SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF I	THE UNITED STATES
ACHESON HOTELS, LLC,)
Petitioner,)
v.) No. 22-429
DEBORAH LAUFER,)
Respondent.)

Pages: 1 through 104

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: October 4, 2023

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1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
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3	ACHESON HOTELS, LLC,)
4	Petitioner,)
5	v.) No. 22-429
6	DEBORAH LAUFER,)
7	Respondent.)
8	
9	
10	Washington, D.C.
11	Wednesday, October 4, 2023
12	
13	The above-entitled matter came on for
14	oral argument before the Supreme Court of the
15	United States at 10:04 a.m.
16	
17	APPEARANCES:
18	ADAM G. UNIKOWSKY, ESQUIRE, Washington, D.C.; on
19	behalf of the Petitioner.
20	ERICA L. ROSS, Assistant to the Solicitor General,
21	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; for the
22	United States, as amicus curiae, supporting
23	neither party.
24	KELSI B. CORKRAN, ESQUIRE, Washington, D.C.; on behal
25	of the Respondent.

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Т	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:04 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We will hear
4	argument this morning in Case 22-429, Acheson
5	Hotels versus Laufer.
6	Mr. Unikowsky.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF ADAM G. UNIKOWSKY
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. UNIKOWSKY: Mr. Chief Justice, and
10	may it please the Court:
11	Respondent does not face an imminent
12	injury from the absence of accessibility
13	information at the website of a hotel she has
14	no interest in visiting. Respondent faces
15	neither an informational injury nor a stigmatic
16	injury. She does not face an informational
17	injury because she has no use for the
18	information she seeks. She's not interested in
19	going to the hotel, so she has no reason for
20	information about whether it is accessible.
21	Nor does she face a stigmatic injury.
22	This Court has held that a person is
23	injured when she is personally subject to
24	unequal treatment. But that requirement is not
25	satisfied by a plaintiff who searches for hotel

- 1 websites on the internet to check whether they
- 2 comply with her interpretation of the ADA.
- Finally, the Court should decide the
- 4 question presented in this case. The circuits
- 5 are divided. The question is important. The
- 6 arguments are fully aired. And if the Court
- 7 doesn't decide the question here, it may not
- 8 have another opportunity to do so.
- 9 The Court should not bless a legal
- 10 strategy of filing large numbers of lawsuits,
- 11 settling almost all of them, and abandoning the
- 12 rare case that threatens to create adverse
- 13 precedent so as to facilitate the filing of
- 14 another round of lawsuits.
- I welcome the Court's questions.
- 16 JUSTICE THOMAS: But Respondent says
- that she has withdrawn her suits. So why
- 18 should we decide this? I -- it seems as though
- 19 it's -- it's finished.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, Respondent has
- 21 withdrawn her suit. I mean, she hasn't
- 22 promised not to bring new suits in the future.
- 23 And if she doesn't, another plaintiff
- 24 presumably will.
- 25 Respondent's position is that any

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1 person with a disability with accessibility
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- 2 needs in America who visits a website can bring
- a lawsuit, so, presumably, another plaintiff
- 4 will come forward and -- and start bringing the
- 5 same claims.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, do you admit,
- 7 though, that it would be easier to simply moot
- 8 this out and wait on a suit that is still
- 9 pending for another round to discuss standing?
- 10 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I'm actually not
- 11 really sure it would be easier because I think
- 12 that even if the Court does what Respondent
- asked, it would still be a significant
- 14 precedential decision.
- I mean, the Court would essentially be
- 16 -- be blessing the legal strategy over our
- objection of filing large numbers of lawsuits
- 18 and -- and abandoning them at the last minute,
- 19 and that, I think, would create a template
- 20 for -- for future plaintiffs to rely upon.
- 21 So --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry, I -- I
- 23 don't understand. You admit that this
- 24 plaintiff is not entitled to monetary relief.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes.

1	JOSTICE	SOTOMAYOR:	The	notei	lS	ownea

- 2 by a different entity now, correct?
- 3 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Correct.
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And so you would
- 5 need a new plaintiff and you would need a new
- 6 defendant --
- 7 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, Your Honor --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- to get a
- 9 precedential -- to get a decision that's not
- 10 advisory, because what you're saying to us, the
- 11 issue is important. This plaintiff gets
- 12 nothing. The defendant has to be different
- 13 because it's a different entity running it.
- So tell me why it's not moot and tell
- me why we wouldn't be just giving an advisory
- 16 opinion.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: So, if there was ever
- 18 a live controversy, it's definitely moot at
- 19 this point. We're not disputing that, Your
- Honor.
- 21 What we're simply saying is that there
- 22 was never a live controversy in the first place
- and the Court should therefore so hold. In
- other words, the Court should say that whether
- it's moot is sort of immaterial because, from

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day one, there wasn't a case or controversy.
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- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I -- I'm sorry, I
- don't know why you haven't answered -- haven't
- 4 answered my question. Why isn't this purely
- 5 advisory once there's no longer a live
- 6 controversy between the parties before us?
- 7 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I don't think it's an
- 8 advisory opinion at all, Your Honor. Both
- 9 parties agree that the correct disposition of
- 10 this case is to hold that there's no Article
- 11 III case or controversy. We simply disagree on
- 12 the reasoning for that.
- 14 prudential doctrines. Standing is one of them.
- 15 Mootness is another. But I'm -- I'm unaware of
- 16 any case where this Court had a standing and
- mootness issue and decided standing rather than
- 18 mootness first.
- 19 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Your Honor, I'm -- I'm
- 20 not sure there's been a case in this particular
- 21 configuration that's arrived at the Court
- 22 before, but I don't think that there is a
- 23 dispute in this case that the Court has the
- 24 jurisdiction to decide either of the Article --
- 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, we had a --

- 1 yes, we can decide either --
- 2 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes. It's -- it's --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- and so I'm
- 4 asking you in what case have we ever done this
- 5 before, decided standing, which is a
- 6 substantive question, when there's no live
- 7 controversy before us?
- 8 MR. UNIKOWSKY: So I don't think the
- 9 Court has decided on this particular
- 10 constellation of facts a standing issue. But,
- 11 again, both parties agree that there's no case
- or controversy. The only question is why.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I -- I suppose
- logically standing is an antecedent question to
- mootness, right? You can't have something moot
- 16 until you have a case.
- 17 MR. UNIKOWSKY: That's correct, Your
- 18 Honor. I think that the first question the
- 19 Court should decide in the case is whether
- 20 there is a case or controversy in the first
- 21 place.
- The concept of mootness almost
- presupposes that at some point it wasn't moot.
- 24 And we think that this case -- there was no
- case or controversy in this case from day one.

- 1 That's the question the Court granted
- 2 certiorari to decide.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Right. But we've
- 4 never done that before is what I understood
- 5 your answer to Justice Sotomayor to be. So, if
- 6 it's sort of a logical antecedent, why -- why
- 7 hasn't this Court set it up in that way?
- 8 It would seem to me the question is
- 9 which is the easier resolution, and so, to the
- 10 extent that you both agree that this is moot,
- 11 why isn't that just the end of it?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, Your Honor, in
- 13 terms of have -- not having done it before,
- it's -- it's very unusual for a plaintiff to --
- for a respondent to prevail in the court of
- 16 appeals to abandon her claim in the Supreme
- 17 Court. That comes up very rarely.
- 18 And I don't think I've ever seen a
- 19 case quite like this one where the seeming
- 20 purpose of the abandonment of the case is to
- 21 allow other plaintiffs to --
- 22 JUSTICE JACKSON: No, I understand
- 23 that. But, when it happens -- you know, the --
- cases do get mooted, and when it happens, the
- 25 defendants' ordinary course of affairs is to

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1 argue mootness, please dismiss the case, it's
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- over. And you're saying that, that -- that the
- 3 case is moot. You agree the case is moot.
- 4 So I guess I -- with at least circling
- back to Justice Thomas's question, why doesn't
- 6 that just resolve it? You're -- you're asking
- 7 us to take on extra work to end a case when
- 8 we've all agreed it has to be ended, and,
- 9 ordinarily, that would be all.
- 10 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I -- I think the
- 11 Court, with apologies, should take on the extra
- 12 work, Your Honor.
- 13 (Laughter.)
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: I think the --
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What -- I'm
- 16 sorry to -- well, go ahead.
- 17 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I -- I --
- 18 (Laughter.)
- 19 MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- I think the reason
- 20 it should decide the standing question in this
- 21 case is that I think the Court should have
- 22 institutional concerns about the strategy of
- 23 abandoning cases at the last minute, especially
- if it's going to set a template for future
- 25 plaintiffs to do the same thing.

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1
               JUSTICE JACKSON: Isn't the remedy for
 2
      that Munsingwear, though? I mean, shouldn't
      your -- shouldn't your answer be moot the case
 3
      and vacate the lower court ruling to the extent
 4
      there is one against us?
 5
               MR. UNIKOWSKY: I don't think that's
 6
 7
     good enough, Your Honor, because, first of all,
      the First Circuit's case is still going to be
 8
 9
     persuasive authority to all district courts in
10
      the First Circuit, who are going to know that
      if the case goes back up, then, presumably --
11
12
               JUSTICE JACKSON: Yeah, but that's
13
      what the Munsingwear remedy is about, isn't it?
14
      I mean, it's -- it's -- it's so that you don't
15
      solve -- suffer any harm, we vacate the lower
16
      court opinion because, if you're right, there
17
      was some kind of tactical strategy here, and
18
      then we all go home.
19
               MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, remember that
     Ms. Laufer's victory in the Fourth Circuit
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- 20
- remains binding precedent in that court. And I 21
- 2.2 just think this case is different because it's
- 23 part of a broader litigation program of
- 24 bringing hundreds and hundreds of lawsuits.
- 25 That's what I think makes this case unique.

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1
               JUSTICE ALITO: May I follow --
 2
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Which --
 3
               JUSTICE ALITO: -- up on -- I'm sorry.
      Go ahead.
 4
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I was just
 5
 6
      going to say I'm as concerned as anybody about
 7
      our workload, but --
 8
               (Laughter.)
 9
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- why -- why
      are you sure that which one's easier?
10
11
               I mean, on the one hand, you have the
12
      standing question. Maybe people will think
13
      that's easy or maybe not.
14
               The mootness question of whether or
15
      not a plaintiff can moot a case to manipulate
16
      the jurisdiction of this Court, I mean, the
17
      mootness papers weren't filed until after the
18
      Petitioner's opening brief.
19
               And we certainly have the authority
      under our precedent to decide, if you have two
20
      jurisdictional issues, which one to do first.
21
2.2
      And in terms of, you know, I think it's a
23
      difficult question as to whether or not
24
      somebody, particularly when you have a program
25
      of litigation like this around the country by
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1 people who may or may not have standing, can
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- 2 manipulate the Court's jurisdiction by, after
- 3 the Court's granted cert, mooting out the case.
- 4 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I agree with that,
- 5 Your Honor. And I think that if the Court were
- 6 to write a precedential decision addressing
- 7 or -- or, you know, agreeing with Respondent's
- 8 theory of how this case should be resolved,
- 9 presumably, the Court would address our
- 10 objections as well --
- 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel --
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- and that would --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- in this case,
- 14 this plaintiff has dropped all her actions.
- The lawyer who did this strategy has suffered
- 16 disciplinary proceedings. She's represented
- she's not going to use him anymore.
- So, yes, there may have been a bad
- 19 tactic in place, but you're ascribing a motive
- 20 to other people before it's happened. And in
- 21 every other case, I don't think every case
- 22 suffers from this same set of failings.
- 23 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I -- I agree
- 24 100 percent, Your Honor. We are not suggesting
- 25 that all testers or all testers' counsel have

