SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE	UNITED STATES
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MINNESOTA VOTERS ALLIANCE, ET AL.,)
Petitioners,)
v.) No. 16-1435
JOE MANSKY, ET AL.,)
Respondents.)
	_

Pages: 1 through 70

Place: Washington, D.C.

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6	JOE MANSKY, ET AL.,)
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8	
9	Washington, D.C.
10	Wednesday, February 28, 2018
11	
12	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
13	argument before the Supreme Court of the United
14	States at 10:04 a.m.
15	
16	APPEARANCES:
17	J. DAVID BREEMER, ESQ., Sacramento, California; on
18	behalf of the Petitioners.
19	DANIEL ROGAN, ESQ., Minneapolis, Minnesota; on
20	behalf of the Respondents.
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Т	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:04 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument this morning in Case 16-1435,
5	Minnesota Voters Alliance versus Mansky.
6	Mr. Breemer.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF J. DAVID BREEMER
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
9	MR. BREEMER: Mr. Chief Justice, and
10	may it please the Court:
11	Minnesota's statute bans all
12	conventional political expression on apparel to
13	prevent a smaller class of material that can
14	already be regulated under other election
15	statutes. Shirts saying AFL-CIO, Chamber of
16	Commerce, Moveon.cor Moveon.org, excuse me
17	and countless other examples are prohibited.
18	Since a vast amount of the banned material is
19	legitimate speech and the statute has plain
20	a few plainly justified applications, it is
21	overbroad and unconstitutional
22	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Which which are
23	those which are those
24	JUSTICE KENNEDY: I was just going to
25	ask you I was just going to ask you, those

- 1 examples you gave, in your view, could be
- 2 prohibited by a properly drawn statute?
- 3 Moveon.org and so forth you say could be
- 4 prohibited under a properly drawn statute?
- 5 MR. BREEMER: They can -- they are
- 6 prohibited. They are prohibited.
- 7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Could they be
- 8 prohibited under a statute that was more
- 9 narrowly drawn?
- 10 MR. BREEMER: No, I do not think they
- 11 could. Under any test, that type of
- 12 generalized political expression, associations,
- 13 NAACP, countless others, could -- could not be.
- 14 And that --
- 15 JUSTICE KAGAN: Do you think more
- 16 electoral --
- 17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Could you clarify
- 18 the procedural posture of this case? I gather
- 19 the first time around you went to the Eighth
- 20 Circuit and they rejected the facial challenge,
- 21 but they sent it back on as-applied. District
- court said as-applied is also dismissed. Then
- 23 it went back to the Eighth Circuit.
- 24 So what -- are we dealing with a
- 25 facial challenge, are we dealing with an

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1 as-applied challenge?
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- 2 MR. BREEMER: It's solely a facial
- 3 challenge, Your Honor. The as-applied claims
- 4 were not appealed and they're not before the
- 5 Court. So the only question is whether this
- 6 statute on its face violates the First
- 7 Amendment overbreadth doctrine. And it does
- 8 violate the First Amendment doctrine -- First
- 9 Amendment overbreadth doctrine because it
- 10 sweeps in so much political expression in
- 11 association that --
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Do you -- do you
- think, Mr. Breemer, that a statute could target
- only electoral speech, in other words, "Clinton
- for President," "Trump for President," that
- 16 sort of thing? Could a statute say that that
- 17 speech cannot be worn in the polling place?
- MR. BREEMER: Yes, a statute does say
- 19 that. In Minnesota, the first sentence of this
- 20 statute --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: No, I know. But it --
- 22 could a statute constitutionally say that? If
- 23 it were limited to that, would that be
- 24 permissible, or is it impermissible?
- 25 MR. BREEMER: Yes, Your Honor, it's a

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very close call, but it's not one that this
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- 2 Court has to make in this particular case.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: I know, but I'm just
- 4 asking your view.
- 5 MR. BREEMER: I honestly don't know,
- 6 Your Honor, whether that -- that line is so
- 7 close, but the statute here, the first
- 8 sentence, already prohibits that material, and
- 9 it's unchallenged, that particular sentence
- 10 here. And even assuming you could ban advocacy
- 11 expression, this statute goes so far to take in
- so much material that isn't advocacy, that is
- 13 simply self-expression of personal values and
- 14 associations. So I agree it's a tough -- a
- very tough call, but it's not one this Court
- 16 has to decide.
- 17 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, but it -- but
- it's important for us if -- we're going to have
- 19 to write an opinion on this. You say, well, I
- 20 don't know, I don't know.
- 21 (Laughter.)
- 22 JUSTICE KENNEDY: What about political
- 23 buttons?
- MR. BREEMER: Anything that --
- 25 JUSTICE KENNEDY: "Vote -- Vote for X"

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or "Vote for Y" and they're both on the ballot.
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- 2 MR. BREEMER: Correct. As I mentioned
- 3 before, the statute -- the first sentence
- 4 already bans that, and so I think --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: We're asking about a
- 6 hypothetical case. Could a statute that was
- 7 limited to that be upheld? And would it be
- 8 constitutional in your view?
- 9 MR. BREEMER: No, I don't think it
- 10 would be. I don't think it would be.
- 11 JUSTICE KENNEDY: All right.
- MR. BREEMER: Because of the passive
- and non-disruptive nature of the speech, people
- simply wearing that type of clothing as they go
- in and out of the polling place --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So you're --
- 17 you're telling us to overrule Burson?
- 18 MR. BREEMER: No, Your Honor, I'm not
- 19 saying that at all.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Burson basically
- 21 said the opposite of what you're saying.
- MR. BREEMER: Well, it's --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Directly and
- 24 completely.
- MR. BREEMER: Well, as we read Burson,

- 1 it didn't deal with the passive wearing of a --
- any kind of apparel, campaign or more general
- 3 political apparel. It dealt with active
- 4 campaigning and material used in conjunction
- 5 with that conduct.
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's the line
- 7 you're drawing? Because someone puts something
- 8 on instead of handing it around, that's the
- 9 line you want us to draw?
- MR. BREEMER: Well, that's part of the
- 11 line. It's not -- the passive nature of the
- 12 material undercuts the state's interest in
- 13 claiming that it's disruptive, but it's also --
- 14 also intimidating speech can --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. -- Mr.
- 16 Breemer --
- 17 MR. BREEMER: Yes.
- 18 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- passive versus
- 19 active sounds a lot like the act/omission
- 20 distinction, and that has proven to be one of
- 21 the most slippery concepts in all of law.
- Is it an act to put on a button or is
- it an omission to not speak about what's on the
- 24 button? A T-shirt, you say, is passive. What
- if it were instead a sign on my head, you know,

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1 flashing lights? Is that active or is that
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- 2 passive? How are we supposed to police the
- 3 line you're -- you're suggesting?
- 4 MR. BREEMER: Well, what I'm
- 5 suggesting, Your Honor, is that the line is
- 6 already policed. All the government's
- 7 interests that it's claiming in polling places
- 8 are already regulated by other statutes. For
- 9 instance, Minnesota's anti-intimidation
- 10 statute, Section 211B.07, could be utilized to
- get at intimidating and threatening messages in
- 12 the polling place. Similarly as --
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: They -- they
- 14 talk about other interests, like decorum and
- 15 dignity, and those aren't addressed by the
- 16 other statutes.
- 17 MR. BREEMER: No, they're not -- well,
- they are addressed by Section 2 -- 204C.06,
- 19 Your Honor, which prohibits disorderly conduct
- 20 and interference --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, there's
- 22 a difference between interference with
- 23 someone's right to vote or disorderly conduct
- and -- and decorum. They're not -- they're not
- 25 the same. Decorum, obviously, reaches further

- 1 than you can't intimidate someone.
- MR. BREEMER: Yes, it probably would,
- 3 Your Honor. That's true. But there's no right
- 4 to vote -- as far as I understand it, the right
- 5 to vote free of intimidation, but there's not a
- 6 right to vote free of being bothered at all.
- 7 Polling places are not pristine retreats from
- 8 the real world, and I don't believe the
- 9 government can sacrifice the First Amendment to
- 10 make them that way.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, you --
- 12 you say that, but I wonder if the state can
- make an opposite determination and say, you
- 14 know, for however many months we've had this,
- 15 you know, maybe bitter, sharp, political
- 16 campaign going on, and maybe, just before you
- 17 cast your vote, you should be able to have a
- 18 time for some quiet reflection or to do that
- 19 important civic obligation in peace and quiet
- 20 without being bombarded by another campaign
- 21 display.
- 22 And it -- you know, you say these are
- 23 -- it's passive but not active, but, you know,
- 24 a picture can be worth a thousand words, and
- 25 people's apparel can convey very strong and

