

1 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

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3 TOBY DOUGLAS, DIRECTOR, CALIFORNIA :

4 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES, :

5 Petitioner : No. 09-958

6 v. :

7 INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER OF :

8 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, INC., ET AL. :

9 - - - - -x

10 and

11 - - - - -x

12 TOBY DOUGLAS, DIRECTOR, CALIFORNIA :

13 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES, :

14 Petitioner : No. 09-1158

15 v. :

16 CALIFORNIA PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION, :

17 ET AL. :

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19 and

20 - - - - -x

21 TOBY DOUGLAS, DIRECTOR, CALIFORNIA :

22 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES, :

23 Petitioner : No. 10-283

24 v. :

25 SANTA ROSA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, :

1 ET AL. :

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3 Washington, D.C.

4 Monday, October 3, 2011

5

6 The above-entitled matter came on for oral
7 argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
8 at 10:05 a.m.

9 APPEARANCES:

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12 Petitioner.

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15 States, as amicus curiae, supporting Petitioner.

16 CARTER G. PHILLIPS, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf
17 of Respondents.

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	C O N T E N T S	
1		
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	PAGE
3	KARIN S. SCHWARTZ, ESQ.	
4	On behalf of the Petitioner	4
5	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	
6	EDWIN S. KNEEDLER, ESQ.	
7	On behalf of the United States, as amicus	18
8	curiae, supporting the Petitioner	
9	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	
10	CARTER G. PHILLIPS, ESQ.	
11	On behalf of the Respondents	29
12	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF	
13	KARIN S. SCHWARTZ, ESQ.	
14	On behalf of the Petitioner	60
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
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11
12
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15
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(10:05 a.m.)

CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument first this morning in Case 09-958, Douglas v. Independent Living Center of Southern California, and the consolidated cases.

Ms. Schwartz.

ORAL ARGUMENT OF KARIN S. SCHWARTZ

ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER

MS. SCHWARTZ: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it please the Court:

There are many reasons why this Court should not recognize a private cause of action to enforce 30(A), and I'd like to focus on three. First is separation of powers. Congress controls who can enforce Federal law, and it has not provided for -- for private enforcement of 30(A). Instead, it has provided for administrative enforcement.

Second is the Spending Clause context in which the case arises. The very legitimacy of Spending Clause legislation depends on the States' voluntary and knowing acceptance of its obligations. For this reason, if Congress wants to provide for private party litigation, it must do so clear and unambiguously, and it has not done so in this case.

1 And third is the language of 30(A) itself,
2 which is broad and undefined and which includes
3 competing policy interests. These are suited to
4 administrative enforcement, with all the expertise and
5 judgment and discretion and administrative know-how that
6 can be brought to bear.

7 These three principles all focus -- all
8 point to one conclusion -- that section 30(A) is not
9 enforceable.

10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Ms. Schwartz, the
11 government doesn't have the injunctive power -- as far
12 as California's rates are concerned, California puts
13 them into effect. The government can't stop that from
14 happening, even if the government thinks that they are
15 in violation of the Medicaid Act; is that right?

16 MS. SCHWARTZ: No, Your Honor, it -- it is
17 not. I mean, in the sense that it can't go out
18 immediately and get an injunction, Your Honor is
19 correct. However, the government has the power to deny
20 a State --

21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Yes, but that's a very
22 drastic remedy, and it's going to hurt the people that
23 Medicaid was meant to benefit. Does the government have
24 any injunctive power, or is its only -- only remedy a
25 fund cutoff?

1 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, its only remedy
2 provided by statute is to terminate funds. However, it
3 is not a drastic remedy; it -- and it is the remedy
4 that's provided --

5 JUSTICE GINSBURG: How often has it
6 happened?

7 MS. SCHWARTZ: How often does it happen?

8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: How -- how often has in
9 the Medicaid context --

10 MS. SCHWARTZ: Very rarely, and the reason
11 for that is because the way that most State plan
12 amendments operate is that these issues are resolved on
13 a consensual basis, generally within the 90 days
14 provided by regulation. This case is the exception that
15 proves the rule.

16 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, Ms. Schwartz, isn't it
17 the exception because in fact you end-run -- end-ran the
18 administrative process, that you put your regulations,
19 your new rate schedules, into effect even before you
20 submitted them to HHS, and continued them in effect
21 while HHS was considering them, and continued them in
22 effect to the extent that you were allowed to do so by
23 injunction, even after HHS disapproved them?

24 MS. SCHWARTZ: There is no end run here
25 because HHS's own regulations provide that our time for

1 submitting a State -- State plan amendment is within the
2 90 days that the amendment will take effect, and HHS
3 will confirm that -- this is the position of the Federal
4 Government that the State may implement its rate
5 reductions while the State plan amendment is pending.
6 It does so at the risk that, if a State plan amendment
7 is disapproved, that it may have to pay additional
8 funds. But we did not do an end run around anything.
9 We are entirely consistent with the administrative
10 process.

11 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Could a State in its own
12 courts provide for procedures whereby adversely affected
13 parties could test the regulation?

14 MS. SCHWARTZ: I don't believe so. And
15 that's because in --

16 JUSTICE KENNEDY: It seems to me you have to
17 say that. Otherwise the next question would be under
18 Gonzaga, you wouldn't say that a State can entertain a
19 monetary cause of action. So, I think that's consistent
20 with your position.

21 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, and I think what's very
22 important to focus on here is that this is not just any
23 Federal statute that's being enforced, but it is a
24 Spending Clause provision that is vague and ambiguous in
25 its terms. It cries -- it has all these policy elements

1 to it, and it cries out for administrative review.

2 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, when you say -- that
3 brings me to a slightly different point. You -- you
4 introduce the fact or the consideration of what's
5 administratively workable. The brief by the former HHS
6 officials says quite to the contrary. It -- it says
7 that there are almost \$400 billion of HHS expenditures
8 that are supervised by 50 people. That works out to 800
9 million each; and they say, we don't have time for this.
10 And it's much more efficient and it's much more
11 consistent with the application of -- proper application
12 of Federal law to allow this action to be brought in the
13 -- in the courts.

14 MS. SCHWARTZ: I have two answers, Your
15 Honor. One is that I don't think it is more efficient
16 to have 700 district court judges interpreting a statute
17 that does not have any objective standard but that is
18 susceptible to many different interpretations.

19 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, Ms. Schwartz, the
20 agency --

21 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, I mean, that's "the
22 sky is falling" -- 700 judges. It would be just each
23 district if it were in every district. And it -- it --
24 and certainly to the extent we are involving a State,
25 there would be only one State involved. So -- so, there

1 is just the State of California, and there are only four
2 districts there, and the suit could only be brought in
3 one. So, I -- I think that's an -- you know, I don't
4 think that the "sky is falling" argument really works.

5 MS. SCHWARTZ: But California is now subject
6 to standards that don't apply anywhere else in the
7 country, and I believe the Court acknowledged exactly
8 this problem just last term in *Astra v. Santa Clara* when
9 it declined to allow private parties to use a contract
10 provision to do an end run around *Gonzaga*,
11 *Sandoval* versus -- *Sandoval v. Alexander*; I think I have
12 that reversed -- and the other cases that, based on
13 separation of powers of principles, based on Spending
14 Clause principles, limit the -- the circumstances in
15 which private parties can sue.

16 JUSTICE ALITO: Are you asking us to adopt a
17 rule that is good for this one case only?

18 MS. SCHWARTZ: A --

19 JUSTICE ALITO: You gave -- or is there --
20 could you state the rule in broader terms or more
21 neutral terms?

22 And you gave three reasons why we should
23 reverse. One, Congress hasn't created a cause of action
24 here. Well, Congress has never created causes of
25 action, never creates a cause of action in any case in

1 the Ex parte Young line or cases like that.

2 The Supremacy Clause, because this is a
3 Spending Clause -- this was an act under the Spending
4 Clause. But you're not asking us to hold that Spending
5 Clause legislation can never pre-empt State legislation,
6 I take it.

7 And then the language of 30(A), where you --
8 are you arguing that 30 -- that the Medicaid Act
9 affirmatively precludes any action like this? I don't
10 understand that -- is -- is any of those arguments
11 sufficient by itself, or do you have to take them all
12 together, and you're asking for a rule that only applies
13 here?

14 MS. SCHWARTZ: No, all of the -- all of
15 those arguments are sufficient, as is the fact that, as
16 we briefed, the Supremacy Clause itself doesn't supply a
17 cause of action. But let me focus on those three
18 points.

19 These are points -- the rule that we are
20 seeking is that a Federal statute is not enforceable
21 unless Congress intends for it to be enforceable and
22 that that principle has special force with respect to
23 Spending Clause provisions where Congress has to clearly
24 and unambiguously provide for that enforcement, because
25 the State has to be on fair notice, due to the nature of

1 the Spending Clause, of the obligations to which it is
2 agreeing. That is Pennhurst. And that is applied with
3 even greater force with respect to 30(A) because of the
4 type of standards that it incorporates.

5 If it's not suitable for -- if the
6 determination applying Gonzaga is that you're -- if
7 you're finding under 1983 the administrative nature and
8 flexible nature of those standards is not appropriate
9 for private enforcement, that shouldn't matter what
10 vehicle you are using to bring the case.

11 And I want to just -- to put this into real
12 clear context. In the 3 years that this case has been
13 pending, California has submitted 68 State plan
14 amendments outside of the rate context. Thirty-six of
15 them were approved. The rest were withdrawn
16 voluntarily. These cases -- and they were all approved,
17 almost all of them, within the 90-day period. So,
18 the --

19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Excuse me. Were
20 those --

21 MS. SCHWARTZ: -- administrative process
22 works.

23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Were those amendments
24 submitted before they took effect or after they had
25 taken affect, like here?

1 MS. SCHWARTZ: I don't know the answer to
2 that question. These are non-rate -- rate-related
3 amendments, State plan amendments. But the point is the
4 administrative process is working. We obtained -- and
5 it resolves, in the usual case, in a consensual
6 resolution that is consistent with the cooperative
7 nature of the joint venture between --

8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm --

9 MS. SCHWARTZ: -- the States and the Federal
10 Government.

11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's where I'm a
12 little bit confused. The injunction here only stopped
13 you from implementing the rate changes until you got
14 approval from HHS in its administrative process that it
15 was going to approve the amendment, correct?

16 MS. SCHWARTZ: No, I don't believe the
17 injunctions were that limited. And so, if we obtained
18 State plan approval, we then would have to go back to
19 the courts and argue over what the impact is of -- of
20 the State plan.

21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's a separate
22 question about whether the courts are required to give
23 deference to an HHS finding. But the injunction here
24 wasn't one that said you could never do this. It just
25 said go finish the process, right?

1 MS. SCHWARTZ: No, the injunctions were not
2 so conditional. And the -- and the point I want to make
3 is the injunctions have disrupted the administrative
4 process as it is intended to work by drawing out the
5 process, by politicizing the process, by prejudicing our
6 ability to get State plan approval because now there's
7 the concern about what about retroactive relief if we
8 approve your State plan --

9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, the courts, I take
10 it, have the prerogative, perhaps even the obligation,
11 under the primary jurisdiction rationale to simply
12 withhold adjudication until the agency acts.

13 MS. SCHWARTZ: And we requested that in some
14 of these cases, and the courts ignored that argument.
15 And so, the upshot is that we are now --

16 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But that's an abuse of
17 discretion, not an absence of power. You're arguing an
18 absence of power.

19 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, there is no cause of
20 action. That's correct, Your Honor. Our position is
21 that there is no cause of action here.

22 JUSTICE KAGAN: So, can I go back to the
23 question that Justice Alito asked you about why there's
24 no cause of action? You are asking us to treat the
25 Supremacy Clause differently from every other

1 constitutional provision. Why should we?

2 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, for several reasons,
3 Your Honor. First, when -- what you're doing here, what
4 the Court is doing here, is enforcing a Federal statute.
5 You look through the Supremacy Clause to the
6 obligations that --

7 JUSTICE KAGAN: The Supremacy Clause is part
8 of the Constitution.

9 MS. SCHWARTZ: It is.

10 JUSTICE KAGAN: And the Petitioners here --
11 excuse me. The -- the plaintiffs here essentially said
12 that the Supremacy Clause as part of the Constitution
13 had been violated and sought, not damages, but only a
14 prospective injunction. And the question is, why the
15 court shouldn't do what the court has done many, many,
16 many times before, tens and tens and tens of times
17 before, and say, yes, that's our prerogative and we'll
18 proceed to the merits?

19 MS. SCHWARTZ: Two points, Your Honor.
20 First, they did seek damages, and they obtained damages
21 in Independent Living. And second is the obligations
22 that are imposed, the study requirement, the data
23 requirement, all these obligations are imposed by 30(A).
24 You look through the Supremacy Clause to the statute to
25 see the obligations. And so, the question is, does

1 Congress get to control who enforces those obligations
2 or not?

3 JUSTICE KAGAN: In a -- in a cause of -- in
4 a suit that's brought under a statute directly, a person
5 could be claiming damages. Here that is not the case.
6 A person is only claiming injunctive relief. And that
7 should -- there should be a difference between those two
8 in terms of when the cause of action is available.

9 MS. SCHWARTZ: First, just one point: In
10 Independent Living, they did claim damages, and they
11 obtained damages. But setting that issue aside, no,
12 Your Honor, this Court has -- has the obligation and the
13 right with respect to constitutional provisions to
14 determine how they will be enforced, subject potentially
15 to congressional action, but there is far more latitude
16 for the Court. With respect to statutes, of course, as
17 this Court is explained in Davis v. Passman, deference
18 to congressional intent is appropriate. And here --

19 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, suppose the plaintiffs
20 here were facing an imminent State enforcement action.
21 Would your argument be different?

22 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, if -- if the plaintiffs
23 fell within -- yes. And if the plaintiffs fell within
24 the bill in equity to restrain enforcement proceedings
25 that was at issue in Ex parte Young and that Justice

1 Kennedy has discussed in terms of the immunity to
2 invalid regulation, then the result would be different.
3 But there are several reasons why --

4 JUSTICE ALITO: But how does that square
5 with the argument that you made that -- relying on
6 separation of powers, the Spending Clause, and the
7 language of 30(A)? All of those are still in play --

8 MS. SCHWARTZ: For a couple --

9 JUSTICE ALITO: -- in that situation.

10 MS. SCHWARTZ: Well, for a couple of
11 different reasons. First of all, a defense, which is
12 what you're asserting in such a case, is not a cause of
13 action. And so, it doesn't implicate the separation of
14 powers concerns to the same degree as a stand-alone
15 cause of action to compel the State to comply with an
16 obligation owed to another entity.

17 Also, in those cases, there -- in the equity
18 cases -- equity doesn't provide a remedy just for an
19 injury. You have to have an invasion of what in old
20 times was called a primary right. But what that means
21 is a right to property or a right in the person. And
22 there were other kinds of primary rights, but --

23 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But what about the
24 providers who say, but under -- under the State law, if
25 we charge more than the hospitals -- if we charge more

1 than the State ceiling, we are subject to sanctions, so
2 this does fit into the category of anticipatory
3 defenses?

