

Supreme Court Loses Legitimacy, Authority With Gay Rights Ruling

The 5-4 opinion by the Supreme Court on the Federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) raises serious questions about the legitimacy of the Court's authority. History has proven that the Supreme Court does not always issue legitimate opinions.

In *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 60 U.S. 393 (1857), Chief Justice Roger Taney wrote for the majority that while some states had granted citizenship to blacks, the U.S. Constitution did not recognize citizenship of blacks. Taney wrote that blacks were "regarded as beings of inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights that the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his own benefit."

Thus, according to the Supreme Court, Scott had no standing to file the suit. As might be expected, this decision created further rift between the North and the South in the days leading up to the Civil War. The Fourteenth Amendment later put the nail in the coffin of the *Dred Scott* decision. This decision was thus made illegitimate and is repudiated today.

In *Buck v. Bell*, 274 U.S. 200 (1927), Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, writing for the Court, described Charlottesville, Va., native Carrie Buck, whom he described as an "imbecile," as the "probable potential parent of socially inadequate offspring, likewise afflicted," and he went on to say that "her welfare and that of society will be promoted by her sterilization." His infamous words still cause one to shudder when he wrote, "Three generations of imbeciles are enough." The *Buck v.*

Bell case approved forced sterilization to prevent “feebleminded and socially inadequate” people from having children. This horrible decision set the stage for more than 60,000 sterilizations in the United States and was cited favorably at the Nuremberg trials in defense of Nazi sterilization experiments. Incredibly, this decision has never been overturned. Even so, this decision was illegitimate and is repudiated today.

In *Korematsu v. U.S.*, 324 U.S. 885 (1945), the Supreme Court upheld Executive Order 9066, which ordered Japanese Americans to be herded into internment camps during World War II. Citizenship had no value to the Japanese. All persons of Japanese descent were placed in custody, despite the constitutional guarantee of the Fifth Amendment. This decision, too, is illegitimate.

Justice O’Connor, writing in *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Penn. v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833, 864-869 (1992), candidly acknowledged, “As Americans of each succeeding generation are rightly told, the Court cannot buy support for its decisions by spending money and, except to a minor degree, it cannot independently coerce obedience to its decrees. The Court’s power lies, rather, in its legitimacy, a product of substance and perception that shows itself in the people’s acceptance of the Judiciary as fit to determine what the Nation’s law means and to declare what it demands. ...

“The Court must take care to speak and act in ways that allow people to accept its decisions on the terms the Court claims for them, as grounded truly in principle, not as compromises with social and political pressures having, as such, no bearing on the principled choices that the Court is obliged to make. Thus, the Court’s legitimacy depends on making legally principled decisions under circumstances in which their principled character is sufficiently plausible to be accepted by the Nation.”

"The 5-4 decision by the Supreme Court in the Federal Defense of Marriage Act case has caused millions of Americans to lose confidence in the Court," says Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel. "The decision is as far removed from the Constitution and the Court's prior precedent as the east is from the west. Led by Justice Kennedy, the majority of the justices have cut the tether that once connected them to the Constitution.

"This decision does not even pretend to be governed by the Constitution or Court precedent. Although the Court used the words 'equal protection,' the Court never engaged in an equal protection analysis. Not once did the Court identify the right sought by the petitioners.

"Not once did the Court ask whether the claimed right was protected, either by an enumerated provision of the Constitution or deeply rooted in history and necessary to ordered liberty. Not once did the Court seek to determine the level of judicial scrutiny the case should receive. In short, the opinion represents the personal views of five Justices and it finds no support in the Constitution or reason. As history has shown us, such decisions delegitimize the Court.

"On top of this flawed opinion, the majority demeaned the Court and weakened its authority by labeling as hateful those who believe that marriage is the union of one man and one woman. Marriage pre-dates religion and all civil authorities. It is ontologically a union of a man and a woman and is part of the natural created order. Such irresponsible language by the Court undermines its legitimacy in the eyes of the people. The Court does not have unlimited authority. This decision presumed too much of the people's blind acceptance of its authority. Just like a corporate act cannot be *ultra vires* (beyond its authority), the people may determine that this decision is beyond the authority of this Court. If that happens, the Court will lose its authority," concludes Staver.