## SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE	SUPREME COU	RT OF THE	UNITED	STATES
			-	
SAS INSTITUTE	INC.,		)	
	Petitioner,		)	
v.			) No.	16-969
JOSEPH MATAL,	Interim Dire	ector,	)	
U.S. Patent an	d Trademark	Office,	)	
and COMPLEMENT	SOFT, LLC,		)	
	Respondents	•	)	
			_	

Pages: 1 through 72

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: November 27, 2017

## HERITAGE REPORTING CORPORATION

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1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE U	NITED STATES
2		-
3	SAS INSTITUTE INC.,	)
4	Petitioner,	)
5	v.	) No. 16-969
6	JOSEPH MATAL, Interim Director,	)
7	U.S. Patent and Trademark Office,	)
8	and COMPLEMENTSOFT, LLC,	)
9	Respondents.	)
10		-
11		
12	Washington, D.C.	
13	Monday, November 27,	2017
14		
15	The above-entitled mat	tter came on for
16	oral argument before the Supreme (	Court of the
17	United States at 11:09 a.m.	
18		
19	APPEARANCES:	
20	GREGORY A. CASTANIAS, Washington,	D.C.; on behalf
21	of the Petitioner	
22	JONATHAN C. BOND, Assistant to the	e Solicitor General,
23	Department of Justice, Washing	gton, D.C.; on behalf
24	of the Respondents	
25		

1	CONTENTS	
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF:	PAGE:
3	GREGORY A. CASTANIAS	
4	On behalf of the Petitioner	3
5	ORAL ARGUMENT OF:	
6	JONATHAN C. BOND	
7	On behalf of the Respondents	30
8	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF:	
9	GREGORY A. CASTANIAS	
10	On behalf of the Petitioner	66
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
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25		

1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:09 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument next in Case 16-969, SAS Institute
5	versus Matal.
6	Mr. Castanias.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF GREGORY A. CASTANIAS
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. CASTANIAS: Mr. Chief Justice, and
10	may it please the Court:
11	For three reasons, the Patent Trial
12	and Appeal Board is not authorized to issue
13	final written decisions on fewer than all of
14	the patent claims challenged by inter partes
15	review petitioners.
16	First, is the plain language of the
17	statute. It requires the Board to issue a
18	final written decision with respect to the
19	patentability of "any patent claim challenged
20	by the petitioner." That's also supported by
21	the context of the Act.
22	Second, that plain and inclusive
23	command is not
24	JUSTICE GINSBURG: And doesn't may
2.5	I just ask you about what you just quoted.

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doesn't the provision begin "if an inter partes
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- 2 review is instituted"? If there is -- it's
- 3 instituted, then --
- 4 MR. CASTANIAS: Yes, that's exactly
- 5 right, Justice Ginsburg. The -- the statute
- 6 starts with a conditional. The conditional was
- 7 met in this case because an inter partes review
- 8 was -- was, in fact, instituted in this case.
- 9 The second -- the second reason --
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It was only
- instituted with respect to certain claims. So
- 12 I have two questions.
- MR. CASTANIAS: Please.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm not at all
- 15 clear what it is you're challenging here. Are
- 16 you challenging the Board's right to initiate
- 17 partial adjudications or are you challenging
- 18 the fact that they are not addressing all of
- 19 the claims in their final decision? What is it
- 20 that you're actually asking us to review?
- MR. CASTANIAS: Well, we are
- 22 challenging the latter. Our question presented
- is focused on the language --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So what is it
- 25 exactly that you want the Board to do with

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1 respect to the claims that it didn't grant
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- 2 adjudication of?
- 3 MR. CASTANIAS: We -- we believe that
- 4 Section 318(a) requires the Board --
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So you want them
- 6 to say we didn't grant review on these claims
- 7 because? Or do you want them to say the patent
- 8 is valid with respect to these claims that we
- 9 didn't grant review?
- 10 MR. CASTANIAS: Well, I think it's
- 11 actually --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Because the only
- 13 -- the only power they're given is to decide
- 14 the patentability of claims. So what exactly
- is it that you're asking them to do?
- 16 MR. CASTANIAS: Well, Justice
- 17 Sotomayor, what we are asking the Board to do
- is to say, in its final written decision, that
- we are not finding, for example, claim 4 of the
- 20 ComplementSoft patent -- as they did in this
- 21 case, we are not finding that unpatentable.
- 22 That way, we can then appeal that decision --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Ahh, you want to
- 24 get around Cuozzo.
- MR. CASTANIAS: No, I don't.

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1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That -- that's
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- 2 exactly what you want to do.
- 3 MR. CASTANIAS: That -- that's what
- 4 the government --
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You want to --
- 6 MR. CASTANIAS: That's what the
- 7 government says we want to do. That's not what
- 8 we want to do.
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, I don't see
- 10 what else you're trying to do, because what
- 11 will you do? You will come up on appeal and
- 12 say the Board was wrong in not instituting
- 13 review of those other claims? That's what
- 14 Cuozzo was about, us saying you can't do that.
- I didn't agree with Cuozzo, so --
- MR. CASTANIAS: Well, I certainly
- 17 under --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- you know, I
- 19 mean --
- 20 MR. CASTANIAS: -- I certainly
- 21 understand that.
- 22 (Laughter.)
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But -- but -- but
- it is what we said. And -- and so, assuming I
- 25 stick with precedent on this issue, what other

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1 purpose would there be for the Board basically
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- 2 to say we made a decision not to institute
- 3 review?
- 4 MR. CASTANIAS: Well, first of all,
- 5 Justice Sotomayor, if you look at what the
- 6 Board actually did in saying that they were not
- 7 going to institute review, the Board
- 8 effectively did make a patentability
- 9 determination in what it calls its initial
- 10 determination. So we have a decision by the
- 11 Patent -- the Patent Trial and Appeal Board
- 12 that has, in fact, ruled on the question, but
- 13 because of the way they have ruled on it, we
- 14 can't appeal it and it can't be estopping. And
- 15 --
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right. You do
- 17 want to get around Cuozzo.
- MR. CASTANIAS: Well, it's --
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Because there is
- 20 absolutely no way that that's anything other
- 21 than that. What's the -- if you're not
- 22 challenging their decision not to institute
- 23 review, why would that make any difference?
- 24 MR. CASTANIAS: Well, Justice Breyer's
- opinion for the Court in Cuozzo was very clear

in saying that the -- that the determination in

- 2 that case was a challenge under the Section
- 3 314(a) institution only.
- 4 We're not challenging the Section
- 5 314(a) institution; what we're saying is that
- 6 whatever institution means, whatever
- 7 institution means when the Board says we're
- 8 only instituting as to these particular claims,
- 9 it doesn't take into account the fact -- and
- 10 this was not addressed in Cuozzo -- that 318(a)
- 11 by its terms, by its text, requires a final
- 12 written decision.
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So would the
- 14 review on appeal be on the basis of a motion --
- 15 like a motion to dismiss? On the face of
- 16 whatever you presented the Board with, at the
- 17 beginning, did the Board have a reasonable
- 18 basis to conclude that no reasonable basis
- 19 existed to challenge the validity of that
- 20 claim?
- MR. CASTANIAS: No, the review would
- 22 not be over the reasonable basis or not. The
- 23 review would be on the question of
- 24 patentability.
- 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So how could we --

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1 how could the appellate court make that
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- determination if there's no record with respect
- 3 to that issue?
- 4 MR. CASTANIAS: Well, Justice
- 5 Sotomayor, there actually --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If --
- 7 MR. CASTANIAS: -- is a record. I'm
- 8 sorry, I didn't mean to --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, no, I --
- MR. CASTANIAS: -- cut you off.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If the Board
- 12 didn't institute review of those claims, there
- would be an incomplete record with respect to
- 14 those other claims.
- MR. CASTANIAS: Let's keep in mind
- 16 that there are -- inter partes review is a --
- is a much more streamlined process than trial
- 18 court litigation. And the complaint is much
- 19 more than notice pleading.
- 20 In this case, the -- the petition that
- 21 was filed here was a complete document. It
- laid out all of the grounds and all of the
- challenges to all 16 of the ComplementSoft
- 24 patent claims. It also included a declaration
- 25 from an expert witness.

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1 If you look at the first few pages of
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- 2 the Joint Appendix in this case, which has
- 3 the --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, that's fine.
- 5 But if the Board didn't institute review of
- 6 those other claims, the other side has not had
- 7 an opportunity to present its evidence in
- 8 contravention of your expert.
- 9 You're asking the appellate court to
- 10 decide patentability on the basis of an
- incomplete, undeveloped record.
- 12 MR. CASTANIAS: Well, we'll either ask
- the appellate court to decide patentability or
- 14 at least decide that we made a case of
- 15 patentability that ought to be decided.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right.
- MR. CASTANIAS: And -- and --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So why don't you
- 19 get to the first issue at all?
- MR. CASTANIAS: Right.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What you really
- 22 want to say is the Board shouldn't institute
- 23 partial reviews; it should, if it finds -- I
- think what you're saying is, once it determines
- you have enough evidence to challenge one

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1 claim, it should hold a hearing on everything.
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- 2 Because without that, you can't really decide
- 3 patentability in a due process way, in a fair
- 4 way.
- 5 So why have you limited your challenge
- in the way you have? What's the purpose of
- 7 doing that? And what advantage does that give
- 8 you?
- 9 It seems to me that it's an unfair
- 10 advantage to the other side. It's an unfair
- advantage to the system. So why don't you just
- 12 argue what you really want to argue, which is,
- 13 I should have an opportunity to litigate all of
- 14 my claims?
- MR. CASTANIAS: Well, that's exactly
- 16 -- that is exactly our argument. We should
- 17 have the opportunity to litigate them in --
- 18 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But the statute
- 19 precludes you from contesting the institution
- 20 decision.
- MR. CASTANIAS: Well, the -- the
- 22 statute precludes me from contesting the
- institution decision, but, Justice Ginsburg, I
- 24 think if we could move to the -- to the
- 25 regulation that the Patent Office issued in

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1 this case, that there -- that the government is
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- 2 relying on.
- What you see in the -- in the Federal
- 4 Register, at 77 Federal Register 48702, the
- 5 government considered the objection that
- 6 reviews ought to take place with regard to all
- 7 challenged patent claims.
- 8 And what you won't see in the Federal
- 9 Register, where the Patent Office took up this
- 10 regulation, is any reference to Section 318(a).
- 11 It was -- that section was never considered.
- 12 What we have under Section 318(a) is
- 13 Congress saying to us and to -- and to the
- 14 public that when an -- when an inter partes
- 15 review is instituted -- and -- and keep in mind
- 16 that that's a binary choice --
- 17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And it's -- and if
- it's instituted and -- here, it was instituted,
- 19 but only on two of -- what -- what?
- 20 MR. CASTANIAS: Nine out of the 16
- 21 claims.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Nine -- okay. Nine
- 23 out of 16. So that's -- so 318 relates to when
- 24 an inter partes review is instituted.
- 25 MR. CASTANIAS: It's an if/then --