4 MS. SCHWARTZ: No, it does not, because we
5 have not threatened to enforce that statute. They are
6 not arguing that statute is -- is pre-empted. They --
7 the -- the statute that they are --

8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But wouldn't they be --
9 the rates go into effect. Someone charges more on the
10 theory that the rates are impermissible under the
11 Supremacy Clause. That person would be subject to
12 sanction under State law.

13 MS. SCHWARTZ: And that would be a different
14 case, and it would be a closer case, although even in
15 that context, because of the Spending Clause context in
16 which the case arises, I don't believe that they would
17 be able to challenge that as -- under the Supremacy
18 Clause.

19 But that is not this case. That case at
20 least presents the fact -- and the reason why it's a
21 closer case is because in that case there is regulation
22 and we are potentially infringing on their property.
23 However, what's the law that they are trying to assert
24 defensively there? It is -- as a Spending Clause
25 provision that has administrative standards, that's been

1 entrusted to Congress. So, shouldn't Congress be able
2 to enforce it? Fundamentally, this Court --

3 JUSTICE SCALIA: Excuse me. You spoke of
4 that, Justice Ginsburg's question, as though it was a
5 hypothetical. But that could happen, couldn't it? What
6 if one of these Respondents charged more than the State
7 law permits? Wouldn't -- wouldn't the State move
8 against them?

9 MS. SCHWARTZ: Of course, we would, and they
10 would have a decision about whether to stay in the
11 Medicaid program or not. But the question is, does this
12 Court exercise its equitable powers to create a cause of
13 action -- that Congress itself has not? That's really
14 the question for this Court.

15 In the Spending Clause context with respect
16 to this kind of standard that is suited for
17 administrative standards, we submit you should not.

18 Unless there are any further questions, Your
19 Honor, I'd like to reserve our remaining time for
20 rebuttal.

21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
22 Mr. Kneedler.

23 ORAL ARGUMENT OF EDWIN S. KNEEDLER

24 ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES,

25 AS AMICUS CURIAE, SUPPORTING THE PETITIONER

1 MR. KNEEDLER: Mr. Chief Justice and may it
2 please the Court:

3 Medicaid is a cooperative program between
4 the Federal Government and the States. Congress has not
5 created a cause of action under that Act for private
6 parties to enforce particular provisions of it.

7 Nor does paragraph 30(A) confer private
8 rights that are enforceable under 1983. Rather,
9 paragraph 30(A) is written in general terms that
10 describe the general undertaking by the State in its
11 bilateral relationship with the Federal Government.

12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Kneedler, is
13 your argument in this case limited to Spending Clause
14 legislation?

15 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes. And what --

16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And if it's not, could
17 you please -- you said yes, it is.

18 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes.

19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But give me the
20 theoretical foundation. If the Supremacy Clause
21 doesn't -- I'm assuming you agree with your -- with
22 Petitioner that it doesn't provide for a cause of
23 action.

24 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes.

25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Is that your position?

1 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes.

2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Then what gets all of
3 the cases that we've had since 1824 into this Court that
4 have granted injunctive relief on supremacy arguments?

5 MR. KNEEDLER: I -- I think that the great
6 majority of those cases are ones in which the plaintiff
7 in the suit in equity is bringing an action anticipating
8 an action at law. And there --

9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, but we -- we have
10 plenty that don't: King, Townsend, Carlson. We've had
11 many others that are not dissimilar --

12 MR. KNEEDLER: They --

13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- from this case.

14 MR. KNEEDLER: I think that they -- though
15 that they do not reflect a general assumption that there
16 is a cause of action directly under the Supremacy
17 Clause, because as this Court said, the Supremacy Clause
18 is not itself a source of rights --

19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So, go back and explain
20 to me how all of those cases --

21 MR. KNEEDLER: To -- I -- I think --

22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What's the theoretical?

23 MR. KNEEDLER: I think there is -- I think
24 one has to look to an equitable cause of action, which I
25 think is the way Ex parte Young describes what was going

1 on in that -- in that way, as anticipating -- it was a
2 defense anticipating an action at law.

3 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So, go to your --
4 Petitioner's response to one of my colleagues, to
5 Justice Scalia, when she said yes, if these providers
6 decide to charge the old rate to their patients, the
7 State will go after them. How is that any different
8 than the cases where we're talking about railroads
9 charging -- not charging customers more than a State
10 commands because the penalty's too high, or --

11 MR. KNEEDLER: I --

12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- or those types of
13 cases that fall into this pre-emptive category that
14 you're talking about?

15 MR. KNEEDLER: That has not been plaintiffs'
16 theory of this case. They have not said that we're
17 going to resort to self-help and charge more than the
18 State allows. What they -- what they want to do is they
19 brought this suit to challenge the rates in the first
20 instance. They are not claiming that they're going to
21 violate State law and charge more; they are simply
22 wanting to challenge the rates that the State has
23 charged. If I could return to the --

24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But you haven't
25 explained how that's theoretically different than the

1 example I just gave you.

2 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes, I think it is, and if I
3 could explain why --

4 JUSTICE SCALIA: So, all they have to do, as
5 far as the Government is concerned, is amend their
6 complaint to say: We intend to charge higher rates than
7 the State law allows.

8 MR. KNEEDLER: And I --

9 JUSTICE SCALIA: And then you -- you'd agree
10 that the suit would lie.

11 MR. KNEEDLER: I'm -- I'm not sure. There
12 would be further questions that would arise in that
13 context. For example, it's -- I don't know whether --
14 whether a -- whether in a prosecution under the statute
15 for charging -- that prohibits charging more than State
16 rates allow, whether you can raise as a defense in that
17 prosecution a challenge to the validity of the rates.

18 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, gee, we're not
19 deciding a whole lot here, then. Just -- it's just a
20 matter of pleading that we're deciding, right?

21 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, that's why I'm saying
22 there might be a further question in -- in what you're
23 describing as to whether that would be a valid defense
24 in the State prosecution, because I can certainly
25 imagine the State saying: We don't want our rates

1 tested in individual criminal prosecutions any more than
2 we would want them tested in affirmative --

3 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Kneedler, why should
4 this even matter so much whether there's a defense
5 available in a regulation that's brought against a
6 person or not? In your brief, you admit that there are
7 numerous cases that don't fit within that category,
8 where the -- but where the -- where the State has acted
9 in some sense to change the behavior of the person, to
10 regulate the person, even if that person doesn't have a
11 proceeding in which to mount a defense. And we -- this
12 Court has treated those cases in exactly the same way,
13 haven't they?

14 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes, but unexamined. And let
15 me say, we are not challenging those cases. And the
16 Court, we think, doesn't need to look more broadly to a
17 theory. We are -- to -- to an all-encompassing theory.
18 We are focusing on Spending Clause legislation in a
19 particular cooperative Federal/State program --

20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, you think --

21 MR. KNEEDLER: -- under the Spending Clause.

22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, you think there
23 may well be implied rights of action outside the
24 Spending Clause context.

25 MR. KNEEDLER: I think probably the best way

1 to explain them is equitable cause of action drawing on
2 the courts' traditional equitable jurisdiction. You
3 could call that an implied cause of action under the
4 Supremacy Clause, but I think, historically, it's been
5 described as an --

6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So --

7 MR. KNEEDLER: -- exercise of the courts'
8 equitable authority. The court has equitable
9 discretion, and we think, because of the Spending Clause
10 nature of this legislation, it should not create a cause
11 of action --

12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, your -- your
13 answer to my earlier question was that you're not
14 arguing about that in this case.

15 MR. KNEEDLER: Right, we are -- we are
16 focusing on --

17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, the
18 Government -- the Government -- we don't have a position
19 from the Government on whether or not there is an
20 implied right of action under other constitutional
21 provisions.

22 MR. KNEEDLER: Under --

23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I mean, outside the
24 Spending Clause context.

25 MR. KNEEDLER: We are certainly not

1 challenging the existence of a cause of action at
2 equity. I'm -- I'm just -- I think we would view it as
3 a cause of action in equity rather than implied under
4 the Supremacy Clause, but I think you may -- you might
5 get to the same place, but I think it is judicial
6 creation of a cause of action. But if I could before my
7 time expires --

8 JUSTICE SCALIA: You -- you do not even
9 exclude all Spending Clause cases. You only exclude
10 those Spending Clause cases where -- where the plaintiff
11 does not say we are -- you know, we're going to violate
12 the State law, and they're going to come after us. So,
13 you haven't made an exception for the Spending Clause.

14 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, it -- I don't think
15 there's any categorical rule because, for example, under
16 Spending Clause cases, you can have rights enforceable
17 under 1983. Our basic point is the Spending Clause is a
18 contractual relationship between the Federal Government
19 and the State, and the Respondents here are in the
20 position of the people asserting rights as third-party
21 beneficiaries to the bilateral relationship between the
22 United States and the -- and the States. Under standard
23 contract law principles --

24 JUSTICE KAGAN: But, Mr. Kneeder --

25 MR. KNEEDLER: -- the third-party can sue

1 only if the parties intended him to be.

2 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Kneedler, this is what
3 you said in your cert stage brief: You said, "Those
4 programs in which the drastic measure of withholding all
5 or a major portion of the Federal funding is the only
6 available remedy" -- and you are talking here about
7 Spending Clause programs, obviously -- "would be
8 generally less effective than a system that also permits
9 awards of injunctive relief in private actions."

10 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes, and the circumstances in
11 which the Court has made that point and that we agree
12 with are often in situations where you have Title 6,
13 Title 9 instances of individual discrimination that are
14 arising under Federal programs, or where you have a
15 right under 1983 where -- where there is an enforceable
16 right that a party has and is going into court and is
17 supplementing the agency's oversight.

18 Here, under -- under paragraph 30(A), you
19 have only general standards that are really suitable for
20 administrative review, with balancing general --

21 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, can that really be the
22 difference? I mean, do you think if 30(A) were
23 written -- were drafted as a formula, a rate schedule
24 formula, that there would be a cause of action, but
25 because 30(A) is more general in nature, that there is

1 no cause of action? I mean, surely that's a question
2 for the merits of whether there is pre-emption or not.

3 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, I -- I don't think it's
4 just a merits question. I think it also goes to the
5 question whether the parties to the contract intended
6 third-party beneficiary-type rights to be able to sue
7 under -- under a -- what is really analogous to a
8 contract.

9 I would also point out that this Court's
10 decision in *Maine v. Thiboutot*, which first recognized a
11 1983 cause of action, pointed to prior cases enforcing
12 Social Security programs, on the assumption that 1983
13 could have been the only source of the cause of action.
14 If there was an implied judge-made cause of action in
15 those circumstances, that assumption would have been
16 unwarranted.

17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Kneedler, before you
18 sit down, could you please enlighten us on two fact
19 points? One is, what is the status of the 30(A)
20 rulemaking? Because I take it once the rule is made, it
21 would get Chevron deference. You said that there would
22 be a final rule in December. Is that still --

23 MR. KNEEDLER: I am informed that it may
24 slip past December, that there -- there has been a lot
25 of interaction with -- with comments on it. I don't

1 know a precise date, but I'm informed that that may be
2 possible.

3 JUSTICE GINSBURG: How about the -- the
4 status of the -- the hearing on California's
5 compliance --

6 MR. KNEEDLER: That is -- that is still
7 pending. There have been extensions. There have also
8 been planned amendments that have been submitted
9 covering some of these same rates.

10 Justice Ginsburg, I also wanted to respond
11 to one of your questions. I do believe the United
12 States would have an injunctive action in certain
13 circumstances. For example, if the United States
14 disapproved a plan and a State continued to -- a plan
15 amendment, and a State continued to follow the terms of
16 the disapproved plan amendment, I think the United
17 States would have a cause of action to enforce --

18 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Under the --

19 MR. KNEEDLER: -- as the party to the
20 contract.

21 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Under a pre-emption --
22 would it be a pre-emption argument?

23 MR. KNEEDLER: No, it would be enforcing the
24 -- the terms of its agreement with the -- with the
25 States.

1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Do you --

2 MR. KNEEDLER: It doesn't have to rely on
3 pre-emption in those circumstances.

4 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Do you agree with the
5 counsel for the Petitioner that if the State chose to
6 allow its courts to issue an injunction on Supremacy
7 Clause grounds in the State courts, that that would be
8 impermissible?

9 MR. KNEEDLER: We think it's a harder
10 question, but probably so, because we believe paragraph
11 30(A) does not confer private rights, and that would be
12 true in the State court as well as Federal court.

13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr.
14 Kneedler.

15 Mr. Phillips.

16 ORAL ARGUMENT OF CARTER G. PHILLIPS

17 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS

18 MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice
19 and may it please the Court:

20 I'd like to focus on two points that came
21 out of the questioning in the first part of the oral
22 argument today.

23 First of all, I would like to focus on the
24 question -- the comment, at least, and the question that
25 flows from it, from Justice Alito, which is that there

1 has never been a recognition of a cause of action in any
2 Ex parte Young case. And that's a hundred percent true,
3 and I didn't hear response to the other side that
4 suggests anything to the contrary.

5 And the reason for that is, obviously, what
6 this Court said in the Verizon case and what it said in
7 Shaw is that you look to the Supremacy Clause as the
8 basis for arising-under jurisdiction, and then if you
9 have jurisdiction, then you look to the traditional
10 equitable standards to determine whether they've been
11 satisfied in a particular case.

12 And under this Court's decision in Ex parte
13 Young, what the Court said was "an injunction which
14 restrains the state officer from taking any steps
15 towards the enforcement of an unconstitutional
16 enactment, to the injury of the complainant" is the
17 basis for relief. And that's exactly the circumstance
18 that we have in this case, and thus --

19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why isn't -- why
20 doesn't your position constitute a complete end run
21 around all of our implied right of action jurisprudence?
22 We've wasted a lot of time trying to figure out whether
23 there's an implied right of action under a particular
24 statute if there has always been one under the Supremacy
25 Clause?

1 MR. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chief Justice, there is a
2 very fundamental difference between an implied right of
3 action or an action under section 1983 and -- and a very
4 simple and straightforward Ex parte Young remedy that's
5 otherwise available. Under 1983, at private rights of
6 action, the district courts, the Federal courts, State
7 courts for that matter in enforcing them, have authority
8 to grant damages, they have much broader injunctive
9 relief, and under section 1983, there's --

10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How can they have
11 much broader -- broader -- first of all, all of those
12 cases -- I don't know if all of them did, but certainly
13 a lot of them did include -- included claims for
14 injunctive relief. And I would have thought the court's
15 authority under your equitable action under the
16 Constitution would be at least as broad as it would be
17 under the statute.

