



# Chief Justice Alito Makes Mark on Supreme Court Session

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On the final day of the Supreme Court's term, it was Justice Samuel Alito who left a lasting impression, legal scholars said, as he authored the majority opinions in two of the most controversial cases on the docket.

"Over time, and Alito could serve 15 more years, he's likely to be more effective than Scalia. For one thing, his writing style is far more conducive to getting people to go along with him," Georgia State University law professor Eric Segall told Politico.

In the case that garnered the most media attention, *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, the court ruled 5-4 that closely held corporations cannot be required to provide coverage for contraceptive services if the religious beliefs of the owners would be compromised by doing so.

According to the court, the contraception coverage mandate is not the least restrictive means for ensuring access to contraception. In order to reach this conclusion, the court concluded that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act applies to closely held corporations. Alito wrote that opinion, as well.

University of Chicago law professor Eric Posner said simply that in *Hobby Lobby*, Alito had a stronger argument than Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who wrote the dissenting opinion.

"My initial reaction is that Alito's legal argument is stronger, but that the law — as now interpreted — is pretty dumb," Posner wrote in *Slate*, adding that the ruling "may well have radical implications, but it is too soon to tell."

In another 5-4 decision, the majority held in *Harris v. Quinn* that compelling home care personal assistants to pay union dues, even if they opt not to join a union, is a violation of their First Amendment rights.

Alito's opinion in that case is no less impactful, according to Andrew Grossman of the libertarian

Cato Institute.

"Today's decision will slow, and perhaps eventually end, that flow of funds, as workers decide they can represent their own interests and would prefer to keep their earnings for themselves and their families. So while the court did not go all the way to striking down compulsory support of public sector unions — as union supporters feared it would — it does deal a major blow to organized labor where it hurts the most: members and money," Grossman said.

Of the 69 rulings issued by the Supreme Court this term, the chief justice wrote the majority opinion in eight cases. Justices Anthony Kennedy, Antonin Scalia, and Sandra Sotomayor wrote an equal number of majority opinions.