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1 it's an if/then. It's a binary, that if it's
```

- 2 instituted, then we're entitled to a decision
- on all challenged patent claims. And it's --
- 4 JUSTICE GINSBURG: If it's -- if it's
- 5 instituted on any one, then the decision has to
- 6 be on all 16?
- 7 MR. CASTANIAS: The decision has to be
- 8 on all 16, that's right. That's what Section
- 9 318 says.
- 10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Even though the
- only one that they're examining is one?
- 12 MR. CASTANIAS: Well, that is -- that
- is a determination by the Board at the outset
- that we apparently have not met a burden of
- proof. What we end up with under the -- under
- 16 the scheme that the -- the Patent Office is
- 17 following right now is a system whereby we were
- 18 sued -- we were sued in a complaint by
- 19 ComplementSoft, in a complaint that alleged
- infringement of -- and I quote the complaint,
- 21 "at least claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, and 10."
- We asked for review of all 16 claims
- 23 because of that "at least" language. The
- 24 Patent Office then only reviewed a certain
- 25 number of the claims, and then, in their

- 1 infringement contentions in this case,
- 2 ComplementSoft asserted every single claim in
- 3 the patent against us but claim 4.
- And so, now, what we're left with is a
- 5 situation whereby we are in the Patent Office,
- 6 fighting for years in the inter partes review
- 7 over the patentability of nine of the 16
- 8 claims, and then we're going to have to go back
- 9 --
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry. How
- 11 did you do that for years? It's a year and a
- 12 half, isn't it, at most?
- MR. CASTANIAS: Well, the -- the
- petition was filed in 2012, and then we've gone
- up to the Federal Circuit, and now, we're
- 16 before this Court. But, yes, it's a year and a
- 17 half at most, three months -- well --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It's usually a
- 19 year. How long did it take here?
- 20 MR. CASTANIAS: It took -- they took
- 21 the maximum amount of time in this case. So --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: A year and a half
- 23 or a year?
- 24 MR. CASTANIAS: The year, they did not
- 25 extend the time.

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1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right.
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- 2 MR. CASTANIAS: So --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Castanias, can I
- 4 ask how your statutory argument works, given
- 5 your position on canceled claims?
- 6 MR. CASTANIAS: Uh-huh.
- 7 JUSTICE KAGAN: If I understand your
- 8 position on canceled claims, it's that the
- 9 Board need not render a decision as to those
- 10 claims. Is that right?
- MR. CASTANIAS: That's right.
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: So I quess what's the
- 13 difference between a canceled claim and a
- 14 non-instituted claim? In other words, both
- were originally in the petition. Both are no
- 16 longer in dispute.
- So, with respect to the one, you say
- it's perfectly consistent with the statutory
- 19 language that the Board did not render a
- 20 decision. Then why not with respect to the
- 21 other as well?
- MR. CASTANIAS: Well, Justice Kagan,
- there's a world of difference between the two.
- A canceled claim no longer exists. We
- 25 can't be sued in the district court on a

- 1 canceled claim. If the denial of institution
- 2 means that we have to go relitigate that claim
- 3 under the same Section 102 and 103 grounds,
- 4 that we would otherwise be able to challenge
- 5 them in front of the -- the Patent Trial and
- 6 Appeal Board --
- 7 JUSTICE KAGAN: So I understand
- 8 there's a practical difference, but I was
- 9 looking for -- because you say that your view
- is commanded by the statute and particularly, I
- 11 think, by this phrase "challenged by the
- 12 petitioner."
- But if you were right about the
- 14 statutory language, that would apply to
- 15 canceled claims as well? It was challenged by
- 16 the Petitioner in the original petition.
- MR. CASTANIAS: Yes, and -- but it's
- 18 no longer challenged by the Petitioner at the
- 19 time of the final decision.
- 20 JUSTICE KAGAN: And this one is also
- 21 no longer in dispute.
- MR. CASTANIAS: And it is -- it is an
- 23 ex-claim. It is no longer a claim. There's
- 24 nothing -- there's nothing to adjudicate. And
- 25 that's the -- that's the answer by the --

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1
               JUSTICE KAGAN: And I think what the
 2
      Board would say is that the same thing is true
 3
      here, there's nothing to adjudicate because
      they've said that it doesn't pass the
 4
      threshold, so they're not in the business of
 5
 6
      adjudicating it.
 7
               MR. CASTANIAS: But it's -- but it's
      because they've said that, and that's not what
 8
      the statute says. Now, it's -- our position --
 9
               JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, what language in
10
      the statute distinguishes between the canceled
11
12
      claim and the non-instituted claim?
               MR. CASTANIAS: It is challenged by
13
14
      the Petitioner -- and, actually, the word
15
      "claim" would work as well because it's no
      longer a patent claim. It doesn't exist.
16
17
               But there is -- the -- the chapter --
      the inter partes chapter of the America Invents
18
      Act, Justice Kagan, tells a really -- it's a
19
      very simple, straightforward, and I would dare
20
      say elegant story. It starts by defining the
21
2.2
      scope of inter partes review in section 311.
      Section 311 is entitled Inter Partes Review.
23
               Section 311(b) is entitled Scope. And
24
      in that scope provision, it refers to what the
25
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- 1 petitioner in an inter partes review may
- 2 request. You then move on to section 312,
- 3 which defines the requirements of a petition.
- 4 What does it require the petition to identify?
- 5 Among other things, each claim challenged.
- 6 So now, we're still at the beginning
- 7 of the process, and then 314 --
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Why bother -- why
- 9 bother requiring you to set forth all your
- 10 grounds for every claim you choose to
- 11 challenge? Because nothing in this forces you
- to challenge the claims in inter partes review.
- MR. CASTANIAS: No, we might select a
- 14 subset --
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So you could
- 16 choose -- you could have chosen to challenge
- 17 four and still gone back to district court and
- 18 challenged all 16 in district court.
- MR. CASTANIAS: And we -- and we might
- 20 have to do that --
- 21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So this was never
- 22 -- so this was never intended to capture all
- 23 litigation over validity?
- 24 MR. CASTANIAS: Oh, no, of course not.
- 25 And -- and we would never say that.

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1
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So -- so why
 2
      bother requiring you to set forth all your
      grounds, particularly if you only really have
 3
      to do it with respect to one? You could take
 4
      your strongest case, set forth all the grounds
 5
 6
      there, and on the others, say, we also want to
 7
      challenge all the other 15 because, under your
      theory, you don't have to do anything more than
 8
      that.
 9
               You just have to identify one claim
10
      that's weak. The Board says, we'll institute
11
12
      review, and then you're entitled to challenge
      all the other claims that you didn't set forth
13
14
      with particularity.
15
               MR. CASTANIAS: And -- and the --
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Because the Board
16
17
      has to give you a hearing on those claims
18
      anyway.
               MR. CASTANIAS: And the statute -- but
19
      -- but, Justice Sotomayor, keep in mind that
20
      the statute invests the Board with the
21
2.2
      discretion at the outset whether or not, that
23
      binary choice, whether or not to institute.
               And that's the -- and that's an
24
25
      important word in the statute, "whether." It
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1 doesn't say whether and if so as to which
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- 2 claims. It is a binary choice, whether. And
- 3 that's consistent --
- 4 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Could the Board
- 5 contact the parties and say, we will not grant
- 6 review as to all of the challenges claimed, but
- 7 if you reduce it to just claims 3 and 4, we
- 8 will hear it? Could the Board do that?
- 9 MR. CASTANIAS: I -- I think the Board
- 10 could do that and then leave the Petitioner
- 11 with the election at that point to say, you
- 12 know what, we think we'd rather go challenge
- 13 all the claims in district court and have --
- 14 have to pay for one proceeding, rather than
- 15 two.
- And that's really what this -- this is
- 17 about, Justice Sotomayor, to go back to your
- 18 question about what do you really want. We
- 19 want to have our Section 102 and 103 objections
- 20 to the ComplementSoft patent heard in a single
- 21 forum.
- Is the Patent Trial and Appeal Board
- 23 more favorable for that --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But you don't --
- you want that, but it doesn't mean the other

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1 side wants that. It doesn't mean that the
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- 2 Board needs that.
- 3 MR. CASTANIAS: Well, the statute --
- 4 we believe the statute says that that's what
- 5 we're entitled to if --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You think it's an
- 7 inherent right.
- 8 MR. CASTANIAS: -- if there is a grant
- 9 --
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Could you show me
- 11 where -- anywhere in this statute the Board is
- 12 prohibited directly from initiation --
- 13 initiating partial review?
- MR. CASTANIAS: Well, I --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Of some claims --
- of some claims or not? And how?
- 17 MR. CASTANIAS: To the extent that
- we're talking about the sort of partial
- institution that they're doing right now, where
- those are not decided in the final decision, I
- 21 would start with Section 318(a). It -- it --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Assume there's not
- 23 -- I find that 314 --
- MR. CASTANIAS: Okay.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- permits -- it

- 1 has no direct prohibition of partial
- 2 institution, that the Board is entitled to do
- 3 that, then why would we have to read the
- 4 language "patent claims challenged by the
- 5 petitioner" any different than the Board is
- 6 reading it?
- 7 The Board is reading it to -- to mean
- 8 any patent claim challenged by the Petitioner
- 9 at the review stage.
- 10 MR. CASTANIAS: Justice Sotomayor, as
- I was -- when I was engaging in colloquy with
- 12 Justice Ginsburg earlier and Justice Kagan, I
- was talking about how the -- the statute tells
- 14 a really elegant story and -- and the way that
- 15 the inter partes review is supposed to work.
- Once -- once a petition is filed, it is that
- 17 petition that is before the Board.
- 18 And Section 314, the one that you're
- 19 -- you're focused on, gives the director the
- 20 discretion to institute. It's whether to
- 21 institute. But it is whether to institute that
- 22 petition. It's not whether to institute with
- 23 regard to any particular claim.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, one of the
- 25 stories that the statute as written seems to

- 1 tell is of great discretion to the Board with
- 2 respect to the institution decision.
- 3 MR. CASTANIAS: Uh-huh.
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: It says you never have
- 5 to institute; it's your choice whether to
- 6 institute; you can't get review of the
- 7 institution decision, which is our Cuozzo case;
- 8 you get to write your own rules about the
- 9 institution decision, which is the -- the
- 10 rule-making delegation.
- 11 So it's a little bit odd to say, well,
- here's the one thing you don't have discretion
- over when it comes to institution: you can't
- 14 say these claims but not those claims.
- In a -- in a context in which Congress
- 16 said the institution decision is really for the
- 17 Board, it's a discretionary decision that lies
- in its bailiwick, why should we carve out that
- 19 one thing?
- MR. CASTANIAS: Well, excuse me,
- 21 Justice Kagan, I think I would answer your
- 22 question by saying that the fact that that
- discretion is imposed to grant or deny, whether
- 24 to grant, suggests very strongly as a textual
- 25 matter that there is not a further secret grant

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of selective review at that point.
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- 2 But, moreover, why -- why should it be
- 3 our choice? Why -- why should we be the -- the
- 4 entity that picks? Well, obviously, the
- 5 statutory language, we think, supports us. The
- 6 ordinary principle that the petitioner or the
- 7 plaintiff in litigation is the master of its
- 8 complaint, we -- because so many of these cases
- 9 follow litigation, we know best what claims
- 10 we're likely to be facing in litigation.
- 11 And, finally, it serves exactly the
- 12 two purposes that the majority opinion of the
- 13 Court in Cuozzo identified for the inter partes
- 14 review system, which is it screens out bad
- 15 patents while bolstering valid ones.
- 16 What -- I mean, it's one of the
- 17 reasons why you don't have a lot of amicus
- 18 briefs on either side in this case, is that
- we're actually in the position of saying, yes,
- 20 we would like -- we would like to be -- have
- 21 appellate review and be bound by an adverse
- 22 decision with regard to claims that the Patent
- 23 Office did not think met the standard for
- 24 institution.
- 25 But that's not -- that's not

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1 unreasonable, particularly in this case,
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- 2 because as we pointed out in our reply brief on
- 3 the merits, the Patent Office in this case, the
- 4 Board, decided to institute review with respect
- 5 to claim 4, but not claim 2.
- 6 Claim 4 actually is identical to claim
- 7 2, except it contains an additional limitation.
- 8 Had we been given the opportunity to say to the
- 9 -- to either to the Board in the process of the
- 10 litigation leading up to a final decision or to
- 11 the Federal Circuit on appellate review, we
- 12 could have said: Look, claim 4, if it falls,
- 13 claim 2 is going to fall with it. There is no
- 14 -- there's no earthly reason why we should
- 15 confirm this claim or reject that claim but
- 16 allow the other claim to go into --
- JUSTICE BREYER: The Patent Office --
- 18 the Patent Office disagrees.
- 19 MR. CASTANIAS: And --
- 20 JUSTICE BREYER: So -- so I can't make
- 21 -- I -- I think the language does, actually,
- 22 help you. I have no doubt that the language
- you point to helps you, but where I run into
- trouble is I can't imagine how a statute is
- 25 supposed to work where you, objecting, say: I

- 1 object to 10 claims, all right? Now we look at
- this and say: You're going to get that grant;
- 3 if just one of those 10 claims is reasonable
- 4 likelihood, you'll prevail. Okay?
- 5 MR. CASTANIAS: I -- I'm not sure I --
- 6 I'm not sure I followed that.
- 7 JUSTICE BREYER: So you will -- you
- 8 will have inter partes review under the first
- 9 thing, 13, 14, as long --
- 10 MR. CASTANIAS: 13, 14.
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: -- as just one, all
- 12 you have to have is one, and you will get inter
- 13 partes review.
- 14 MR. CASTANIAS: I -- it's not "will
- 15 get"; I "may get."
- 16 JUSTICE BREYER: You may get. Okay.
- 17 They say -- now, it's up to the Patent Office.
- 18 And the Patent Office says, yeah, one, okay.
- Now, what you're saying is because
- there was one and nine they're never going to
- 21 review, they think there's nothing to it.
- 22 Okay? And it says that their decision not to
- 23 review will not be appealed, all right?
- Okay. So they find one, and all of a
- 25 sudden, they discover they're in court and have

- 1 to appeal everything on nine claims they
- 2 thought made no sense. But if they find all 10
- 3 are no good, then they're out of court, no way
- 4 to get them in there, dah, dah, dah. Okay?
- Now, that's the part I have trouble
- 6 grasping, why someone would write a statute
- 7 like that.
- 8 MR. CASTANIAS: Well, Justice Breyer,
- 9 I think I'd start by urging you to read the
- 10 statute free of the regulation. Just read the
- 11 statutory language --
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: I have done that. I
- 13 actually have it written down. My law clerk
- 14 has it here. But I -- I grant you I have a
- 15 hard time keeping it all in mind.
- 16 MR. CASTANIAS: And -- and it's hard
- 17 to find in -- in that entire statutory scheme,
- 18 the language of scope, what the "challenged in
- 19 the petition, " even the amendment --
- JUSTICE BREYER: No, I started by
- 21 saying --
- 22 MR. CASTANIAS: -- language didn't
- 23 specify anything about --
- 24 JUSTICE BREYER: I started by saying
- 25 --

MR. CASTANIAS: Excuse me.

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               JUSTICE BREYER: -- that I think
      language does favor you but not definitely.
 3
                                                    Ι
      mean, there is a lot of opening and ambiguity
 4
      here. And that's why I turned to what I was
 5
      having trouble with, is trying to imagine what
 6
 7
      the purpose would be of writing a statute the
      way you want, though I find it very practical
 8
 9
      to think of the statute as your opponents want
      it.
10
               Now, that -- that exposing my method
11
12
      of thinking, I'm not wedded to that, but I do
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want to know what your answer is. 14 MR. CASTANIAS: Well, my -- my answer is that I think that it makes -- it's very 15 practical to read the statute as we're reading 16 17 And I don't think it's ambiguous at all. I think it's -- I think the ambiguity is only 18 injected by the addition of the regulation that 19 the Patent Office has -- has introduced into 20 this, because you won't find a hint of partial 21 2.2 institution anywhere in the statute, and you

have some strong textual indicators against it.

in Chevron world and even if Section 318 were

That's why we say that even if we were

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1 the subject of a regulation, which it's not, it
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- 2 would still not be within the zone of
- 3 reasonableness with regard to the -- the scope
- 4 of the ambiguity.
- 5 But why would you write it this way?
- 6 For exactly the two reasons that you -- you
- 7 wrote for the Court in Cuozzo. IPR screens out
- 8 bad patents while bolstering valid ones.
- 9 Look at what the Board did in this
- 10 case. In their institution decision, which ran
- 11 22 pages, it's not -- it wasn't just a
- 12 determination like the statute anticipates. It
- was a full, written, reasoned decision, made in
- very short order after three months. The Board
- moved all of the work that they could have done
- at the end to this institution phase and said:
- 17 Yeah, we're not going to institute with regard
- to claim 2 and claims 10 through 16.
- But we've still got reasoned decisions
- 20 on that. But those claims haven't been
- 21 bolstered, to use the words of -- of Cuozzo.
- 22 And the -- the decision by the Board to reject
- our arguments ought to then, if we lose either
- 24 before the Board in the final written decision
- or on appeal, it should estop us from

- 1 relitigating those issues in the federal
- 2 courts.
- 3 That was exactly the point of the
- 4 inter partes review statute, is to make
- 5 district court litigation simpler by allowing
- 6 the expert agency to do these types of
- 7 adjudications. I say that with trepidation
- 8 because of the first argument -- but they are
- 9 adjudications of a type that agencies may --
- 10 may make, and it streamlines the patent
- 11 litigation that follows.
- 12 If there are no further questions,
- 13 I'll reserve the remainder of my time.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 15 counsel.
- Mr. Bond.
- 17 ORAL ARGUMENT OF JONATHAN C. BOND
- ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS
- MR. BOND: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
- 20 it please the Court --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah.
- MR. BOND: In established inter partes
- review, Congress gave the PTO an enhanced tool
- 24 to identify and revisit patent claims that it
- 25 has determined may not be patentable for

- 1 certain reasons, and it entrusted the agency
- with determining when to use that tool and how
- 3 those proceedings should work in practice.
- 4 Petitioner's challenge to the scope of
- 5 the final written decision here, its argument
- 6 that it should have included more claims in the
- 7 final written decision, fails because the PTO
- 8 or the -- the Board here, as under delegated
- 9 authority, validly determined not to institute
- on those claims. They were never part of the
- instituted proceeding, and there's nothing in
- the statute that requires the Board to
- institute or to include in its final decision
- 14 claims that were never part of the proceeding
- in the first place.
- Now, the crux of this dispute is, as I
- 17 think the prior colloquy illustrated, over the
- 18 partial institution decision. The Board's
- 19 partial institution decision here to institute
- 20 review, except as to claims 2 and 11 through
- 21 16, is not reviewable under Section 314(d) and
- 22 this Court's decision in Cuozzo. And, in any
- event, it reflects a permissible exercise of
- the broad discretion conferred on the Board by
- 25 the statute.

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1
               JUSTICE ALITO: Well, what is the --
 2
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But what do
      you do with the problem he -- your friend
 3
      raised with respect to claim 4 and claim 2?
 4
      does seem to put them in a difficult position.
 5
               MR. BOND: So it's actually not clear
 6
 7
      that claim 4 is narrower than claim 2. As we
      explained in the briefing in the court of
 8
 9
      appeals, it's possible that claim 4 is actually
10
      broader in some respects. That's a close
      dispute that the Board, in its discretion,
11
12
      determined claim 4 presents a -- a close
      question. Claim 2 does not, as presented to
13
14
     us, present a close question.
15
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that
      doesn't seem to me -- I mean, I know we don't
16
17
     have review of the decision which claims to
      review, it doesn't seem to me like very
18
      helpful, in terms of what the whole process was
19
20
      supposed to accomplish.
               MR. BOND: So we think Congress vested
21
2.2
      the Board with discretion of deciding in what
23
      circumstances claims are closely-enough related
24
      that granting a review on one may -- implies
      that it makes sense to grant a claim on a
25
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1 related claim -- or grant review on a related
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- 2 claim because they're so closely related.
- 3 Here, the Board determined that the
- 4 request for review on claim 2 failed because
- 5 the petition failed at the threshold. It
- 6 didn't identify specific references in the
- 7 prior art that rendered claim 2 obvious over
- 8 the prior art.
- 9 With respect to claim 4, the petition
- 10 had made a closer showing. Now, that's a
- 11 function of the petition.
- 12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, why couldn't