18 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, Ex parte Young has been
19 pretty consistently evaluated as saying simply you
20 cannot do what the Constitution immediately prohibits
21 you from doing. And so -- and, frankly, the Ex parte
22 Young remedy has been a negative --

23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But your position --

24 MR. PHILLIPS: -- not to violate the --

25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Your position --

1 MR. PHILLIPS: -- not to violate the
2 Supremacy Clause.

3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Your position is
4 that the Constitution prohibits you from doing anything
5 where the State law is pre-empted by the Federal law.
6 That doesn't sound very narrow to me.

7 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, but -- but if you go
8 back and look at the cases in which 1983 relief has been
9 involved, a case like Blessing -- in Blessing, the
10 complaint there sought essentially to take over the
11 entire State law function of providing support for
12 children. And that was the injunctive relief that was
13 requested. And if the Court had adopted the notion that
14 1983 carried with it a private right of action, that
15 would have been available relief; there would have been
16 a claim for damages in that circumstance; and there
17 would have been access to attorneys' fees.

18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What if the --

19 MR. PHILLIPS: None of those things is
20 available here.

21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What if the law that
22 Congress is -- Congress passes sets forth certain
23 Federal standards -- it's a cooperative Federal-State
24 law like this one -- and it says: And there's no
25 private right of action for any individual to enforce

1 this. That's limited to the Federal Government.

2 MR. PHILLIPS: In that -- in that situation,
3 there's obviously no authority to bring a private right
4 of action under the statute. That still doesn't answer
5 the question whether or not there is a right to invoke
6 the Supremacy Clause --

7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, Congress can
8 say --

9 MR. PHILLIPS: -- when there's a conflict
10 between Federal and State law.

11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Congress can say in
12 the same statute that confers the allegedly pre-emptive
13 Federal standards that we do not want individuals
14 bringing actions in court to enforce this. We want to
15 leave that up to HHS. And you're saying, even though
16 Congress said that, individuals can nonetheless bring a
17 suit under the Supremacy Clause, the theory of which is
18 we are making sure that Federal law controls.

19 MR. PHILLIPS: Right.

20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The same Federal law
21 that says you can't bring a cause of action.

22 MR. PHILLIPS: No, I understand that,
23 Mr. Chief Justice, but you still have the problem that
24 even under those circumstances, a regime can arise in
25 which there is a square and, in this case, you know, I

1 think undeniable, conflict between Federal and State
2 law, and the question is -- and that that conflict
3 imposes not only injury in fact to an individual but
4 also imposes irreparable harm.

5 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you're saying then,
6 if Congress loud and clear says, we want HHS to be the
7 sole enforcer of this law, you're saying--

8 MR. PHILLIPS: Of the Federal statute.

9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Of this, yes. You're
10 saying that that would be ineffective because there
11 could still be a Supremacy Clause claim.

12 MR. PHILLIPS: Yes. Whether or not you
13 would in fact get relief under the Supremacy Clause
14 seems to me a very --

15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: That's on the merits --

16 MR. PHILLIPS: -- tough question.

17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- but Congress says, we
18 don't want anybody coming into the court. We want --

19 MR. PHILLIPS: I don't think Congress has
20 the authority to essentially say there are some
21 conflicts between Federal and State law that we will
22 simply ignore even though they cause irreparable injury.

23 JUSTICE KAGAN: Is that necessary to your
24 position, Mr. Phillips?

25 MR. PHILLIPS: Absolutely not, Justice

1 Kagan.

2 JUSTICE KAGAN: Because you could take the
3 view, right, that if Congress speaks to cut off a claim,
4 that's one thing, and a very different thing, than if
5 Congress has not spoken at all.

6 MR. PHILLIPS: Right. And it seems to me
7 here is a situation where you would expect Congress to
8 have spoken explicitly --

9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Then it's a question of
10 what will be the default rule. Congress is silent.

11 MR. PHILLIPS: Of course.

12 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Is the default rule that
13 there is a Supremacy Clause action or that Congress must
14 expressly allow it?

15 MR. PHILLIPS: And the reason why the
16 default rule would almost certainly be that in fact you
17 can bring the Ex parte Young cause of action is because
18 the effect -- the Spending Clause has been subject to
19 the -- to pre-emption claims since 1968. This whole
20 notion that they contracted against this background of
21 what obligations did they assume -- the obligation that
22 they clearly would have assumed is that if in fact there
23 is a violation of Federal law based on a failure to
24 satisfy one of the conditions of spending under these
25 circumstances, you would -- they would be susceptible to

1 an Ex parte Young --

2 JUSTICE BREYER: Why?

3 MR. PHILLIPS: -- injunctive action.

4 JUSTICE BREYER: I'm -- I'm not certain of
5 this. I find this a difficult case. It seems to me the
6 Government is prepared to concede that if an individual
7 has a Federal right that he'd like to enforce and
8 someone is trying to block it by asserting a State law
9 that he thinks is pre-empted, he can go ahead. If it
10 looks as if the State is going to take something from
11 him that a Federal law guarantees and he has a defense
12 that he'd like to make to that under Federal law, the
13 State law that seems to allow it is pre-empted, he can
14 make it.

15 Our problem arises where neither of those
16 things is true. So, we say, what is true here? What
17 kind of Federal claim does he have? And the word is
18 that rates have to be -- that the rate that the State
19 has to pay back to the doctor has to be "sufficient."
20 Okay, "sufficient." That's basically the word.

21 MR. PHILLIPS: Right.

22 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. So, I see three
23 possibilities. One is you say, sure, let all the
24 doctors go and sue. There are only 50,000 kinds of
25 reimbursement. Maybe there are a million. I don't know

1 how many. And they only take place in, what, say,
2 400,000 counties. And we will have Federal judges
3 reaching different views about what is sufficient in
4 each of those different places. And sometimes they will
5 agree. Did Congress want that? Well, hmm, a problem.

6 The second way of going about it is cure
7 that and say: You win, but you have to use primary
8 jurisdiction, and you have to get the government's view
9 on it, Judge; and before you decide, you have to pay
10 attention.

11 MR. PHILLIPS: Can I --

12 JUSTICE BREYER: There's a long line of
13 cases. I have one more thing --

14 MR. PHILLIPS: Can I --

15 JUSTICE BREYER: -- then you'll get all
16 three.

17 MR. PHILLIPS: But can I deal with that one
18 immediately?

19 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes.

20 MR. PHILLIPS: Because I think it's
21 important in the context of this case to recognize.
22 We're talking about the issuance of a preliminary
23 injunction that was designed to hold everything until
24 matters could be avoided. We realize that we're talking
25 about a situation where the State, solely for budgetary

1 reasons, without regard to Federal law whatsoever,
2 simply made a slash in the reimbursements.

3 JUSTICE BREYER: If I want your view, I want
4 your view on whether the right approach -- you're saying
5 what's the status quo pending. And I want your view on
6 these three possibilities.

7 MR. PHILLIPS: Right. I --

8 JUSTICE BREYER: One is the possibility the
9 judges just do it in all the different places, try to
10 figure out what's sufficient. The second is the
11 possibility that we try primary jurisdiction, and that's
12 the -- then the curlicue on that is what do you do
13 pending? And, you know, that's your injunction.

14 MR. PHILLIPS: And that's what I just want
15 to be clear on.

16 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes, yes. And the third
17 possibility is you say: I'm just sorry that the -- this
18 is just too vague, the "sufficient" et cetera. It has
19 to be centralized. There's no way to work this out with
20 all these different judges and different kinds of rates
21 and different kinds of provisions. And so, this is an
22 instance where you cannot bring your claim that
23 something violates the Supremacy Clause because you
24 don't have a Federal right to a thing, and they're not
25 trying to take away a thing that the Federal right gives

1 you, et cetera.

2 All right. Do you see those three
3 possibilities?

4 MR. PHILLIPS: Right.

5 JUSTICE BREYER: And what I wanted you to do
6 is to address them.

7 MR. PHILLIPS: The -- the third possibility,
8 it seems to me, Justice Breyer, is not much different
9 from a lot of the other cases that this Court has
10 already decided --

11 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes.

12 MR. PHILLIPS: -- like Crosby and like
13 Engine Manufacturers, where there's the vague standard
14 out there, and the -- and it doesn't -- and they're not
15 asserting a right to be -- not to have an enforcement
16 action brought against them. And this Court has
17 routinely held in that circumstance that there is in
18 fact a Supremacy Clause action available. So, I don't
19 think the third option is really an option. And it also
20 ultimately goes to the merits of the pre-emption claim.

21 If it turns out that all of this is just too
22 squishy to evaluate, then it would seem to me that on
23 the merits, then you would say there's not a clear
24 enough statement of Federal law to justify saying
25 there's a conflict that would -- and, therefore, you

1 would lose on the merits. But that wouldn't prevent you
2 from going into court and trying to make the kind of
3 showing that we made here.

4 JUSTICE BREYER: You think primary
5 jurisdiction is the way to do it.

6 MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

7 JUSTICE BREYER: You see, I see a practical
8 problem, and I'm -- the practical problem is millions of
9 rates all judged by the term "sufficient," and instead
10 of the agency in charge deciding what's sufficient, we
11 do have a lot of judges.

12 MR. PHILLIPS: But, Justice Breyer, the
13 agency always has the ultimate authority here to step in
14 and take action. And I think the real question is, is
15 it reasonable to think that Congress meant to place this
16 in an agency, in circumstances where the agency isn't
17 going to receive notice of the implementation of the
18 change before it gets implemented, where the State is
19 permitted to take no -- to make no response to a request
20 for information and allow the unlawful rates to go into
21 effect for years on end?

22 JUSTICE KAGAN: So, could I ask --

23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Fighting -- why are you
24 fighting Justice Breyer so much?

25 MR. PHILLIPS: I didn't think I was.

1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I mean, it sounds like
2 you are, and that's why I am having some difficulty.

3 There are two points, following up on his
4 and then my second question. Engage the Solicitor
5 General's suggestion that this isn't a cause of action
6 under the Supremacy Clause, but that it is a cause of
7 action under some implied equitable --

8 MR. PHILLIPS: Doctrine.

9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- doctrine, okay?
10 Which may square. And I'm now coming back to Justice
11 Breyer's question. I agree with all you were trying to
12 say about what the State did or didn't do here, but if
13 it's a primary jurisdiction question, what's wrong with
14 just saying that the court's power is limited under
15 equity to issuing an injunction that gives the matter
16 over to the administrative agency that puts in the
17 status quo -- assuming there's some sort of violation of
18 Federal law or seeming violation of Federal law -- a
19 preventive injunction that just stops the State from
20 acting until the administrative process concludes?

21 MR. PHILLIPS: Justice Sotomayor --

22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What's wrong with that?

23 MR. PHILLIPS: There's nothing wrong with
24 that. Candidly, we -- we would be perfectly comfortable
25 with that, but I don't understand the other side to be

1 complaining about the scope of the injunctive relief.

2 It is not that they are saying --

3 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, no. They're saying
4 you can't have any.

5 MR. PHILLIPS: Right. And so --

6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But -- but Justice
7 Breyer's question, I think, was slightly different,
8 which is, what's the limit on --

9 MR. PHILLIPS: Right.

10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- the court's power?
11 And how do you --

12 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, we did have an
13 alternative argument that the injunction should --
14 should stay into effect at least until HHS acts, and the
15 -- the district court granted a broader preliminary
16 injunction and didn't consider the alternative argument
17 that was -- that was there.

18 But, again, it seems to me that, you know,
19 the court ought to recognize that you're in the context
20 of preliminary injunctive relief in this situation, and
21 -- and there will be plenty of time to kind of work
22 through the nature of the injunctive relief if in fact
23 the court's allowed to go forward and take up the Ex
24 parte Young issue under the circumstance.

25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Would you engage the

1 question that -- the approach the Solicitor General has
2 been making, which is don't find a cause of action under
3 the Supremacy Clause; find it in the court's -- an
4 implied cause of action?

5 MR. PHILLIPS: I'm not perfectly comfortable
6 with that rationale. I think the answer is it's sort of
7 a combination of the Supremacy Clause and the -- and
8 broad equitable relief, rather than -- I mean, clearly
9 one or the other. They seem to go pretty much
10 hand-in-glove in the ex parte line of cases. And so, I
11 don't have any particular problem with that.

12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, I might, if you
13 continue in your earlier position that a Supremacy
14 Clause cause of action would stop Congress from having a
15 -- a voice in enforcement in cutting it off clearly, if
16 Congress were to write a law that says no one can
17 enforce this, either in damages or in injunctive relief.
18 Your earlier answer seemed to suggest Congress didn't
19 have the power under the Supremacy Clause to do that.

20 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, I -- suppose there
21 were --

22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If this were in
23 equity --

24 MR. PHILLIPS: It will depend on the -- on
25 the circumstances of the case, but I do think there is

1 some gap between the full extent of Congress's power in
2 this area and -- and the protections of the Supremacy
3 Clause, if for no other reason -- and because the
4 executive branch also has the authority and, certainly
5 acting within its own exclusive authority, could --
6 could pre-empt State law or could create a situation
7 where State law would be pre-empted. And I don't think
8 Congress would have the authority to -- to take away the
9 Ex parte Young remedy under -- under those particular
10 circumstances.

11 JUSTICE ALITO: What is your response to the
12 argument that the equitable power exercised in Ex parte
13 Young and similar cases is limited to certain specific
14 situations such as where there is an imminent threat of
15 the State enforcement action, and a few others where
16 there's a trespass, where there's a clearly defined
17 Federal right? I mean, it doesn't encompass every
18 situation in which the plaintiff simply has Article III
19 standing and wants to obtain an injunction that a
20 particular State law is pre-empted by Federal law.

21 MR. PHILLIPS: The -- I mean, to be sure,
22 the Court in Ex parte Young was dealing with a specific
23 situation of trying to prevent enforcement. But the --
24 the Supreme Court -- this Court in all of its decisions
25 post-Ex parte Young has never said that that's the only

1 circumstance and has certainly never said that in
2 exercising the judicial power under Article III that
3 extends to all cases in equity, that it means only the
4 equity that existed in -- in the 18th century at that
5 point in time.

6 So, it seems to me the right answer at this
7 stage is for this Court to look at the situation and
8 say: Is this a context in which equitable relief would
9 be appropriate? And if you just use the preliminary
10 injunction standards, it clearly would be appropriate
11 under -- under these particular circumstances, where we
12 have a likelihood of success on the merits, irreparable
13 harm, and the balance of harms favor the -- favor the
14 plaintiff.

15 JUSTICE BREYER: Right.

16 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So, what is the best
17 authority in our cases, other than *Ex parte Young*, or in
18 a treatise or in recognized statements of the difference
19 in law and equity for the proposition that in this area
20 we can make a distinction between law and equity after
21 centuries in which we've tried to say that that
22 distinction ought to be blurred?

23 MR. PHILLIPS: Well --

24 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I mean, do you want us --
25 would you want us to write an opinion and say, oh,

1 there's a difference in damages at equity?

