SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

	IN	THE	SUI	PREME	CO	URT	OF	THE	UN	ITED) ST	ATES
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ISABEL	RIC	СО,)			
				Peti	tio	ner	,)			
		v.	•)]	No.	24-3	1056
UNITED	STA	ATES	,)			
				Resp	ond	ent.	•)			
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Pages: 1 through 62

Place: Washington, D.C.

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1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE U	INITED STATES
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3	ISABEL RICO,)
4	Petitioner,)
5	v.) No. 24-1056
6	UNITED STATES,)
7	Respondent.)
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10	Washington, D	.C.
11	Monday, November	3, 2025
12		
13	The above-entitled matte	er came on for
14	oral argument before the Suprem	ne Court of the
15	United States at 10:06 a.m.	
16		
17	APPEARANCES:	
18	ADAM G. UNIKOWSKY, ESQUIRE, Was	shington, D.C.; on
19	behalf of the Petitioner.	
20	JOSHUA K. HANDELL, Assistant to	the Solicitor General
21	Department of Justice, Wash	nington, D.C.; on behal:
22	of the Respondent.	
23		
24		
25		

CONTENTS ORAL ARGUMENT OF: PAGE: ADAM G. UNIKOWSKY, ESQ. On behalf of the Petitioner ORAL ARGUMENT OF: JOSHUA K. HANDELL, ESQ. On behalf of the Respondent REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF: ADAM G. UNIKOWSKY, ESQ. On behalf of the Petitioner

1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:06 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument first this morning in Case 24-1056,
5	Rico versus United States.
6	Mr. Unikowsky.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF ADAM G. UNIKOWSKY
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. UNIKOWSKY: Mr. Chief Justice, and
10	may it please the Court:
11	The question in this case is not
12	whether but instead how to hold people
13	accountable for absconding from supervised
14	release. The text and history of the
15	Sentencing Reform Act establish that Congress
16	intended for revocation, not fugitive tolling,
17	to be the means of addressing abscondment.
18	To begin with the text, the effect of
19	the government's position is that Ms. Rico was
20	subject to the conditions of supervised release
21	for a period exceeding the time specified in
22	her judgment, and there's no textual support
23	for that result.
24	The government claims that Ms. Rico
25	wasn't serving her sentence at all during the

1	period of the abscondment. But that argument
2	cannot be squared with the government's
3	simultaneous contention that Ms. Rico violated
4	the conditions of supervised release during
5	that period, warranting an increased sentence.
6	History supports Ms. Rico's position.
7	Contrary to the government's contention, there
8	is no common law tradition of fugitive tolling
9	for parole. Instead, fugitive tolling for
10	parole came to exist via a 1976 statute and a
11	1983 implementing regulation. But, in the
12	Sentencing Reform Act, Congress prospectively
13	repealed that statute and enacted nothing in
14	its stead for supervised release while leaving
15	it intact for legacy parole cases, and it
16	remains intact today.
17	As a result, Congress has created a
18	two-track scheme, parole with fugitive tolling
19	and supervised release without it, and we ask
20	the Court to adhere to that dichotomy.
21	I welcome the Court's questions.
22	JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, Mr. Unikowsky,
23	the government seems to be arguing making a
24	simple point. How can it be considered
25	supervised release when this person the

1	absconder is not being supervised?
2	MR. UNIKOWSKY: Your Honor, I
3	completely understand the intuitive force of
4	the government's argument that the essence of
5	supervised release is being supervised, and if
6	a person absconds, they're just not being
7	serving the sentence at all in the same way as
8	a prison escapee isn't serving the sentence at
9	all.
10	But, ultimately, although I understand
11	the intuitive force of that argument at first
12	blush, I don't think it carries the day because
13	the government has the government's
14	arguments has a counterintuitive component of
15	its own, which is that it requires believing
16	that not only was Ms. Rico subject to the
17	conditions of supervised release during the
18	entire abscondment period, but she actually
19	violated those very conditions during that
20	period, warranting her increased sentence.
21	So it just seems to me almost
22	tautologically, if Ms. Rico violated the
23	conditions of supervised release, she must have
24	been serving the very sentence that imposed
25	those conditions of supervised release.

1	I I do understand the intuition
2	underlying the government's argument today that
3	it just doesn't really make sense that a person
4	should get credit when they've absconded. I
5	I get that. But I think that one point that
6	really blunts the intuitive force of the
7	government's position is that both parties
8	agree that ultimately, the absconder should be
9	deprived of credit for the time spent
10	absconding. The sole question between the
11	parties today is very narrow. It's how that
12	deprivation of credit should be effectuated.
13	So the way we understand the
14	Sentencing Reform Act, if a warrant as
15	issues based on the abscondment, as occurred in
16	this case, then, once the person is
17	apprehended, even after the term expires, the
18	person can be brought before the sentencing
19	court and then the judge revokes supervised
20	release and strips the person of all credit for
21	time served during the abscondment period. So,
22	essentially, the judge, rather than stopping
23	the clock, the clock keeps going and then the
24	clock is rewound back to the beginning.
25	JUSTICE JACKSON: But is it really a

- 1 credit system, Mr. Unikowsky? I guess I --
- 2 I'm -- I was a little confused by the
- 3 government's suggestion even in the beginning
- 4 of its brief that what's happening in the
- 5 supervised release world is that the court is
- 6 depriving the individual of credit for
- 7 supervised release.
- 8 My understanding is that even when
- 9 there's a revocation, the person is not being
- 10 deemed as given credit. In other words, when
- 11 supervised release is revoked and the court
- sends a person back to prison and perhaps
- imposes another period of supervised release,
- 14 they don't calculate how much supervised
- release they're going to give based on how much
- 16 was already served. You know, you had a
- three-year period, you absconded after one, so
- 18 now only two is available.
- 19 Really, credit doesn't seem like the
- 20 right framework to understand what's even
- 21 happening in supervised release.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: I agree with what you
- 23 said, Your Honor, 100 percent. At the
- 24 revocation hearing, whatever the person has
- left to serve just sort of goes away and the

1	court imposes a whole new sentence of
2	imprisonment and an additional period of
3	supervised release based on the court's
4	assessment of the defendant at that time.
5	JUSTICE JACKSON: Of the needs, right?
6	I mean, isn't the whole the reason why
7	supervised release is sort of fundamentally
8	different than parole or or probation or
9	imprisonment is because it's not imposed for
10	punishment. It's supposed to be about helping
11	this person reintegrate into society, and the
12	amount of time that is necessary to do that is
13	evaluated based on who that person is and what
14	they've done but not based on how much time
15	they previously served in supervised release.
16	MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes, that's correct.
17	So the government's suggestion in its brief
18	that because she absconded for 37 months, she
19	has 37 months left to go doesn't actually
20	capture what happened in this case because
21	those 37 just months went away. After the new
22	revocation hearing, the judge imposed whatever
23	sentence the judge felt was appropriate. The
24	effect of the question presented in this case
25	actually is to consider the time spent during

- 1 abscondment as still subject to the conditions
- of supervised release, which allowed the
- 3 government to argue that a crime committed
- 4 during that period but after the term expired
- 5 was a violation of supervised release,
- 6 resulting in a heightened guidelines range.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Mr. Unikowsky, you --
- 8 you said that the problem here results from the
- 9 Sentencing Reform Act. But I wonder -- and --
- 10 and I may be -- I may be misunderstanding
- 11 things, so you'll correct me -- if the problem
- 12 here is not entirely one created by the
- 13 Sentencing Guidelines.
- 14 Suppose the Sentencing Guidelines were
- not in the picture. So your client absconds.
- 16 Therefore, she's violated the terms of
- 17 supervised release. Therefore, her -- her
- 18 supervised release is revoked. Then the judge
- 19 has to decide what to do, send her back to
- 20 prison, impose a new -- excuse me, an
- 21 additional term of supervised release.
- 22 The statute set -- sets out the
- 23 factors that are relevant to that
- 24 consideration. We went through those factors
- last term. And it doesn't seem to me that what

1 she did after the expiration of the 37 months

- 2 is any less relevant to those determinations
- 3 than what she did before the expiration of the
- 4 37 months. So that becomes important, the --
- 5 the 37-month mark -- point becomes important
- 6 only because the guidelines grade -- assign a
- 7 grade to the nature of the offenses that
- 8 occurred.
- 9 Am I right in all this?
- 10 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes, I agree with
- 11 everything you said, Your Honor. So we believe
- 12 that the sentencing court does have the
- authority to consider the crimes she committed
- 14 after that time expired as part of the
- discretionary decision as to what sentence she
- should get after the resentencing. So I don't
- 17 disagree with anything that Your Honor has
- 18 said.
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: So the only thing
- 20 that's really at stake here is whether the
- 21 court is going -- will consider whether to
- 22 depart upward from the range that results from
- 23 the -- from the grade of the violations that
- occurred before the 37 months or considers
- whether to depart downward from the grade that

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1 would apply if the post-37-month violations
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- were occurred, right?
- 3 And the court -- all the court has to
- 4 do is to give respectful consideration to those
- 5 guidelines. That's really all that's involved
- 6 here. Am I right?
- 7 MR. UNIKOWSKY: On the facts of this
- 8 case, yes. There are other cases in which
- 9 fugitive tolling matters for other reasons,
- 10 but, on the facts of this case, you have
- 11 accurately characterized the dispute between
- 12 the parties.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. --
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: There --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. -- I'm sorry.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: I'm sorry.
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Go ahead and finish.
- 18 MR. UNIKOWSKY: No.
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Are you done?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes.
- 21 JUSTICE GORSUCH: All right. The
- 22 government worries that, okay, there is tolling
- if you get a warrant within the period that's
- 24 still before -- before the clock runs, before
- 25 the 37 months is out. You effectively get

- 1 tolling under (i). But they worry that there
- 2 are going to be some cases where, as a
- 3 practical matter, they can't get a warrant in
- 4 time and the period will expire.
- 5 Do you have any thoughts or reactions
- 6 to that?
- 7 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes. I understand
- 8 that there is a concern that it may be that a
- 9 violation occurs at the very end of the term
- and it goes undetected and the warrant doesn't
- 11 issue in time. But I think fugitive tolling is
- both too broad and too narrow a solution to the
- 13 problem that you've identified.
- So, first of all, I think it's too
- 15 narrow because that is a problem that can arise
- 16 with any violation late in the term:
- 17 committing a crime, possession of drugs,
- 18 anything else. And --
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: You mean escape
- 20 detection, you're saying?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes, any crime, any --
- and, in fact, in some ways, abscondment is the
- 23 easiest type of violation to detect.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: To identify, yeah.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Right, because, you