- 1 shocking images that maybe the state can decide
- that, just before you cast your vote, you
- 3 should have at least a moment free of all the
- 4 Sturm und Drang of the campaign.
- 5 MR. BREEMER: That -- that's true.
- 6 And there are legitimate interests in the
- 7 polling place. The problem here is that most
- 8 of the material that it wants to get at, if not
- 9 all of it, is already covered. And the small
- 10 amount that you're suggesting is not covered --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you've answered
- 12 -- you've answered that it's already covered,
- 13 but it's no good.
- 14 JUSTICE KENNEDY: You've said it's no
- 15 good.
- 16 MR. BREEMER: Excuse me, I'm sorry. I
- 17 --
- 18 JUSTICE GINSBURG: You said the
- 19 coverage was no good, that you could not cover.
- 20 MR. BREEMER: If I'm -- yes, Your
- 21 Honor. If I'm pressured to make the call on --
- 22 on whether you could constantly --
- 23 constitutionally proscribe campaign apparel,
- specifically advocacy apparel, I would say no.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, you're

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1 pressured to come --
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- 2 MR. BREEMER: But the statute here
- 3 goes far beyond that.
- 4 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- you're pressured
- 5 to come up with a workable rule to guide us
- 6 when we write this decision.
- 7 MR. BREEMER: Yes, Your Honor.
- 8 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And you're -- you're
- 9 telling, in response to the Chief Justice,
- 10 basically, that the state's interest in -- in
- 11 -- in decorum and solemnity and the dignity of
- the voting process cannot be protected by rules
- 13 relating to buttons and apparel.
- MR. BREEMER: I'm saying, Your Honor,
- 15 that it -- it's not reasonably protected in
- this instance because it sweeps in so much
- 17 material that's not reasonably related to those
- 18 interests -- interests.
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, suppose we think
- 20 that it would be a different case and that a
- 21 state could have a law that prohibits the
- 22 wearing of buttons or any other -- or attire
- that contains the name of a candidate or refers
- to a ballot issue or the name of a political
- 25 party that has candidates running for office in

- 1 that election.
- If we thought that that would be
- 3 consistent with the First Amendment, would that
- 4 doom your case or would you still have
- 5 additional arguments?
- 6 MR. BREEMER: No, that -- Your Honor,
- 7 that is one place where you can draw the line.
- 8 And if the line is drawn there, this statute
- 9 still fails. It's still overbroad because it
- 10 sweeps in so much other -- all political --
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: And -- and what would
- 12 be the justification for that line, in your
- 13 view?
- MR. BREEMER: Well, the justification
- 15 for --
- 16 JUSTICE KAGAN: In other words, why
- 17 would we put one -- all the materials that
- 18 Justice Alito talked about on one side of the
- 19 line and all the materials that you think a
- state cannot restrict on the other side of the
- line? In your view, what's the difference?
- MR. BREEMER: I think that you could
- arguably conclude that that type of apparel is
- reasonably related to the government's
- 25 legitimate interest in preventing undue

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1 influence in polling places, but shirts that
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- 2 simply say AFL-CIO, Chamber of Congress, NAACP,
- 3 those are not related to the government's
- 4 interests in --
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How about issues
- 6 on the ballot?
- 7 MR. BREEMER: Yes, Your Honor, I would
- 8 -- that would be --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right. So
- 10 let's talk about a fiscal matter. Could
- 11 someone then wear a button or a shirt or could
- 12 the state ban a button or a shirt that said
- "Restrain Government Spending"?
- MR. BREEMER: No, Your Honor, I don't
- believe it could, because the connection is so
- 16 --
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I think your
- 18 adversary says they can because it's a
- 19 political issue display.
- MR. BREEMER: That's correct. I think
- 21 they do --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And that's where
- you say they can't?
- MR. BREEMER: No. We say --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Even though that's

- 1 on the ballot?
- 2 MR. BREEMER: A fiscal issue? I think
- 3 the connection would be too attenuated because
- 4 then you could extrapolate forever.
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: To you. But do
- 6 you think a reasonable observer would think
- 7 it's too attenuated?
- 8 MR. BREEMER: I think a -- yes, I do
- 9 think a reasonable observer would not see
- 10 generalized political apparel as an influencing
- 11 towards something on the ballot. And that's
- 12 the problem with this statute. It seeks to
- silence so much peaceful conventional messaging
- 14 by the blunt means of -- of outlying
- 15 everything.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Can you --
- 17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But they have a
- 18 statute that covered one thing that is in this
- 19 case, it's not hypothetical, it doesn't have to
- 20 do with an issue on the ballot, but the "Please
- 21 ID Me, Please ID Me" button, which was
- 22 challenged and then you chose not to pursue
- 23 that.
- 24 But what is your position on that?
- 25 Could a legitimately challenged statute stop

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1 you from having the "Please ID Me" button?
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- MR. BREEMER: Yes, it could. And I
- 3 think the Minnesota's anti-deception,
- 4 anti-fraud statute that's already on the books
- 5 could be used -- could have been used and could
- 6 be in the future, if similar circumstances come
- 7 up, could be used to deal with that button.
- 8 That's Section 20 -- 211B.07 again. That's the
- 9 anti-intimidation statute.
- 10 There is also a fraud statute, which
- is 204C.035. All the government's interests
- can be already addressed through its election
- 13 statutes. And that's what makes this statute
- so overbroad, is that it's trying -- they're
- trying to get at a small slice of potentially
- 16 uncovered material by banning all political
- 17 expression in association, even items that
- don't go to ballot issues, that don't go to
- 19 candidates, that are just personal expression
- of political beliefs and political values.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: It -- it just is a
- little bit hard, Mr. Breemer, to evaluate an
- 23 argument of overbreadth unless we have a clear
- view from you as to how far you think a state
- could go.

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1
               So I'm not sure that you've given us
 2
      that view. I mean, are you -- do you want to
      accept Justice Alito's suggestion, or do you
 3
      want to draw the line at some other place so
 4
      that we know, okay, that's permissible, this is
 5
      impermissible, how does this relate to that?
 6
 7
      That's the usual way overbreadth analysis goes.
               MR. BREEMER: Yes, Your Honor. And
 8
 9
      it's -- it's -- it's very difficult, given the
      range of available material that's out there
10
      and the number of interests the government has
11
12
      here, to be able to put every item in the -- in
      the appropriate box. I think it's very hard to
13
14
      draw a line, other than drawing a line through
15
      this particular sentence, which would allow the
      government to continue to pursue its interests
16
17
      but accommodate free speech.
                                    I agree --
               JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, if -- if the
18
      Court is concerned about preserving the dignity
19
      and the decorum and the solemnity of the voting
20
      process, and the statute is as difficult as you
21
2.2
      say, isn't that an argument for allowing good
23
      faith determination on a case-by-case basis by
      the polling officials?
24
2.5
               MR. BREEMER: No, I wouldn't say that,
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1 Your Honor, because, in the meantime, free
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- 2 speech would be chilled. All -- all this
- 3 conventional political expression in
- 4 association that no reasonable person would see
- 5 as a threat to the polling place would be
- 6 chilled in the process, as it's being chilled
- 7 right now and will continue to be chilled
- 8 unless this statute is invalidated.
- 9 So I agree that it's a possible line
- 10 to draw at advocacy material, but, in any
- event, the statute would fail because it still
- sweeps in the rest of the conventional type --
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: If -- if that were
- 14 where we drew the line, I mean, what -- what
- would be encompassed in advocacy material?
- 16 Would it be only things that named a
- 17 candidate's name?
- 18 MR. BREEMER: Your Honor, I think it
- 19 would be anything that said for or against a
- 20 candidate or an issue directly on the ballot.
- 21 JUSTICE KAGAN: How about if it said
- "Resist"?
- MR. BREEMER: I think that would be
- constitutionally permitted, and should be, and
- 25 -- and generalized slogans --

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1 JUSTICE KAGAN: "Make America Great
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- 2 Again"?
- MR. BREEMER: That type of slogan,
- 4 too, I think that should be constitutionally
- 5 permissible. Any -- caller -- generalized --
- 6 otherwise, you start to bleed over and pretty
- 7 soon you have the problem that we have here of
- 8 discretionary enforcement and you're swallowing
- 9 all this other legitimate speech when you're
- 10 trying to just stop that type of advocacy
- 11 material.
- 12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Why should there be
- speech inside the election booth at all, or
- inside the -- what you call the election room?
- 15 Let's -- let's say that it's a small room. Why
- should there be any speech there at all?
- 17 You're there -- you're there to vote.
- MR. BREEMER: Your Honor, because the
- 19 First Amendment doesn't stop at the polling
- 20 place door, even -- even if it's a non --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: That's one of the
- 22 questions in the case. What's your cite --
- 23 citation for that?
- MR. BREEMER: "Jews for Jesus," Your
- Honor.

