

Rulings handed down in three cases

High Court ruling to fight teaching bias

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Female educators have scored a significant victory in the Supreme Court that may give them a helping hand in fighting bias against women in the teaching field.

The high court ruled, 6-3, Monday that Title IX — one of the most important federal tools to combat sex discrimination in education — covers not only admissions, scholarships and other student benefits, but also employment practices.

Margaret Kohn, a lawyer with the National Women's Law Center in Washington, called the ruling a very important victory, but the decision also contained curbs that narrowed its scope.

The decision allows the government to police sex discrimination in private and public educational programs — from preschool through the university level — but only in those specific school programs and activities that receive federal funding.

The justices also had good news Monday for a group of black workers in Mississippi with job discrimination complaints against three state agencies. The high court overrode the state's

objections and kept the workers' lawsuits alive.

But while doing a good turn for women in education and the Mississippi black workers, the justices delivered a potential setback on another job discrimination front.

On a 5-4 vote, they ruled against an appeal brought by a

New York engineer who said he was fired and denied reemployment by his company because he is Polish and Jewish.

The decision, which declares a person who loses a discrimination suit in state courts generally cannot then take it to federal court, could make it significantly more difficult to pursue job bias

complaints in federal court.

In the Title IX case, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor voted with the majority on the side of women's rights activists in one of her first high court tests on a woman's issue.

Dissenting were Chief Justice Warren Burger and Justices Lewis Powell and William Rehn-

quist.

Title IX, part of the 1972 Education Amendments, was a major step by Congress to outlaw sex discrimination in educational programs that receive federal funds. It allows the government to investigate alleged sex discrimination by a school and cut off federal funds for

violations. Under regulations overseen by the Education Department, Title IX also is used to investigate sex bias in employment by educational institutions.

Monday's test case was brought by school districts in North Haven and Trumbull, Conn., which both argued Title

IX was never meant to cover employment practices.

They were cited for alleged discriminating against a female teacher, who was not rehired after a one-year maternity leave and a guidance counselor, who contended she was required to type and errand-running her male colleagues were not

ERA backers begin Illinois hunger strike

United Press International
SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Seven women dedicated to the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment are going hungry to give lawmakers in the key target state of Illinois some food for thought.

The group, made up of ERA supporters from across the nation, ate "last supper" leftovers Monday night in preparation for the hunger strike.

The women said their fast is a first in the fight for the ERA. Six of the women pledged to live only on water. One promised to diet on juice. They said they were prepared for a long fast, but have no idea when it will end.

"I think it's going to make visible a whole new level of seriousness ... It's an attempt to move them (legislators) in a very personal way," Maureen Fiedler of Lockport, N.Y., said.

"This takes an in-depth commitment. It's not like a volunteer, 'you take a leaflet' thing."

In Houston, Pulitzer-prize winning columnist Ellen Goodman Monday said she was not optimistic the ERA would pass within the next 44 days but she disputed suggestions failure of the constitutional amendment might demoralize the women's movement.

"In every race across the country we will ask politicians 'Are you for us or agin' us?'" she told the League of Women Voters convention. "I suspect they are going to regret it didn't pass before."

The Illinois fasters said they hope their abstinence from food may convince legislators in Illinois — a key state targeted by the National Organization of Women — to pass the ERA before the June 30 deadline.

Three more states must ratify by the deadline for it to become law. But the ERA supporters said Illinois is the biggest challenge because it requires a three-fifths majority — rather than simple majority — of the Legislature.



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