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1 acted unethically. The only person who was
```

- 2 subject to a sanctions order in this is
- 3 Mr. Gillespie, who's the -- the local counsel
- 4 in the District of Maryland.
- I think that in other cases with other
- 6 plaintiffs, I'm not suggesting there's going to
- 7 be false statements to courts and opposing
- 8 counsel, but the fundamental program here is to
- 9 -- to file large numbers of lawsuits and settle
- 10 almost all of them. Even, you know, ethical
- 11 ADA lawyers do that.
- 12 And I think the Court should be
- 13 concerned that whether that's permissible will
- 14 not see the -- the bright lights of appellate
- 15 review if the Court blesses a strategy of
- 16 abandoning these cases in the rare situation
- where the defendant decides to litigate the
- 18 case all the way up and there's a possibility
- 19 of adverse precedent.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Mr. Unikowsky, I
- 21 mean -- I'll return to our workload for a
- 22 minute. I mean, often, when we're in the
- 23 district court -- I mean, I see this as a
- 24 prudential issue and I've thought a lot about
- it because, I mean, I think it's a difficult

- 1 prudential call.
- But, in the district court, when you
- 3 have two -- you know, if you have a more
- 4 difficult issue and an easier issue -- and I'll
- 5 just assume for present purposes that mootness
- 6 is easier -- you know, the district court
- 7 doesn't know if the issue's going to arise
- 8 again.
- 9 You know, when, in Pearson, we got rid
- of the Saucier two-step, we said, well, listen,
- 11 you know, he doesn't know, a higher court may
- 12 be considering the issue, the district court is
- delving in and expending all these resources on
- 14 something that may never come up.
- But institutionally, if we're thinking
- 16 about allocation of resources, it seems to me
- 17 that that might be different here because I
- 18 take it what you're saying is that there's an
- 19 entrenched split that we're going to have to
- 20 decide at some point, and significant resources
- 21 have already been invested in this case, and
- 22 you filed your opening brief before the
- 23 suggestion of mootness was filed, thereby
- 24 investigating -- yeah -- sorry, investing
- resources, and that we're going to have to do

- 1 this all over again.
- 2 MR. UNIKOWSKY: That is correct, Your
- 3 Honor. And just to add one additional point on
- 4 to the table, I mean, there's a lot of judicial
- 5 resources expended just by these lawsuits. I
- 6 mean, when you have, you know, 200 lawsuits
- 7 being filed in federal district courts, the
- 8 judges are expending resources on that. They
- 9 -- they -- individual judges may be deciding
- 10 the standing question on their own without
- 11 guidance from this Court.
- 12 So it seems to me that if the goal is
- 13 to save judicial resources, of course, as Your
- 14 Honor said, this Court's resources might be
- saved if it just decides the question presented
- one way or another. If we think of the entire
- 17 federal judiciary, I think --
- 18 JUSTICE KAGAN: I wonder whether --
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, the -- suppose
- 20 that there's a case that involves an issue that
- 21 has divided the courts of appeals. There is an
- 22 entrenched split. It would be helpful to
- 23 provide guidance on this issue and not allow
- 24 the split to persist. But the case before us
- is dead as a doornail and is not going to arise

- 1 again between these parties.
- 2 Would you say there that for the
- 3 prudential reasons that have been mentioned, it
- 4 would be permissible for us to decide the
- 5 issue?
- 6 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I don't think the
- 7 Court could decide the merits. I think that
- 8 under Article III, that's just flatly banned.
- 9 But this case is different because the question
- 10 presented is a question of Article III, so the
- 11 Court has the jurisdiction to decide that
- 12 jurisdictional question.
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: But --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, but doesn't that
- 15 look just like an advisory opinion?
- 16 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I don't think it's an
- 17 advisory --
- JUSTICE ALITO: I mean, we're not --
- 19 we're not -- we would not be addressing
- anything that is of relevance to the case that
- 21 is before us. We would be addressing an issue
- that should be resolved. It's an advisory
- 23 opinion. There are arguments in favor of
- 24 advisory opinions. They just happen not to be
- 25 consistent with Article III of the

- 1 Constitution.
- 2 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I -- I disagree, Your
- 3 Honor. I think that the judgment of this Court
- 4 is going to be that there is no case or
- 5 controversy. That's not an advisory opinion.
- 6 That's disposing of the case in front of the
- 7 Court.
- 8 And I think the Court is free to state
- 9 the reasoning that we are advocating in this
- 10 case as part -- in this case, excuse me, as
- 11 part of its judgment that there isn't a case or
- 12 controversy under Article III.
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: I mean, it still feels
- 14 a bit unjudicial, if I may say, so that the
- 15 question is not just resources but -- but
- 16 something broader than that. And I take the
- 17 point that each of these is a jurisdictional
- issue and that there's nothing jurisdictionally
- 19 precluding us, that this is a matter of
- 20 prudence. But, when you look at a case that's
- 21 dead as a doornail several times over, you
- 22 know, the -- the -- the case has been dismissed
- 23 by the plaintiff. The defendant is totally
- 24 different. The defendant's website, everybody
- agrees, is now in compliance with the ADA.

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1
               So this is, like, dead, dead, dead in
 2
      all the ways that something can be dead.
 3
      to use that case as the vehicle for deciding an
      important issue, an issue that probably is
 4
      going to need to be decided at some point but
 5
 6
      surely could come up in a live case, I -- I --
 7
      I -- I guess it just doesn't seem like
      something that a court should -- should be
 8
      anxious to do.
 9
10
               MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, just to address
11
      some of the subsidiary issues Your Honor
12
     mentioned, the question of whether the updates
13
      to the website made the case dead is actually
14
     disputed among the parties. The First Circuit
15
     held and Respondent continues to argue that
16
     that didn't moot the case. So I think that
17
      that would be a difficult -- maybe not
     difficult, but the Court would have to --
18
19
               JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, it's not
     disputed that the hotel's website is in
20
21
      compliance. The only thing that's in dispute
2.2
      is what the issue is with respect to, like,
23
     hotels.com. But the hotel is now owned by
24
      somebody else, the hotel is in compliance in
25
      terms of its own website, and, you know, most
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1 importantly, the plaintiff has dropped this

- 2 case.
- 3 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Right. So, in -- in
- 4 terms of the sale of the hotel, so Acheson
- 5 Hotels remains the defendant in this case. It
- 6 would be the subject of any hypothetical
- 7 injunction and fee award. So we don't think
- 8 that moots the case unless there's a court
- 9 order substituting the new defendant, which
- 10 never happened. So I'm -- I'm not sure that's
- 11 a reason not to decide the question presented.
- 12 But, look, I --
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: Yeah, I think you're
- 14 avoiding the main --
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Okay. I understand
- 16 Your -- Your Honor's argument that if they've
- dropped the case, why are you deciding this big
- 18 question. And, yes, that is certainly a
- 19 discretionary consideration that the Court
- 20 should consider in deciding how to dispose of
- 21 this case. It is a weight on one side of the
- 22 balance.
- 23 And I just think that the weights are
- 24 greater on the other side of the balance when
- 25 you consider the institutional considerations

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1 that should lead the Court to decide the
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- 2 question presented, such as a concern about
- 3 blessing the legal strategy in this case of
- 4 Respondent, which will be invoked in future
- 5 cases by other litigants because the same thing
- 6 is going to happen. A plaintiff is going to
- 7 file a large number of lawsuits, and in the
- 8 rare case that goes up, the plaintiff will
- 9 abandon the case at the last minute, and if
- 10 there's push-back from either the court or the
- 11 defendant, the plaintiff is going to say look
- 12 at what happened in the Acheson case; the
- 13 Supreme Court said it was perfectly fine to
- 14 adopt that legal strategy.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: But, if it's going
- to happen again, why don't we wait until it
- happens again, and then we have the pattern
- 18 you're talking about? What you're saying is
- 19 resolve it now because you can foresee that
- that will occur, and I guess I just don't
- 21 understand why that's so convincing.
- 22 It -- it seems to me in tension to
- 23 suggest that this issue will come up again and
- 24 that we should take it now --
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: No, I -- I think --

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1
               JUSTICE JACKSON: -- because we should
 2
      just wait until it comes up again.
 3
               MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, I think what's
      going to happen, Justice Jackson, is that, you
 4
     know, in the court of appeals, a plaintiff will
 5
     drop the case, and then the plaintiff will cite
 6
 7
      this Court's decision in this case to say
      that's fine, and then the court of appeals will
 8
     follow this Court's precedent in this case and
 9
10
     allow the plaintiff to drop the case.
11
               And then I guess, theoretically, a
12
     petition for certiorari could be filed, but
      it's not clear that the -- the defendant has --
13
14
     has standing to even file that petition for
15
      certiorari when the defendant actually won in
16
      the court of appeals. And so it's actually not
17
      clear to me this question will come back if
18
      future claims follow this -- this template.
19
               And, again, in the Court -- in Your
     Honors' -- in this case, the Court's going to
20
      write an opinion. Even if it resolves this
21
2.2
      case on the ground Respondent has advocated, I
23
     would guess it's going to --
24
               JUSTICE JACKSON: Why would --
25
     wouldn't our opinion on mootness be both
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1 parties have agreed that this case is moot;
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- therefore, we have no live controversy, period?
- 3 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, I mean, we've
- 4 opposed that disposition, and so I -- I -- I
- 5 don't know, but --
- 6 JUSTICE JACKSON: I'm sorry.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Counsel --
- 8 JUSTICE JACKSON? Did you say it's not
- 9 moot?
- 10 MR. UNIKOWSKY: No. We're saying it's
- 11 moot. We just don't think the Court should
- 12 resolve the case on that ground. And so I
- 13 would -- I would guess the Court would address
- 14 our arguments.
- I'm -- I'm sorry, Your Honor.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: With respect to
- standing, would it be sufficient if a plaintiff
- 18 were to allege in -- in her complaint that she
- does intend to visit the hotel, period?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes, that would be
- 21 enough for standing, Your Honor. Then the
- 22 person -- then there's a downstream consequence
- 23 from being deprived of the information. We
- haven't disputed that if there's a person with
- concrete travel plans who says, look, I want to

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1 --
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- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, concrete
- 3 travel. I'm talking about an allegation in a
- 4 complaint, just I -- I -- I may someday
- 5 visit this hotel.
- 6 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I don't think "I may
- 7 someday" is enough. That kind of sounds like
- 8 the allegations --
- 9 JUSTICE GORSUCH: "I will someday."
- 10 MR. UNIKOWSKY: "I will" -- I think "I
- will" -- "someday" probably is not enough
- 12 either.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: "Someday" not good
- 14 enough?
- 15 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I don't think -- under
- 16 Lujan case, the Court held that "someday" plans
- aren't good enough for standing.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: In the next decade?
- 19 (Laughter.)
- 20 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I think it's got to be
- 21 concrete plans. If you're -- if you're going
- to Wells next summer and you're trying to make
- 23 a reservation at Coast Village, I think that's
- enough for standing.
- 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But that's not --

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: With
2	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: the way people
3	travel, counselor. When people travel, or at
4	least when I do, and I think I'm not abnormal
5	in this sense, I look at a place, I look at
6	various sites to decide where I want to stay, I
7	look at price points, I look at the level of
8	accessibility, whatever. All right?
9	So what you're saying is that there's
10	no stigmatic harm to a disabled person in their
11	ability to do what I do, look at a place and
12	say: I may want to visit Venice, I may want to
13	visit Florida, I may want to visit California,
14	and I want information about all the sites
15	there so I can decide what suits me best.
16	And you're saying you need something
17	much more concrete than that?
18	MR. UNIKOWSKY: So
19	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I've been deprived
20	of my ability to make an informed choice about
21	where to visit and I'm not harmed
22	stigmatically?
23	MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, so it seems to
24	me that if the person is traveling and is
25	checking a few hotels and is trying to decide

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where to stay, but the person's planning to
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- 2 travel, then I think that there would be
- 3 standing. Like, if you're saying I want to go
- 4 to Ocean City and I'm looking at two or three
- 5 hotels, not sure which one to stay at --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But the person who
- 7 says, I want to find the place to visit --
- 8 Ocean City, Atlantic City, whatever other city
- 9 -- and now I'm doing my investigation of all
- 10 three cities and I decide against your city
- 11 because I couldn't find enough accessible
- 12 places, I'm not harmed?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: No, I -- I don't -- I
- 14 don't think so. I mean, I don't think that if
- you have no idea where you're going to go and
- 16 you're just going to a hotel website for some
- 17 randomly picked hotel in a city and see it's
- 18 not accessible, but you don't have any --
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But why aren't I
- 20 -- I don't understand. Discrimination, I
- 21 thought, meant that I'm being treated
- 22 differently than other people. If I go on a
- 23 drive to a place and there's a sign up that
- 24 says "No disabled person is welcome," I've been
- 25 discriminated against, correct?

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1 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes.
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- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What's different
- 3 than my going to a website and the website
- 4 saying nothing about disability, so I know I'm
- 5 not welcome there?
- 6 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, Your Honor, if
- 7 you see the sign that says "No disabled people
- 8 welcome," I actually don't think that there's
- 9 standing unless you want to enter the business.
- 10 So, if you -- if you're on the internet and you
- 11 see a sign of some business and --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So it's just --
- oh, so in -- the -- the people who used to go
- 14 to lunch counters and wanted to just sit down,
- they didn't necessarily want to try the food
- 16 there --
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: No, no.
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- those people
- 19 weren't discriminated against?
- 20 MR. UNIKOWSKY: They were definitely
- 21 discriminated against because they were
- 22 prevented from sitting at the lunch counter.
- 23 That's the discrimination.
- 24 JUSTICE KAGAN: Could I -- could I
- just go back to what you think would be enough?

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1 So, if a person said, I'm -- I'm checking
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- 2 out -- I'm trying to find a fully accessible
- 3 hotel in a -- a small, great beach town.
- 4 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Mm-hmm.
- 5 JUSTICE KAGAN: So they're looking at
- 6 a bunch of things, trying to find a fully
- 7 accessible hotel in the kind of beach town that
- 8 they want to go to.
- 9 That would be enough?
- 10 MR. UNIKOWSKY: May I answer the
- 11 question, Your Honor?
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Please.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Because I -- I --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes.
- 15 JUSTICE KAGAN: Please.
- 16 (Laughter.)
- 17 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I -- I think that
- 18 would be enough, Your Honor, yes.
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: Okay. So not concrete
- travel plans, but, you know, some indication
- 21 that you're seeking this information for a
- 22 purpose?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, I think it has
- 24 to be a little more just than a generalized
- 25 purpose. If you're planning to travel, you

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1 know, if you're not decided whether to go to
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- Ocean City or Rehoboth or Bethany Beach, you're
- 3 checking your options in all three of them,
- 4 then I think that probably is enough. I don't
- 5 think you have to say that you're going to this
- 6 specific stretch of road in -- in Ocean City.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 8 counsel.
- 9 If -- how many hotels did Ms. Laufer
- 10 contact in how many different places?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Depending on how you
- 12 count, because sometimes lawsuits can count as
- two or one, it's definitely more than 500 and
- 14 perhaps more than 600.
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, if she
- 16 alleges that she may well go to this particular
- 17 hotel, you would be able to challenge the
- 18 veracity of that allegation, right?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes, Your Honor.
- 20 That -- that happened in this case, in fact.
- There's a declaration in which Respondent said
- she would take this long road trip to Maine and
- other places, and the court basically found
- 24 that not plausible.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. Thank

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1 you.
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- Justice Thomas?
- Justice Alito?
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In fact, she did,
- 5 however. She did take a long trip.
- 6 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Ultimately, the record
- 7 shows that she took a road trip to Maine, yes,
- 8 Your Honor.
- 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: You -- you have a
- 10 statement a -- a couple of times in your brief,
- 11 you say you're not challenging the use of
- 12 testers in ADA litigation, and -- principally
- distinguish this case to one where there's an
- 14 attempt to enter a building.
- So I guess I'd like to hear what you
- 16 mean by that, what you think would be
- 17 permissible, and why it's different from this
- 18 case.
- 19 MR. UNIKOWSKY: That's right. So
- 20 we've distinguished the scenario where someone
- 21 is actually trying to physically enter a
- building and, but for the accessibility
- 23 barrier, the person couldn't enter. And that's
- 24 because we understand the inability to access a
- 25 building as a traditional Article III injury

1 regardless of the motive for entering the

- 2 building.
- 3 JUSTICE KAGAN: So suppose that you
- 4 were trying to enter a hotel --
- 5 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Mm-hmm.
- 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- but you didn't
- 7 really want to stay at the hotel.
- 8 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I think that probably
- 9 would be if you, like, were physically
- 10 prevented from that.
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: But you want to -- but
- 12 you want to go in.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yeah. That's right.
- 14 But that --
- 15 JUSTICE KAGAN: Same, like you want to
- 16 enter a concert venue, even though you don't
- 17 want to stay for the concert.
- 18 MR. UNIKOWSKY: So every court of
- 19 appeals to have addressed the question Your
- 20 Honor just described has found standing on
- 21 those facts, and so we haven't contested that
- in our briefing.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: And I presume that
- 24 that's similar -- I mean, tell me if you think
- 25 this is wrong -- to -- let's say that there's a

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1 blind person who, you know, can't access a
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- 2 website at all because there aren't the --
- 3 there's not the appropriate technology for the
- 4 visually impaired to make use of the website.
- 5 Would you say also that that's sort of
- 6 like the person who wants to enter a building?
- 7 MR. UNIKOWSKY: So --
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: That, you know -- and
- 9 the visually impaired person is, in fact, a
- 10 tester and is just checking out different
- 11 websites?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: So we -- we actually
- 13 haven't taken that position. There's --
- there's three courts of appeals decisions, one
- of which -- one of which was written by then
- 16 Judge Barrett, involving visually impaired
- testers who go to websites of credit unions
- that they weren't even statutorily eligible to
- join, and those courts held that the plaintiffs
- 20 did not have standing, and we actually think
- 21 those are correctly decided.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Yeah, I -- I
- 23 understand that. But, if a -- if a person
- is -- is, you know, just, you know, checking
- out websites in the way that, you know, not --

- 1 it's not like I'm eligible to join the website
- of a particular company, but just in the way we
