Court sides with student in case over textbooks

> *In a dissent for herself and Justices Anthony Kennedy and Antonin Scalia, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said the court was ignoring Congress' aim of protecting "copyright owners against the unauthorized importation of low-priced, foreign-made copies of their copyrighted works."*

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that textbooks and other goods made and sold abroad can be re-sold online and in discount stores without violating U.S. copyright law.

In a 6-3 opinion, the court threw out a copyright infringement award to publisher John Wiley & Sons against Thai graduate student Supap Kirtsaeng, who used eBay to resell copies of the publisher's copyrighted books that his relatives first bought abroad at cut-rate prices.

Justice Stephen Breyer said in his opinion for the court that once goods are sold lawfully, whether in the U.S. or elsewhere, publishers and manufacturers lose the protection of U.S. copyright law.

"We hold that the 'first sale' doctrine applies to copies of a copyrighted work lawfully made abroad," Breyer said.

Had the court come out the other way, it would have crimped the sale of many goods sold online and in discount stores, and it would have complicated the tasks of museums and libraries that contain works produced outside the United States, Breyer said. Retailers told the court that more than $2.3 trillion worth of foreign goods were imported in 2011, and that many of these goods were bought after they were first sold abroad, he said.

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