SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE	ONTIED	STATES
A. J. T., BY AND THROUGH HER PAREN	TS,)	
A. T. & G. T.,)	
Petitioner,)	
V.) No.	24-249
OSSEO AREA SCHOOLS,)	
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT)	
NO. 279, ET AL.,)	
Respondents.)	

Pages: 1 through 104

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: April 28, 2025

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1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES	
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3	A. J. T., BY AND THROUGH HER PARENTS,)	
4	A. T. & G. T.,	
5	Petitioner,)	
6	v.) No. 24-2	49
7	OSSEO AREA SCHOOLS,	
8	INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT)	
9	NO. 279, ET AL.,	
10	Respondents.)	
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12		
13	Washington, D.C.	
14	Monday, April 28, 2025	
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16	The above-entitled matter came on for	
17	oral argument before the Supreme Court of the	
18	United States at 10:04 a.m.	
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25		

1	APPEARANCES:
2	ROMAN MARTINEZ, ESQUIRE, Washington, D.C.; on behalf
3	of the Petitioner.
4	NICOLE F. REAVES, Assistant to the Solicitor General,
5	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; for the
6	United States, as amicus curiae, supporting the
7	Petitioner.
8	LISA S. BLATT, ESQUIRE, Washington, D.C.; on behalf of
9	the Respondents.
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:04 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We will hear
4	argument first this morning in Case 24-249,
5	A.J.T. versus Osseo Area Schools.
6	Mr. Martinez.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF ROMAN MARTINEZ
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. MARTINEZ: Mr. Chief Justice, and
10	may it please the Court:
11	The district has conceded Ava's
12	question presented. Both sides now agree that
13	the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act apply the
14	same legal standards to all plaintiffs and that
15	it's wrong to impose any sort of uniquely
16	stringent test on children facing discrimination
17	at school. That concession fully resolves this
18	case.
19	The Eighth Circuit rejected Ava's
20	claims under Monahan's two-tiered asymmetric
21	approach. That ruling can't stand. The
22	district wants to preserve its victory under a
23	new theory it invented after dropping the
24	indefensible two-tiered approach it defended
25	helow

1	Now they say that the statutes apply a
2	bad-faith or gross-misjudgment test to all
3	plaintiffs, not just schoolchildren protected by
4	the IDEA. That's exactly the opposite of what
5	they told you at the cert stage, where they said
6	that no bad faith or intent is required outside
7	the IDEA context.
8	The district's new theory violates the
9	text, history, and purpose of both statutes. It
10	contradicts decades of regulations. It defies
11	at least five precedents of this Court and
12	decisions from virtually every circuit. It
13	would also revolutionize disability law,
14	stripping protections from vulnerable victims
15	and gutting the reasonable accommodations needed
16	for equal opportunity.
17	If you address this new argument, you
18	should reject it out of hand. But you shouldn't
19	address it because it's so clearly procedurally
20	barred many times over. Whether you look at
21	this through the lens of judicial estoppel or
22	waiver or Rules 15 and 24, one thing is clear:
23	The district can't win this case based on a
24	radical new theory that goes beyond Ava's
25	question presented and directly contradicts what

- 1 they told the lower courts and this Court at the
- 2 cert stage. Instead, you should follow regular
- 3 order and procedure, you should answer the
- 4 limited question presented, and you should
- 5 vacate the decision below.
- I welcome the Court's questions.
- 7 JUSTICE THOMAS: Isn't there an
- 8 argument, though, that we should -- that some
- 9 would think is embedded or included in the
- 10 question presented, and that is what is the
- 11 standard?
- 12 MR. MARTINEZ: I don't think so,
- 13 Your Honor. I don't think that question is
- 14 embedded in the question presented. I think our
- question presented was very clear that we were
- 16 asking whether the uniquely stringent test that
- 17 Monahan required only in the educational
- 18 context, whether that was the correct rule.
- 19 And that's clear not just from the
- 20 framing of the question presented and the
- 21 paragraphs, the introductory paragraphs, leading
- 22 into it but also from what we said in the -- the
- 23 rest of the petition, where we used that
- 24 "uniquely stringent" phase 10 different times to
- 25 talk about what issue we were -- putting before

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1 the Court. We said that on pages 2, 3, 15, 13,
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- 2 16, 22, 24, 27, and 39.
- It's not just us, though. We
- 4 understood our question presented that way. The
- 5 other side also understood it the same way. So,
- 6 when they responded to our petition and they
- 7 responded to our question presented in their
- 8 cert papers, they took the case on exactly those
- 9 terms. They argued about the circuit split,
- 10 they argued about the merits. They said this
- 11 case was "narrow" and was only going to affect a
- 12 sliver of plaintiffs who were in Ava's position,
- 13 children facing discrimination at school.
- Now, though, they're trying to make
- this case about everyone, about 44 million
- 16 Americans with disabilities who are protected by
- 17 reasonable accommodations and who would suffer
- under the bad-faith-and-gross-misjudgment test
- 19 that they're putting before the Court for the
- 20 first time.
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, if
- that's true, counsel, then nobody is defending
- the position that you challenged, is that right?
- MR. MARTINEZ: I think, at this point,
- 25 the other side has conceded that that position

- is indefensible, and then -- and, therefore,
- they aren't defending it. I think they have one
- 3 amicus who filed a brief that seems to be
- 4 defending the Monahan test.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, and yet
- 6 that position that you're attacking was the
- 7 majority position, right?
- 8 MR. MARTINEZ: That was the position
- 9 but -- adopted by five circuit courts. That's
- 10 right.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, what do
- 12 we normally do in a situation like that?
- Normally, we appoint a -- an amicus to defend
- 14 the judgment below. And we're saying we should
- just hand you a victory even though no one's
- 16 challenging your understanding of what the
- 17 conflict was about.
- 18 MR. MARTINEZ: Your Honor, I think
- 19 that it's fully presented to this Court, the
- 20 issue of whether that Monahan test is right.
- 21 And the fact that the other side couldn't even
- 22 come up with an argument to -- at the merits
- 23 stage to defend that standard is a reason why
- 24 you should set that standard aside. It's not a
- 25 reason to kind of have a do-over or appoint an

- 1 amicus.
- 2 I think it's true you sometimes do
- 3 appoint an amicus in that circumstance. I
- 4 think you usually do it when the other side
- 5 is -- is -- is no longer defending the judgment
- 6 as opposed to the reasoning of the opinion, so I
- 7 don't think that that sort of situation applies
- 8 here.
- 9 But we certainly don't think there's
- 10 an impediment for -- to you coming in and
- 11 resolving the question presented. You, of
- 12 course, can look at the Eighth Circuit's
- 13 rationale and the rationale of the four other
- 14 circuits that have adopted this erroneous rule.
- 15 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: If -- if we do
- 16 what you say and say that there's no unique
- 17 standard in the schools context, it'll still be
- open to the court on remand to decide which
- 19 standard is appropriate throughout, correct?
- MR. MARTINEZ: I think that the Eighth
- 21 Circuit would have to apply its own precedent to
- 22 that question, but I think what you should
- 23 say --
- 24 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Or it could
- 25 rethink that precedent. In other words, you're

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1 saying to leave open the question of whether the
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- 2 proper standard is deliberate indifference or,
- 3 instead, is bad faith or gross misjudgment and
- 4 that that can be considered on remand and can be
- 5 considered by other courts of appeals, to the
- 6 Chief Justice's question, that have this
- 7 carveout or separate rule for schools?
- 8 MR. MARTINEZ: I think, in theory, it
- 9 could be considered on remand either by the
- 10 Eighth Circuit or in other cases by other
- 11 courts. I do think that in this case, it can't
- because, in this case, we think the other side
- is judicially estopped from changing positions
- on which they, you know, successfully avoided
- 15 en banc review in the Eighth Circuit.
- 16 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Point taken on
- 17 that. And then what -- can you explain the
- delta between, on the one hand, "deliberate
- 19 indifference" at least as the Solicitor General
- 20 defines it and "bad faith" or "gross
- 21 misjudgment" on the other hand? Because the way
- they define "deliberate indifference" sounds a
- lot like someone acting in bad faith.
- 24 MR. MARTINEZ: Your Honor, could I
- 25 just add -- add one additional comment on your

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1 earlier question and then --
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- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Mm-hmm.
- 3 MR. MARTINEZ: -- answer that one? I
- 4 think the other thing is, when -- when we're
- 5 asking you to get rid of the Monahan two-tiered
- 6 approach, I think it would be valuable and
- 7 important for you to say not only that that
- 8 approach is wrong but that the rationale under
- 9 which it was adopted, the rationale being that
- 10 the IDEA context requires this sort of special
- 11 rule in this context, is wrong. And I think
- that would help provide guidance to the Eighth
- 13 Circuit and other courts.
- With respect to what the test is, you
- know, it's a little hard to fully understand the
- 16 other side's test because they've characterized
- 17 it in so many different ways. They kind of seem
- to flip-flop depending on what court they're in
- 19 and what brief they're writing. As I understand
- 20 their current theory --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: No, I -- just put
- 22 aside what they're -- what is the difference
- 23 between deliberate indifference and bad faith?
- 24 MR. MARTINEZ: So I think their bad --
- 25 as they -- as I understand their bad-faith test,

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1 it requires motive, which, in their brief, they
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- 2 describe in various places as requiring a
- 3 sinister state of mind or something, you know,
- 4 approximating a bare desire to harm. And so I
- 5 think that's an animus-type test that requires
- 6 more than the knowledge that there's a
- 7 substantial likelihood of a violation --
- 8 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But deliberate
- 9 indifference, as the Solicitor General at least
- is articulating it -- and I don't know if you
- 11 agree or disagree -- you would have to know that
- 12 you have a legal obligation to do something or
- 13 substantially likely and still not act.
- MR. MARTINEZ: So I think --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: And if you know
- 16 you're supposed to do something as a matter of
- 17 law and don't act, that's -- you know that --
- 18 MR. MARTINEZ: I --
- 19 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- sounds like
- 20 that.
- 21 MR. MARTINEZ: I think you can ask the
- 22 Solicitor General to elaborate on their theory.
- 23 As I understand their test, which -- which we
- think is the majority test, you don't have to
- 25 know the law. You don't -- it's -- a mistake of

- 1 law is not a defense. You have to know the
- 2 facts that would constitute a violation of the
- law, and then you have to be indifferent to
- 4 those facts.
- 5 And I think it's -- it's a fair
- 6 question to ask the SG what -- what they -- how
- 7 they would characterize it, but that's certainly
- 8 how I understand the test.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm not sure where
- 10 any of these tests come from, because mens rea
- is generally willfulness, which requires knowing
- 12 what the law is, but the statute doesn't talk
- 13 about willfulness. Motive, in -- intent -- we
- 14 don't care about motive. We've said that
- 15 repeatedly in a bunch of different contexts.
- 16 It's do you know you're doing the act and are
- 17 you intending to do the act. If it violates the
- law, you're guilty. Pardon the pun. This is a
- 19 tort, but you're responsible. Or you do it
- 20 knowingly, knowing that you're doing the act.
- 21 So I don't know where the bad faith
- 22 comes from. I don't know where the gross
- 23 indifference comes from. I don't know where the
- 24 deliberate indifference comes from.
- 25 Have you figured that out?