2 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, all -- all we --

3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: What do I -- other than Ex
4 parte Young, what do I cite for that?

5 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, any of the cases in
6 which the Court has recognized that obviously in order
7 to get -- in order to get injunctive relief, you have to
8 demonstrate that there's -- that there's no adequate
9 remedy at law. So, I mean, the distinction has always
10 been there, even after the merging of law and equity --

11 JUSTICE SCALIA: That -- that's not --

12 MR. PHILLIPS: -- in the early part of the
13 last century.

14 JUSTICE SCALIA: That's not the theory on
15 which we've said you can't get damages under Ex parte
16 Young. The theory that prevents damages is the theory
17 of sovereign immunity. The -- the fiction that
18 you're -- that you're moving against the individual and
19 not against the State simply cannot be maintained when
20 you're taking money out of the State treasury. That's
21 the basis for it, not -- not what you just described.

22 MR. PHILLIPS: No, but I'm -- but I'm not
23 asking for -- for -- I mean, we're not asking for
24 damages here, Justice Scalia.

25 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I know, but see --

1 MR. PHILLIPS: All we're asking for
2 is injunctive relief.

3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But that -- but that
4 wouldn't explain the case like Gonzaga where there was
5 no State entity. Gonzaga was a private institution.

6 MR. PHILLIPS: Right. But --

7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So, I'm -- I'm wondering.
8 I understand the Eleventh Amendment dynamic, which --

9 MR. PHILLIPS: Right.

10 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- as Justice Scalia
11 points out, was the whole driving force of -- of Ex
12 parte Young. Is there -- is there any other basis for
13 us to say that there has to be a law/equity distinction?
14 You say, well, that's because there is no adequate
15 remedy at law. But that's circular; that assumes
16 because there's no cause of action -- so, that doesn't
17 work.

18 MR. PHILLIPS: No, but I -- I mean, all of
19 the cases that come out of the Ex parte Young line of
20 authority seem to base -- you know, they all tee off,
21 obviously, the problem that exists in this context,
22 which is -- which is the one that Justice Scalia
23 identified.

24 JUSTICE BREYER: There must be a limit.
25 There must be a limit because if there is not a limit on

1 what you can do under Ex parte Young, I can go in my
2 office and I look at the statute books and they are just
3 filled with statutes, and I -- Federal; and if I had all
4 the State statute books, it would be 15 offices or 20 or
5 100. And I know perfectly well that a lot of those
6 statutes in the Federal books have to do with agencies,
7 and they give jobs to agencies, and it's perfectly
8 apparent that the ones who run those statutes in many
9 instances are the agencies, and really judges are out of
10 it.

11 Now, if I adopt your line, it seems to me I
12 am saying that any time that a person has an individual
13 of saying that a State law is contrary to one of those
14 statutes, he can run right into court. And I can see
15 we've done that where he has some kind of right that
16 he's protecting that's threatened in some way or that he
17 wants to assert. I can see that we could do that in the
18 foreign policy case like Burma; I can see that we could
19 do that where Federal voting rights are at stake, which
20 are very important.

21 But a principle that says you can do that
22 any time you want seems to me a little -- it's -- it
23 seems to me the real fear of far-reaching in this extent
24 that it just stops the agency from doing their business
25 at the behest of anyone who would like to assert a State

1 law, or States -- it's a mess, in other words.

2 MR. PHILLIPS: Justice Breyer, can I -- two
3 points here: First of all, we are not talking about a
4 situation of somebody seeking a roving commission to go
5 find out all Federal -- all situations where State law
6 violates Federal law. We're -- the beneficiaries in
7 this case --

8 JUSTICE BREYER: No, no. Your people have
9 your problem.

10 MR. PHILLIPS: But those are life-and-death
11 problems.

12 JUSTICE BREYER: But some other people have
13 another problem.

14 MR. PHILLIPS: But my people have a
15 life-and-death problem, Justice Breyer. So, if there
16 were ever a situation where you would say let's look to
17 see whether or not there is relief available, this would
18 be the situation where -- where I would hope --

19 JUSTICE BREYER: The doctors want to be paid
20 more money or at least not paid as much as they were; I
21 understand that.

22 MR. PHILLIPS: But the beneficiaries --

23 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes.

24 MR. PHILLIPS: The patients are the one who
25 lose access to --

1 JUSTICE BREYER: So, is there a medical
2 exception?

3 MR. PHILLIPS: I'm sorry.

4 JUSTICE BREYER: Is there a medical
5 exception? Is it that you can have this generalized
6 claim if you're a doctor, but not others?

7 MR. PHILLIPS: No, to be sure, Justice
8 Breyer. The exception is that we have to satisfy the
9 requirements of Article III. We have to have injury and
10 redressability, and in order to get equitable relief, we
11 ultimately are going to have to demonstrate that the
12 injury is irreparable, that there is no adequate remedy
13 at law. Those are high burdens --

14 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Phillips --

15 MR. PHILLIPS: -- and in a circumstance
16 where you cannot get damages and you cannot get
17 attorneys' fees.

18 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Phillips, could I ask
19 you a little bit more about how this interacts with the
20 agency process? Now, suppose that California had done
21 what, the way I read the statute, it was supposed to do,
22 which is to go to the agency and say: We want to change
23 our rates. We can't afford these rates anymore, and we
24 think these lower rates would do just as well. All
25 right?

1 And then the agency and California sit down
2 and discuss the matter. Would this suit have ever come
3 into being?

4 MR. PHILLIPS: If they had just discussed
5 the matter?

6 JUSTICE KAGAN: You know, they did not
7 impose them unilaterally. They go to the -- to HHS and
8 they wait for HHS to approve what they want to do. If
9 HHS approves --

10 MR. PHILLIPS: We wouldn't be here. I can
11 guarantee you we wouldn't be here.

12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, if -- if HHS approved,
13 maybe somebody does sue. And then there's great
14 deference to the agency --

15 MR. PHILLIPS: That's --

16 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- isn't that right?

17 MR. PHILLIPS: That's exactly right.

18 JUSTICE KAGAN: And if HHS doesn't approve,
19 then what's there to talk about? There's no suit.

20 MR. PHILLIPS: Right. No, there's no
21 question that --

22 JUSTICE KAGAN: So, either way, the agency
23 wins, right?

24 MR. PHILLIPS: Right. The agency always
25 wins. That's the rule that they --

1 (Laughter.)

2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why is there no --

3 MR. PHILLIPS: But then the question --

4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why is there no suit
5 if the agency doesn't approve?

6 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, I mean -- I mean, if
7 the agency --

8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You're saying
9 Congress can't say there's no implied right of action.

10 MR. PHILLIPS: Right.

11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But the agency can?

12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, if the -- I was just
13 saying if the agency didn't approve, your clients don't
14 have anything to complain about.

15 MR. PHILLIPS: Right, because -- well --

16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Do you have the same
17 answer or a different one?

18 MR. PHILLIPS: -- I mean, I suppose it
19 depends on whether they go ahead. If California, in the
20 face of disapproval, continued to violate the law, that
21 would -- I assume you meant that California complied.

22 JUSTICE KAGAN: Correct.

23 JUSTICE ALITO: No, but the agency approves
24 rates and someone who's dissatisfied with the rates sues
25 and says these rates are ridiculously low.

1 MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, you can bring the
2 lawsuit --

3 JUSTICE ALITO: They still can sue --

4 MR. PHILLIPS: -- Justice Alito. The -- the
5 bottom line is you're going to lose that -- that
6 litigation and in a circumstance where you have no
7 realistic prospect of --

8 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, how do you know
9 they're going to lose the litigation? Why should they
10 lose the litigation if it's really -- if there really is
11 a cause of action there? Some of the Medicaid rates are
12 very low, aren't they?

13 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, ultimately, you have to
14 demonstrate that there's -- that there is a -- by clear
15 and convincing evidence, a conflict between Federal and
16 State law. And the agency that has -- that evaluates
17 the standards of Federal law will have said in a very
18 authoritative way that there is not a violation under
19 those circumstances.

20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But you still have a
21 cause of action under the Supremacy Clause.

22 MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, no, to be sure, I have a
23 cause of action.

24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I thought you were
25 saying you didn't --

1 MR. PHILLIPS: No, no.

2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- if the agency --

3 MR. PHILLIPS: No, no. I'm not saying you
4 don't, I'm just -- all I'm saying is that if the -- if
5 the process works appropriately, there would be not the
6 litigation that Justice Breyer was worried about, where
7 you would have hundreds of thousands of cases going
8 forward.

9 If the process -- which, again, it goes back
10 to the default rule.

11 JUSTICE SCALIA: You've lost me here. You
12 -- you say there would be a cause of action under the
13 Supremacy Clause if the agency approves the rates, but
14 your clients don't think the rates are high enough?

15 MR. PHILLIPS: Sure, we would still say
16 there's a --

17 JUSTICE SCALIA: Under the --

18 MR. PHILLIPS: We would still have an
19 argument that there's a conflict between Federal and
20 State law.

21 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, Federal law is
22 determined by the agency, surely. So long as the agency
23 is complying with the Administrative Procedure Act, I
24 don't see how you have any --

25 MR. PHILLIPS: Well --

1 JUSTICE SCALIA: -- any cause of action
2 under the Supremacy Clause; you may have an APA cause of
3 action.

4 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, we -- well, the problem
5 with the APA -- we might have an APA cause of action,
6 but I also think that there is a -- I mean, I -- look,
7 that hypothetical is so far afield --

8 JUSTICE SCALIA: Federal law is not
9 determined by the agency?

10 MR. PHILLIPS: I'm sorry, Justice Scalia.

11 JUSTICE SCALIA: Federal law is not
12 determined by the agency?

13 MR. PHILLIPS: No, of course, Federal law is
14 determined by the agency, but not without limits.

15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, then you don't have a
16 Supremacy Clause cause of action.

17 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, I think you -- I still
18 think you can bring an action under the Supremacy
19 Clause. I think, ultimately, you have very -- you have
20 zero hope of prevailing --

21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why does the --

22 MR. PHILLIPS: -- which was my point.

23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why does the agency
24 get to determine Federal law when Congress doesn't? You
25 told me earlier if Congress --

1 MR. PHILLIPS: Because Congress --

2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- Congress says in
3 a statute no implied right of action, that that doesn't
4 control.

5 MR. PHILLIPS: Right, but that doesn't --
6 that controls to the extent of trying to enforce
7 directly the Federal statute; it doesn't control with
8 respect to trying to enforce the Supremacy Clause.

9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: The Supremacy Clause says
10 that judges in every State shall be bound thereby, but
11 if you want to amend it so that judges in every State
12 and all administrators should be bound thereby, then you
13 have a Supremacy Clause action against every Federal
14 agency. That doesn't make sense.

15 MR. PHILLIPS: Well, no, but what the
16 Supremacy Clause says is that Federal law will be
17 supreme in all circumstances, notwithstanding State
18 law --

19 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Number one, it doesn't say
20 that. There's no -- it doesn't say "all circumstances."
21 It doesn't say that.

22 MR. PHILLIPS: The Supremacy Clause -- well,
23 I don't know of any exceptions in the Supremacy Clause
24 where State law gets to remain supreme to Federal law.

25 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I'm -- well, no. Justice

1 Scalia's question was related to a Federal agency. The
2 Federal agency does something that's inconsistent with
3 the statute, arguably, and you say there's a Supremacy
4 Clause violation? That's novel.

5 MR. PHILLIPS: No, not -- not that -- not
6 what the agency has done violates the Supremacy Clause;
7 it's the State acting pursuant to what the agency has
8 approved, that if you still thought it violated Federal
9 law, would be a basis for seeking a Supremacy Clause
10 action. But, no, Justice Scalia is right. The obvious
11 -- the obvious solution to the immediate problem is to
12 seek review of the decision by HHS and to -- and to
13 follow it under those circumstances.

14 The -- the second point that I wanted to
15 focus a little bit about, because it does seem to me --
16 again, it goes to what are -- what should be the
17 background principles that operate here. And a couple
18 of Justices specifically raised the question of, you
19 know, would this case be different if we were seeking to
20 balance-bill -- that is, to bill the extent to which we
21 were allowed to bill prior to the time that the State of
22 California reduced by 10 percent, if we brought that
23 lawsuit, would that be perfectly permissible?

24 And I understand California, I think, has
25 suggested that it would be, and I heard Mr. Kneedler

1 suggest that, well, there might be some additional
2 issues there. But the reality is, is it seems to me
3 that shows you just how unrealistic the -- the
4 distinction is in this particular case, because we're
5 talking about individuals -- you know, the question is
6 not, you know, how are you going to implement this down
7 the road? The question is, what do you do with someone
8 who is suffering a lack of access to vital medical care
9 in a way that is irreparable? And is it realistic to
10 think that Congress meant under those circumstances to
11 deprive the individual plaintiff of any kind of rights?

12 And the answer is no. And that's -- that's
13 as far as the Court needs to go. It doesn't need to
14 figure out exactly how far Congress could deal with the
15 Supremacy Clause. I realize that there is some
16 skepticism on that score. But on the core question
17 here, did Congress intend to deprive these plaintiffs of
18 their rights under *Ex parte Young*, the answer is no --

19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The answer is yes,
20 they intended to deprive them of the right to sue under
21 the statute. I understand that you're not challenging
22 the proposition that this statute, when Congress was
23 specifically focused on the question of how to enforce
24 this provision, they did not provide a right of action.
25 And under our implied right of action jurisprudence,

1 that means there isn't one.

2 So, why when they're confronted with the
3 precise question did they say no, we don't want these
4 people to sue, but you say, well, they knew under the
5 Constitution they were going to be able to anyway?

6 MR. PHILLIPS: Because -- because there is a
7 difference between providing a private right of action
8 and all the bells and whistles that go with that, as
9 opposed to recognizing that Ex parte Young is the
10 background principle that has been in place for well
11 over a century and that says that when the -- when the
12 standards for equitable relief are satisfied, the courts
13 have the power, and they can prevent the violation of
14 the Supremacy Clause.

15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: You said you would be
16 satisfied with a limitation that the Court can issue an
17 injunction pending the administrative procedure without
18 going on to then the substance of the question, was
19 there compliance with 30(A) by California?

20 MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, Justice Ginsburg, I
21 would have been perfectly comfortable with that. I
22 mean, that was one of the alternative grounds for relief
23 that we sought. The district judge didn't happen to go
24 down that particular path.

25 But, clearly, from our perspective, the

1 important element is to maintain the status quo ante
2 until a resolution of the legality of California's
3 statute can be made, either by the agency or by the
4 courts. But the -- but the one thing you shouldn't be
5 allowed to do is simply to -- to permit this to drift
6 without any remedy and without any ability to get access
7 to medical care that's clearly inconsistent with what
8 Congress intended and where a remedy is available under
9 the Ex parte Young formulation.

10 If there are no further questions, Your
11 Honors, thank you.

12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr.
13 Phillips.

