

Adkins v. Children's Hospital of D.C.
261 US 525 (1923)

- 1) Facts: In 1918, the United States Congress enacted a law which guaranteed minimum wage to women and children who were employed in the District of Columbia. The D.C. Children's Hospital, which employed many women, filed a suit because they claimed the new minimum wage law violated the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment.
- 2) Legal Question: Did the new minimum wage law passed by Congress violate the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment?
 - a) Yes (5-3).
 - b) Dissent: Justices William Howard Taft, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and Edward T. Sanford
- 3) Conclusion: Majority of the Court struck down the law as unconstitutional. Justice Sutherland reasoned that the Nineteenth Amendment had abolished the inequality of sexes, thus the special protection of women was deemed unnecessary by the majority. The majority also claimed that the new law would forbid multiple parties to contract freely with each other--Employer and employee had a constitutional right to contract in whatever manner they pleased.