- 3 all check out websites and can't do that,
- 4 whether the fact that he was a tester could
- 5 prevent the person from making a claim.
- 6 MR. UNIKOWSKY: So I don't think the
- 7 person has standing, but, even if you disagree,
- 8 our case is different from that. So the first
- 9 part of my answer is I don't think so. I think
- 10 that, as in the case with the credit unions,
- 11 merely trying to seek information about a
- 12 service you don't want, I don't think that's an
- 13 Article III injury under TransUnion's
- 14 discussion of informational harm.
- But the second part of my answer is
- that even if you think I'm completely wrong on
- that, I think that's distinguishable because,
- in that case, the plaintiff was prevented from
- 19 using the website.
- In this case, we think what really
- 21 happened here was that there was a bar to
- 22 accessing the hotel, which doesn't become
- 23 relevant until the plaintiff tries to do that.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Thank you.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice

Т	Gorsucn?
2	Justice Kavanaugh?
3	Justice Barrett?
4	JUSTICE BARRETT: I have a question
5	about some of Justice Sotomayor and Justice
6	Kagan's hypotheticals. I mean, it does seem
7	like they're all meaningfully different in the
8	injury sense, and I'm wondering whether I
9	mean, I'm I'm thinking about a plaintiff who
10	tries to make a reservation at Acheson Hotel
11	and then just gets frustrated because she's
12	disabled and she can't get the information, so
13	she says, I'm not giving this place my
14	business, but I want to sue. Like, I would
15	never go say stay there because and I'm
16	not going to go back to the website because I'm
17	offended. You know, this isn't this isn't a
18	place that I want to frequent.
19	Do you think that person suffered an
20	Article III injury?
21	MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes, but they couldn't
22	sue because you can only get an injunction.
23	JUSTICE BARRETT: Injunctive relief.
24	MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yeah.
25	JUSTICE BARRETT: Okay. So that

- 1 that's my question. You're not taking the
- 2 position that my plaintiff hasn't suffered an
- 3 Article III injury, but you're saying here that
- 4 the forward-looking piece of it is because you
- 5 have to show that you have standing for the
- 6 relief that you seek, and the ADA only permits
- 7 an injunction?
- 8 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Correct. The injury
- 9 has to be in the future. Correct.
- 10 JUSTICE BARRETT: Okay. Thanks.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 12 Jackson?
- 13 JUSTICE JACKSON: So I quess I'm
- trying to figure out the difference between
- 15 your argument in saying that you want to
- 16 preserve tester standing, that testers you
- 17 understand are okay and Ms. Laufer is not. And
- 18 I know that you say that she is a
- 19 self-appointed tester.
- Is that because -- you're trying to
- 21 distinguish her from the testers that you think
- 22 have standing and don't? And what's the
- 23 difference?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: No, I -- I -- I --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Okay.

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1
               MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- I -- I'm not --
 2
      that's not -- I mean, she is self-appointed in
 3
      the sense --
 4
               JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes.
              MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- that she doesn't
 5
 6
     work for the government. That's all I meant by
 7
      that.
               JUSTICE JACKSON: I see. I see.
 8
 9
              MR. UNIKOWSKY: But I -- other testers
      who themselves are self-appointed would have
10
11
      standing. It depends on the particular facts.
12
               JUSTICE JACKSON: I guess I'm trying
13
      to -- I -- I'm trying to ferret out whether
      there -- whether what's really hard here is
14
15
     drawing the distinction between a tester who
     actually experiences discrimination even if
16
17
     they don't really want the service
18
      subjectively, right?
19
               So this is -- Justice Sotomayor talked
20
      about the people going to lunch counters. They
21
      aren't hungry. They're not actually there for
2.2
      the sandwich. They're going in because they
23
     are putting themselves into a discriminatory
      situation in order to be able to challenge the
24
25
     policy.
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- 1 Ms. Laufer says, I'm challenging the
- 2 policy. But I guess the question is, is she
- 3 really experiencing discrimination? Is that
- 4 what we're supposed to be kind of thinking
- 5 about?
- 6 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yeah. So, first of
- 7 all, I just want to put on the table we
- 8 definitely think the person at the lunch
- 9 counter has standing, okay?
- 10 JUSTICE JACKSON: Okay. And that's
- 11 not -- and that's because it doesn't matter
- 12 that his motivation is, I didn't want the
- 13 sandwich, right?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: That's right. That's
- 15 the facts of the Havens Realty case
- 16 essentially, which we haven't asked the Court
- 17 to -- to overturn.
- 18 JUSTICE JACKSON: So it doesn't matter
- 19 that she's doing this to sue. That's -- I
- 20 mean, I know you keep talking about her -- her
- 21 motivation, she wants to do this to sue.
- In the same way as it doesn't matter
- that the person's subjective motivation is to
- set up circumstances by which they can
- 25 challenge the discriminatory lunch counter, it

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doesn't matter that her subjective motivation
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- 2 is to sue. There must be something about
- 3 whether she's actually experiencing
- 4 discrimination --
- 5 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I --
- 6 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- that is the
- 7 difference in your argument, right?
- 8 MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- I -- I think
- 9 that's right. I don't think that subjective
- intent matters when there has been a concrete
- 11 Article III harm, such as, in the Cruz case,
- 12 being banned from speaking --
- 13 JUSTICE JACKSON: Right.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- such as, in the
- 15 tester case, not entering a business.
- 16 And I do think that being the victim
- of intentional racial discrimination, as in the
- 18 facts of the Havens Realty case, where the
- 19 hypotheticals Your Honor has described may
- 20 inflict in certain circumstances an Article III
- 21 stigmatic injury. We just don't think that
- these facts are comparable to those.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: That she has
- 24 actually been the victim of an injury and is
- 25 that -- that's because you say she never -- she

disclaimed her interest in going to Maine?

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MR. UNIKOWSKY: So I think there's --
      there's several differences between this case
 3
      and the lunch counter hypothetical.
 4
               JUSTICE JACKSON: Hmm.
 5
               MR. UNIKOWSKY: So, first of all, I
 6
 7
      think this is more of a generalized grievance
      like in the lunch counter or Ms. Coleman in
 8
 9
     Havens Realty. Like, the person was personally
     the victim of racial discrimination.
10
11
               I think that when you just go to a
12
      website to check ADA compliance, that's more of
13
     a generalized grievance.
               There's also no intent to discriminate
14
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- 15 in this case. I do realize that the ADA
- 16 considers the disparate effect of facially
- 17 neutral policies to be discriminatory just as
- 18 disparate treatment is discriminatory.
- 19 But, in this case, there's no
- disparate effect either because she's not using 20
- 21 the information. So there's no -- the
- 2.2 disrespect of intentional discrimination --
- 23 JUSTICE JACKSON: But that's all --
- 24 MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- is absent too.
- 25 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- on the merits.

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1
      I'm talking about --
 2
              MR. UNIKOWSKY: No, I don't --
 3
               JUSTICE JACKSON: -- injury, right? I
     mean, those that -- that's whether or not she
 4
 5
      could actually win the case. You're saying she
 6
      can't even bring it.
 7
              MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes.
 8
               JUSTICE JACKSON: And I'm trying to
 9
     understand why you think she's not injured.
10
      And I think you -- I think I get it. I just
11
     wanted to be clear --
12
              MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well --
13
               JUSTICE JACKSON: -- on the difference
14
     between her and a tester.
15
              MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- I mean, on -- on
16
      the -- on the question Your Honor described
17
     about being subject to discrimination, I do
18
      think this case is properly understood as
19
     discrimination against people who are limited
20
      from accessing the building, like the purpose
21
      of accessibility information on the website is
2.2
      to facilitate accessibility of the building.
23
              And so not --
               JUSTICE JACKSON: No, isn't it -- I'm
24
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sorry, isn't it -- isn't it to facilitate their

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1 assessment of whether or not this building
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- 2 offers services that they can use?
- 3 MR UNIKOWSKY: Yeah, but --
- 4 JUSTICE JACKSON: So what she's trying
- 5 -- the reason why there's discrimination is
- 6 because an able-bodied person can get on the
- 7 website and it shows that there are 15 rooms
- 8 available at this hotel, and so they know that
- 9 there are 15 rooms available and they could go
- 10 there, whereas a disabled person, unless the
- 11 hotel identifies that it actually has
- 12 accessible rooms, can't look on the website and
- assess the availability of those rooms. I
- 14 thought that was the discriminatory issue.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yeah, but the problem
- is that looking at the website is not an end in
- 17 itself. I think it's a means to the end of
- 18 accessing the hotel. Like the reason you want
- 19 to know whether there's a wheelchair ramp is to
- 20 know if you show up at the hotel whether you
- 21 can enter it.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Maybe. I mean,
- there could be a lot of reasons, right? I
- 24 mean, the point is you're being discriminated
- 25 against because you can't -- you don't have the

- 1 same access to information about the status of
- 2 the hotel and whether rooms are available.
- 3 MR. UNIKOWSKY: I guess I just don't
- 4 view -- I mean, there's no argument that
- 5 Respondent couldn't use the website, unlike in
- 6 the hypothetical with the visually impaired
- 7 plaintiff that Justice Kagan asked about. I
- 8 think that her ability to use the website was
- 9 not constrained. She just didn't get
- information that she needed to know whether she
- 11 could access the building, which I just don't
- think is an injury, unless you're going to use
- 13 that information somehow.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Thank you.
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 16 counsel.
- Ms. Ross.
- 18 ORAL ARGUMENT OF ERICA L. ROSS
- 19 FOR THE UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE,
- 20 SUPPORTING NEITHER PARTY
- MS. ROSS: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
- 22 it please the Court:
- 23 As the questions this morning make
- 24 clear, this is an unusual case. At the time we
- 25 filed our brief, we flagged serious concerns

- 1 about whether the case was moot.
- Now, as I take my friend to agree,
- 3 it's clearly moot. We have not only a
- 4 plaintiff who no longer seeks to litigate her
- 5 claims, a defendant who no longer owns the
- 6 hotel, but also a website that is no longer
- 7 lacking the relevant information.
- 8 Rather than decide the more difficult
- 9 standing question in this highly artificial
- 10 posture, the Court should exercise its
- 11 discretion to vacate the First Circuit's
- 12 decision and dismiss the case as moot under
- 13 Munsingwear.
- 14 At a minimum, if the Court exercises
- its discretion to address standing, it should
- 16 hold that Respondent lacks standing for a
- 17 narrow reason. Her claim to standing depends
- on her view that Title III and the Reservation
- 19 Rule give her a freestanding right to
- 20 information, akin to the right to information
- 21 about housing in Havens.
- 22 But the ADA and the Reservation Rule
- 23 are narrower. They give individuals with
- 24 disabilities a right to information in
- 25 connection with the equal enjoyment of a

- 1 hotel's reservation service. Because
- 2 Ms. Laufer has not alleged that she would use
- 3 that service in the future, she lacks standing.
- I welcome the Court's questions.
- 5 JUSTICE THOMAS: You're not saying
- 6 that we don't have jurisdiction over the case
- 7 -- as I understand you. You're simply saying
- 8 that we should exercise our discretion not to
- 9 decide the standing issue?
- 10 MS. ROSS: That's correct, Justice
- 11 Thomas. When the government was on the
- 12 receiving end of this type of a dismissal of a
- 13 complaint in district court after the grant --
- 14 Court had granted certiorari in Carnahan, we
- 15 specifically laid out our -- our thoughts on
- this issue, specifically, that the Court does
- 17 have discretion to decide either the standing
- or the mootness question first, but, there, we
- 19 said, you know, it makes sense, given the
- 20 artificial nature of the case once the
- 21 plaintiff has dismissed her claims, to decide
- 22 mootness while leaving on the table, you know,
- the possibility that in a future case you might
- 24 choose to decide standing.
- 25 But I think for the reasons I was just

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1 explaining that this is not that future case
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- 2 because it's not just sort of artificial in the
- 3 way that any case in which a plaintiff who has
- 4 dismissed her claims will be artificial. It's
- 5 -- it's sort of extra-artificial for the
- 6 reasons that Justice Kagan was -- was pointing
- 7 out.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You -- you're
- 9 confident that the mootness question is easy.
- 10 Is the government at all concerned about the
- 11 manipulation of this Court's jurisdiction when
- 12 you have -- because Ms. -- Ms. Laufer, I
- gather, is not the only person doing this,
- bringing hundreds of cases around the country,
- and then, when the Court gets interested in her
- 16 case, it's all gone. It's moot.
- 17 It doesn't stop any of the other
- dozens of people, however many there are, who
- 19 are doing the same thing. So we may have to
- 20 come up with another case as soon as this --
- 21 this one, if it's -- if it's not addressed, and
- 22 then they will -- that one will be mooted.
- 23 And, you know, we can't sort of keep
- 24 granting cert and having it constantly being
- 25 mooted with never a determination of whether

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1 there's standing in those variety of cases.
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- I mean, you may think that that's not
- 3 necessarily easier or harder than the standing
- 4 question, but it's -- It's certainly not one
- 5 that we can just, you know, toss off with the
- 6 back of our hand, is it?
- 7 MS. ROSS: So I certainly understand
- 8 the institutional concern, and that is why,
- 9 among other reasons, we think the -- the Court
- 10 can and should leave on the table this option
- of actually deciding the standing question
- 12 rather than the mootness question in a future
- case should this actually become a pattern. I
- just think, again, that this is a particularly
- 15 poor case to do it in.
- And I think, beyond that, you know, on
- 17 -- on the more specific question of whether
- 18 this case will -- or a case like this will come
- 19 to the Court again, I think this has already
- 20 been covered, but the circuit split actually
- looks quite different now than it did when the
- 22 Court granted certiorari. It's not just that
- 23 the parties agree that under Munsingwear the
- 24 First Circuit decision would have to be vacated
- 25 in this case, but it's also that the Eleventh

- 1 Circuit decision has since been vacated, and so
- 2 now there's only one circuit decision on
- 3 Petitioner's side -- excuse me, Respondent's
- 4 side of the split.
- 5 And so I think parties may -- may
- 6 adjust their behavior in -- in light of this,
- 7 but, again, we, for the institutional reasons
- 8 you note, think the Court can reserve this
- 9 option in future cases.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How -- reserve
- 11 the option. How many times does this -- do we
- 12 have to do this? The next case that comes up
- in the same posture as this, should we let that
- one go too because maybe it'll be the last one,
- or should we address it here?
- MS. ROSS: So I certainly understand
- 17 the concern, Mr. Chief Justice. Again, you
- 18 know, I think it's not just that this is the
- 19 first case. It's really that this is sort of
- 20 moot to the third. I mean, it has a plaintiff
- 21 who has dismissed her claims, a defendant who
- 22 no longer owns the hotel in question, and a
- 23 website that everyone agrees has been updated.
- 24 And if you look at the First Circuit's
- 25 decision, the reason why the First Circuit

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1 thought this case was not moot was this
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- 2 third-party issue with respect to hotels.com
- 3 and other third-party websites. But, under the
- 4 regulation, it's the hotel owner whose job it
- 5 is to inform those third parties about
- 6 accessibility information, and we don't even
- 7 have that party before the Court to tell us --
- 8 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I think --
- 9 MS. ROSS: -- whether that has
- 10 happened.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- I think the --
- 12 I think the Chief's question was, next time, we
- 13 shouldn't do this, do you agree?
- MS. ROSS: You know, I think certainly
- 15 I would have to know more about what it looks
- like next time, but I think the whole point,
- obviously, of the Court reserving this ability
- 18 would be -- or recognizing this ability,
- 19 really, because they're both jurisdictional
- questions, would be to allow you to say yes,
- 21 we're going to go to standing in the next case.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Do you think it's
- 23 relevant that the reason the split looks
- 24 different too is also perhaps strategic
- 25 behavior on the part of the Respondent?

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1 Because didn't she go to those other circuits
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- 2 and then dismiss her claims and ask for the
- 3 decisions to be vacated?
- 4 MS. ROSS: So, you know, I -- I don't
- 5 want to sort of import -- or impart a motive to
- 6 any of the parties on -- on either side of this
- 7 case. I think the Eleventh Circuit decision is
- 8 actually a little bit more complicated than
- 9 that because it was actually that the defendant
- 10 not only -- or had not just sold the hotel at
- 11 the time of the decision, it actually had
- 12 dissolved and had not told the court that at
- the time, and so it wasn't sort of just on
- 14 Ms. Laufer's side of the v.
- 15 JUSTICE BARRETT: It was at her
- 16 request, is all I'm saying.
- MS. ROSS: Yes.
- 18 JUSTICE BARRETT: Yeah.
- 19 MS. ROSS: I think it was at her
- 20 request. You know, again, I -- I think the
- 21 question really is, given how much more
- 22 difficult at least we think the standing
- 23 question is than the mootness question, whether
- 24 it makes sense in this case, where we have
- 25 these additional complications, to go ahead and

- 1 decide that.
- 2 JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm wondering, just to
- 3 turn to the standing question --
- 4 MS. ROSS: Certainly.
- 5 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- how you would
- 6 distinguish your position from Mr. Unikowsky's
- 7 views and why it matters.
- 8 MS. ROSS: Sure. So I -- I think
- 9 there are sort of many differences, but I guess
- 10 I'll hit three main ones.
- 11 The first one is that Mr. Unikowsky,
- in his brief and then again this morning,
- 13 expressed the view that the Reservation Rule is
- 14 really about access to the facility under the
- 15 ADA.
- 16 We -- we understand it a little bit
- 17 differently. There's, of course, some element
- of access to the facility in there, but the
- 19 statute says --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: When you say "the
- 21 facility, meaning the hotel?
- MS. ROSS: The hotel, the physical
- 23 place of public accommodation. The -- the
- 24 statute also guarantees people with
- 25 disabilities the equal enjoyment of the

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1 services of a place of public accommodation,
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- 2 and so I think how this cashes out is that in
- 3 -- on Mr. Unikowsky's view, I think, if you
- 4 have a hotel like this one that has no
- 5 accessible -- no accessible rooms, then a
- 6 plaintiff can never have standing based on the
- 7 fact that they didn't tell you that on their
- 8 website because you couldn't go there anyway.
- 9 We think that actually is an injury.
- 10 If -- if you're trying to figure it out and you
- 11 can't because they don't have the information,
- 12 you're not having the equal enjoyment of the
- 13 service in the way that the ADA provides.
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: Is your argument
- 15 really a standing argument, an Article III
- 16 argument, or is it a merits argument? You're
- 17 saying that when Title III and the Reservation
- Rule are properly interpreted, then Ms. Laufer
- 19 doesn't have a claim. That's a merits
- 20 argument.
- MS. ROSS: So, Justice Alito, I
- 22 appreciate that the -- the analyses sort of
- overlap in this area, and I think the reason
- 24 why that is so is that this Court has
- 25 specifically recognized that congressional --

- 1 what Congress does in terms of creating rights
- 2 and causes of action is relevant.
- I think the -- the phrase this Court
- 4 used in TransUnion was, you know, due respect,
- 5 obviously Havens, other cases. And so I do
- 6 think there's some overlap. But we do think
- 7 the way this comes to the Court is that
- 8 discrimination is an Article III injury when
- 9 somebody personally experiences it with respect
- 10 to her rights. And --
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, let -- let me
- 12 ask -- let me give you a hypothetical of the
- 13 sort that our former colleague, Justice Breyer,
- 14 might have asked. So --
- 15 (Laughter.)
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: -- let -- let's say I
- 17 am -- I am driving to a dog show and I am
- 18 transporting my champion Saint Bernard and I
