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Supreme Court rules 1990 Gun-Free School Zones Act unconstitutional in a 5-4 decision Texas A

□ The ruling declared that Congress lacked authority to enact the law because it did not fall within its authority to regulate interstate commerce.

Principal Burl Whatley has encountered firearms on campus and even heard shots ring out during a recent lunch period, yet he's not exactly mourning the demise Wednesday of a federal law banning possession of a gun within 1,000 feet of a school.

Like other Texas school and law enforcement officials, Whatley said the statute thrown out by the U.S. Supreme Court was not necessarily a primary line of defense against guns.

'I don't know that we lost anything when we had that ruling, because I don't know that there was any prosecution un-der that," said Whatley, principal at El Paso's Coronado High.

Ruling 5-4 in a San Antonio case, the na-tion's high court said Congress lacked the au-thority to enact the 1990 Gun-Free School Zones Act because it does not fall within its authority to regulate interstate commerce.

The act "is a criminal statute that by its terms has nothing to do with 'commerce' or any sort of economic enterprise, however broadly one might define those terms,' Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist wrote for the court.

States have the primary authority to enact and enforce criminal laws, the court said.

The decision denied the government's bid to reinstate a former San Antonio high school student's conviction for carrying a gun to school.

Alfonso Lopez Jr. said he was given the gun to deliver to someone else for \$40 to use in what Lopez described as a "gang war" at Edison High School.

Stephen Johnson, Edison's principal at

"Sometimes the Supreme Court and the legislators have to sit down and say 'Let's do what's right for the children.' I'm definitely against the decision by the Supreme Court."

> - Paul Strelzin, principal of El Paso's Bowie High

the time, said Wednesday that he doubts the high court's ruling will make much of a practical difference

"It wasn't totally important because there are other gun laws. Obviously, we had state laws that said you couldn't bring your guns on campus," he told San Antonio radio station WOAI. "But it just gave it a little more weight, being a federal law. . .. I'm concerned because we need all the tools we can get to help with discipline on the campuses.

Existing state law makes it a time White. felony for anyone but a licensed per all Matt Ba or security guard to possess a fiream weapon on school property. Violaton Texas A imprisoned for two to 10 years.

So we are not without protection deo will stin police Sgt. Ken Cavett. Austin police Sgt. Ken Cavett. ormation at 696-In fact, Cavett said officers in Auf

gang and robbery unit could not may having any cases come under the fede Whatley said he also was not a Wildlife

tural Re the federal act be forced, even the d Expo v veapons have been m. - 4 p. on campus and stroom. Fo experienced an in all Michell earlier this year Beta Alp which gunshots were Beta Alp

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there will be any Society f change as to how business at Corona iv School," he said. "Sometimes 1213 Nag 'Sometimes elling th

Supreme Court and the legislators irts from sit down and say 'Let's do what's m ore infor: 47-5364. said Paul Strelzin, the children,' pal of El Paso's Bowie High. "I'm de against the Supreme Court." decision by ociology

Race] C.W. Burruss, security director ikers D Dallas Independent School Distric Greg N noted that with one less law av ns, enter its. 1-4 some parents might feel their children be more vulnerable. 0-9 p.m.

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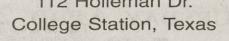
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8 - 10 PM

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