- 13 the Board just -- just say we -- we decline to
- 14 grant it unless you reduce the -- unless you
- 15 eliminate this claim?
- MR. BOND: So, we think the Board
- 17 could do that, and we think that the Board has
- 18 that authority to say we're denying review
- 19 across the board, but we -- and on Petitioner's
- 20 view, I think that he conceded that that --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: But then we can rule
- against you, and there's no real problem.
- MR. BOND: We -- we could deny review
- 24 across the board, but if you tailor your
- 25 petition, we could grant review in that

- 1 circumstance.
- 2 But that, we think, illustrates the
- 3 artificiality of the Petitioner's position that
- 4 the Board could get to the same result, just
- 5 through a more cumbersome, multistage process
- of saying, we're not going to grant it this
- 7 way, but if you revise and resubmit, we will
- 8 then entertain your challenge.
- 9 Here, we understand that Congress
- 10 designed --
- 11 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, it doesn't
- 12 because the challengers might say, in that --
- in that event, we'll just go to the district
- 14 court. We don't want -- we don't want it.
- MR. BOND: Sure, and they could do
- 16 that in this instance. A challenger here who's
- 17 dissatisfied with the Board's decision about
- 18 the scope of review can say, you know what,
- 19 it's not worth our time, we can settle with the
- 20 -- the patent owner our -- our IPR dispute, we
- can agree not to pursue it and can proceed in
- 22 litigation.
- 23 And if, as in this case, the alleged
- infringer was sued in a -- in a district court
- 25 infringement case and then brings an I -- IPR

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1 proceeding, there's no stay of the district
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- 2 court proceeding, at least mandated by the
- 3 statute, so they can proceed in the district
- 4 court to litigate as they had -- already had
- 5 been doing.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I -- I thought
- 7 roughly half of the proceedings were stayed?
- 8 MR. BOND: As a matter of the district
- 9 court's discretion, I think a little over
- 10 50 percent of contested stay motions are
- 11 granted, but, of course, if it's the alleged
- infringer who went to the IPR or went to the
- 13 PTO to ask for an IPR and then says, look, I'm
- done with IPR, they wouldn't grant review on
- the claims that I would like, they can go back
- 16 to the district court and say, I no longer need
- 17 a stay if one was granted in the first place,
- 18 let's proceed to litigate this here in this
- 19 infringement suit.
- 20 And so we think that the statute is
- 21 perfectly consistent with inter partes review
- 22 being conducted on a partial institution basis,
- 23 and at a minimum, as I think was discussed
- 24 earlier, no provision of the statute clearly
- 25 prohibits what the -- what the PTO is doing

- 1 here.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, what about
- 3 318(a)? If we look at that by itself, where is
- 4 there any ambiguity? If an inter partes review
- 5 is instituted and not dismissed under this
- 6 chapter, the Patent Trial and Appeal Board
- 7 shall issue a final decision with respect to
- 8 the patentability of any patent claim
- 9 challenged by the petitioner.
- 10 What is ambiguous about that?
- MR. BOND: So a couple of things.
- 12 First, we'd say, as Petitioner invited the
- 13 Court to do, read through the statute
- 14 sequentially. We set it forth starting at page
- 15 11A of our brief in the appendix. Read through
- 16 and see what --
- 17 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, that really
- 18 wasn't my question. If we look at that
- 19 language by itself, where is there ambiguity?
- 20 MR. BOND: Sure. If -- if you look at
- 21 the four words, "challenged by the petitioner,"
- in isolation, they don't answer any of the
- 23 questions about the scope of what we mean by
- "challenged by the petitioner."
- 25 So, if you look at those four words in

- 1 isolation, they don't tell you standing alone
- 2 challenged in an IPR proceeding or this IPR
- 3 proceeding as distinct from in an infringement
- 4 suit where you also challenged them. It also
- 5 doesn't tell you challenged on a ground
- 6 permitted within IPR.
- JUSTICE ALITO: You think that's --
- 8 you think that is a serious interpretation of
- 9 this challenge -- they challenged it in a
- 10 discussion in their office. They challenged it
- in a discussion in a bar. It means challenged
- 12 it in this proceeding. What else could it
- 13 mean?
- MR. BOND: Well, you know that because
- of context. It also means challenged on a
- 16 ground within IPR, challenged timely and
- 17 challenged by a petitioner who's not estopped
- 18 from doing so.
- 19 And the reason that question isn't
- 20 hard is because of the context of the statute,
- 21 including the opening clause that takes as its
- 22 starting premise --
- JUSTICE ALITO: You think it's not
- 24 hard?
- MR. BOND: We think --

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1 JUSTICE ALITO: You think that's not a
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- 2 hard question at least?
- MR. BOND: No, we think what's not
- 4 difficult is the question you posed -- or the
- 5 question that I suggested of we know that they
- 6 mean challenged in an IPR proceeding and in
- 7 this IPR proceeding. That question we don't
- 8 think is difficult because of the context,
- 9 because of the opening clause referring to "if
- 10 an IPR proceeding is instituted, "we're
- 11 referring to that IPR proceeding.
- 12 And it is --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Is this how you would
- 14 read it -- and don't just agree with me because
- it sounds as if I agree with you, I just want
- 16 to know what you -- don't get me off on a
- 17 mistake if it is -- if an inter partes review
- is instituted, any patent claim that is the
- 19 subject of that inter partes review challenged
- 20 by -- in other words, it is understood that the
- 21 word "patent claim" refers to a claim that
- 22 inter partes review has been granted in respect
- 23 to.
- MR. BOND: We --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Is that right or

- 1 wrong?
- 2 MR. BOND: We think that's essentially
- 3 right. I -- I would say that another way of
- 4 framing it is challenged by the Petitioner
- 5 implicitly within the instituted proceeding,
- 6 referred to in the opening clause. So I think
- 7 we're -- we're saying --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's more of
- 9 a stretch from the -- it's a fairly complicated
- and refined stretch of any claim challenged by
- 11 the Petitioner.
- MR. BOND: So we think it's actually
- consistent with ordinary usage to say, at the
- 14 merits phase of a discretionary review
- proceeding, that when you say, "challenged by
- the petitioner," you mean within the merits
- 17 phase that the opening clause presupposes has
- 18 taken place.
- 19 When this Court grants certiorari --
- 20 JUSTICE BREYER: I put it -- I put it
- 21 my way because the word "any" is like Exhibit
- 22 Number 1 for a word, the scope of which is very
- often ambiguous in a statute.
- 24 If you can eat any fish, you can eat
- 25 any fish. Think about that one.

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1
               MR. BOND: So --
 2
               (Laughter.)
               JUSTICE BREYER: All right. Now --
 3
      now my -- my point is we have loads of statutes
 4
      where the word "any" has a scope and the scope
 5
      is determined by the context of the statute.
 6
 7
      And so what I'm thinking in the back of my mind
      is this is one of those, but as I say, don't
 8
 9
      let me get off on a wrong foot.
               MR. BOND: So we do agree that any
10
      encompasses anything within the scope that the
11
12
      context of 318(a) and its broader context of
      the scheme encompasses. So it's any claim
13
14
      within the instituted proceeding.
15
               But just focusing on that word "any,"
      I think it's actually helpful to look past the
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17
      language the Petitioner quotes to the -- the
      end of 318(a). It says, "any patent claim
18
      challenged by the petitioner and any new claim
19
      added under section 316(d)."
20
               What "any" is doing here is not saying
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2.2
      this is an all-encompassing review provision
      that requires the final written decision to
23
24
      encompass anything in the universe. It's doing
      something much more limited.
25
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Т	The tall end of this sentence in
2	section 318(a) is simply clarifying that when
3	you get to the final decision, there are two
4	kinds of things the Board needs to address. It
5	needs to address those claims that were
6	actually challenged within the instituted IPR,
7	if there are any left, and it needs to address
8	any substitute claims added by amendment or
9	proposed to be added by amendment under 316(d),
10	if there are any.
11	JUSTICE ALITO: If Congress wanted to
12	say what you think this means, why in the world
13	would they phrase it the way it is phrased in
14	318(a)? Why wouldn't they say with respect to
15	the patentability of any claim found by the
16	director to have at least some likelihood of
17	success? Or any claim on which review was
18	granted? Why in the world would they say any
19	patent claim challenged by the petitioner?
20	MR. BOND: Well, two points, Your
21	Honor. There are several things that can cause
22	a claim not to be in the case by the end. The
23	fact that the PTO or the PTAB on delegated
24	authority didn't institute is one, but also
25	canceled claims and also settled claims.

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1 Parties can settle not just the entire dispute
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- 2 but also their dispute over individual claims.
- 3 Any of those things would mean that
- 4 the claim is no longer challenged by the
- 5 petitioner at the time of the final decision.
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: It doesn't actually
- 7 have to mean that. I just thought there's
- 8 another tack here, that if you're voting in
- 9 Congress on this, you actually don't know what
- 10 you think of in respect to the answer to this
- 11 question we are now litigating.
- 12 And since you don't know, the best
- answer, from the point of view of the agency,
- 14 you use a word like "any" and "any claim," as I
- say, filled with ambiguity, so that the agency
- 16 can decide which way it wants to go. Is there
- 17 any indication of that?
- 18 MR. BOND: So we -- we do think that
- 19 Congress, indeed, left these matters to the
- agency in 316(a). It's just like the question
- 21 that was presented in Cuozzo. No statutory
- 22 provision in Cuozzo specifically addressed the
- 23 claim construction standard.
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but
- 25 that's -- so you're saying, if I understand

- 1 your answer to Justice Breyer, that Congress
- 2 deliberately adopted an ambiguous term in the
- 3 statute so that the agency would determine what
- 4 it meant.
- It's one thing to say, you know, the
- 6 agency should determine which patent claims
- 7 challenge it will decide in -- or which ones
- 8 that aren't decided will be considered? It's
- 9 another thing to decide let's pick a word
- 10 that's so vague that nobody will be able to
- 11 figure it out, and we'll leave it to the
- 12 Commission.
- MR. BOND: No, and let -- let me be
- 14 clear. Our point is not that Congress enacted
- on purpose a deliberately ambiguous statute.
- 16 Our point is that the statute Congress enacted
- 17 is consistent with partial institution. But to
- 18 the extent there's a question about that,
- 19 Congress left those questions to the agency.
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, there is one
- 21 very telling sign that the "any patent claim
- 22 challenged by the petitioner" has a different
- 23 meaning, and that's in 314 itself, which says
- "claims challenged in the petition."
- 25 If Congress intended claims challenged

- in the petition to be a part of 318, it could
- 2 have used exactly the same words.
- 3 MR. BOND: That's exactly right. And
- 4 that, I think, is the second answer to Justice
- 5 Alito's question, the reason to think that
- 6 Congress intended this result is that Congress
- 7 used this very phrase that would encompass
- 8 Petitioner's position in a different phrase of
- 9 the statute.
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: But you think
- "challenged by the petitioner" is narrower than
- 12 -- I'm sorry, any change -- "any patent claim
- challenged by the petitioner" is narrower than
- 14 the -- the words that are used in 314?
- 15 MR. BOND: So we think it is narrower
- in the circumstance for the same reason the
- 17 Petitioner does, that it includes the
- 18 possibility that claims will drop out along the
- 19 way.
- 20 And, again, "challenged by the
- 21 petitioner" standing alone is capaciously broad
- and could encompass any number of things. It's
- 23 context that tells you that it's narrower.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: But doesn't that
- exactly work the other way around? Of course,

- 1 by the end, you're only going to resolve the
- 2 challenges that -- that remain pending. When
- 3 you're doing the institution decision of inter
- 4 partes review, you're going to look at the
- 5 petition. Couldn't it be just that simple?
- And doesn't 314 kind of cut against
- 7 the government in some ways too by suggesting
- 8 that all the PTO needs to do is decide whether
- 9 there is one claim that isn't frivolous, that's
- 10 -- that's the sum total of its job under the
- 11 plain terms.
- 12 MR. BOND: So --
- 13 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And that -- and that
- 14 beyond that, it need not go further.
- MR. BOND: So two points. First, we
- 16 agree that 314 is focused on the institution
- 17 phase and, therefore, the focus is on the
- 18 petition --
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Right.
- 20 MR. BOND: -- whereas in 318 --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: It's what -- what's
- 22 left.
- MR. BOND: Right, it's what's left of
- 24 the proceeding.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: So that's why

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1 there's a difference in language there, you
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- 2 agree?
- MR. BOND: Right, exactly. And we
- 4 think that that underscores that what's left
- 5 can include the fact --
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. But -- but
- 7 how then do we deal with the fact that in 314,
- 8 we have all the -- all the PTO has to do is
- 9 decide whether there is one non-frivolous
- 10 claim. It's a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down
- 11 decision --
- MR. BOND: Because --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- that's
- 14 anticipated there, not a -- not a
- 15 claim-by-claim examination.
- MR. BOND: Well, two points, Your
- 17 Honor. First, what Congress included there is
- 18 simply a floor. It's phrased as a prohibition
- 19 that the PTO and, on delegated authority the
- 20 Board, may not institute, unless it finds that
- 21 at least one of the claims is -- has a
- reasonable likelihood of being found invalid.
- 23 It doesn't say that the Board must
- therefore institute or must do an up-or-down
- 25 determination.

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1 JUSTICE GORSUCH: No.
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- MR. BOND: We think that that leaves
- 3 room for the Board to say we can't institute if
- 4 we don't find at least one, but you know what?
- 5 We're going to conserve our resources, as
- 6 316(b) tells us in adopting regulations, and
- 7 focus then on the claims --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, help me --
- 9 help me out with 316 then if that's where
- 10 you're going to go to. Where do you -- where
- 11 do you see the authority for the regulations
- 12 that the director is proscribed here?
- MR. BOND: Sure. They're in two
- provisions, principally 316(a)(4), which was
- 15 the same provision as -- at issue in Cuozzo.
- 16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Now, (a) (4), that --
- 17 my problem with that, where I get stuck is that
- 18 (a) (4) concerns establishing a governing inter
- 19 partes review. And we're not at that stage
- 20 yet. We're at the decision whether to
- 21 institute inter partes review.
- MR. BOND: Sure.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: I would have thought
- 24 you'd have to look to -- to (a)(2) rather than
- 25 (a) (4).

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               MR. BOND: Right, so (a)(2) is the
 2
      second provision, but we do think that (a) (4)
      encompasses this because it's establishing and
 3
      governing inter partes review. And the Board's
 4
      determination whether to institute on a
 5
     particular claim is part of that universe of
 6
 7
      things that was granted to the Board.
               But certainly also (a)(2) because that
 8
 9
      establishes -- or gives the Board authority to
      establish rules that govern the showing of
10
      sufficiency that needs to be made.
11
12
      17(a) of the gray brief.
13
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: I'd agree with you
14
      to cover -- you've given great discussion on
15
      the standards for showing sufficient grounds to
      institute a review. I'm not sure, I quess I'm
16
17
      -- you can help me on how that also includes
      the authority whether to grant review of this
18
      or that claim, the weeding out process.
19
               MR. BOND:
20
                          Sure.
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: I can see how it
21
      might affect the reasonable likelihood inquiry
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23
      and how the director is going to go about doing
      that, but I -- I quess it's a little less clear
24
      to me how it also grants him authority, or her
25
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- 1 authority, to decide which claims to proceed
- 2 with.
- MR. BOND: Sure. Because -- well,
- 4 what it says is the standards for showing of
- 5 sufficient grounds. And those standards for
- 6 showing sufficient grounds, that's in (a)(2).
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah.
- 8 MR. BOND: And what the Board's
- 9 regulation is doing is preserving the Board's
- 10 ability to assess sufficiency on a
- 11 claim-by-claim basis. We think that's
- 12 encompassed within (a)(2).
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, but -- but
- 14 314(a) seems to proscribe that -- that
- 15 question, at least with respect to one claim.
- 16 It speaks to that very issue.
- MR. BOND: Well, it sets a floor, just
- 18 like the outer time limits that Congress
- 19 required in 316(a)(11), set an outer time
- 20 limit, but don't preclude the Board from
- 21 setting a lower time limit on the completion of
- the final written decision.
- The same we think is true of 316 -- or
- 24 314(a). It said you may not institute unless
- 25 at least one of these claims, you conclude, is

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1 worthwhile because it clears that reasonable
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- 2 likelihood threshold.
- 3 But especially in the context of the
- 4 scheme that gives the Board complete discretion
- 5 to deny review entirely, we think it's
- 6 improbable that Congress would have tied the
- 7 Board's hands in this one respect.
- 8 Moreover, not just to say you don't
- 9 have discretion --
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Is there some
- inconsistency with 304 where you're allowed --
- the director gets to decide which question
- 13 specifically the director wants to take up?
- 14 There seems to be an express grant to the
- director there to do exactly what you want to
- do here. And is its absence here suggestive?
- 17 MR. BOND: We don't think so, Your
- 18 Honor. I think the scheme of ex parte
- 19 reexamination is fundamentally different in
- that it's a party is just suggesting to the
- 21 Board, or the Board on its own initiative,
- 22 saying we're going to look at a particular
- 23 substance -- substantial new question of
- patentability that has been raised, and we'll
- look at which particular claims we think are

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1 implicated by that.
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- 2 JUSTICE GORSUCH: It's not just claims
- 3 in 304, it's questions. And so the director
- 4 can pick and choose which questions. And is
- 5 granted that express authority.
- And normally we -- we think that when
- 7 it's granted in one place but not clearly
- 8 granted in the other that that -- that that
- 9 intends a difference.
- MR. BOND: So, at a minimum, that
- difference doesn't clearly preclude the Board
- here under 314(d) and its regulatory authority
- 13 from saying we're going to treat this as a
- 14 floor, that we are told by Congress we can't do
- it unless we clear this floor, but we're going
- to hold patents or IPR petitions to a higher
- 17 standard and evaluate them claim by claim
- 18 because that's consistent with the purpose as
- 19 Congress told us in 316(b) to consider in
- 20 adopting our regulations.
- 21 And those purposes boil down to, as
- the Court underscored in Cuozzo, making sure
- we're actually improving patent quality and
- 24 doing so efficiently.
- Now, the Board's partial institution

- 1 approach is perfectly consistent with both of
- 2 those aims. It focuses its energies on those
- 3 patent claims it determines actually have a
- 4 reasonable likelihood of being invalidated
- 5 without wasting time on other claims.
- The Petitioner's all-or-nothing
- 7 approach puts the Board to an untenable choice;
- 8 either it wastes time on claims it's already
- 9 determined don't have a reasonable likelihood
- of being invalidated, at least based on the
- 11 arguments presented in the petition, or it
- 12 doesn't use this new tool at all and all of the
- work of creating inter partes review was for
- 14 nothing.
- And so, in either event, we're not
- 16 getting the benefit or achieving either of the
- 17 goals that Congress had in mind.
- 18 And there --
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: Is there anything in
- the statute that would prevent the Board, if it
- is required to render a final decision on all
- 22 claims initially challenged by the Petitioner,
- 23 from instituting a streamlined procedure for
- 24 dealing with the claims that were found at the
- outset to have no likelihood of success?

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1
               Why does it need to go through a full
 2
      proceeding with respect to those claims?
      -- can it not just say in a summary form we
 3
      found that these have no likelihood of success?
 4
               And then that could be appealed to the
 5
      Federal Circuit and the Federal Circuit could
 6
 7
      decide whether that -- that determination was
      permissible.
 8
 9
               MR. BOND: So a couple of points, Your
      Honor. First, at the institution phase, the
10
      Board is not deciding the merits, it is
11
12
      deciding not to decide the merits.
      saying you haven't for some reason made a
13
14
      sufficient showing to make us convinced that it
      is worth our time to investigate the merits of
15
      your claim.
16
17
               They can also deny, however, for
      additional reasons, irrespective of the merits.
18
      They might say, just as all agree they can deny
19
      the petition entirely apart from the merits,
20
      they might say this patent claim is going to be
21
2.2
      very time-consuming and is not going to advance
23
      the goals of the statute, so we're going to
24
      deny review on that ground.
2.5
               So there is not necessarily a ruling
```