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1
               JUSTICE GINSBURG: Was it an airport?
 2
               MR. BREEMER: It was an airport.
      was a non-public forum, Your Honor.
                                           That's why
 3
      I'm referring to -- that's why I'm referring to
 4
      it. So --
 5
 6
               JUSTICE GINSBURG:
                                  Justice Kennedy
 7
      asked the question, could a state say that the
      polling place is off limits to any kind of
 8
 9
      advocacy or promotion of any point of view?
10
               MR. BREEMER: A state could say that,
      yes, Your Honor, and Minnesota has said that.
11
12
      I'm sorry if I misunderstood. I thought your
13
      question was whether you could create an
14
      entirely First Amendment-free zone in the
      polling place. And -- and my answer to that
15
      would be, no, you -- you can't.
16
17
               And this gets close to a First
      Amendment-free zone because political speech is
18
      such a core part of the First Amendment that
19
      it's a political speech-free zone. And while
20
      you may be able -- the government may be able
21
2.2
      to ban a certain small class of material, for
23
      instance, the advocacy material, it couldn't
      sweep in all the rest of the available
24
      political speeches out there, "Resist" shirts,
25
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- 1 "Me Too" and so on. But that's exactly what
- 2 it's doing here. It's trying to silence all
- 3 this legitimate speech by -- to -- to go after
- 4 a small slice that it can already regulate
- 5 under its other statutes.
- 6 JUSTICE GINSBURG: So what -- what do
- 7 you put in what the state can do in addition to
- 8 vote for candidate X or vote against
- 9 proposition Y?
- 10 MR. BREEMER: As a bright-line rule,
- 11 Your Honor, I don't -- I don't see any other
- 12 feasible bright line. I think that the state
- would have to -- if there's an intimidating
- 14 message that comes in, I think the state would
- have to deal with that on an as-applied basis,
- 16 as -- as events occur under its existing
- 17 statutes like such --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You took the
- 19 position that "Me Too" -- "Please ID Me" wasn't
- 20 intimidating.
- MR. BREEMER: No, Your Honor, I don't
- 22 think I --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Or that it was
- 24 free speech that should not be stifled,
- 25 correct? Are you changing your mind on that

- 1 now?
- MR. BREEMER: No. Our position was
- 3 that, as pure speech, just the words on that
- 4 button were -- yes, it was protected speech,
- 5 that's correct.
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So there's always
- 7 line-drawing. Whether you call it intimidating
- 8 speech or not, someone's going to have to draw
- 9 a line.
- 10 So going back to Justice Kennedy's
- 11 point, why, if this is not a public forum, why
- 12 can't the state reasonably draw the line at
- 13 saying political speech of any kind can be
- 14 potentially intimidating in a voting place and
- 15 we won't permit it?
- 16 MR. BREEMER: I think the -- the --
- 17 the reason is that the First Amendment
- 18 continues, as I mentioned before, continues to
- 19 apply in polling places. And once we start to
- 20 create these --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It does. You can
- vote. That's the permitted act, political
- 23 activity.
- MR. BREEMER: Correct. And, Your
- 25 Honor, and that's --

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1
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So it's not all
 2
      that's being --
               MR. BREEMER: There -- there's an --
 3
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I mean, I suspect
 4
      that on a military base we would say it would
 5
      be okay for the Army to say on military grounds
 6
 7
      we're not going to permit political speech.
               MR. BREEMER: Well, I'm not quite sure
 8
 9
      about that, Your Honor, because, in Greer, in
      the Greer decision, the Court said that
10
      conventional political speech would not be
11
12
      banned.
13
               This Court has never upheld a
14
      prohibition on political speech as broad as
15
      this. And there's never --
               JUSTICE ALITO: Have we ever said that
16
17
      it would be permissible to ban all political
      speech on military ground?
18
               MR. BREEMER: No, Your Honor.
19
      in Greer, the Court said that conventional
20
      political speech was -- continued to be
21
2.2
      permitted. And -- and so I guess the answer to
23
      the question is that this Court has never
      upheld a prohibition this broad in -- even in
24
25
      non-public forums, even on a military
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1 reservation, in an airport, in a school. In
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- 2 Cohen, Tinker, in Greer, in all these cases,
- 3 the Court wasn't willing to draw a line --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Because there was
- 5 not a state interest that would permit it?
- 6 MR. BREEMER: Well, that's -- that's
- 7 correct. It -- there wasn't --
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: There wasn't a
- 9 state interest, but here there is a state
- interest that was recognized in Burson as being
- 11 quite important and very legitimate?
- MR. BREEMER: It's true, they are
- important interests, and -- and we don't deny
- 14 that. The problem is that the means being used
- is such a blunt means that it's swallowing a
- 16 lot --
- 17 JUSTICE KENNEDY: You're -- you're --
- 18 MR. BREEMER: -- of political
- 19 expression that doesn't have a reasonable
- 20 connection to those particular interests, like
- 21 simply wearing a shirt that identifies an
- 22 organization that has political views or a hat
- or any other sort of apparel that simply
- identifies the wearer's personal beliefs.
- 25 A lot of this material is not worn as

- 1 advocacy or to influence but simply as
- 2 self-expression on the day of election when
- 3 people want to express their own political
- 4 views when everyone is talking about them and
- 5 -- and wear them in. So that type of material,
- 6 I don't believe we -- our position is it cannot
- 7 be banned even under the -- the most lenient
- 8 test because it's not related to these
- 9 interests.
- Now there's some -- is some material,
- 11 threatening, intimidating material, threats to
- 12 particular classes, that could be under
- 13 Minnesota's anti-intimidation statute, but the
- 14 problem here -- we have here is that the
- 15 statute doesn't stop there. It --
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What about the
- 17 -- the concern about coordination? You know,
- 18 whatever the group is, you know, a big
- 19 employer, the union, teachers, whatever, say
- 20 we're all going to show up and we're all going
- 21 to have, you know, these -- these buttons on or
- 22 whatever, and maybe you're a member of the
- group and you don't agree with the position and
- you'll feel some pressure to transform your
- 25 speech from what you really would like to say

- or you wouldn't like to say anything about it,
- yet you're going to be identified; because you
- don't have our button, you're not doing what
- 4 you should be doing to support the group.
- 5 MR. BREEMER: Yes, Your Honor. And if
- 6 that situation did come up, it could be
- 7 addressed under Section 204C.06, which
- 8 prohibits voter interference and disorderly
- 9 conduct and loitering in the polling place.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but
- 11 nobody would say that it's interference or
- 12 disorderly conduct. It's subtle psychological
- pressure. I don't think that would be covered
- by any of those other statutory provisions.
- MR. BREEMER: And in that case, Your
- 16 Honor, then it would be -- could be dealt with
- on an as-applied basis as the circumstances
- 18 come up, if it crosses the line between --
- 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: As-applied under
- 20 what?
- MR. BREEMER: -- speech and conduct.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Under what? You
- 23 have to have a statute to apply.
- 24 MR. BREEMER: Yes. And I -- and I'm
- 25 still referring to the other statutes that

- 1 could be addressed as an as-applied challenge
- 2 under those situations -- under those existing
- 3 statutes because it's crossing the line. In
- 4 that kind of situation, it would cross the line
- 5 between speech and conduct. And once you cross
- 6 the line between speech and conduct -- or
- 7 speech and electioneering, if you draw the line
- 8 at advocacy, it would cross the line between
- 9 electioneering, either one of those, and then
- 10 you could deal with it on that situation.
- I would mention, though, it is -- it
- is -- it is a fact that that type of behavior
- is already not allowed in polling places
- 14 because of the other interests in statutes in
- 15 there that try to keep it in a -- in a -- quiet
- 16 decorum and limiting people for only the
- 17 purpose of going in and out of the polling
- 18 place.
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: How many other states
- 20 have laws that go as far as Minnesota's?
- MR. BREEMER: Your Honor, we believe
- 22 -- nine is our estimate. And the remainder
- 23 deal with electioneering. They stop at
- 24 electioneering at the advocacy material that we
- 25 were discussing before. So there's nine states