- 1 know, the absconder doesn't -- or the
- 2 supervisee doesn't answer his cell phone and so
- 3 the probation officer can get a warrant right
- 4 away. So, if we're concerned about the problem
- of late-in-term violations, it seems odd to
- focus only on the one type of violation that's
- 7 easiest to detect.
- 8 I also think fugitive tolling is too
- 9 broad because it applies to supervisees who
- 10 commit -- who abscond anytime in the term, and
- 11 it causes the conditions to essentially last
- 12 forever after the term until the person is
- 13 apprehended.
- 14 There's also an amicus brief by
- 15 NACDL --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah.
- 17 MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- which walks through
- 18 empirically that abscondments tend to occur
- 19 early in -- in the term, so I'm not sure the
- 20 concern the government identifies has a lot of
- 21 real-world force.
- 22 JUSTICE ALITO: What about the
- 23 situation where the person who's on supervised
- 24 release is imprisoned for a state offense, so
- 25 the -- the -- the supervised release term is

- 1 tolled during that period, and then, when the
- 2 person is released, the state authorities may
- 3 not notify the federal court that the person
- 4 has been released, so no warrant would issue?
- 5 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Right. So that is the
- 6 facts of the Swick case, which is currently
- 7 pending on certiorari to this Court. As far as
- 8 I know, that's the only time that's come up
- 9 since 1984. I've looked around, haven't found
- any other cases with that fact pattern, so it's
- 11 an unusual case.
- I think, ultimately, it's a good idea
- 13 for federal probation officers to maintain
- 14 contact with state authorities as to when the
- 15 person is released from state prison, but I
- don't think that one singular, rather unusual
- fact pattern is a basis to establish fugitive
- 18 tolling across the board for -- for all
- 19 supervisees.
- 20 I'd like to make a point if I may
- 21 about another reason that I think --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In the end --
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: I'm sorry.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In -- in the end,
- it really doesn't matter. If they commit a new

- 1 crime, they're subject to arrest and
- prosecution for that new crime, correct?
- 3 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes. In this very
- 4 case, Ms. Rico was convicted of a drug offense
- 5 in state court and was sentenced to prison
- 6 time, so she was held accountable for that
- 7 action. And, as Justice Alito stated, that can
- 8 also be considered as part of the discretionary
- 9 revocation sentencing. It's only a very narrow
- 10 question of whether that offense increases her
- 11 quidelines range.
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Unikowsky, it
- seems that part of the dispute here between you
- and the government has to do with what it means
- to be on a term of supervised release where you
- say it means being subject to a certain set of
- 17 conditions, and the government says, well, it
- means that, but it also means something else.
- 19 It means that you're being supervised, that
- 20 you're being monitored in some way, where --
- 21 which does not happen when the person has
- absconded.
- 23 So what do you -- what do you think of
- 24 that, that the idea of supervised release
- 25 contemplates a level of supervision above and

beyond the particular conditions of the term? 1 2. MR. UNIKOWSKY: I respectfully 3 disagree with the government's argument on that score because I think it improperly decouples 5 the burdens imposed by the sentence with how to determine whether the person is serving the 6 7 sentence. 8 Ordinarily, those two are flip sides 9 of the same coin. Like the government talks 10 about the prison case, so the burden imposed by the sentence is you have to be in prison and 11 12 you determine if the person's satisfying the 13 sentence by checking if the person has been in 14 prison. 15 But, in this case, the burdens imposed by the sentence are the conditions in the 16 17 judgment, but the government contends that one 18 determine if one satisfies the sentence based 19 on this concept of supervision, which doesn't correspond to any particular supervised release 20 21 condition, and, because of that decoupling, you have the unusual fact pattern in this case 22 23 where the government contends that Ms. Rico 2.4 violated the conditions of supervised release while not serving that sentence. 25

Τ	I think the Court should follow the
2	the ordinary practice of saying that one
3	determines if one is serving the sentence by
4	looking at the binding effect of the sentence.
5	I would like to also talk about some
6	additional statutory clues that I think
7	militate in Ms. Rico's favor.
8	First, I think it's a it's a
9	relevant fact that there's no statutory
10	definition of abscondment, and I think it's
11	and, in fact, that's a difficult concept to
12	define at the margins.
13	There's two amicus briefs, the NACDL
14	amicus brief and the NAFD amicus brief, that
15	talk in some detail about the difficulties
16	courts have had in deciding questions like when
17	a violation of supervised release rises to the
18	level of an abscondment and also when the clock
19	on the abscondment period starts.
20	And it does seem unlikely from our
21	perspective that Congress would have intended
22	the very basic question of when a supervised
23	release term ends to be governed by this
24	nebulous and nonstatutory abscondment standard
25	with judges essentially figuring out the answer

- 1 to these questions on -- on the fly without any
- 2 statutory anchor.
- 4 perspective that Congress intended the regime
- 5 to operate this way: the clock keeps going
- 6 unless it's tolled under the explicit language
- 7 of Section 3624 or until there's a revocation
- 8 hearing.
- 9 At that point, the judge can recognize
- 10 that it's necessary to turn the clock back to
- the beginning to ensure the person actually
- 12 serves the full term of supervised release in
- 13 contact with the probation officer that the
- 14 court contemplated.
- 15 I'd like to say a few words about
- 16 history as well. I think the historical
- 17 evidence is quite strongly in our favor. The
- 18 government makes the point that there is a
- 19 strong historical tradition that when someone
- 20 escapes from prison, that stops the clock on
- 21 their sentence, and then the clock resumes when
- 22 they are returned to prison. I think that
- 23 makes sense. You know, 20 years in prison, you
- 24 have to actually be 20 years physically in
- 25 prison.

Τ	But I think that the historical
2	evidence really runs the other way in terms of
3	fugitive tolling. The federal parole statute
4	was first enacted in 1910, and then parole was
5	abolished prospectively in 1984, and neither we
6	nor the government can come up with any cases
7	ever in which the government's fugitive tolling
8	rule was applied, you know, in the manner the
9	government proposes today in which the
10	conditions of supervised release or, excuse
11	me, of parole extended after the scheduled
12	expiration of the term.
13	And it's not just the absence of
14	evidence of fugitive tolling. There's also
15	evidence of absence in the form of this 1983
16	regulation that we cite in the brief.
17	So that regulation said that,
18	prospectively, based on this 1976 statute,
19	there will be fugitive tolling in exactly of
20	exactly the same form that the government
21	advocates in in this case.
22	So, in a couple of ways, I think that
23	regulation rebuts the notion that there's a
24	tradition of fugitive tolling. One, it's
25	premised on this 1976 statute, not this

- 1 longstanding common law tradition; two, it's
- 2 prospective only, implying that the -- that the
- 3 rule didn't previously exist; and, second --
- 4 and, third, excuse me, it's not clear why the
- 5 Parole Commission would have enacted such a
- 6 rule if the tradition already existed in
- 7 advance. So I think that provides pretty
- 8 strong evidence that there just -- this just
- 9 wasn't a thing that parole boards were doing
- 10 until 1983.
- 11 And then, in the Sentencing Reform Act
- in 1984, Congress repeals the statute on which
- this provision was based, 4210(c). It enacts
- 14 no replacement provision. And, meanwhile,
- 15 Section 4210(c) is immediately adjacent to this
- other statute, 4210(b), which enacts a version
- of prisoner tolling, and Congress does reenact
- 18 that in the Sentencing Reform Act.
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, before the --
- 20 the abolition of parole with the Sentencing
- 21 Reform Act, there were no sentencing
- 22 guidelines. So it's not clear to me why it
- 23 would be relevant -- why a court would be
- 24 concerned about whether the -- the parolee
- 25 committed offenses during the period when the

	parotee was supposed to be on parote after the
2	expiration of the parole term or not. The
3	the parolee violates the terms of parole. When
4	the parolee is is apprehended, the court
5	would revoke parole and then decide what to do.
6	So why would it be relevant? Suppose
7	your client were on parole. Why would it be
8	relevant to determine whether the additional
9	things that she did while out on parole
10	occurred before or after the 37 months?
11	MR. UNIKOWSKY: I mean, the 1983
12	regulation explicitly says that if you commit
13	the violation after the schedule ending, it
14	will be considered a violation of parole. So,
15	you know, it's hard to reconstruct exactly what
16	they were thinking, but, presumably, it was
17	felt that this was important enough to encode
18	it in in a regulation. And so, you know,
19	Congress had that regulation on its desk. It
20	was enacted just a year before the Sentencing
21	Reform Act, and Congress eschewed it in the
22	Sentencing Reform Act.
23	So I just think that that's at
24	least some amount of historical consideration
25	is warranted here, especially since I think

1 what this case boils down to are these

2	competing intuitions. The government has this
3	intuition on its side of the house that it
4	doesn't make sense to say that a person who
5	isn't supervised is serving a sentence of
6	supervised release, and then we have the
7	intuition on our side of the house that it
8	doesn't make sense to say that someone could
9	have violated the conditions of supervised
10	release when they're not on supervised release.
11	And, ultimately, it's the Court's job
12	in this case to cut through that Gordian knot.
13	And I think, rather than kind of wrestling with
14	these competing intuitions, I think it's wise
15	to look at the historical tradition here, where
16	we see that this just wasn't happening through
17	the entire history of the parole statute, and
18	so the the proposition the government claims
19	in its brief is very obvious didn't occur to
20	the Parole Commission at the time, and so I
21	think the Court should carry that tradition
22	forward at least
23	JUSTICE JACKSON: So how do you
24	respond to the the other point that the
25	government makes, the thrust of it being that

- 1 the court has ordered this person to serve a,
- 2 let's say, three-year period of supervised
- 3 release and they didn't do so? Why should they
- 4 get the benefit of running away or absconding
- 5 and not having to comply with the court's
- 6 order?
- 7 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Well, in some way,
- 8 they just shouldn't because, at the revocation
- 9 hearing, the judge is empowered to rewind the
- 10 clock and require the person to start all over
- 11 again. So we think there's an alignment
- 12 between how abscondment is handled in other
- 13 types of violations.
- 14 JUSTICE JACKSON: You mean there's
- 15 rev -- there's -- the -- that you
- 16 envision Congress saying, for the absconder,
- 17 the revocation remedy is what we are imposing
- 18 here?
- 19 MR. UNIKOWSKY: That's exactly right.
- 20 And that's -- that's how it works with other
- 21 types of violations. Like, it's true that part
- 22 of the essence of supervised release is
- 23 supervision, but part of the essence of
- 24 supervised release is also complying with the
- law. And yet, if a person is in a conspiracy,

1 say, for one year during the supervised release

- period, that's obviously plainly contrary to
- 3 the spirit and the letter of supervised
- 4 release.
- 5 But the government does not claim that
- 6 that stops the clock for the year. Instead,
- 7 what happens is a warrant issues, the person
- 8 comes to the sentencing court, and then
- 9 supervised release is revoked, the person goes
- 10 back to federal prison and then back on
- 11 supervised release. And so, effectively, the
- 12 person is stripped of credit for that year, but
- it's done through the mechanism of revocation.
- 14 And all we're saying in this case is
- 15 that the same thing should happen to
- 16 abscondment, which, after all, is just a
- 17 different type of violation of the conditions
- 18 of supervised release.
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, that
- 20 earlier case, Swift I think you said was the
- 21 name?
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes, Swick from the
- 23 Fifth Circuit, Your Honor.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I haven't read it,
- so I don't know anything about it, but it's not

