

US Supreme Court curbs federal agency powers, overturning 1984 precedent

WASHINGTON, June 28 (Reuters) - The U.S. Supreme Court dealt a major blow to federal regulatory power on Friday by overturning a 1984 precedent that had given deference to government agencies in interpreting laws they administer, handing a defeat to President Joe Biden's administration.

The justices ruled 6-3 to set aside lower court decisions against fishing companies that challenged a government-run program partly funded by industry that monitored overfishing of herring off New England's coast. It marked the latest decision in recent years powered by the Supreme Court's conservative majority that hemmed in the authority of federal agencies.

The precedent the court overturned arose from a ruling involving oil company Chevron that had called for judges to defer to reasonable federal agency interpretations of U.S. laws deemed to be ambiguous. This doctrine, long opposed by conservatives and business interests, was called "Chevron deference."

"Chevron is overruled. Courts must exercise their independent judgment in deciding whether an agency has acted within its statutory authority," Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in the decision.

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