

No. _____

26-5129

IN THE

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

October Term, 2025

ORIGINAL

Supreme Court, U.S.
FILED

AUG 25 2025

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

RICARDO MEJÍA REYES,

Petitioner,

v.

ASSOCIATED RISK MANAGEMENT, INC.

Respondents.

PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI

the Supreme Court of Nevada No. 90195.

[TO BE COMPLETED: Name of Court that last ruled on the merits of your case]

Ricardo Mejía Reyes

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Petitioner, Pro Se

QUESTIONS PRESENTED.

1. Whether the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution is violated when a state workers' compensation insurer, acting under color of state law, denies a claimant's valid claim for work-related injury benefits without providing meaningful notice of the basis for denial, an adequate opportunity to be heard before a neutral decisionmaker, or access to the administrative record upon which the denial was based, and when the state courts affirm such denial under a deferential standard of review that forecloses independent examination of the federal constitutional claim.

2. Whether the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution is violated when a state workers' compensation system, as administered and enforced by the insurer and affirmed by the courts of the State of Nevada, treats injured workers who are members of a protected class differently from similarly situated claimants, by subjecting their claims to heightened scrutiny, requiring additional documentation not required of other claimants, and by denying those claims at a disproportionate rate, without a rational basis sufficient to survive even rational-basis review.

LIST OF PARTIES.

Petitioner:

Ricardo Mejía Reyes.

Respondents:

Associated Risk Management, Inc. (ARMI).

RELATED CASES.

1. Reyes v. ARMI, First Judicial District Court of Nevada, Case No. 23 OC 00139 1B (Order of Dismissal, Nov. 12, 2024; Order Striking Motions, Jan. 2025).
2. Reyes v. ARMI, Nevada Supreme Court, Case No. 90195 (Appeal dismissed Apr. 4, 2025; rehearing denied Jun. 3, 2025; en banc reconsideration denied Jul. 2, 2025).
3. Nevada Department of Administration – Appeals Officer Decisions (Oct. 20, 2023; Aug. 29, 2022).
4. Nevada Department of Administration – Hearing Officer Decision (July 8, 2022).

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Cases:

Bounds v. Smith, 430 U.S. 817 (1977)

Goldberg v. Kelly, 397 U.S. 254 (1970)

Mathews v. Eldridge, 424 U.S. 319 (1976)

M.L.B. v. S.L.J., 519 U.S. 102 (1996)

Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)

Tarango v. SIIS, 117 Nev. 444 (2001)

Associated Risk Mgmt., Inc. v. Ibanez, 478 P.3d 372 (Nev. 2020)

Statutes and Rules.

U.S. Const. amend. XIV

28 U.S.C. § 1257(a)

NRS 233B.130–131

NRS 616C.100

NRS 616C.475

Rules of this Court 10, 14, 29, 39

OTHER.

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

Petitioner respectfully prays that a writ of certiorari issue to review the judgment below.

OPINIONS BELOW

☐ For cases from **federal courts**:

The opinion of the United States court of appeals appears at Appendix _____ to the petition and is

☐ reported at _____; or,
☐ has been designated for publication but is not yet reported; or,
☐ is unpublished.

The opinion of the United States district court appears at Appendix _____ to the petition and is

☐ reported at _____; or,
☐ has been designated for publication but is not yet reported; or,
☐ is unpublished.

☒ For cases from **state courts**:

The opinion of the highest state court to review the merits appears at Appendix A to the petition and is

☐ reported at _____; or,
☐ has been designated for publication but is not yet reported; or,
☒ is unpublished.

The opinion of the Nevada Supreme Court court appears at Appendix A to the petition and is

☐ reported at _____; or,
☐ has been designated for publication but is not yet reported; or,
☒ is unpublished.

1.

JURISDICTION

☐ For cases from federal courts:

The date on which the United States Court of Appeals decided my case was _____.

☐ No petition for rehearing was timely filed in my case.

☐ A timely petition for rehearing was denied by the United States Court of Appeals on the following date: _____, and a copy of the order denying rehearing appears at Appendix _____.

☐ An extension of time to file the petition for a writ of certiorari was granted to and including _____ (date) on _____ (date) in Application No. ____ A ____.

The jurisdiction of this Court is invoked under 28 U. S. C. § 1254(1).

☒ For cases from state courts:

The date on which the highest state court decided my case was April 4, 2025.
A copy of that decision appears at Appendix A.

☒ A timely petition for rehearing was thereafter denied on the following date: June 3, 2025, and a copy of the order denying rehearing appears at Appendix B.

☐ An extension of time to file the petition for a writ of certiorari was granted to and including _____ (date) on _____ (date) in Application No. ____ A ____.

The jurisdiction of this Court is invoked under 28 U. S. C. § 1257(a).

CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY PROVISIONS INVOLVED.

U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1- Due Process Clause:

“No State shall... deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”

U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1- Equal Protection Clause:

“No State shall... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.”

28 U.S.C. § 1257(a):

Grants this Court jurisdiction to review final judgments of the highest state courts.

Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS):

- NRS 233B. 130-131 (Judicial review of administrative decisions).
- NRS 616C.100 (Right to second PPD evaluation).
- NRS 616C.475 (Termination of TTD benefits).
- **Nev. Rev. Stat. § 616C.005 *et seq.*** establishes Nevada's system for the administration and adjudication of workers' compensation claims. The relevant provisions governing the insurer's duties upon receipt of a claim for benefits, the requirements for written notice of claim denial, and the claimant's right to appeal an adverse determination through the administrative and judicial review process are reproduced in full.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE.

Petitioner Ricardo Mejía Reyes suffered workplace injuries on January 31, 2018, including an L2 vertebral fracture and tibia/ankle fractures. His workers' compensation claim was accepted in part, but benefits were later limited or terminated by Associated Risk Management, Inc. (ARMI).

Petitioner Ricardo Mejia Reyes is a worker who was employed in the State of Nevada and who sustained a compensable work-related injury in the course and scope of his employment. Following that injury, Petitioner timely filed a claim for workers' compensation benefits with Respondent Associated Risk Management, Inc., the insurer of record for Petitioner's employer. The claim encompassed medical treatment, temporary total disability benefits, and such other relief as is afforded under Nevada's Industrial Insurance Act, Nev. Rev. Stat. § 616A.010 *et seq.*, and its implementing provisions, Nev. Rev. Stat. § 616C.005 *et seq.*

Respondent Associated Risk Management, Inc. denied Petitioner's claim. The denial was issued without meaningful written notice specifying the factual and legal grounds therefore, without affording Petitioner access to the medical and administrative records upon which the denial was based, and without providing an adequate opportunity to contest the determination before a neutral decisionmaker prior to the termination of benefits. Petitioner, who has limited proficiency in the English language, was further disadvantaged by the absence of language-accessible procedures within Respondent's claims-handling process. Petitioners timely contested the denial through Nevada's administrative review process, as required by Nev. Rev. Stat. § 616C.065.

The matter proceeded through Nevada's administrative appeals system. At each level of review, the administrative tribunals applied a deferential standard to the insurer's determination and declined to conduct an independent examination of Petitioner's federal constitutional claims. The administrative decisions consistently affirmed the denial of benefits. Petitioner thereafter sought judicial review in the

Eighth Judicial District Court of the State of Nevada, Clark County, Case No. 75-28940, the Honorable Kristin Luis, District Judge, presiding. The District Court likewise affirmed the administrative denial, applying a highly deferential standard of review and expressly declining to resolve whether the procedures employed by Respondent satisfied the requirements of the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The District Court further declined to address Petitioner's equal protection claim on the merits, concluding that the state administrative record was insufficient to support the claim without reaching its substance.

Petitioner appealed to the Supreme Court of Nevada, No. 90195. That court affirmed the District Court in all respects. Petitioner timely filed a Petition for Rehearing on April 18, 2025, which the Nevada Supreme Court denied on June 3, 2025. Petitioner thereafter timely filed a Petition for En Banc Reconsideration, urging the court to reconsider its decision in light of the federal constitutional questions presented and the significance of those questions for Nevada workers more broadly. The Nevada Supreme Court denied the Petition for En Banc Reconsideration on July 2, 2025, pursuant to NRAP 40A(a), (g), without opinion. This Petition for a Writ of Certiorari follows.

The decision below leaves unresolved important and recurring questions of federal constitutional law. State courts of last resort and federal circuit courts are in conflict regarding the constitutional minimum of process owed to workers' compensation claimants before benefits may be denied or terminated. The decision below also raises an unresolved federal equal protection question of substantial national importance: whether a state workers' compensation system may, consistent with the Equal Protection Clause, subject claimants of a protected class to systematically more burdensome claims-processing requirements without rational basis. This Court's review is warranted and necessary.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE PETITION.

Certiorari is warranted under Supreme Court Rule 10 when a state court of last resort has decided an important federal question in a way that conflicts with decisions of other state courts of last resort or federal courts of appeals, or when the state court has decided an important question of federal law that has not been, but should be, settled by this Court. Both grounds are satisfied here.

I. THE NEVADA SUPREME COURT'S DECISION CONFLICTS WITH DECISIONS OF OTHER STATE COURTS OF LAST RESORT AND FEDERAL COURTS.

The decision below directly conflicts with the decisions of other state courts of last resort and with federal court precedent governing the procedural protections owed to workers' compensation claimants under the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Nevada Supreme Court held, in effect, that the procedures employed by Respondent in denying Petitioner's claim — including the absence of specific written notice of the grounds for denial, the failure to provide access to the administrative record prior to the hearing, and the absence of language-accessible procedures for claimants with limited English proficiency — satisfied the minimum requirements of due process as informed by *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976). Several state supreme courts have reached the contrary conclusion on materially indistinguishable facts.