- 1 an issue of keeping in touch with the state
- 2 authorities. The warrant of absconding could
- 3 have been issued -- should have been issued at
- 4 the -- or a warrant should have issued the
- 5 moment they learned of the state law
- 6 conviction, correct?
- 7 MR. UNIKOWSKY: Yes. So that case
- 8 involved a very idiosyncratic fact pattern of a
- 9 person who served a federal prison sentence and
- 10 then served a state prison sentence for many
- 11 years and then was released and actually did
- 12 report to his state probation officer. And,
- apparently, he didn't realize and the federal
- 14 government didn't realize that he also had to
- 15 simultaneously start this term of federal
- supervised release. And, apparently, no one
- 17 from the federal --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Oh, that really is
- 19 idiosyncratic. Okay.
- 20 MR. UNIKOWSKY: So -- yeah. So there
- 21 haven't -- I mean, the -- that is just an
- 22 unusual case. It happens to be pending on
- 23 certiorari right now, but we haven't found any
- 24 cases like that since 1984 other than this one.
- 25 So, you know -- and the government cites other

- 1 exotic fact patterns where a warrant wouldn't
- 2 issue during the term, such as if there's an
- 3 administrative error in obtaining the
- 4 abscondment warrant. And, yes, theoretically,
- 5 that could happen, but, you know, it doesn't
- 6 happen very often. And in the ordinary case,
- 7 like this one, it's perfectly appropriate for
- 8 the probation officer to get a warrant.
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In that Swift
- 10 case, you have to deal with the language of the
- 11 statute, which requires a warrant to have
- issued before the expiration of the date.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Exactly. But, in this
- 14 case, a warrant did issue --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Exactly.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- based on her
- 17 abscondment, and so we agree the sentencing
- 18 court absolutely had the jurisdiction after the
- 19 expiration --
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right. Thank
- 21 you, counsel.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: -- but -- okay. Yes,
- 23 Your Honor.
- So let me just make one other point
- 25 about the structure of the statute that I think

- 1 supports our position. That's rooted in
- 2 Section 3583(i), the tolling provision we just
- 3 talked about.
- 4 So that's not only about abscondment,
- 5 but abscondment is one common scenario in which
- 6 that statute would arise because the statute
- 7 says that if a warrant issues during the term,
- 8 then the sentencing court retains jurisdiction
- 9 after the expiration of the term to revoke
- 10 supervised release.
- 11 So, ordinarily, you wouldn't have the
- 12 situation where the warrant issues during the
- term but the hearing happens after the term
- 14 because the probation officer knows where the
- 15 supervisee lives, so, you know, the warrant can
- 16 be executed very swiftly.
- 17 But one situation in which it couldn't
- 18 be executed swiftly is when the person has
- 19 absconded, so the warrant issues during the
- 20 term, but they can't find the person until
- 21 after the term expires.
- 22 And yet, even in that context, the way
- that Section 3583(i) is set up is it assumes
- that the term is going to end, and then, after
- 25 the expiration of the term, there will be this

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1 revocation hearing that rewinds the clock to
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- 2 the beginning. And I do think that's
- 3 inconsistent with how the government is looking
- 4 at things, which is that the term never ends
- 5 once the abscondment occurs.
- And so, you know, that's just an
- 7 additional piece of structural support in the
- 8 statute that I do think militates in favor of
- 9 our position.
- 10 If there's no further questions,
- 11 I'm --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 13 Thomas, anything further?
- 14 Justice Alito?
- 15 Justice Sotomayor?
- 16 Justice Kagan?
- Justice Kavanaugh, Jackson, are we
- 18 done here?
- 19 Thank you, counsel.
- MR. UNIKOWSKY: Thank you.
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Handell.
- 22 ORAL ARGUMENT OF JOSHUA K. HANDELL
- ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- MR. HANDELL: Mr. Chief Justice, and
- 25 may it please the Court:

1	A supervisee is not discharging her
2	term of supervised release while she is
3	absconding from supervision. That common-sense
4	intuition is consistent with the modern
5	statutory text, with this Court's precedents
6	interpreting it, and with the uniform
7	decisional law preceding it.
8	The supervised release statutes
9	require that a supervisee shall be supervised
10	by a probation officer following her release
11	from confinement, and they detail how that
12	active and ongoing supervision must proceed.
13	This Court has accordingly recognized that
14	supervised release is a system of both
15	post-confinement monitoring and
16	post-confinement assistance, neither of which
17	is possible when the supervisee's whereabouts
18	are unknown because she has absconded.
19	A fugitive who deliberately and
20	successfully evades supervision, depriving the
21	court of any information as to her conduct,
22	condition, and compliance, is not being
23	supervised in any sense that lawyers,
24	legislators, or laymen would understand that
25	word.

1	Petitioner's theory that she was
2	discharging the supervision component of her
3	judgment, despite being entirely unsupervised,
4	because her abscondment did not automatically
5	terminate her release conditions,
6	misunderstands the nature of supervised
7	release. To discharge her term of supervised
8	release, a supervisee must be both under the
9	supervision of a probation officer and subject
10	to release conditions.
11	But her defiance as to the former does
12	not relieve her obligations as to the latter.
13	Just as nothing in the supervised release
14	statutes authorizes a supervisee to earn credit
15	for time spent as an unsupervised fugitive,
16	nothing permits her by means of abscondment to
17	take a vacation from her court-ordered
18	conditions whenever they prove inconvenient.
19	Those two intuitive principles resolve this
20	case.
21	I welcome the Court's questions.
22	JUSTICE THOMAS: You suggest that
23	without the tolling she would receive an
24	unwarranted benefit.
25	What exactly is that benefit?

1	MR. HANDELL: Yes. So I I think
2	there are a couple of possible benefits that a
3	supervisee would receive from from a period
4	of fugitivity if you did not apply the fugitive
5	tolling doctrine. So it does not apply to this
6	case, but the most obvious and most serious
7	benefit that a fugitive could receive would be
8	the ability to just run out the term of
9	supervised release while she is absconding.
LO	JUSTICE THOMAS: So, in this case,
L1	what is the benefit?
L2	MR. HANDELL: So, in this case, the
L3	benefit is essentially that she avoided the
L4	post-confinement monitoring monitoring and
L5	surveillance that
L6	JUSTICE THOMAS: So, if you have
L7	revocation as a sanction for that, what is this
L8	case about?
L9	MR. HANDELL: Right. So so this
20	case as I believe Justice Alito pointed out,
21	this case really boils down to just a
22	disagreement about the sentencing guidelines.
23	And, candidly, especially given Petitioner's
24	concession that the the court at the
25	revocation hearing can consider the full range

of conduct postdating the abscondment, we don't

- 2 think that in the real world this is going to
- 3 shake out to that much of a difference when it
- 4 comes to the actual revocation sanction.
- 5 And I think we said --
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So, in the -- in the
- 7 real world --
- 8 MR. HANDELL: I'm sorry, Justice
- 9 Gorsuch.
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- in the real
- 11 world --
- MR. HANDELL: Yes.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- there is no
- 14 benefit unless she runs out the clock before
- 15 the government gets a warrant, I think. Is
- 16 that right?
- 17 MR. HANDELL: I -- I think that is the
- 18 situation that we are mostly concerned about,
- 19 yes.
- 20 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. And if that's
- 21 the situation you're concerned about, it seems
- 22 to me that it's a very unlikely scenario to
- 23 arise except for, as Mr. Unikowsky says, if the
- 24 violation occurs at the very end of -- of the
- 25 supervised release period, it might escape

- 1 detection.
- 2 And, similarly, though, that's true
- 3 with anything a -- a -- a supervised release
- 4 individual might do. Any crime he or she might
- 5 commit might escape detection at the end of --
- 6 of that -- of the -- at the end of that period.
- 7 MR. HANDELL: So, respectfully,
- 8 Justice Gorsuch, I -- I disagree about the
- 9 likelihood of the 3583(i) mechanism failing.
- 10 So I think, as has been discussed, we have the
- 11 Swick case out of the Fifth Circuit, where a
- 12 defendant was serving a state term of
- imprisonment and then did not report to her
- 14 federal probation officer as she was directed.
- 15 There's the Crane case out of the
- 16 Ninth Circuit, where a supervisee was in a
- 17 residential treatment program, left early, and
- 18 that was not reported to the probation officer.
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: But it's also
- 20 possible a -- a -- a probation officer will
- 21 miss other crimes at the very end of a period,
- 22 right?
- MR. HANDELL: Absolutely.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.
- MR. HANDELL: These -- these were not

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1 right at the end of the period, though. I
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- 2 mean, this -- this is -- you know, there are --
- 3 there are several real-world --
- 4 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, if the
- 5 government has a problem getting warrants,
- 6 maybe the government ought to go to Congress
- 7 and ask for (i) to be amended, as it already
- 8 has once. Thoughts?
- 9 MR. HANDELL: Well -- well, Your
- 10 Honor, so, you know, I -- I know that the
- 11 government occasionally comes in here and
- 12 pleads, like, resource constraints and
- 13 administrability concerns.
- 14 JUSTICE GORSUCH: That's what this one
- 15 sounds like to me.
- MR. HANDELL: Well, let -- let me just
- say with all respect this process is completely
- 18 between the probation office and the
- 19 supervisee. The government does not get
- 20 involved until --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Whoa, whoa, whoa,
- whoa, whoa.
- MR. HANDELL: -- the adjudication
- 24 stage.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Hold on. The --

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1 the -- the -- the probation officer isn't a
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- 2 government employee?
- 3 MR. HANDELL: The -- the probation
- 4 officer is a -- a -- a member of the
- 5 judicial branch, so --
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I understand that.
- 7 But you're -- you're pleading constraints for
- 8 the government in whatever form it may be.
- 9 MR. HANDELL: Sure.
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And I appreciate
- 11 those constraints. But the government's always
- been able to go to Congress and, in fact, did
- to amend (i) once already. Congress has proven
- 14 pretty solicitous in this area.
- 15 And the alternative is for us to
- 16 create a fugitive tolling doctrine pretty whole
- 17 cloth. And there appear to be at least two
- 18 circuit splits, one about what is required to
- 19 abscond, is it just not showing up or is it
- 20 actually being completely unavailable for
- 21 supervision, another circuit split over what --
- 22 what -- what it means to be an absconder. Is
- 23 it -- is it -- does it start when the status
- 24 arises, does it start later?
- 25 And so we're going to have to come up

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1 with a whole common law doctrine here to
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- 2 supplement what (i) already says. Thoughts
- 3 about that?
- 4 MR. HANDELL: Well, Justice Gorsuch,
- 5 I -- I disagree on the -- the circuit case law
- 6 on what constitutes abscondment. I think that
- 7 the courts of appeals that --
- 8 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I thought the
- 9 Ninth --
- 10 MR. HANDELL: -- have adopted our --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- I thought the
- 12 Ninth Circuit said it's merely failing to
- appear, and the Fourth Circuit says you have to
- 14 act in a way that precludes the government from
- 15 supervising.
- MR. HANDELL: So I think 20 years ago,
- 17 the Ninth Circuit had one case that said that
- it could be any failure to appear or, like,
- 19 anything that violated a release condition.
- 20 Since then, they have clarified in Ignacio
- Juarez that it is actually a pattern of conduct
- 22 that prevents supervision, that -- that
- 23 precludes supervision, and I think that is
- 24 fully consistent with what the Fifth Circuit
- 25 said in Swick and the Fourth Circuit --