1	MR. MARTINEZ: So
2	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I I think that
3	that's part of the question that would have to
4	happen if a court takes the other side's point
5	that it should be intentional with respect to
6	all claims, injunctive injunctive and/or
7	damages.
8	So I take their point that maybe you
9	need intentional conduct for an an
LO	injunction, but I don't know why you need
L1	anything else.
L2	MR. MARTINEZ: Right. Justice
L3	Sotomayor, we agree with that the impulse
L4	underlying that question. I think those are
L5	some great questions for the other side.
L6	I think what I would say on this is
L7	that, cert
L8	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Yeah, but you're
L9	here, so
20	MR. MARTINEZ: Well, let me take a
21	shot at it.
22	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Okay.
23	MR. MARTINEZ: I think, cert
24	certainly, with respect to liability and whether

the statute is violated, there's no intent

- 1 requirement. It's not in the statute. The --
- what the statute has is a causation requirement
- 3 which is satisfied in circumstances where a
- 4 person's disability -- means that they're being
- 5 excluded from a building or a program or a
- 6 service. So there's just no way to -- to gin up
- 7 a -- an intent requirement out of that.
- I think what some courts have done in
- 9 the context of damages is that -- is they've
- 10 sort of read the damages provisions and the --
- 11 the damage -- the remedies that are available
- 12 through the lens of the Spending Clause and
- 13 said: We -- we require something more, and
- 14 because we require actual notice to the
- 15 recipient of federal funds before we cut off
- 16 federal funds, we should require some form of
- 17 notice.
- 18 And so, in the Title IX context,
- 19 courts have applied a deliberate
- 20 indifference-type standard, and we think that --
- 21 that that's sort of the -- the uniform rule or
- 22 at least the almost uniform rule that's applied
- 23 by nine circuits in this context.
- What the other side has, though, is a
- 25 bad-faith-and-gross-misjudgment rule that is

- 1 literally -- it comes out of nowhere, like
- 2 nowhere. There -- no court has ever embraced
- 3 that test as a standard under -- other than the
- 4 five circuits that we're arguing about here, no
- 5 court has ever embraced that test in any other
- 6 context under the discrimination laws, and we
- 7 think that's a very high standard to meet.
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I think you're
- 9 going too far, though -- meaning I don't know
- 10 why you can't have an intentional failure to
- 11 reasonably accommodate, because that's what
- 12 discrimination is.
- 13 And accommodation is: I'm not letting
- 14 you use a program that you're otherwise
- qualified for because I'm not letting you get to
- the program. Either you're not providing a ramp
- or you're not providing an instrument that I
- 18 could use. By its own definition, that's
- 19 intentional conduct, isn't it?
- 20 MR. MARTINEZ: Well, I -- I don't
- 21 think so, Your Honor. I think the reasonable
- 22 accommodation problem arises in a context where
- there's no intent.
- 24 And I totally agree with what the
- other side said on page 30 of their brief in

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1 opposition and what this Court said in the
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- 2 Choate decision, where it recognized -- it
- 3 recognized that the statutes provide -- and --
- 4 and this is page 30 in their brief -- their
- 5 statutes proscribe at least some unintentional
- 6 yet harmful conduct, and talked about Choate,
- 7 which itself recognized that the Rehabilitation
- 8 Act targets unintentional discriminatory acts
- 9 like architectural barriers.
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Got it.
- MR. MARTINEZ: So those do not require
- 12 intent and --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Alright.
- MR. MARTINEZ: -- have never been
- 15 understood to require intent.
- 16 JUSTICE JACKSON: Mr. Martinez --
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Oh.
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- Mr. Martinez --
- 20 I'm sorry -- just to follow up on that, I -- I
- 21 take your point that we don't have to address
- 22 any of this on your theory of the case, but
- 23 deliberate indifference is often deliberately
- indifferent to somebody else's discrimination.
- 25 It's usually a supervisory-type liability.

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1
                And -- and -- as Justice Sotomayor
 2
      suggested, and maybe I just missed it, when we
 3
      think of discrimination in many contexts,
      causation, you're -- you're right, but the act
 4
      of discrimination is to treat someone else
 5
      differently because of their disability, right?
 6
 7
                And I would have thought that that
     might have meant I -- I intend to treat someone
 8
 9
     differently. It doesn't matter about my further
10
     motive. I agree, I -- I take that point, bad
11
      faith. But -- but why wouldn't that be the
12
      test?
13
                MR. MARTINEZ: So, Your Honor, two
14
      things on that. First of all, I guess what I
15
     would say is, with respect to the -- the need
16
      for intent in every context, what actually
17
     helped this whole area of law click for me was
18
      reading your decision for -- in the Cinnamon
19
     Hills case, which was -- addressing --
20
      explaining sort of the theory of reasonable
21
     accommodation statutes.
2.2
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: I'm glad you
23
      remember that, because I'm not sure I do.
               MR. MARTINEZ: Well, it's -- it -- it
24
25
      was actually a very thoughtful opinion that --
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1 that really kind of teased out the
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- 2 differences --
- 3 (Laughter.)
- 4 MR. MARTINEZ: -- between disparate --
- 5 intentional treatment and reasonable
- 6 accommodation claims, and what -- what you said
- 7 in that opinion was that sometimes formal
- 8 equality isn't enough. And in the disability
- 9 context, it isn't.
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mm-hmm.
- MR. MARTINEZ: And the reason for that
- is that you can have people discriminated and
- 13 excluded by reason of their disability even
- though there's no -- there's no intent.
- 15 And -- and so, because you have a
- 16 disability --
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I see.
- MR. MARTINEZ: -- you're not able to
- 19 take advantage of a program. And so, even when
- there's not animus when there's not a bad actor
- on the other side, you know, you imagine someone
- 22 rolls up --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: I -- I -- I follow
- 24 you.
- MR. MARTINEZ: Okay.

- 3 MR. MARTINEZ: Sure.
- 4 JUSTICE JACKSON: Mr. --
- 5 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And thank you for
- 6 the reminder.
- 7 (Laughter.)
- 8 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I do have one -- one
- 9 other question.
- 10 MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.
- 11 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And that is that
- 12 you're right that a lot of the courts have
- 13 looked at these things through the Spending
- 14 Clause, really, the spending power, and -- and,
- 15 therefore, states have to be on -- on clear
- 16 notice, and they've distinguished between
- damages and injunctions on that basis.
- But I'm kind of curious why, because I
- 19 would have thought in a contract scenario I
- 20 might be more on notice that my violations would
- incur damages than they would an injunction
- 22 requiring specific performance, which is an
- 23 unusual remedy for a contract breach.
- Thoughts?
- MR. MARTINEZ: So I think, on that

- one, I think that with respect to the
- 2 injunction, if -- if the recipient of federal
- 3 funding doesn't like the injunction, they can
- 4 just stop receiving the funding. So they have
- 5 the ability to get out of -- out of the deal,
- 6 and so it doesn't put them on the hook to spend
- 7 money in the same way that a damages remedy
- 8 would.
- 9 JUSTICE BARRETT: Mr. Martinez, has
- 10 any other circuit taken the view or is this
- 11 argument that the other side is pressing, is
- 12 that one that's kind of a live issue in the
- 13 lower courts?
- MR. MARTINEZ: No.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Has any other court
- 16 taken it?
- 17 MR. MARTINEZ: No. We have 12 -- 12
- 18 circuits, all -- every single geographic circuit
- across the country says that you don't have to
- 20 show intent to establish a violation of this
- 21 statute, outside of the context of children with
- 22 education claims. So the baseline rule that
- applies everywhere is no intent for liability.
- You then have 10 circuits that have
- 25 said you do have some form of intent requirement

1 for damages, and nine of those 10 circuits say

- 2 that it's -- the test is deliberate
- 3 indifference.
- 4 There's a little bit of uncertainty
- 5 about the Fifth Circuit about what kind of
- 6 intent is required. The Fifth Circuit has
- 7 suggested that deliberate indifference might not
- 8 be enough, but they haven't really clearly
- 9 adopted a different intent standard.
- 10 But I think the other side says that
- 11 there would be disarray if you didn't resolve,
- 12 like, every last issue in this case. That's
- 13 just not right.
- If you say the IDEA context doesn't
- 15 create a special rule disfavoring kids in the
- 16 education context, what's almost certainly going
- 17 to happen is that the circuits out there are
- 18 just going to apply their baseline rule, and all
- 19 12 of the geographic circuits are going to say
- 20 that intent isn't required.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Well, it might also
- 22 be that this sparks percolation on this issue.
- 23 I mean, maybe what will happen is that there
- 24 will be pushback of the sort that your friend on
- 25 the other side is advocating.

1 MR. MARTINEZ: I -- I would doubt that

- 2 because of the fact that the reason these five
- 3 courts have applied this Monahan test is really
- 4 because, and as they explained it very well in
- 5 their brief in opposition, it's all about the
- 6 IDEA.
- 7 I mean, look at their brief in
- 8 opposition. The first paragraph is all about,
- 9 like, this is an IDEA case, and they're
- 10 basically trying to interpret these statutes in
- 11 circumstances where kids have protections under
- the IDEA to give them fewer protections under
- 13 the ADA and Rehabilitation Act.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So --
- 15 JUSTICE KAGAN: I understand,
- 16 Mr. Martinez, why they did that before Smith v.
- 17 Robinson and the congressional response to that.
- 18 It's basically the same rationale that the Court
- 19 used in Smith v. Robinson.
- But, once that happened, Smith v.
- 21 Robinson and then Congress's repudiation of it,
- 22 why didn't those courts go back and take a look
- 23 at their own precedent?
- MR. MARTINEZ: So -- so Monahan was,
- 25 of course, before Smith versus Robinson. I -- I

- don't know the answer to that, Your Honor. I
- 2 think it's hard because you have to get en banc
- 3 review.
- 4 We tried our best to get en banc
- 5 review in this case, and when we did that and
- 6 we resurfaced this issue to the Eighth Circuit
- 7 in an effort to get them to overturn their
- 8 precedent, the other side came in and said --
- 9 they didn't just say follow this because it's
- 10 your precedent, they said follow it because it's
- 11 right, and they won a -- a denial of en banc
- 12 review in part based on their argument that
- 13 there is this two-tiered approach and it -- a
- special rule needs to apply with kids who have
- 15 IDEA rights.
- And so now they're coming into this
- 17 Court flip-flopping on that and trying to kind
- of play -- have it both ways and play both
- 19 sides, even though now they realize that that --
- 20 that earlier argument is indefensible.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So, Mr. Martinez,
- 22 can you just speak very clearly -- I'm --
- 23 Chief, should -- can I go forward?
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Sure.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Can you just speak

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1 very clearly to why they're wrong about that?
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- 2 In other words, they said Monahan is correct for
- 3 this particular context.
- 4 MR. MARTINEZ: Yeah.
- 5 JUSTICE JACKSON: And I'd invite you
- 6 to just --
- 7 MR. MARTINEZ: So --
- 8 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- tell us why
- 9 they're wrong.
- 10 MR. MARTINEZ: -- I think there are
- two main reasons, which I'll summarize very
- 12 quickly.
- Number one, there's nothing in the
- text of either the ADA or the Rehabilitation Act
- or the statutes it cross-references that sets up
- 16 a two-tiered standard under which different
- 17 plaintiffs seeking relief under the same
- 18 provisions have different standards apply to
- 19 them.
- 20 If that weren't enough -- we think it
- is enough -- you have an express statutory
- language, 1415(1), in the IDEA that was enacted
- 23 to overturn Smith versus Robinson and the -- the
- 24 erroneous reasoning that it embraced, and
- 25 1415(1) specifically says -- I'm not going to

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1 quote it, but it -- it says that you can't use
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- 2 the IDEA to limit people's rights under the
- 3 other statutes like the ADA or the
- 4 Rehabilitation Act.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 6 counsel.
- 7 Justice Thomas?
- 8 Justice Alito?
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: This is not exactly
- 10 related to the question that's before us, so
- 11 perhaps it's unfair, but I think it might have
- some relationship to what the court below was
- 13 getting at.
- 14 So this is the question. What
- difference, if any, do you see between the cost
- 16 that a school district must be required to --
- 17 the extra costs a school district must be
- 18 required to shoulder under the IDEA and the
- 19 extra costs that would constitute a reasonable
- 20 accommodation under the ADA --
- MR. MARTINEZ: I --
- JUSTICE ALITO: -- or the
- 23 Rehabilitation Act?
- MR. MARTINEZ: -- I think it's going
- to depend in any particular case. And the way

- 1 to think about this is these are really
- 2 different statutory regimes.
- 3 You have the IDEA that gives you an
- 4 affirmative right to a FAPE, the ADA in Section
- 5 504, which eliminate discrimination.
- 6 Depending on the case, it may be that
- 7 the IDEA gives you more than the other statutes
- 8 in one context, and the other statutes might
- 9 give you more than the IDEA in a different
- 10 context.
- 11 Here, I think, with respect to the --
- 12 the monetary relief that's at issue, it -- it
- 13 really -- you know, the -- the statutes
- overlap to some extent, but they don't overlap
- with respect to the statute of limitations. And
- 16 so we're trying to take advantage of the statute
- of limitations that Congress gave us with
- 18 respect to the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act,
- 19 which allows us to go back further in time than
- 20 the two-year statute of limitations under the
- 21 IDEA.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Thank you.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 24 Sotomayor?
- 25 Justice Kagan?

1	Justice Gorsuch?
2	Justice Kavanaugh?
3	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: A couple
4	follow-ups. You agree that there's an intent
5	requirement for damages claims, but you say it's
6	deliberate indifference, correct?
7	MR. MARTINEZ: Your Honor, in our
8	opening brief, we did not take a position on
9	that. We did not take a position on whether
LO	there was an intent requirement, but we
L1	certainly are not fighting that. We didn't
L2	fight that below. I think the Eighth Circuit
L3	and nine other circuits say it's deliberate
L4	indifference.
L5	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: That sounds close
L6	to a yes.
L7	(Laughter.)
L8	MR. MARTINEZ: Close close close
L9	to a yes. We you know, we would have taken a
20	position on it if we thought that was the
21	question presented, but it isn't, so we we
22	didn't have to.
23	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: And then
24	MR. MARTINEZ: But I think that's

25 fair.