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1 that have similar this, and --
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- 2 JUSTICE ALITO: And what has been the
- 3 experience of these other cases -- these other
- 4 states? Have they had brawls in the -- in the
- 5 polling place? Have they had disturbances in
- 6 the polling place?
- 7 MR. BREEMER: No, Your Honor, there's
- 8 no evidence of -- of disruption either in
- 9 Minnesota or these other states caused by
- 10 simply wearing --
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, the states that
- don't have laws that go as far as Minnesota's,
- 13 what -- what has been the record there?
- MR. BREEMER: As far as I know, Your
- 15 Honor -- it's not in this record. As far as I
- 16 know, that they -- that there hasn't been any
- instances of a disruption caused by people
- 18 wearing apparel, except for when polling
- 19 workers confront people wearing apparel and
- then stop the process to try and police their
- 21 clothes.
- 22 And that's part of the problem here,
- is that disruption and intimidation is often
- 24 going to occur through the policing of
- 25 someone's shirt, not through the fact that

- 1 they're passively wearing it as they go in and
- 2 out of the polling place.
- 3 JUSTICE ALITO: And does the record
- 4 show how many officials would be making these
- 5 determinations at a general election in
- 6 Minnesota and how they're selected?
- 7 MR. BREEMER: The polling officials,
- 8 Your Honor?
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: Yeah, the polling
- 10 officials.
- MR. BREEMER: They're selected from
- 12 the parties, various parties. Names -- a list
- is submitted, and they're selected. I don't
- 14 know how many there are.
- 15 We know that there's more than one.
- 16 We also know that there's -- there's other
- officials sometimes that go in there.
- JUSTICE ALITO: So they're selected by
- 19 the parties. So, if a -- an official from one
- 20 party thinks that the attire of a particular
- voter violates this law, what happens? That's
- the final decision?
- MR. BREEMER: What happens at that
- point, Your Honor, is, yes, that's -- that's a
- 25 final decision in -- in this respect. The --

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1 the voter with the apparel must either take off
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- 2 their clothes or have their name and address --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But if the other --
- 4 the other election judge says I disagree, then
- 5 what happens?
- 6 MR. BREEMER: Then I -- I think they
- 7 would call the head judge, Your Honor, and
- 8 there would be a decision -- head election
- 9 judge and there would be a decision being made.
- 10 And in the meantime, there would be a
- 11 disruption going on in the polling place
- 12 because apparel is being policed.
- JUSTICE ALITO: And who --
- MR. BREEMER: And, again --
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: I'm sorry. And who
- selects the head election judge at any
- 17 particular place?
- 18 MR. BREEMER: I'm sorry, Your Honor, I
- 19 don't -- I don't know the answer to that
- 20 question. My co-counsel may.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, I'll ask -- I
- 22 guess I'll ask the state. Do you know whether
- 23 these -- these people have any training? Are
- they all chosen to be the reasonable observer?
- Do they, you know, test them to see if they're

- 1 -- they're the reasonable observer? Do we
- 2 know?
- 3 MR. BREEMER: I don't know. I know
- 4 that they try to train them, Your Honor. And
- 5 this is how the Election Day policy in this
- 6 case came up. The election officials attempted
- 7 to train the officials to -- polling officials
- 8 to apply this very broadly to material that
- 9 names an organization, advocacy material, party
- 10 material, and not limited to that.
- 11 So there is some effort to train them,
- 12 but the effort in this case confirmed that this
- 13 statute sweeps so broadly that there's almost
- 14 virtual -- there's virtually nothing political
- 15 that it can't take in.
- I'll reserve my remaining time.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 18 counsel.
- 19 Mr. Rogan.
- 20 ORAL ARGUMENT OF DANIEL ROGAN
- ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS
- 22 MR. ROGAN: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
- 23 it please the Court:
- 24 Minnesota's restriction on speech in
- 25 the polling place does not violate the First

- 1 Amendment. It is a reasonable and
- viewpoint-neutral speech restriction in a
- 3 quintessential nonpublic forum that protects
- 4 the fundamental right to vote.
- 5 This Court has recognized that
- 6 ensuring the integrity of our electoral process
- 7 and protecting the fundamental right to vote
- 8 are government interests of the highest order
- 9 and that laws advancing these important
- 10 interests may constitutionally limit speech.
- 11 Minnesota's prohibition on political
- 12 apparel in the polling place is such a law.
- 13 This law protects the integrity of the
- 14 elections by preserving order and decorum in
- the polling place, and preventing voter
- 16 confusion and intimidation.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It does reach
- 18 quite a bit beyond what I think a reasonable
- observer would think is necessary. Do -- do
- you really think if someone has a shirt with
- 21 the tiniest little logo or inscription here,
- that that's going to have any effect on
- 23 decorum?
- MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, the -- the --
- 25 the test that Minnesota has is what a

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1 reasonable observer would understand is
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- 2 advocating electoral choices. So, in some
- 3 ways, a -- a tiny lapel pin that no one can see
- 4 is -- is not going to be --
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You can see
- 6 it. I mean, you can see it and you know it's
- 7 -- it's the logo of one of the campaigns.
- 8 MR. ROGAN: Certainly, yes, Your
- 9 Honor, I do -- I do think that that causes the
- 10 -- the problems and is constitutionally
- 11 proscribable, and it's for the reasons that --
- that you discussed, which is the intimidation
- 13 that it -- that can occur is not just based on
- 14 the plain meaning of what is -- what the
- apparel says, that it's somehow intimidating on
- 16 its own. It's -- it's a pro- -- it's a
- 17 prophylactic measure designed to prevent the
- 18 type of intimidation that you talked about,
- which is that having people identify with
- 20 particular candidates allows them to then
- 21 suddenly feel like they either have to comply
- 22 or that they are going to be singled out, and
- that can lead to the intimidation.
- 24 And that's what the history of -- in
- 25 Minnesota and in states in the late 1800s that

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1 led this Court in Burson to uphold exactly that
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- 2 type of prohibition.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I don't
- 4 know if I discuss the issues. I ask questions.
- 5 But I just don't understand where the
- 6 disruption of the decorum comes with respect to
- 7 anything that qualifies as -- as political. I
- 8 -- I mean, people going to vote certainly would
- 9 expect that they would see people arguing for
- 10 their candidates or the other candidates,
- 11 though maybe not within 100 feet or whatever.
- But the idea that they're going to be protected
- 13 from recognizing that other people support
- different candidates than they might, I think,
- is a bit more of a stretch.
- 16 MR. ROGAN: Certainly, Your Honor, and
- 17 -- and I think -- I think Burson recognized
- 18 that order and decorum can be called into
- 19 question by simply wearing campaign material.
- 20 All that Minnesota's law does is extend that
- 21 line to political material.
- 22 And it's for the exact same reasons.
- It's that when you have a campaign that's gone
- on for months, and we end up at the Election
- Day in the polling place where we've asked

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1 people to come forward to exercise their right
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- 2 to vote, that is a place where we want to
- 3 ensure that there's order and decorum so that
- 4 there is the solemnity that goes with voting.
- 5 And having people identify themselves
- 6 with a pin that is a campaign or a political
- 7 message on it reasonably could lead to
- 8 disruption. And that disruption --
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: How would -- how
- 10 would -- well, how far does -- does this go?
- 11 The -- the clear case is a pin that says "Vote
- 12 For Candidate X." But we're told by the
- 13 Petitioner that you can't wear a pin saying "Me
- 14 Too, " you can't wear a pin saying "ACLU Defends
- 15 Free Speech"?
- MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, the -- the
- 17 line that we have drawn is campaign material
- 18 plus political material, with the definition of
- 19 political material being reasonably related --
- 20 a reasonable person would understand that the
- 21 message that's being delivered is one regarding
- 22 electoral choices in the polling place.
- 23 And so --
- 24 JUSTICE GINSBURG: So where -- where
- 25 does that limitation come in, electoral choices

- in the polling place?
- MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, it comes from
- 3 the definition of political, which is in an
- 4 Election Day -- Election Day electioneering
- 5 statute, and from the definition of political
- 6 purpose, which is in the statute which
- 7 describes -- that uses the word "political" to
- 8 mean influencing voting in an election.
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: The problem is that so
- 10 many things have political connotations, and
- 11 the connotations are in the eye of the
- beholder. And on Election Day, you're going to
- have hundreds, maybe thousands of officials in
- 14 Minnesota, and every one of them probably
- thinks that he or she is the reasonable
- observer, and they're making a determination
- about whether something has political
- 18 connotations.
- 19 And in one of your elections, in 2016,
- I think, you had -- the President was running,
- 21 members of the House were running, members of
- the State Legislature were running, State
- Judges were running. There were local
- 24 elections. There was one ballot question.
- 25 So the observer would have to know all