- on the merits at all, and it's fundamentally
- 2 different than a district court, say, folding
- 3 in a 12(b)(6) or summary judgment ruling
- 4 because it's based on the agency's discretion,
- 5 not just the merits.
- 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: Or couldn't the agency
- 7 at that point say, you know, the ground on
- 8 which you charge this patent is invalid is not
- 9 a ground we can review at this time?
- 10 MR. BOND: Right. Exactly right.
- 11 They -- they could as well say that you have
- 12 challenged this on 112 under indefiniteness or
- under Section 101, and it's a law of nature
- challenge, and that's not properly presented to
- 15 us. They could say on those grounds or you are
- 16 estopped and we're not going to consider
- 17 those -- those --
- 18 JUSTICE KAGAN: And then it would
- 19 seem, I mean, that would be a strange kind of
- thing to say, well, you can't challenge on that
- 21 ground, but we're going to issue a decision as
- 22 to patentability.
- MR. BOND: Exactly right. So you're
- forced with either the PTO -- the PTAB either
- 25 deciding we're not going to review this ground

- 1 and then that gets baked into the final
- 2 decision and treated as a merits ruling, which
- 3 can then be appealed to the Federal Circuit and
- 4 creates circumvention of Cuozzo, or you're
- 5 forcing the Board to decide the merits,
- 6 notwithstanding the fact that it didn't
- 7 institute review, didn't get submissions from
- 8 the parties at the merits stage, and didn't
- 9 apply the different standards that apply at the
- 10 merits stage of IPR proceedings.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It -- it
- 12 didn't institute review, but it issued a quite
- 13 lengthy decision on -- addressing the issues,
- 14 right?
- MR. BOND: It issued a lengthy
- decision, about half as long as the final
- 17 decision, but they're different in kind. And
- 18 I'd like to emphasize a few ways that they
- 19 differ.
- 20 So, importantly, when the Board denies
- 21 review, it often is denying review for some
- threshold reason based on a failing in the
- 23 petition presented to it, not deciding
- 24 patentability at the end.
- 25 So a good example here is at Petition

- 1 Appendix page 115a to 116a where the Board
- denies institution of claims 11 through 16.
- 3 Those claims are what are known as
- 4 means-plus-function claims, where under Section
- 5 1112(f) -- or 112(f) their meaning is
- 6 determined by a particular structure set forth
- 7 in the specification, not in the claim itself.
- 8 Accordingly, the Board's regulations
- 9 -- and this is 42.104 -- require a petition for
- inter partes review to identify what structure
- do you think determines the construction of
- this claim so that we, the Board, can determine
- if it's unpatentable?
- 14 The Board said at 115, the petition
- didn't identify what structure it was that the
- 16 Petitioner thought informed the construction or
- 17 the interpretation of these claims.
- So a fortiori, we can't determine
- 19 patentability based on your submission.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How often --
- 21 how often does it issue decisions -- written
- decisions at this stage in determining whether
- 23 to institute inter partes review?
- MR. BOND: So I -- I don't have
- 25 statistics on how frequently it issues

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1 decisions of this kind. We think it is the
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- 2 Board's ordinary practice, and we think for two
- 3 reasons that is actually a good practice that
- 4 the Board, in its discretion, has -- has
- 5 adopted.
- 6 It's helpful for the Board itself
- 7 because, if the Board institutes review, it
- 8 then -- the judges of the panel or whatever
- 9 panel is assigned to it, then have a very short
- 10 window set by statute to determine the merits
- of this proceeding after the administrative
- 12 trial is complete.
- 13 And, second, it's beneficial for the
- 14 parties to this case and other cases to know
- what it is the Board is looking for in this
- 16 relatively new statutory scheme when it
- 17 institutes review and exercises its discretion.
- 18 That discussion at page 115A of the
- 19 petition appendix is illustrative. It shows
- other parties in the future, if you actually
- 21 don't follow our rule and include the kind of
- 22 structure that we say you must, because 112(f)
- requires us to look at that in construing the
- 24 claim, we are unlikely to grant review on your
- 25 petition.

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1
               That's instructive to the bar and the
 2
      patent bar and to the patent community --
 3
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I thought --
               MR. BOND: -- to know how --
 4
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- that that was
 5
 6
      the very reason given by the Board in
 7
      encouraging these kinds of opinions to be
      written.
 8
 9
               MR. BOND: That's precisely right,
      that it's useful to the patent -- it's useful
10
      to the patent bar and useful to the community
11
12
      to know --
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So the Patent
13
14
      Board basically told the public, we're issuing
15
      these decisions for educational purposes?
               MR. BOND: That's right, it -- to
16
17
      educate the -- the -- the public and the patent
      bar and also itself and its panels on what the
18
      nature of this suit is or what -- what this
19
20
      dispute is and what it looks for in the future.
               But, in any event, even if the patent
21
      -- even if the Board could adopt a more
22
      efficient method of partial institution, we
23
      think that's beside the point of the question
24
      presented to you today.
25
```

1	Whether the Board could achieve more
2	efficient partial institution with a thumbs up
3	or thumbs down is not a reason for the Board to
4	jettison that system entirely and adopt this
5	much more inefficient approach where it lacks
6	discretion over the one thing that is common to
7	patent law. The default rule in patent law is
8	that claims are evaluated independently. In
9	litigation, each claim is independently
10	presumed valid under Section 282.
11	It would be highly incongruous for
12	Congress to say, when the expert agency is
13	reviewing patents it has issued, it lacks
14	discretion to constrain the scope of its review
15	and lacks discretion to do what is ordinarily
16	the rule in patent law. And indeed, the rule
17	in discretionary review generally, we're not
18	aware of any context in which a tribunal vested
19	with discretionary review authority is put to
20	this choice of reviewing all
21	JUSTICE GORSUCH: What do you say
22	about our our last argument, where a lot of
23	our attention focused on Congress's putative
24	intention to to want to move things to an
2.5	expert agency and and speed things along.

- 1 make it more efficient?
- 2 Could -- could that be a reason here
- 3 why Congress might have wanted the Patent
- 4 Office to review any -- and -- and issue a
- 5 final decision on any and all claims brought to
- 6 it?
- 7 MR. BOND: So, two points. We don't
- 8 think that it would be more efficient in a
- 9 sense of making things go faster. If the Board
- 10 --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: No, I -- no, surely,
- not necessarily efficient from the -- the PTO's
- perspective, but efficient from the economy's
- 14 perspective.
- MR. BOND: So -- so then two points on
- 16 the -- on the economy benefit point. It's not
- 17 going to benefit the economy first if the PTO
- is put to a choice between not instituting
- 19 review at all, that is, no benefit to the
- 20 economy, or spinning its wheels on claims in a
- 21 patent on --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: But it could do what
- 23 Justice Kennedy said. That -- that would --
- 24 everybody agrees would remain an available
- 25 choice.

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1
               MR. BOND: It could indeed do that,
 2
      and that, we think, highlights that this is
 3
      consistent with Congress's goals. If it could
      achieve -- achieve the same result in two more
 4
      cumbersome steps -- two more cumbersome steps,
 5
 6
      it makes sense that Congress did not intend to
 7
      preclude it from doing so through this natural
 8
 9
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, it would
      require consent by the -- by the litigant in
10
      that case, whereas here, this litigant took the
11
12
      view that I really want an adjudication on
      everything that -- would it be crazy to suppose
13
14
      that Congress might have wanted that as a way
15
      to achieve maximum efficiency through this
      administrative process?
16
               MR. BOND: So --
17
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: For the -- from the
18
19
      economy's perspective?
               MR. BOND: We don't think the consent
20
      issue is fundamentally different, because if a
21
22
      petitioner, again, comes in and says, I want
23
      IPR on claims 1 through 10, and the Board says,
24
      we'll give you IPR on 1 through 5, the
      petitioner can, in effect, walk away if they
25
```

- 1 can just simply agree with the patent owner to
- 2 say, look, we drop our IPR challenge, I'll go
- 3 back to the infringement suit where you sued me
- 4 and presumably want to litigate, and we'll
- 5 litigate that there. That's permitted under
- 6 Section 317.
- 7 Now, to be sure, the Board at that
- 8 point can proceed to adjudicate in its own --
- 9 within its own proceeding the underlying
- 10 claims, but that has nothing to do with the
- 11 rights or consent of the parties inter se.
- 12 And I think to the -- the underlying
- 13 question here is isn't this meant as a
- substitute for litigation? And we think the
- 15 statute itself makes clear that that's not the
- 16 design of inter partes review.
- 17 The limited scope -- so it's limited
- 18 to 102 and 103, it's limited to particular
- 19 prior art, and it's limited only to particular
- 20 claims that this petitioner brings to the PTO.
- 21 It can't be viewed as a substitute for
- 22 litigation such that someone could reasonably
- look at the scheme and say Congress wanted all
- of these claims decided either in one forum or
- 25 the other. It's baked into the scheme that

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1 there will be this potential for some claims to
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- 2 be reviewed by the PTO and others in court.
- 3 And partial institution actually
- 4 enhances the efficiency and harmonious working
- of these two things because the -- the Board
- 6 can say, look, you've got a solid challenge on
- 7 claim number 1, we will review that. The rest
- 8 of them we don't think have met our standard,
- 9 or we exercise our discretion not to review
- 10 them. We're releasing those to the district
- 11 court, so the district court litigation can
- 12 proceed, and we'll deal with this one, and the
- 13 district court can decide what to do.
- 14 Petitioner's position, by contrast,
- 15 creates, I think, an incentive at least for
- 16 parties to seek to tie up district court
- 17 litigation by seeking IPR.
- And the example we gave in, I think,
- 19 page 39 and 40 of our brief is where an -- an
- 20 entity sued for infringement, can then, on a
- 21 strong patent claim, can take that claim to
- 22 IPR, add on some weak and vulnerable claims and
- ask the PTO to grant review.
- 24 If the Board's only choice is to grant
- all or nothing and it grants all, then the

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1 district court is very likely, we think -- at
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- 2 -- at least there's a possibility, that it will
- 3 stay the district court litigation, and the
- 4 alleged infringer has effectively slowed down
- 5 the district court litigation over claims that
- 6 had nothing to do with that suit.
- 7 That possibility, we think, is
- 8 inherent in Petitioner's approach that puts the
- 9 agency to that kind of choice, whereas --
- 10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Are you relying at
- all on the notion that this entire inter partes
- scheme is to give the agency a chance to take a
- 13 second look to correct its error; therefore, it
- 14 should not be the petitioner who controls what
- the agency will consider?
- MR. BOND: Yes, Your Honor. And I
- 17 think that that's an important feature of inter
- 18 partes review, that this notion of master of
- 19 the complaint just doesn't translate here, one,
- 20 because Section 311(b) doesn't say you may get
- 21 review of anything you want, but you may get
- 22 review only of these kinds of things, but more
- 23 fundamentally because the point of this scheme
- is to give the agency an opportunity to
- 25 reconsider decisions in the form of patent

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1 claims it's previously issued.
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- 2 It doesn't make any sense to give the
- 3 Board complete --
- 4 JUSTICE GORSUCH: It can --
- 5 MR. BOND: -- discretion --
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- it can still do
- 7 that through ex parte proceedings reviewability
- 8 on its own anytime, right?
- 9 MR. BOND: Well, ex parte --
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Those are -- those
- 11 still exist? They --
- MR. BOND: They do still exist.
- 13 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah.
- MR. BOND: They have a different
- 15 standard --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah, yeah.
- 17 MR. BOND: -- and Congress thought
- 18 that wasn't sufficient and adopted this
- 19 additional mechanism.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Right, right.
- 21 MR. BOND: And so Congress, in giving
- the agency authority and discretion to deny
- 23 review entirely and so much discretion over the
- 24 way these proceedings work, we think it's
- 25 simply improbable that Congress would have

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1 given the agency all the discretion, except
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- 2 over the scope of which claims it will
- 3 institute and particularly given that the
- 4 background rule of patent law is that it will
- 5 -- it will examine claims one by one.
- If there are no further questions.
- We ask that you affirm.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 9 counsel.
- 10 Mr. Castanias, four minutes.
- 11 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT BY GREGORY A. CASTANIAS
- 12 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- MR. CASTANIAS: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 14 Justice.
- I have three specific responses to
- points made by my friend and then four broader
- 17 points that I hope I'll be able to get in in my
- 18 limited time.
- 19 Justice Kagan, your colloquy with my
- 20 friend here was about 101 and 112. That's
- 21 answered by the scope provision of Section
- 22 311(b). That limits inter partes reviews to
- 23 102 and 103 challenges in the first instance.
- Mr. Chief Justice, you had a colloquy
- with my friend about the lengthy decision that

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1 was entered at the institution phase here. And
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- 2 my friend responded to you that this was a
- failure to follow the rules of the tribunal.
- 4 This was a merits decision that was
- 5 made. It said that we had failed to show the
- 6 corresponding structure, which is a requirement
- 7 of the law under Section 112-6. And if we had
- 8 had a challenge to that that we wanted to
- 9 appeal, we should have been able to have that
- 10 finalized, it -- via estopping, and also
- 11 appealable for us.
- 12 Justice Sotomayor, you asked the
- 13 question about what the education purpose is of
- 14 the institution decision. Our point is that
- 15 education can come from an appealable and
- 16 estopping decision.
- Now, the broader points, Justice
- 18 Breyer, you, in your colloquy with my friend,
- 19 rewrote the statute for him to get to the place
- 20 he wanted to go. You said the statute should
- 21 be read as "any patent claim that is the
- 22 subject of inter partes review and" -- that's
- 23 not what the statute says.
- 24 JUSTICE BREYER: No, I just mentioned
- that the word "any" is ambiguous.

Τ	MR. CASTANIAS: Well, it's only
2	ambiguous absent context. And as as we
3	showed, the Rosenwasser case, when you have
4	"shall" and "any" in the same way that that
5	minimum wage statute was was worded, "any"
6	here doesn't mean you may have any vegetable on
7	the menu. It doesn't that obviously doesn't
8	mean you can you you must have
9	everything
LO	JUSTICE BREYER: Just ambiguous in
L1	between whether they're referring to a claim in
L2	which it has been granted or whether they're
L3	referring to any claim in the petition.
L4	MR. CASTANIAS: Well
L5	JUSTICE BREYER: Ambiguous as to
L6	between those two things, it seemed ambiguous.
L7	MR. CASTANIAS: And that is where,
L8	Justice Breyer, this Court's decision in
L9	Utility Air, that made clear that a statutory
20	provision that may seem ambiguous in isolation
21	is often clarified by the remainder of the
22	statutory scheme because only one of the
23	permissible
24	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Let me ask you
25	MR. CASTANIAS: meanings produces a

- 1 substantive effect.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You talked about
- 3 canceled claims. How about settled claims?
- 4 Say, in the middle of the proceedings, you
- 5 settle a claim.
- 6 Under your theory, the Board would
- 7 still have to address that?
- 8 MR. CASTANIAS: I -- I think that if
- 9 we are saying we are no longer challenging that
- 10 -- it's no longer a claim challenged by the
- 11 petitioner. The settlement presumably --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It's in the
- 13 petition.
- MR. CASTANIAS: The settlement
- 15 would --
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What gives you a
- 17 right to drop it then?
- 18 MR. CASTANIAS: Because the language
- of 318(a) is "by the petitioner." And that's
- 20 what the context tells us about that.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Castanias, while
- we're on the statute, I understand that this is
- your argument for why there has to be a final
- 24 decision with respect to every claim
- 25 challenged, by, you know, however you -- but

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1 you're still saying that -- that you're not
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- 2 challenging the -- the partial institution. Is
- 3 that right?
- 4 MR. CASTANIAS: But we're -- we're not
- 5 challenging --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: And I guess here's my
- 7 question --
- 8 MR. CASTANIAS: Okay, yes.
- 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- is what language
- 10 says that partial institution is not
- 11 permissible?
- MR. CASTANIAS: The fact that the
- 13 Board has already given the discretion whether
- 14 to institute. The discretion whether to
- institute does not hide inside it a secret
- 16 second level of discretion to decide to
- institute anything other than the petition.
- 18 JUSTICE KAGAN: I think I'm not
- 19 understanding. Could you just point me to the
- 20 -- the language that you're saying. That's --
- MR. CASTANIAS: It's --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: -- the thing that you
- 23 can't --
- MR. CASTANIAS: It's in Section --
- it's in Section 314(b), Timing. And it says,

- 1 "The director shall determine whether to
- 2 institute an inter partes review."
- And we say that's a binary choice, and
- 4 we say that's consistent with the if/then
- 5 language of Section 318.
- 6 To -- to Justice Gorsuch's colloquy
- 7 with my friend, there is no interpretation
- 8 here. No evaluation at all, even in the
- 9 institution regulation of Section 318(a). So I
- don't know what we're possibly deferring to
- 11 here with regard to the language of Section
- 12 318(a).
- The Section 314(a) did -- didn't
- 14 address it. The Section 314(a) regulation
- didn't address it in the Federal Register. And
- as you pointed out, Justice Gorsuch, (a) (2)
- 17 talks about grounds to institute. It's not a
- 18 weeding-out function and it's not a final
- 19 written decision regulation.
- 20 On reviewability, our yellow brief I
- 21 think tells the tale. This is not the same
- 22 section. And it is -- it certainly would be,
- in the words of Justice Alito, shenanigans, if
- 24 the Board is allowed to fail to follow the
- 25 regulation here.

