

## Team 7

Mary Drury, Lupe Zamudio, Evelyn Martinez, Estrella Perez,  
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- I. Adkins vs. Children's Hospital
- II. Legal Citation: 261 U.S. 525 (1923)

### III. Statement of Facts:

- a. In 1918, Congress enacted a law guaranteeing a minimum wage to women and children employed in the District of Columbia. Such law appointed a district minimum wage board to settle on and enforce minimum wages both for child and women workers. Per the statute, employers were required to pay the set minimum wage which was geared toward "the necessary cost of living" and meant to keep workers "in good health and to protect their morals."
- b. D.C.'s Children's Hospital, which employed many women, sought an injunction (a judicial order meant to refrain from carrying out law) against the law. The injunction was denied in the trial court but granted in the intermediate appellate court.
- c. Hospital filed suit against the 3 members of the wage board, one being Jesse C. Adkins, claiming the minimum wage law violated the 5th amendment due process clause.

### IV. Statement of Issues

- (1) Did the minimum wage law violate the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment?

### V. Decisions

- (1) Yes.

### VI. Reasoning of the Court

- (1) The majority struck down the minimum wage law as unconstitutional. The Court relied on *Lochner v. New York*, which struck down a law limiting bakers' working hours under the Due Process Clause, which they believed contained a right of "freedom to contract." In *Adkins*, the Court reasoned that the same reasoning extended to a minimum wage law. Employer and employees, according to the majority, had a constitutional right to contract in whatever manner they pleased. So, the minimum wage law *unjustly* interfered with the freedom to contract. Also, the Court reasoned that women do not merit greater protection than men.
- (2) In dissent, Justices William Howard Taft, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and Edward T. Sanford argued that Congress had the policing power to correct recognizable evils.

### VII. Opinion of the Court

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5-3 decision - declared D.C. as unconstitutional