_	OUDITCE NAVANAUGII: GO YOU AGIEE
2	with the SG's formulation of deliberate
3	indifference? Any problems with how they
4	formulate it in their brief?
5	MR. MARTINEZ: As I understand their
6	formulation, I agree with it. I think
7	substantial likelihood is an appropriate way
8	of of thinking about, you know, substantial
9	likelihood of a violation. I think the one
10	thing I just want to be very clear on is you
11	don't have to know the law. You have to know
12	the facts that would give rise to the violation.
13	And I think that's an important caveat.
14	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, on that
15	point, in my last question, there's a lot of
16	line drawing that has to go on in this context,
17	I think, with school districts deciding whether
18	to provide services to 4:30 p.m. or until 6 p.m.
19	And that's a very fact-intensive judgment on
20	which the district court found that the district
21	officials exercised professional judgment,
22	convened multiple IEP meetings, extended the
2.3	school day heyond the school day of her neers

implemented many of Dr. Reichle's suggestions.

Failure provide extended schooling until 6 p.m.

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1 at home was, at most, negligent, is what the
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- 2 district court found.
- And I guess it's hard to know how you
- 4 say -- where do you find the line for deliberate
- 5 indifference or you know that you -- that it's
- 6 substantially likely to be a violation when it's
- 7 this fact-intensive reasonableness --
- 8 MR. MARTINEZ: Right.
- 9 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- kind of
- 10 inquiry? So how should a court think about
- 11 that? In other words, the court on remand, if
- 12 it's applying deliberate indifference, how
- 13 should it think about it as related to these
- 14 facts?
- MR. MARTINEZ: Well, I think I -- the
- 16 first thing I would say is we -- we love the
- fact that we have appellate courts, and the
- 18 Eighth Circuit in this case said, looking at
- 19 those same facts, that we may well have
- 20 established deliberate indifference. So it took
- 21 a different view. We think, certainly, on the
- 22 summary judgment record in this case, we would
- get past, you know, the other side's motion for
- 24 summary judgment on whether there was deliberate
- 25 indifference.

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                Obviously, it's going to be a -- a
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      fact-bound analysis. It's going to require
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      close attention. And the sensitivity that this
      Court has -- has often said is very important in
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     the IDEA context should, of course, apply in
 5
     this context too. But we think that we have
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7
      good arguments and good facts for us that we can
     prevail on deliberate indifference properly
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 9
      understood if this goes back down below.
10
               JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Thank you.
11
                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS:
                                        Justice
12
      Barrett?
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               JUSTICE BARRETT:
                                  No.
14
                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
15
      Jackson?
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                JUSTICE JACKSON: And, of course, your
17
      overall point is that courts already consider
18
     deliberate indifference on facts in other
19
      contexts?
20
                MR. MARTINEZ: That's right. They --
      they -- they consider it on other facts in other
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2.2
      contexts. And Justice Gorsuch asked, isn't it
23
      only the case when you're talking about
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      supervisor -- supervisory-type liability? And
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     we -- I would just say -- I should have said
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- 1 this earlier, Justice Gorsuch, but I'll say it's
- 2 also true in other contexts, like the prison
- 3 context. When you're assessing Eighth Amendment
- 4 claims dealing with the, you know, medical
- 5 treatment or conditions of confinement, when
- 6 you're looking at the prison's own conduct, you
- 7 apply the -- deliberate indifference standard
- 8 there. And so, yes.
- 9 JUSTICE JACKSON: Thank you.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 11 counsel.
- Ms. Reaves.
- 13 ORAL ARGUMENT OF NICOLE F. REAVES
- for the united states, as amicus curiae,
- 15 SUPPORTING THE PETITIONER
- MS. REAVES: Mr. Chief Justice, and
- 17 may it please the Court:
- 18 There is no sound basis for applying
- 19 different intent requirements to Title II and
- 20 Section 504 claims brought in the school
- 21 context. The texts of those provisions apply to
- 22 qualified individuals and provide relief to any
- 23 person and do not distinguish among different
- 24 contexts. And if there were any doubt,
- 25 20 U.S.C. 1415(1) makes clear that Title II and

- 1 Section 504 rights are not restricted or limited
- 2 in the education context.
- Respondents no longer dispute these
- 4 points. Instead, they ask this Court to adopt a
- 5 breathtakingly broad rule and hold that a
- 6 plaintiff cannot bring a Title II or Section 504
- 7 claim in any context without proving intent to
- 8 discriminate. No court of appeals has ever
- 9 adopted that rule, which would entirely
- 10 eliminate all Title II and Section 504
- 11 reasonable accommodation claims.
- 12 This Court should reject Respondents'
- 13 attempt to belatedly insert such wide-ranging
- issues into this case and instead merely hold
- that students are not required to satisfy
- 16 heightened intent standards in the school
- 17 context.
- 18 And Respondents' arguments are wrong
- on the merits in any event. The text, context,
- 20 history, and purpose of Title II and Section 504
- 21 do not require a plaintiff to prove intent to
- 22 discriminate to bring a claim.
- I welcome the Court's questions.
- 24 JUSTICE THOMAS: So the -- I think you
- 25 argue that intent is required in a -- in damages

1	context?
2	MS. REAVES: Yes, Justice Thomas.
3	JUSTICE THOMAS: But not injunctive
4	relief?
5	MS. REAVES: Yes.
6	JUSTICE THOMAS: Now what's your
7	explanation for the difference?
8	MS. REAVES: So I think the
9	explanation comes primarily from this Court's
10	recognition in the Spending Clause context and
11	particularly in Davis and Gebser, where the
12	Court has walked down a lot of this road, that
13	there needs to be particular notice when there's
14	going to be an expenditure of funds under
15	Spending Clause statutes.
16	And, in contrast, when an entity
17	incurs liability but is only potentially going

- to have to be on the hook for injunctive relief, 18
- the entity has a choice. They can reject 19
- 20 ongoing spending in exchange for not having
- 21 continuing injunctive relief. And that's not
- 22 the case with backward-looking damages.
- And I think it's also not unusual for 23
- the Court to draw these types of lines in this 24
- area. In Lane v. Peña, the Court held that the 25

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1 Rehabilitation Act and Section 504 in
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- 2 particular, that the United States had not
- 3 waived its sovereign immunity with regard to
- 4 damages claims but recognized that it had waived
- 5 its sovereign immunity with regard to injunctive
- 6 relief claims.
- 7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, I -- I get
- 8 this -- the -- the sovereign immunity overlay,
- 9 but, I mean, the -- the strength of the argument
- 10 from Petitioners and -- and the government is
- 11 that the statutes here don't draw any
- 12 distinction of the sort that Respondent
- proposes -- proposed below. And, here, you're
- 14 asking us to draw a distinction that the statute
- doesn't have on its face between damages and
- injunctive relief and apply a higher standard
- 17 when it comes to injunctive relief. So could
- 18 you address that oddity?
- 19 And then again, I asked the question
- of Mr. Martinez, if -- if you're looking at it
- 21 through a contract-type lens through the
- 22 Spending Clause, why wouldn't a -- a state be on
- 23 notice more that a breach would incur damages
- than specific performance, which is an
- 25 extraordinary remedy in contract at least? So

- one might think, if -- if the state were on
- 2 notice of anything, it might be injunctions
- 3 before damages rather than the other way around.
- 4 Thoughts?
- 5 MS. REAVES: So, as to the first part
- of your question, I don't think we're asking the
- 7 Court to draw a new line here because I think
- 8 both Gebser and Davis already strongly suggest
- 9 this line between damages and injunctive relief.
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, but textual --
- I understand that point, but I -- I was focusing
- on the statutory text. The strength of the
- 13 argument here is stat -- statute doesn't draw
- 14 the distinction that Respondent proposed. And
- now you're asking us to do a similar thing, and
- 16 I'm -- I'm just wondering about its consistency
- 17 with contract-type analogies.
- MS. REAVES: Right. And so, as far as
- 19 the contract analogy goes, I think that the --
- the contract analogy obviously isn't perfect
- 21 because the focus here is -- is notice --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mm-hmm.
- MS. REAVES: -- as to liability going
- forward. And if you've already had a violation
- of the statute and you're automatically liable

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1 without any sort of intent requirement, that
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- 2 would weigh -- raise wheel -- real notice
- 3 problems. But, unlike a traditional contract, a
- 4 state can or -- a funded entity can withdraw
- 5 and -- to forgo ongoing injunctive relief.
- 6 That's not necessarily true of a contract, but I
- 7 think, because of the way the Spending Clause
- 8 contract overlay works in this context, the
- 9 notice concerns are just less there.
- 10 And I would also like to just briefly
- 11 respond to Respondents' suggestion that
- 12 injunctive relief is always going to be
- 13 significantly more burdensome. Plaintiff still
- is going to need to prove both the violation and
- that they are entitled to injunctive relief, and
- that means they're going to need to show that
- 17 the on -- the violation is ongoing and that --
- but for injunctive relief, the violation is not
- 19 going to fall --
- 20 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Does the government
- 21 think that intent is required or that it --
- 22 it -- it -- it's -- it's just noticing that --
- 23 that it might be suggested by our cases? Or --
- or would deliberate indifference be the
- 25 appropriate standard for both damages and

- 1 injunctive relief?
- MS. REAVES: So we think that -- and I
- 3 think this is consistent with what we said in
- 4 our brief -- intent is not required to state a
- 5 violation of the statute.
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: No, I understand,
- 7 but for -- for damage --
- 8 MS. REAVES: And it is not required
- 9 for injunctive relief.
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- for damages.
- 11 MS. REAVES: It absolutely is required
- 12 for damages.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: You think it is?
- 14 Okay.
- MS. RAVES: Yes.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: But you're not --
- 17 your argument doesn't turn on that today, right?
- I mean, isn't -- I'm -- I'm trying to understand
- 19 whether, to rule in favor of Petitioner or the
- 20 government today, we have to take a position
- 21 on -- deliberate indifference or whether there's
- 22 a difference between damages or injunctive
- 23 relief. I didn't understand the question
- 24 presented in this case as it currently exists to
- 25 require us to rule on any of that.

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1 MS. REAVES: That's correct. We don't
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- 2 think the Court has to rule on any of that.
- 3 Because we do think this was teed up on the
- 4 assumption that there are baseline standards,
- 5 the Court doesn't need to get into those, and
- 6 the question is just whether there's a
- 7 heightened intent standard that applies to all
- 8 claims in the school context.
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: In -- in that
- 10 regard, do you have any concerns that no one is
- 11 here defending the pot -- position of the
- 12 majority of circuits who addressed this question
- 13 below, or am I the only one?
- 14 (Laughter.)
- MS. REAVES: Mr. Chief Justice, I -- I
- don't have any concerns about that. I do think
- 17 you have the reasoning of the decision below,
- 18 you have the reasoning of Monahan, you have the
- 19 reasoning of one of the amicus briefs in support
- of Respondents. You have Respondents' brief in
- 21 opposition, which actually did take this
- head-on.
- 23 And I honestly don't think there's a
- lot more to be said for the bad-faith-or-gross-
- 25 misjudgment standard. It -- it just -- there's

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1 no basis for it in the text, particularly in
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- 2 light of Section 1415(1).
- 3 And I -- I think there's perhaps a
- 4 reason that Respondents have shifted positions
- 5 because it is so hard to defend, so I don't
- 6 think this is a situation in which there's a
- 7 close question that this Court should be worried
- 8 about that no one is actually defending.
- 9 JUSTICE BARRETT: Why do you think no
- 10 circuit has changed its position? If it's so
- obvious that Respondent has just completely
- 12 given it up and jumped overboard, why are all
- 13 these circuits sticking with it?
- MS. REAVES: I honestly think that's a
- 15 good question. Having read all of these cases
- 16 post-Monahan and then post Section 1415(1), it
- 17 really just seems like courts of appeals haven't
- grappled with it, and maybe it's because of how
- some of these cases were litigated and 1415(1)
- wasn't pointed out to the courts.
- I do find it somewhat surprising, but
- 22 I don't think that's a reason for the Court to,
- you know, suggest that the bad-faith-or-gross-
- 24 misjudgment heightened standard is appropriate.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You --

1	JUSTICE BARRETT: Then I'll ask you
2	the question oh, sorry.
3	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Go ahead.
4	JUSTICE BARRETT: the question that
5	the government always gets asked: Difference
6	between your position and Mr. Martinez's?
7	MS. REAVES: I think the primary
8	difference is that, you know, while we don't
9	think the Court has to resolve this in this
10	case, we absolutely believe that intent is
11	required for damages claims under the ADA and
12	title and Section 504. And we think that
13	deliberate indifference is a way to prove that
14	intent.
15	And I think I I took my friend
16	to not be taking a clear position on that here
17	or in in in his briefing.
18	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: How would you
19	describe the difference between deliberate
20	indifference and bad faith?
21	MS. REAVES: So I'd like to take this
22	in a couple parts both as to the whole standard
23	and then each part of the bad-faith-or-gross-
24	misjudgment standard.