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CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I thought you
 1
      were being overly ambitious when you said you'd
 2
      get to four points in rebuttal, but thank you,
 3
      counsel.
 4
 5
               (Laughter.)
 6
               MR. CASTANIAS: My last point was
 7
      efficiency, Your Honor.
               (Laughter.)
 8
 9
               MR. CASTANIAS: Thank you.
10
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The case is
11
      submitted.
12
               (Whereupon, at 12:09 p.m., the case
13
      was submitted.)
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
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#### 12 32:4.7.9.12 33:9 agree [10] 6:15 34:21 38:14,15 40: assuming [1] 6:24 1 40 [1] 63:19 10 **45**:16 **46**:2 **48**:13 **53**:19 **62**:1 attention [1] 59:23 **1** [5] **13:**21 **39:**22 **61:**23.24 **63:**7 42.104 [1] 56:9 agrees [1] 60:24 authority [13] 31:9 33:18 41:24 46: **10** [6] **13**:21 **26**:1.3 **27**:2 **29**:18 **61**: 48702 [1] 12:4 Ahh [1] 5:23 19 **47**:11 **48**:9,18,25 **49**:1 **51**:5,12 aims [1] 52:2 **59**:19 **65**:22 5 101 [2] 54:13 66:20 Air [1] 68:19 authorized [1] 3:12 **102** [4] **16**:3 **20**:19 **62**:18 **66**:23 5 [1] 61:24 ALITO [10] 32:1 36:2.17 37:7.23 available [1] 60:24 103 [4] 16:3 20:19 62:18 66:23 50 [1] 35:10 38:1 41:11 44:10 52:19 71:23 aware [1] 59:18 11 [2] 31:20 56:2 6 Alito's [1] 44:5 away [1] 61:25 11:09 [2] 1:17 3:2 all-encompassing [1] 40:22 66 [1] 2:10 В 1112(f [1] 56:5 all-or-nothing [1] 52:6 112 [2] 54:12 66:20 7 back [6] 14:8 18:17 20:17 35:15 alleged [4] 13:19 34:23 35:11 64:4 112(f [2] 56:5 57:22 40.7 62.3 77 [1] 12:4 allow [1] 25:16 112-6 [1] 67:7 background [1] 66:4 allowed [2] 50:11 71:24 8 115 [1] 56:14 bad [2] 24:14 29:8 allowing [1] 30:5 115a [2] 56:1 57:18 bailiwick [1] 23:18 8 [1] 13:21 alone [2] 37:1 44:21 116a [1] 56:1 baked [2] 55:1 62:25 already [3] 35:4 52:8 70:13 A 11A [1] 36:15 bar [5] 37:11 58:1,2,11,18 ambiguity [6] 28:4,18 29:4 36:4, a)(2 [6] 47:24 48:1.8 49:6.12 71:16 12(b)(6 [1] 54:3 based [4] 52:10 54:4 55:22 56:19 19 42:15 a)(4 [4] 47:16,18,25 48:2 12:09 [1] 72:12 basically [2] 7:1 58:14 ambiguous [11] 28:17 36:10 39: a.m [2] 1:17 3:2 basis [7] 8:14,18,18,22 10:10 35: 13 [2] 26:9,10 23 43:2.15 67:25 68:2.10.15.16.20 ability [1] 49:10 22 49:11 14 [2] 26:9,10 ambitious [1] 72:2 able [4] 16:4 43:10 66:17 67:9 15 [1] 19:7 begin [1] 4:1 amendment [3] 27:19 41:8 9 above-entitled [1] 1:15 16 [11] 9:23 12:20,23 13:6,8,22 14: beginning [2] 8:17 18:6 America [1] 17:18 absence [1] 50:16 behalf [8] 1:20,23 2:4,7,10 3:8 30: 7 18:18 29:18 31:21 56:2 amicus [1] 24:17 absent [1] 68:2 16-969 [1] 3:4 18 66:12 Among [1] 18:5 absolutely [1] 7:20 17(a [1] 48:12 believe [2] 5:3 21:4 amount [1] 14:21 accomplish [1] 32:20 beneficial [1] 57:13 2 another [3] 39:3 42:8 43:9 Accordingly [1] 56:8 benefit [4] 52:16 60:16.17.19 answer [9] 16:25 23:21 28:13,14 2 [11] 13:21 25:5,7,13 29:18 31:20 account [1] 8:9 beside [1] 58:24 36:22 42:10,13 43:1 44:4 **32:**4.7.13 **33:**4.7 achieve [4] 59:1 61:4.4.15 best [2] 24:9 42:12 answered [1] 66:21 2012 [1] 14:14 achieving [1] 52:16 between [6] 15:13,23 17:11 60:18 anticipated [1] 46:14 **2017** [1] **1:**13 across [2] 33:19.24 **68:**11,16 anticipates [1] 29:12 22 [1] 29:11 Act [2] 3:21 17:19 beyond [1] 45:14 anvtime [1] 65:8 **27** [1] **1**:13 actually [21] 4:20 5:11 7:6 9:5 17: binary [5] 12:16 13:1 19:23 20:2 anyway [1] 19:18 282 [1] 59:10 14 **24**:19 **25**:6.21 **27**:13 **32**:6.9 **39**: 71:3 apart [1] 53:20 12 **40**:16 **41**:6 **42**:6,9 **51**:23 **52**:3 bit [1] 23:11 apparently [1] 13:14 **57:**3,20 **63:**3 Board [91] 3:12.17 4:25 5:4.17 6: Appeal [12] 3:12 5:22 6:11 7:11,14 3 [3] 2:4 13:21 20:7 add [1] 63:22 12 7:1.6.7.11 8:7.16.17 9:11 10:5. 8:14 16:6 20:22 27:1 29:25 36:6 30 [1] 2:7 added [3] 40:20 41:8.9 22 13:13 15:9.19 16:6 17:2 19:11. **67**:9 304 [2] 50:11 51:3 addition [1] 28:19 16.21 **20:**4.8.9.22 **21:**2.11 **22:**2.5.7. appealable [2] 67:11,15 **311** [2] **17:**22,23 additional [3] 25:7 53:18 65:19 17 **23**:1.17 **25**:4.9 **29**:9.14.22.24 appealed [3] 26:23 53:5 55:3 311(b [3] 17:24 64:20 66:22 address [6] 41:4,5,7 69:7 71:14, 31:8,12,24 32:11,22 33:3,13,16,17, appeals [1] 32:9 312 [1] 18:2 19,24 **34**:4 **36**:6 **41**:4 **46**:20,23 **47**: APPEARANCES [1] 1:19 314 [8] 18:7 21:23 22:18 43:23 44: addressed [2] 8:10 42:22 3 **48**:7,9 **49**:20 **50**:4,21,21 **51**:11 appellate [5] 9:1 10:9,13 24:21 25: 14 45:6,16 46:7 addressing [2] 4:18 55:13 **52**:7,20 **53**:11 **55**:5,20 **56**:1,12,14 314(a 6 8:3,5 49:14,24 71:13,14 adiudicate [3] 16:24 17:3 62:8 **57**:4,6,7,15 **58**:6,14,22 **59**:1,3 **60**: Appendix [4] 10:2 36:15 56:1 57: 314(b [1] 70:25 adjudicating [1] 17:6 9 61:23 62:7 63:5 65:3 69:6 70:13 314(d [2] 31:21 51:12 adjudication [2] 5:2 61:12 apply [3] 16:14 55:9.9 316 [2] 47:9 49:23 adiudications [3] 4:17 30:7,9 Board's [11] 4:16 31:18 34:17 48: approach [4] 52:1,7 59:5 64:8 316(a [1] 42:20 administrative [2] 57:11 61:16 4 49:8.9 50:7 51:25 56:8 57:2 63: aren't [1] 43:8 316(a)(11 [1] 49:19 adopt [2] 58:22 59:4 arque [2] 11:12,12 316(a)(4 [1] 47:14 adopted [3] 43:2 57:5 65:18 boil [1] 51:21 argument [14] 1:16 2:2,5,8 3:4,7 316(b [2] 47:6 51:19 adopting [2] 47:6 51:20 bolstered [1] 29:21 **11**:16 **15**:4 **30**:8,17 **31**:5 **59**:22 **66**: 316(d [2] 40:20 41:9 advance [1] 53:22 bolstering [2] 24:15 29:8 11 69:23 317 [1] 62:6 advantage [3] 11:7,10,11 BOND [64] 1:22 2:6 30:16,17,19,22 arguments [2] 29:23 52:11 **318** [6] **12**:23 **13**:9 **28**:25 **44**:1 **45**: adverse [1] 24:21 **32**:6,21 **33**:16,23 **34**:15 **35**:8 **36**: around [3] 5:24 7:17 44:25 20 71:5 affect [1] 48:22 11,20 **37**:14,25 **38**:3,24 **39**:2,12 art [3] 33:7.8 62:19 318(a [13] 5:4 8:10 12:10,12 21:21 affirm [1] 66:7 40:1,10 41:20 42:18 43:13 44:3, artificiality [1] 34:3 36:3 40:12,18 41:2,14 69:19 71:9, agencies [1] 30:9 15 45:12,15,20,23 46:3,12,16 47:2, asserted [1] 14:2 12 agency [17] 30:6 31:1 42:13,15,20 13,22 **48**:1,20 **49**:3,8,17 **50**:17 **51**: assess [1] 49:10 39 [1] 63:19

assigned [1] 57:9

**Assistant** [1] 1:22

Assume [1] 21:22

**43**:3,6,19 **54**:6 **59**:12,25 **64**:9,12,

15,24 65:22 66:1

agency's [1] 54:4

4

4 [12] 5:19 13:21 14:3 20:7 25:5,6,

10 53:9 54:10.23 55:15 56:24 58:

4.9.16 **60**:7.15 **61**:1.17.20 **64**:16

**65:**5.9.12.14.17.21

8 64:19

both [3] 15:14.15 52:1 bother [3] 18:8,9 19:2 bound [1] 24:21 BREYER [22] 25:17,20 26:7,11,16 **27**:8,12,20,24 **28**:2 **30**:21 **38**:13, 25 **39**:20 **40**:3 **42**:6 **43**:1 **67**:18,24 68:10 15 18 Breyer's [1] 7:24 brief 5 25:2 36:15 48:12 63:19 71: briefing [1] 32:8 briefs [1] 24:18 brings [2] 34:25 62:20 broad [2] 31:24 44:21 broader [4] 32:10 40:12 66:16 67: 17 brought [1] 60:5 burden [1] 13:14 business [1] 17:5 C

calls [1] 7:9 came [1] 1:15 canceled [9] 15:5,8,13,24 16:1,15 **17**:11 **41**:25 **69**:3 capaciously [1] 44:21 capture [1] 18:22 carve [1] 23:18 Case [25] 3:4 4:7.8 5:21 8:2 9:20 10:2,14 12:1 14:1,21 19:5 23:7 24: 18 **25**:1,3 **29**:10 **34**:23,25 **41**:22 **57**:14 **61**:11 **68**:3 **72**:10,12 cases [2] 24:8 57:14 CASTANIAS [87] 1:20 2:3,9 3:6,7, 9 **4**:4,13,21 **5**:3,10,16,25 **6**:3,6,16, 20 **7**:4,18,24 **8**:21 **9**:4,7,10,15 **10**: 12,17,20 **11**:15,21 **12**:20,25 **13**:7, 12 **14**:13,20,24 **15**:2,3,6,11,22 **16**: 17.22 **17**:7.13 **18**:13.19.24 **19**:15. 19 **20**:9 **21**:3.8.14.17.24 **22**:10 **23**: 3.20 **25**:19 **26**:5.10.14 **27**:8.16.22 28:1.14 66:10.11.13 68:1.14.17.25 **69**:8,14,18,21 **70**:4,8,12,21,24 **72**: 6,9 cause [1] 41:21 certain [3] 4:11 13:24 31:1 certainly [4] 6:16,20 48:8 71:22 certiorari [1] 39:19 challenge [20] 8:2,19 10:25 11:5 **16**:4 **18**:11.12.16 **19**:7.12 **20**:12 31:4 34:8 37:9 43:7 54:14,20 62:2 63:6 67:8 challenged [44] 3:14.19 12:7 13:3 **16**:11.15.18 **17**:13 **18**:5.18 **22**:4.8 27:18 36:9,21,24 37:2,4,5,9,10,11, 15,16,17 38:6,19 39:4,10,15 40:19 **41**:6,19 **42**:4 **43**:22,24,25 **44**:11, 13,20 52:22 54:12 69:10,25 challenger [1] 34:16 challengers [1] 34:12 challenges [4] 9:23 20:6 45:2 66: challenging [9] 4:15,16,17,22 7: 22 8:4 69:9 70:2.5

chance [1] 64:12 change [1] 44:12 chapter [3] 17:17,18 36:6 charge [1] 54:8 Chevron [1] 28:25 CHIEF [16] 3:3,9 30:14,19 32:2,15 35:6 39:8 42:24 55:11 56:20 66:8, 13 24 72.1 10 choice [12] 12:16 19:23 20:2 23:5 24:3 52:7 59:20 60:18.25 63:24 64:9 71:3 choose [3] 18:10.16 51:4 chosen [1] 18:16 Circuit [5] 14:15 25:11 53:6.6 55:3 circumstance [2] 34:1 44:16 circumstances [1] 32:23 circumvention [1] 55:4 claim [84] 3:19 5:19 8:20 11:1 14:2, 3 **15**:13,14,24 **16**:1,2,23 **17**:12,12, 15,16 **18:**5,10 **19:**10 **22:**8,23 **25:**5, 5,6,6,12,13,15,15,16 29:18 32:4,4, 7,7,9,12,13,25 **33:**1,2,4,7,9,15 **36:** 8 **38**:18.21.21 **39**:10 **40**:13.18.19 **41**:15.17.19.22 **42**:4.14.23 **43**:21 **44**:12 **45**:9 **46**:10 **48**:6.19 **49**:15 **51**:17,17 **53**:16,21 **56**:7,12 **57**:24 **59**:9 **63**:7,21,21 **67**:21 **68**:11,13 69:5,10,24 claim-by-claim [2] 46:15 49:11 claimed [1] 20:6 claims [91] 3:14 4:11,19 5:1,6,8,14 6:13 8:8 9:12,14,24 10:6 11:14 12: 7,21 **13**:3,21,22,25 **14**:8 **15**:5,8,10 **16**:15 **18**:12 **19**:13,17 **20**:2,7,13 **21**:15.16 **22**:4 **23**:14.14 **24**:9.22 26:1.3 27:1 29:18.20 30:24 31:6. 10.14.20 32:17.23 35:15 41:5.8.25. 25 **42**:2 **43**:6,24,25 **44**:18 **46**:21 **47:**7 **49:**1,25 **50:**25 **51:**2 **52:**3,5,8, 22,24 53:2 56:2,3,4,17 59:8 60:5, 20 61:23 62:10,20,24 63:1,22 64: 5 65:1 66:2,5 69:3,3 clarified [1] 68:21 clarifying [1] 41:2 clause [4] 37:21 38:9 39:6,17 clear [8] 4:15 7:25 32:6 43:14 48: 24 **51**:15 **62**:15 **68**:19 clearly [3] 35:24 51:7,11 clears [1] 50:1 clerk [1] 27:13 close [3] 32:10,12,14 closely [1] 33:2 closely-enough [1] 32:23 closer [1] 33:10 colloquy [6] 22:11 31:17 66:19,24 **67**:18 **71**:6 come [2] 6:11 67:15 comes [2] 23:13 61:22 command [1] 3:23 commanded [1] 16:10 **Commission** [1] **43**:12 common [1] 59:6 community [2] 58:2,11