14 Ms. Schwartz, you have 4 minutes remaining.

15 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF KARIN S. SCHWARTZ

16 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER

17 MS. SCHWARTZ: Thank you, Your Honor.

18 So, there are other provisions of the
19 Medicaid Act that are privately enforceable. This one
20 is not. I'd like to address the Court's questions about
21 Ex parte Young. Ex parte Young, of course, involved a
22 -- the Due Process Clause, not the Supremacy Clause, as
23 the substantive provision of the Constitution that was
24 being enforced, and the plaintiff had an independent,
25 free-standing property or personal right in Ex parte

1 Young, in all of the cases that are its progeny.

2 Now, there's another -- I want to address
3 Justice Alito's point about, do we apply the rights
4 language -- the rights requirement in Ex parte Young
5 causes of action? Yes, you do. Alexander v. Sandoval,
6 California v. Sierra Club, Blessing v. Freestone.

7 Look at Alexander v. Sandoval. The State
8 passes a constitutional amendment that says English
9 only. The -- the State adopts a policy, English-only
10 drivers tests. This is challenged as conflicting with
11 Federal law and specifically a Federal regulation. The
12 Court said no -- no, Cort v. Ash was satisfied.
13 Congress drafts statutes; it controls who gets to
14 enforce them.

15 JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm sorry --

16 MS. SCHWARTZ: No cause of action.

17 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- Ms. Schwartz. Are you
18 saying -- this is the way I understood you, and tell me
19 if I'm right: Are you saying that the test for
20 determining whether there's a 1983 suit is the same as
21 the test for determining whether there is an Ex parte
22 Young action? Because you talked about, you know,
23 whether somebody has a right, which is usually the
24 language we use in the 1983 context.

25 MS. SCHWARTZ: No, I'm not. The test for

1 whether there is an Ex parte -- and there's different
2 meanings of Ex parte Young, but none of them apply here.
3 You can see Ex parte Young as construing a cause of
4 action under the Due Process Clause. This not a cause
5 of action under the Due Process Clause.

6 You could see Ex parte Young as involving a
7 specific kind of bill in equity which is a defense of
8 regulation of your conduct where that regulation
9 infringes a personal or property right. That is not
10 this case. There's no regulation of Respondents'
11 conduct, and there's no infringement of a personal or
12 property right in this case. The only entity that's
13 being regulated by the State -- by the State statute
14 that purportedly is being -- well, that is being
15 challenged as pre-empted is the State of California
16 itself because we are the entity that sets rates, and so
17 the -- the statute tells the agency this is how you will
18 set rates.

19 So, however you look at ex parte Young,
20 plaintiffs cannot satisfy the elements of an Ex parte
21 Young cause of action.

22 What I'm saying with respect to
23 Alexander v. Sandoval and these other cases is injury is
24 not enough. You have to have a -- a right. Under
25 equity, injury has never been enough, and it's not

1 enough under this Court's separation of powers decisions
2 and its Spending Clause cases.

3 And I wanted to just segue very quickly to
4 this idea that there's a default rule that a Supremacy
5 Clause cause of action exists by default. That is
6 absolutely not true, and it is not true in this context,
7 and I'd like to identify two reasons.

8 First, the Suter fix. The -- Congress
9 acted, when this Court in Suter said that there was no
10 cause of action. And it said just because something is
11 in a -- in a State plan doesn't render it unenforceable.
12 But we want to preserve the holding in Suter.

13 Well, it -- that suggests that other things
14 are unenforceable, that Congress is not legislating
15 against a backdrop of an assumption that there's an
16 injunctive relief claim, or it wouldn't have required
17 the Suter fix. In *Maine v. Thiboutot*, another case that
18 assumes -- that recognizes that with respect to Spending
19 Clause actions, the sole means -- the Spending Clause
20 statutes, the means, the vehicle for enforcing is 1983.

21
22 And, finally, in the Spending Clause
23 context, we have the clear statement rule, which is
24 incompatible with just an assumption that a cause of
25 action always exists. Because the State has to have

1 knowing and acceptance -- knowing and then accepting --
2 accept its obligations, we require that there be a clear
3 statement.

4 Thank you, Your Honor.

5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
6 Counsel. The case is submitted.

7 (Whereupon, at 11:04 a.m., the case in the
8 above-entitled matter was submitted.)

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22
23
24
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A				
ability 13:6 60:6	63:5,10,25	agreeing 11:2	APA 55:2,5,5	13:24 46:23,23
able 17:17 18:1 27:6	actions 26:9 33:14	agreement 28:24	apparent 48:8	47:1
59:5	63:19	ahead 36:9 52:19	APPEARANCES	assert 17:23 48:17
above-entitled 2:6	acts 13:12 42:14	AL 1:8,17 2:1	2:9	48:25
64:8	additional 7:7 58:1	Alexander 9:11 61:5	application 8:11,11	asserting 16:12
absence 13:17,18	address 39:6 60:20	61:7 62:23	applied 11:2	25:20 36:8 39:15
absolutely 34:25	61:2	Alito 9:16,19 13:23	applies 10:12	ASSOCIATION
63:6	adequate 46:8 47:14	15:19 16:4,9 29:25	apply 9:6 61:3 62:2	1:16
abuse 13:16	50:12	44:11 52:23 53:3,4	applying 11:6	assume 35:21 52:21
accept 64:2	adjudication 13:12	53:8	approach 38:4 43:1	assumed 35:22
acceptance 4:22	administrative 4:18	Alito's 61:3	appropriate 11:8	assumes 47:15
64:1	5:4,5 6:18 7:9 8:1	allegedly 33:12	15:18 45:9,10	63:18
accepting 64:1	11:7,21 12:4,14	allow 8:12 9:9 22:16	appropriately 54:5	assuming 19:21
access 32:17 49:25	13:3 17:25 18:17	29:6 35:14 36:13	approval 12:14,18	41:17
58:8 60:6	26:20 41:16,20	40:20	13:6	assumption 20:15
acknowledged 9:7	54:23 59:17	allowed 6:22 42:23	approve 12:15 13:8	27:12,15 63:15,24
act 5:15 10:3,8 19:5	administratively 8:5	57:21 60:5	51:8,18 52:5,13	Astra 9:8
54:23 60:19	administrators	allows 21:18 22:7	approved 11:15,16	attention 37:10
acted 23:8 63:9	56:12	all-encompassing	51:12 57:8	Attorney 2:10
acting 41:20 44:5	admit 23:6	23:17	approves 51:9 52:23	attorneys 32:17
57:7	adopt 9:16 48:11	alternative 42:13,16	54:13	50:17
action 4:13 7:19	adopted 32:13	59:22	area 44:2 45:19	authoritative 53:18
8:12 9:23,25,25	adopts 61:9	ambiguous 7:24	arguably 57:3	authority 24:8 31:7
10:9,17 13:20,21	adversely 7:12	amend 22:5 56:11	argue 12:19	31:15 33:3 34:20
13:24 15:8,15,20	affect 11:25	amendment 7:1,2,5	arguing 10:8 13:17	40:13 44:4,5,8
16:13,15 18:13	affirmative 23:2	7:6 12:15 28:15,16	17:6 24:14	45:17 47:20
19:5,23 20:7,8,16	affirmatively 10:9	47:8 61:8	argument 2:7 3:2,5	available 15:8 23:5
20:24 21:2 23:23	afford 50:23	amendments 6:12	3:9,12 4:3,8 9:4	26:6 31:5 32:15,20
24:1,3,11,20 25:1	afield 55:7	11:14,23 12:3,3	13:14 15:21 16:5	39:18 49:17 60:8
25:3,6 26:24 27:1	agencies 48:6,7,9	28:8	18:23 19:13 28:22	avoided 37:24
27:11,13,14 28:12	agency 8:20 13:12	amicus 2:15 3:7	29:16,22 42:13,16	awards 26:9
28:17 30:1,21,23	40:10,13,16,16	18:25	44:12 54:19 60:15	a.m 2:8 4:2 64:7
31:3,3,6,15 32:14	41:16 48:24 50:20	analogous 27:7	arguments 10:10,15	
32:25 33:4,21	50:22 51:1,14,22	answer 12:1 24:13	20:4	B
35:13,17 36:3	51:24 52:5,7,11,13	33:4 43:6,18 45:6	arises 4:20 17:16	back 12:18 13:22
39:16,18 40:14	52:23 53:16 54:2	52:17 58:12,18,19	36:15	20:19 32:8 36:19
41:5,7 43:2,4,14	54:13,22,22 55:9	answers 8:14	arising 26:14	41:10 54:9
44:15 47:16 52:9	55:12,14,23 56:14	ante 60:1	arising-under 30:8	backdrop 63:15
53:11,21,23 54:12	57:1,2,6,7 60:3	anticipating 20:7	Article 44:18 45:2	background 35:20
55:1,3,5,16,18	62:17	21:1,2	50:9	57:17 59:10
56:3,13 57:10	agency's 26:17	anticipatory 17:2	Ash 61:12	balance 45:13
58:24,25 59:7 61:5	agree 19:21 22:9	anybody 34:18	aside 15:11	balance-bill 57:20
61:16,22 62:4,5,21	26:11 29:4 37:5	anymore 50:23	asked 13:23	balancing 26:20
	41:11	anyway 59:5	asking 9:16 10:4,12	base 47:20

<p>based 9:12,13 35:23 basic 25:17 basically 36:20 basis 6:13 30:8,17 46:21 47:12 57:9 bear 5:6 behalf 2:11,16 3:4,7 3:11,14 4:9 18:24 29:17 60:16 behavior 23:9 behest 48:25 believe 7:14 9:7 12:16 17:16 28:11 29:10 bells 59:8 beneficiaries 25:21 49:6,22 beneficiary-type 27:6 benefit 5:23 best 23:25 45:16 bilateral 19:11 25:21 bill 15:24 57:20,21 62:7 billion 8:7 bit 12:12 50:19 57:15 Blessing 32:9,9 61:6 block 36:8 blurred 45:22 books 48:2,4,6 bottom 53:5 bound 56:10,12 branch 44:4 Breyer 36:2,4,22 37:12,15,19 38:3,8 38:16 39:5,8,11 40:4,7,12,24 45:15 47:24 49:2,8,12,15 49:19,23 50:1,4,8 54:6 Breyer's 41:11 42:7 brief 8:5 23:6 26:3</p>	<p>briefed 10:16 bring 11:10 33:3,16 33:21 35:17 38:22 53:1 55:18 bringing 20:7 33:14 brings 8:3 broad 5:2 31:16 43:8 broader 9:20 31:8 31:11,11 42:15 broadly 23:16 brought 5:6 8:12 9:2 15:4 21:19 23:5 39:16 57:22 budgetary 37:25 burdens 50:13 Burma 48:18 business 48:24</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <hr/> <p>C 3:1 4:1 California 1:3,8,12 1:16,21 2:11 4:6 5:12 9:1,5 11:13 50:20 51:1 52:19 52:21 57:22,24 59:19 61:6 62:15 California's 5:12 28:4 60:2 call 24:3 called 16:20 Candidly 41:24 care 1:4,13,22 58:8 60:7 Carlson 20:10 carried 32:14 CARTER 2:16 3:10 29:16 case 4:4,20,25 6:14 9:17,25 11:10,12 12:5 15:5 16:12 17:14,14,16,19,19 17:21,21 19:13 20:13 21:16 24:14 30:2,6,11,18 32:9</p>	<p>33:25 36:5 37:21 43:25 47:4 48:18 49:7 57:19 58:4 62:10,12 63:17 64:6,7 cases 4:6 9:12 10:1 11:16 13:14 16:17 16:18 20:3,6,20 21:8,13 23:7,12,15 25:9,10,16 27:11 31:12 32:8 37:13 39:9 43:10 44:13 45:3,17 46:5 47:19 54:7 61:1 62:23 63:2 categorical 25:15 category 17:2 21:13 23:7 cause 4:13 7:19 9:23 9:25 10:16,17 13:19,21,24 15:3,8 16:12,15 18:12 19:5,22 20:16,24 24:1,3,10 25:1,3,6 26:24 27:1,11,13 27:14 28:17 30:1 33:21 34:22 35:17 41:5,6 43:2,4,14 47:16 53:11,21,23 54:12 55:1,2,5,16 61:16 62:3,4,21 63:5,10,24 causes 9:24 61:5 ceiling 17:1 Center 1:7 4:5 centralized 38:19 centuries 45:21 century 45:4 46:13 59:11 cert 26:3 certain 28:12 32:22 36:4 44:13 certainly 8:24 22:24 24:25 31:12 35:16</p>	<p>44:4 45:1 cetera 38:18 39:1 challenge 17:17 21:19,22 22:17 challenged 61:10 62:15 challenging 23:15 25:1 58:21 change 23:9 40:18 50:22 changes 12:13 charge 16:25,25 21:6,17,21 22:6 40:10 charged 18:6 21:23 charges 17:9 charging 21:9,9 22:15,15 Chevron 27:21 Chief 4:3,10 18:21 19:1,12 23:20,22 24:6,12,17,23 29:13,18 30:19 31:1,10,23,25 32:3 32:18,21 33:7,11 33:20,23 52:2,4,8 52:11,16 53:20,24 54:2 55:21,23 56:2 58:19 60:12 64:5 children 32:12 chose 29:5 circular 47:15 circumstance 30:17 32:16 39:17 42:24 45:1 50:15 53:6 circumstances 9:14 26:10 27:15 28:13 29:3 33:24 35:25 40:16 43:25 44:10 45:11 53:19 56:17 56:20 57:13 58:10 cite 46:4 claim 15:10 32:16 34:11 35:3 36:17</p>	<p>38:22 39:20 50:6 63:16 claiming 15:5,6 21:20 claims 31:13 35:19 Clara 9:8 Clause 4:19,21 7:24 9:14 10:2,3,4,5,23 11:1 13:25 14:5,7 14:12,24 16:6 17:11,15,18,24 18:15 19:13,20 20:17,17 23:18,21 23:24 24:4,9,24 25:4,9,10,13,16 25:17 26:7 29:7 30:7,25 32:2 33:6 33:17 34:11,13 35:13,18 38:23 39:18 41:6 43:3,7 43:14,19 44:3 53:21 54:13 55:2 55:16,19 56:8,9,13 56:16,22,23 57:4,6 57:9 58:15 59:14 60:22,22 62:4,5 63:2,5,19,19,22 clear 4:24 11:12 34:6 38:15 39:23 53:14 63:23 64:2 clearly 10:23 35:22 43:8,15 44:16 45:10 59:25 60:7 clients 52:13 54:14 closer 17:14,21 Club 61:6 colleagues 21:4 combination 43:7 come 25:12 47:19 51:2 comfortable 41:24 43:5 59:21 coming 34:18 41:10 commands 21:10</p>
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<p>comment 29:24 comments 27:25 commission 49:4 compel 16:15 competing 5:3 complain 52:14 complainant 30:16 complaining 42:1 complaint 22:6 32:10 complete 30:20 compliance 28:5 59:19 complied 52:21 comply 16:15 complying 54:23 concede 36:6 concern 13:7 concerned 5:12 22:5 concerns 16:14 concludes 41:20 conclusion 5:8 conditional 13:2 conditions 35:24 conduct 62:8,11 confer 19:7 29:11 confers 33:12 confirm 7:3 conflict 33:9 34:1,2 39:25 53:15 54:19 conflicting 61:10 conflicts 34:21 confronted 59:2 confused 12:12 Congress 4:15,23 9:23,24 10:21,23 15:1 18:1,1,13 19:4 32:22,22 33:7 33:11,16 34:6,17 34:19 35:3,5,7,10 35:13 37:5 40:15 43:14,16,18 44:8 52:9 55:24,25 56:1 56:2 58:10,14,17</p>	<p>58:22 60:8 61:13 63:8,14 congressional 15:15 15:18 Congress's 44:1 consensual 6:13 12:5 consider 42:16 consideration 8:4 considering 6:21 consistent 7:9,19 8:11 12:6 consistently 31:19 consolidated 4:6 constitute 30:20 Constitution 14:8 14:12 31:16,20 32:4 59:5 60:23 constitutional 14:1 15:13 24:20 61:8 construing 62:3 context 4:19 6:9 11:12,14 17:15,15 18:15 22:13 23:24 24:24 37:21 42:19 45:8 47:21 61:24 63:6,23 continue 43:13 continued 6:20,21 28:14,15 52:20 contract 9:9 25:23 27:5,8 28:20 contracted 35:20 contractual 25:18 contrary 8:6 30:4 48:13 control 15:1 56:4,7 controls 4:15 33:18 56:6 61:13 convincing 53:15 cooperative 12:6 19:3 23:19 32:23 core 58:16 correct 5:19 12:15</p>	<p>13:20 52:22 Cort 61:12 counsel 18:21 29:5 64:5,6 counties 37:2 country 9:7 couple 16:8,10 57:17 course 15:16 18:9 35:11 55:13 60:21 court 1:1 2:7 4:11,12 8:16 9:7 14:4,15 14:15 15:12,16,17 18:2,12,14 19:2 20:3,17 23:12,16 24:8 26:11,16 29:12,12,19 30:6 30:13 32:13 33:14 34:18 39:9,16 40:2 42:15,19 44:22,24 44:24 45:7 46:6 48:14 58:13 59:16 61:12 63:9 courts 7:12 8:13 12:19,22 13:9,14 24:2,7 29:6,7 31:6 31:6,7 59:12 60:4 court's 27:9 30:12 31:14 41:14 42:10 42:23 43:3 60:20 63:1 covering 28:9 create 18:12 24:10 44:6 created 9:23,24 19:5 creates 9:25 creation 25:6 cries 7:25 8:1 criminal 23:1 Crosby 39:12 cure 37:6 curiae 2:15 3:8 18:25</p>	<p>curlicue 38:12 customers 21:9 cut 35:3 cutoff 5:25 cutting 43:15</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <hr/> <p>D 4:1 damages 14:13,20 14:20 15:5,10,11 31:8 32:16 43:17 46:1,15,16,24 50:16 data 14:22 date 28:1 Davis 15:17 days 6:13 7:2 deal 37:17 58:14 dealing 44:22 December 27:22,24 decide 21:6 37:9 decided 39:10 deciding 22:19,20 40:10 decision 18:10 27:10 30:12 57:12 decisions 44:24 63:1 declined 9:9 default 35:10,12,16 54:10 63:4,5 defense 16:11 21:2 22:16,23 23:4,11 36:11 62:7 defenses 17:3 defensively 17:24 deference 12:23 15:17 27:21 51:14 defined 44:16 degree 16:14 demonstrate 46:8 50:11 53:14 deny 5:19 Department 1:4,13 1:22 2:14</p>	<p>depend 43:24 depends 4:21 52:19 deprive 58:11,17,20 Deputy 2:10,13 describe 19:10 described 24:5 46:21 describes 20:25 describing 22:23 designed 37:23 determination 11:6 determine 15:14 30:10 55:24 determined 54:22 55:9,12,14 determining 61:20 61:21 difference 15:7 26:22 31:2 45:18 46:1 59:7 different 8:3,18 15:21 16:2,11 17:13 21:7,25 35:4 37:3,4 38:9,20,20 38:21 39:8 42:7 52:17 57:19 62:1 differently 13:25 difficult 36:5 difficulty 41:2 directly 15:4 20:16 56:7 DIRECTOR 1:3,12 1:21 disapproval 52:20 disapproved 6:23 7:7 28:14,16 discretion 5:5 13:17 24:9 discrimination 26:13 discuss 51:2 discussed 16:1 51:4 disrupted 13:3 dissatisfied 52:24</p>
--	---	---	---	--

