

TABLE 14.1

Significant Prisoner Rights Cases (Continued)

| CASE                                                           | ISSUE                     | DESCRIPTION                                                                                                                                                            | WHAT THE COURT SAID                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Pennsylvania Department of Corrections v. Yeskey (1998)</i> | Disabilities              | Yeskey was denied admission to a boot camp because of hypertension. Do the protections in Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act extend to inmates?           | "Assuming, without deciding, that the plain-statement rule does govern application of the ADA to the administration of state prisons, we think the requirement of the rule is amply met: the statute's language unmistakably includes State prisons and prisoners within its coverage . . . the plain text of Title II of the ADA unambiguously extends to state prison inmates" <i>Pennsylvania Department of Corrections v. Yeskey</i> (97–634)                                                                                |
| <i>Overton v. Bazzetta et al. (2003)</i>                       | Visitation rights         | Michigan passed a law prohibiting children from visiting unless the inmate had parental rights and restricting other types of visitors. A group of inmates filed suit. | "The fact that the regulations bear a rational relation to legitimate penological interests suffices to sustain them regardless of whether respondents have a constitutional right of association that has survived incarceration. This Court accords substantial deference to the professional judgment of prison administrators, who bear a significant responsibility for defining a corrections system's legitimate goals and determining the most appropriate means to accomplish them." <i>Overton v. Bazzetta</i> (02–94) |
| <i>Cutter v. Wilkinson (2005)</i>                              | Religion                  | Inmates argued that their non-mainstream religions were not accommodated as specified in the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000.             | "RLUIPA thus protects institutionalized persons who are unable freely to attend to their religious needs and are therefore dependent on the government's permission and accommodation for exercise of their religion. But the Act does not elevate accommodation of religious observances over an institution's need to maintain order and safety. An accommodation must be measured so that it does not override other significant interests." <i>Cutter v. Wilkinson</i> (03–9877)                                             |
| <i>Brown v. Plata (2011)</i>                                   | Prison population limits  | A lower court ordered that the California state prison system reduce prison populations because of its inability to meet physical and health needs of inmates.         | "The medical and mental health care provided by California's prisons falls below the standard of decency that inheres in the Eighth Amendment. This extensive and ongoing constitutional violation requires a remedy, and a remedy will not be achieved without a reduction in overcrowding. . . . The State shall implement the order without further delay." <i>Brown v. Plata</i> (09–1233)                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Swarthout v. Cooke (2011)</i>                               | Inmates' rights to parole | A federal court overturned the governor's decision to deny an inmate parole. The state appealed on the grounds that the federal court did not have legal standing.     | "Whatever liberty interest exists is, of course, a state interest created by California law. There is no right under the Federal Constitution to be conditionally released before the expiration of a valid sentence, and the States are under no duty to offer parole to their prisoners." <i>Swarthout v. Cooke</i> (10–333)                                                                                                                                                                                                   |