



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

Public Information Office

The Supreme Court's Power of Extraordinary Jurisdiction

Can the Supreme Court hear any case it wants?

Under Pennsylvania law the state Supreme Court is able to take control of any case pending in the lower courts when the high court sees the need to address an issue of "immediate public importance." This power, known as the exercise of "extraordinary jurisdiction," is used by the Supreme Court only on rare occasions, on average about three times a year.

The Supreme Court has used its powers to take jurisdiction of cases involving salary adjustments for elected officials, election disputes, public employee strikes, prison overcrowding, investigating grand juries, powers of the Legislature and other issues of important public concern.