<p>dissimilar 20:11 distinction 45:20,22 46:9 47:13 58:4 district 8:16,23,23 31:6 42:15 59:23 districts 9:2 doctor 36:19 50:6 doctors 36:24 49:19 doctrine 41:8,9 doing 14:3,4 31:21 32:4 48:24 Douglas 1:3,12,21 4:5 drafted 26:23 drafts 61:13 drastic 5:22 6:3 26:4 drawing 13:4 24:1 drift 60:5 drivers 61:10 driving 47:11 due 10:25 60:22 62:4,5 dynamic 47:8 D.C 2:3,14,16</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <hr/> <p>E 3:1 4:1,1 earlier 24:13 43:13 43:18 55:25 early 46:12 EDWIN 2:13 3:6 18:23 effect 5:13 6:19,20 6:22 7:2 11:24 17:9 35:18 40:21 42:14 effective 26:8 efficient 8:10,15 either 43:17 51:22 60:3 element 60:1 elements 7:25 62:20 Eleventh 47:8 enactment 30:16</p>	<p>encompass 44:17 end-ran 6:17 end-run 6:17 enforce 4:13,15 17:5 18:2 19:6 28:17 32:25 33:14 36:7 43:17 56:6,8 58:23 61:14 enforceable 5:9 10:20,21 19:8 25:16 26:15 60:19 enforced 7:23 15:14 60:24 enforcement 4:17 4:18 5:4 10:24 11:9 15:20,24 30:15 39:15 43:15 44:15,23 enforcer 34:7 enforces 15:1 enforcing 14:4 27:11 28:23 31:7 63:20 engage 41:4 42:25 Engine 39:13 English 61:8 English-only 61:9 enlighten 27:18 entertain 7:18 entire 32:11 entirely 7:9 entity 16:16 47:5 62:12,16 entrusted 18:1 equitable 18:12 20:24 24:1,2,8,8 30:10 31:15 41:7 43:8 44:12 45:8 50:10 59:12 equity 15:24 16:17 16:18 20:7 25:2,3 41:15 43:23 45:3,4 45:19,20 46:1,10 62:7,25</p>	<p>ESQ 2:10,13,16 3:3 3:6,10,13 essentially 14:11 32:10 34:20 et 1:8,17 2:1 38:18 39:1 evaluate 39:22 evaluated 31:19 evaluates 53:16 evidence 53:15 ex 10:1 15:25 20:25 30:2,12 31:4,18,21 35:17 36:1 42:23 43:10 44:9,12,22 45:17 46:3,15 47:11,19 48:1 58:18 59:9 60:9,21 60:21,25 61:4,21 62:1,2,3,6,19,20 exactly 9:7 23:12 30:17 51:17 58:14 example 22:1,13 25:15 28:13 exception 6:14,17 25:13 50:2,5,8 exceptions 56:23 exclude 25:9,9 exclusive 44:5 excuse 11:19 14:11 18:3 executive 44:4 exercise 18:12 24:7 exercised 44:12 exercising 45:2 existed 45:4 existence 25:1 exists 47:21 63:5,25 expect 35:7 expenditures 8:7 expertise 5:4 expires 25:7 explain 20:19 22:3 24:1 47:4 explained 15:17</p>	<p>21:25 explicitly 35:8 expressly 35:14 extends 45:3 extensions 28:7 extent 6:22 8:24 44:1 48:23 56:6 57:20</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">F</p> <hr/> <p>face 52:20 facing 15:20 fact 6:17 8:4 10:15 17:20 27:18 34:3 34:13 35:16,22 39:18 42:22 failure 35:23 fair 10:25 fall 21:13 falling 8:22 9:4 far 5:11 15:15 22:5 55:7 58:13,14 far-reaching 48:23 favor 45:13,13 fear 48:23 Federal 4:16 7:3,23 8:12 10:20 12:9 14:4 19:4,11 25:18 26:5,14 29:12 31:6 32:5,23 33:1,10,13 33:18,20 34:1,8,21 35:23 36:7,11,12 36:17 37:2 38:1,24 38:25 39:24 41:18 41:18 44:17,20 48:3,6,19 49:5,6 53:15,17 54:19,21 55:8,11,13,24 56:7 56:13,16,24 57:1,2 57:8 61:11,11 Federal-State 32:23 Federal/State 23:19 fees 32:17 50:17 fell 15:23,23</p>	<p>fiction 46:17 fighting 40:23,24 figure 30:22 38:10 58:14 filled 48:3 final 27:22 finally 63:22 find 36:5 43:2,3 49:5 finding 11:7 12:23 finish 12:25 first 4:4,14 14:3,20 15:9 16:11 21:19 27:10 29:21,23 31:11 49:3 63:8 fit 17:2 23:7 fix 63:8,17 flexible 11:8 flows 29:25 focus 4:14 5:7 7:22 10:17 29:20,23 57:15 focused 58:23 focusing 23:18 24:16 follow 28:15 57:13 following 41:3 force 10:22 11:3 47:11 foreign 48:18 former 8:5 formula 26:23,24 formulation 60:9 forth 32:22 forward 42:23 54:8 foundation 19:20 four 9:1 Francisco 2:11 frankly 31:21 Freestone 61:6 free-standing 60:25 full 44:1 function 32:11 fund 5:25 fundamental 31:2</p>
--	---	--	---	--

<p>Fundamentally 18:2 funding 26:5 funds 6:2 7:8 further 18:18 22:12 22:22 60:10</p>	<p>government 5:11,13 5:14,19,23 7:4 12:10 19:4,11 22:5 24:18,18,19 25:18 33:1 36:6</p>	<p>64:4 Honors 60:11 hope 49:18 55:20 HOSPITAL 1:25 hospitals 16:25 hundred 30:2 hundreds 54:7 hurt 5:22 hypothetical 18:5 55:7</p>	<p>include 31:13 included 31:13 includes 5:2 incompatible 63:24 inconsistent 57:2 60:7 incorporates 11:4 independent 1:7 4:5 14:21 15:10 60:24 individual 23:1 26:13 32:25 34:3 36:6 46:18 48:12 58:11 individuals 33:13,16 58:5 ineffective 34:10 information 40:20 informed 27:23 28:1 infringement 62:11 infringes 62:9 infringing 17:22 injunction 5:18 6:23 12:12,23 14:14 29:6 30:13 37:23 38:13 41:15,19 42:13,16 44:19 45:10 59:17 injunctions 12:17 13:1,3 injunctive 5:11,24 15:6 20:4 26:9 28:12 31:8,14 32:12 36:3 42:1,20 42:22 43:17 46:7 47:2 63:16 injury 16:19 30:16 34:3,22 50:9,12 62:23,25 instance 21:20 38:22 instances 26:13 48:9 institution 47:5 intend 22:6 58:17</p>	<p>intended 13:4 26:1 27:5 58:20 60:8 intends 10:21 intent 15:18 interaction 27:25 interacts 50:19 interests 5:3 interpretations 8:18 interpreting 8:16 introduce 8:4 invalid 16:2 invasion 16:19 invoke 33:5 involved 8:25 32:9 60:21 involving 8:24 62:6 irreparable 34:4,22 45:12 50:12 58:9 issuance 37:22 issue 15:11,25 29:6 42:24 59:16 issues 6:12 58:2 issuing 41:15</p>
<hr/>				
G				
<p>G 2:16 3:10 4:1 29:16 gap 44:1 gee 22:18 general 2:11,13 19:9,10 20:15 26:19,20,25 43:1 generalized 50:5 generally 6:13 26:8 General's 41:5 Ginsburg 5:10,21 6:5,8 16:23 17:8 27:17 28:3,10 34:5 34:9,15,17 35:9,12 59:15,20 Ginsburg's 18:4 give 12:22 19:19 48:7 gives 38:25 41:15 go 5:17 12:18,25 13:22 17:9 20:19 21:3,7 32:7 36:9 36:24 40:20 42:23 43:9 48:1 49:4 50:22 51:7 52:19 58:13 59:8,23 goes 27:4 39:20 54:9 57:16 going 5:22 12:15 20:25 21:17,20 25:11,12 26:16 36:10 37:6 40:2,17 50:11 53:5,9 54:7 58:6 59:5,18 Gonzaga 7:18 9:10 11:6 47:4,5 good 9:17</p>	<p>government's 37:8 grant 31:8 granted 20:4 42:15 great 20:5 51:13 greater 11:3 grounds 29:7 59:22 guarantee 51:11 guarantees 36:11</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><hr/>I<hr/></p> <p>idea 63:4 identified 47:23 identify 63:7 ignore 34:22 ignored 13:14 III 44:18 45:2 50:9 imagine 22:25 immediate 57:11 immediately 5:18 31:20 37:18 imminent 15:20 44:14 immunity 16:1 46:17 impact 12:19 impermissible 17:10 29:8 implement 7:4 58:6 implementation 40:17 implemented 40:18 implementing 12:13 implicate 16:13 implied 23:23 24:3 24:20 25:3 27:14 30:21,23 31:2 41:7 43:4 52:9 56:3 58:25 important 7:22 37:21 48:20 60:1 impose 51:7 imposed 14:22,23 imposes 34:3,4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><hr/>J<hr/></p> <p>jobs 48:7 joint 12:7 judge 37:9 59:23 judged 40:9 judges 8:16,22 37:2 38:9,20 40:11 48:9 56:10,11 judge-made 27:14 judgment 5:5 judicial 25:5 45:2 jurisdiction 13:11 24:2 30:8,9 37:8 38:11 40:5 41:13 jurisprudence 30:21 58:25 Justice 2:14 4:3,10 5:10,21 6:5,8,16 7:11,16 8:2,19,21 9:16,19 11:19,23</p>	

