

# VA challenges 122 year old law

United Press International

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court agreed Monday to review a Civil War era law that limits to \$10 the amount veterans can pay a lawyer to challenge a denial of disability benefits by the Veterans Administration.

The law, passed 122 years ago to protect veterans from unscrupulous lawyers, was successfully challenged in a lower court by veterans groups that argue the limit prevents them from mounting challenges to complex VA benefits denials.

They said the limit effectively prevents sophisticated court challenges

to benefit denials in cases involving illnesses stemming from radiation, Agent Orange, other chemicals and post-traumatic stress syndrome.

The high court, accepting an appeal from the Justice Department, agreed to review a ruling by a lone San Francisco federal judge who rejected earlier court decisions approving the spending limitation.

In other action Monday, the court:   
• Ruled 6-3 that a federal law aimed at protecting postal workers by making it a crime to assault a federal agent carrying money also covers assaults on Secret Service agents involved in an undercover counterfeiting investigation.

• Upheld, 8-0, a federal appeals court ruling that said a criminal suspect must testify at his trial if he wants to challenge on appeal the use of prior convictions as evidence against him.

• Agreed to review a 1975 Alabama death penalty law that prevented juries from considering aggravating and mitigating circumstances of a case before choosing between a life sentence and execution. The law was changed in 1981.

• Sided with the state of Wisconsin in a voter reapportionment dispute that has been ongoing since the 1980 census was completed. The

court vacated a lower court ruling that had sided with the state Republican Party.

In the veterans case, the National Association of Radiation Survivors convinced Judge Marilyn Hall Patel last June that the limitation was obsolete and was denying them the right to redress their grievances in the courts.

Rehnquist, citing two federal appeals court rulings counter to Patel's decision, refused to allow the cap to be lifted. The Supreme Court has twice refused to review the limitation in other cases.

## Police Beat

The following incidents were reported to the University Police Department through Monday.

### MISDEMEANOR THEFT:

- A Schwinn Varsity 10-speed bicycle was stolen from the Krueger Hall bike racks.
- A Halsey-Taylor water fountain was stolen from the first floor North stairwell in Dorm 11.

### CRIMINAL MISCHIEF:

- Someone threw a chemical substance onto the right front fender of a 1978 Chevrolet Camaro, causing the paint to peel away from it.

## deciding

(continued from page 1)

He says maturation, or exposure to the real world helps.

Cole says he has had students who sit out a few semesters, work, and during that time find out what they really want to do about their education.

Sitting out a few semesters from school after being blocked can sometimes make you a better risk, to some deans, than if you came back as soon as you could.

Students who are blocked, readmitted, blocked, and readmitted run the biggest risk of all. Chances are if

they mess up again they are dropped from the University. As Carlson puts it, being dropped, "basically ends your career in college."

Carlson says being dropped and blocked effectively do the same thing: prevent the student from going to school.

Being dropped is more serious because other schools don't accept a student who has been dropped.

Some colleges, such as engineering, try not to drop students. Carlson says that in recent years the college has rarely dropped students,

except in flagrant cases.

The College of Business Administration doesn't use the word blocked at all. When that college stops you from returning to the University your transcripts show it.

The business college is the only college with college probation. A student is placed on probation anytime the GPR falls below a 2.0 in a semester. Regardless of overall average.

Samuel Gillespie, assistant dean for the College of Business Administration, says he'd rather bring the deficit to the students' attention than

have them accumulate a larger deficit and drag themselves down.

"If you get them early," Gillespie says, "they'll catch it up."

He concedes that students may have another view.

"Students will say 'harrassing,' we say 'firm,'" he says. "Life is difficult and you're faced with problems daily. The academic experience isn't only the knowledge, it's really preparing you for the next difficulty."

It's not actually that cut-and-dried for the business college. Gillespie says it helps if the students visit him

during the semester if they think they are doing poorly.

Dwayne Suter, associate dean for the College of Agriculture, says, "We block a student when we believe it is not in the student's best interest to continue the next semester in the University."

"Each semester I have the unpleasant task of telling no more than two or three that I cannot in good conscience allow them to return to Texas A&M."

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