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of the issues in all of those campaigns and
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- 2 would have to decide whether something had
- 3 connotations regarding any of those issues.
- 4 It's -- it's an invitation for
- 5 arbitrary and -- arbitrary enforcement and
- 6 enforcement that's not even-handed. And I -- I
- 7 have no idea where the line lies.
- 8 Some of the examples that were raised
- 9 in the Eighth Circuit were really pretty -- and
- 10 -- and the state said, yes, that would be
- 11 prohibited. An AFL-CIO shirt, that would be
- 12 prohibited?
- MR. ROGAN: So, Your Honor, the -- I
- 14 think the -- the answer is that it has two
- 15 components to it. It has to be understood as
- relating to electoral choices and it has to be
- 17 well-known.
- 18 So many of the examples that -- that
- 19 you talked about simply wouldn't be well-known.
- 20 It's -- it's a reasonable observer sitting in
- 21 the polling place on Election Day, after
- there's been a campaign, after there's been the
- 23 issues that have been raised that are relevant
- to the election, deciding whether or not they
- 25 believe that it's reasonable to understand the

- 1 message being --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Yeah. Well, that
- 3 makes it worse, that it has to be -- well, it's
- 4 not only does it have to be a political
- 5 message, but it has to be well-known. What --
- 6 what is well-known?
- 7 MR. ROGAN: Well, Your Honor, the
- 8 political has a -- has a plain meaning in our
- 9 statute based on that it -- it's influencing
- 10 elections.
- 11 What I -- all that I'm describing is
- that something that is political, for example,
- 13 that is known to only a few people but is
- 14 clearly political, is not going to be something
- that's going to be reasonably understood by
- 16 voters in the polling place.
- 17 JUSTICE ALITO: Alright how about a
- 18 shirt with a rainbow flag? Would that be
- 19 permitted?
- 20 MR. ROGAN: A shirt with a rainbow
- 21 flag? No, it would -- yes, it would be -- it
- 22 would be permitted unless there was -- unless
- there was an issue on the ballot that -- that
- 24 related somehow to -- to gay rights.
- 25 JUSTICE ALITO: How about a shirt that

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1 says "Parkland Strong"?
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- MR. ROGAN: No, that would -- that
- 3 would be -- that would be allowed. I think --
- 4 I think, Your Honor --
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: Even though gun
- 6 control would very likely be an issue?
- 7 MR. ROGAN: To the extent --
- 8 JUSTICE ALITO: I bet some candidate
- 9 would raise an issue about gun control.
- 10 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, the -- the --
- 11 the line that we're drawing is one that is --
- is related to electoral choices in a --
- 13 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, what's the
- 14 answer to this question? You're a polling
- official. You're the reasonable person. Would
- that be allowed or would it not be allowed?
- 17 MR. ROGAN: The -- the Parkland?
- 18 JUSTICE ALITO: Yeah.
- 19 MR. ROGAN: I -- I think -- I think
- 20 today that I -- that would be -- if -- if that
- 21 was in Minnesota, and it was "Parkland Strong,"
- 22 I -- I would say that that would be allowed in,
- 23 that there's not --
- 24 JUSTICE ALITO: Okay. How about an
- 25 NRA shirt?

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1 MR. ROGAN: An NRA shirt? Today, in
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- 2 Minnesota, no, it would not, Your Honor. I
- 3 think that that's a clear indication -- and I
- 4 think what you're getting at, Your Honor --
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: How about a shirt with
- 6 the text of the Second Amendment?
- 7 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, I -- I -- I
- 8 think that that could be viewed as political,
- 9 that that -- that would be -- that would be --
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: How about the First
- 11 Amendment?
- 12 (Laughter.)
- MR. ROGAN: No, Your Honor, I don't --
- I don't think the First Amendment. And, Your
- 15 Honor, I --
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No -- no -- no
- 17 what, that it would be covered or wouldn't be
- 18 allowed?
- 19 MR. ROGAN: It would be allowed.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It would be?
- 21 MR. ROGAN: It would be. And -- and I
- 22 think the -- I understand the -- the idea, and
- 23 I've -- I've -- there are obviously a lot of
- 24 examples that -- that have been bandied about
- 25 here --

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1 JUSTICE ALITO: Yeah, well, this is
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- the problem. How about a Colin Kaepernick
- 3 jersey?
- 4 MR. ROGAN: No, Your Honor, I don't
- 5 think that that would be under -- under our
- 6 statute. And I think --
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: How about "All Lives
- 8 Matter"?
- 9 MR. ROGAN: That could be, Your Honor
- 10 -- that could be -- that could be perceived as
- 11 political. And I -- I think obviously, Your
- 12 Honor, there -- there are some hard calls and
- there are always going to be hard calls. And
- 14 that -- that doesn't mean that the line that
- 15 we've drawn is -- is unconstitutional or even
- 16 unreasonable.
- 17 JUSTICE ALITO: How about an "I Miss
- 18 Bill" shirt?
- 19 (Laughter.)
- MR. ROGAN: I'm sorry, Your Honor? I
- 21 didn't --
- JUSTICE ALITO: An "I Miss Bill," or
- to make it bipartisan, a "Reagan/Bush '84"
- 24 shirt?
- 25 MR. ROGAN: Yes, Your Honor, I believe

- 1 that that's political.
- JUSTICE BREYER: You can do this too,
- 3 I guess, with the -- can't you, with the need
- 4 in state-run hospitals to restrict conversation
- 5 in certain areas to medical matters, the need
- in law schools or other schools to restrict
- 7 conversation in the class to the subject that
- 8 is being taught, including politics, the need
- 9 in -- I don't know, you make it up, but I --
- 10 because that's what we're doing, that's what
- I'm doing, and I can think of many, many
- instances where thousands, perhaps millions, of
- people have to have the authority to operate a
- standard to restrict the speech to the subject
- 15 that's at hand.
- 16 And so, if, in fact, we are trying to
- 17 have a place where a person has reflective
- 18 thought for a moment after the hurly-burly of
- 19 the campaign, this problem will inevitably
- 20 arise.
- One way of correcting mistakes is
- through as-applied challenges after the event.
- 23 So my question is, how does that work?
- MR. ROGAN: How does an as-applied
- 25 challenge work, Your Honor?

1	JUSTICE BREYER: Suppose in the
2	examples that you've heard there were mistakes
3	made. The person who's running it thought that
4	the Rainbow Coalition was an issue in the case
5	because one party wanted to have it and the
6	other party was against it. Suppose he made a
7	mistake and kept out the person with the sign
8	or the T-shirt, either of which could have a
9	rainbow on it.
LO	Suppose he's mistaken. Is there any
L1	remedy in your state?
L2	MR. ROGAN: The the what what
L3	occurs if there is speech that is pro
L4	proscribable is the election judge will ask the
L5	person to cover it up. And the remedy for that
L6	then is, if the person can either cover it up
L7	and proceed to vote, and that ends it, or if
L8	they proceed to vote, their name will be
L9	identified in in a in a Election Day log
20	indicating that they were wearing political
21	material.
22	And that in all cases so far has ended
23	the inquiry. There hasn't been any adverse
24	actions. Ultimately, if somebody was a case
25	was brought in the administrative hearing

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1 process, the penalty is up to a $300 fine,
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- 2 which is a traffic ticket.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How -- but the
- 4 -- I guess the issue is, how do you know if a
- 5 mistake has been made? You know, if someone
- 6 makes a judgment and it's challenged, how do
- 7 you know a mistake's been made? I mean,
- 8 there's -- the question -- the concern, of
- 9 course, it's what the case could be largely
- 10 about, is whether or not there are standards
- 11 that can be applied in a reasonable way.
- 12 And it's not a question really of
- review in an as-applied or other challenge to
- see if there's been a mistake, unless the
- 15 courts are going to be in the position of
- 16 deciding all of those -- those questions.
- 17 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, I think the
- 18 history of Minnesota's statute shows that we
- 19 have a workable definition. For over 100
- years, we've had this statute in place and we
- 21 haven't -- this is the first time that it's
- been challenged by anybody objecting to an
- argument that they believed that their speech
- 24 was not political.
- 25 And that the -- the speech here is