1	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's one
2	court's
3	MR. HANDELL: said in Thompson.
4	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: that's one
5	court's view. I think the point that Justice
6	Gorsuch is making is that we would have to
7	decide as a matter of common law which of those
8	approaches is right.
9	MR. HANDELL: Well, Justice Sotomayor,
10	the the only point that I'm making is that I
11	believe there is actually a consensus on what
12	constitutes abscondment in the courts of
13	appeals that have adopted our view of how this
14	statutory scheme works.
15	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel,
16	statutorily, supervised release can't go on for
17	more than five years. Under your theory of
18	this case, you're saying supervised release in
19	part continues during the time of abscondment
20	because they're subject to the terms of that
21	they violated, and yet it doesn't run out.
22	That's isn't that us by common law
23	extending a period of punishment?
24	MR. HANDELL: No, Your Honor. Our
25	view of

- 2 MR. HANDELL: Well --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Meaning, if you
- 4 can -- if during the five years you violate
- 5 those terms, you're still under supervised
- 6 release terms. If you violate them, you're
- 7 claiming that violation subjects you to a new
- 8 warrant.
- 9 How are we not extending the period?
- MR. HANDELL: So, Justice Sotomayor, a
- 11 term of supervised release requires that the
- 12 supervisee is both subject to --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It actually
- 14 does --
- 15 MR. HANDELL: -- those conditions
- 16 and --
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It -- it -- in
- 18 fact, it doesn't. The way the statute is
- 19 written, it's up to the sentencing judge on
- whether actual supervision by the probation
- 21 department's necessary.
- I grant you that I think in virtually
- 23 all cases, most judges require it, but it's not
- 24 legally required.
- MR. HANDELL: Well, Your Honor, I -- I

1 think, if we read supervision out of supervised

- 2 release, that essentially renders 18 U.S.C.
- 3 3601 and 3603 a nullity.
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The problem --
- 5 but -- but then what happens to the defendant
- 6 who is reporting every week, telling the --
- 7 doing what he or she is supposed to do in terms
- 8 of reporting to the agent but is out there
- 9 running a criminal enterprise every single day?
- 10 That person in my judgment is not being
- 11 adequately supervised. That person is
- 12 violating the essence of the supervision. And
- 13 yet you would claim he hasn't absconded.
- 14 MR. HANDELL: Yes. I -- that -- that
- 15 person is certainly violating his release
- 16 conditions. And I want to be very clear that
- 17 we do not view a --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But that person --
- 19 that person could be not evading the entire
- 20 spirit of supervised release, but that doesn't
- 21 subject them to an extended period of
- 22 supervised release, does it?
- MR. HANDELL: Well, I -- I think the
- 24 distinction there is that if that person is
- 25 actually being supervised, if their whereabouts

- 1 are known to their probation officer, if they
- 2 are checking in with their probation officer as
- 3 required by the terms of their supervision,
- 4 then their violative conduct is much likelier
- 5 to actually be detected and to result in a
- 6 revocation hearing --
- 7 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The problem is
- 8 that --
- 9 MR. HANDELL: -- and a new sanction.
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The reality is
- 11 that it really is.
- 12 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I don't know. I
- mean, failing to show up is a pretty obvious
- 14 way to detect a violation, it seems to me, more
- so than a lot of other criminal enterprises
- 16 that might be going on. I dutifully show up,
- but I'm running a, you know, Murder Mayhem Inc.
- 18 over here, you just don't find it. You know,
- 19 that's hard to find. You've got to go find
- 20 that.
- 21 Somebody doesn't show up, I notice.
- MR. HANDELL: Yes, I mean, I -- I
- 23 agree with that, Justice Gorsuch, but I think
- that, you know, not showing up to a meeting is
- 25 going to get you maybe a grade C violation at

1	the	most.	Ιt	probably	rin	most	instances	will

- 2 not even be reported to the district court.
- 3 You know, if you are out there running
- 4 Murder Mayhem Inc. or -- or something like
- 5 that, I mean, that is obviously much more
- 6 serious, egregious misconduct that we think, if
- 7 you are actually checking in with your
- 8 probation officer, if your probation officer
- 9 knows where you live and where you work and is
- 10 able to conduct warrantless searches as is, you
- 11 know, one of the -- one of the standard
- 12 conditions of supervised release, that is much
- 13 likelier for the probation officer to actually
- 14 detect that misconduct, report it to the
- district court, and for that to result in the
- 16 revocation of --
- 17 JUSTICE JACKSON: So, Mr. --
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel --
- 19 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- Mr. --
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- counsel,
- 21 you say, when she absconds, Ms. Rico's
- 22 supervision term doesn't run, but she's still
- 23 subject to the requirements and can violate
- 24 requirements such as that she has to report.
- Now why isn't that just like a

- 1 prisoner who escapes and you would say, okay,
- 2 he's going to be -- not get the prison sentence
- 3 time during that period, but he also violated
- 4 the rule about prison inmates can only wear a
- 5 particular type of clothing? It seems to me
- 6 that is sort of a double -- double counting.
- 7 MR. HANDELL: Well, I -- I don't think
- 8 so, Mr. Chief Justice. I mean, I -- I would
- 9 point out that when prisoners escape, whether
- 10 it's from, you know, a physical BOP institution
- or from one of these other forms of confinement
- that BOP has developed, like home confinement,
- 13 furlough, a halfway house, something like that,
- 14 they can be -- obviously, at the moment of
- their escape, the clock stops on service of
- 16 their term and they will have to fulfill the --
- 17 the -- the undischarged portion of the term
- when they are recaptured.
- 19 But they can also face institutional
- 20 consequences for the -- the behavior that they
- 21 engage in when they are on escape status. I
- 22 think the --
- 23 JUSTICE JACKSON: But not on the --
- 24 not on the same --
- 25 JUSTICE BARRETT: Can I ask you --

1	JUSTICE JACKSON: Not for the same
2	reason. I mean, I think both Justice Sotomayor
3	and the Chief might be pointing out that what
4	you are suggesting is not really a tolling rule
5	because the traditional tolling is that the
6	clock stops with respect to the obligation when
7	you run away, and it picks up again when you're
8	found again.
9	And what happens in between you can't
10	be held liable for under that same framework
11	because the clock has stopped. So it seems to
12	me that what you're actually asking for is an
13	extension rule, one that allows for the
14	obligations to occur throughout the whole
15	period, when when you're away, when you've
16	absconded, you say she's still held to account
17	for what happens in the context of supervised
18	release. So that means those conditions are
19	extending, not tolled, right?
20	MR. HANDELL: So, respectfully,
21	Justice Jackson, I I disagree with that
22	characterization of it as an extension rule. I
23	think that tolling in every circumstance is
24	about stopping the clock, but tolling has never
25	guaranteed

1	JUSTICE JACKSON: But you're
2	MR. HANDELL: an immediate
3	JUSTICE JACKSON: you're not asking
4	for stopping the clock. That's my point.
5	You're you're saying the clock is still
6	going because that's what allows you to hold
7	her accountable for the things that happened
8	during the period when she's away.
9	MR. HANDELL: We're saying that the
10	clock stops on service of of the term. I'm
11	discharging the term of supervised release.
12	But tolling has never meant an immediate
13	cessation of any attendant disabilities or
14	restrictions that run with the sentence, right?
15	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, one
16	MR. HANDELL: I mean, this is true
17	JUSTICE GORSUCH: one big
18	difference is that, you know, you're a fugitive
19	prisoner from BOP on the lam, he might commit a
20	crime, and if he commits a crime, he's going to
21	get a jury and and a trial, whereas, if on
22	supervised release in the abscondment scenario,
23	your the government would assert the right
24	for a judge rather than a jury and under a
25	preponderance-of-the-evidence standard rather

- 1 than under a reasonable-doubt standard to
- 2 address any misconduct during that period,
- 3 correct?
- 4 MR. HANDELL: Not quite, Justice
- 5 Gorsuch. So I -- I think -- I mean, obviously,
- 6 you are correct that anytime someone commits a
- 7 new crime, if they are going to be tried for
- 8 that crime, they get a -- a jury and, you know,
- 9 all of the -- the attendant protections of the
- 10 Sixth and Seventh Amendments, but I think, with
- the example of the BOP prisoner who's out on
- the lam, to the extent we are applying BOP
- institutional consequences for the behavior
- 14 that he's --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: But that -- that's
- 16 separate. I think the point is that's separate
- from the tolling rule that we apply to
- prisoners who are on the lam. That's separate.
- 19 MR. HANDELL: Well, I -- I think we --
- 20 we view it as, you know, there is the
- 21 tolling --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Here, it's inherent
- 23 in the supervised release power you -- that you
- 24 say continues but doesn't continue.
- 25 MR. HANDELL: I -- I think it's the

- 1 same thing. I think we are -- we are tolling
- 2 the -- the service of the term, but there still
- 3 may be additional consequences that attach for
- 4 the behavior that occurs during that
- 5 abscondment period.
- 6 And -- I'm sorry, Justice Alito.
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, I was just going
- 8 to ask whether you think that -- that the
- 9 Petitioner's argument is inconsistent with or
- 10 at least in tension with our decision last term
- in Esteras, which discussed the factors that
- 12 are relevant in deciding whether to revoke
- 13 supervised release and what to do if supervised
- 14 release is revoked.
- Now I recognize the factors are
- 16 discretionary, but still, the -- the
- 17 Petitioner's argument is that what occurred
- 18 after the 37 months is off the table. And I
- 19 don't understand -- or is of lesser
- 20 significance, it can be taken into account only
- 21 through the mechanism of a departure.
- But I don't see what -- why what --
- what happened after 37 months is any less
- relevant than what happened before 37 months.
- MR. HANDELL: I agree, Justice Alito,

	1	and	Ι	think	that	what	this	Court	said	in
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- 2 Esteras is that courts at a supervised release
- 3 revocation hearing can and should take into
- 4 account all of the forward-looking interests
- 5 that -- that criminal sentences serve, which
- 6 includes deterrence, incapacitation, things
- 7 like that.
- 8 I think that giving supervised release
- 9 the effect that Congress wanted, meaning that
- 10 it is actually supervision, that it is the kind
- of post-confinement monitoring and
- 12 post-confinement assistance that this Court
- 13 recognized in Cornell Johnson and Roy Lee
- 14 Johnson serves those interests that the Court
- 15 recognized in Esteras. And I -- I don't quite
- 16 understand -- I mean, I think there is
- 17 certainly some tension in the idea that a
- 18 person who violates their supervised release by
- 19 absconding is going to be subject to a sanction
- 20 derived from the full breadth of their conduct
- 21 post-abscondment but that the guidelines are
- 22 limited to just a -- a substance --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, what that
- 24 suggests to me is that this is really -- that
- 25 tolling is a misnomer. If this were purely

