

## **Advocacy Update**

### **December 6 – December 11, 2010**

**Supreme Court to hear Wal-Mart Discrimination Case** (December 6) – The Supreme Court has agreed to hear the Wal-Mart vs. Dukes case. They will be ruling on the ability of the plaintiffs to file a class action suit. Arguments will begin sometime this upcoming spring. [Read more.](#)

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**Thompson vs. North American Stainless Steel (December 7)** – This is an interesting case that was argued on Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. It is a Title VII case involving sex discrimination in employment. The plaintiff, Miriam Regalado filed a Title VII complaint against her employer, North American Stainless Steel, for discriminating against her and treating her disrespectfully because she is a woman. The company found out about the complaint and proceeded to fire her fiancé who worked at the same company.

This is a particularly interesting case because it will set some more definite parameters around the expansiveness of Title VII. Obviously, if she had been fired for filing the complaint it would violate the anti-retaliation language in Title VII. However, the question here is whether Title VII protects retaliation against someone's family members. The ruling may have implications for women in the workplace and if the Court rules against the plaintiff, it may discourage women from filing Title VII complaints for fear of retaliation against family. [Read more.](#) If you really want to read more, this is a [lengthy article](#) that discusses the issues in the case.

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**espnW Goes Live** (December 6) – This website is designed to be a place that caters to women and their athletic interests. [CLICK HERE](#) to go to the site.

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**Appeals Court hears JMU sports case** (December 7) – An appeals court heard arguments on Tuesday relating to a series of cuts made to James Madison University sports teams in 2006. JMU cut 7 men's teams and 3 women's teams in order to comply with Title IX. Advocates for sports equity filed suit claiming that the cuts were illegal (in what way, I am not sure). The case was dismissed and the group, Equity in Athletics is trying to get the case revived. A decision about whether or not an appeal will move forward should come in the next few weeks. [Read more.](#)

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**Belmont Coach Update** (December 6) – Students at Belmont University staged a sit-in, in protest of the firing of Coach Lisa Howe. As explained last week, Howe was fired after she revealed to the administration that her partner was pregnant. The students are asking the University to issue an apology for the discriminatory firing. [Read more.](#)

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**Education Department Touts Settlements As 'Model' For Campus Sex Assault Policies** (December 8) – The U.S. Department of Education says two recent settlements will serve as a new model for how colleges, universities, and the department deal with allegations of campus sexual assault — the focus of a Center for Public Integrity investigation earlier this year. The two universities involved in the cases are Notre Dame College and Eastern Michigan University. After complaints surfaced regarding both institutions handling of recent sexual assault cases, the OCR launched full-scale, 2-year investigations. The assistant secretary of the Department of Education explained that these settlements will represent a paradigm shift in the way these campuses handle claims of sexual assault. There are many provisions that will require more education and better reporting. The settlements have been widely praised by victim advocates. [Read more.](#)