

Oops! They did it again

Hobby Lobby decision will restrict women's choices
By Emily Weathers Kennedy, Guest columnist

I didn't want to do it. I held my breath during the debate, hoping the Supreme Court would stay out of women's healthcare. But alas, they did it again with the "corporations are people argument," and this time I realized that I must speak out to the other women out there who actually believe in birth control as a right of choice as stated in the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

In a 5-4 decision on June 30, 2014, the United States Supreme Court ruled once again that some corporations have some of the same rights as people. In my op-ed of March 26, *With (citizens) united we may fall*, I argued that the *Citizens United* ruling gave corporations and unions a green light to spend countless sums to influence elections, a bad move that puts our country on a slippery slope towards election peddling and gravely threatens our democracy.

This latest decision in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* is equally as sinister. This time the Supreme Court ruled that Hobby Lobby and other "closely-held corporations" are to be granted religious exemption from the ACA's contraception mandate. Many religious fundamentalists call it a victory for religious liberty.

A victory for whom? Certainly "closely-held corporations" win here. The IRS defines these corporations as having more than 50 percent of their stock owned by 5 or fewer individuals. In the ruling Justice Samuel Alito writes that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act requires that the "government provide closely-held corporate objectors the same accommodation it already provides nonprofit organization objectors."

The whole point of incorporating, whether with 5 people or 1,000, is to limit individual liability. Hobby Lobby asked that on one hand it wanted the legal protections only corporations can get but on the other hand special protections that only individuals, churches and religious organizations get. It is unfair and highly dangerous to be able to have it both ways.

Now Hobby Lobby and similar corporations can pick and choose which "religious objections" they find in their insurance coverage (except for blood transfusions and vaccinations, which were excluded from the choice) and not pay for them. They don't like certain means of contraception (day-after pill and IUDs) because they view them as abortion, so they strike out all of the other birth control pills that help keep unwanted pregnancies and abortions at bay. This way they, the corporations, have forced their religious views on their employees. The ruling also doesn't bode well for those with mental issues who work for Scientologists, who don't believe in antidepressants or other medications for mental illness.

Employers and insurance companies long ago figured out that it is cheaper to provide birth control than pay for babies. This tidbit of knowledge might just benefit those who oppose abortion and aid to welfare recipients. Prevention of unwanted pregnancies goes a long way to solving the over-population of the planet and the starvation affecting 842 million people today. Restricting women who choose to work for "closely-held corporations" is not the answer, especially when an IUD can cost as much as a month's salary for someone on minimum wage and birth

control pills are used for acne, heavy periods, and cramping as well as to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg sums it up in her dissenting opinion: "Religious organizations exist to foster the interests of persons subscribing to the same religious faith. Not so of for-profit corporations. Workers who sustain the operations of those corporations commonly are not drawn from one religious community... Approving some religious claims while deeming others unworthy of accommodation could be 'perceived as favoring one religion over another,' the very 'risk the [Constitution's] Establishment Clause was designed to preclude. The court, I fear, has ventured into a minefield."

It is a minefield we fought a revolution to stay out of.

But look at it this way, remarkably, the contraceptive devices and products that so offend the religious beliefs of this family are manufactured by the very companies in which Hobby Lobby holds a substantial stake via their employee 401(k) plan. In other words, Hobby Lobby makes their millions in retirement benefits off the investments of companies who produce and manufacture the very products they refuse to offer their employees.

Emily Weathers Kennedy is a freelance writer, blogger, artist, photo stylist, and decorator. Her work is online and in product catalogs. Emily lives with her husband, 3 dogs, and 2 cats and writes from their farm in Loretto, where she was born and raised.

