

## How the Case Moved Through the Court System

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### Supreme Court of the United States

The Court upheld the Louisiana State Supreme Court's decision and declared that the "Separate Car Act" was constitutional as long as there were separate but equal accommodations for both whites and blacks. It further stated that the legal distinction made by the Act did not in any way destroy the legal equality of the two races. (As to the question Plessy raised in his petition to the Louisiana State Supreme Court about his not being black, the Supreme Court of the United States recognized that it may be an important question, but the question was not properly put in issue in this case.)

*Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)*

Plessy filed a petition for writs of error and certiorari to the Supreme Court of the United States, arguing that the "Separate Car Act" violated the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments.



### Louisiana State Supreme Court

Rejected Plessy's argument that Judge Ferguson's ruling should be overturned; the Court affirmed the constitutionality of the Separate Car Act and further stated Plessy refused to admit he was black.

*Ex parte Plessy (1892)*

Plessy petitioned the Louisiana Supreme Court not as an appeal of the district court decision but in a separate case on his behalf, for a writ of prohibition to stop Judge Ferguson from continuing the legal proceedings against him. Plessy argued that he was only one-eighth black, that the mixture of colored blood was not discernible in him, and thus that he should be afforded all the rights and privileges of a white man.



### Criminal District Court for the Parish of Orleans

Judge Ferguson of state district court found Plessy guilty of not leaving the car for whites when asked to; denied claim that Separate Car Act was unconstitutional because Louisiana could regulate its railroad companies however it saw fit as long as equal accommodations were provided.

*State of Louisiana v. Plessy (1892)*