COMPLEMENTSOFT [6] 1:8 5: 20 9:23 13:19 14:2 20:20 complete [4] 9:21 50:4 57:12 65:3 completion [1] 49:21 complicated [1] 39:9 conceded [1] 33:20 concerns [1] 47:18 conclude [2] 8:18 49:25 conditional [2] 4:6 6 conducted [1] 35:22 conferred [1] 31:24 confirm [1] 25:15 Congress [29] 12:13 23:15 30:23 32:21 34:9 41:11 42:9,19 43:1,14, 16,19,25 44:6,6 46:17 49:18 50:6 **51**:14,19 **52**:17 **59**:12 **60**:3 **61**:6, 14 62:23 65:17,21,25 Congress's [2] 59:23 61:3 consent [3] 61:10,20 62:11 conserve [1] 47:5 consider [3] 51:19 54:16 64:15 considered [3] 12:5 11 43:8 consistent [9] 15:18 20:3 35:21 39:13 43:17 51:18 52:1 61:3 71:4 constrain [1] 59:14 construction [3] 42:23 56:11,16 construing [1] 57:23 contact [1] 20:5 contains [1] 25:7 contentions [1] 14:1 contested [1] 35:10 contesting [2] 11:19,22 context [13] 3:21 23:15 37:15,20 **38**:8 **40**:6,12,12 **44**:23 **50**:3 **59**:18 68:2 69:20 contrast [1] 63:14 contravention [1] 10:8 controls [1] 64:14 convinced [1] 53:14 correct [1] 64:13 corresponding [1] 67:6 couldn't [3] 33:12 45:5 54:6 counsel [3] 30:15 66:9 72:4 couple [2] 36:11 53:9 course [3] 18:24 35:11 44:25 COURT [37] 1:1.16 3:10 7:25 9:1. 18 **10:**9.13 **14:**16 **15:**25 **18:**17.18 20:13 24:13 26:25 27:3 29:7 30:5. 20 32:8 34:14,24 35:2,4,16 36:13 39:19 51:22 54:2 63:2,11,11,13, 16 64 1 3 5 Court's [3] 31:22 35:9 68:18 courts [1] 30:2 cover [1] 48:14 crazy [1] 61:13 creates [2] 55:4 63:15 creating [1] 52:13 crux [1] 31:16 cumbersome [3] 34:5 61:5.5 Cuozzo [16] 5:24 6:14.15 7:17.25 8:10 23:7 24:13 29:7.21 31:22 42: 21.22 47:15 51:22 55:4 complaint [6] 9:18 13:18,19,20 24: cut [2] 9:10 45:6

D.C [3] 1:12,20,23 dah [3] 27:4.4.4 dare [1] 17:20 deal [2] 46:7 63:12 dealing [1] 52:24 decide [17] 5:13 10:10,13,14 11:2 **42**:16 **43**:7,9 **45**:8 **46**:9 **49**:1 **50**:12 53:7,12 55:5 63:13 70:16 decided [5] 10:15 21:20 25:4 43:8 **62**:24 deciding [5] 32:22 53:11,12 54:25 **55**:23 decision [59] 3:18 4:19 5:18.22 7: 2.10.22 8:12 11:20.23 13:2.5.7 15: 9.20 16:19 21:20 23:2.7.9.16.17 24:22 25:10 26:22 29:10,13,22,24 31:5,7,13,18,19,22 32:17 34:17 36:7 40:23 41:3 42:5 45:3 46:11 47:20 49:22 52:21 54:21 55:2,13, 16,17 **60**:5 **66**:25 **67**:4,14,16 **68**: 18 **69**:24 **71**:19 decisions [7] 3:13 29:19 56:21,22 **57:1 58:15 64:25** declaration [1] 9:24 decline [1] 33:13 default [1] 59:7 deferring [1] 71:10 defines [1] 18:3 defining [1] 17:21 definitely [1] 28:3 delegated [3] 31:8 41:23 46:19 delegation [1] 23:10 deliberately [2] 43:2,15 denial [1] 16:1 denies [2] 55:20 56:2 deny [7] 23:23 33:23 50:5 53:17,19, 24 65:22 denvina [2] 33:18 55:21 **Department** [1] 1:23 desian [1] 62:16 designed [1] 34:10 determination [9] 7:9,10 8:1 9:2 13:13 29:12 46:25 48:5 53:7 determine [6] 43:3,6 56:12,18 57: determined [7] 30:25 31:9 32:12 **33**:3 **40**:6 **52**:9 **56**:6 determines [3] 10:24 52:3 56:11 determining [2] 31:2 56:22 differ [1] 55:19 difference [7] 7:23 15:13.23 16:8 46:1 51:9.11 different [9] 22:5 43:22 44:8 50:19 **54:**2 **55:**9,17 **61:**21 **65:**14 difficult [3] 32:5 38:4,8 direct [1] 22:1 directly [1] 21:12 Director [10] 1:6 22:19 41:16 47: 12 **48**:23 **50**:12,13,15 **51**:3 **71**:1 disagrees [1] 25:18 discover [1] 26:25

discretion [25] 19:22 22:20 23:1.

12.23 31:24 32:11.22 35:9 50:4.9 **54**:4 **57**:4,17 **59**:6,14,15 **63**:9 **65**:5, 22,23 66:1 70:13,14,16 discretionary [4] 23:17 39:14 59: 17 19 discussed [1] 35:23 discussion [4] 37:10.11 48:14 57: 18 dismiss [1] 8:15 dismissed [1] 36:5 dispute [8] 15:16 16:21 31:16 32: 11 **34:**20 **42:**1.2 **58:**20 dissatisfied [1] 34:17 distinct [1] 37:3 distinguishes [1] 17:11 district [19] 15:25 18:17,18 20:13 30:5 34:13,24 35:1,3,8,16 54:2 63: 10,11,13,16 64:1,3,5 document [1] 9:21 doing [12] 11:7 21:19 35:5,25 37: 18 **40**:21,24 **45**:3 **48**:23 **49**:9 **51**: 24 61:7 done [3] 27:12 29:15 35:14 doubt [1] 25:22 down [4] 27:13 51:21 59:3 64:4 drop [3] 44:18 62:2 69:17 due [1] 11:3

E

each [2] 18:5 59:9 earlier [2] 22:12 35:24 earthly [1] 25:14 eat [2] 39:24,24 economy [3] 60:16,17,20 economy's [2] 60:13 61:19 educate [1] 58:17 education [2] 67:13.15 educational [1] 58:15 effect [2] 61:25 69:1 effectively [2] 7:8 64:4 efficiency [3] 61:15 63:4 72:7 efficient [6] 58:23 59:2 60:1.8.12. efficiently [1] 51:24 either [10] 10:12 24:18 25:9 29:23 **52:**8,15,16 **54:**24,24 **62:**24 election [1] 20:11 elegant [2] 17:21 22:14 eliminate [1] 33:15 emphasize [1] 55:18 enacted [2] 43:14.16 encompass [3] 40:24 44:7.22 encompassed [1] 49:12 encompasses [3] 40:11.13 48:3 encouraging [1] 58:7 end [7] 13:15 29:16 40:18 41:1,22 45:1 55:24 energies [1] 52:2 engaging [1] 22:11 enhanced [1] 30:23 enhances [1] 63:4 enough [1] 10:25 entered [1] 67:1

entire [3] 27:17 42:1 64:11 entirely [4] 50:5 53:20 59:4 65:23 entitled [6] 13:2 17:23,24 19:12 21:5 22:2 entity [2] 24:4 63:20 entrusted [1] 31:1 error [1] 64:13 especially [1] 50:3 essentially [1] 39:2 establish [1] 48:10 established [1] 30:22 establishes [1] 48:9 establishing [2] 47:18 48:3 estop [1] 29:25 estopped [2] 37:17 54:16 estopping [3] 7:14 67:10,16 evaluate [1] 51:17 evaluated [1] 59:8 evaluation [1] 71:8 Even [7] 13:10 27:19 28:24,25 58: 21 22 71.8 event [4] 31:23 34:13 52:15 58:21 everybody [1] 60:24 everything [4] 11:1 27:1 61:13 68: evidence [2] 10:7.25 ex [3] 50:18 65:7.9

ex-claim [1] 16:23 exactly [16] 4:4,25 5:14 6:2 11:15, 16 **24**:11 **29**:6 **30**:3 **44**:2,3,25 **46**:3 50:15 54:10.23 examination [1] 46:15 examine [1] 66:5 examining [1] 13:11 example [3] 5:19 55:25 63:18 except [3] 25:7 31:20 66:1 excuse [2] 23:20 28:1 exercise [2] 31:23 63:9 exercises [1] 57:17 Exhibit [1] 39:21 exist [3] 17:16 65:11,12 existed [1] 8:19 exists [1] 15:24 expert [5] 9:25 10:8 30:6 59:12,25 explained [1] 32:8 exposing [1] 28:11 express [2] 50:14 51:5 extend [1] 14:25 extent [2] 21:17 43:18

face [1] 8:15 facing [1] 24:10 fact [10] 4:8.18 7:12 8:9 23:22 41: 23 46:5,7 55:6 70:12 fail [1] 71:24 failed [3] 33:4,5 67:5 failing [1] 55:22 fails [1] 31:7 failure [1] 67:3 fair [1] 11:3 fairly [1] 39:9 fall [1] 25:13 falls [1] 25:12

faster [1] 60:9 favor [1] 28:3 favorable [1] 20:23 feature [1] 64:17 Federal [10] 12:3,4,8 14:15 25:11 **30**:1 **53**:6,6 **55**:3 **71**:15 few [2] 10:1 55:18 fewer [1] 3:13 fighting [1] 14:6 figure [1] 43:11 filed [3] 9:21 14:14 22:16 filled [1] 42:15 final [23] 3:13.18 4:19 5:18 8:11 16: 19 **21**:20 **25**:10 **29**:24 **31**:5,7,13 36:7 40:23 41:3 42:5 49:22 52:21 55:1.16 60:5 69:23 71:18 finalized [1] 67:10 finally [1] 24:11 find [7] 21:23 26:24 27:2,17 28:8, 21 47:4

finds [2] 10:23 46:20 fine [1] 10:4 First [14] 3:16 7:4 10:1.19 26:8 30: 8 31:15 35:17 36:12 45:15 46:17 53:10 60:17 66:23 fish [2] 39:24.25 floor [4] 46:18 49:17 51:14,15 focus [2] 45:17 47:7 focused [4] 4:23 22:19 45:16 59: focuses [1] 52:2 focusing [1] 40:15 folding [1] 54:2 follow [4] 24:9 57:21 67:3 71:24 followed [1] 26:6 following [1] 13:17 follows [1] 30:11 foot [1] 40:9 forced [1] 54:24 forces [1] 18:11

forcing [1] 55:5

fortiori [1] 56:18

framing [1] 39:4

frequently [1] 56:25

frivolous [1] 45:9

full [2] 29:13 53:1

future [2] 57:20 58:20

G

free [1] 27:10

front [1] 16:5

21 64:23

**72:**3

71.7

form [2] 53:3 64:25

forum [2] 20:21 62:24

finding [2] 5:19,21

forth [6] 18:9 19:2,5,13 36:14 56:6 found [4] 41:15 46:22 52:24 53:4 four [6] 18:17 36:21.25 66:10.16 friend [7] 32:3 66:16,20,25 67:2,18 function [2] 33:11 71:18 fundamentally [4] 50:19 54:1 61: further [4] 23:25 30:12 45:14 66:6

General [1] 1:22 generally [1] 59:17 gets [2] 50:12 55:1 getting [1] 52:16 GINSBURG [10] 3:24 4:5 11:18,23 **12**:17,22 **13**:4,10 **22**:12 **64**:10 give [6] 11:7 19:17 61:24 64:12,24 given [8] 5:13 15:4 25:8 48:14 58: 6 **66**:1.3 **70**:13 gives [4] 22:19 48:9 50:4 69:16 giving [1] 65:21 goals [3] 52:17 53:23 61:3 GORSUCH [29] 44:24 45:13,19,21, 25 46:6,13 47:1,8,16,23 48:13,21 **49**:7,13 **50**:10 **51**:2 **59**:21 **60**:11, 22 **61**:9,18 **65**:4,6,10,13,16,20 **71**: Gorsuch's [1] 71:6

gave [2] 30:23 63:18

aot [2] 29:19 63:6 govern [1] 48:10 governing [2] 47:18 48:4 government [5] 6:4,7 12:1,5 45:7 grant [21] 5:1,6,9 20:5 21:8 23:23. 24,25 26:2 27:14 32:25 33:1,14, 25 34:6 35:14 48:18 50:14 57:24 63:23 24 granted [9] 35:11,17 38:22 41:18 **48:**7 **51:**5,7,8 **68:**12

granting [1] 32:24 grants [3] 39:19 48:25 63:25 grasping [1] 27:6 gray [1] 48:12 great [2] 23:1 48:14 GREGORY [5] 1:20 2:3.9 3:7 66: ground [7] 37:5,16 53:24 54:7,9,

21.25 grounds [10] 9:22 16:3 18:10 19:3,

5 **48**:15 **49**:5,6 **54**:15 **71**:17 guess [4] 15:12 48:16,24 70:6

н

half [5] 14:12,17,22 35:7 55:16 hands [1] 50:7 hard [5] 27:15,16 37:20,24 38:2 harmonious [1] 63:4 hear [2] 3:3 20:8 heard [1] 20:20 hearing [2] 11:1 19:17 help [4] 25:22 47:8,9 48:17 helpful [3] 32:19 40:16 57:6 helps [1] 25:23 hide [1] 70:15 higher [1] 51:16 highlights [1] 61:2 highly [1] 59:11 hint [1] 28:21 hold [2] 11:1 51:16 Honor [6] 41:21 46:17 50:18 53:10 64:16 72:7 hope [1] 66:17 however [2] 53:17 69:25

entertain [1] 34:8

identical [1] 25:6 identified [1] 24:13 identify [6] 18:4 19:10 30:24 33:6 **56:**10,15 if/then [3] 12:25 13:1 71:4 illustrated [1] 31:17 illustrates [1] 34:2 illustrative [1] 57:19 imagine [2] 25:24 28:6 implicated [1] 51:1 implicitly [1] 39:5 implies [1] 32:24 important [2] 19:25 64:17 importantly [1] 55:20 imposed [1] 23:23 improbable [2] 50:6 65:25 improving [1] 51:23 INC [1] 1:3 incentive [1] 63:15 include [3] 31:13 46:5 57:21 included [3] 9:24 31:6 46:17 includes [2] 44:17 48:17 including [1] 37:21 inclusive [1] 3:22 incomplete [2] 9:13 10:11 incongruous [1] 59:11 inconsistency [1] 50:11 indeed [3] 42:19 59:16 61:1 indefiniteness [1] 54:12 independently [2] 59:8,9 indication [1] 42:17 indicators [1] 28:23 individual [1] 42:2 inefficient [1] 59:5 informed [1] 56:16 infringement [7] 13:20 14:1 34: 25 35:19 37:3 62:3 63:20 infringer [3] 34:24 35:12 64:4 inherent [2] 21:7 64:8 initial [1] 7:9 initially [1] 52:22 initiate [1] 4:16 initiating [1] 21:13 initiation [1] 21:12 initiative [1] 50:21 injected [1] 28:19 inquiry [1] 48:22 inside [1] 70:15 instance [2] 34:16 66:23 **INSTITUTE** [38] 1:3 3:4 7:2.7.22 9: 12 **10:**5.22 **19:**11.23 **22:**20.21.21. 22 **23**:5.6 **25**:4 **29**:17 **31**:9.13.19 **41:**24 **46:**20,24 **47:**3,21 **48:**5,16 **49**:24 **55**:7,12 **56**:23 **66**:3 **70**:14, 15,17 71:2,17 instituted [17] 4:2,3,8,11 12:15,18, 18,24 **13:**2,5 **31:**11 **36:**5 **38:**10,18 39:5 40:14 41:6 institutes [2] 57:7,17 instituting [4] 6:12 8:8 52:23 60: institution [35] 8:3,5,6,7 11:19,23