- 19 want to check in to a hotel with my dog, and
- 20 they ask me: Is it a service dog? I say no,
- 21 it's not a service dog. Is it an emotional
- 22 support dog? No, it's not an emotional support
- dog. Well, they say, you can't check into the
- hotel because either we don't allow dogs at all
- or we don't allow dogs that weigh more than a

- 1 hundred pounds. And I say, well, you're
- 2 violating the ADA. And I sue under the ADA.
- Now do I lack standing? Have I not
- 4 suffered an injury in fact because I can't get
- 5 this hotel room and I can't have my dog, my
- 6 champion Saint Bernard, with me in my room? Or
- 7 do I just lose because the dog isn't covered --
- 8 having the dog with -- without it being a
- 9 service dog or an emotional support dog is not
- 10 covered by the ADA?
- MS. ROSS: So I think you might just
- have a merits problem there if I'm following it
- 13 correctly, but I think it's a little bit
- 14 different because the -- the harm that you're
- 15 alleging in that case is the -- just the -- the
- 16 harm from -- you know, maybe the person was
- mean to you, you just really wanted to bring
- 18 your dog, whatever it is.
- 19 I think the way that this case is
- 20 pitched is that the right that -- that
- 21 Ms. Laufer claims gives her standing is the
- violation of the statutory right to information
- 23 or the -- the violation of the regulation. And
- so we sort of have to know what the statute or
- 25 the regulation provide to decide whether she

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1 is -- if I could just finish the -- the
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- 2 sentence --
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Sure
- 4 MS. ROSS: -- in an analogy to sort of
- 5 an Allen versus Wright case, you know, we have
- 6 to -- we have to know whether she is the person
- 7 who's personally experiencing the
- 8 discrimination or she's the person who's sort
- 9 of across the country hearing about it, and to
- 10 know that, we have to know what the right to
- 11 the non-discrimination right is.
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you.
- Justice Thomas, a question about your
- 14 dog?
- 15 Justice Sotomayor?
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm -- I'm a
- 17 little confused. In your brief, you say,
- 18 "Ms. Laufer has not alleged that she used,
- 19 attempted to use, or planned to use the Inn's
- 20 reservation service." That's your brief at
- 21 page 19 to 20.
- I don't know, and you differentiated
- 23 yourself from your colleague by saying he
- thinks that if she wasn't going to use the
- 25 place at all, she doesn't have standing, and

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1 he'll answer that, okay?
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- 2 But does that mean that you're saying
- 3 no tester could ever have standing?
- 4 MS. ROSS: Certainly not, Justice
- 5 Sotomayor. We just think that the -- you have
- 6 to look at the service that's being alleged
- 7 rather than the -- the -- so if I could give
- 8 you a physical analogy --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Yes.
- 10 MS. ROSS: -- I do think it makes it a
- 11 little bit easier.
- 12 Here, you know, if you had two people
- who drive up to a store and they find that
- there's only stairs, no ramp, and one of them
- drives away and the other says, you know, I'd
- really like to go into this store, but I can't,
- 17 I think that first person has standing --
- 18 excuse me, the -- the person who -- who says,
- 19 I'd really like to go into this store, but I
- 20 can't, has standing. The person who drives
- 21 away does not have standing. Neither of them
- 22 actually has to say, I would buy something.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So is -- was her
- 24 problem that she didn't say, I didn't go into
- 25 the website? She says, I'm surfing to see how

- 1 many websites I can find information in. Is
- 2 that what her problem was, that she didn't try
- 3 to make a reservation --
- 4 MS. ROSS: So I --
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- or that she
- 6 didn't look at the reservation? I -- I don't
- 7 understand. When do we get to that point?
- 8 MS. ROSS: Sure. So I think when we
- 9 get to the point where she has an injury is
- 10 when she says, just as the physical tester
- 11 says, I would go inside, when she says, I would
- 12 make a reservation or I would use this
- information to consider making a reservation,
- because, you know, we certainly take the points
- that were expressed earlier about people who
- are -- are considering whether they're going to
- go to the place and are trying to figure it
- 18 out.
- 19 But I think the difference here is
- 20 that Ms. Laufer was doing this, she -- she had
- 21 no use for the reservation service itself. She
- 22 had no interest in actually even completing
- 23 that transaction.
- 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I -- I find this
- so hard because I think what we're trying to do

- 1 is to say that the website somehow is different
- 2 than the physical entry or attempted entry,
- 3 because we agree in Blue Haven that the couple
- 4 wasn't intending to rent, they just went and
- 5 asked for information and -- not Blue Haven,
- 6 I'm sorry, Haven Realty, and they got turned
- 7 away, and you're saying that we shouldn't write
- 8 this to overturn Haven Realty.
- 9 MS. ROSS: Certainly not, Justice
- 10 Sotomayor.
- 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right. Sc
- 12 what's different than my going to -- the black
- 13 couple went to the door of the place, asked for
- 14 information. A disabled person goes to a
- website, which is, in my mind, the door to the
- 16 hotel or at least a telephone to the hotel, and
- is being told, no, you're not welcomed here
- 18 because we're not -- we don't have accessible
- 19 rooms here?
- 20 MS. ROSS: So --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Basically, it --
- it's almost a negative, which is, if you don't
- give me the information, you're telling me that
- it's not accessible to me.
- MS. ROSS: So I -- I agree with a lot

- of what you've said, Justice Sotomayor. I
- 2 think the distinction comes between the way
- 3 that the statute at issue in Havens was
- 4 written, which was it is unlawful to falsely
- 5 tell any person that there is no housing
- 6 available for a discriminatory reason,
- 7 essentially, whereas the -- the reservation --
- 8 and so it doesn't matter whether you're going
- 9 to -- to rent the apartment, it does not matter
- 10 at all.
- I think, here, the Reservation Rule is
- 12 much narrower than that. It does provide a
- 13 right to information but in connection with
- 14 actually making a reservation. So, if you go
- to pages 9A to 10A of our statutory appendix,
- where the regulation is laid out in full, the
- title of it is "Reservations made by places of
- 18 lodging." The requirements apply with respect
- 19 to reservations made by any means, and all the
- 20 way through to, you know, the exceptions and
- 21 the effective date are based on reservations.
- 22 And so I think it's not this sort of anybody in
- 23 the world gets information in quite the same
- 24 way that it was in Havens.
- But, again, completely agree that

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1 Havens I should not be overruled. I heard my
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- 2 friend to agree with that. And also that, you
- 3 know, we're not suggesting that -- that the --
- 4 the person who actually does want to make a
- 5 reservation doesn't have standing.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice Kagan?
- 7 JUSTICE KAGAN: I -- I wanted to give
- 8 you an opportunity if you hadn't completed your
- 9 list of things that are different between you
- 10 and Mr. Unikowsky to do that.
- 11 But I also want to ask whether the
- 12 first difference that you mentioned, which is
- 13 you're focusing on the reservation service and
- 14 he's focusing on the hotel or other facility,
- might introduce a kind of gamesmanship with
- 16 respect to tester plaintiffs, you know, that
- 17 you go into the website and you make the
- 18 reservation and two days later you cancel the
- 19 reservation, and you said: Hey, I made a
- 20 reservation, what's your problem? Of course, I
- 21 have standing.
- MS. ROSS: Sure. So I'll take those
- 23 in order. I think, to finish the list -- and I
- 24 appreciate the opportunity -- the second one is
- 25 that I heard Mr. Unikowsky to suggest both in

- 1 the papers and today that there might be sort
- of a particularization problem simply because
- 3 this is on the website.
- We disagree with that. I mean, I
- 5 think, if an individual experiences the
- 6 discrimination on a website because they are
- 7 actually trying to make a reservation, as this
- 8 Court has said in other contexts, the fact that
- 9 a -- an injury is widely shared does not mean
- 10 that it's not particularized.
- 11 And then the third point was, again,
- 12 about this question about, you know, what
- 13 counts as discrimination. I think -- I -- I --
- more so in the brief, and so I -- I don't want
- to attribute too much of a difference here, but
- 16 I think in -- we think it's very clear that
- 17 Congress defined discrimination to include the
- 18 failure to make reasonable modifications.
- 19 And so the fact that, you know,
- 20 someone can say: Well, my website has, you
- 21 know, the same information for all comers and
- she wasn't sort of personally picked out to
- 23 have different information, I think is no
- 24 answer to the idea that this is real
- 25 discrimination under the ADA.

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1 And I think this -- that's a concept
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- 2 that this Court has recognized in other areas.
- 3 So, for example, in the religion context,
- 4 obviously, in cases like Abercrombie, the Court
- 5 has made clear that, you know, it's not enough
- 6 to just have a neutral "no head covering"
- 7 policy. You need to make an accommodation to
- 8 treat people equally.
- 9 To the gamesmanship point, I think
- 10 that our test for standing will be narrower
- 11 than the one that the court of appeals adopted.
- 12 I think there will be fewer testers.
- I don't think there will be no
- 14 testers, and I think that's just a -- a
- 15 consequence of the fact that this statute does
- 16 provide a -- a right to anyone who's trying to
- 17 use the service, and we don't take a step back
- 18 and look to their motive.
- 19 But I do think, to some of the
- 20 questions that came earlier, the -- the lower
- 21 courts will have ways to ferret some of that
- 22 gamesmanship out. For example, you know, if
- you say, I would have made a reservation on
- 24 this website, but it turns out that when you
- 25 see compliant websites you never make a

- 1 reservation, then a court might say that's not
- 2 a credible allegation.
- 3 Similarly, I think hotels will have an
- 4 ability to change how difficult it is to make a
- 5 reservation and then cancel it. And so it
- 6 might not be credible to say, I would have made
- 7 a reservation if, in fact, I would have had to
- 8 put down my deposit upfront and I couldn't get
- 9 it back if I canceled it later.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 11 Gorsuch?
- Justice Kavanaugh?
- 13 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Just in the wake
- of your discussion with Justice Alito, I just
- want to make sure I'm clear on your position
- 16 under Article III and our precedents.
- 17 You agree that one could have a cause
- 18 of action but no standing, correct?
- 19 MS. ROSS: I think that flows clearly
- 20 from this Court's decision in TransUnion and --
- and Spokeo, among others.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Okay. And you
- agree that one could have standing but no cause
- 24 of action?
- MS. ROSS: That's also correct.

1	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Okay.
2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
3	Barrett?
4	JUSTICE BARRETT: So I just want to
5	make sure that I understand your colloquy with
6	Justice Kagan.
7	What if I am not disabled and I don't
8	need any accommodation, but I prefer, because I
9	care a lot about the issue, to only stay at
LO	hotels that do post the information on websites
L1	and also make accommodations?
L2	So I go to the website and I try to
L3	make a reservation, and I could make a
L4	reservation at a room, you know, that's not
L5	handicapped-accessible.
L6	But would I have standing then because
L7	the website and and, in fact, I do make
L8	the reservation, but would I have standing
L9	then? I used the service. I guess I'm just
20	trying to figure out, so you're saying that
21	it's plaintiffs who intend to use the service
22	who would have standing.
23	And I'm trying to to narrow down,
24	does that just mean anyone who would use the

service, or does that just mean the subset of

- 1 people who would use the service and who it's
- 2 actually relevant for them to know whether the
- 3 room is accessible?
- 4 MS. ROSS: So I -- I appreciate the --
- 5 the chance to clarify, and I apologize if I was
- 6 unclear on this.
- 7 I think it is certainly true that you
- 8 need to be suffering discrimination within the
- 9 meaning of the ADA, and so the person who
- 10 doesn't need the accessibility information, I
- 11 think, would not have standing.
- 12 JUSTICE BARRETT: So it's tied in.
- 13 It's not just -- and I -- I honestly think some
- of the confusion in these cases is just by
- using "informational injury" with no additional
- 16 explanation.
- 17 It's -- it's not just kind of a bald
- informational injury. It's informational
- injury because -- and you're saying it's tied
- 20 here to discrimination -- because she lacked
- 21 information, she was discriminated against
- 22 because she couldn't access the service, the
- 23 reservation service online?
- MS. ROSS: Exactly.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Okay.

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1 MS. ROSS: I think both Havens and
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- 2 this case are really better understood as
- discrimination cases that happened to involve
- 4 information rather than --
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Yeah.
- 6 MS. ROSS: -- informational cases for
- 7 precisely the reasons you note, Justice
- 8 Barrett.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Thank you.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 11 Jackson?
- 12 JUSTICE JACKSON: So my thought has
- been that we need to distinguish between the
- 14 person who's getting online and they're a
- documentarian, a passionate observer, a person
- 16 who's going there just to see, are you
- 17 following the rules, Hotel X, Hotel B, et
- 18 cetera, and a person who, I think you're
- 19 saying, is trying to use the service.
- 20 Is that a -- the -- the relevant line
- in terms of establishing injury?
- MS. ROSS: Yes, Justice Jackson.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: All right. So, if
- 24 the -- and so then the question becomes, what
- 25 does it mean to use the service? And do I have

- 1 to actually make -- express an intention to
- 2 make a reservation, or could I be looking at
- 3 this because there's a possibility that I might
- 4 want to, you know, go to this area in the way
- 5 some of the hypotheticals have talked about,
- 6 and I want to see could I go there? Is that
- 7 enough?
- 8 MS. ROSS: So I think that probably is
- 9 enough. I mean, I think, you know, this gets
- 10 complicated because we're talking about both
- 11 what's enough under the Reservation Rule but
- 12 also what's enough for forward-looking relief.
- And so I think you sort of have to tease those
- things out. But it seems like, if you are, you
- know, comparison-shopping because you want to
- 16 go either -- you're thinking about three
- 17 different hotels or three different cities and
- 18 you're trying to figure out, you know, is this
- 19 a place that I could make a reservation, then I
- 20 do think that you would have standing under our
- 21 conception of the -- the rule.
- 22 JUSTICE JACKSON: Right. And that
- 23 seems like it's a little bit different than
- 24 what -- what Acheson Hotels is saying. They're
- saying you have to know that you're going to go

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1 to that hotel or you have to have pretty
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- 2 imminent plans or something like that, right?
- 3 MS. ROSS: I think that's right. And,
- 4 you know, I -- again, as I said earlier, I
- 5 think this cash -- one of the ways this cashes
- 6 out is the -- when the hotel actually has no
- 7 accessibility information, the person --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Right.
- 9 MS. ROSS: -- is still being
- 10 discriminated against because they can't use
- 11 the service in the same way that somebody else
- 12 can.
- 13 JUSTICE JACKSON: And your bottom line
- in this case is you put Ms. Laufer in the other
- 15 bucket because she disclaims any interest in
- 16 actually possibly going to this hotel?
- 17 MS. ROSS: So --
- 18 JUSTICE JACKSON: Or in Maine or
- 19 whatever?
- 20 MS. ROSS: So -- so I think it's the
- 21 disclaiming or the -- the failure to allege
- 22 that she would make a reservation, because we
- are focused on the service, not sort of the
- downstream question of whether she ultimately
- 25 would keep the reservation.

1	And I think the part of the reason
2	for that is that, you know, when I'm travel
3	planning, when other people who don't have
4	disabilities are travel planning, I have an
5	ability to look at different websites, even if
6	I'm ultimately not going to go to that place.
7	And so I think part of the
8	antidiscrimination or or part of the
9	discrimination here is is being treated
LO	differently with respect to that ability to
L1	to gather the information necessary to make the
L2	decision.
L3	JUSTICE JACKSON: Thank you.
L4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
L5	counsel.
L6	Ms. Corkran.
L7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF KELSI B. CORKRAN
L8	ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
L9	MS. CORKRAN: Mr. Chief Justice, and
20	may it please the Court:
21	There is no serious dispute that at
22	the time Ms. Laufer filed suit, Acheson
23	provided no accessibility information on its
24	reservation website, thereby excluding disabled
25	people from using its online reservation

- 1 services and engaging in unlawful
- 2 discrimination under the ADA.
- 3 As Congress recognized, when places of
- 4 public accommodation fail to take reasonable
- 5 steps to make their services available to
- 6 people with disabilities, they signal that
- 7 disabled people are unwelcome participants in
- 8 the marketplace and contribute to their
- 9 day-to-day experience of being isolated,
- 10 invisible, and ignored.
- 11 If the Court reaches the standing
- 12 question presented by Acheson, it should reject
- 13 Acheson's argument that a disabled person does
- 14 not experience that dignitary harm when she
- 15 encounters the accessibility barrier on
- 16 Acheson's website, unless she also has travel
- 17 plans that are thwarted by the discriminatory
- 18 treatment.
- 19 For over six decades and most notably
- in Havens Realty, this Court has recognized
- 21 that discrimination inflicts Article III injury
- 22 regardless of whether the plaintiff experiences
- any harm beyond the unequal treatment.
- 24 What it means to personally experience
- 25 discrimination on the internet is a novel

- 1 question, but whether the answer is the one
- 2 we've offered or the one the government
- 3 proposes, Havens requires a test that focuses
- 4 on what the plaintiff experiences on the
- 5 website, not her underlying motive in that
- 6 experience or whether any downstream injuries
- 7 result.
- Finally, I want to return to the issue
- 9 the Court started with today. Mr. Unikowsky
- and I are both arguing before the Court on
- 11 behalf of clients that have no legal interest
- in the outcome of this case: Ms. Laufer
- 13 because she has dismissed her complaint with
- 14 prejudice and will not be bringing any more ADA
- suits and Acheson because it no longer owns the
- 16 hotel whose reservations service the suit
- 17 challenged.
- These circumstances render the case,
- 19 at minimum, a poor vehicle for reaching the
- 20 standing question.
- I welcome the Court's questions.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: You started with the
- 23 standing question, and you spoke of dignitary
- 24 injury, and in your briefs, I think you focus
- on stigmatic injury. The government seems to

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1 focus on informational injury. And there seems
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- 2 to be a -- a -- a difference in your
- 3 characterization of the injury here.
- 4 Would you spend a few minutes and
- 5 explain which injury are we talking about?
- 6 MS. CORKRAN: Here, we're talking
- 7 about a discriminatory denial of information,
- 8 so it's not a pure informational injury. The
- 9 discrimination aspect of it is important
- 10 because, as in Havens, it's not just that
- 11 you're not getting the information; you're not
- 12 getting the information for a reason that
- 13 conveys that you have inferior status in
- 14 society. So it's inflicting a dignitary harm
- that you wouldn't have from a purely
- 16 informational injury.
- 17 JUSTICE THOMAS: I quess I could think
- of cases in which a denial of injury doesn't go
- 19 to one's dignity or to -- doesn't create this
- 20 sort of a stigmatic --
- MS. CORKRAN: Yeah.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Deprivation.
- 23 And it -- but it seems as though the
- 24 government doesn't make that second step to the
- 25 injury that you're talking about. It simply --

- 1 it's talk -- it focuses more on the information
- 2 that you are deprived of in order to be able to
- 3 use or to make a decision about using a hotel.
- 4 MS. CORKRAN: I -- I -- I think the
- 5 government's brief does talk about this Court's
- 6 jurisprudence on dignitary harm and
- 7 discrimination and the fact that the Court has
- 8 never required any downstream consequence for a
- 9 -- a discriminatory injury.
- 10 And that's certainly the approach the
- 11 Eleventh Circuit took on this issue.
- 12 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I agree with you
- 13 that discriminatory treatment is itself an
- injury under our precedents and Article III,
- 15 certainly in Havens Realty.
- The discriminatory treatment here, I
- 17 think Mr. Unikowsky is saying, would have
- 18 occurred at the hotel or in and that there was
- 19 no discrimination in the information provided
- 20 because everyone was provided the same
- 21 information. I just want to give you an
- 22 opportunity to respond to that.
- MS. CORKRAN: Yeah, thank you, Your
- 24 Honor. I think that's wrong for the reasons
- Ms. Ross said. Under 12182, places of public

- 1 accommodation cannot discriminate in the
- 2 provision of services. So it's not just in
- access to their building. The service itself
- 4 has to be provided in a way that allows people
- 5 with disabilities to use it in the same way as
- 6 non-disabled people.
- 7 I also think this argument, when it's
- 8 framed that way, really is a merits question
- 9 and, under Steel Co., isn't part of the
- 10 standing inquiry. I think, under Steel Co. and
- 11 Lexmark and if you combine those with
- 12 TransUnion and Spokeo, the Court assumes as