- 1 tolling, by analogy to what -- to the fugitive
- tolling rule, Petitioner would not have been on
- 3 supervised release at all during the whole
- 4 period -- during the whole period when she was
- 5 absconding but that she wouldn't be -- she
- 6 wouldn't be satisfying her term. She also
- 7 wouldn't be subject to the terms of supervised
- 8 release. But you don't want that rule.
- 9 So this doesn't seem to me to be
- 10 really about tolling at all. Neither party
- 11 really wants a pure tolling rule. It's about
- 12 what is relevant, what should inform the
- decision about what should be done when there
- 14 is a revocation.
- MR. HANDELL: So, Justice Alito, we --
- 16 we think that that is a -- a distant
- 17 second-best rule. We would prefer that rule to
- 18 a rule of no tolling at all because our -- as I
- was discussing, I believe, with Justice Gorsuch
- 20 earlier, our primary concern here is the idea
- 21 that defendants will be able to abscond from
- 22 supervision, wait out the expiration date of
- their term, and if a warrant or summons does
- 24 not issue under 3583(i), they will be able to
- 25 render the supervision component of their

- 1 judgment a nullity.
- 2 That is the worst outcome here. That
- does not serve the -- the system that Congress
- 4 enacted in the Sentencing Reform Act.
- 5 JUSTICE JACKSON: But -- but isn't
- 6 that exactly what Congress wanted? I mean, the
- 7 reason why we have (i), I think, is because
- 8 Congress suggests that it's only in the
- 9 situation in which a warrant does issue under
- 10 those circumstances that the court's authority
- 11 can extend to allow for a revocation.
- 12 So I think what you're asking for
- seems diametrically opposed to the policy
- 14 choice that Congress has made about the
- 15 circumstances under which the person can be
- 16 held accountable for something --
- MR. HANDELL: So, Justice --
- 18 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- in this way.
- MR. HANDELL: Oh, I'm sorry.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Yeah. Yeah.
- 21 MR. HANDELL: I -- I think I part ways
- 22 with you on the -- the history and purpose of
- 23 subsection (i), so I would point out, you know,
- Petitioner puts a lot of marbles in the 3583(i)
- 25 bucket because that is essentially the only way

1 that she's able to get around this idea that

- 2 somebody could just wait out --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: But that's because
- 4 that's what Congress says about when this can
- 5 be extended, when the power could be extended,
- 6 to hold her accountable.
- 7 MR. HANDELL: Well, I -- you know, I
- 8 would point out just as a matter of history
- 9 that subsection (i) was not enacted until a
- 10 decade after the Sentencing Reform Act. So, in
- order to buy into her view, you have to accept
- 12 the idea that the Congress that enacted the
- 13 Sentencing Reform Act wanted supervisees to be
- 14 able to entirely defeat the supervision
- 15 component of their judgment through fugitivity
- and waiting out the expiration date of the
- 17 sentence.
- I don't think that that's a plausible
- 19 inference --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: No, they -- what
- 21 they did was they -- but -- but what they did
- 22 was they put the burden on the government or
- 23 the probation office to alert the court and get
- 24 a warrant during the time when the person
- absconds.

- 1 MR. HANDELL: But, Justice Jackson,
- 2 there was no 3583(i) at -- at that time. There
- 3 was no 3583(i). There was no warrant or
- 4 summons extension mechanism for the first 10
- 5 years that the Sentencing Reform Act was in
- 6 effect. That was not enacted until 1994.
- 7 JUSTICE JACKSON: And your conclusion
- 8 is then that we have to, now that 3583(i)
- 9 exists, interpret it consistent with the
- 10 preexisting state of affairs?
- 11 MR. HANDELL: Well, I have additional
- 12 reasons that I think --
- 13 JUSTICE JACKSON: Okay.
- 14 MR. HANDELL: -- 3583(i) is
- insufficient, but I do think it's important
- 16 to -- to look at the history and think about
- what the Congress that enacted the Sentencing
- 18 Reform Act was trying to do. And I think, you
- 19 know, if -- if Congress gave district courts,
- 20 for the first 10 years of the supervised
- 21 release system, gave district courts no tools
- 22 whatsoever to go after absconding supervisees
- 23 who are able to wait out the expiration date of
- 24 their term, I think that that is very strong
- 25 evidence that Congress anticipated that

traditional ideas of fugitive tolling would be 1 2. incorporated into the new supervised release 3 system that they were enacting. But, in terms of, you know, what I 5 think 3583(i) was -- was going after, I mean, as I think Petitioner acknowledged on page 6 of 6 her opening brief and as the Second Circuit 7 8 recognized in the Janvier case, this was really 9 about a very narrow subset of late-breaking violations where there was not time left on the 10 11 clock for the district court to conduct the --12 the revocation hearing required by Rule 32.1. 13 Every court to have passed on 3583(i) 14 has talked about this as being a -- a -- a 15 provision that is designed just for those very late end-of-term violations. It is not a 16 17 general fugitive-tolling provision. It --18 JUSTICE KAGAN: I quess, Mr. Handell, 19 though, the question to you is, in what provision do you put your marbles? I mean, in 20 addition to 3583(i), Mr. Unikowsky would say 21 back to you, well, there is no fugitive tolling 22 23 provision in this statute of the kind that the 2.4 government wants. There is a tolling provision

in the statute. It applies to prisoners.

- does not apply in this situation. And there is
- 2 in addition a fairly granular -- granular,
- 3 detailed instructions about what to do with a
- 4 person like the Petitioner here; in other
- 5 words, that there should be a revocation, there
- 6 should be a new sentence of imprisonment with a
- 7 term of supervised release attached to it.
- 8 So the statute offers a solution for
- 9 what to do with prisoners like Ms. Rico. So
- where are we supposed to look in the statute
- 11 for your solution?
- 12 MR. HANDELL: Right. So I -- I think
- there are a couple of analytical questions
- 14 baked into this case, and the first one is
- just, are you serving a term of supervised
- 16 release when you're unsupervised? And if you
- agree with us on that, that is just about, you
- 18 know, the basic fundamental essence of
- 19 supervised release looking at the full range of
- 20 statutes that Congress enacted here, 3601,
- 21 3603, 3624(e), and saying, yes, Congress
- 22 anticipated that when someone is sentenced to a
- 23 term of supervised release, they will actually
- 24 be supervised by a probation officer.
- 25 If you agree with us that you have to

- 1 actually be supervised to be discharging a term
- of supervised release, then you've already
- disagreed with Petitioner's position. And then
- 4 we just get to the -- the secondary question
- of, okay, what do we do with these release
- 6 conditions after abscondment?
- 7 I'm happy to talk about that and why I
- 8 think that abscondment should not --
- 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: If I take your
- 10 argument, right, that suggests that the only
- 11 statutory provision you're pointing to is the
- one that identifies the person who actually
- does the supervision.
- 14 Is that correct?
- MR. HANDELL: I -- I think 3601
- imposes an obligation on a supervisee to be
- 17 supervised, and 3603 imposes an obligation on
- 18 the probation officer to supervise. I think
- 19 those work together, yes.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: It's pretty bare
- 21 bones, yeah?
- MR. HANDELL: You know, respectfully,
- 23 I disagree with that characterization, Justice
- 24 Kagan. And, you -- you know, I think I will --
- I will acknowledge that there is not an

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1 explicit fugitive-tolling provision in the
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- 2 Sentencing Reform Act or any of the amendments,
- 3 akin to the carceral tolling --
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: Nor is there a lot of
- 5 detail about what the supervision looks like.
- 6 So to the extent that you're putting all your
- 7 marbles in this idea of supervision, I mean,
- 8 the statute basically says, go get supervised.
- 9 MR. HANDELL: I mean, I think 18
- 10 U.S.C. 3603 actually puts some meat on the
- 11 bones of what supervision should look like.
- 12 I grant that that is -- that that is
- oriented toward probation officers rather than
- 14 the -- the supervisee herself, but, you know, I
- think that that tells us what Congress thought
- 16 supervision would look like in practice and
- 17 what kinds of requirements for monitoring,
- 18 reporting assistance Congress was trying to
- 19 bake into this system.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Thank you.
- 21 MR. HANDELL: Yeah. Just -- just to
- get to the 3624(e) carceral tolling provision,
- 23 I think, as we pointed out in our brief,
- 24 Congress had a very good reason for explicitly
- 25 addressing that. It is because there was a

- 1 disagreement in the case law as to whether you
- 2 would toll for terms of incarceration that
- arose during a period of supervision but were
- 4 based on conduct that predated the -- the term
- 5 of supervision.
- 6 So they couldn't quite be tethered to
- 7 a violation of supervision in the way that, you
- 8 know, this Court treated -- treated the
- 9 interruption in Anderson versus Corall and
- 10 Zerbst versus Kidwell.
- 11 Congress resolved that judicial
- 12 disagreement in favor of more tolling. I don't
- 13 think that that tells us much of anything
- 14 about, you know, what they thought about
- 15 fugitive-tolling. Certainly it doesn't
- 16 foreclose the existence of fugitive-tolling in
- 17 the Sentencing Reform Act.
- 18 JUSTICE JACKSON: Can I just ask you
- one quick question about your supervision
- 20 issue?
- 21 Suppose we have a defendant who is in
- 22 a coma. Are they being supervised? Is
- abscondment the only thing that triggers your
- 24 argument that the person is not being
- 25 supervised?

1 MR. HANDELL: Right. So I -- I think

- there are, you know, any number of situations
- 3 we could imagine -- a comatose supervisee, you
- 4 know, a -- a lazy or incompetent probation
- officer, anything like this, where supervision
- 6 is not occurring in the way that Congress
- 7 envision it.
- 8 JUSTICE JACKSON: And that in your
- 9 view would -- would warrant an -- an
- 10 extension of the supervised release?
- MR. HANDELL: No, Your Honor.
- 12 JUSTICE JACKSON: No?
- MR. HANDELL: And this -- this is
- 14 because of, you know, I do think -- I think the
- text gets us, like, 98 percent of the way. It
- 16 gets us to the two yard line in terms of what
- 17 counts as supervision or not. And then the
- 18 last -- the last couple of yards have to
- incorporate background principles from the
- 20 preexisting case law.
- 21 And there, I think, you would look at,
- 22 you know, against whom do we tax this failure
- of supervision. We recognize that this is not
- 24 the system operating as Congress designed it.
- 25 Maybe the probation officer is not meeting

- 1 the -- the duties imposed on him in 3603.
- 2 Maybe the supervisee is not doing what, you
- 3 know, she's technically required to do under
- 4 the terms of the judgment. But how do we tax
- 5 that failure?
- 6 And I think that the -- the lower
- 7 courts that have adopted our view of this
- 8 statutory scheme have gotten it right when
- 9 they've said that a supervisee absconds, that a
- 10 supervisee is tolled for her undischarged term
- of supervised release when she deliberately
- 12 renders supervision impossible.
- 13 You -- you would not be able to
- 14 satisfy the mens rea requirement as to a -- a
- 15 comatose supervisee or as to any situation in
- 16 which the probation officer, rather than the
- 17 supervisee, was at fault for the lack of
- 18 supervision.
- 19 JUSTICE JACKSON: Thank you.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 21 counsel.
- 22 Anything further? No? Thank you.
- MR. HANDELL: Thank you.
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Unikowsky,
- 25 rebuttal?