So deliberate indifference requires

- 1 actual knowledge of -- that a federally
- 2 protected right was substantially likely to be
- 3 violated and failure to act. That we think is
- 4 just a standard intent requirement. It doesn't
- 5 require any sort of animus.
- 6 So look at the bad-faith-or-gross-
- 7 misjudgment standard. Think, first of all, as a
- 8 whole, it's been rarely applied. It's only been
- 9 applied in this Monahan line of cases, and it --
- 10 for that reason, I think it's a little bit
- 11 undertheorized, whereas deliberate indifference
- has been applied across the board to Title II
- and Section 504 cases, other than some circuits
- in this context.
- 15 And then, if you break out the two
- parts of the standard, I think that bad faith
- appears to have an animus requirement, which we
- 18 just don't think is consistent with the text of
- 19 these statutes. It's not consistent with things
- 20 the Court has said in cases like Murray versus
- 21 UBS Securities that discrimination generally
- doesn't require animus. So we think that's, you
- know, too high of a standard.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Is -- is --
- MS. REAVES: And then, if you get to

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1 the gross misjudgment part, I think that's very
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- 2 unclear. You know, Respondents suggested in
- 3 their brief in opposition that just looking at
- 4 it on its face, it doesn't require intent at
- 5 all, and that would be a problem.
- And then Respondents in their merits
- 7 brief cite two cases that are over a hundred
- 8 years old that don't even use "gross
- 9 misjudgment." They use "gross mistake."
- 10 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, to Justice
- 11 Barrett's question about the circuits, is there
- 12 a case out there that failed under the bad-faith
- 13 standard that you think would have succeeded
- 14 under the deliberate-indifference standard?
- MS. REAVES: Well, the court of
- 16 appeals below here thought that it probably made
- a difference, so I think that's a good example.
- 18 I think I can give you an example of a case sort
- 19 of going the opposite direction.
- 20 So we cite the Eleventh Circuit's
- 21 decision in Liese in our briefing, and in that
- 22 case, the -- the issue was whether there was
- failure to provide a reasonable accommodation in
- the form of a sign language interpreter for a
- 25 patient at a hospital, and the court found that

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1 there was enough to go to trial because there
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- 2 was deliberate indifference because these
- 3 individuals had repeatedly requested an
- 4 interpreter.
- 5 But there was no indication in that
- 6 decision that any of those choices made by the
- 7 hospital were backed by some sort of -- of
- 8 animus on behalf -- you know, animus
- 9 discriminating against individuals with
- 10 disabilities.
- 11 So I think that case, while it got to
- 12 go to trial, under our standard wouldn't
- 13 necessarily get to go to trial --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Thank you.
- MS. REAVES: -- under Respondents.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 17 counsel.
- Justice Thomas?
- 19 Justice Alito?
- JUSTICE ALITO: What do you think was
- 21 the impulse that led so many lower courts to
- 22 adopt the standard that you find to be
- 23 completely unsupported?
- 24 MS. REAVES: So I think the initial
- 25 rationale was the one the court laid out in

- 1 Monahan, the Eighth Circuit laid out, which was
- 2 this desire to harmonize the IDEA with the --
- 3 with Section 504 and Title II.
- 4 And I think that might have been
- 5 understandable, but -- and, obviously, this
- 6 Court found that logic compelling in Smith, but
- 7 I think, once Congress adopted 1415(1) and said
- 8 that nothing in the IDEA shall be construed to
- 9 restrict or limit the rights, procedures, and
- 10 remedies available under the ADA or
- 11 Rehabilitation Act, it was just abundantly clear
- 12 that that harmonization is inappropriate.
- 13 And I think there also might have been
- 14 a little bit of a misunderstanding about some of
- 15 the daylight between these type of claims.
- I mean, my friend laid out very well,
- 17 I think, that -- different protections under the
- 18 IDEA and Title II and Section 504, but there are
- 19 some claims you just can't bring under the IDEA.
- 20 So, if an individual is on grade and
- they don't need any special education, they're
- 22 not going to get anything under the IDEA. But,
- if they're using a wheelchair, they are going to
- 24 potentially need a reasonable accommodation
- 25 under the ADA.

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1 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, don't these two
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- 2 statutes proceed a -- along very different
- 3 lines? Under the IDEA, the school district must
- 4 provide a free appropriate public education.
- 5 That can be extremely expensive, right?
- 6 MS. REAVES: Yes.
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: The antidiscrimination
- 8 statutes, the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act,
- 9 start from the baseline that people with
- disabilities are supposed to be treated the same
- 11 as people without disabilities. But they depart
- 12 from the baseline because employers, for
- 13 example, in the employment context, must make a
- 14 reasonable accommodation. But there's a limit
- to the expense that an employer, for example,
- 16 must be -- is required to bear under the ADA.
- 17 So is there a substantial difference
- in that respect between the financial burden
- 19 that these two statutes impose on the regulated
- 20 parties?
- 21 MS. REAVES: No, I -- I don't think so
- 22 because the reasonable accommodation limitation
- and particularly the "reasonable" part of that
- is baked into both Title II and Section 504.
- 25 That's been recognized since the 1970s, shortly

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1 after the Rehabilitation Act was adopted.
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- 2 And then Congress, when it enacted the
- 3 ADA, said in Section 12201(a) that nothing in
- 4 the ADA shall be construed to apply a lesser
- 5 standard than the standards applied under Title
- 6 V of the Rehabilitation Act or the regulations
- 7 issued by federal agencies pursuant to such
- 8 title.
- 9 So the reasonable accommodation
- 10 limitation is baked into these Title II claims
- 11 that can be brought against public schools. And
- so the public school is going to be able to come
- 13 forward and say: This is not reasonable because
- 14 we can't afford it because it's not the sort of
- 15 thing that is normal accommodation or because it
- 16 would require a fundamental alteration in the
- 17 programs that we -- we give to students.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, let me just give
- 19 you one other example. I don't want to belabor
- 20 this be -- too much because it's a little --
- it's a side point.
- 22 Suppose an employer in -- a -- a place
- of employment is open from 9 to 5. Let's say
- it's a store. For some reason, it's open
- 25 from -- it closes at -- at 5 p.m. And there's

- 1 an employee with a disability similar to -- to
- 2 the -- to A.J.T.'s disability here who can't
- 3 work in the morning but could work later in the
- 4 day.
- 5 Would that employer be required under
- 6 the ADA to allow this employer -- employee to
- 7 work after closing time instead of during the
- 8 normal hours when this -- when this business is
- 9 providing a service to the public?
- MS. REAVES: No, because, under the
- 11 reasonable accommodation framework, the employer
- would be able to say: Well, this isn't a sort
- of accommodation that's reasonable on its face
- or used in a variety of cases. This isn't a
- 15 sort of accommodation we've seen before. And
- that's a defense courts often recognize.
- 17 And then they'd also say: Well, this
- 18 would be a fundamental alteration to our
- 19 business.
- 20 And I think, Justice Alito, one thing
- 21 I would just point out is I actually think that
- 22 underscores some of the differences between the
- 23 IDEA and Title II and Section 504 in the
- 24 education context.
- 25 You know, we have not taken a position

- on this, but just because after-hours education
- 2 is required under the IDEA does not mean that
- 3 that's a required reasonable accommodation under
- 4 Title II and Section 504.
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: All right. That's
- 6 what I was asking about. Thank you.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 8 Sotomayor?
- 9 Justice Kagan?
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: Ms. Reaves, if we
- 11 decide that this dual-track approach is
- incorrect and if we say nothing about the
- 13 appropriate standards with respect to either
- 14 damages or injunctions, what's your
- understanding of what could properly happen
- 16 below?
- 17 MS. REAVES: So I think below, without
- any other urging, presumably, the Eighth Circuit
- 19 would apply its general precedent to those two
- 20 questions. And the Eighth Circuit has generally
- 21 held that to state a violation of Title II or
- 22 Section 504, you don't have to prove an intent.
- 23 That's also true for injunctive relief. But
- 24 you -- the plaintiff would have to prove
- 25 deliberate indifference for damages.

- We haven't taken a position on
- 2 whether, you know, Respondents could try to
- 3 raise these broader arguments on remand. I
- 4 think -- I think there's some good arguments
- 5 that those have been forfeited and that there
- 6 are judicial estoppel, but that would obviously
- 7 be a question for the lower courts to sort out.
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: And you said without
- 9 any urging on our part or without any
- 10 encouragement. I mean, is -- is -- is there an
- 11 argument for encouragement? Is there -- is the
- 12 better approach not to do that? What -- what --
- do you have a position on that?
- MS. REAVES: We don't think that
- there's any basis for courts to start
- 16 reconsidering the reasonable accommodations
- 17 framework that all courts of appeals have signed
- 18 off on. I'm -- I mean, this Court has
- 19 recognized it since the mid-1970s. The entirety
- 20 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II have been
- 21 built up around that. And so I don't think
- there's a good basis for that, and there
- 23 would -- there wouldn't be any reason to
- 24 encourage it.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Thank you.

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
2	Gorsuch?
3	Justice Kavanaugh?
4	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You said that
5	clear notice was important, I think, in this
6	context in damages claims. And the other side
7	says that your framing of deliberate
8	indifference, in particular, actual knowledge
9	that a federally protected right was
10	substantially likely to be violated they
11	focus on substantially likely that that does
12	not give in this context school districts clear
13	notice of what they have to do, particular
14	you know, something like this, 4:30 p.m. or
15	6 p.m., and that it's therefore and you're
16	talking about reasonable accommodations and line
17	drawing to Justice Alito's question.
18	How do we deal with that?
19	MS. REAVES: Well, as an initial
20	matter, I think the deliberate indifference
21	standard is significantly clearer and gives more
22	notice than the proposed bad-faith-or-gross-
23	misjudgment standard, where we don't even know
24	if the second component requires intent or not.
25	And deliberate indifference is much more well

- 1 established.
- 2 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, just on the
- 3 question, though, it -- it -- this standard is
- 4 not exactly crystal-clear. At least that's what
- 5 the other side says. School districts, to
- 6 Justice Alito's point, are going to be on the
- 7 hook for substantial expenditures, and they want
- 8 just notice, tell us whether we're substantially
- 9 likely to violate the law. How are they
- 10 supposed to determine that?
- MS. REAVES: So a couple of responses
- 12 to that. So, first of all, I do think, you
- know, this is an actual knowledge requirement,
- and it is failure to act, a deliberate choice
- 15 not to act. And when it comes to --
- 16 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You say actual
- 17 knowledge of your legal obligations, correct?
- MS. REAVES: So it's not actual
- 19 knowledge of the law, but it's actual
- 20 knowledge -- and, I mean, I think this is
- 21 consistent with normal intent standards -- that,
- 22 you know, your actions are -- are illegal and --
- or your actions are, you know, likely to violate
- 24 someone's rights. So it's not that you have to
- 25 know --

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1
                JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: That's pretty --
 2
                MS. REAVES: -- the precision of --
 3
      and, I mean, this is a tricky area in many areas
      of law, but I do think that with the substantial
 4
      likelihood standard, as this Court has described
 5
 6
      it in Davis and Gebser, is going to require, you
 7
     know, a more than 50 percent assurance that a
      violation's going to occur, and that means that
 8
 9
      you've kind of made a mistake as to the whole
      reasonable accommodation framework.
10
11
                And I would just point out that
12
     because we're just talking about injunctive
13
      relief, the kind of worst-case scenario here is,
14
     if the entity mistakenly, you know, denies a
15
      reasonable accommodation and it turns out they
16
      should have granted it, they'll just have to
17
     grant it going forward unless there is, you
18
     know, this high level of deliberate
19
      indifference. Like, this -- the -- the standard
20
     builds in the ability for school districts to
21
     make significant mistakes and not be held liable
2.2
     for damages.
23
                JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Sorry to belabor
          One last question. If -- if a school
24
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district says I don't know whether the -- the