16:1 21:19 22:2 23:2,7,9,13,16 24: 24 28:22 29:10,16 31:18,19 35:22 **43**:17 **45**:3,16 **51**:25 **53**:10 **56**:2 **58:**23 **59:**2 **63:**3 **67:**1,14 **70:**2,10 71:9 instructive [1] 58:1 intend [1] 61:6 intended [3] 18:22 43:25 44:6 intends [1] 51:9 intention [1] 59:24 inter [37] 3:14 4:1.7 9:16 12:14.24 **14**:6 **17**:18.22.23 **18**:1.12 **22**:15 **24**:13 **26**:8,12 **30**:4,22 **35**:21 **36**:4 **38**:17,19,22 **45**:3 **47**:18,21 **48**:4 **52:**13 **56:**10,23 **62:**11,16 **64:**11,17 66:22 67:22 71:2 Interim [1] 1:6 interpretation [3] 37:8 56:17 71:7 introduced [1] 28:20 invalid [2] 46:22 54:8 invalidated [2] 52:4 10 Invents [1] 17:18 investigate [1] 53:15 invests [1] 19:21 invited [1] 36:12 IPR [22] 29:7 34:20,25 35:12,13,14 **37**:2,2,6,16 **38**:6,7,10,11 **41**:6 **51**: 16 **55**:10 **61**:23,24 **62**:2 **63**:17,22 irrespective [1] 53:18 isn't [4] 14:12 37:19 45:9 62:13 isolation [3] 36:22 37:1 68:20 issue [12] 3:12.17 6:25 9:3 10:19 **36**:7 **47**:15 **49**:16 **54**:21 **56**:21 **60**: 4 61:21 issued [5] 11:25 55:12.15 59:13 65:1

J

itself [7] 36:3,19 43:23 56:7 57:6

issues [3] 30:1 55:13 56:25

issuing [1] 58:14

**58:**18 **62:**15

jettison [1] 59:4 iob [1] 45:10 Joint [1] 10:2 JONATHAN [3] 1:22 2:6 30:17 JOSEPH [1] 1:6 iudges [1] 57:8 judgment [1] 54:3 Justice [169] 1:23 3:3.9.24 4:5.10. 14.24 **5**:5.12.16.23 **6**:1.5.9.18.23 **7**: 5.16.19.24 **8:**13.25 **9:**4.6.9.11 **10:**4 16.18.21 **11**:18.23 **12**:17.22 **13:**4. 10 **14**:10.18.22 **15**:1.3.7.12.22 **16**: 7,20 17:1,10,19 18:8,15,21 19:1, 16,20 20:4,17,24 21:6,10,15,22,25 **22**:10,12,12,24 **23**:4,21 **25**:17,20 **26**:7,11,16 **27**:8,12,20,24 **28**:2 **30**: 14,19,21 32:1,2,15 33:12,21 34:11 **35**:6 **36**:2,17 **37**:7,23 **38**:1,13,25 39:8,20 40:3 41:11 42:6,24 43:1, 20 44:4.10.24 45:13.19.21.25 46:6 13 47:1.8.16.23 48:13.21 49:7.13 50:10 51:2 52:19 54:6.18 55:11

**56**:20 **58**:3,5,13 **59**:21 **60**:11,22, 23 61:9,18 64:10 65:4,6,10,13,16, 20 **66**:8,14,19,24 **67**:12,17,24 **68**: 10,15,18,24 **69:**2,12,16,21 **70:**6,9, 18,22 **71**:6,16,23 **72**:1,10

# Κ KAGAN [21] 15:3,7,12,22 16:7,20

**17**:1,10,19 **22**:12,24 **23**:4,21 **54**:6,

18 66:19 69:21 70:6,9,18,22

keep [3] 9:15 12:15 19:20 keeping [1] 27:15 KENNEDY [5] 20:4 33:12,21 34: 11 60:23 kind [6] 45:6 54:19 55:17 57:1.21 64:9 kinds [3] 41:4 58:7 64:22 known [1] 56:3

language [22] 3:16 4:23 13:23 15:

lacks [3] 59:5.13.15

laid [1] 9:22

19 **16**:14 **17**:10 **22**:4 **24**:5 **25**:21, 22 27:11,18,22 28:3 36:19 40:17 46:1 69:18 70:9,20 71:5,11 last [2] 59:22 72:6 latter [1] 4:22 Laughter [4] 6:22 40:2 72:5,8 law [7] 27:13 54:13 59:7,7,16 66:4 67:7 leading [1] 25:10 least [13] 10:14 13:21,23 35:2 38:2 41:16 46:21 47:4 49:15,25 52:10 63:15 64:2 leave [2] 20:10 43:11 leaves [1] 47:2 left [7] 14:4 41:7 42:19 43:19 45: 22,23 46:4 lengthy [3] 55:13,15 66:25 less [1] 48:24 level [1] 70:16 lies [1] 23:17 likelihood [9] 26:4 41:16 46:22 48: 22 **50**:2 **52**:4,9,25 **53**:4 likely [2] 24:10 64:1 limit [2] 49:20.21 limitation [1] 25:7 limited [7] 11:5 40:25 62:17,17,18, 19 66:18 limits [2] 49:18 66:22 litigant [2] 61:10,11 litigate [6] 11:13,17 35:4,18 62:4,5 litigating [1] 42:11 litigation [16] 9:18 18:23 24:7,9,10 25:10 30:5,11 34:22 59:9 62:14, 22 63:11.17 64:3.5 little [3] 23:11 35:9 48:24 LLC [1] 1:8 loads [1] 40:4 long [3] 14:19 26:9 55:16 longer [10] 15:16,24 16:18,21,23 17:16 35:16 42:4 69:9,10 look [20] 7:5 10:1 25:12 26:1 29:9

35:13 36:3.18.20.25 40:16 45:4 **47**:24 **50**:22,25 **57**:23 **62**:2,23 **63**: 6 64:13 looking [2] 16:9 57:15 looks [1] 58:20 lose [1] 29:23 lot [3] 24:17 28:4 59:22 lower [1] 49:21

### M

made [10] 7:2 10:14 27:2 29:13 33: 10 48:11 53:13 66:16 67:5 68:19 maiority [1] 24:12 mandated [1] 35:2 manv [1] 24:8 master [2] 24:7 64:18 MATAL [2] 1:6 3:5 matter [3] 1:15 23:25 35:8 matters [1] 42:19 maximum [2] 14:21 61:15 mean [17] 6:19 9:8 20:25 21:1 22: 7 24:16 28:4 32:16 36:23 37:13 38:6 39:16 42:3,7 54:19 68:6,8 meaning [2] 43:23 56:5 meanings [1] 68:25 means [6] 8:6,7 16:2 37:11,15 41: means-plus-function [1] 56:4 meant [2] 43:4 62:13 mechanism [1] 65:19 mentioned [1] 67:24 menu [1] 68:7 merits [16] 25:3 39:14,16 53:11,12, 15,18,20 **54**:1,5 **55**:2,5,8,10 **57**:10 met [4] 4:7 13:14 24:23 63:8 method [2] 28:11 58:23 middle [1] 69:4 might [8] 18:13.19 34:12 48:22 53: 19.21 60:3 61:14 mind [6] 9:15 12:15 19:20 27:15 40:7 52:17 minimum [3] 35:23 51:10 68:5 minutes [1] 66:10 mistake [1] 38:17 Monday [1] 1:13 months [2] 14:17 29:14 moreover [2] 24:2 50:8 most [2] 14:12,17 motion [2] 8:14.15 motions [1] 35:10 move [3] 11:24 18:2 59:24 moved [1] 29:15 much [5] 9:17.18 40:25 59:5 65:23 multistage [1] 34:5

## Ν

must [4] 46:23,24 57:22 68:8

narrower [5] 32:7 44:11.13.15.23 natural [1] 61:7 nature [2] 54:13 58:19 necessarily [2] 53:25 60:12 need [4] 15:9 35:16 45:14 53:1 needs [6] 21:2 41:4,5,7 45:8 48:11

never [8] 12:11 18:21,22,25 23:4 26:20 31:10.14 new [4] 40:19 50:23 52:12 57:16 next [1] 3:4 Nine [6] 12:20,22,22 14:7 26:20 27: nobody [1] 43:10 non-frivolous [1] 46:9 non-instituted [2] 15:14 17:12 normally [1] 51:6 nothing [10] 16:24,24 17:3 18:11 **26**:21 **31**:11 **52**:14 **62**:10 **63**:25 **64**: notice [1] 9:19 notion [2] 64:11,18 notwithstanding [1] 55:6 November [1] 1:13 number [4] 13:25 39:22 44:22 63: 0

object [1] 26:1 objecting [1] 25:25 objection [1] 12:5 objections [1] 20:19 obvious [1] 33:7 obviously [2] 24:4 68:7 odd [1] 23:11 Office [15] 1:7 11:25 12:9 13:16.24 14:5 24:23 25:3,17,18 26:17,18 28:20 37:10 60:4 often [5] 39:23 55:21 56:20,21 68: okay [10] 12:22 21:24 26:4,16,18, 22,24 27:4 46:6 70:8 once [3] 10:24 22:16,16 one [42] 10:25 13:5.11.11 15:17 16: 20 19:4,10 20:14 22:18,24 23:12, 19 **24**:16 **26**:3.11.12.18.20.24 **32**: 24 35:17 39:25 40:8 41:24 43:5. 20 45:9 46:9.21 47:4 49:15.25 50: 7 51:7 59:6 62:24 63:12 64:19 66: 5.5 68:22 ones [3] 24:15 29:8 43:7 only [16] 4:10 5:12,13 8:3,8 12:19 13:11,24 19:3 28:18 45:1 62:19 63:24 64:22 68:1,22 opening [5] 28:4 37:21 38:9 39:6, opinion [2] 7:25 24:12 opinions [1] 58:7 opponents [1] 28:9 opportunity [5] 10:7 11:13,17 25: 8 64:24 oral [5] 1:16 2:2,5 3:7 30:17 order [1] 29:14 ordinarily [1] **59**:15 ordinary [3] 24:6 39:13 57:2 original [1] 16:16 originally [1] 15:15 other [22] 6:13,25 7:20 9:14 10:6,6 **11**:10 **15**:14.21 **18**:5 **19**:7.13 **20**:

25 25:16 38:20 44:25 51:8 52:5

57:14.20 62:25 70:17

others [2] 19:6 63:2 otherwise [1] 16:4 ought [3] 10:15 12:6 29:23 out [13] 9:22 12:20,23 23:18 24:14 **25**:2 **27**:3 **29**:7 **43**:11 **44**:18 **47**:9 **48**:19 **71**:16 outer [2] 49:18.19 outset [3] 13:13 19:22 52:25 over [12] 8:22 14:7 18:23 23:13 31: 17 33:7 35:9 42:2 59:6 64:5 65:23 66:2 overly [1] 72:2 own [5] 23:8 50:21 62:8.9 65:8

owner [2] 34:20 62:1

p.m [1] 72:12 PAGE [5] 2:2 36:14 56:1 57:18 63: pages [2] 10:1 29:11 panel [2] 57:8,9 panels [1] 58:18 part [5] 27:5 31:10,14 44:1 48:6 parte [3] 50:18 65:7,9 partes [36] 3:14 4:1,7 9:16 12:14, 24 **14**:6 **17**:18.22.23 **18**:1.12 **22**: 15 24:13 26:8.13 30:4.22 35:21 36:4 38:17.19.22 45:4 47:19.21 48:4 52:13 56:10.23 62:16 64:11. 18 **66**:22 **67**:22 **71**:2 partial [16] 4:17 10:23 21:13,18 22: 1 **28**:21 **31**:18,19 **35**:22 **43**:17 **51**: 25 58:23 59:2 63:3 70:2,10 particular [8] 8:8 22:23 48:6 50: 22,25 **56**:6 **62**:18,19 particularity [1] 19:14 particularly [4] 16:10 19:3 25:1 parties [7] 20:5 42:1 55:8 57:14.

past [1] 40:16 Patent [63] 1:7 3:11,14,19 5:7,20 7: 11,11 **9**:24 **11**:25 **12**:7,9 **13**:3,16, 24 **14**:3,5 **16**:5 **17**:16 **20**:20,22 **22**: 4,8 **24**:22 **25**:3,17,18 **26**:17,18 **28**: 20 30:10,24 34:20 36:6,8 38:18, 21 40:18 41:19 43:6,21 44:12 51: 23 52:3 53:21 54:8 58:2.2.10.11. 13.17.21 59:7.7.16 60:3.21 62:1 63:21 64:25 66:4 67:21

20 62:11 63:16

party [1] 50:20

pass [1] 17:4

patentability [15] 3:19 5:14 7:8 8: 24 10:10.13.15 11:3 14:7 36:8 41: 15 **50**:24 **54**:22 **55**:24 **56**:19 patentable [1] 30:25

patents [4] 24:15 29:8 51:16 59:

pay [1] 20:14 pending [1] 45:2 percent [1] 35:10 perfectly [3] 15:18 35:21 52:1

permissible [4] 31:23 53:8 68:23

**70:**11

permits [1] 21:25 permitted [2] 37:6 62:5 perspective [3] 60:13,14 61:19 petition [29] 9:20 14:14 15:15 16: 16 **18:**3,4 **22:**16,17,22 **27:**19 **33:**5, 9,11,25 43:24 44:1 45:5,18 52:11 **53:**20 **55:**23,25 **56:**9,14 **57:**19,25 68:13 69:13 70:17

Petitioner [41] 1:4.21 2:4.10 3:8. 20 16:12.16.18 17:14 18:1 20:10 22:5.8 24:6 36:9.12.21.24 37:17 **39:**4.11.16 **40:**17.19 **41:**19 **42:**5 43:22 44:11,13,17,21 52:22 56:16 61:22,25 62:20 64:14 66:12 69:11,

Petitioner's [7] 31:4 33:19 34:3 44:8 52:6 63:14 64:8 petitioners [1] 3:15 petitions [1] 51:16 phase [6] 29:16 39:14,17 45:17 53:

phrase [4] 16:11 41:13 44:7.8

phrased [2] 41:13 46:18 pick [2] 43:9 51:4 picks [1] 24:4

place [6] 12:6 31:15 35:17 39:18 **51**:7 **67**:19

plain [3] 3:16,22 45:11 plaintiff [1] 24:7 pleading [1] 9:19 please [3] 3:10 4:13 30:20 point [16] 20:11 24:1 25:23 30:3 40:4 42:13 43:14.16 54:7 58:24 **60**:16 **62**:8 **64**:23 **67**:14 **70**:19 **72**:

pointed [2] 25:2 71:16 points [10] 41:20 45:15 46:16 53:9 60:7,15 66:16,17 67:17 72:3 posed [1] 38:4

position [8] 15:5,8 17:9 24:19 32: 5 **34**:3 **44**:8 **63**:14 possibility [3] 44:18 64:2,7 possible [1] 32:9

possibly [1] 71:10 potential [1] 63:1 power [1] 5:13

practical [3] 16:8 28:8.16 practice [3] 31:3 57:2,3 precedent [1] 6:25

precisely [1] 58:9 preclude [3] 49:20 51:11 61:7 precludes [2] 11:19,22

premise [1] 37:22

present [2] 10:7 32:14 presented [8] 4:22 8:16 32:13 42: 21 52:11 54:14 55:23 58:25

presents [1] 32:12 preserving [1] 49:9

presumably [2] 62:4 69:11 presumed [1] 59:10 presupposes [1] 39:17 prevail [1] 26:4

prevent [1] 52:20 previously [1] 65:1

principally [1] 47:14 principle [1] 24:6 prior [4] 31:17 33:7,8 62:19 problem [3] 32:3 33:22 47:17 procedure [1] 52:23 proceed [6] 34:21 35:3,18 49:1 62: 8 63:12

proceeding [19] 20:14 31:11,14 **35**:1.2 **37**:2.3.12 **38**:6.7.10.11 **39**: 5 15 **40**:14 **45**:24 **53**:2 **57**:11 **62**:9 proceedings [6] 31:3 35:7 55:10 65:7.24 69:4

process [8] 9:17 11:3 18:7 25:9 32:19 34:5 48:19 61:16

produces [1] 68:25 prohibited [1] 21:12

prohibition [2] 22:1 46:18 prohibits [1] 35:25

proof [1] 13:15 properly [1] 54:14 proposed [1] 41:9 proscribe [1] 49:14

proscribed [1] 47:12

provision [9] 4:1 17:25 35:24 40: 22 42:22 47:15 48:2 66:21 68:20

provisions [1] 47:14 PTAB [2] 41:23 54:24

PTO [13] 30:23 31:7 35:13,25 41: 23 45:8 46:8,19 54:24 60:17 62: 20 63:2.23

PTO's [1] 60:12

public [3] 12:14 58:14,17 purpose [6] 7:1 11:6 28:7 43:15 **51**:18 **67**:13

purposes [3] 24:12 51:21 58:15

pursue [1] 34:21 put [5] 32:5 39:20.20 59:19 60:18

putative [1] 59:23

puts [2] 52:7 64:8

quotes [1] 40:17

Q

quality [1] 51:23 question [24] 4:22 7:12 8:23 20: 18 23:22 32:13,14 36:18 37:19 38: 2,4,5,7 42:11,20 43:18 44:5 49:15 **50**:12,23 **58**:24 **62**:13 **67**:13 **70**:7 questions [7] 4:12 30:12 36:23 43: 19 **51**:3,4 **66**:6 quite [1] 55:12 quote [1] 13:20 auoted [1] 3:25

