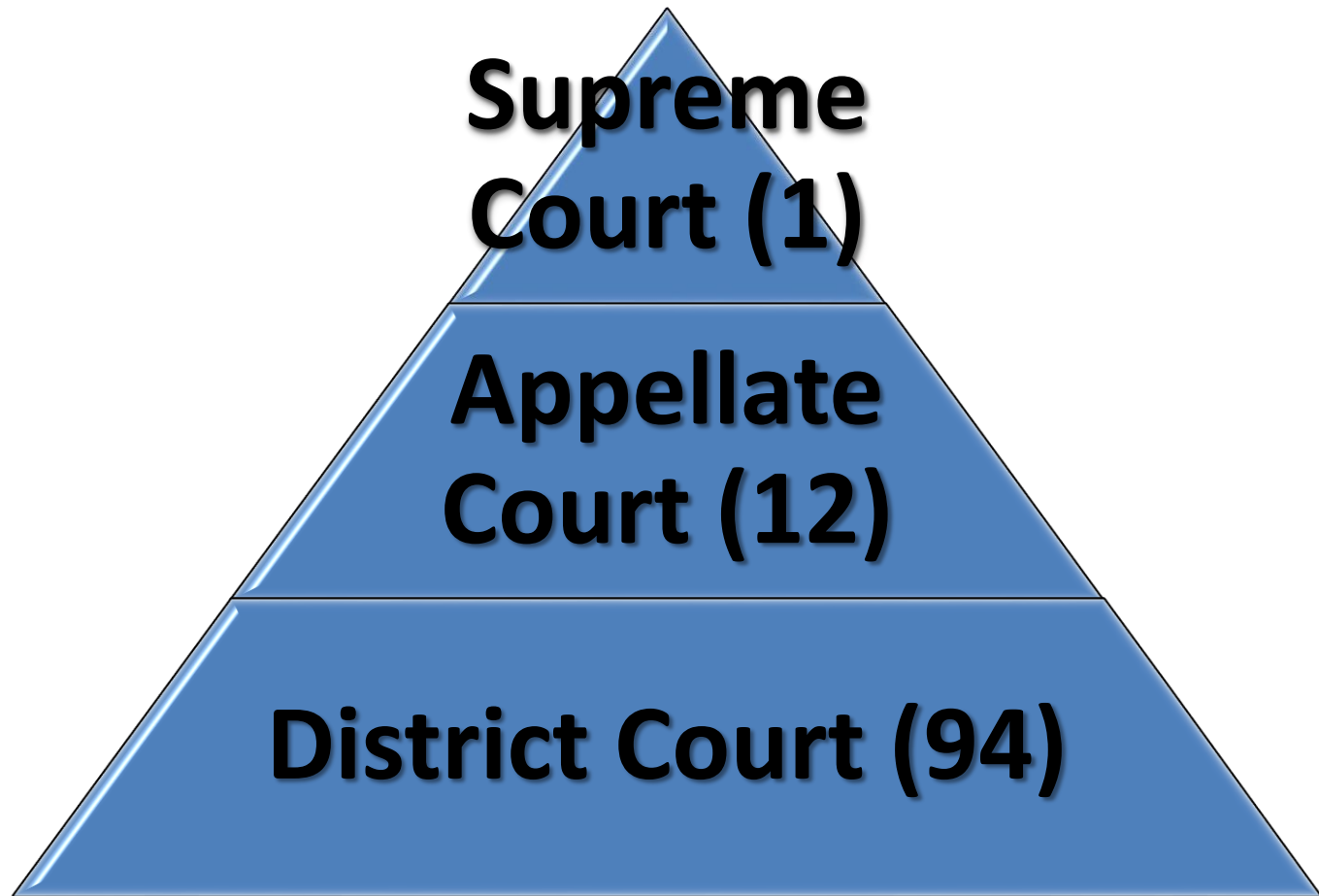




# The Federal Court System



# Federal Court Hierarchy





# The Judicial Branch

- Responsible for Interpreting the Laws
- Headed by the Supreme Court
  - Comprised of 1 Chief Justice and 8 Associate Justices