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1 counsel for the school district says I don't
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- 2 know whether the law would require us to go to
- 3 6 p.m. or 4:30 p.m., I just don't know, I don't
- 4 know how that will be assessed, can a -- can a
- 5 court then say that they acted with knowledge
- 6 that a federal right was substantially likely to
- 7 be violated?
- 8 MS. REAVES: I don't think so. I
- 9 think that would fall into the kind of
- 10 bureaucratic inaction or negligence buckets,
- 11 which are not high enough to be actual
- 12 knowledge.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Thank you.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 15 Barrett?
- 16 Justice Jackson?
- 17 JUSTICE JACKSON: So, in your exchange
- 18 with Justice Kavanaugh, it seemed like the
- intent factor or element was taking on a lot of
- 20 work in terms of figuring these kinds of claims
- 21 out, and I really thought that in the reasonable
- 22 accommodations framework that it's an
- 23 interactive kind of engagement that when a
- 24 person has a disability and they say I need this
- accommodation, there's, like, a back-and-forth

- 1 between the employer, the school district, or
- whomever, and so it's not really like a surprise
- 3 coming out of nowhere and it's all about intent.
- 4 It's really, I thought, about arguments related
- 5 to whether or not this particular accommodation
- is reasonable under the circumstances.
- 7 MS. REAVES: So I do think the
- 8 bottom-line inquiry is going to be intent, but I
- 9 think you're absolutely right that in a school
- 10 context in particular with a disabled child,
- 11 there's going to often be a lot of
- 12 back-and-forth between the school district and
- 13 the student, and that may often, you know, be
- 14 relevant to showing intent. And I think some of
- these cases that we've cited, like the Liese
- 16 case I cited earlier, you know, intent there was
- 17 possibly shown by the repeated requests for
- 18 reasonable accommodation and failure to grant
- 19 those requests or to --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So let me just ask
- 21 this.
- MS. REAVES: -- consider them
- 23 seriously.
- 24 JUSTICE JACKSON: If -- if we say
- 25 there's no heightened standard here and that the

- 1 regular standards apply, and let's say the
- 2 Eighth Circuit has adopted deliberate
- 3 indifference in this context, the ADA claim
- 4 could then proceed in the sense that it's not
- 5 barred because we don't have this animus.
- 6 Would there be then some engagement
- 7 around whether or not this particular
- 8 accommodation was reasonable?
- 9 MS. REAVES: Yes. I think that would
- 10 be appropriate on remand. So we obviously
- 11 haven't taken a position on how this should come
- 12 out.
- 13 JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes.
- MS. REAVES: But I think what would
- happen on remand is, as to Petitioner's
- 16 injunctive relief claim, the court would need to
- 17 go through the analysis and see, you know,
- 18 whether this was, in fact, a request -- a
- 19 reasonable accommodation request that was denied
- and then, if yes, whether the requirements for
- 21 injunctive relief are met.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Mm-hmm.
- MS. REAVES: And then, if yes, to --
- the liability question would also need to go
- 25 through deliberate indifference as to her

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1 request for damages.
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- JUSTICE JACKSON: Thank you.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 4 counsel.
- 5 Ms. Blatt.
- 6 ORAL ARGUMENT OF LISA S. BLATT
- 7 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS
- 8 MS. BLATT: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
- 9 it please the Court:
- 10 This Court should affirm Monahan.
- 11 Bare IDEA violations do not support liability
- 12 under Section 504 or the ADA. Instead, the
- 13 defendant must have acted with discriminatory
- 14 intent. Monahan correctly described that intent
- as bad faith, which is the longstanding term for
- 16 actions done for an improper reason, here,
- 17 disability.
- 18 504 and Title II require
- 19 discrimination by reason of disability. This
- 20 Court has held that the nearly identical text in
- 21 Title VI requires intent to discriminate.
- 22 Petitioner acknowledges that because the law
- 23 here expressly incorporates Title VI rights and
- 24 remedies, discriminatory intent must be shown to
- 25 get damages. But Petitioner departs from that

- 1 intent requirement for liability and
- 2 injunctions.
- 3 That's wrong. When Congress wanted
- 4 intent-free liability, it said so expressly. In
- 5 ADA's Title I and III, Congress spelled out
- 6 reasonable a -- accommodations intent-free
- 7 claims and barred damages without intent for
- 8 employers and altogether for hotels and hotdog
- 9 stands. Congress did not plausibly disfavor
- 10 states and localities in Title II.
- 11 This Court should decide the correct
- 12 standard. The petition ends with: "What
- 13 standard should apply under the ADA and Rehab
- 14 Act is a pure question of law. It should be
- 15 resolved in this case." That's a quote. We
- 16 agree.
- 17 And reversing Monahan would expose
- 46,000 public schools to liability when, for 40
- 19 years, they have trained teachers, allocated
- 20 budgets, and obtained insurance, all in reliance
- on Monahan. Every good-faith disagreement would
- 22 risk liability or even the nuclear option, the
- 23 loss of federal funding, which is over a hundred
- 24 billion dollars.
- The district cares deeply about Ava

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1 and gave her more service than any other student
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- 2 even before this litigation started. Such
- 3 good-faith efforts should not support
- 4 discrimination liability.
- 5 I welcome questions.
- 6 JUSTICE THOMAS: Is this the same
- 7 argument that you made below?
- 8 MS. BLATT: Yes. So let me take you
- 9 through -- again, I had an out-of-body
- 10 experience listening to what we argued, but in
- 11 the rehearing petition on page 1, the school
- 12 district argued Monahan is required by the text.
- 13 On page 26 of the brief in opposition, we said
- 14 Monahan is required by the text. We quoted the
- text, and we said it requires discrimination
- 16 intent. We -- we cited Title VI because the --
- 17 this statute expressly incorporates the rights
- and remedies of Title IV's intent was required.
- 19 We cited Sandoval, which is your seminal case
- 20 under Title VI, which holds the nearly identical
- 21 language requires discriminatory intent.
- Now, to be sure, page 27's ongoing and
- the rehearing petition and the red brief still
- 24 argues from the top of the mountain that this
- 25 standard makes particularly good sense in the

- 1 school context because the other side in their
- 2 complaint -- and this goes directly to Justice
- 3 Alito's question -- on paragraphs 118 and 133
- 4 say just because you violate the IDEA, that is
- 5 ipso facto a violation of the ADA and
- 6 Rehabilitation Act.
- 7 So we've always said that you owe
- 8 deference to schools and this standard makes
- 9 sense.
- 10 And I can talk about how Monahan
- 11 arrived. Monahan makes complete sense. It's a
- 12 caricature and not an accurate description of
- 13 that case. It starts with the language of the
- 14 statute and said: When you have a mere
- violation of the requirement to provide a free
- 16 and appropriate education, that is not
- 17 necessarily discrimination, "the statute solely
- 18 by reason of discrimination." Something else
- 19 was required.
- 20 Now the Court chose bad faith for a
- 21 reason. Bad faith by definition means an
- 22 improper purpose. The only purpose that is
- 23 prohibited by this statute is -- is disability.
- No one, no case, no cite has ever said that's
- 25 animus. Again, that's made up, hence,

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1 out-of-body experience.
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- JUSTICE JACKSON: Ms. Blatt, I --
- 3 I'm --
- 4 MS. BLATT: Yes.
- 5 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- I'm over here
- 6 trying to really figure out what you argued
- 7 below --
- 8 MS. BLATT: Sure.
- 9 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- and the many,
- 10 many times that I understood you to be pegging
- 11 your argument to the unique elements of this
- 12 particular environment.
- MS. BLATT: Correct.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: And so I think it
- might be a little unfair to suggest that what
- 16 you were always just saying is that Monahan is
- 17 based on the text of the statute.
- 18 It seems to me that you were very
- 19 clearly saying in your -- right up and to the
- 20 opposition to rehearing and to the BIO below
- 21 that there was something about the IDEA context
- 22 and schools that gave Monahan its value.
- MS. BLATT: Both of those statements
- 24 are correct. It is not inconsistent to say
- Monahan is required by the text and this makes

- 1 great policy sense in the school context, which
- 2 is also what Judge Arnold said in the Eighth
- 3 Circuit.
- 4 The disconnect is there's this -- I
- 5 don't know, it's a lie to say that we never
- 6 defended Monahan by the text. It's on page 26
- 7 of the brief in opposition.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: No, no, no, I'm
- 9 not -- I don't think the argument is that you
- 10 never defended it by the text. I think the --
- 11 MS. BLATT: Well, what is a lie and
- 12 what is inaccurate --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, no, no, no.
- 14 T --
- MS. BLATT: If I could just get this
- 16 out -- if I could just get this out, please.
- 17 What is a lie and inaccurate is that
- 18 we ever said in any context that this Court
- 19 should take the same language and define it
- 20 differently depending on context. That is not
- 21 true. There is no statement. They adding words
- 22 to our mouth. We never said you should have a
- 23 double regime.
- 24 What the school district has said,
- 25 which is what Monahan said, is --

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1 JUSTICE GORSUCH: You -- you believe
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- 2 that Mr. Martinez and the Solicitor General are
- 3 lying? Is that your accusation?
- 4 MS. BLATT: At -- at oral argument,
- 5 yes, absolutely. It is not true that we --
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I think you should
- 7 be more careful with your words, Ms. Blatt.
- 8 MS. BLATT: Okay. Well, they should
- 9 be more careful in character --
- 10 mischaracterizing a position by an experienced
- 11 advocate of the Supreme Court, with all due
- 12 respect.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, I'm
- 14 quoting from their reply brief, where they say
- 15 that -- with citations, what you said, that the
- 16 secondary education was a "unique context"
- "giving rise to a unique subset" "calling for a"
- 18 "different standard."
- MS. BLATT: Correct.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That seems to
- 21 me to be what the --
- MS. BLATT: Well, I'm sorry, no.
- Where does it say that quoting for a different
- 24 standard? That part we never said. Are they
- 25 quoting?

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1
                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, they've
 2
     got quote marks around it.
 3
                (Laughter.)
                MS. BLATT: Where's the -- where's the
 4
 5
     page?
                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's -- it's
 6
 7
     page 4 of their yellow brief.
                MS. BLATT: Oh. Well, they're -- I
 8
     mean, we never said that there should be
 9
10
     different standards. What we've always said and
11
      what we've acknowledged in the brief in
12
      opposition, which is true, that outside the
      school context, the courts have said there's no
13
14
      intent at least for liability but for damages.
15
                But we are where we are with the
16
     question presented. What I hear the real
17
     dispute is: What does the question presented
18
      ask? And the question presented, we read, is:
19
     What is the correct standard?
20
                Now, to be sure, they add the
21
     pejorative term "uniquely stringent." But had
2.2
      the question said should this Court adopt a
23
     uniquely stupid bad-faith standard, the question
24
      would still not be should courts adopt uniquely
25
      stupid standards. It would be should courts
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1 adopt the bad-faith standard.
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- JUSTICE JACKSON: But, Ms. Blatt,
- 3 you -- in order to say it's uniquely stupid, I
- 4 think you would have to point to at least one
- 5 other circuit that has actually applied the
- 6 bad-faith standard in a different context.
- 7 I mean, to the extent that you're now
- 8 saying it's dumb for them to have adopted it or
- 9 not to have adopted it everywhere, can we get to
- 10 the substance of your argument?
- 11 MS. BLATT: Sure. It -- our
- definition of "bad faith" is discriminatory
- intent.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: No, I understand.
- 15 But -- has a single other standard -- circuit
- 16 applied that outside of this particular context?
- MS. BLATT: So -- well -- no, in the
- sense of the circuits that are applying outside
- 19 the school context, including the Eighth
- 20 Circuit, don't apply bad faith. They apply no
- intent, deliberate indifference.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: And is your argument
- 23 that bad faith should apply everywhere?
- MS. BLATT: A -- yes, in a -- the
- 25 statutory text solely by discrimination is the

1 reason for the action is a discriminatory intent

- 2 standard.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: And that would be a
- 4 sea change, right? That's what the other side
- 5 told us.
- 6 MS. BLATT: Well, it would be a --
- 7 only a sea change in terms of liability. If
- 8 we're going to talk about what the circuits --
- 9 Judge Sutton --
- 10 JUSTICE BARRETT: Well, sea change in
- 11 terms of liability is a pretty big sea change.
- 12 I mean, Justice Jackson's pointing out that no
- 13 circuit has adopted your rule.
- MS. BLATT: Well, we're asking the
- 15 Court to -- to decide this case.
- In terms of outside the school case,
- 17 Judge Sutton's opinion in the Sixth Circuit, and
- 18 that counts as a court, has held that -- that
- 19 this statute, just like Title IX and Title VI,
- 20 requires discriminatory intent.
- Now that's in the disparate impact
- 22 context, and no one has had a basis for saying
- there's any distinction between reasonable
- 24 accommodation and disparate impact.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: But, regardless

- 1 whether it's technically in the QP, it strikes
- 2 me as a pretty big deal.
- 3 MS. BLATT: I -- I think that's right.
- 4 And so --
- 5 JUSTICE BARRETT: Well, then why would
- 6 we do it when we don't really have -- we
- 7 don't -- we don't have -- you know, this didn't
- 8 come up until their reply because they didn't
- 9 understand it to be the QP. We don't have other
- 10 circuits that have adopted the question.
- 11 As I suggested to Mr. Martinez, it's
- 12 possible that if we decided this case in his
- favor, that then, when it goes back below, this
- 14 argument that you're making here will be made,
- and then it can follow our traditional way of
- 16 letting it percolate up, and then we can address
- it when we have more information.
- 18 But this seems pretty -- like a really
- 19 pretty big deal.
- MS. BLATT: I -- I think it's --
- 21 it's -- everything you said I agree with, except
- for the blue brief and the government's brief
- 23 said that the statute require -- that you have
- 24 to apply the plain text. So, lo and behold, we
- 25 looked at the plain text.