- valid Ms. Laufer's cause of action here, so you
- 14 assume that the allegations in her complaint
- 15 state a claim of unlawful discrimination under
- 16 12182, and then you also assume that Congress
- 17 conferred a cause of action to her.
- 18 And then the question is, did Congress
- 19 act within its constitutional authority when it
- 20 provided a cause of action here?
- 21 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, I think the
- 22 -- Mr. Unikowsky's saying, particularly in the
- 23 briefs, this is an Allen versus Wright kind of
- 24 case, not a Havens Realty kind of case. And
- 25 the distinction between those two cases --

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1 Allen versus Wright, as you know, someone in
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- 2 Hawaii can't complain about discrimination
- 3 that's occurring in Maine. Havens Realty, you
- 4 actually personally experienced the
- 5 discrimination yourself when you're, as Judge
- 6 Barrett, then-Judge Barrett said in Casillas,
- 7 when you're lied to because of your race.
- 8 So why isn't this case more like what
- 9 Allen versus Wright described there?
- 10 MS. CORKRAN: The -- the plaintiffs in
- 11 Allen v. Wright were challenging the IRS's
- 12 failure to enforce a provision of the Internal
- 13 Revenue Code that required it -- it to withhold
- 14 tax-exempt status from discriminatory schools.
- The plaintiffs in that case had no private
- 16 right to the IRS complying with the law. They
- were seeking to enforce a public right. And in
- 18 those circumstances, they had to show that they
- were personally injured by the IRS's
- 20 non-compliance.
- 21 JUSTICE KAGAN: But I wonder whether
- there isn't a broader principle at stake in a
- 23 case called -- like Havens. I mean, here, your
- 24 client has disclaimed, has said, I'm not
- intending to go on vacation at all, I'm not

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1 intending to go to any hotel, I'm not intending
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- 2 to use the reservations service at all to look
- 3 for accessible hotels, to reserve accessible
- 4 hotels, to go to accessible hotels. I'm not
- 5 doing any of that.
- 6 So tell me how she is discriminated
- 7 against by -- by the inaccuracies on this
- 8 website.
- 9 MS. CORKRAN: The reason the case
- 10 comes to the Court in -- in that posture is
- 11 because injunctive relief is so elusive when
- 12 you're talking about concrete travel plans. As
- was noted earlier, Ms. Laufer did amend her
- 14 complaint in this case to say that she was
- going on this long road trip, but when the case
- was on appeal, she had already gone on the road
- 17 trip.
- And so that's why, when we say she's
- 19 disclaimed any intent of going on a trip, it's
- 20 because, by the time the case was on appeal,
- 21 she had already gone on the trip --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, but that's the
- 23 --
- MS. CORKRAN: -- and it could be a
- 25 basis --

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1 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- case that's before
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- 2 us.
- 3 MS. CORKRAN: Right.
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: It's a case before us
- 5 with a stipulation that she's not using the
- 6 website for any vacation purposes --
- 7 MS. CORKRAN: But --
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- that -- that she's
- 9 -- and I think that your brief reads like --
- 10 like this too, that the harm is -- well, I'm
- 11 not sure. You tell me. The harm is just, I'm
- 12 a person with a disability, and I see that
- 13 there is inaccurate information about
- 14 accessibility, and that itself harms me, even
- if I have no plans or less than plans, I have
- 16 -- I -- I'm just not thinking about vacations
- 17 at all.
- MS. CORKRAN: Yeah. So I'll start by
- 19 saying the reason all of these tester cases or
- 20 really any of these Reservation Rule cases are
- 21 going to be in that posture is because you --
- 22 you can't have concrete or even, you know,
- 23 somewhat concrete travel plans and get an
- 24 injunction in time. So -- so that's why these
- 25 cases have been just generally litigated in

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1 this way in this pure tester posture.
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- 2 But the injury here, again, it's not
- 3 just a denial of information. The day-to-day
- 4 experience of being a disabled person is to --
- 5 to have your world be very small because our --
- 6 our marketplace, our places of public -- public
- 7 accommodation, just ignore you. They don't see
- 8 you. They don't recognize you as a potential
- 9 customer or as a member of the marketplace.
- 10 And so, when -- when Ms. Laufer goes
- 11 to the website and she sees that she's
- invisible, that they are not even acknowledging
- 13 her --
- 14 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, suppose she goes
- 15 to --
- MS. CORKRAN: -- as someone who might
- 17 stay there --
- 18 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- the website and
- 19 rather than look at accessibility information,
- she goes to the website and she looks at lots
- of pictures of places and -- and -- and says:
- 22 Oh, this one doesn't have the required ramps.
- 23 And, again, she's not going to those places,
- 24 she has no intent of going to those places, but
- 25 she sees that they don't have the required

- 1 ramps and she brings suit then.
- 2 Does -- does she have standing to do
- 3 that?
- 4 MS. CORKRAN: So --
- 5 JUSTICE KAGAN: Because I think that
- 6 that's pretty similar to what is going on in
- 7 this case.
- 8 MS. CORKRAN: So she does not have
- 9 standing based on the pictures because she's
- 10 not encountering the accessibility barrier
- 11 herself. She's seeing --
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, I don't know,
- it's, like, right there. I mean, if you're
- 14 saying it's how you experience discrimination,
- and I can understand that, but I'm experiencing
- that sense of being excluded when I see that
- 17 all these hotels are set up to exclude me and
- 18 others like me.
- 19 MS. CORKRAN: There might be some sort
- of Article III argument there, but Congress
- 21 certainly hasn't provided a cause of action
- there, unless you actually have plans to go to
- 23 the hotel.
- 24 And I want to go back to what Justice
- 25 --

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1
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, then -- then
 2
      just to pause there for a moment, it -- it
 3
      sounds to me like you're edging right up to the
 4
      Solicitor General's test. Am I missing
 5
      something?
              MS. CORKRAN: I -- I see the intuitive
 6
 7
      appeal of the government's test. I think the
      government -- and -- and we are both asking
 8
      this question of, how do you encounter
 9
10
     discrimination on a website? And -- and this
11
     goes to the analogy Justice Sotomayor was
12
     making.
13
               Our position is, well, in the physical
14
     barrier context, you experience, you encounter
15
      that accessibility barrier when you visit the
16
     hotel regardless of whether you want to stay at
17
      the hotel or what your underlying motive is.
      So, when we translate that into the internet
18
19
      context, we say you encounter the accessibility
     barrier when you go to the website and click
20
21
      around.
              I think --
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, I -- I -- so
2.2
23
      -- so maybe that's the difference. Just -- I
24
      just want to make sure I understand what the
25
     difference is is all I'm trying to do.
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1 government says, yes, informational -- lack of
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- 2 information can be a form of discrimination --
- 3 MS. CORKRAN: Yes.
- 4 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- when you have
- 5 some plans. Now how concrete that is, good
- 6 luck, all right --
- 7 MS. CORKRAN: Yeah.
- 8 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- but some interest
- 9 in making a reservation.
- 10 And I -- I -- the -- the extreme
- 11 position -- the other end of the spectrum, and
- 12 I think that -- I don't know, I don't know
- where you are on this -- is I'm just clicking
- 14 around to see and I'm -- I'm looking for an
- absence of information. I'm going to seek out
- 16 this discrimination without any plans, without
- 17 any interest. It's just what I do.
- 18 Is -- is that standing in your view?
- 19 MS. CORKRAN: Yeah. So I think that
- is the distinction between our position and the
- 21 -- and the government's position. So the
- 22 government says --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah. So what's
- 24 wrong with the government's position?
- 25 MS. CORKRAN: So I -- I think -- so --

- 1 so just to articulate what I think the
- 2 government would say about your hypothetical is
- 3 --
- 4 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah.
- 5 MS. CORKRAN: -- the government says
- 6 you have to use --
- 7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Not my hypothetical.
- 8 MS. CORKRAN: Yeah. The government
- 9 says you have to use the website in some way.
- 10 So they would, I think, say our position is
- akin to driving by the website, and they want
- 12 you to engage with it and actually make a
- 13 reservation or -- or engage with it in a way
- 14 that shows you're considering making a
- 15 reservation.
- We say in our brief, I'm not sure that
- 17 distinction holds as a practical matter. Judge
- 18 Newsom made this point as well.
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: No, I'm not sure
- that it's going to be much of a pleading
- 21 barrier if you were to adopt --
- MS. CORKRAN: Yeah.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- the government's
- 24 position versus your -- your client's, I think,
- but I'm just trying to understand what the real

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1 difference is --
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- 2 MS. CORKRAN: Yeah.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- if there is any
- 4 or whether you're comfortable with the
- 5 government's position.
- 6 MS. CORKRAN: I'm comfortable with the
- 7 government's position so long as it's
- 8 understood as an inquiry into what you
- 9 experience on the website and not your
- 10 underlying motive for being on the website --
- 11 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Right. We put that
- 12 aside.
- MS. CORKRAN: -- and not whether you
- 14 experience any downstream injury as a result of
- 15 being on the website.
- 16 And I think that's the real problem
- 17 with Acheson's position. They are attempting
- 18 to upend, I think, how this Court has always
- 19 defined discriminatory injury, which is the
- 20 injury is in the dignitary harm. You don't
- 21 have to show some sort of downstream
- 22 consequence, like --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: So --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: And I appreciate --
- 25 I appreciate that.

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1
              MS. CORKRAN: Yeah.
 2
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: But -- but just to
 3
      -- just so I've really got it, the government
 4
     doesn't -- says the motive is irrelevant. We
 5
     don't care --
 6
              MS. CORKRAN: Yes.
 7
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- why you walk in.
      But -- but we have to have some further
8
9
      engagement rather than just I'm spending the
10
     afternoon clicking through these things for --
     for -- because I'm -- that's what I do.
11
12
              MS. CORKRAN: Yes, I think that's
13
     right. They think our clicking around is
      equivalent to driving by --
14
15
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah.
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- 16 MS. CORKRAN: -- and that making the
- 17 reservation is -- is visiting --
- 18 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Something a little
- 19 bit more.
- MS. CORKRAN: Yeah, I think that's 20
- 21 right.
- 2.2 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. And -- and --
- 23 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: So --
- 24 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- you're
- 25 comfortable with that?

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1
               MS. CORKRAN: I'm comfortable -- I
 2
      think it's -- I think it's compatible with
 3
     Havens.
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.
 4
                                        Thank you.
               MS. CORKRAN: Right?
 5
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah.
 6
 7
               MS. CORKRAN: Yeah.
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you.
 8
 9
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that --
               JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: So --
10
11
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- that's what
12
      I'm wondering, and this, I think, is Mr.
     Unikowsky's argument, and you've said it
13
14
      several times, that it's the discrimination you
15
      experience when you go to the website, when you
16
      -- there's the encounter on the website.
17
               And I think that distinguishes it from
18
     Havens, where the discrimination was right
19
      there. And what I understand Mr. Unikowsky and
20
      I think perhaps the government says, you can't
      add on, as if it made no difference, later
21
2.2
     discrimination on the website because she
23
     really doesn't need the information on the
24
     website, she's not going to use it.
25
               And so, to me, that's a key
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1 distinction between this case and -- and
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- 2 Havens.
- MS. CORKRAN: Well, in Havens,
- 4 Ms. Coleman didn't need the information either.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but, I
- 6 mean, the -- the actual discrimination was
- 7 against her.
- 8 MS. CORKRAN: Yes.
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Right? And
- 10 that -- that's all you needed. It was the
- information that was given there at her
- 12 request. That's the end of the case.
- 13 Here, there's more. It -- it -- it --
- it is, as you say, discrimination on the
- 15 website. We don't have that when she just goes
- in, calls the -- the hotel. She's not on the
- 17 website. And it seems to me that that takes it
- 18 out of the initial -- initial encounter.
- 19 MS. CORKRAN: Yeah. I think the
- 20 question then becomes, how do you -- how do you
- 21 translate that Havens in-person encounter to
- 22 the digital realm? And I think, if you -- you
- 23 know, if there had been a sign on the door at
- the realtor that said "If you're black, we have
- 25 no apartments available," we wouldn't say that

- 1 Ms. Coleman didn't personally experience that
- 2 discrimination because it was just a sign that
- anyone would see if they came to the realtor's
- 4 --
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yeah, but
- 6 she's not on the website. She's talking to the
- 7 person in the -- in the hotel, right?
- 8 MS. CORKRAN: Well, right. So -- so,
- 9 under the -- the hypothetical I just gave with
- 10 Ms. Coleman, she isn't actually talking to
- 11 anyone. She's being told by a sign that there
- 12 are no apartments available to her.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Right. And
- 14 I'm challenging the hypothetical.
- MS. CORKRAN: Okay.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Because I
- 17 think the hypothetical would say not the sign,
- the sign is the website, and she's going there.
- 19 But she's not going to go there because she
- 20 doesn't want the information from the website.
- 21 She just needs to know from the conversation
- 22 that it's not there.
- MS. CORKRAN: That -- sorry, you're
- talking about Ms. Coleman now just needs to
- 25 know or Ms. Laufer?

CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Ms. Laufer.

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2
               MS. CORKRAN: So -- so I -- I think
 3
      that -- that what Ms. Laufer experienced on the
      website is similar to Ms. Coleman confronting a
 4
      sign that says no apartments are available.
 5
               In both scenarios, Ms. Coleman had no
 6
 7
      interest in -- in getting an apartment.
     Ms. Laufer had no interest in --
 8
 9
               JUSTICE JACKSON: But, Ms. --
10
               MS. CORKRAN: -- staying at the hotel.
11
               JUSTICE JACKSON: -- Ms. Corkran, can
12
      I give you another hypothetical that I hope
     will clarify things a little bit?
13
14
               So suppose we have an African American
15
      lawyer. This is back in the '60s, segregation
16
     time, '50s, '60s, who is across the street from
17
      a restaurant, and they see, they know, that the
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19 through the front window, and at this time, the

restaurant is not serving black customers

- law says you're supposed to be, and they're
- 21 not. They're making these people go around the
- 22 back. And he's obviously upset about this. He
- feels the dignitary harm of seeing this happen.
- 24 But he somehow disclaims that he ever would
- have gone to the restaurant, ever wanted to go

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1 to the restaurant, et cetera.
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- 2 Is it your view that he would have
- 3 standing to sue because he's aware of, he sees,
- 4 this discrimination occurring, but he's also
- 5 said, I would never have subjected myself to
- 6 that?
- 7 MS. CORKRAN: And -- and he's seeking
- 8 injunctive relief, not damages?
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes. Yes.
- 10 MS. CORKRAN: Yes. So -- so, under
- 11 those circumstances, if you're not going to
- 12 ever go up to the counter --
- 13 JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes.
- MS. CORKRAN: -- and ask for food --
- 15 JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes.
- MS. CORKRAN: -- then you don't have
- 17 standing.
- 18 JUSTICE JACKSON: So why isn't
- 19 Ms. Laufer that person?
- 20 MS. CORKRAN: Because Ms. Laufer has
- 21 alleged that -- or did allege that she would go
- 22 back to the website and confront the
- 23 accessibility barrier. The important thing
- 24 about the --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: But she's not

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1 confronting the barrier if she's not asking for
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- 2 food. I mean, she sees the barrier. I think
- 3 this is where the breakdown is, I think, right?
- 4 She's not like a tester who actually
- 5 went to the counter. They didn't really want
- 6 the food. They were only doing it to
- 7 challenge. Motive is irrelevant. You -- we
- 8 all agree that that person would have standing
- 9 because they actually went there and they
- 10 experienced the discrimination.
- I want to know why she isn't the
- 12 lawyer looking out the window across the street
- 13 seeing this happen. And how can you say that
- 14 he's confronting the barrier?
- 15 MS. CORKRAN: Because she went to the
- website and she engaged with the website and
- 17 she --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So he goes down, he
- 19 goes out across the street, he's standing
- 20 there. He -- he goes. He's not just looking
- 21 from across the street. He's literally right
- 22 there at the counter because he wants to
- document this happening because he has in his
- 24 mind: I really want to stop this, I'm going to
- 25 sue.

- 1 MS. CORKRAN: Right.
- 2 JUSTICE JACKSON: But he never goes to
- 3 the counter to ask himself for the food.
- 4 MS. CORKRAN: Yeah. So I think -- I
- 5 think Ms. Laufer is the -- is -- in her
- 6 circumstance, when she goes to the website and
- 7 she engages in the reservations service, she is
- 8 encountering that accessibility barrier.
- 9 JUSTICE JACKSON: All right.
- 10 MS. CORKRAN: But I think the
- 11 government's position -- if that doesn't -- if
- that doesn't resonate, the government's
- position, I think, works as well, again, and is
- 14 compatible with Havens.
- 15 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I think some of
- 16 the amicus briefs raise the concern that
- 17 everyone throughout the United States can sue
- 18 every inn and hotel throughout the United
- 19 States and use the phrase -- I'm not saying I
- agree with this, but this is the phrase in the
- 21 amicus brief -- "online version of offended
- observers."
- 23 And so I want you to respond to that.
- 24 Is that ultimately the effect of your position?
- Not saying that means your position's wrong,

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1 but is that the effect of your position?
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- MS. CORKRAN: No, it isn't, and I
- 3 think this goes back to our discussion about
- 4 Allen v. Wright. Here, a disabled plaintiff is
- 5 asserting a private right to equal treatment,
- 6 and the -- the cause of action is for
- 7 individuals who have experienced a violation of
- 8 that private right.
- 9 So, one, you can't -- you don't have a
- 10 cause of action under Title III unless --
- 11 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Put aside cause of
- 12 action.
- MS. CORKRAN: Right.
- 14 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: This is about
- 15 standing.
- MS. CORKRAN: You don't -- you have to
- 17 be both disabled so that you're actually
- 18 experiencing a discriminatory denial of
- information and you have to have encountered
- 20 the discrimination.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: So --
- 22 MS. CORKRAN: You can't just hear
- 23 about it.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- I think the --
- 25 some of the amicus briefs all -- also refer to

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1 then could every disabled person throughout the
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- 2 United States sue every inn and hotel
- 3 throughout the United States. Again, not
- 4 saying that means your position's wrong, but
- following up, I guess, on Justice Gorsuch, I'm
- 6 trying to figure out where that leads.
- 7 MS. CORKRAN: I -- I think any
- 8 disabled person who goes to the website,
- 9 whether they make a reservation under the
- 10 government's rule, but they're engaging with it
- and confronting the accessibility barrier,
- 12 would have experienced a violation of their
- 13 private right under Title III, but that's not
- 14 an -- that's not an extension of Article III
- 15 standing. That's just an application of
- 16 traditional Article III principles to the
- 17 digital realm.
- 18 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I think --
- MS. CORKRAN: It's just everyone's
- reach has been expanded for better or worse.
- 21 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Right. And I
- 22 think the interesting difficult question in
- this case maybe on the standing side is, do you
- 24 actually experience discrimination when you go
- 25 to the website and you can get all the same

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1 information anyone else can get, but you're
```