<p>12:8,11,21 13:9,16 13:22,23 14:7,10 15:3,19,25 16:4,9 16:23 17:8 18:3,4 18:21 19:1,12,16 19:19,25 20:2,9,13 20:19,22 21:3,5,12 21:24 22:4,9,18 23:3,20,22 24:6,12 24:17,23 25:8,24 26:2,21 27:17 28:3 28:10,18,21 29:1,4 29:13,18,25 30:19 31:1,10,23,25 32:3 32:18,21 33:7,11 33:20,23 34:5,9,15 34:17,23,25 35:2,9 35:12 36:2,4,22 37:12,15,19 38:3,8 38:16 39:5,8,11 40:4,7,12,22,23 40:24 41:1,9,10,21 41:22 42:3,6,6,10 42:25 43:12,22 44:11 45:15,16,24 46:3,11,14,24,25 47:3,7,10,10,22 47:24 49:2,8,12,15 49:19,23 50:1,4,7 50:14,18 51:6,12 51:16,18,22 52:2,4 52:8,11,12,16,22 52:23 53:3,4,8,20 53:24 54:2,6,11,17 54:21 55:1,8,10,11 55:15,21,23 56:2,9 56:19,25,25 57:10 58:19 59:15,20 60:12 61:3,15,17 64:5 Justices 57:18 justify 39:24</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">K</p> <hr/>	<p>Kagan 6:16 8:19 13:22 14:7,10 15:3 23:3 25:24 26:2,21 34:23 35:1,2 40:22 50:14,18 51:6,12 51:16,18,22 52:12 52:22 61:15,17 KARIN 2:10 3:3,13 4:8 60:15 Kennedy 7:11,16 8:2,21 13:9,16 16:1 28:18,21 29:1 29:4 45:16,24 46:3 46:25 47:3,7,10 56:9,19,25 kind 18:16 36:17 40:2 42:21 48:15 58:11 62:7 kinds 16:22 36:24 38:20,21 King 20:10 Kneedler 2:13 3:6 18:22,23 19:1,12 19:15,18,24 20:1,5 20:12,14,21,23 21:11,15 22:2,8,11 22:21 23:3,14,21 23:25 24:7,15,22 24:25 25:14,24,25 26:2,10 27:3,17,23 28:6,19,23 29:2,9 29:14 57:25 knew 59:4 know 9:3 12:1 22:13 25:11 28:1 31:12 33:25 36:25 38:13 42:18 46:25 47:20 48:5 51:6 53:8 56:23 57:19 58:5,6 61:22 knowing 4:22 64:1,1 know-how 5:5</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">L</p> <hr/>	<p>lack 58:8 language 5:1 10:7 16:7 61:4,24 latitude 15:15 Laughter 52:1 law 4:16 8:12 16:24 17:12,23 18:7 20:8 21:2,21 22:7 25:12 25:23 32:5,5,11,21 32:24 33:10,18,20 34:2,7,21 35:23 36:8,11,12,13 38:1 39:24 41:18,18 43:16 44:6,7,20,20 45:19,20 46:9,10 47:15 48:13 49:1,5 49:6 50:13 52:20 53:16,17 54:20,21 55:8,11,13,24 56:16,18,24,24 57:9 61:11 lawsuit 53:2 57:23 law/equity 47:13 leave 33:15 legality 60:2 legislating 63:14 legislation 4:21 10:5 10:5 19:14 23:18 24:10 legitimacy 4:20 let's 49:16 lie 22:10 life-and-death 49:10 49:15 likelihood 45:12 limit 9:14 42:8 47:24 47:25,25 limitation 59:16 limited 12:17 19:13 33:1 41:14 44:13 limits 55:14 line 10:1 37:12 43:10 47:19 48:11 53:5</p>	<p>litigation 4:24 53:6 53:9,10 54:6 little 12:12 48:22 50:19 57:15 Living 1:7 4:5 14:21 15:10 long 37:12 54:22 look 14:5,24 20:24 23:16 30:7,9 32:8 45:7 48:2 49:16 55:6 61:7 62:19 looks 36:10 lose 40:1 49:25 53:5 53:9,10 lost 54:11 lot 22:19 27:24 30:22 31:13 39:9 40:11 48:5 loud 34:6 low 52:25 53:12 lower 50:24</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">M</p> <hr/> <p>Maine 27:10 63:17 maintain 60:1 maintained 46:19 major 26:5 majority 20:6 making 33:18 43:2 Manufacturers 39:13 matter 2:6 11:9 22:20 23:4 31:7 41:15 51:2,5 64:8 matters 37:24 mean 5:17 8:21 24:23 26:22 27:1 41:1 43:8 44:17,21 45:24 46:9,23 47:18 52:6,6,18 55:6 59:22 meanings 62:2 means 16:20 45:3 59:1 63:19,20</p>	<p>meant 5:23 40:15 52:21 58:10 measure 26:4 Medicaid 5:15,23 6:9 10:8 18:11 19:3 53:11 60:19 medical 50:1,4 58:8 60:7 MEMORIAL 1:25 merging 46:10 merits 14:18 27:2,4 34:15 39:20,23 40:1 45:12 mess 49:1 million 8:9 36:25 millions 40:8 minutes 60:14 Monday 2:4 monetary 7:19 money 46:20 49:20 morning 4:4 mount 23:11 move 18:7 moving 46:18</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">N</p> <hr/> <p>N 3:1,1 4:1 narrow 32:6 nature 10:25 11:7,8 12:7 24:10 26:25 42:22 necessary 34:23 need 23:16 58:13 needs 58:13 negative 31:22 neither 36:15 neutral 9:21 never 9:24,25 10:5 12:24 30:1 44:25 45:1 62:25 new 6:19 non-rate 12:2 notice 10:25 40:17 notion 32:13 35:20</p>
--	--	--	--	---

<p>notwithstanding 56:17 novel 57:4 Number 56:19 numerous 23:7</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">O</p> <hr/> <p>O 3:1 4:1 objective 8:17 obligation 13:10 15:12 16:16 35:21 obligations 4:22 11:1 14:6,21,23,25 15:1 35:21 64:2 obtain 44:19 obtained 12:4,17 14:20 15:11 obvious 57:10,11 obviously 26:7 30:5 33:3 46:6 47:21 October 2:4 office 48:2 officer 30:14 offices 48:4 officials 8:6 oh 45:25 53:1,22 okay 36:20 41:9 old 16:19 21:6 once 27:20 ones 20:6 48:8 operate 6:12 57:17 opinion 45:25 opposed 59:9 option 39:19,19 oral 2:6 3:2,5,9 4:8 18:23 29:16,21 order 46:6,7 50:10 ought 42:19 45:22 outside 11:14 23:23 24:23 oversight 26:17 owed 16:16</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">P</p> <hr/>	<p>P 4:1 PAGE 3:2 paid 49:19,20 paragraph 19:7,9 26:18 29:10 part 14:7,12 29:21 46:12 parte 10:1 15:25 20:25 30:2,12 31:4 31:18,21 35:17 36:1 42:24 43:10 44:9,12,22,25 45:17 46:4,15 47:12,19 48:1 58:18 59:9 60:9,21 60:21,25 61:4,21 62:1,2,3,6,19,20 particular 19:6 23:19 30:11,23 43:11 44:9,20 45:11 58:4 59:24 parties 7:13 9:9,15 19:6 26:1 27:5 party 4:23 26:16 28:19 passes 32:22 61:8 Passman 15:17 path 59:24 patients 21:6 49:24 pay 7:7 36:19 37:9 penalty's 21:10 pending 7:5 11:13 28:7 38:5,13 59:17 Pennhurst 11:2 people 5:22 8:8 25:20 49:8,12,14 59:4 percent 30:2 57:22 perfectly 41:24 43:5 48:5,7 57:23 59:21 period 11:17 permissible 57:23 permit 60:5 permits 18:7 26:8</p>	<p>permitted 40:19 person 15:4,6 16:21 17:11 23:6,9,10,10 48:12 personal 60:25 62:9 62:11 perspective 59:25 Petitioner 1:5,14,23 2:12,15 3:4,8,14 4:9 18:25 19:22 29:5 60:16 Petitioners 14:10 Petitioner's 21:4 PHARMACISTS 1:16 Phillips 2:16 3:10 29:15,16,18 31:1 31:18,24 32:1,7,19 33:2,9,19,22 34:8 34:12,16,19,24,25 35:6,11,15 36:3,21 37:11,14,17,20 38:7,14 39:4,7,12 40:6,12,25 41:8,21 41:23 42:5,9,12 43:5,20,24 44:21 45:23 46:2,5,12,22 47:1,6,9,18 49:2 49:10,14,22,24 50:3,7,14,15,18 51:4,10,15,17,20 51:24 52:3,6,10,15 52:18 53:1,4,13,22 54:1,3,15,18,25 55:4,10,13,17,22 56:1,5,15,22 57:5 59:6,20 60:13 place 25:5 37:1 40:15 59:10 places 37:4 38:9 plaintiff 20:6 25:10 44:18 45:14 58:11 60:24 plaintiffs 14:11</p>	<p> 15:19,22,23 21:15 58:17 62:20 plan 6:11 7:1,5,6 11:13 12:3,18,20 13:6,8 28:14,14,16 63:11 planned 28:8 play 16:7 pleading 22:20 please 4:11 19:2,17 27:18 29:19 plenty 20:10 42:21 point 5:8 8:3 12:3 13:2 15:9 25:17 26:11 27:9 45:5 55:22 57:14 61:3 pointed 27:11 points 10:18,19 14:19 27:19 29:20 41:3 47:11 49:3 policy 5:3 7:25 48:18 61:9 politicizing 13:5 portion 26:5 position 7:3,20 13:20 19:25 24:18 25:20 30:20 31:23 31:25 32:3 34:24 43:13 possibilities 36:23 38:6 39:3 possibility 38:8,11 38:17 39:7 possible 28:2 post-Ex 44:25 potentially 15:14 17:22 power 5:11,19,24 13:17,18 41:14 42:10 43:19 44:1 44:12 45:2 59:13 powers 4:15 9:13 16:6,14 18:12 63:1 practical 40:7,8</p>	<p>precise 28:1 59:3 precludes 10:9 prejudicing 13:5 preliminary 37:22 42:15,20 45:9 prepared 36:6 prerogative 13:10 14:17 presents 17:20 preserve 63:12 pretty 31:19 43:9 prevailing 55:20 prevent 40:1 44:23 59:13 preventive 41:19 prevents 46:16 pre-empt 10:5 44:6 pre-empted 17:6 32:5 36:9,13 44:7 44:20 62:15 pre-emption 27:2 28:21,22 29:3 35:19 39:20 pre-emptive 21:13 33:12 primary 13:11 16:20 16:22 37:7 38:11 40:4 41:13 principle 10:22 48:21 59:10 principles 5:7 9:13 9:14 25:23 57:17 prior 27:11 57:21 private 4:13,16,23 9:9,15 11:9 19:5,7 26:9 29:11 31:5 32:14,25 33:3 47:5 59:7 privately 60:19 probably 23:25 29:10 problem 9:8 33:23 36:15 37:5 40:8,8 43:11 47:21 49:9</p>
--	---	--	--	---

<p>49:13,15 55:4 57:11 problems 49:11 procedure 54:23 59:17 procedures 7:12 proceed 14:18 proceeding 23:11 proceedings 15:24 process 6:18 7:10 11:21 12:4,14,25 13:4,5,5 41:20 50:20 54:5,9 60:22 62:4,5 progeny 61:1 program 18:11 19:3 23:19 programs 26:4,7,14 27:12 prohibits 22:15 31:20 32:4 proper 8:11 property 16:21 17:22 60:25 62:9 62:12 proposition 45:19 58:22 prosecution 22:14 22:17,24 prosecutions 23:1 prospect 53:7 prospective 14:14 protecting 48:16 protections 44:2 proves 6:15 provide 4:23 6:25 7:12 10:24 16:18 19:22 58:24 provided 4:16,17 6:2,4,14 providers 16:24 21:5 providing 32:11 59:7</p>	<p>provision 7:24 9:10 14:1 17:25 58:24 60:23 provisions 10:23 15:13 19:6 24:21 38:21 60:18 purportedly 62:14 pursuant 57:7 put 6:18 11:11 puts 5:12 41:16</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Q</p> <hr/> <p>question 7:17 12:2 12:22 13:23 14:14 14:25 18:4,11,14 22:22 24:13 27:1,4 27:5 29:10,24,24 33:5 34:2,16 35:9 40:14 41:4,11,13 42:7 43:1 51:21 52:3 57:1,18 58:5 58:7,16,23 59:3,18 questioning 29:21 questions 18:18 22:12 28:11 60:10 60:20 quickly 63:3 quite 8:6 quo 38:5 41:17 60:1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">R</p> <hr/> <p>R 4:1 railroads 21:8 raise 22:16 raised 57:18 rarely 6:10 rate 6:19 7:4 11:14 12:13 21:6 26:23 36:18 rates 5:12 17:9,10 21:19,22 22:6,16 22:17,25 28:9 36:18 38:20 40:9 40:20 50:23,23,24</p>	<p>52:24,24,25 53:11 54:13,14 62:16,18 rate-related 12:2 rationale 13:11 43:6 reaching 37:3 read 50:21 real 11:11 40:14 48:23 realistic 53:7 58:9 reality 58:2 realize 37:24 58:15 really 9:4 18:13 26:19,21 27:7 39:19 48:9 53:10 53:10 reason 4:22 6:10 17:20 30:5 35:15 44:3 reasonable 40:15 reasons 4:12 9:22 14:2 16:3,11 38:1 63:7 rebuttal 3:12 18:20 60:15 receive 40:17 recognition 30:1 recognize 4:13 37:21 42:19 recognized 27:10 45:18 46:6 recognizes 63:18 recognizing 59:9 redressability 50:10 reduced 57:22 reductions 7:5 reflect 20:15 regard 38:1 regime 33:24 regulate 23:10 regulated 62:13 regulation 6:14 7:13 16:2 17:21 23:5 61:11 62:8,8,10 regulations 6:18,25</p>	<p>reimbursement 36:25 reimbursements 38:2 related 57:1 relationship 19:11 25:18,21 relief 13:7 15:6 20:4 26:9 30:17 31:9,14 32:8,12,15 34:13 42:1,20,22 43:8,17 45:8 46:7 47:2 49:17 50:10 59:12 59:22 63:16 rely 29:2 relying 16:5 remain 56:24 remaining 18:19 60:14 remedy 5:22,24 6:1 6:3,3 16:18 26:6 31:4,22 44:9 46:9 47:15 50:12 60:6,8 render 63:11 request 40:19 requested 13:13 32:13 require 64:2 required 12:22 63:16 requirement 14:22 14:23 61:4 requirements 50:9 reserve 18:19 resolution 12:6 60:2 resolved 6:12 resolves 12:5 resort 21:17 respect 10:22 11:3 15:13,16 18:15 56:8 62:22 63:18 respond 28:10 Respondents 2:17 3:11 18:6 25:19</p>	<p>29:17 62:10 response 21:4 30:3 40:19 44:11 rest 11:15 restrain 15:24 restrains 30:14 result 16:2 retroactive 13:7 return 21:23 reverse 9:23 reversed 9:12 review 8:1 26:20 57:12 ridiculously 52:25 right 5:15 12:25 15:13 16:20,21,21 22:20 24:15,20 26:15,16 30:21,23 31:2 32:14,25 33:3 33:5,19 35:3,6 36:7,21,22 38:4,7 38:24,25 39:2,4,15 42:5,9 44:17 45:6 45:15 47:6,9 48:14 48:15 50:25 51:16 51:17,20,23,24 52:9,10,15 56:3,5 57:10 58:20,24,25 59:7 60:25 61:19 61:23 62:9,12,24 rights 16:22 19:8 20:18 23:23 25:16 25:20 27:6 29:11 31:5 48:19 58:11 58:18 61:3,4 risk 7:6 road 58:7 ROBERTS 4:3 18:21 19:12 23:20 23:22 24:6,12,17 24:23 29:13 30:19 31:10,23,25 32:3 32:18,21 33:7,11 33:20 52:2,4,8,11</p>
---	--	---	---	--