- 1 In terms of how you want to decide the
- 2 case, absolutely, you need to make clear that if
- 3 you're just going to reverse, that the Eighth
- 4 Circuit is free, notwithstanding its precedent,
- 5 to either level down, like the other side wants,
- 6 and apply the no intent, deliberate indifference
- 7 outside the school context, inside the school
- 8 context, or level up.
- 9 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: On the -- on the
- 10 level down/level up point, you're defining "bad
- 11 faith" so it doesn't require animus.
- MS. BLATT: Correct.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: So you're, I
- think, lowering bad faith from what some people
- 15 might think bad faith encompasses.
- MS. BLATT: But no one -- some people
- 17 is just this conversation. No court has --
- 18 these courts have said --
- 19 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Some judges.
- 20 MS. BLATT: They said it requires
- 21 discriminatory intent. No one has said animus.
- 22 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Okay. I'm just --
- 23 making the point, you're saying bad faith does
- 24 not require animus, correct?
- MS. BLATT: Correct.

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1 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Okay. And then --
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- then the SG defines "deliberate indifference" to
- 3 require actual knowledge that a -- that it's
- 4 substantially likely that you're violating the
- 5 law.
- And I'm wondering, "bad faith" as you
- 7 define it, without a requirement of animus, and
- 8 what they say is deliberate indifference, I'm
- 9 having a little trouble seeing a case that would
- 10 actually come out differently under those two
- 11 things.
- MS. BLATT: Well, sure. Any -- and
- this is the problem with their deliberate
- 14 indifference test.
- 15 And Justice -- this goes to Justice
- 16 Jackson. No court, no context except a prison,
- 17 would ever use a deliberate indifference test
- 18 for -- intent to discriminate. Intent to
- 19 discriminate is you have to intend to
- 20 discriminate.
- 21 Their test is you could have no intent
- 22 to discriminate. You could be obsessed with a
- 23 scandal. You could have budget concerns. But
- you were deliberately indifferent to some --
- 25 unidentified percentage that a student asks for

1 extra test time and you gave 30 minutes instead

- 2 of 60 minutes.
- Well, if you think that there's a
- 4 substantial chance that 60 minutes might be it,
- 5 but, in good faith, you want to -- you know, one
- 6 circuit has held 30 minutes is enough, there's
- 7 damages liability.
- 8 That is insane. That is not an intent
- 9 to discriminate. That is just either a
- 10 disagreement about what the law requires or you
- 11 had some sort of weird problem that had nothing
- 12 to do with the -- a child's disability status.
- 13 You just were deliberately indifferent.
- If you're going to follow Title VI --
- and this is the Fifth Circuit. The Fifth
- 16 Circuit said: I don't know what this deliberate
- 17 indifference is. I -- Title VI requires intent.
- 18 You -- there's no scenario where in --
- 19 deliberate indifference has ever meant
- discrimination in and of itself, as opposed to
- 21 you're deliberately indifferent to a teacher's
- or student's intentional sexual harassment.
- We agree you could have a deliberate
- 24 indifference if there were supervisory liability
- 25 to discrimination against the disabled.

- 1 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Why do you think
- 2 that's taken hold in all the circuits outside
- 3 the school context?
- 4 MS. BLATT: Easy. They cited this
- 5 case called Monell. I mean, that's just wrong,
- 6 weird, mistake.
- 7 So then they said: Well, Davis and
- 8 Gebser said deliberate indifference, and they
- 9 just misread it. I mean, the Fifth Circuit got
- 10 it right.
- 11 So, if you're going to rule against
- 12 us, at least wipe the slate clean and say -- if
- 13 you going to -- they want to say you have to
- 14 follow Title VI because they don't make a
- difference in terms of parties and you have to
- use intent for damages, then intent for damages
- 17 should be intent to discriminate just like Title
- 18 VI.
- 19 And we do think there is no textual
- 20 basis. They raised a lot of policy sense --
- 21 policy stuff between an injunction and loss --
- 22 and loss of -- sorry -- injunction and damages.
- But federal funding is now a big deal.
- 24 They could say one good-faith disagreement with
- 25 the IDEA is enough to cut off all the school

- 1 district's funding just because they disagreed?
- Or, actually, no, they could just got
- 3 it wrong. Their view is all funding in any
- 4 school, even Harvard, any school, the entire
- funding be cut off because they didn't fix the
- 6 elevator long enough. Like, the elevator was
- 7 there, but it was broken for two months or two
- 8 weeks. Failure to reasonably accommodate
- 9 liability.
- 10 And now federal funding is a big deal.
- No -- no -- no government has ever threatened
- 12 the loss of federal funding based on Title --
- 13 based on the Rehab Act. But you don't need
- 14 anti-Semitism anymore or encampments. You can
- just say you violated the reasonable
- 16 accommodation.
- 17 Now this is a big deal. That's what
- 18 Justice Barrett's saying. So I understand that
- 19 you don't want to take on this -- this case, but
- 20 I didn't bring this petition. This petition
- 21 said decide the standard and then said -- cited
- 22 your article, Justice Kavanaugh, saying you look
- 23 at the plain text. So I can't be faulted by
- 24 pick -- like what Judge Arnold did and pick up
- 25 the text, and it says solely by reason of

- 1 discrimination.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Ms. -- Ms. Blatt, I
- 3 think we have to really be fair about what the
- 4 question presented in this case actually is.
- 5 MS. BLATT: Sure.
- 6 JUSTICE JACKSON: It -- it -- it
- 7 did not say decide the standard. I'm reading.
- 8 The question presented is whether the ADA and
- 9 Rehabilitation Act require children with
- 10 disabilities to satisfy a uniquely stringent
- 11 bad-faith-or-gross- misjudgment standard when
- 12 seeking relief for discrimination relating to
- 13 their education.
- 14 MS. BLATT: So that can have two
- meanings. One, you could put all the emphasis
- on "uniquely stringent." Should this Court
- adopt a uniquely stringent standard, "oh, and
- it's called bad faith?" Or it could mean what
- we think the end of the petition said it meant.
- 20 Should a Court adopt the bad-faith standard,
- 21 which is uniquely stringent? And the last
- 22 page -- the last line of their petition says you
- 23 should decide what standard applies in this
- 24 case.
- Now, if you want to read it as the

- 1 "should courts adopt uniquely stringent
- 2 standards," then you're right. The -- the --
- 3 the parties a -- agree.
- 4 JUSTICE JACKSON: And you're saying
- 5 that's not the way you read it when I'm looking
- 6 at page 27 of your BIO, which says "the
- 7 bad-faith-or-gross-misjudgment standard is an
- 8 appropriate exercise of discretion; most
- 9 importantly, it accounts for the unique nature
- of claims like Petitioner's, that is, claims by
- 11 students with disabilities regarding the
- 12 appropriateness of their IEPs."
- 13 And you go on at length in talking
- 14 about the unique nature of this particular
- 15 context and why it would justify having this
- 16 standard as opposed to the standard that all the
- 17 courts have applied in other contexts.
- MS. BLATT: Well, that's why page 26
- 19 precedes page 27 --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes.
- 21 MS. BLATT: -- which I think you're
- reading from, and page 26 says the court of
- 23 appeals' decision below is correct and it's
- 24 correct because of the text, it's correct
- 25 because it incorporates Title VI, and it's

- 1 correct because it's been definitively
- 2 interpreted in Alexander versus Sandoval, which
- 3 is a pretty big deal for the uniquely worded
- 4 Title VI case.
- 5 But, Justice Jackson, there's no
- 6 disagreement that we've always said that there
- 7 is a big problem with the other side's argument
- 8 in the school context, because every IDEA
- 9 disagreement now risks the loss of federal
- 10 funding and injunctive relief. And so, yeah,
- 11 that -- that -- that is a big deal. And in
- terms of damages, that's a big deal too if you
- have a deliberate indifference standard, which,
- to be fair to us, does not apply in any other
- 15 context.
- 16 So there's no question that there's an
- incoherent big mess of a regime because this
- 18 Court started out in Davis saying that this is
- 19 not an affirmative action case. And then you
- 20 had Choate, which is maybe not Exhibit A, but
- 21 it's Exhibit B for what this Court has called
- 22 the bad old days, And that case has a lot of
- 23 dicta that talks about reasonable accommodation.
- Monahan was decided after Davis, before Choate.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: But can I just --

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1 can I just focus your attention on that?
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- 2 Because I don't understand why you are really
- 3 pressing this idea that discrimination claims in
- 4 the context of reasonable accommodations and
- 5 disability aren't something unique.
- I mean, I -- I thought the -- the
- 7 Alexander versus Choate line of thinking was
- 8 that you can have discrimination in this
- 9 context, say, differently from maybe racial
- 10 discrimination or gender discrimination when
- 11 a -- an entity that is responsible for
- 12 accommodating someone with a disability doesn't
- 13 act, that -- that you have benign neglect,
- meaning you're not doing it out of some sort of
- intent to treat this person differently. In
- fact, what you say is I'm treating this person
- the same, and the same is a world in which they
- 18 can't walk up the stairs and they can't see the
- 19 board and they can't do the things that
- 20 everybody else can do.
- 21 In -- in the
- 22 discrimination-of-disability context, the
- 23 requirement of the law is to treat them
- 24 differently --
- MS. BLATT: Well --

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1 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- differently in
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- 2 the sense that you're accommodating them so that
- 3 they can take and have full enjoyment of the
- 4 services.
- 5 MS. BLATT: Well --
- 6 JUSTICE JACKSON: So it's just a
- 7 different concept in --
- 8 MS. BLATT: But that -- yeah, with
- 9 respect, that's not the statute Congress passed.
- 10 And if you just look at Title I and Title III,
- 11 they have oodles and oodles of explanation of
- what a reasonable accommodation is, multipart
- 13 definitions on --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: No, but the whole
- idea of accommodation is unique --
- 16 MS. BLATT: That's not in the statute.
- 17 JUSTICE JACKSON: Accommodation is not
- in the statute?
- MS. BLATT: 504 and Title II, no.
- 20 That's what this -- I mean, no. That's what
- 21 Judge Sutton said.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: It's not in the ADA?
- MS. BLATT: It sure as heck is not in
- the statute. The word "reasonable" is not in
- 25 the statute. The word "accommodation" is not in

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1 the statute. This passive voice reading has got
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- 2 to be incorrect because it would bring all
- 3 disparate impact claims under --
- 4 JUSTICE JACKSON: So you -- you
- 5 read -- you read disability discrimination
- 6 statutes to not be requiring accommodation for
- 7 people with disabilities, that they -- that it's
- 8 just about discriminatory intent, meaning not
- 9 treating these people the same as everyone else?
- 10 MS. BLATT: Correct, and that is
- 11 glaringly obvious when you look at the seminal
- 12 statute of the ADA because Title I for
- 13 employers, Title III for country clubs and
- 14 hotdog stands, have not only reasonable
- 15 accommodations provisions, Justice Jackson, but
- 16 they don't make hotdog stands liable for
- 17 damages. And a made-up judicial damage remedy
- 18 comes from thin air.
- 19 JUSTICE BARRETT: Ms. Blatt, the
- answer to this is probably clear since you
- 21 called the two-tiers test stupid, but I just --
- MS. BLATT: I -- that was a --
- 23 (Laughter.)
- 24 JUSTICE BARRETT: -- I -- I just want
- to clarify, you agree there's no two-tier test?