raised [2] 32:4 50:24 ran [1] 29:10 rather [3] 20:12.14 47:24 read [8] 22:3 27:9.10 28:16 36:13. 15 **38:**14 **67:**21 reading [3] 22:6,7 28:16 real [1] 33:22 really [11] 10:21 11:2,12 17:19 19: 3 **20**:16,18 **22**:14 **23**:16 **36**:17 **61**: 12

never - really

reason [10] 4:9 25:14 37:19 44:5, 16 **53**:13 **55**:22 **58**:6 **59**:3 **60**:2 reasonable [9] 8:17,18,22 26:3 46: 22 48:22 50:1 52:4.9 reasonableness [1] 29:3 reasonably [1] **62**:22 reasoned [2] 29:13,19 reasons [6] 3:11 24:17 29:6 31:1 53:18 57:3 REBUTTAL [3] 2:8 66:11 72:3 reconsider [1] 64:25 record [4] 9:2.7.13 10:11 reduce [2] 20:7 33:14 reexamination [1] 50:19 reference [1] 12:10 references [1] 33:6 referred [1] 39:6 referring [4] 38:9,11 68:11,13 refers [2] 17:25 38:21 refined [1] 39:10 reflects [1] 31:23 regard [6] 12:6 22:23 24:22 29:3, 17 **71**:11 Register [4] 12:4,4,9 71:15 regulation [10] 11:25 12:10 27:10 **28**:19 **29**:1 **49**:9 **71**:9,14,19,25 regulations [4] 47:6,11 51:20 56: regulatory [1] 51:12 reject [2] 25:15 29:22 related [4] 32:23 33:1,1,2 relates [1] 12:23 relatively [1] 57:16 releasing [1] 63:10 relitigate [1] 16:2 relitigating [1] 30:1 relvina [2] 12:2 64:10 remain [2] 45:2 60:24 remainder [2] 30:13 68:21 render [3] 15:9.19 52:21 rendered [1] 33:7 reply [1] 25:2 request [2] 18:2 33:4 require [3] 18:4 56:9 61:10 required [2] 49:19 52:21 requirement [1] 67:6 requirements [1] 18:3 requires [6] 3:17 5:4 8:11 31:12 40:23 57:23 requiring [2] 18:9 19:2 reserve [1] 30:13 resolve [1] 45:1 resources [1] 47:5 respect [21] 3:18 4:11 5:1,8 9:2,13 15:17,20 19:4 23:2 25:4 32:4 33:9 **36**:7 **38**:22 **41**:14 **42**:10 **49**:15 **50**: 7 53:2 69:24 respects [1] 32:10 responded [1] 67:2 Respondents [4] 1:9,24 2:7 30: responses [1] 66:15 rest [1] 63:7 resubmit [1] 34:7

result [3] 34:4 44:6 61:4 review [95] 3:15 4:2,7,20 5:6,9 6: 13 **7**:3,7,23 **8**:14,21,23 **9**:12,16 **10**: 5 **12**:15,24 **13**:22 **14**:6 **17**:22,23 **18**:1,12 **19**:12 **20**:6 **21**:13 **22**:9,15 **23**:6 **24**:1,14,21 **25**:4,11 **26**:8,13, 21,23 30:4,23 31:20 32:17,18,24 **33**:1,4,18,23,25 **34**:18 **35**:14,21 **36**:4 **38**:17.19.22 **39**:14 **40**:22 **41**: 17 **45**:4 **47**:19.21 **48**:4.16.18 **50**:5 **52**:13 **53**:24 **54**:9.25 **55**:7.12.21. 21 **56**:10.23 **57**:7.17.24 **59**:14.17. 19 **60**:4,19 **62**:16 **63**:7,9,23 **64**:18, 21.22 65:23 67:22 71:2 reviewability [2] 65:7 71:20 reviewable [1] 31:21 reviewed [2] 13:24 63:2 reviewing [2] 59:13,20 reviews [3] 10:23 12:6 66:22 revise [1] 34:7 revisit [1] 30:24 rewrote [1] 67:19 riahts [1] 62:11 ROBERTS [12] 3:3 30:14 32:2.15 35:6 39:8 42:24 55:11 56:20 66:8 72:1.10 room [1] 47:3 Rosenwasser [1] 68:3 roughly [1] 35:7 rule [6] 33:21 57:21 59:7,16,16 66: rule-making [1] 23:10 ruled [2] 7:12.13

S

rules [3] 23:8 48:10 67:3

ruling [3] 53:25 54:3 55:2

run [1] 25:23

same [10] 16:3 17:2 34:4 44:2.16 47:15 49:23 61:4 68:4 71:21 SAS [2] 1:3 3:4 saying [21] 6:14 7:6 8:1,5 10:24 12:13 23:22 24:19 26:19 27:21,24 **34**:6 **39**:7 **40**:21 **42**:25 **50**:22 **51**: 13 53:13 69:9 70:1,20 says [18] 6:7 8:7 13:9 17:9 19:11 **21**:4 **23**:4 **26**:18,22 **35**:13 **40**:18 **43**:23 **49**:4 **61**:22,23 **67**:23 **70**:10, scheme [11] 13:16 27:17 40:13 50: 4,18 **57**:16 **62**:23,25 **64**:12,23 **68**: scope [16] 17:22.24.25 27:18 29:3 31:4 34:18 36:23 39:22 40:5.5.11 59:14 62:17 66:2,21 screens [2] 24:14 29:7 se [1] 62:11 Second [8] 3:22 4:9,9 44:4 48:2 **57:**13 **64:**13 **70:**16 secret [2] 23:25 70:15 Section [34] 5:4 8:2,4 12:10,11,12 13:8 16:3 17:22.23.24 18:2 20:19 21:21 22:18 28:25 31:21 40:20 41: 2 54:13 56:4 59:10 62:6 64:20 66:

21 67:7 70:24,25 71:5,9,11,13,14, see [6] 6:9 12:3,8 36:16 47:11 48: 21 seek [1] 63:16 seeking [1] 63:17 seem [5] 32:5,16,18 54:19 68:20 seemed [1] 68:16 seems [4] 11:9 22:25 49:14 50:14 select [1] 18:13 selective [1] 24:1 sense [5] 27:2 32:25 60:9 61:6 65: sentence [1] 41:1 sequentially [1] 36:14 serious [1] 37:8 serves [1] 24:11 set [8] 18:9 19:2,5,13 36:14 49:19 56:6 57:10 sets [1] 49:17 setting [1] 49:21 settle [3] 34:19 42:1 69:5 settled [2] 41:25 69:3 settlement [2] 69:11.14 several [1] 41:21 shall [3] 36:7 68:4 71:1 shenanigans [1] 71:23 short [2] 29:14 57:9 shouldn't [1] 10:22 show [2] 21:10 67:5 showed [1] 68:3 showing [6] 33:10 48:10,15 49:4, 6 53:14 shows [1] 57:19 side [4] 10:6 11:10 21:1 24:18 sian [1] 43:21 simple [2] 17:20 45:5 simpler [1] 30:5 simply [4] 41:2 46:18 62:1 65:25 since [1] 42:12 single [2] 14:2 20:20 situation [1] 14:5 slowed [1] 64:4 **Solicitor** [1] 1:22 solid [1] 63:6 someone [2] 27:6 62:22 sorry [3] 9:8 14:10 44:12 sort [1] 21:18 SOTOMAYOR [52] 4:10.14.24 5:5. 12,17,23 **6**:1,5,9,18,23 **7**:5,16,19 **8**: 13,25 **9**:5,6,9,11 **10**:4,16,18,21 **14**: 10,18,22 **15**:1 **18**:8,15,21 **19**:1,16, 20 20:17,24 21:6,10,15,22,25 22: 10 **43**:20 **58**:3,5,13 **67**:12 **68**:24 69:2 12 16 sounds [1] 38:15 speaks [1] 49:16 **specific** [2] **33**:6 **66**:15 specifically [2] 42:22 50:13 specification [1] 56:7 specify [1] 27:23 speed [1] 59:25

standard [5] 24:23 42:23 51:17 63: 8 **65**:15 standards [4] 48:15 49:4,5 55:9 standing [2] 37:1 44:21 start [2] 21:21 27:9 started [2] 27:20,24 starting [2] 36:14 37:22 starts [2] 4:6 17:21 **STATES** [2] 1:1 17 statistics [1] 56:25 statute [46] 3:17 4:5 11:18.22 16: 10 **17**:9.11 **19**:19.21.25 **21**:3.4.11 **22**:13,25 **25**:24 **27**:6,10 **28**:7,9,16, 22 29:12 30:4 31:12,25 35:3,20, 24 36:13 37:20 39:23 40:6 43:3, 15,16 **44**:9 **52**:20 **53**:23 **57**:10 **62**: 15 **67**:19,20,23 **68**:5 **69**:22 statutes [1] 40:4 statutory [10] 15:4,18 16:14 24:5 **27**:11,17 **42**:21 **57**:16 **68**:19,22 stay [4] 35:1,10,17 64:3 stayed [1] 35:7 steps [2] 61:5.5 stick [1] 6:25 still [9] 18:6,17 29:2,19 65:6,11,12 69:7 70:1 stories [1] 22:25 story [2] 17:21 22:14 straightforward [1] 17:20 strange [1] 54:19 streamlined [2] 9:17 52:23 streamlines [1] 30:10 stretch [2] 39:9.10 strong [2] 28:23 63:21 strongest [1] 19:5 strongly [1] 23:24 structure [5] 56:6.10.15 57:22 67: stuck [1] 47:17 subject [3] 29:1 38:19 67:22 **submission** [1] **56**:19 submissions [1] 55:7 submitted [2] 72:11.13 subset [1] 18:14 substance [1] 50:23 substantial [1] 50:23 substantive [1] 69:1 substitute [3] 41:8 62:14 21 success [3] 41:17 52:25 53:4 sudden [1] 26:25 sued [6] 13:18,18 15:25 34:24 62: 3 63:20 sufficiency [2] 48:11 49:10 sufficient [5] 48:15 49:5,6 53:14 suggested [1] 38:5 suggesting [2] 45:7 50:20 suggestive [1] 50:16 suggests [1] 23:24 suit [5] 35:19 37:4 58:19 62:3 64:6 sum [1] 45:10 summary [2] 53:3 54:3 supported [1] 3:20 supports [1] 24:5

spinning [1] 60:20

stage [5] 22:9 47:19 55:8,10 56:22

suppose [1] 61:13 supposed [3] 22:15 25:25 32:20 **SUPREME** [2] **1**:1,16 surely [1] 60:11 system [4] 11:11 13:17 24:14 59:4 tack [1] 42:8 tail [1] 41:1 tailor [1] 33:24 tale [1] 71:21 talked [1] 69:2 talks [1] 71:17 tells [6] 17:19 22:13 44:23 47:6 69: 20 71:21 term [1] 43:2 terms [3] 8:11 32:19 45:11 text [1] 8:11 textual [2] 23:24 28:23 theory [2] 19:8 69:6 there's [16] 9:2 15:23 16:8,23,24 17:3 21:22 25:14 26:21 31:11 33: 22 35:1 42:7 43:18 46:1 64:2 therefore [3] 45:17 46:24 64:13 thev've [2] 17:4.8 thinking [2] 28:12 40:7 though [2] 13:10 28:8 three [4] 3:11 14:17 29:14 66:15 threshold [4] 17:5 33:5 50:2 55: thumbs [2] 59:2,3 thumbs-down [1] 46:10 thumbs-up [1] 46:10 tie [1] 63:16 tied [1] 50:6 time-consuming [1] 53:22 timely [1] 37:16 Timing [1] 70:25 today [1] 58:25 took [4] 12:9 14:20.20 61:11 tool [3] 30:23 31:2 52:12 total [1] 45:10 Trademark [1] 1:7 translate [1] 64:19 treat [1] 51:13 treated [1] 55:2 trepidation [1] 30:7 Trial [7] 3:11 7:11 9:17 16:5 20:22 36:6 57:12 tribunal [2] 59:18 67:3 trouble [3] 25:24 27:5 28:6 true [2] 17:2 49:23 trvina [2] 6:10 28:6 turned [1] 28:5 two [18] 4:12 12:19 15:23 20:15 24: 12 **29**:6 **41**:3,20 **45**:15 **46**:16 **47**: 13 **57:**2 **60:**7,15 **61:**4,5 **63:**5 **68:**16 type [1] 30:9 types [1] 30:6

U

U.S [1] 1:7 under [22] 6:17 8:2 12:12 13:15,15 16:3 19:7 26:8 31:8,21 36:5 40:20

41:9 45:10 51:12 54:12,13 56:4 59:10 62:5 67:7 69:6 underlying [2] 62:9,12 underscored [1] 51:22 underscores [1] 46:4 understand [6] 6:21 15:7 16:7 34: 9 42:25 69:22 understanding [1] 70:19 understood [1] 38:20 undeveloped [1] 10:11 unfair [2] 11:9.10 UNITED [2] 1:1.17 universe [2] 40:24 48:6 unless [5] 33:14,14 46:20 49:24 **51**·15 unlikely [1] 57:24 unpatentable [2] 5:21 56:13 unreasonable [1] 25:1 untenable [1] 52:7 up [9] 6:11 12:9 13:15 14:15 25:10 **26**:17 **50**:13 **59**:2 **63**:16 up-or-down [1] 46:24 uraina [1] 27:9 usage [1] 39:13 useful [3] 58:10,10,11 Utility [1] 68:19

V

vague [1] 43:10 valid [4] 5:8 24:15 29:8 59:10 validity [2] 8:19 18:23 validly [1] 31:9 vegetable [1] 68:6 versus [1] 3:5 vested [2] 32:21 59:18 via [1] 67:10 view [4] 16:9 33:20 42:13 61:12 viewed [1] 62:21 voting [1] 42:8 vulnerable [1] 63:22

W

wage [1] 68:5

walk [1] 61:25

wanted [6] 41:11 60:3 61:14 62:23 67:8.20 wants [3] 21:1 42:16 50:13 Washington [3] 1:12,20,23 wastes [1] 52:8 wasting [1] 52:5 way [20] 5:22 7:13,20 11:3,4,6 22: 14 27:3 28:8 29:5 34:7 39:3,21 41: 13 **42**:16 **44**:19,25 **61**:14 **65**:24 **68**: ways [2] 45:7 55:18 weak [2] 19:11 63:22 wedded [1] 28:12 weeding [1] 48:19 weeding-out [1] 71:18 whatever [4] 8:6,6,16 57:8 wheels [1] 60:20 whereas [3] 45:20 61:11 64:9

whereby [2] 13:17 14:5

Whereupon [1] 72:12

whether [23] 19:22,23,25 20:1,2 **22**:20,21,22 **23**:5,23 **45**:8 **46**:9 **47**: 20 48:5,18 53:7 56:22 59:1 68:11, 12 70:13,14 71:1 who's [2] 34:16 37:17 whole [1] 32:19 will [21] 6:11,11 20:5,8 26:7,8,12, 14,23 34:7 43:7,8,10 44:18 63:1,7 64:2.15 66:2.4.5 window [1] 57:10 within [10] 29:2 37:6.16 39:5.16 40:11.14 41:6 49:12 62:9 without [2] 11:2 52:5 witness [1] 9:25 word [10] 17:14 19:25 38:21 39:21, 22 40:5,15 42:14 43:9 67:25 worded [1] 68:5 words [8] 15:14 29:21 36:21,25 38: 20 44.2 14 71.23 work [8] 17:15 22:15 25:25 29:15 31:3 44:25 52:13 65:24 working [1] 63:4 works [1] 15:4 world [4] 15:23 28:25 41:12.18 worth [2] 34:19 53:15 worthwhile [1] 50:1 write [3] 23:8 27:6 29:5 writing [1] 28:7 written [15] 3:13,18 5:18 8:12 22: 25 **27**:13 **29**:13,24 **31**:5,7 **40**:23 49:22 56:21 58:8 71:19 wrote [1] 29:7 year [6] 14:11,16,19,22,23,24

year [6] 14:11,16,19,22,23,24 years [2] 14:6,11 yellow [1] 71:20

Ζ

zone [1] 29:2