- 1 clearly within the heartland of the statute.
- 2 The "Please ID Me" --
- 3 JUSTICE KAGAN: Do you know how often,
- 4 Mr. Rogan, people are asked to cover things up?
- 5 I mean, do people know about this statute and
- 6 act accordingly, or do you often find, is it,
- 7 you know, every other voter is wearing
- 8 something? What -- what -- or something in
- 9 between?
- 10 MR. ROGAN: It -- it is -- it is
- 11 for the most part complied with, that
- 12 Minnesotans understand that they're not allowed
- to wear political or campaign material at the
- 14 polling places.
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: So let's continue on
- 16 this because I -- I'm finding it useful. It
- sounded to me from your response, both to the
- 18 Chief Justice and to me, that there are two
- 19 people who make the decision as to whether it
- 20 is or is not political. One is the election
- 21 official, and the other is the person carrying
- the sign or wearing the T-shirt.
- Both make that decision because, if
- the second decides that the first is wrong, he
- 25 simply goes in and continues to carry it. Then

- 1 his name appears in a book, all right? If he
- does not want his name in a book, is there any
- 3 action he could bring in order to remove his
- 4 name from the book on the ground that it wasn't
- 5 political?
- 6 MR. ROGAN: There -- there isn't any
- 7 -- any statute in Minnesota that allows
- 8 somebody to change an official record of what
- 9 happened. But that person could bring a
- 10 lawsuit. They could bring a declaratory
- 11 judgment action to see if --
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: They bring an APA
- 13 action or, you know -- saying that this was
- 14 unreasonable and improper listed.
- MR. ROGAN: Certainly, Your Honor.
- 16 Certainly.
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: So they could get a
- 18 judge to do it, you think?
- 19 MR. ROGAN: Yes.
- JUSTICE BREYER: But it's never
- 21 happened because it's never been a problem. Is
- 22 that the answer?
- MR. ROGAN: Yes, that's -- that's the
- answer.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Okay.

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               JUSTICE ALITO: I mean, people go to
 2
      vote after work, before work, in the middle of
      doing chores for the day, taking kids to
 3
      school. So somebody goes to the polling place
 4
      and is wearing a shirt, doesn't say anything
 5
      about a candidate or a ballot issue, but a
 6
 7
      particular election judge, one of these people
      picked by one of the two parties, says, oh,
 8
 9
      that's political, you -- so now this person has
      a choice.
10
11
               The person can wear a bathrobe or some
12
      kind of coverup to go in and vote. You think
      that's not kind of humiliating? Or the person
13
14
      can be listed as a bad Minnesotan and, at some
      point down the road, potentially fined $300,
15
      found to have committed a petty offense.
16
17
               MR. ROGAN: Your Honor --
               JUSTICE ALITO: That's the situation,
18
19
      right?
               MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, the -- if --
20
      if the individual wore in a campaign shirt or a
21
      political shirt, they would be asked to cover
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23
      it up or, if it was a button, to remove it.
      And there is no evidence in Minnesota, and
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certainly in the record, and no evidence at all

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1 that we -- that there -- that this has been a
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- 2 problem, that we've had people show up and say,
- 3 I don't have any other way to -- to move
- 4 forward except to -- to --
- 5 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Is there -- is there
- 6 any evidence -- usually, in First Amendment
- 7 cases, we're concerned about overbreadth
- 8 because of the chilling effect that's often
- 9 undocumented. And the burden is usually on the
- 10 state to justify a compelling interest rather
- 11 than the other way around.
- 12 And so I guess my question for you is
- it sounds like Minnesota's law is a bit of an
- outlier compared to most of the country's.
- 15 There may be nine states or so with -- with a
- 16 statute that goes this far. Is there any
- 17 documented need for a statute to go this far as
- 18 opposed to what happens in most other states,
- which is limited to electioneering?
- 20 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, I think the
- 21 premise of your question is -- is -- is
- 22 Minnesota's use of the word "political." And
- there are 11 states that use the word
- 24 "political."
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay, 11. Whatever

- 1 number it is, it's a minority number. And
- 2 under your interpretation of "political," it
- 3 would forbid people from wearing certain
- 4 portions of the Bill of Rights into a polling
- 5 place but not other portions of the Bill of
- 6 Rights.
- 7 And I guess I'm just wondering what
- 8 compelling interest Minnesota has identified
- 9 that requires a statute that goes so much
- 10 further than the vast majority of states?
- MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, the -- the --
- 12 the forum analysis would indicate that the
- 13 burden on the state is only to show
- 14 reasonableness and that -- that our statute
- 15 must --
- 16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: What evidence do we
- 17 have? What record is there? What facts can
- 18 you point to?
- MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, it's the
- 20 history of elections that was sufficient in
- 21 Burson to show that wearing campaign material
- 22 would have a detrimental effect on the polling
- 23 place.
- 24 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Again, Burson was
- 25 electioneering, a different statute, and you're

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1 asking us to go a step further than Burson.
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- 2 And I'm just wondering what -- what do you
- 3 have? And if the answer is nothing further
- 4 than Burson, that's fine; that's an answer.
- 5 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, the -- the --
- 6 the evidence that we have is the same as what
- 7 was in Burson. And Burson is a case that did
- 8 involve campaign speech. What was involved
- 9 there was clearly understood to be -- by this
- 10 Court to be campaign material related to
- buttons and T-shirts worn in the polling place
- 12 and within 100 feet of the polling place.
- 13 All that Minnesota's law does is
- 14 expand the scope of what is prohibited from
- 15 campaign speech to additional political speech.
- 16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Political speech
- 17 beyond solicitation for candidates or things on
- 18 the ballot, right?
- 19 MR. ROGAN: Yes --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.
- MR. ROGAN: -- beyond expressed
- 22 advocacy that is -- that would be defined as --
- 23 as campaign speech. And I think that the --
- the First Amendment issue here, as -- as my
- 25 friend has described it, is whether or not

- 1 there is any ability to -- to ban what they
- 2 call passive speech.
- 3 The line that they've drawn here is
- 4 not one about campaign speech or political
- 5 speech or the way that -- that this Court has
- 6 described it, which is that there are instances
- 7 where you can ban any type of speech, including
- 8 on this Court's plaza, where any speech or any
- 9 message on a banner, flag, or device is
- 10 prohibited.
- 11 Those are the types -- it's clear that
- 12 this Court has allowed the states to prohibit
- what they call passive speech, and instead of
- 14 describing what the category is of speech,
- whether it's campaign, political, or all
- 16 speech, their rule is, if it's on a T-shirt, it
- 17 doesn't matter what it says, that you can wear
- 18 it in a polling place.
- 19 And that was squarely rejected in
- 20 Burson. And it was for the reasons that it
- 21 impacts the integrity of the election by having
- 22 political or campaign speech and it impacts the
- decorum and solemnity of the polling place to
- 24 have that type of speech in the -- in the
- 25 polling place.

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1 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Rogan, could you
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- 2 explain that for me a little bit more?
- 3 Because, I mean, there are clearly some places
- 4 where we think -- you know, the courtroom is a
- 5 good example, where we don't want anybody to be
- 6 wearing buttons or wearing shirts of -- of the
- 7 kind that you're talking about.
- 8 But why should a polling place be that
- 9 sort of place? In other words, you talk about
- 10 the decorum, the solemnity. Makes it sound a
- 11 little bit church-like.
- 12 Why -- why is a polling place that?
- 13 Why isn't it just the culmination of what is
- often a rowdy political process?
- MR. ROGAN: So for two reasons, Your
- 16 Honor. I think -- I think the rowdy political
- 17 process ends before you get into the polling
- 18 place so that we can have an election that has
- 19 integrity, that citizens -- we have to -- what
- 20 we're doing is we're taking the citizens'
- 21 decisions about who to vote for and turning it
- 22 into electoral choices.
- 23 And for that process to have
- integrity, the beginning of the process, the
- act of voting itself, has to have integrity.