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1 MS. BLATT: Correct.
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- 2 JUSTICE BARRETT: Okay. So there is
- 3 what Justice Gorsuch has sometimes called
- 4 radical --
- 5 MS. BLATT: Radical agreement.
- 6 JUSTICE BARRETT: -- on that point?
- 7 Okay.
- 8 MS. BLATT: There's radical agreement.
- 9 What there's radical disagreement on is the
- 10 question presented. And if you just say -- and
- 11 I know it's sometimes easier for you to say we
- don't have to do a lot, but you cause real harm
- 13 to the parties who don't have Supreme Court
- 14 counsel and lower courts who get confused when
- 15 you just remand and say we just remand. So, if
- 16 you could at least set the -- at least set the
- 17 slate free -- while it is part of your job,
- 18 Justice Kavanaugh, to set the law sometimes, and
- 19 I understand it's easier for you, and you have a
- 20 lot going on, not to set the law, but --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Ms. Blatt --
- MS. BLATT: Yeah.
- 23 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- I -- I confess
- 24 I'm still troubled by your suggestion that your
- 25 friends on the other side have lied.

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1 MS. BLATT: Okay. Let's pill -- pull
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- 2 it up.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah. I think we're
- 4 going to have to here, and I'd ask you to
- 5 reconsider that phrase.
- 6 MS. BLATT: At oral argument --
- 7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: If I might.
- 8 MS. BLATT: -- it was incorrect.
- 9 JUSTICE GORSUCH: If I -- if I --
- MS. BLATT: Sure.
- 11 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Incorrect is fine.
- MS. BLATT: Well, lying --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: People make
- 14 mistakes.
- MS. BLATT: Okay.
- 16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: You can accuse
- 17 people of being incorrect, but lying --
- MS. BLATT: That's fine.
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Ms. Blatt, if I
- 20 might finish.
- MS. BLATT: Sure.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Lying is another
- 23 matter. Page 1 of your brief in opposition --
- MS. BLATT: Yep.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- "as applied to

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1 the provision of IDEA services, the overlap
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- 2 between these statutes leads to a conceptual
- 3 particularity that exists only in this context."
- 4 MS. BLATT: Yep.
- 5 JUSTICE GORSUCH: That seems to
- 6 suggest you're arguing for a unique rule.
- Page 2. "For more than 40 years,
- 8 courts of appeals considering this unique subset
- 9 of ADA and Rehabilitation" --
- MS. BLATT: Yeah.
- 11 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- "claims directly
- 12 challenging IDEA's educational services have
- widely recognized that plaintiffs must establish
- 14 more."
- MS. BLATT: Yep.
- 16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: "That scheme
- 17 requires plaintiffs to show that school
- 18 professionals acted with discriminatory intent
- 19 by demonstrating that their decisions were
- 20 premised on bad faith or gross misjudgment."
- 21 Page 3. "In this unique context,
- 22 courts must balance the Rehabilitation Act and
- 23 ADA's prohibition on disability discrimination
- with educators' responsibility for determining
- 25 appropriate special education services. The

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1 bad-faith-or-gross-misjudgment standard" --
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- MS. BLATT: We say unique throughout.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- "properly" --
- 4 I -- I'm not finished.
- 5 MS. BLATT: Yeah.
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: "Properly accounts
- 7 for the need for deference."
- Page 27. "As courts have recognized,
- 9 discrimination claims based on an IEP's adequacy
- 10 are a conceptual peculiarity that exists in the
- 11 primary and secondary educational context."
- 12 Further down: "The
- 13 bad-faith-or-gross- misjudgment standard permits
- 14 the courts to adjudicate these novel claims
- 15 without requiring judges to substitute their own
- 16 notions of sound educational policy for those in
- 17 school authorities."
- MS. BLATT: Correct.
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: One -- one can
- 20 interpret those perhaps different ways ---
- MS. BLATT: Well --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- but, surely, a
- 23 reasonable person could interpret them as
- 24 arguing for a special rule in the educational
- 25 context, correct?

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1
               MS. BLATT: No, only because of the
 2
      text, but --
 3
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Ms. Blatt.
               MS. BLATT: Okay. Well, you -- I
 4
 5
     mean --
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: A reasonable
 6
 7
     person -- all of those emphasized the unique
      context of primary and secondary education and
8
 9
      the need for a special rule, don't they?
10
               MS. BLATT: Fine, but what I'm --
11
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Fine?
12
               MS. BLATT: -- objecting to --
13
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Fine?
14
               MS. BLATT: Can I -- can I --
15
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Then -- then would
     you withdraw your accusation?
16
17
               MS. BLATT: I'll withdraw it.
18
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you. That's
19
      it.
20
               MS. BLATT: Okay. That's fine.
21
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Ms. Blatt, I
22
      also -- going back to a question Justice Barrett
23
     asked, you are basically saying, no, I'm not
24
     asking for a unique rule; I'm asking for a rule
25
     that applies in all discrimination statutes.
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1 But nowhere else have I seen the use of
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- 2 deliberate indifference or gross enough
- 3 indifference used to define intentional
- 4 discrimination.
- In fact, in Albecombie, we had a
- 6 neutral policy that applied to all employees,
- 7 they can't wear hair -- headgear, and we said a
- 8 neutral policy can still discriminate --
- 9 MS. BLATT: Absolutely.
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- against
- 11 religion even though there was no bad faith
- 12 proven there. It was all hats are out.
- MS. BLATT: Correct.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All coverings are
- 15 out.
- MS. BLATT: Correct.
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So I don't know
- where the bad faith comes from. I'm not even
- 19 sure where deliberate indifference comes from.
- 20 But putting that aside, before we rule in a way
- 21 that suggests that your new definition applies
- 22 to every statute, that this is the way we now
- define intentional for every statute, shouldn't
- 24 we have had that fully aired below --
- MS. BLATT: Well, if --

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1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- and accurately
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- 2 aired?
- 3 MS. BLATT: So, if you just interpret
- 4 bad faith the way we think Judge Arnold did and
- 5 the way we do it as improper purpose with only
- 6 disability, then it's nothing -- it's nothing
- 7 new. It's just an -- an -- a prohibited reason,
- 8 just like in the racial gerrymandering.
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, but that is
- 10 gerrymandering the definition because, if
- 11 it's -- a neutral policy in terms of what you
- 12 wear can still discriminate.
- MS. BLATT: Yes.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So --
- MS. BLATT: So we're in complete
- 16 agreement that if you have a policy to cancel
- 17 all field trips because -- and the reason is
- 18 because you don't want to make accommodations
- 19 for the disabled, then that is bad faith or
- 20 that's an intent to discriminate.
- We are fine with the statutory
- 22 language "solely" -- or take out the "solely by
- 23 reason of disability."
- 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But they didn't --
- 25 there was no evidence that they passed this

- 1 because they wanted to discriminate against
- 2 religious people. They passed their dress code
- 3 because they wanted a particular look in their
- 4 store. It wasn't until this individual came in
- 5 and said, "My religion requires this," is they
- 6 said, "I'm not going to reasonably accommodate
- 7 you."
- 8 MS. BLATT: Yeah. So --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But they didn't
- 10 pass the policy with antireligion animus.
- 11 MS. BLATT: If you -- let me just give
- 12 you another example.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You're asking --
- when you're using the words "bad faith," you're
- 15 talking about animus.
- MS. BLATT: No, I'm talking about --
- 17 and you can -- you're in charge, so you can say:
- 18 Intent to discriminate is the standard. We're
- 19 not going to use bad faith. We don't like that
- 20 word. Intent to discriminate. If you say bad
- 21 faith, please make clear that it only means
- 22 intent to discriminate, because you could
- violate the IDEA just because you think disabled
- 24 children are better off without the
- 25 accommodation.

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1 That is a -- a -- that is a violation
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- 2 of -- of the ADA and the Rehab Act. That is
- discrimination. It's not animus. It could be
- 4 benign intent.
- Basically, it's the same standard in
- 6 the race context or in the -- the sex context.
- 7 No one cares what your views are towards women
- 8 or people of color if you treat them
- 9 differently. You can't do that.
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, it would
- 11 have been nice to have known that we were biting
- 12 off that big a chunk.
- MS. BLATT: I agree. But in terms of
- 14 what we had to do when you granted cert was look
- 15 at the text, and then the -- the blue brief said
- 16 that there is no intent required. They cited
- the definition of what a qualified individual
- 18 was and said --
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: By the way,
- 20 intent's not even an issue here because there
- 21 wasn't an injunction being -- or the lack of an
- 22 injunction challenged here. They got the
- 23 injunction under the IDEA, didn't they?
- MS. BLATT: They want more.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, we can put

- 1 aside whether they want more. But the only
- 2 thing between -- before us on the decision below
- 3 is whether it's an intent standard or a
- 4 heightened standard, correct?
- 5 MS. BLATT: I -- I think that's fair
- 6 because it's a summary judgment standard. So
- 7 that's the way I would put it if I were you, is
- 8 say all you have to decide is summary judgment.
- 9 And our point on the damages is part
- 10 of their whole schtick is that this statute
- incorporates Title VI, and they -- they say and
- 12 that requires intent.
- And so we are saying -- and, again,
- 14 back to defense of the red brief, when the --
- both the gray brief and the blue brief say that
- 16 no intent is required under the statute, we said
- 17 that's wrong. So --
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I
- 19 mean -- I'm sorry.
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Go ahead. Never
- 21 mind.
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I -- I was
- 23 going to say the -- the -- the choice is not one
- 24 standard or another. I would have thought from
- 25 the framing of the whole case the question was

- 1 whether you have a different standard in the
- 2 educational context.
- MS. BLATT: And if -- if that is --
- 4 and I agree. If that is the way you define the
- 5 question presented, then the parties are in
- 6 radical agreement.
- 7 If -- as we read, and the last
- 8 statement of their petition said you should
- 9 resolve the standard. If you don't want to
- 10 resolve the standard, then you're correct,
- 11 there's not much to decide.
- But you are overturning, in effect,
- the law of five circuits that affects 40,000 --
- 14 46,000 schools. And there are 8 million kids
- on -- that are covered by the IDEA, and there
- are 30,000 of these complaints, and their view
- 17 is every IDEA violation is a violation of the
- 18 statute.
- Now they say there may have been
- 20 another violation, but that is the -- a theory.
- 21 And, in terms of the unique context, what
- 22 Monahan says is: If you violate a free and
- 23 appropriate education, that's just not
- 24 necessarily discriminatory.
- It could be based on budgets. It

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1 could be based on you just disagreed what the
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- 2 accommodation was, as -- as was the case here.
- And the Court in Monahan said: You
- 4 need to show discriminatory intent, and it used
- 5 the phrase "bad faith," meaning the improper
- 6 purpose.
- 7 But I agree, if you -- if you read
- 8 this like Ames, where there was no defense of
- 9 the decision below, then you don't have a lot to
- 10 do. But we're here radically defending the
- 11 decision below, which we've done in the
- 12 rehearing petition and in the -- in the brief in
- opposition and in the -- the red brief.
- 14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You don't think it
- was -- that you -- might have violated Rule 15.2
- of our rules that requires counsel of its
- 17 obligation, Respondents, "to address any
- 18 perceived misstatement of fact or law in the
- 19 petition that bears on what issues properly
- 20 would be before the Court if certiorari were
- 21 granted?"
- Where in this brief do you say Monahan
- is consistent outside the unique -- education?
- MS. BLATT: We didn't say that. So
- 25 that -- that is -- just be clear, we did not say

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1 the implications of our textual defense means
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- 2 Monahan or a intent standard would be -- be
- 3 required outside.
- What we took as given and why I don't
- 5 think the rules were violated is that all the
- 6 courts have said, in this asymmetrical world
- 7 following the regulations and Choate, that there
- 8 is a "no intent requirement for reasonable
- 9 accommodations, although an intent requirement
- 10 for disparate impact, " Judge Sutton's opinion.
- 11 And then all the circuits but the
- 12 Fifth Circuit have held -- have said there's
- deliberate indifference or intent because of the
- 14 Title VI incorporation.
- What we did not point out in the --
- the orange brief, which is correct, that that
- 17 regime doesn't make any sense.
- 18 So that -- that's right, we didn't
- 19 point that out because it was only when, you
- 20 know, we're here briefing on the merits, and I
- 21 think you would want Respondents' counsel to
- defend the decision below, the decision below is
- 23 based on the text, so we started with the text.
- I mean, what I think the other --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Thank you,

