

You Be the Judge!

The job of a Supreme Court Judge is to make sure that all laws uphold the Constitution. Read the scenarios below. Use the Constitution to determine which side you agree with. Include your verdict, as well as your reasoning, on the lines provided. If you need additional room you may use an extra sheet of paper.

Scenario 1:

The state of North Carolina legislature passes a measure that shuts down all public schools for five years. The state intends to take the money saved from schools and use it towards building new cancer research hospitals, homeless shelters, elderly care centers, as well as repaving damaged roads. A group of parents calling themselves the “Coalition for Public Education” sue the state arguing that it is unconstitutional to eliminate public schools. The state argues that parents still have access to education through private schools and home schooling. It is up to the North Carolina Supreme Court to decide if the state should provide universal public schooling for all children.

Verdict _____

Explanation

Scenario 2:

A group, called “**Soybeans Are Disgusting (SAD)**” is going around the country to grocery stores, county fairs, and music festivals in an effort to convince Americans that foods made with soybeans not only taste bad, but are a health risk as well. “SAD” claims that the continued use of soybeans in foods will cause children to develop weak muscles and bones due to their lack of calcium and will further diminish children’s willingness to eat their vegetables due to the beans’ terrible taste. This group peacefully protests by holding signs that say “Soy is NOT for Boys,” or “The Only Good Soy Is No Soy.” As a result of numerous protests throughout North Carolina (a state that derives much of its income from large-scale soy farming) the General Assembly passes a law that bans “SAD”. “SAD” sues the state saying that the government is infringing on their rights. The state argues that SAD is offensive, ignorant, and hurtful towards both the farmers and eaters of soybeans. It is the job of the North Carolina Supreme Court to determine if the state is allowed to pass a law that can ban “SAD”.

Verdict _____

Explanation

Scenario 3:

Undergoing tough economic times, Hoke County is having trouble paying for the local education system. In an attempt to increase revenue to fund schools, the town council passes a law called the "Voting Appropriations Supplemental Act (VASA)." It states that, "one must pay an appropriation of no less than one dollar but no more than five dollars to the polling precinct where their ballot is being cast. Appropriation levels are to be determined by the Hoke County Board of Elections." Gregg Hughes, a Hoke County bus driver, sues the county for inhibiting his natural right of voting by forcing him to pay to vote. The state argues that it is allowed to place a miniscule fee for voting if it has the intention of benefiting the public good. It is the job of the North Carolina Supreme Court to determine if Hoke County is allowed to pass and enforce VASA.

Verdict _____

Explanation

Scenario 4:

In order to increase revenue to build more roads and schools, the state of North Carolina passes a law that increases the income tax rate from 6.5% to 9%. A group of citizens calling themselves, "Carolinians Against Taxes (CATs)" sue the state saying "the tax rate is way too high and the state government is trying to raise taxes without our approval." The state argues that as long as they use the money for its stated purpose, schools and roads, they are legally allowed to raise income taxes to 9%. It is the job of the North Carolina Supreme Court to determine if the tax increase is within the bounds of the law.

Verdict _____

Explanation