- 2 experiencing discrimination because what would
- 3 happen if you went to the hotel?
- 4 MS. CORKRAN: Well, so I don't think
- 5 it's -- it's -- the discrimination is what
- 6 would happen if you went to the hotel. The
- 7 discrimination is -- you know, we say in our
- 8 brief it's as if you went up to a reservation
- 9 desk in a wheelchair and the hotel had a
- 10 practice of just ignoring anyone in a
- 11 wheelchair or telling them to call a number.
- 12 There is a dignity harm --
- 13 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Mm-hmm.
- MS. CORKRAN: -- in being treated as
- invisible and not as a potential participant in
- 16 the marketplace.
- 17 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Mm-hmm. So
- 18 someone who didn't go on the website but was
- 19 aware of this --
- 20 MS. CORKRAN: Would not have
- 21 experienced that discrimination.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: It's the website
- 23 that's --
- MS. CORKRAN: Yeah.
- 25 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- in your view,

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1 creating the discrimination?
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- MS. CORKRAN: Yeah.
- 3 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: And then Justice
- 4 Gorsuch referenced, quite correctly in my view,
- 5 that pleading -- it might be easy to plead some
- 6 of this to get around this, but -- but, at
- 7 summary judgment, of course, the facts would
- 8 have to hold up that you intended to travel
- 9 somewhere, right?
- 10 MS. CORKRAN: Well, I don't think
- 11 there should be an intent to -- to travel
- 12 anywhere.
- 13 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Right. No, I
- 14 know. But --
- MS. CORKRAN: Right. If there's an
- intent-to-travel requirement, no one is going
- to ever have standing to bring these suits in
- 18 any meaningful --
- 19 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Right.
- 20 MS. CORKRAN: -- way because the trips
- are going to happen before you get your relief.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Mm-hmm. Okay.
- MS. CORKRAN: I -- I thought maybe
- 24 we'd return --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Oh --

