

As the largest of the thirteen federal circuits, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit takes approximately 7,000 new cases a year. Ninth Circuit decisions affect nearly 51 million people living within nine Western states and two United States territories. The court's territory includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Ninth Circuit is famous for its controversial and often "liberal" decisions. Last year, the Supreme Court agreed to review twenty-nine cases from the Ninth Circuit. In twenty-eight of those cases, the higher court reversed the appellate ruling. Overall, however, fewer than one-percent of all Ninth Circuit cases are reversed. Due to its tremendous size and liberal reputation, the division of the Ninth Circuit has been the subject of a century-old debate. This year, many conservative Western lawmakers have recommended that the court be subdivided.

The purpose of this twenty-fourth edition of the Ninth Circuit Survey is to inform the readers of some of the important decisions of the 1998-99 court term. While the Ninth Circuit Survey continues to be an entirely student-managed, student-written and student-edited scholarly work, this edition differs slightly from the past. First, it contains summaries that provide an in-depth analysis of recent decisions impacting intellectual property law, constitutional law, criminal procedure, employment law, and environmental law. The summaries are also composed of a brief discussion of the decisions' potential implications in the particular field of law. Second, this edition includes a detailed biography of each jurist serving on the Ninth Circuit. Lastly, this edition includes a student-written critique and analysis of a recent Ninth Circuit decision regarding personal jurisdiction in the Internet context.

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