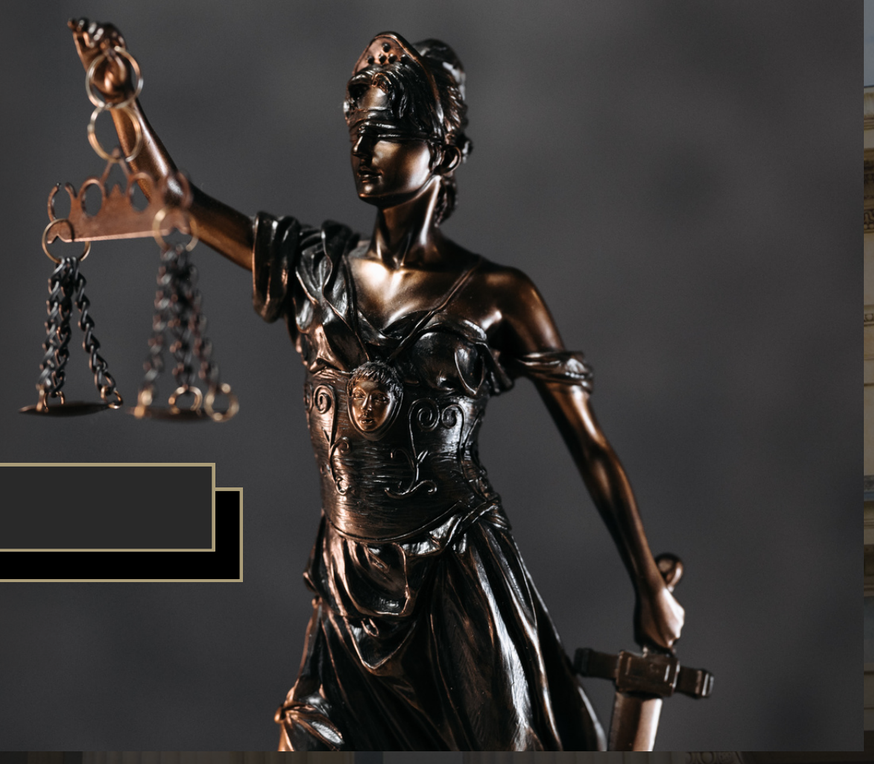
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# Dartmouth College v. Woodward



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## *Circumstances of the Case*

New Hampshire Legislature attempted to make Dartmouth College, a Private Institution, into a state university. The legislature changed the corporate charter that the school had by transferring the power of the trustee appointments to the governor. The old trustees of Dartmouth filed suit against William H. Woodward, who sided with the new appointees, in an attempt to regain the resources of Dartmouth College

## Opinion of the Court

In 1769, King George III granted a charter to Dartmouth College. After the separation of Britain and the colonies, New Hampshire state legislature had taken back their charter. Dartmouth appealed this decision and  the Court ruled in favor of Dartmouth and allowed them to continue to be a private college. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall, wrote in that in the opinion of the court the original Dartmouth charter was a contract and the constitution protected contracts.

### Short Term Ramifications

In the short term Dartmouth College was able to reclaim all of their land, buildings, and charter. The ruling in this case protected the rights of private businesses from state legislature.

### Long Term Effects and Significance

The decision in Dartmouth College v. Woodward allowed Capitalism to prosper and it allowed for an economy based on many privately owned businesses. Additionally it promoted the American free enterprise system and resulted in the emergence of corporations.

Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward. (n.d.). *Oyez*. Retrieved November 3, 2023, from https://www.oyez.org/cases/1789-1850/17us518
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