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1 MS. CORKRAN: Oh, sorry.
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- 2 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- one other one.
- 3 In the reply brief -- and I just want to make
- 4 sure I have your answer on this. So U.S.
- 5 v. Richardson's kind of a landmark standing
- 6 case. In the reply brief, they say that U.S.
- 7 v. Richardson would come out the other way
- 8 under your theory if a plaintiff visited the
- 9 CIA's website and observed that the information
- 10 was absent.
- 11 Do you want to respond to that?
- 12 MS. CORKRAN: Yes. So I think that's
- wrong for two reasons. One, again, that's a
- 14 public right case, and also it's a pure
- 15 informational injury. It doesn't involve a
- 16 discriminatory denial of information.
- I was just going to return to the --
- 18 the mootness point and Your Honor's concerns
- 19 about manipulating the Court's docket. I don't
- 20 think that this is one of those cases. Of
- 21 course, it is well established that the Court
- 22 can exercise its discretion on what to do here
- on a case-by-case basis.
- Here, we don't have a respondent who
- 25 waited to hear what the Court was going to do

- 1 about granting review and then attempted to
- 2 moot out the case. Ms. Laufer acquiesced to
- 3 the Court's review, and then there was this
- 4 unexpected development that was deeply
- 5 upsetting to her.
- 6 She hasn't brought any of these suits,
- 7 I think, in close to two years and already
- 8 wasn't planning on bringing any more. The
- 9 allegations against Mr. Gillespie were pretty
- 10 devastating to her and she didn't want to
- 11 pursue these cases anymore, and that's why we
- 12 dismissed the complaint as moot.
- We were completely transparent with
- 14 opposing counsel and the Court about the
- 15 disciplinary order and about Ms. Laufer's
- 16 reasoning, and we acknowledged in our
- 17 suggestion of mootness that we were not
- 18 manipulating the Court's jurisdiction, that
- it's free to reach the standing question if it
- 20 thinks this case is still a good vehicle for
- 21 doing so.
- 22 And this is a highly unusual case in
- that not only does Ms. Laufer not have an
- interest in it anymore, neither does Acheson
- 25 because it doesn't own the hotel. Acheson has