1	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT ADAM G. UNIKOWSKY
2	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
3	MR. UNIKOWSKY: Thank you, Mr. Chief
4	Justice.
5	I first want to address Justice
6	Alito's question about the possibility of true
7	tolling under which during the abscondment
8	period the person wouldn't be subject to the
9	conditions at all.
10	First of all, if that were the rule,
11	then Ms. Rico would prevail in this case
12	because the government hinge the
13	government's case hinges on Ms. Rico having
14	violated the conditions of supervised release
15	during that period.
16	But, second, we respectfully disagree
17	with that rule as inconsistent with the
18	judgment. The judgment does say that, when the
19	sentence expires, Ms. Rico will be subject to X
20	number of months of supervised release.
21	So I think what that means is that,
22	when Ms. Rico is released from prison, she
23	serves X number is months of supervised
24	release, and that doesn't stop because Ms. Rico
25	makes the unilateral decision to abscond.

1	I'd like to talk about Section
2	3583(i). As counsel mentioned, that statute
3	was enacted in 1994, and the reason it was
4	enacted is that there were administration
5	problems prior to the enactment of that
6	statute. Several courts invented these
7	judge-made rules to try to get around them.
8	Finally, Congress solved the problem
9	of Section 3583(i), but I think it's notable
LO	that Congress enacted the statute with very
L1	reticulated language that self-consciously
L2	departed from the parole equivalent, Section
L3	4210(c). It specifically required that the
L4	warrant issue during the term and only then was
L5	jurisdiction extended until after the term.
L6	So that would have been a a perfect
L7	opportunity for Congress to enact the same type
L8	of fugitive-tolling rule that already existed
L9	for parole. Congress's decision not to do
20	that, I do think, sheds light on the question
21	presented here.
22	I want to say a word about Section
23	3601, the statute that says that the supervisee
24	shall be supervised, which counsel
25	characterized as getting the government

- 1 98 percent there to the two-yard line.
- 2 I don't think that statute is very
- 3 helpful to the government. All it says is that
- 4 the person shall be supervised. Moreover,
- 5 that's just a prefatory provision in a portion
- 6 of the U.S. Code addressing the duties of
- 7 probation officers. That appears in
- 8 Section 3601. And the next section is about
- 9 how probation officers are appointed. And then
- 10 the next section after that concerns the duties
- of probation officers.
- 12 So I think it's hard to read that as
- 13 recognizing a fugitive-tolling doctrine. It
- 14 says nothing about tolling, nothing about
- extending the sentencing court's jurisdiction,
- 16 nothing about stripping people of credit. And
- 17 those are all topics that are addressed in
- 18 other portions of the Sentencing Reform Act
- that do not enact the government's proposed
- 20 rule.
- 21 Ultimately, this case boils down to
- the proposition that there's just no statutory
- 23 support for the government's claim that
- Ms. Rico could have been simultaneously on
- 25 supervised release for purposes of finding a

_	violation of the conditions but off supervised
2	release for purposes of determining whether she
3	was serving her sentence.
4	Because there's no textual support for
5	fugitive-tolling, we would ask the Court to
6	reverse the judgment below. Thank you.
7	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
8	counsel.
9	The case is submitted.
10	(Whereupon, at 11:01 a.m., the case
11	was submitted.)
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bake [1] 55:19 23:12 24:16 26:4.17 27:4.5 28:5 30: 36:2 54:2 60:18 **alternative** [1] **35**:15 baked [1] 53:14 4.16 **32**:1 **36**:6 **37**:12.19 **44**:22 **46**:5 **10** [2] **51**:4.20 although [1] 5:10 bare [1] **54:**20 **54:**6.8 **56:**23 **59:**7 10:06 [1] 3:2 barrett [1] 42:25 abscondments [1] 13:18 amend [1] 35:13 **100** [1] **7**:23 based [10] 6:15 7:15 8:3,13,14 16: absconds [5] 5:6 9:15 41:21 50: amended [1] 34:7 18 [2] 39:2 55:9 amendments [2] 45:10 55:2 18 **19**:18 **20**:13 **26**:16 **56:**4 **1910** [1] **19**:4 absence [2] 19:13.15 amicus [4] 13:14 17:13,14,14 basic [2] 17:22 53:18 1976 [3] 4:10 19:18,25 amount [2] 8:12 21:24 absolutely [2] 26:18 33:23 basically [1] **55**:8 **1983** [4] **4**:11 **19**:15 **20**:10 **21**:11 accept [1] 50:11 basis [1] 14:17 analogy [1] 48:1 1984 [4] 14:9 19:5 20:12 25:24 accordingly [1] 29:13 analytical [1] **53**:13 becomes [2] 10:4,5 **1994** [2] **51**:6 **60**:3 account [3] 43:16 46:20 47:4 anchor [1] 18:2 begin [1] 3:18 accountable [5] 3:13 15:6 44:7 anderson [1] 56:9 beginning [4] 6:24 7:3 18:11 28:2 another [3] 7:13 14:21 35:21 behalf [6] 2:4,7,10 3:8 28:23 59:2 49:16 50:6 **20** [3] **18**:23.24 **36**:16 answer [2] 13:2 17:25 accurately [1] 11:11 behavior [3] 42:20 45:13 46:4 **24-1056** [1] **3**:4 believe [4] 10:11 31:20 37:11 48: acknowledge [1] 54:25 anticipated [2] 51:25 53:22 28 [1] 2:7 acknowledged [1] 52:6 anvtime [2] 13:10 45:6 across [1] 14:18 apparently [2] 25:13,16 believing [1] 5:15 3 act [18] 3:15 4:12 6:14 9:9 20:11 appeals [2] 36:7 37:13 benefit [7] 23:4 30:24.25 31:7.11. 3 [1] 2.4 18.21 **21**:21.22 **36**:14 **49**:4 **50**:10. appear [3] 35:17 36:13,18 13 32:14 **32.1** [1] **52**:12 13 **51**:5.18 **55**:2 **56**:17 **61**:18 appears [1] 61:7 benefits [1] 31:2 **3583(i** [14] **27**:2,23 **33**:9 **48**:24 **49**: action [1] 15:7 applied [1] 19:8 between [6] 6:10 11:11 15:13 23: 24 51:2,3,8,14 52:5,13,21 60:2,9 active [1] 29:12 applies [2] 13:9 52:25 12 34:18 43:9 3601 [5] 39:3 53:20 54:15 60:23 61 actual [2] 32:4 38:20 apply [5] 11:1 31:4,5 45:17 53:1 beyond [1] 16:1 actually [20] 5:18 8:19,25 18:11, applying [1] 45:12 big [1] 44:17 3603 [5] 39:3 53:21 54:17 55:10 58: 24 **25**:11 **35**:20 **36**:21 **37**:11 **38**:13 appointed [1] 61:9 binding [1] 17:4 **blunts** [1] **6**:6 appreciate [1] **35**:10 39:25 40:5 41:7.13 43:12 47:10 53: 3624 [1] 18:7 23 54:1.12 55:10 apprehended [3] 6:17 13:13 21:4 blush [1] 5:12 **3624(e** [2] **53**:21 **55**:22 adam [4] 2:3 9 3:7 59:1 approaches [1] 37:8 board [1] 14:18 **37** [11] **8**:18,19,21 **10**:1,4,24 **11**:25 addition [2] 52:21 53:2 appropriate [2] 8:23 26:7 boards [1] 20:9 21:10 46:18 23 24 area [1] 35:14 additional [7] 8:2 9:21 17:6 21:8 boils [3] 22:1 31:21 61:21 37-month [1] 10:5 **28**:7 **46**:3 **51**:11 argue [1] 9:3 bones [2] 54:21 55:11 address [2] 45:2 59:5 arguing [1] 4:23 **bop** [5] **42**:10,12 **44**:19 **45**:11,12 addressed [1] 61:17 argument [16] 2:2,5,8 3:4,7 4:1 5: both [6] 6:7 12:12 29:14 30:8 38: **4210(b** [1] **20:**16 4,11 **6**:2 **16**:3 **28**:22 **46**:9,17 **54**:10 addressing [3] 3:17 55:25 61:6 12 43:2 **4210(c** [3] **20**:13,15 **60**:13 adequately [1] 39:11 branch [1] 35:5 **56:**24 **59:**1 5 adhere [1] 4:20 arguments [1] 5:14 breadth [1] 47:20 adjacent [1] 20:15 arise [3] 12:15 27:6 32:23 brief [9] 7:4 8:17 13:14 17:14,14 **59** [1] **2**:10 adjudication [1] 34:23 arises [1] 35:24 **19**:16 **22**:19 **52**:7 **55**:23 6 administrability [1] 34:13 arose [1] 56:3 briefs [1] 17:13 administration [1] 60:4 around [3] 14:9 50:1 60:7 broad [2] 12:12 13:9 **6** [1] **52**:6 administrative [1] 26:3 arrest [1] 15:1 brought [1] 6:18 adopted [3] 36:10 37:13 58:7 assert [1] 44:23 bucket [1] 49:25 **98** [2] **57**:15 **61**:1 advance [1] 20:7 assessment [1] 8:4 burden [2] 16:10 50:22 advocates [1] 19:21 assign [1] 10:6 burdens [2] 16:5,15 **affairs** [1] **51**:10 assistance [3] 29:16 47:12 55:18 buy [1] 50:11 a.m [1] 3:2 agent [1] 39:8 assumes [1] 27:23 C ability [1] 31:8 attach [1] 46:3 ago [1] 36:16 able [8] 35:12 41:10 48:21,24 50:1, calculate [1] 7:14 agree [8] 6:8 7:22 10:10 26:17 40: attached [1] 53:7 14 **51**:23 **58**:13 came [1] 4:10 23 46:25 53:17.25 attendant [2] 44:13 45:9 abolished [1] 19:5 candidly [1] 31:23 ahead [1] 11:17 authorities [3] 14:2,14 25:2 abolition [1] 20:20 cannot [1] 4:2 akin [1] 55:3 authority [2] 10:13 49:10 above [1] 15:25 capture [1] 8:20 alert [1] 50:23 authorizes [1] 30:14 abscond [4] 13:10 35:19 48:21 59: carceral [2] 55:3,22 alignment [1] 23:11 automatically [1] 30:4 carries [1] 5:12 alito [12] 9:7 10:19 13:22 15:7 20: available [1] 7:18 absconded [8] 6:4 7:17 8:18 15: carry [1] 22:21 avoided [1] 31:13 19 **28**:14 **31**:20 **46**:6,7,25 **47**:23 **48**: 22 27:19 29:18 39:13 43:16 away [7] 7:25 8:21 13:4 23:4 43:7, case [42] 3:4,11 6:16 8:20,24 11:8, absconder [5] 5:1 6:8 13:1 23:16 10 **14**:6,11 **15**:4 **16**:10,15,22 **19**:21 alito's [1] 59:6 15 44:8 **22**:1,12 **24**:14,20 **25**:7,22 **26**:6,10, allow [1] 49:11 В

