

Why Wasn't Hobby Lobby a Total Landslide?

While sports fans would say, "A win is a win," many are wondering: Why there is such backlash on the Hobby Lobby decision from the progressive left, and why was it a razor-close 5-4 win instead of a 9-0 slam dunk.

Dr. Richard Land, president of Southern Evangelical Seminary, says that while religious liberty scored a win in the end, four Supreme Court justices representing a differing cultural pulse of the nation dissented—some strongly—on the decision.

"The Hobby Lobby verdict was a culturally dividing case," Land said, "with Americans either strongly for or strongly against the outcome. It earned cheers from supporters but also massive backlash from those who disagreed and took to social media with angry words without knowing all of the facts about the brave owners of this family-held company, the Greens. The reaction against the decision reveals a new philosophy loose in the land—that reproductive rights should in every case triumph over individual religious convictions.

"The only way to protect the survival and flourishing of religious liberty is to practice it, use it and exercise it, as the Green family did," Land continued. "It is indeed a 'use-it-or-lose-it' situation. We must exercise our liberties to spread truth to ensure that our society continues to recognize and protect the religious liberty that is our birthright as Americans and as human beings. The Declaration of Independence doesn't say that we hold these truths to be self-evident that 'Americans are created equal,' but that 'all men are created equal.' And they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. The government can't grant these rights; all it can do is recognize, acknowledge and

protect them.”

Much of the Hobby Lobby Supreme Court decision was grounded in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993. More than 20 years ago, Land was one of those who helped make the law reality when he was involved in the creation and passage of the bill as the head of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. The federal law, an integral part two decades later in the Hobby Lobby case, restricted laws that substantially burden a person’s free exercise of religion and was signed into law by President Bill Clinton.

“There is a great distinction between liberty and tolerance,” Land added. “Liberty is when the government recognizes our birthright as human beings and the freedoms that come with that birthright. Tolerance is the government thinking it should grant us a favor. True liberty is actually soul freedom, the right to freedom of conscience—to worship freely, run our businesses and live our lives according to our beliefs.”

June was a landmark month for Supreme Court freedom-based decisions. In addition to the Hobby Lobby case, *Harris vs. Quinn*, where the court ruled that some government employees are not required to pay fees to the unions representing them, was also decided by a close 5-4 vote. The court, however, declined to strike down a long-time precedent requiring many public sector workers to pay union fees.

Likewise, the court also voted 9-0 in June that President Obama overstepped his bounds by naming three members to the National Labor Relations Board while the Senate was on a brief break. Now, as a result, hundreds of NLRB decisions are in question.

“The fact that the court voted 9-0 in this case involving President Obama makes it clear that even the liberal justices

were concerned about a runaway president,” Land said. “Our current President is taking this nation into a constitutional crisis and will continue to violate the freedoms recognized within the Constitution and Declaration of Independence. This decision was a stepping stone to protecting those freedoms from an administration that seems to have little regard for the constitutional restrictions placed upon the executive branch.”