Looking at the [Key Supreme Court Case on the 1964 Law](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/initiatives_awards/students_in_action/atlanta.html) - Heart of Atlanta Motel v. U.S. (1964) following “FIRAC”

Facts: Some businesses refused to serve African Americans. One of these was a motel owner in Atlanta. His business served mostly interstate travelers. He claimed that Congress had exceeded its authority under the Commerce Clause by regulating a local private business. He also claimed that the law should be declared invalid under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment.

Issue: Whether Americans can be discriminated against in public accommodations. Under the Constitution, can Congress pass a law preventing private businesses in all states from discriminating against people because of their race or color?

Rule (Law that Applies): Commerce Clause and Fifth Amendment (Due Process)

Analysis/Application: This case hinged on whether the federal government has the power to make private discrimination a crime. This was not the first time the Court had considered the issue - there was precedent. In the 1880s, the Civil Rights cases also asked whether the federal government could outlaw private discrimination under the Constitution. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875 that outlawed discrimination by private businesses like restaurants and hotels. The Act made it a crime to deny to anyone the "full and equal enjoyment" of railways and other transportation. It also required equal treatment in hotels, theaters and other places of public amusement.

Conclusion: Court found that Congress could regulate both interstate commerce and activities within a state as part of its national "police power" to outlaw moral wrongs. The Supreme Court decision was unanimous. The Court upheld the law. Justice Tom Clark pointed out that the Court had long upheld Congress's power to regulate interstate commerce under the Commerce Clause.