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1 counsel.
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- MS. BLATT: Sorry. I don't --
- 3 JUSTICE ALITO: Where do you think
- 4 that the Petitioner says that a violation of the
- 5 IDEA necessarily constitutes a violation of the
- 6 ADA?
- 7 MS. BLATT: It's JA 20 and 24,
- 8 paragraphs 118 and 133. So it's not in the
- 9 brief. It's in the complaint. I would just say
- 10 it's not --
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: I'm sorry,
- 12 paragraph 118 and what else?
- 13 MS. BLATT: And 133.
- Now paragraphs 119 and 134 say the ADA
- and the Rehab Act were violated other ways, but
- 16 part of their complaint is just the violation of
- 17 the IDE -- it just says the violation of the
- 18 IDEA itself is a violation of the other
- 19 statutes.
- 20 And we would hope that you would clear
- 21 that up, that that can't possibly be right,
- 22 because the IDEA can -- you know, can -- can --
- 23 can be -- go way beyond what might be a
- 24 reasonable accommodation.
- 25 And I also think it's not clear from

- 1 their brief on deliberate indifference.
- 2 Deliberate indifference as to what statutorily
- 3 protected right? Either the reasonable
- 4 accommodation right or the IDEA. And I think,
- 5 in fairness to them, it's both.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 7 counsel.
- 8 Justice Thomas?
- 9 Justice Alito?
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, I won't have
- 11 a -- another opportunity to question
- 12 Mr. Martinez, so perhaps he could address that
- in rebuttal, if he sees fit, whether he is
- 14 arguing that a violation of the IDEA necessarily
- 15 constitutes a violation of the ADA.
- 16 What he -- what the complaint says is
- that the district's violations of the IDEA also
- violate a plaintiff's rights under Section 504
- of the Rehabilitation Act, and he says the same
- 20 thing about the ADA.
- MS. BLATT: Yeah. And, again, it's
- 22 important to school districts that you make
- 23 clear if you can level set that -- the mere bare
- 24 violation because that is the -- thrust of
- 25 Monahan, is that a bare violation does not

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1 necessarily violate the statute.
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- 2 JUSTICE ALITO: Thank you.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 4 Sotomayor, anything?
- 5 Justice Kagan?
- 6 Justice Kavanaugh?
- 7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You say the
- 8 statute requires intentional discrimination,
- 9 Title II, and the Rehabilitation Act. The
- 10 Solicitor General says, yes, that's right,
- 11 deliberate indifference is an intent standard.
- I just want to -- you -- want to
- 13 respond to that?
- MS. BLATT: Deliberate indifference is
- 15 not an intent standard --
- 16 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Okay. That's
- 17 your --
- 18 MS. BLATT: -- for discrimination. It
- 19 can be an intent standard in the prison context.
- 20 If you know someone's dying and you don't do
- 21 anything, that means you intentionally acted.
- 22 But you can intentionally act --
- 23 deliberate indifference can be evidence of a
- 24 discriminatory intent, but just because you
- deliberately don't respond to a parent's

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1 complaints doesn't necessarily mean you intend
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- 2 to discriminate on the basis of disability.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well -- right.
- 4 And I think the way the Solicitor General then
- 5 defines "deliberate indifference" is why at
- 6 least I see the delta here as pretty small,
- 7 because they say you have to know that you're
- 8 violating your legal obligations or what's
- 9 substantially likely to be your legal
- 10 obligation. That's really --
- 11 MS. BLATT: But then they said that
- 12 you don't have to know the law. So, in other
- words, if a parent says: Hi school, you're
- 14 violating your legal obligations --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, they did --
- 16 that -- that is true, they did say you have to
- 17 know your legal obligations, but that --
- MS. BLATT: They said you didn't.
- 19 Maybe I misheard them. I heard them say --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, they did --
- MS. BLATT: -- you don't need to know
- 22 the law. And I know that's what my friend for
- the Petitioner said, you don't need to know the
- 24 law.
- 25 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I don't know how

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1 you can know -- this is a helpful question, by
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- 2 the way.
- 3 MS. BLATT: Yeah.
- 4 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I don't know how
- 5 you can know that a federally protected right
- 6 was substantially likely to be violated without
- 7 having some idea what the law provides.
- 8 MS. BLATT: Well, I -- we would
- 9 welcome that if you're going to have a
- 10 deliberate indifference standard, that it be as
- 11 high as possible because, if you have these --
- 12 again, what the school districts are worried
- about is because you -- you -- you have
- 14 good-faith disagreements in all -- I mean, these
- are really tough cases on -- in terms of, you
- 16 know, how much support. Here, the -- the -- she
- 17 had 10 specialists. So these are just tough
- 18 cases. And so the question was how much support
- 19 she should be given at home.
- 20 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I quess what I'm
- 21 getting at is deliberate indifference can be
- 22 fairly protective -- as defined by the Solicitor
- 23 General, fairly protective of school districts
- in the sense that the law's not like you open a
- code book and it tells you, oh, go to 6 p.m.

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1 You have to decide --
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- 2 MS. BLATT: Yes. If you --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- what's
- 4 reasonable.
- 5 MS. BLATT: If you would define it
- 6 that way, that would be great. I mean, we would
- 7 appreciate that, although we do think, if you're
- 8 going to incorporate Title VI, I mean, you're
- 9 now just saying the Fifth Circuit is wrong. The
- 10 Fifth Circuit said, oh, I don't know, Sandoval
- 11 looks likes it says intent; it doesn't say
- 12 deliberate indifference. And they -- these are
- 13 all Spending Clause statutes. So Title IX,
- 14 Title VI, the Rehab Act, the Affordable Care Act
- incorporates all these. They -- their -- and
- 16 this is a one area. And Justice Barrett is
- 17 correct, this is a big, messy area.
- So I don't blame you for not wanting
- 19 to get into it, but we would at least appreciate
- 20 that you make clear that there's a level set
- 21 particularly on damages.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Thank you.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 24 Barrett?
- 25 Justice Jackson?

1	JUSTICE JACKSON: Yeah. I just am
2	still struggling with how you account for the
3	language in the disability discrimination
4	statutes that goes beyond discrimination and
5	discriminatory intent.
6	And so I'm looking, for example, at
7	the Title II language which says, "No qualified
8	individual with a disability shall, by reason of
9	such disability, be excluded from participation
10	in or be denied the benefits of the services,
11	programs, or activities of a public entity, or
12	be subjected to discrimination by such entity."
13	And my understanding of the way at
14	least that courts have been interpreting this is
15	you don't need discriminatory intent in a
16	situation in which a person is alleging, for
17	example, that they have been excluded from the
18	participation.
19	And you seem to be suggesting that you
20	still have to have that element in some way, and
21	I'm confused by that.
22	MS. BLATT: Sure. And you have to
23	start from the fact of, what is Congress's
24	authority to even pass Title Title II? It's

not a Commerce Clause legislation. Well, it's

- 1 important because it looks like it's Section 5,
- 2 and if you just -- so you have to see it through
- 3 the lens of -- of -- of Congress's power under
- 4 Section 5.
- But, even putting that aside, if you
- 6 don't read it -- if you just look at Titles I
- 7 and Title III, where they spell out disparate
- 8 impact, and so that -- if you read that statute
- 9 in the passive voice to require disparate
- 10 impact, all the disparate impact and reasonable
- 11 accommodation provisions and definitions and
- 12 contours are all superfluous.
- 13 So that if you just looked at -- I
- 14 actually think this case is easier under
- 15 Title II because you don't have the Choate
- 16 baggage. But, if you just look at Title II,
- 17 it's an easy case that there is no reasonable
- 18 accommodations requirement at all. That --
- 19 that's -- that's our -- that's our stronger
- 20 case, is under Titles -- Title II, because
- 21 Titles I and Title III are so chockful of the
- 22 contours.
- 23 And there's no reasonable requirement
- in II. So it's made up. It doesn't say you
- 25 have to reasonably accommodate. On the other

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1 side, they say the definition is any -- you
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- 2 know, remove structural, communications,
- 3 transportation barriers and auxiliary aids. But
- 4 there's no word "reasonable" in there. So it
- 5 has to be read in when it's actually defined in
- 6 great details in I and III. What it means to
- 7 modify the program, what an undue -- hardship is
- 8 a four-part test, and what is -- what is readily
- 9 achievable is a four-part test.
- 10 JUSTICE JACKSON: Thank you.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 12 counsel.
- 13 Rebuttal, Mr. Martinez?
- 14 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF ROMAN MARTINEZ
- 15 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- MR. MARTINEZ: Your Honors, I'm not
- going to dignify Ms. Blatt's name-calling here
- 18 with a response in kind, though I appreciate
- 19 that she withdrew the charges here, although
- 20 perhaps a bit under duress.
- I do want to address whether we were
- incorrect in characterizing our position, and
- 23 the answer is absolutely not. You heard her say
- 24 today that she was radically defending the
- 25 Eighth Circuit's decision in this case. Well,

- 1 that decision includes Footnote 2, which
- 2 expressly characterized Monahan as applying a
- 3 higher test, a two-tiered test. So, if she's
- 4 radically defending that, then she's radically
- 5 defending the two-tiered approach that I think
- 6 she said was completely wrong.
- 7 We would also encourage you to look at
- 8 page 23, in addition to the -- all the other
- 9 pages that were cited, where she said that "the
- 10 universe of plaintiffs with claims affected by
- 11 the question presented is narrow. For
- 12 educational discrimination plaintiffs not
- 13 covered by the IDEA, such as college students, a
- 14 bad-faith or gross-misjudgment standard does not
- 15 apply." That's exactly the opposite of what
- 16 she's saying now.
- 17 So what is at issue in this case? I
- 18 think the most important thing we heard from
- 19 Ms. Blatt is when she conceded in questioning
- from Justice Jackson that she is trying and the
- 21 district arguments here are trying to get rid of
- the reasonable accommodation claims that people
- in this country with disabilities have enjoyed
- 24 for decades. That's what's at stake.
- 25 This is a revolutionary and radical

- 1 argument that has not been made in this Court
- and that she's trying to get you to decide on
- 3 the basis of essentially no briefing. There
- 4 are -- the -- the question of whether reasonable
- 5 accommodations are required is easy. There are
- 6 subsidiary questions that are challenging. You
- 7 should not address those subsidiary questions in
- 8 this case because we haven't had briefing. It's
- 9 unfair to you. You don't have a decision below.
- 10 It's unfair to us. It's unfair to our amici,
- 11 the disability rights community, who would have
- 12 rung a five-alarm fire if they had known that
- 13 reasonable accommodation claims were on the
- 14 table. So you should not address that. You
- 15 should apply your waiver rules.
- 16 If you do address some of this stuff,
- 17 Justice Kavanaugh, I would encourage you to look
- 18 at the COPAA amicus brief. On pages 18 to 29,
- 19 it has a very good discussion of the kinds of
- 20 cases and where the different standards might
- 21 make a difference.
- I think, on the merits, the most
- 23 important point Ms. Blatt made was this
- 24 assertion, which I would characterize as
- incorrect in the extreme, that the ADA does not

- 1 talk about or somehow ratify reasonable
- 2 accommodation claims. I would appoint the Court
- 3 most importantly to Section 12201(a), in which
- 4 the ADA Title II expressly incorporates by
- 5 reference the regulations that had been enacted
- 6 under the Rehabilitation Act, all of which
- 7 expressly embrace reasonable accommodation
- 8 claims.
- 9 In addition to that, I would point the
- 10 Court to other provisions of the ADA:
- 11 12101(a)(5), 12131(2), 12201(h). All of those
- 12 refer to either reasonable accommodations or
- 13 reasonable modifications. So, with respect, I
- 14 think that's wrong.
- 15 Finally, let me just take a step back,
- 16 Your Honors, and talk about really what's
- 17 issue -- what's at issue in this case. This
- 18 case started narrow. It was about a sliver of
- 19 plaintiffs. It's now quite broad because of the
- 20 arguments the district is making. If you accept
- 21 her arguments, think of all the people who are
- going to be affected. Think of five-year-old
- 23 Ehlena Fry with cerebral palsy, who needs the
- 24 help of her service dog, Wonder. Think about
- 25 George Lane, the Tennessee man forced to crawl

Τ	up two flights of stairs in order to have his
2	court his day in court. Think about Ava, who
3	desperately needs every precious hour of school
4	so she can learn to communicate with her
5	parents.
6	We ask you to reject those radical
7	arguments, and we ask you to vacate the decision
8	below.
9	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
10	counsel.
11	The case is submitted.
12	(Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the case
13	was submitted.)
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