

Public Can Take Notes At Trials: Supreme Court

The Supreme Court Wednesday morning ruled that a member of the public should be allowed to take notes on trials inside courtrooms, in its very first judgment over note-taking at legal courts.

The ruling was made in a case in which Lawrence Repeta, 38-year-old American lawyer, sought compensation of ¥1.3 million from the state after being ordered to stop taking notes at a trial going on at the Tokyo District Court for studies of Japanese economic laws.

While saying the public is basically free to take notes, the top court ruled the district court ban did not represent too serious a mistake and rejected Repeta's appeal for the state compensation.

Wednesday's ruling is likely to lead to a substantial re-



Lawrence Repeta entering the Supreme Court building in Tokyo Wednesday morning.

laxation of the current ban imposed on the public other

than members of the mass media on taking notes at court trials. Other courts are sure to review their current policy.

The trial had been centered on whether or not the constitutional principle of open trials guaranteed the freedom to take notes, whether the constitutional right to know included the right to make notes and whether allowing only reporters to take notes infringed on equality under laws.

The Tokyo District Court had ruled that the Constitution did not guarantee the right to take such notes and the Tokyo High Court ruled that certain restrictions could not be helped for fair and smooth management of suits, rejecting Repeta's demand both times.

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