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1 And the integrity is not just actual integrity
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- that somebody -- that everybody who is entitled
- 3 to vote was able to vote. It has to be
- 4 perceived as having integrity.
- 5 And one of the problems with allowing
- 6 campaign or political material into the polling
- 7 place is it creates a perception problem. The
- 8 example is, if you have two people, one wearing
- 9 a "Make America Great Again" hat and one not
- 10 wearing one -- in Minnesota, we have
- 11 challengers who can challenge the eligibility
- of someone to vote. If somebody challenges the
- 13 "Make America Great Again" voter but not the
- other voter, the perception is, did they do
- that because of partisan reasons? How about
- the election judge who asks extra questions of
- 17 the person wearing the "Make America Great
- 18 Again" hat? Are they being singled out because
- 19 of their political message? And, ultimately,
- 20 it -- it impacts that voter, the voter next to
- 21 them, and everybody in the polling place --
- JUSTICE ALITO: You --
- MR. ROGAN: -- who now wonders --
- 24 JUSTICE ALITO: You exacerbate that
- 25 problem by opening up the possibility of

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1 similarly partisan or seemingly partisan
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- 2 applications of your very broad statute.
- 3 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, there -- there
- 4 is no evidence of any viewpoint discrimination
- 5 in Minnesota in its 100 years. And as you had
- 6 earlier asked, the -- the way that this process
- 7 works is that there are at least four poll
- 8 workers in every single precinct in Minnesota,
- 9 and when they're busy, there are more. And
- 10 they are from different political parties.
- 11 And so any viewpoint discrimination
- 12 that -- that -- that could occur is likely to
- be self-corrected by others in the polling
- 14 place. And, ultimately, the decision about
- whether or not to move forward with any type of
- 16 -- of prosecution under the Office of
- 17 Administrative Hearings is actually done either
- 18 by the chief election judge or by the city
- 19 clerk.
- 20 JUSTICE ALITO: All right. How is
- 21 that going to happen? So let's say the --
- there's an election judge who's a Republican
- and this Republican election judge thinks that
- 24 a particular shirt has political connotations
- and says, no, you can't go in; you've got to

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wear -- you've got to cover yourself up or go
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- 2 home and get changed. Okay?
- And now that person thinks that's
- 4 unfair. Then what happens?
- 5 MR. ROGAN: They --
- JUSTICE ALITO: A Democrat -- a
- 7 Democratic judge intervenes and then you have a
- 8 -- you have an argument between these two
- 9 judges?
- 10 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, what -- what
- 11 would happen in that instance is -- is either
- 12 the person would -- would cover it up or there
- 13 -- or there could be a discussion to say I
- 14 don't -- this isn't political and I want to
- talk to the head election judge. And then it
- would be resolved and it would be resolved by
- 17 the --
- 18 JUSTICE ALITO: And who's the head
- 19 election judge?
- MR. ROGAN: The head election judge is
- 21 a judge who's selected by the city clerk
- 22 because they are -- they -- they have more
- 23 training and -- and usually they've been an
- 24 election judge for -- for a long period of time
- so that they're familiar with all the

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1 processes.
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- 2 And I think, you know, one of the
- 3 things that -- that -- that I think is
- 4 important to understand is election judges have
- 5 discretion to make a lot of different decisions
- 6 in polling places. In Minnesota, we have
- 7 same-day registration. They make decisions
- 8 about whether or not somebody's qualified, has
- 9 -- has met their requirements to -- to
- 10 register.
- 11 We also have challenge voters, when
- 12 somebody is challenged because for -- are they
- a felon or are they somehow not eligible to
- vote, the election judge puts them under oath
- 15 and asks them questions and makes a
- 16 determination about whether or not they're
- 17 eligible to vote.
- 18 So the idea that -- that making a -- a
- 19 -- a decision about whether or not something is
- 20 political or not is well within the
- 21 understanding of -- of a -- of an election
- 22 judge in Minnesota. And I think that the --
- 23 the important issue here is the state's
- interest is the fundamental right to vote.
- This isn't just prohibiting speech in

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1 the -- at the DMV or at the post office. This
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- 2 is an election process that is incredibly
- 3 important to democracy. It's incredibly
- 4 important to the electoral branches of
- 5 government to make sure that it has the
- 6 integrity that's required so that when
- 7 individuals are elected, that they have the
- 8 legitimacy that's required to make sure that
- 9 citizens believe that they are the rightful
- 10 decision-makers.
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: Let me ask you about
- one of the interests that you assert in your
- brief, and this is on page 46 of your brief.
- "A voter could well feel confused or
- intimidated if she walked into a polling place
- and discovered that every other voter held the
- 17 opposite point of view on any number of
- 18 controversial political issues related to
- 19 electoral choices, as evidenced by the
- 20 political messages displayed on other voters'
- 21 apparel."
- Do you think that's a compelling state
- 23 interest? Do you think that's even a
- 24 legitimate state interest?
- MR. ROGAN: Yes, Your Honor, I think

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1 it's -- I think it's a legitimate state
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- 2 interest in a polling place to prohibit
- 3 material that is going to make one voter feel
- 4 singled out, that -- that they could feel that
- 5 they are not welcome in that polling place
- 6 because they don't hold the same political
- 7 views as everybody else.
- 8 And, ultimately, it could lead to the
- 9 type of subtle intimidation that Burson found
- 10 could be -- could be found just by wearing a
- 11 vote for, pick your candidate.
- 12 The -- the -- the interests of making
- sure that the polling place doesn't have
- 14 political material is the exact same interest
- that this Court found was sufficient to
- 16 prohibit campaign material.
- 17 And I think to -- to go back to the --
- 18 the question of line-drawing, line-drawing
- 19 happens every single time in when there's a
- 20 content-based restriction. And the fact that
- 21 there are hard calls at the edges of the line,
- 22 at the margin, doesn't mean that the line that
- 23 was drawn is unreasonable. All that it means
- is that there are hard cases. And there are
- 25 always going to be hard cases.

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1
               And, ultimately, that's what
 2
      as-applied challenges are for. And here the --
      the material was --
 3
               JUSTICE ALITO: Now how would an
 4
      as-applied challenge work on -- on Election
 5
 6
      Day? You're not going to have an as-applied
 7
      challenge when somebody goes to vote.
               MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, the -- the --
 8
 9
      the as-applied challenge could happen the way
10
      it happened in this case, where somebody brings
      a lawsuit, but -- but in -- in the -- in the
11
12
      case where somebody wears material, they either
13
      -- they -- they can continue to wear it, as --
14
      as the Petitioners did here, and then go into
      an -- an administrative process and say it's
15
      not political, I -- I have a right to wear
16
17
      this.
               So there's -- there's an easy way for
18
      somebody who believes that the material that
19
20
      they're wearing is not political to have an
      administrative review of that if they believe
21
2.2
      that the -- that the election judges are acting
23
      inappropriately.
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS:
24
                                       That -- that
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suggests to me that your interests might not be

- 1 terribly strong if someone's about to break the
- law and you say, okay, go ahead, but, you know,
- 3 we're going to write your name down and, you
- 4 know, you might -- in other words, your
- 5 interests -- you've emphasized several times
- 6 the lack of, you know, nothing terribly bad
- 7 happens to you when you do this. And that
- 8 suggests to me that it's not that strong an
- 9 interest.
- 10 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor --
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Aren't you
- 12 worried -- if you're not worried about
- intimidation, why do you let somebody go in
- 14 with a button that violates your -- your
- 15 policy, or why is the only thing you do is
- 16 write his name down?
- 17 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, our the -- the
- 18 enforcement of this statute is done primarily
- 19 by election judges telling people to cover up
- 20 the material. And that has been sufficient in
- 21 Minnesota to deal with the problem. We have
- 22 100 years of elections in Minnesota.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Are those election
- 24 officials inside the room?
- MR. ROGAN: Yes, Your Honor.

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1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: In other words,
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- there's the voting booth and the table where
- 3 you give your registration. And so do other
- 4 voters see this going on, they see the shirt
- 5 and they hear the argument, or is that in some
- 6 different room?
- 7 MR. ROGAN: No, Your Honor, it happens
- 8 -- it happens right in the same room.
- 9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, it seems to me
- 10 that's more disruptive than wearing the shirt.
- MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, Minnesota
- 12 hasn't found it to be disruptive, that it's --
- 13 that it's a quick conversation, and it --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, we're -- we're
- 15 -- we're trying to understand how this thing
- 16 works.
- 17 MR. ROGAN: Certainly, Your Honor.
- 18 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And we just said
- 19 that -- you say a quick conversation, then the
- 20 other judge comes over, then the intervening
- judge. That's got to take at least 10 minutes.
- 22 And so I'm sitting there waiting in line for my
- vote, and I hear all of this stuff?
- 24 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, if -- if there
- 25 was -- if there was such a discussion as that,