# Qualifications for a Supreme Court Justice

- Age
  - None
- Citizenship/Residency
  - None
- Length of Term
  - Life
- Term Limit
  - One





# How the Justices are selected

- All Federal Judges are appointed by the President and approved by the Senate





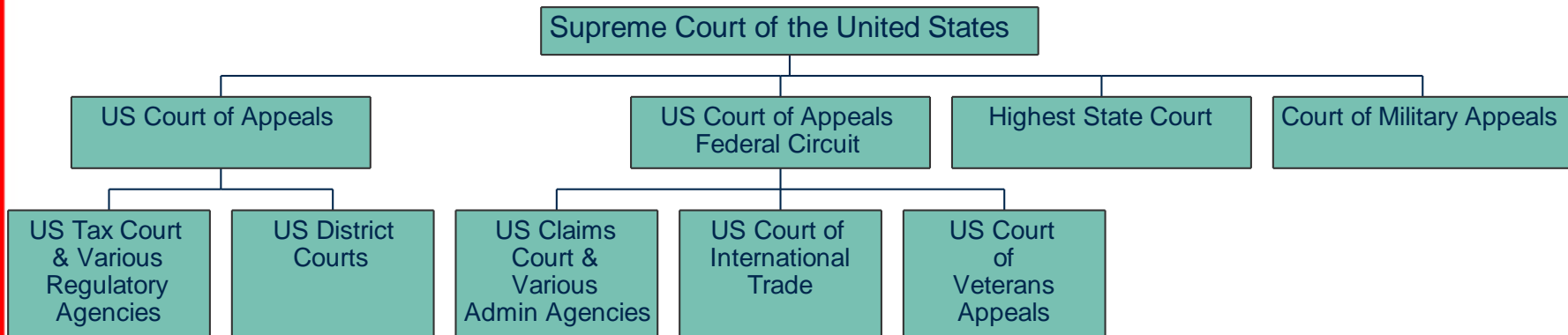
# Jurisdiction

- The authority to act, hear a case, investigate, or make an arrest





# The Federal Court System





# Original Jurisdiction

- Courts with Original Jurisdiction
  - District Courts- ex: state crimes
  - Supreme Court- ex: cases between states





# Appellate Jurisdiction

- **Description** - The authority to hear a case on appeals
- **Courts with Appellate Jurisdiction**
  - **Appellate courts**- hear cases from district level in which there was an error in the case
  - **Supreme Court**- hears cases from Appellate level



## Limits on Congress and Court System

- **Ex post facto** – allowing a person to be punished for an action that was not against the law when it was committed. **(CAN'T)**
- **Writ of habeas corpus** – a court order that requires police to bring a prisoner to court to explain why they are holding the person. **(MUST)**
- **Bill of attainder** – a law that punishes a person accused of a crime without a trial or a fair hearing in court. **(CAN'T)**



# Powers of the Supreme Court

- Judicial Review
  - Can declare laws unconstitutional
  - Can declare executive action unconstitutional
- Settles disputes involving the United States
- Settles disputes between the states





# Key Judicial Terms

- Plenary Review-oral arguments before the court
- Sitting-when justices hear & deliver opinions
- Recess-when justices consider the business of the court
- Brief-written documentation submitted by the lawyers to explain and argue the case that is presented before the court.
- Judicial Review-the court can review any federal or state law to see if it is agreement with the Constitution



# Terms continued

- Writ of Certiorari-directs the lower courts to send its records on the case to the Supreme Court (looking for errors)
- Majority Opinion-written documentation of the opinion of the majority voters
- Minority Opinion- written documentation of the opinion of the minority voters
- Concurring Opinion-written documentation of the majority but, with a different reason why