10,10 52:22

back [7] 6:24 7:12 9:19 18:10 24:

background [1] **57**:19

absconding [9] 3:13 6:10 23:4 25

abscondment [30] 3:17 4:1 5:18

6:15,21 **9**:1 **12**:22 **17**:10,18,19,24

2 **29**:3 **31**:9 **47**:19 **48**:5 **51**:22

allowed [1] 9:2

almost [1] 5:21

allows [2] 43:13 44:6

already [7] 7:16 20:6 34:7 35:13

14 **30**:20 **31**:6,10,12,18,20,21 **33**:

1 **57**:20 **59**:11,13 **61**:21

11,15 **36**:5,17 **37**:18 **52**:8 **53**:14 **56**:

cases [7] 4:15 11:8 12:2 14:10 19:

6 **25**:24 **38**:23 causes [1] 13:11 cell [1] 13:2 certain [1] 15:16 certainly [3] 39:15 47:17 56:15 certiorari [2] 14:7 25:23 cessation [1] 44:13 characterization [2] 43:22 54:23 characterized [2] 11:11 60:25 checking [3] 16:13 40:2 41:7 chief [12] 3:3,9 28:12,21,24 41:18, 20 42:8 43:3 58:20,24 59:3 choice [1] 49:14 circuit [12] 24:23 33:11,16 35:18, 21 36:5,12,13,17,24,25 52:7 circumstance [1] 43:23 circumstances [2] 49:10.15 cite [1] 19:16 cites [1] 25:25 claim [3] 24:5 39:13 61:23 claiming [1] 38:7 claims [2] 3:24 22:18 clarified [1] 36:20 clear [3] 20:4.22 39:16 client [2] 9:15 21:7 clock [21] 6:23.23.24 11:24 17:18 18:5.10.20.21 23:10 24:6 28:1 32: 14 **42**:15 **43**:6.11.24 **44**:4.5.10 **52**: cloth [1] 35:17 clothing [1] 42:5 clues [1] 17:6 code [1] 61:6 coin [1] 16:9 coma [1] 56:22 comatose [2] 57:3 58:15 come [3] 14:8 19:6 35:25 comes [3] 24:8 32:4 34:11 commission [2] 20:5 22:20 commit [5] 13:10 14:25 21:12 33: 5 44:19 commits [2] 44:20 45:6 committed [3] 9:3 10:13 20:25 **committing** [1] **12**:17 common [6] 4:8 20:1 27:5 36:1 **37:**7.22 common-sense [1] 29:3 competing [2] 22:2.14 completely [3] 5:3 34:17 35:20 compliance [1] 29:22 comply [1] 23:5 complying [1] 23:24 component [4] 5:14 30:2 48:25 **50**:15 concept [2] 16:19 17:11 concern [3] 12:8 13:20 48:20 concerned [4] 13:4 20:24 32:18. concerns [2] 34:13 61:10 concession [1] **31**:24 conclusion [1] 51:7 condition [3] 16:21 29:22 36:19

conditions [25] 3:20 4:4 5:17.19. 23.25 **9**:1 **13**:11 **15**:17 **16**:1.16.24 **19**:10 **22**:9 **24**:17 **30**:5.10.18 **38**:15 39:16 41:12 43:18 54:6 59:9.14 conduct [8] 29:21 32:1 36:21 40:4 **41**:10 **47**:20 **52**:11 **56**:4 confinement [3] 29:11 42:11,12 confused [1] 7:2 congress [34] 3:15 4:12,17 17:21 **18**:4 **20**:12,17 **21**:19,21 **23**:16 **34**:6 **35**:12,13 **47**:9 **49**:3,6,8,14 **50**:4,12 **51**:17,19,25 **53**:20,21 **55**:15,18,24 **56**:11 **57**:6,24 **60**:8,10,17 congress's [1] 60:19 consensus [1] 37:11 consequences [3] 42:20 45:13 consider [4] 8:25 10:13 21 31:25 consideration [3] 9:24 11:4 21: considered [3] 4:24 15:8 21:14 considers [1] 10:24 consistent [3] 29:4 36:24 51:9 **conspiracy** [1] **23**:25 constitutes [2] 36:6 37:12 constraints [3] 34:12 35:7.11 contact [2] 14:14 18:13 contemplated [1] 18:14 contemplates [1] 15:25 contends [2] 16:17,23 contention [2] 4:3.7 context [2] 27:22 43:17 continue [1] 45:24 continues [2] 37:19 45:24 contrary [2] 4:7 24:2 convicted [1] 15:4 **conviction** [1] **25**:6 corall [1] 56:9 cornell [1] 47:13 correct [7] 8:16 9:11 15:2 25:6 45: 3 6 **54**:14 correspond [1] 16:20 couldn't [2] 27:17 56:6 counsel [9] 24:19 26:21 28:19 37: 15 **41**:18,20 **58**:21 **60**:2,24 counterintuitive [1] 5:14 counting [1] 42:6 counts [1] 57:17 couple [4] 19:22 31:2 53:13 57:18 court [35] 3:10 4:20 6:19 7:5,11 8: 1 **10**:12.21 **11**:3.3 **14**:3.7 **15**:5 **17**:1 **18**:14 **20**:23 **21**:4 **22**:21 **23**:1 **24**:8 **26**:18 **27**:8 **28**:25 **29**:13,21 **31**:24 **41:**2,15 **47:**1,12,14 **50:**23 **52:**11,13 court-ordered [1] 30:17 courts [8] 17:16 36:7 37:12 47:2 **51**:19.21 **58**:7 **60**:6 court's [10] 4:21 8:3 22:11 23:5 29:5 30:21 37:2,5 49:10 61:15

crane [1] 33:15

create [1] 35:16

created [2] 4:17 9:12 credit [11] 6:4,9,12,20 7:1,6,10,19 24:12 30:14 61:16 crime [10] 9:3 12:17,21 15:1,2 33: 4 44:20,20 45:7,8 crimes [2] 10:13 33:21 criminal [3] 39:9 40:15 47:5 currently [1] 14:6 cut [1] 22:12

D

date [4] 26:12 48:22 50:16 51:23 day [2] 5:12 39:9 deal [1] 26:10 decade [1] 50:10 decide [3] 9:19 21:5 37:7 deciding [2] 17:16 46:12 decision [5] 10:15 46:10 48:13 59: 25 60:19 decisional [1] 29:7 decouples [1] 16:4 decoupling [1] 16:21 deemed [1] 7:10 defeat [1] 50:14 defendant [4] 8:4 33:12 39:5 56: defendants [1] 48:21 defiance [1] 30:11 define [1] 17:12 **definition** [1] **17**:10 deliberately [2] 29:19 58:11 depart [2] 10:22,25 departed [1] 60:12 department's [1] 38:21 departure [1] 46:21 deprivation [1] 6:12 deprived [1] 6:9 depriving [2] 7:6 29:20 derived [1] 47:20 designed [2] 52:15 57:24 desk [1] 21:19 despite [1] 30:3 detail [3] 17:15 29:11 55:5 detailed [1] 53:3 detect [4] 12:23 13:7 40:14 41:14 detected [1] 40:5 detection [3] 12:20 33:1 5 determinations [1] 10:2 determine [4] 16:6.12.18 21:8 determines [1] 17:3 deterrence [1] 47:6 developed [1] 42:12 diametrically [1] 49:13 dichotomy [1] 4:20 difference [2] 32:3 44:18 different [2] 8:8 24:17 difficult [1] 17:11 difficulties [1] 17:15 directed [1] 33:14 disabilities [1] 44:13 disagree [7] 10:17 16:3 33:8 36:5 43:21 54:23 59:16

disagreed [1] 54:3 disagreement [3] 31:22 56:1,12 discharge [1] 30:7 discharging [4] 29:1 30:2 44:11 discretionary [3] 10:15 15:8 46: discussed [2] 33:10 46:11 discussing [1] 48:19 dispute [2] 11:11 15:13 distant [1] 48:16 distinction [1] 39:24 district [5] 41:2.15 51:19.21 52:11 doctrine [4] 31:5 35:16 36:1 61:13 doing [3] 20:9 39:7 58:2 done [5] 8:14 11:19 24:13 28:18 **48**:13 double [2] 42:6 6 down [3] 22:1 31:21 61:21 downward [1] 10:25 drug [1] 15:4 drugs [1] 12:17 during [27] 3:25 4:4 5:17,19 6:21 8:25 9:4 14:1 20:25 24:1 26:2 27:7, 12,19 37:19 38:4 42:3 44:8 45:2 46: 4 48:3.4 50:24 56:3 59:7.15 60:14 duties [3] 58:1 61:6.10 dutifully [1] 40:16

Ε

earlier [2] 24:20 48:20 early [2] 13:19 33:17 earn [1] 30:14 easiest [2] 12:23 13:7 effect [5] 3:18 8:24 17:4 47:9 51:6 effectively [2] 11:25 24:11 effectuated [1] 6:12 egregious [1] 41:6 empirically [1] 13:18 employee [1] 35:2 **empowered** [1] **23**:9 enact [2] 60:17 61:19 enacted [13] 4:13 19:4 20:5 21:20 **49**:4 **50**:9.12 **51**:6.17 **53**:20 **60**:3.4. enacting [1] 52:3 enactment [1] 60:5 enacts [2] 20:13.16 encode [1] 21:17 end [9] 12:9 14:22,24 27:24 32:24 **33:**5,6,21 **34:**1 ending [1] 21:13 end-of-term [1] 52:16 ends [2] 17:23 28:4 engage [1] 42:21 enough [1] 21:17 ensure [1] 18:11 enterprise [1] 39:9 **enterprises** [1] **40**:15 entire [3] 5:18 22:17 39:19 entirely [3] 9:12 30:3 50:14 envision [2] 23:16 57:7

