

Federal Ruling Could Affect Michael Ryan Case

A federal judge has blocked the importation of a drug used in executions on grounds the Food and Drug

Administration ignored the law by allowing it into this country.

U.S. District Judge Richard Leon in Washington sided with lawyers for death row inmates in Tennessee, Arizona and California who wanted to keep out the drug, sodium thiopental, because it is an unapproved drug manufactured overseas.

The Obama administration argued it had discretion to allow unapproved drugs into the U.S. But Leon said the FDA acted

``contrary to law.'

Sodium thiopental is an anesthetic used to put inmates to sleep before other lethal drugs are administered.

The drug's U.S. manufacturer announced last year that it would no longer produce it, forcing corrections officials to delay many executions.

Nebraska Death Row inmate Michael Ryan has filed appeals based on the states intent to use the drug in his execution that had been scheduled for earlier this month. Ryan was sentenced to death for his actions at a farm north of Rulo in the 1980's. He was sentenced to death in Richardson County District Court. Attorney's have filed numerous appeals on behalf of Ryan over the years.

Associated Press