

Criminal Justice: An Overview of the System

Module 5: Courts and Sentencing

Section 5.2: Prosecution and Defense

Argersinger v. Hamlin (1972): A Supreme Court decision that requires the appointment of counsel before a prison sentence can be levied against a criminal defendant.

Assistant U.S. Attorney: U.S. Government attorneys who serve as prosecutors in federal criminal cases.

City Attorney: A civil servant lawyer tasked with representing a city in legal matters, often including prosecutions.

District Attorney (D.A.): The attorney, usually an elected official, tasked with prosecuting accused persons in the name of the state.

Docket: A log containing the complete history of each case in the form of brief chronological entries summarizing the court proceedings.

Faretta v. California (1975): A SCOTUS ruling that established the precedent that people have a right to self-representation in criminal cases.

Independent Counsel: A lawyer appointed by the federal government to investigate allegations of wrongdoing by a government official.

Indigent Defendant: A person that cannot afford an attorney to defend them against a criminal accusation.

Nolle Prosequi: A Latin legal phrase meaning "will no longer prosecute;" formal notice by a prosecutor that a case is being dropped.

State's Attorney: An attorney representing the interests of a state in court, usually in the capacity of a prosecutor.

United States Attorneys: Conduct most of the trial work in which the United States is a party.