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1 what would happen is it would -- they would
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- 2 take it to a different -- a different area to
- 3 talk about that.
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. -- Mr. Rogan, I
- 5 assume that the real work of this statute is
- 6 being done by the fact that people know about
- 7 it and so people just don't wear these things
- 8 for the most part. And you're always going to
- 9 have cases where people don't know about it or
- 10 maybe they want to challenge it, but those are
- 11 going to be few and far between, and -- and the
- 12 real work is that people just approach the
- 13 polling place in a different kind of way.
- 14 MR. ROGAN: That's correct, Your
- 15 Honor. And -- and in Minnesota, that -- that
- is exactly what happens. And it's -- and it
- 17 makes it so that the voting process is one that
- 18 Minnesotans can be proud of. We often lead the
- 19 nation in electoral turnout. We have elections
- 20 that have a high degree of integrity. We've
- 21 had multiple state-wide recounts that have not
- 22 had any issues regarding that whether or not
- 23 somebody was -- whether or not political
- 24 material was -- was in the polling place.
- This statute has worked. It's worked

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1 well for more than 100 years. And the -- the
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- 2 -- the rule that is laid out makes it clear
- 3 that it's only political material that is going
- 4 to be something that is advocating for
- 5 electoral choices, because it --
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: Suppose a group of
- 7 people want to make a statement about a
- 8 political issue, not a political candidate but
- 9 a political issue, and they say we're going to
- do that by wearing all white on Election Day
- 11 when we go to the polls.
- 12 Would that be allowed?
- MR. ROGAN: Under the statute, yes.
- 14 It's not a political badge, button, or
- 15 insignia. That -- that it has to be --
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: That doesn't express a
- 17 view on a political issue?
- 18 MR. ROGAN: It -- under -- it -- it
- 19 might -- it might express a view on a political
- issue, but it's not a political badge, button,
- 21 or insignia. An insignia is a -- is a
- 22 distinguishing mark. It would have to have
- 23 symbols or -- or letters associated with it.
- 24 So an article of clothing by itself in general
- is not going to -- to be sufficient to be a

- 1 political -- or to -- to be something
- that would be, under the statute, understood as
- 3 a political badge, button, or insignia.
- 4 JUSTICE ALITO: So, if a -- if a shirt
- 5 has "#metoo" that would be allowed or not
- 6 allowed?
- 7 MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, that would be
- 8 -- that -- that would be an insignia. And --
- 9 and if that was an issue in the -- in -- in --
- in elections in that polling place, that would
- 11 be political.
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: So if people want --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: How do we determine
- if it's an issue?
- MR. ROGAN: I'm sorry, Your Honor, I
- 16 didn't --
- 17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: How do we know if
- 18 it's an issue?
- 19 MR. ROGAN: We know it from -- from
- 20 the campaigns that have -- that have occurred,
- 21 that this is not done in a vacuum. This is
- done on Election Day by election judges who are
- in that community, who are aware of what the
- 24 political issues are and what the political
- 25 candidates are.

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1 This -- this statute's limited in the
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- 2 same way that campaign speech is limited. It's
- 3 limited by those individuals who are on the
- 4 ballot, and it -- and the issues that -- that
- 5 they've brought up.
- For example, the -- the --
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: So -- so, if a group
- 8 said, well, okay, we're not going to be able to
- 9 wear our -- our "Me Too" shirt, but we're going
- 10 to convey the same message by wearing all
- 11 white, that would be okay?
- MR. ROGAN: Your Honor, that -- under
- our statute, I -- I don't believe that would be
- 14 a political insignia.
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 16 counsel.
- 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: Maybe you should make
- 18 it broader.
- 19 (Laughter.)
- MR. ROGAN: May I, Your Honor?
- 21 Your Honor, I think constitutionally
- 22 we could. I think that -- that that's exactly
- 23 what the -- the plaza rule for this Court is,
- 24 is that you can make it broader. In a
- 25 non-public forum, you can make it broader than

- 1 the -- the line that Minnesota's drawn. It's
- just the line that we have drawn.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 4 counsel.
- 5 Mr. Breemer, you have four minutes
- 6 remaining.
- 7 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF J. DAVID BREEMER
- 8 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
- 9 MR. BREEMER: The statute does affect
- 10 millions of people that go to the polls in
- 11 Minnesota, at polling places, absentee ballot
- 12 locations throughout the state for 46 days
- prior to the election, and so what you just
- 14 heard, I believe, is that there's going to be
- an effect of chilling all this legitimate
- 16 speech, Me Too, Resist, Black Lives Matter,
- 17 American Legion, Americans For Tax Reform, and
- 18 the list goes on. And --
- 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But we were just
- told by Respondent that it has to be connected
- 21 to an electoral choice in that election.
- MR. BREEMER: Yes, Your Honor. And --
- and that's what they're saying now, but
- 24 throughout this litigation, the lower courts
- view this as going towards all political views.

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1 Their position for seven years has been it
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- 2 covers all political views. And I believe they
- 3 said that here as well. And the Election Day
- 4 policy and both the statute are clear that it
- 5 covers everything political. There's no
- 6 qualification on the term "political."
- 7 As-applied challenges, to deal with
- 8 this, would result in an endless series of
- 9 adjudications, either in the polling place
- 10 itself or in courts later on. And in the
- 11 meantime, legitimate protected speech and
- 12 self-expression, like the Second Amendment on a
- 13 shirt, would be chilled. And that's the
- 14 purpose of the overbreadth doctrine.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Do you have any
- 16 proof? You have one person who says that this
- 17 process delayed him five hours. Any process
- 18 you institute, there's going to be an
- 19 aberration.
- 20 Your adversary says that most of the
- 21 time this goes by very quickly. Most of the
- 22 time the -- the election judge or whomever
- tells the wearer please cover up your button or
- take it off, and people do that. So do we rule
- 25 for the aberration or do we rule for the norm?

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1 MR. BREEMER: I think you have to look
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- 2 at the evidence in the record, Your Honor. And
- 3 this is the evidence we have on enforcement.
- 4 We have two people that were told they either
- 5 had to remove their clothing or have their name
- 6 and address taken down for potential
- 7 prosecution in order to vote.
- 8 We also have a number of other people
- 9 after the 2010 election that didn't even try to
- 10 wear apparel because they were afraid of
- 11 enforcement. That's at the Joint Appendix at
- 12 page 117.
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry. Let's
- 14 not forget who these people were and what they
- were wearing, "Please ID Me," which for some
- 16 people was a highly charged political message,
- 17 which was found, on remand, was intended to
- intimidate people to leave the polling booth --
- other people to leave the polling booth. So --
- MR. BREEMER: That's true. And there
- 21 are -- and there are concerns there. And
- 22 that's -- and -- and it's not before the Court,
- 23 but it wasn't just the buttons.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But -- but --
- MR. BREEMER: It wasn't just the

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1 buttons, Your Honor.
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- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- how many
- 3 incidences involving the examples that Justice
- 4 Alito raised have been reported, of people --
- 5 in Minnesota, of people wearing a button like
- 6 an organizational -- Chamber of Commerce?
- 7 MR. BREEMER: We don't -- we don't
- 8 have record evidence of a button that would say
- 9 that, but we do have record evidence of slogans
- 10 like "Don't Tread On Me," "Liberty," that type
- of thing, with the Tea Party. And we also have
- 12 the Election Day policy, which the state says
- we are going to enforce this --
- 14 JUSTICE BREYER: Right. Is that -- is
- 15 that enough? I mean, the -- read the whole
- 16 First Amendment. You have freedom of thought,
- of expression, of communication, of petition.
- 18 It's a process. And part of a process that
- 19 allows ideas to flourish and get arguments back
- and forth, part of a process, I think, should
- 21 be, and the founders meant it to be, some
- thought and reflection.
- 23 And so here they've said the last
- 24 moment in a world where we know how much
- 25 argument there is in an election. It starts 19

- 1 years before and ends up in every conceivable
- 2 place. We want to carve out 100 feet where
- 3 this decision is going to be made and say to
- 4 the person making it: Think.
- 5 It won't always work. Maybe it hardly
- 6 ever works. But they're trying. And they're
- 7 saying, of course, there will be some problems,
- 8 though there have been none or virtually none
- 9 in Minnesota for 100 years?
- 10 My -- you see my question?
- MR. BREEMER: Yes, Your Honor. And
- 12 there -- and there are legitimate interests in
- the polling place and in the right to vote. No
- one questions that. The problem here is this
- 15 statute just goes too far.
- 16 The appropriate result in this case is
- 17 to invalidate the third sentence of the
- 18 statute, give the Minnesota legislature another
- 19 chance to draw up -- draw up a more narrowly
- 20 drawn statute if it wants to continue to have
- 21 an apparel ban.
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 23 counsel. The case is submitted.
- 24 (Whereupon, at 11:06 a.m., the case in
- 25 the above-entitled matter was submitted.)

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