July 14, 1956 (28 U.S.C. 251), established the court as a court of record of the United States under Article III of the Constitution. The Customs Court Act of 1980 (28 U.S.C. 251) constituted the court as the United States Court of International Trade.

The Court of International Trade has jurisdiction over any civil action against the United States arising from Federal laws governing import transactions. This includes classification and valuation cases, as well as authority to review certain agency determinations under the Trade Agreements Act of 1979 (19

U.S.C. 2501) involving antidumping and countervailing duty matters. In addition, it has exclusive jurisdiction of civil actions to review determinations as to the eligibility of workers, firms, and communities for adjustment assistance under the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2101). Civil actions commenced by the United States to recover customs duties, to recover on a customs bond, or for certain civil penalties alleging fraud or negligence are also within the exclusive jurisdiction of the court.

The court is composed of a chief judge and eight judges, not more than five of whom may belong to any one political party. Any of its judges may be temporarily designated and assigned by the Chief Justice of the United States to sit as a court of appeals or district court judge in any circuit or district. The court has a clerk and deputy clerks, a librarian, court reporters, and other supporting personnel. Cases before the court may be tried before a jury. Under the Federal Courts Improvement Act of 1982 (28 U.S.C. 1295), appeals are taken to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and ultimately review may be sought in appropriate cases in the Supreme Court of the United States.

The principal offices are located in New York, NY, but the court is empowered to hear and determine cases arising at any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States.

For further information, contact the Clerk, United States Court of International Trade, One Federal Plaza, New York, NY 10278-0001. Phone, 212-264-2814.

Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation The Panel, created by act of April 29, 1968 (28 U.S.C. 1407), and consisting of seven Federal judges designated by the Chief Justice from the courts of appeals and district courts, is authorized to temporarily transfer to a single district, for coordinated or consolidated pretrial proceedings, civil actions pending in different districts that involve one or more common questions of fact.

For further information, contact the Clerk, Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, Room G-255, Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building, One Columbus Circle NE., Washington, DC 20002-8041. Phone, 202-502-2800.

Special Courts

The Supreme Court has held that “. . . Article III [of the Constitution] does not express the full authority of Congress to create courts, and that other Articles invest Congress with powers in the exertion of which it may create inferior courts and clothe them with functions deemed essential or helpful in carrying those powers into execution.” Such courts, known as legislative courts, have functions which “. . . are directed to the execution of one or more of such powers and are prescribed by Congress independently of section 2 of Article III; and their judges hold office for such term as Congress prescribes, whether it be a fixed period of years or during good behavior.” Appeals from the decisions of these courts, with the exception of the U.S. Tax Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, may be taken to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. Appeals from the decisions of the Tax Court may be taken to the court of appeals in which judicial circuit the case was initially heard. Certain decisions of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces are reviewable by writ of certiorari in the Supreme Court.

United States Court of Federal Claims

The U.S. Court of Federal Claims has jurisdiction over claims seeking money judgments against the United States. A claim must be founded upon the United States Constitution; an act of Congress; the regulation of an executive department; an express or implied-in-fact contract with the United States; or damages, liquidated or unliquidated, in cases not sounding in tort. Judges in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims are appointed by the President for 15-year terms, subject to Senate confirmation. Appeals are to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

For further information, contact the Clerk's Office, United States Court of Federal Claims, 717 Madison Place NW., Washington, DC 20005-1086. Phone, 202-357-6400. Internet, www.uscfc.uscourts.gov.

United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces

This court was established under Article I of the Constitution of the United States pursuant to act of May 5, 1950, as amended (10 U.S.C. 867). Subject only to certiorari review by the Supreme Court of the United States in a limited number of cases, the court serves as the final appellate tribunal to review court-martial convictions of all the Armed Forces. It is exclusively an appellate criminal court, consisting of five civilian judges who are appointed for 15-year terms by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The court is called upon to exercise jurisdiction to review the record in all cases:

- extending to death;
- certified to the court by a Judge Advocate General of an armed force or by the General Counsel of the Department of Transportation, acting for the Coast Guard; or
- petitioned by accused who have received a sentence of confinement for 1 year or more, and/or a punitive discharge.

The court also exercises authority under the All Writs Act (28 U.S.C. 1651 (a)).

In addition, the judges of the court are required by law to work jointly with the senior uniformed lawyer from each armed force, the Chief Counsel of the Coast Guard, and two members of the public appointed by the Secretary of Defense, to make an annual comprehensive survey and to report annually to the Congress on the operation and progress of the military justice system under the Uniform Code