

OPINION

Paying Women Less for Work

Wal-Mart has chance to make things right

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

The federal appeals court, in a split decision last month, ruled 6-5 that a sexual discrimination case against Wal-Mart can move forward as a class action suit.

The case began in 2001 when six women claimed Wal-Mart paid women less than men, awarded smaller raises to women and provided fewer opportunities for promotions for women. Later, more than one million women signed on to be-

come claimants in the case which is the largest employment discrimination case in this nation's history.



Obviously, Wal-Mart does not want the case to proceed and has announced it will appeal to the Supreme Court. Additionally, Wal-Mart maintains that the discrimination claims are based on individual decision making, not corporate.

This isn't the first time Wal-Mart has faced accusations of

discrimination.

In 2009, Wal-Mart settled a class action suit on that saw them accused of discriminating against African-Americans employed in Wal-Mart's trucking fleet. When the suit was filed, only 2 to 3-percent of Wal-Mart's highway drivers were black; about 15-percent of highway truck drivers across the nation, regardless of employer, are black. The settlement called for Wal-Mart to pay over \$17 million in damages and improve hiring practices.

Wal-Mart is the nation's largest private sector employer in the country; over 1 million employees work for the big box retailer. If found liable of sexual

discrimination, Wal-Mart will suffer a blow to both its reputation and its bottom line.

But, the company will also have a chance to make things right. After it settled its racial discrimination case, Wal-Mart instituted a diversity hiring and training program. Similar initiatives could possibly come of this suit.

While the full truth about the discrimination claims have yet to be brought to light, it is a good thing this case will be heard in court. These women, like all Americans, deserve the opportunity to seek justice.

Greg Mathis is a retired Michigan District Court Judge and syndicated television judge.

More Guns and More Violence

Restrictions are melting away

BY WILLIAMS A. COLLINS

Everybody's doing it. Buying a gun. Ever since the Supreme Court said anyone can own one, nervous citizens have been gobbling them up. Unconcealed weapons are even showing up in bars and supermarkets.

It used to be that folks craved heat to protect themselves from the odd, headline-grabbing home invasion. Experience shows, though, that such homeowner weaponry has proved much more useful in shooting wives, husbands, and estranged sweethearts than in defending one's castle. Guns are also enormously convenient for committing suicide.

Kids adore them too, especially little kids. More preschoolers die from bullets than do police officers. But kids

don't complain much about guns...they think they're cool. The real grumps are New Yorkers. That city has passed harsh



Georgia market them like candy. Citizens of the Northeast are not amused. Neither are Mexicans.

Just as the U.S. provides an insatiable market for the Mexican drug pipeline, Mexican drug lords provide an insatiable market for the U.S. weapons pipeline. No, it's not barter -- we buy a lot more than they do -- but the two markets are quite intertwined. If we didn't have sufficient guns to supply them, the drug cartels would have to go after each other with machetes, a great boon to innocent bystanders.

Actually, polling shows that

Americans in general aren't that thrilled about guns. But Americans in general aren't that thrilled about voting either. Gun owners, on the other hand, are. Therefore politicians tend not to thwart the NRA because the anti-gun folks also aren't nearly as generous at campaign time.

But in many places there remains a good majority of folks favoring firearms restriction, which is why the gunmen still need to persuade the Supreme Court to outlaw state controls, just as it has lately outlawed

federal controls. With this court, that shouldn't take long.

It's true that the U.S. Senate did recently reject a measure that would have allowed concealed weapons to be legal in every state, but don't get your hopes up. That only came about because the amendment needed 60 votes. It got 58. Just give it time.

OtherWords columnist William A. Collins is a former state representative and a former mayor of Norwalk, Conn.

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