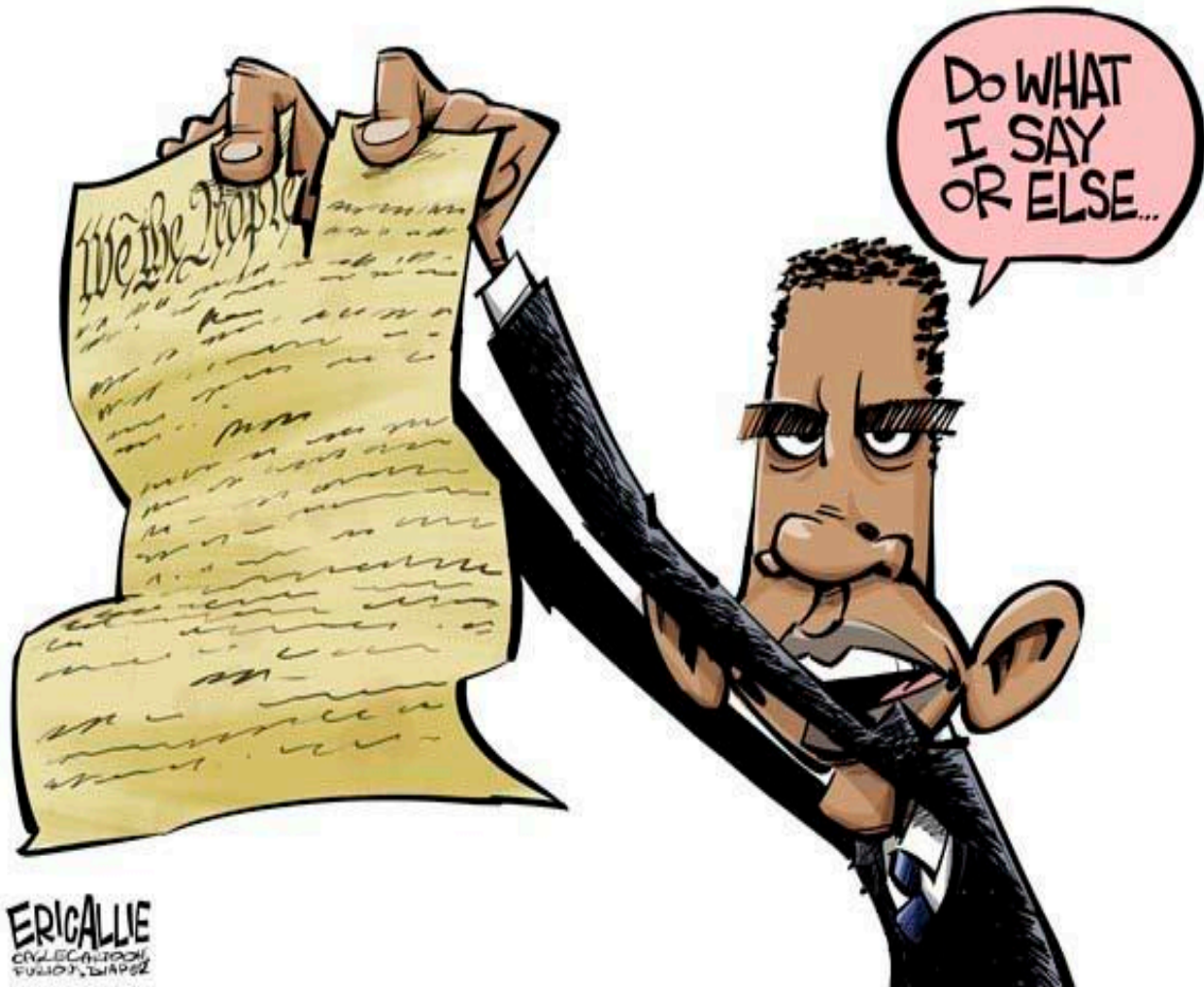
Tyrades . . . *Continued from A-4*

("What do you mean, I can't telecommute leaning on a shovel? I've got a bad back; can't you assign someone to HELP me steal office supplies? Is it okay if I send a surrogate to photocopy his butt cheeks for me?")

What wrenching changes will come about as we try to make the workplace more responsive to our home conditions? Will the Research & Development department be assigned to find out who left the empty milk carton in the fridge? Will fast-food clerks be encouraged to ask, "You want overpriced holiday wrapping paper with that?" Will "Take Your Child's Parole Officer To Work" Day become standard?

As a pet owner, I sort of hope that provisions for sick employees, sick children and aging parents are expanded to cover four-legged family members - but it could get interesting. ("You say I'm out of order, judge? No, my collie's WOMB is out of order. That's why I've brought her along to deliver her puppies while I deliver my summation. Let me borrow that robe. The blood won't really show on that black fabric...")

I just wonder if we've really examined the core concept of the new American Dream: all those bright-eyed, healthy, childless workers whose only hope is to endure years of taking up the slack for their co-workers, with the ambition of someday hitting the jackpot. ("What's that, dad? You say your colonoscopy came back clean? Why does everything happen to ME??")



Hensley . . . *Continued from A-4*

is also the key ingredient in the manufacture of methamphetamine.

The Tennessee Anti-Meth Production (TAMP) Act targets so-called "smurfers" who buy PSE products from a variety of stores in small quantities until they have enough to manufacture meth. The new law sets an annual limit on pseudoephedrine purchases of 28.8 grams. It also requires a prescription for any person under eighteen years of age to purchase a product that contains any immediate methamphetamine precursor, unless a pharmacist-generated prescription is issued.

Meth / Penalties -- Legislators also voted this year to strengthen penalties against those who manufacture methamphetamine. This measure provides for a mandatory minimum sentence for possession of meth of 30 days in jail and 180 days imprisonment for the manufacturing of meth.

In addition, the legislature passed a new law which adds anyone convicted of a drug felony to the Methamphetamine Registry to prevent them from purchasing pseudoephedrine, the precursor used for making meth. The legislation also extends the time from 7 to 10 years in which offenders would be prohibited from purchasing any pseudoephedrine products if they are on the Drug Registry.

Meth / Tracking -- In order to better track meth arrests and convictions, in the General Assembly approved legislation to subdivide methamphetamine from other Schedule II drugs in charging offenders with possession. The bill delineates meth from cocaine, crack and other Schedule II drugs so law enforcement can track it.

Meth / Housing -- Another bill passed this year requires a person who makes a profit from housing to report to law enforcement when they know that methamphetamines have been manufactured there. The measure prescribes a Class B misdemeanor for property owners or caretakers that do not notify law enforcement within 24 hours of discovering that methamphetamine has been or is being manufactured in order to protect the public.



THE LAWRENCE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY held a meet and greet dinner in Loretto this past Saturday, giving local candidates a chance to speak to voters ahead of the start of early voting. Early voting will start July 18th and end August 2nd. Election day will be on August 7th.

Pictured left to right: Trustee Kiley Weathers, Circuit Court Clerk Debbie Riddle, County Executive J Mack Chandler, Sheriff Jimmy Brown, County Clerk Chuck Kizer, County Commissioner Chris Jackson, County Commissioner Wayne Yocom and Assessor of Property Barbara Kizer.

Soccer Camp

LCHS Soccer Field • 1800 Springer Rd.

July 7-8

Monday & Tuesday

Ages 5-10 yrs., 9-11 a.m.
 Ages 11-16 yrs., 5-7 p.m.



Javier Quintero
 International Soccer Coach
 Former Goal Keeper for
 Los Tigres de Mexico
 Pro Soccer Team

Registration begins 1 hour before workshops. Registration fee is \$25 which includes T-shirt. Proceeds are to support LCHS soccer program. Snacks and water are provided by Mars Hill Baptist Church.

**For more information contact
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