



# U.S. Supreme Court Decision Affirms Ruling Lathrop Gage Received in 8th Circuit

March 22, 2016

**KANSAS CITY, Mo. (March 22, 2016)** - The United States Supreme Court today affirmed a lower court ruling in a case involving Lathrop Gage client Community Bank of Raymore, which was represented by partners Greer S. Lang, Thomas H. Stahl and Justin Nichols.

The 4-4 decision, the court's first split decision since the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February, upheld an Eighth Circuit opinion ruling that spousal guarantors could not bring discrimination claims against creditors under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA). Lathrop Gage represented Community Bank of Raymore in the case, *Hawkins et al v. Community Bank of Raymore*.

This case determined that Valerie Hawkins and Janice Patterson could not bring discrimination claims against Community Bank of Raymore under the ECOA. Hawkins and Patterson were both listed as guarantors on \$2 million in loans that their husbands received from Community Bank of Raymore to help fund their real estate business, which eventually went into default.

The split decision means the rule in the Eighth Circuit remains valid. However the issue remains unresolved nationally as the Sixth Circuit came to an opposite ruling in a different case in 2014.

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