<p>52:16 53:20,24 54:2 55:21,23 56:2 58:19 60:12 64:5 ROSA 1:25 routinely 39:17 roving 49:4 rule 6:15 9:17,20 10:12,19 25:15 27:20,22 35:10,12 35:16 51:25 54:10 63:4,23 rulemaking 27:20 run 6:24 7:8 9:10 30:20 48:8,14</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <p>S 2:10,13 3:1,3,6,13 4:1,8 18:23 60:15 San 2:11 sanction 17:12 sanctions 17:1 Sandoval 9:11,11 61:5,7 62:23 Santa 1:25 9:8 satisfied 30:11 59:12,16 61:12 satisfy 35:24 50:8 62:20 saying 22:21,25 31:19 33:15 34:5,7 34:10 38:4 39:24 41:14 42:2,3 48:12 48:13 52:8,13 53:25 54:3,4 61:18 61:19 62:22 says 8:6,6 32:24 33:21 34:6,17 43:16 48:21 52:25 56:2,9,16 59:11 61:8 Scalia 18:3 21:5 22:4,9,18 25:8 46:11,14,24 47:10 47:22 54:11,17,21</p>	<p>55:1,8,10,11,15 57:10 Scalia's 57:1 schedule 26:23 schedules 6:19 Schwartz 2:10 3:3 3:13 4:7,8,10 5:10 5:16 6:1,7,10,16 6:24 7:14,21 8:14 8:19 9:5,18 10:14 11:21 12:1,9,16 13:1,13,19 14:2,9 14:19 15:9,22 16:8 16:10 17:4,13 18:9 60:14,15,17 61:16 61:17,25 scope 42:1 score 58:16 second 4:19 14:21 37:6 38:10 41:4 57:14 section 5:8 31:3,9 Security 27:12 see 14:25 36:22 39:2 40:7,7 46:25 48:14,17,18 49:17 54:24 62:3,6 seek 14:20 57:12 seeking 10:20 49:4 57:9,19 segue 63:3 self-help 21:17 sense 5:17 23:9 56:14 separate 12:21 separation 4:15 9:13 16:6,13 63:1 SERVICES 1:4,13 1:22 set 62:18 sets 32:22 62:16 setting 15:11 Shaw 30:7 showing 40:3</p>	<p>shows 58:3 side 30:3 41:25 Sierra 61:6 silent 35:10 similar 44:13 simple 31:4 simply 13:11 21:21 31:19 34:22 38:2 44:18 46:19 60:5 sit 27:18 51:1 situation 16:9 33:2 35:7 37:25 42:20 44:6,18,23 45:7 49:4,16,18 situations 26:12 44:14 49:5 skepticism 58:16 sky 8:22 9:4 slash 38:2 slightly 8:3 42:7 slip 27:24 Social 27:12 sole 34:7 63:19 solely 37:25 Solicitor 2:13 41:4 43:1 solution 57:11 somebody 49:4 51:13 61:23 sorry 38:17 50:3 55:10 61:15 sort 41:17 43:6 Sotomayor 11:19,23 12:8,11,21 19:16 19:19,25 20:2,9,13 20:19,22 21:3,12 21:24 40:23 41:1,9 41:21,22 42:3,6,10 42:25 43:12,22 sought 14:13 32:10 59:23 sound 32:6 sounds 41:1 source 20:18 27:13</p>	<p>Southern 1:8 4:5 sovereign 46:17 speaks 35:3 special 10:22 specific 44:13,22 62:7 specifically 57:18 58:23 61:11 spending 4:19,20 7:24 9:13 10:3,3,4 10:23 11:1 16:6 17:15,24 18:15 19:13 23:18,21,24 24:9,24 25:9,10,13 25:16,17 26:7 35:18,24 63:2,18 63:19,22 spoke 18:3 spoken 35:5,8 square 16:4 33:25 41:10 squishy 39:22 stage 26:3 45:7 stake 48:19 standard 8:17 18:16 25:22 39:13 standards 9:6 11:4,8 17:25 18:17 26:19 30:10 32:23 33:13 45:10 53:17 59:12 standing 44:19 stand-alone 16:14 state 5:20 6:11 7:1,1 7:4,5,6,11,18 8:24 8:25 9:1,20 10:5 10:25 11:13 12:3 12:18,20 13:6,8 15:20 16:15,24 17:1,12 18:6,7 19:10 21:7,9,18,21 21:22 22:7,15,24 22:25 23:8 25:12 25:19 28:14,15 29:5,7,12 30:14</p>	<p>31:6 32:5,11 33:10 34:1,21 36:8,10,13 36:18 37:25 40:18 41:12,19 44:6,7,15 44:20 46:19,20 47:5 48:4,13,25 49:5 53:16 54:20 56:10,11,17,24 57:7,21 61:7,9 62:13,13,15 63:11 63:25 statement 39:24 63:23 64:3 statements 45:18 States 1:1 2:7,15 3:7 4:21 12:9 18:24 19:4 25:22,22 28:12,13,17,25 49:1 status 27:19 28:4 38:5 41:17 60:1 statute 6:2 7:23 8:16 10:20 14:4,24 15:4 17:5,6,7 22:14 30:24 31:17 33:4 33:12 34:8 48:2,4 50:21 56:3,7 57:3 58:21,22 60:3 62:13,17 statutes 15:16 48:3 48:6,8,14 61:13 63:20 stay 18:10 42:14 step 40:13 steps 30:14 stop 5:13 43:14 stopped 12:12 stops 41:19 48:24 straightforward 31:4 study 14:22 subject 9:5 15:14 17:1,11 35:18 submit 18:17</p>
--	---	---	---	---

<p>submitted 6:20 11:13,24 28:8 64:6 64:8 submitting 7:1 substance 59:18 substantive 60:23 success 45:12 sue 9:15 25:25 27:6 36:24 51:13 53:3 58:20 59:4 sues 52:24 suffering 58:8 sufficient 10:11,15 36:19,20 37:3 38:10,18 40:9,10 suggest 43:18 58:1 suggested 57:25 suggestion 41:5 suggests 30:4 63:13 suit 9:2 15:4 20:7 21:19 22:10 33:17 51:2,19 52:4 61:20 suitable 11:5 26:19 suited 5:3 18:16 supervised 8:8 Supervising 2:10 supplementing 26:17 supply 10:16 support 32:11 supporting 2:15 3:8 18:25 suppose 15:19 43:20 50:20 52:18 supposed 50:21 supremacy 10:2,16 13:25 14:5,7,12,24 17:11,17 19:20 20:4,16,17 24:4 25:4 29:6 30:7,24 32:2 33:6,17 34:11 34:13 35:13 38:23 39:18 41:6 43:3,7 43:13,19 44:2</p>	<p>53:21 54:13 55:2 55:16,18 56:8,9,13 56:16,22,23 57:3,6 57:9 58:15 59:14 60:22 63:4 supreme 1:1 2:7 44:24 56:17,24 sure 22:11 33:18 36:23 44:21 50:7 53:22 54:15 surely 27:1 54:22 susceptible 8:18 35:25 Suter 63:8,9,12,17 system 26:8</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">T</p> <hr/> <p>T 3:1,1 take 7:2 10:6,11 13:9 27:20 32:10 35:2 36:10 37:1 38:25 40:14,19 42:23 44:8 taken 11:25 talk 51:19 talked 61:22 talking 21:8,14 26:6 37:22,24 49:3 58:5 tee 47:20 tell 61:18 tells 62:17 tens 14:16,16,16 term 9:8 40:9 terminate 6:2 terms 7:25 9:20,21 15:8 16:1 19:9 28:15,24 test 7:13 61:19,21 61:25 tested 23:1,2 tests 61:10 thank 18:21 29:13 29:18 60:11,12,17 64:4,5</p>	<p>theoretical 19:20 20:22 theoretically 21:25 theory 17:10 21:16 23:17,17 33:17 46:14,16,16 Thiboutot 27:10 63:17 thing 35:4,4 37:13 38:24,25 60:4 things 32:19 36:16 63:13 think 7:19,21 8:15 9:3,4,11 20:5,14 20:21,23,23,25 22:2 23:16,20,22 23:25 24:4,9 25:2 25:4,5,14 26:22 27:3,4 28:16 29:9 34:1,19 37:20 39:19 40:4,14,15 40:25 42:7 43:6,25 44:7 50:24 54:14 55:6,17,18,19 57:24 58:10 thinks 5:14 36:9 third 5:1 38:16 39:7 39:19 third-party 25:20,25 27:6 Thirty-six 11:14 thought 31:14 53:24 57:8 thousands 54:7 threat 44:14 threatened 17:5 48:16 three 4:14 5:7 9:22 10:17 36:22 37:16 38:6 39:2 time 6:25 8:9 18:19 25:7 30:22 42:21 45:5 48:12,22 57:21</p>	<p>times 14:16,16 16:20 Title 26:12,13 TOBY 1:3,12,21 today 29:22 told 55:25 tough 34:16 Townsend 20:10 traditional 24:2 30:9 treasury 46:20 treat 13:24 treated 23:12 treatise 45:18 trespass 44:16 tried 45:21 true 29:12 30:2 36:16,16 63:6,6 try 38:9,11 trying 17:23 30:22 36:8 38:25 40:2 41:11 44:23 56:6,8 turns 39:21 two 8:14 14:19 15:7 27:18 29:20 41:3 49:2 63:7 type 11:4 types 21:12</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">U</p> <hr/> <p>ultimate 40:13 ultimately 39:20 50:11 53:13 55:19 unambiguously 4:24 10:24 unconstitutional 30:15 undefined 5:2 undeniable 34:1 understand 10:10 33:22 41:25 47:8 49:21 57:24 58:21 understood 61:18 undertaking 19:10 unenforceable</p>	<p>63:11,14 unexamined 23:14 unilaterally 51:7 United 1:1 2:7,14 3:7 18:24 25:22 28:11,13,16 unlawful 40:20 unrealistic 58:3 unwarranted 27:16 upshot 13:15 use 9:9 37:7 45:9 61:24 usual 12:5 usually 61:23</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">V</p> <hr/> <p>v 1:6,15,24 4:5 9:8 9:11 15:17 27:10 61:5,6,6,7,12 62:23 63:17 vague 7:24 38:18 39:13 valid 22:23 validity 22:17 vehicle 11:10 63:20 venture 12:7 Verizon 30:6 versus 9:11 view 25:2 35:3 37:8 38:3,4,5 views 37:3 violate 21:21 25:11 31:24 32:1 52:20 violated 14:13 57:8 violates 38:23 49:6 57:6 violation 5:15 35:23 41:17,18 53:18 57:4 59:13 vital 58:8 voice 43:15 voluntarily 11:16 voluntary 4:21 voting 48:19</p>
---	---	---	--	---

<p style="text-align: center;">W</p> <p>wait 51:8</p> <p>want 11:11 13:2 21:18 22:25 23:2 33:13,14 34:6,18 34:18 37:5 38:3,3 38:5,14 45:24,25 48:22 49:19 50:22 51:8 56:11 59:3 61:2 63:12</p> <p>wanted 28:10 39:5 57:14 63:3</p> <p>wanting 21:22</p> <p>wants 4:23 44:19 48:17</p> <p>Washington 2:3,14 2:16</p> <p>wasn't 12:24</p> <p>wasted 30:22</p> <p>way 6:11 20:25 21:1 23:12,25 37:6 38:19 40:5 48:16 50:21 51:22 53:18 58:9 61:18</p> <p>we'll 4:3 14:17</p> <p>we're 21:8,16 22:18 22:20 25:11 37:22 37:24 46:23 47:1 49:6 58:4</p> <p>we've 20:3,10 30:22 45:21 46:15 48:15</p> <p>whatsoever 38:1</p> <p>whistles 59:8</p> <p>win 37:7</p> <p>wins 51:23,25</p> <p>withdrawn 11:15</p> <p>withhold 13:12</p> <p>withholding 26:4</p> <p>wondering 47:7</p> <p>word 36:17,20</p> <p>words 49:1</p> <p>work 13:4 38:19 42:21 47:17</p> <p>workable 8:5</p>	<p>working 12:4</p> <p>works 8:8 9:4 11:22 54:5</p> <p>worried 54:6</p> <p>wouldn't 7:18 17:8 18:7,7 40:1 47:4 51:10,11 63:16</p> <p>write 43:16 45:25</p> <p>written 19:9 26:23</p> <p>wrong 41:13,22,23</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <hr/> <p>x 1:2,9,11,18,20 2:2</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Y</p> <hr/> <p>years 11:12 40:21</p> <p>Young 10:1 15:25 20:25 30:2,13 31:4 31:18,22 35:17 36:1 42:24 44:9,13 44:22,25 45:17 46:4,16 47:12,19 48:1 58:18 59:9 60:9,21,21 61:1,4 61:22 62:2,3,6,19 62:21</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Z</p> <hr/> <p>zero 55:20</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">\$</p> <hr/> <p>\$400 8:7</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <hr/> <p>09-1158 1:14</p> <p>09-958 1:5 4:4</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <hr/> <p>10 57:22</p> <p>10-283 1:23</p> <p>10:05 2:8 4:2</p> <p>100 48:5</p> <p>11:04 64:7</p> <p>15 48:4</p> <p>18 3:7</p>	<p>18th 45:4</p> <p>1824 20:3</p> <p>1968 35:19</p> <p>1983 11:7 19:8 25:17 26:15 27:11 27:12 31:3,5,9 32:8,14 61:20,24 63:20</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <hr/> <p>20 48:4</p> <p>2011 2:4</p> <p>29 3:11</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <hr/> <p>3 2:4 11:12</p> <p>30 10:8</p> <p>30(A) 4:14,17 5:1,8 10:7 11:3 14:23 16:7 19:7,9 26:18 26:22,25 27:19 29:11 59:19</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <hr/> <p>4 3:4 60:14</p> <p>400,000 37:2</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <hr/> <p>50 8:8</p> <p>50,000 36:24</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <hr/> <p>6 26:12</p> <p>60 3:14</p> <p>68 11:13</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <hr/> <p>700 8:16,22</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <hr/> <p>800 8:8</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <hr/> <p>9 26:13</p> <p>90 6:13 7:2</p> <p>90-day 11:17</p>		
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