- 1 relied on Rule 25(c), I think, in their
- 2 petition for the proposition that they're still
- 3 the right defendant.
- 4 But all that Rule 25(c) does is
- 5 provide that if an injunction issues that it
- 6 binds the new owners. If anything, that makes
- 7 it worse because the actual owners who are
- 8 going to be bound by any injunction in this
- 9 case aren't here, and we don't know what they
- 10 think.
- But that injunction wouldn't apply to
- 12 Acheson in any meaningful way. They don't own
- 13 the reservations site or the hotel. And their
- only alleged interest in this case at this
- point is that Ms. Acheson now owns a different
- 16 hotel. I think she takes the position that
- 17 that hotel's reservations service is -- is in
- 18 compliance, and -- and she might hypothetically
- 19 get some lawsuit from someone else down the
- 20 road.
- 21 And I think this Court's cases,
- 22 Camreta v. Greene and United States
- v. Juvenile, make clear that that sort of
- 24 hypothetical future litigation isn't enough to
- 25 avoid mootness.

Т	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
2	counsel.
3	Justice Thomas?
4	Justice Alito?
5	Justice Sotomayor?
6	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I have one
7	question. Some amici say that the internet, as
8	you've been arguing, is an especially important
9	place for disabled people because they rely on
LO	it more than than anything else because of
L1	the physical barriers to get to places.
L2	MS. CORKRAN: Right.
L3	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So the internet is
L4	the way they travel to a lot of places to find
L5	information ahead of time.
L6	Are there any other common ADA claims
L7	that occur largely in the context of the
L8	internet?
L9	MS. CORKRAN: Yeah.
20	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Outside of the
21	Reservation Rule and the screen reader cases?
22	MS. CORKRAN: Oh, so I was going to
23	say the screen reader cases.
24	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Yeah, those are
5	the two aren't thew?

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1
               MS. CORKRAN: Yeah, and the other --
 2
      the other circuit split has to do whether --
 3
      with whether freestanding internet services
      that aren't attached to a place of public
 4
     accommodation are themselves places of public
 5
 6
      accommodation subject to Title III, but that's
7
     not implicated here.
 8
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's sort of
 9
     different.
               MS. CORKRAN:
10
                             Yes.
11
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Can you tell me
12
     would or how our ruling here might have an
13
      impact on the screen reader cases? What can we
14
      say or not say that would address that split?
15
               MS. CORKRAN: So I --
16
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I haven't thought
17
      of -- I thought of it, but I haven't delved
      into whether I have an answer for that, so I'm
18
19
      just --
20
               MS. CORKRAN: I -- I do think that the
21
      credit union cases and, in particular, Carello
2.2
      in the Seventh Circuit are distinguishable
23
     because, there, you had a blind plaintiff who
24
      couldn't access the website, but there was an
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entirely independent reason that he couldn't

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1 fully enjoy it, and that was because he wasn't
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- 2 eligible to be a member.
- 3 So that's an objective reason. It
- 4 didn't have to do with his subjective motive or
- 5 any downstream consequences. He just -- he --
- 6 he wasn't able to enjoy it anyway and therefore
- 7 didn't experience the discriminatory injury
- 8 under Title III. So I don't think that what
- 9 the Court does here necessarily impacts what's
- 10 happening there.
- 11 And then, I guess -- yeah, I -- I do
- think, if the Court adopts Acheson's position,
- 13 that -- in order to allege a discriminatory
- injury under Title III, you have to allege some
- 15 sort of downstream injury, would have an
- 16 enormous consequence on the screen
- 17 accessibility cases too.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Okay. Thank you.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice Kagan?
- 20 Justice Gorsuch?
- Justice Kavanaugh?
- Justice Jackson?
- Thank you, counsel.
- MS. CORKRAN: Thank you.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Rebuttal, Mr.

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1 Unikowsky.
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- 2 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF ADAM G. UNIKOWSKY
- 3 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- 4 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 5 Justice.
- 6 I'd just like to say a few words about
- 7 the mootness issue and then a few words on the
- 8 standing issue on which the Court granted
- 9 certiorari.
- 10 On the mootness issue, I just think
- 11 that in deciding whether to exercise its
- 12 discretion to decide the question presented,
- 13 the Court should think about what's going to
- 14 happen in the lower courts if it -- it doesn't
- 15 do that.
- So, first of all, in the Fourth
- 17 Circuit, where Ms. Laufer's lawsuit -- or the
- decision finding standing is binding precedent,
- 19 it's essentially going to be impossible or
- 20 almost impossible for a hotel to ever challenge
- 21 standing because, in the district court, the
- 22 hotel would have to lose a motion to dismiss,
- 23 litigate the case all the way to judgment,
- lose, appeal, lose based on binding circuit
- 25 precedent, and then file a petition for

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1 rehearing en banc or a cert petition, and, of
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- 2 course, if that happens, then the hotel will
- 3 abandon the case and cite this case for the
- 4 proposition that it's allowed to do that. So,
- 5 essentially, plaintiffs within that circuit
- 6 will be able to bring lawsuits forever.
- 7 In other circuits, like the First and
- 8 the Eleventh Circuit, okay, if the Court
- 9 Munsingwear's this case, it's going to be
- 10 persuasive rather than binding precedent, but,
- of course, persuasive authority may prove
- 12 influential to the district courts.
- 13 And even assuming that courts ignore
- it altogether, then you're going to have every
- 15 single district court deciding this standing
- 16 question in the first instance, which is going
- to lead to a lot of judicial resources being
- 18 expended that would be saved if this case
- 19 currently before the Court is decided.
- 20 So I think that if the Court is
- 21 concerned about expending judicial resources,
- 22 they would ultimately be saved at the end of
- 23 the day if the Court decides the question
- 24 presented.
- On the merits, just one word. I think

- 1 that Justice Kagan's question about a plaintiff
- 2 who observes an accessibility barrier on a
- 3 website is the right way to think about this
- 4 case. I think the lack of information about
- 5 accessibility is an accessibility barrier in
- 6 the same way as an actual architectural barrier
- 7 is an accessibility barrier.
- 8 In both cases, the -- the plaintiff is
- 9 deterred from going to the hotel. The lack of
- information deters the plaintiff from going to
- 11 the physical building because the plaintiff
- doesn't know if they'll be able to get in, just
- as observing the accessibility barrier deters
- the plaintiff from going to the hotel because
- 15 the plaintiff knows in that case that they
- 16 can't get into the building.
- 17 And so we think that those two cases
- should be understood the same way for purposes
- 19 of standing. If going into the hotel is a
- 20 requirement for the actual barrier, it should
- 21 also be a requirement for lacking information
- 22 about the barrier.
- 23 So we're not seeking a far-reaching
- 24 ruling abolishing tester standing or anything
- like that. We certainly haven't asked the

_	court to overrure havens hearty. We re simply
2	trying to ally align the law of standing in
3	this case with the law of standing in other
4	in other cases involving architectural
5	barriers.
6	If the Court has no further questions
7	we'd ask the Court to reverse.
8	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
9	counsel.
10	The case is submitted.
11	(Whereupon, at 11:28 a.m., the case
12	was submitted.)
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