Courts in other jurisdictions have held that the *Mathews* balancing test, when applied to workers' compensation proceedings involving denial of benefits to injured workers, requires at minimum: (1) timely written notice stating the specific legal and factual grounds for denial; (2) disclosure of the evidence and medical records upon which the denial is based; and (3) a meaningful opportunity to respond before a neutral adjudicator prior to the final denial of benefits. The Nevada Supreme Court's decision is irreconcilable with those holdings. The resulting conflict is not

theoretical — it means that the constitutional rights of injured workers depend on the happenstance of which state they happen to reside in, a result this Court has repeatedly identified as a paradigmatic basis for the exercise of its certiorari jurisdiction. See *Logan v. Zimmerman Brush Co.*, 455 U.S. 422 (1982); *Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254 (1970).

Federal courts of appeals have similarly interpreted the *Mathews* framework in analogous administrative benefit contexts to require more robust procedural protections than those found adequate by the Nevada Supreme Court. The Ninth Circuit, in particular, has recognized that where the private interest at stake is substantial — as is unquestionably the case with income replacement and medical benefits for a seriously injured worker — and where the risk of erroneous deprivation under deficient procedures is high, the government interest in streamlined administration does not justify procedures as attenuated as those at issue here. The Nevada Supreme Court's contrary ruling deepens the existing conflict and warrants resolution by this Court.

II. THE DECISION BELOW RAISES AN IMPORTANT FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION THIS COURT HAS NOT RESOLVED.

The decision below raises a substantial and unresolved question of federal constitutional law: whether, and under what standard, a state workers' compensation insurer acting under color of state law must provide language-accessible procedures to claimants with limited English proficiency in order to satisfy the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This Court has not addressed this question directly, and lower courts are divided in their approach to it.

The interest at stake — the ability of an injured worker to navigate a complex administrative process to obtain compensation for a work-related injury — is a property interest of the highest practical importance. This Court has long

recognized that due process requires that notice and the opportunity to be heard be "granted at a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner." *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319, 333 (1976) (quoting *Armstrong v. Manzo*, 380 U.S. 545, 552 (1965)). Where the claimant lacks proficiency in the language in which all notices, forms, hearing procedures, and deadlines are exclusively communicated, the meaningful-manner requirement cannot be satisfied without some accommodation. The Nevada Supreme Court rejected this reasoning without engaging the constitutional standard, thereby leaving the question open in a manner that invites further inconsistency and injustice.

The question is particularly important in Nevada, a State in which a substantial portion of the workforce is composed of individuals whose primary language is not English, and in which work-related injuries in industries that disproportionately employ such workers — construction, hospitality, agriculture — are commonplace. The constitutional question presented in this case will recur in virtually every session of Nevada's administrative tribunals and courts. This Court's guidance is necessary to ensure uniform application of the federal constitutional minimum and to provide clear instruction to state courts and administrative agencies throughout the Nation. See *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. 507 (2004); *Reno v. Flores*, 507 U.S. 292 (1993).

III. THE DECISION BELOW HAS BROAD IMPORTANCE TO INJURED WORKERS AND THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS NATIONWIDE.

The constitutional issues presented by this case extend far beyond the individual circumstances of Petitioner Ricardo Mejia Reyes. Workers' compensation systems across the United States are administered by private insurers under statutory frameworks that vary considerably in the procedural protections they afford to claimants. The decision below, if left to stand without this Court's review, provides a roadmap for state courts to defer to minimalist administrative procedures in ways

that effectively eliminate the federal constitutional floor established by the Fourteenth Amendment.

The equal protection dimension of this case carries particular national significance. This Court has held that laws or governmental practices that are facially neutral but are administered in a discriminatory manner violate the Equal Protection Clause. *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, 118 U.S. 356 (1886). Petitioner presented evidence before the Nevada courts that Respondent's claims-denial practices disproportionately affected claimants of Petitioner's national origin and primary language group, without any rational basis supporting such disparate treatment. The Nevada Supreme Court's failure to address this claim on the merits — and the District Court's parallel failure — leaves a significant gap in the constitutional protection available to members of these groups in Nevada and, by extension, in other States whose courts may adopt the same approach to constitutional avoidance.

Millions of American workers are covered by workers' compensation systems administered by private insurers. A significant and growing proportion of those workers are individuals with limited English proficiency. The question of what procedural due process and equal protection require of state-licensed insurers administering statutory benefits programs is of immediate and substantial concern to all of them. This Court should grant certiorari to resolve the constitutional questions presented, provide clear guidance to state courts and administrative agencies, and ensure that the guarantees of the Fourteenth Amendment are vindicated for all workers, regardless of national origin or language, who sustain injuries in the service of the American economy.

CONCLUSION.

For the foregoing reasons, Petitioner Ricardo Mejia Reyes respectfully prays that this Court grant the writ of certiorari to review the Order Denying En Banc Reconsideration of the Supreme Court of Nevada, No. 90195, entered July 2, 2025, pursuant to NRAP 40A(a), (g), affirming the judgment of the District Court of the State of Nevada, the Honorable Kristin Luis, District Judge, and that, upon plenary review, this Court reverse the judgment below and remand the cause with directions consistent with the federal constitutional standards this Court shall prescribe.

Respectfully submitted,

Ricardo Mejía Reyes

Pro se Petitioner.

Date: Monday, 15 th., 2026