

## SCOTUS Snapshot

*Your weekly window into the Court that shapes the nation.*

### ***Monsanto v. Durnell***

#### **What's At Stake**

- What is the case about?

The Supreme Court today reaffirmed a fundamental principle of our constitutional system: when Congress establishes a comprehensive federal regulatory framework, individual states cannot impose conflicting requirements through litigation. In *Monsanto v. Durnell*, the Court held that the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) preempts a Missouri failure-to-warn lawsuit seeking to require a cancer warning on Roundup that the Environmental Protection Agency has repeatedly declined to require. Writing for a 7-2 majority, Justice Brett Kavanaugh concluded that allowing state tort law to impose labeling requirements “in addition to or different from” federal law would undermine the uniform national standards Congress enacted.

The decision is not simply about one herbicide or one manufacturer. It is about who decides what warnings belong on federally regulated products. Congress entrusted the EPA, not fifty different state courts and juries, to evaluate scientific evidence, approve pesticide labels, and determine when additional warnings are warranted. The Court recognized that permitting state-law lawsuits to compel different labeling requirements would create the very patchwork of conflicting obligations that Congress sought to prevent.

Federal preemption exists to ensure that when Congress chooses national uniformity in a particular area, that choice cannot be overridden by inconsistent state requirements. Businesses should not face one federal standard while simultaneously being subjected to dozens of competing state-law mandates imposing different obligations.

- Who is affected and how?

This case affects all states and all individuals living within the U.S.

- Why does it matter?

Today's decision provides needed clarity for regulated industries and confirms that courts must respect the regulatory framework Congress enacted. If new scientific evidence warrants different warnings, the appropriate avenue is through the EPA's regulatory process, not through state tort verdicts that effectively rewrite federally approved labels.

#### **Our Take**

The Supreme Court's decision preserves the rule of law by ensuring that national standards remain national.