

U. S. Supreme Court Bars Some Punitive Damages

Award based on receipt of U.S. funds is rejected

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The U.S. Supreme Court has told Congress that if it wants to make punitive damages available to plaintiffs in private actions against local governments, colleges or other recipients of federal funds, it must enact laws that say so.

The message came on June 17 in a disability discrimination suit brought by a paraplegic man against the Kansas City, Mo., police and mayor. *Barnes v. Gorman*, No. 01-682.

The opposite decision would have created a "bizarre situation," said Lawrence S. Robbins of Washington, D.C.'s Robbins, Russell, Englert, Orseck & Untereiner, winning counsel to Mayor Kay Barnes.

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