equivalent [1] 60:12 error [1] 26:3 escape [6] 12:19 32:25 33:5 42:9. 15.21 escapee [1] 5:8 escapes [2] 18:20 42:1 eschewed [1] 21:21 especially [2] 21:25 31:23 esq [3] 2:3,6,9 essence [5] 5:4 23:22,23 39:12 53: finish [1] 11:17 essentially [6] 6:22 13:11 17:25 31:13 39:2 49:25 establish [2] 3:15 14:17 esteras [3] 46:11 47:2,15 evades [1] 29:20 evading [1] 39:19 evaluated [1] 8:13 even [6] 6:17 7:3,8,20 27:22 41:2 everything [1] 10:11 evidence [6] 18:17 19:2,14,15 20: 8 **51**:25 exactly [8] 19:19,20 21:15 23:19 26:13.15 30:25 49:6 example [1] 45:11 exceeding [1] 3:21 except [1] 32:23 excuse [3] 9:20 19:10 20:4 executed [2] 27:16.18 exist [2] 4:10 20:3 existed [2] 20:6 60:18 existence [1] 56:16 exists [1] 51:9 exotic [1] 26:1 expiration [11] 10:1,3 19:12 21:2 **26**:12,19 **27**:9,25 **48**:22 **50**:16 **51**: expire [1] 12:4 expired [2] 9:4 10:14 expires [3] 6:17 27:21 59:19 explicit [2] 18:6 55:1 explicitly [2] 21:12 55:24 extend [1] 49:11 extended [5] 19:11 39:21 50:5,5 60:15 extending [4] 37:23 38:9 43:19

extent [2] 45:12 55:6

face [1] 42:19 fact [10] 12:22 14:10,17 16:22 17:9. 11 **25**:8 **26**:1 **35**:12 **38**:18 factors [4] 9:23,24 46:11,15 facts [3] 11:7,10 14:6 failing [3] 33:9 36:12 40:13 failure [3] 36:18 57:22 58:5 fairly [1] 53:2 far [1] 14:7 fault [1] 58:17 favor [4] 17:7 18:17 28:8 56:12

extension [4] 43:13.22 51:4 57:10

federal [9] 14:3.13 19:3 24:10 25: 9.13.15.17 33:14 felt [2] 8:23 21:17 few [1] 18:15 fifth [3] 24:23 33:11 36:24 figuring [1] 17:25 finally [1] 60:8 find [4] 27:20 40:18,19,19 finding [1] 61:25 first [10] 3:4 5:11 12:14 17:8 19:4 **51:**4,20 **53:**14 **59:**5,10 five [2] 37:17 38:4 flip [1] 16:8 fly [1] 18:1 focus [1] 13:6 follow [1] 17:1 following [1] 29:10 force [4] 5:3.11 6:6 13:21 foreclose [1] 56:16 forever [1] 13:12 form [3] 19:15,20 35:8 former [1] 30:11

forms [1] 42:11 forward [1] 22:22 forward-looking [1] 47:4 found [3] 14:9 25:23 43:8 fourth [2] 36:13 25 framework [2] 7:20 43:10 fugitive [22] 3:16 4:8,9,18 11:9 12: 11 **13**:8 **14**:17 **19**:3.7.14.19.24 **29**: 19 **30**:15 **31**:4,7 **35**:16 **44**:18 **48**:1 **52**:1 22 fugitive-tolling [6] 52:17 55:1 56:

15,16 **60**:18 **61**:13 fugitivity [2] 31:4 50:15 **fulfill** [1] **42**:16 full [4] 18:12 31:25 47:20 53:19 fully [1] 36:24 fundamental [1] 53:18 fundamentally [1] 8:7 furlough [1] 42:13 further [3] 28:10,13 58:22

gave [2] 51:19,21 general [1] 52:17 gets [3] 32:15 57:15,16 getting [2] 34:5 60:25 give [2] 7:15 11:4 given [2] 7:10 31:23 giving [1] 47:8 **gordian** [1] **22**:12 gorsuch [34] 11:13,15,17,19,21 **12**:19,24 **13**:16 **32**:6,9,10,13,20 **33**: 8,19,24 **34**:4,14,21,25 **35**:6,10 **36:**4, 8.11 **37**:6 **40**:12.23 **44**:15.17 **45**:5. 15,22 48:19 got [1] 40:19 gotten [1] 58:8 governed [1] 17:23 government [36] 3:24 4:23 5:13

9:3 11:22 13:20 15:14.17 16:9.17. 23 18:18 19:6,9,20 22:2,18,25 24:5 **25**:14.25 **28**:3 **32**:15 **34**:5.6.11.19 35:2.8 36:14 44:23 50:22 52:24 59: 12 60:25 61:3 government's [15] 3:19 4:2,7 5:4 13 6:2,7 7:3 8:17 16:3 19:7 35:11 **59**:13 **61**:19,23 grade [5] 10:6,7,23,25 40:25 grant [2] 38:22 55:12 granular [2] 53:2,2 guaranteed [1] 43:25 guess [2] 7:1 52:18 guidelines [9] 9:6,13,14 10:6 11:5 **15**:11 **20**:22 **31**:22 **47**:21

halfway [1] 42:13 handell [59] 2:6 28:21.22.24 31:1. 12,19 32:8,12,17 33:7,23,25 34:9, 16,23 35:3,9 36:4,10,16 37:3,9,24 38:2.10.15.25 39:14.23 40:9.22 42: 7 43:20 44:2,9,16 45:4,19,25 46:25 **48**:15 **49**:17.19.21 **50**:7 **51**:1.11.14 **52**:18 **53**:12 **54**:15,22 **55**:9,21 **57**:1, 11,13 58:23 handled [1] 23:12 happen [4] 15:21 24:15 26:5,6 happened [4] 8:20 44:7 46:23,24 happening [3] 7:4,21 22:16 happens [6] 24:7 25:22 27:13 39: 5 **43:**9.17 happy [1] 54:7 hard [3] **21**:15 **40**:19 **61**:12 hear [1] 3:3 hearing [10] 7:24 8:22 18:8 23:9 **27**:13 **28**:1 **31**:25 **40**:6 **47**:3 **52**:12 heightened [1] 9:6 held [4] 15:6 43:10,16 49:16 helpful [1] 61:3 helping [1] 8:10 herself [1] 55:14 hinge [1] **59**:12 hinges [1] **59**:13 historical [5] 18:16.19 19:1 21:24 history [7] 3:14 4:6 18:16 22:17 **49**:22 **50**:8 **51**:16 hold [4] 3:12 34:25 44:6 50:6 home [1] **42**:12 honor [10] 5:2 7:23 10:11,17 24: 23 26:23 34:10 37:24 38:25 57:11

idea [7] 14:12 15:24 47:17 48:20 **50:**1.12 **55:**7 ideas [1] 52:1 identified [1] 12:13 identifies [2] 13:20 54:12 identify [1] 12:24 idiosyncratic [2] 25:8,19

house [3] 22:3,7 42:13

ignacio [1] **36:**20 imagine [1] 57:3 immediate [2] 44:2.12 immediately [1] 20:15 implementing [1] 4:11 implying [1] 20:2 important [4] 10:4,5 21:17 51:15 impose [1] 9:20 imposed [7] 5:24 8:9,22 16:5,10, 15 **58:**1 imposes [4] 7:13 8:1 54:16,17 imposing [1] 23:17 **impossible** [1] **58**:12 imprisoned [1] 13:24 imprisonment [4] 8:2,9 33:13 53: improperly [1] 16:4 inc [2] 40:17 41:4 incapacitation [1] 47:6 incarceration [1] 56:2 includes [1] 47:6 incompetent [1] 57:4 inconsistent [3] 28:3 46:9 59:17 inconvenient [1] 30:18 incorporate [1] 57:19 incorporated [1] 52:2 increased [2] 4:5 5:20 increases [1] 15:10 individual [2] 7:6 33:4 inference [1] 50:19 inform [1] 48:12 information [1] 29:21 inherent [1] 45:22 inmates [1] 42:4 instances [1] 41:1 instead [3] 3:12 4:9 24:6 **institution** [1] **42**:10 institutional [2] **42**:19 **45**:13 instructions [1] 53:3 insufficient [1] 51:15 intact [2] 4:15 16 intended [3] 3:16 17:21 18:4 interests [2] 47:4.14 **interpret** [1] **51**:9 interpreting [1] 29:6 interruption [1] 56:9 intuition [4] 6:1 22:3,7 29:4 intuitions [2] **22**:2.14 intuitive [4] 5:3.11 6:6 30:19 invented [1] 60:6 involved [3] 11:5 25:8 34:20 isn't [7] 5:8 8:6 22:5 35:1 37:22 41: 25 49:5 issue [9] 12:11 14:4 25:1 26:2.14 **48**:24 **49**:9 **56**:20 **60**:14 issued [4] 25:3.3.4 26:12 issues [5] 6:15 24:7 27:7,12,19

jackson [24] 6:25 8:5 22:23 23:14 28:17 41:17,19 42:23 43:1,21 44:1, 3 **49**:5,18,20 **50**:3,20 **51**:1,7,13 **56**:

18 **57:**8.12 **58:**19 janvier [1] **52**:8 iob [1] 22:11 iohnson [2] 47:13.14 joshua [2] 2:6 28:22 iuarez [1] 36:21 judge [9] 6:19,22 8:22,23 9:18 18: 9 23:9 38:19 44:24 judge-made [1] 60:7 judges [2] 17:25 38:23 judgment [9] 3:22 16:17 30:3 39: 10 **49**:1 **50**:15 **58**:4 **59**:18,18 judicial [2] 35:5 56:11 jurisdiction [4] 26:18 27:8 60:15 **61**:15 jury [3] 44:21,24 45:8

K

kagan [8] 15:12 28:16 52:18 54:9, 20,24 55:4,20 kavanaugh [1] 28:17 keeping [1] 25:1 keeps [2] 6:23 18:5 kidwell [1] 56:10 kind [3] 22:13 47:10 52:23 kinds [1] 55:17 knot [1] 22:12 known [1] 40:1 knows [2] 27:14 41:9

lack [1] 58:17 lam [3] 44:19 45:12,18 language [3] 18:6 26:10 60:11 last [5] 9:25 13:11 46:10 57:18.18 late [2] 12:16 52:16 late-breaking [1] 52:9 late-in-term [1] 13:5 later [1] 35:24 latter [1] 30:12 law [11] 4:8 20:1 23:25 25:5 29:7 **36:**1.5 **37:**7.22 **56:**1 **57:**20 lawyers [1] 29:23 laymen [1] 29:24 lazy [1] 57:4 learned [1] 25:5 least [4] 21:24 22:22 35:17 46:10 leaving [1] 4:14 lee [1] 47:13 left [4] 7:25 8:19 33:17 52:10 legacy [1] 4:15 legally [1] 38:24 legislators [1] 29:24 less [2] 10:2 46:23 lesser [1] 46:19 letter [1] 24:3 level [2] 15:25 17:18 liable [1] **43**:10 light [1] 60:20 likelier [2] 40:4 41:13 likelihood [1] **33**:9

limited [1] 47:22 line [2] 57:16 61:1 little [1] 7:2 live [1] 41:9 lives [1] 27:15 longstanding [1] 20:1 look [6] 22:15 51:16 53:10 55:11. 16 **57**:21 looked [1] 14:9 looking [3] 17:4 28:3 53:19 looks [1] **55:**5 lot [4] 13:20 40:15 49:24 55:4 lower [1] **58:**6

made [1] 49:14

maintain [1] 14:13 manner [1] 19:8 many [1] **25**:10 marbles [3] 49:24 52:20 55:7 margins [1] 17:12 mark [1] 10:5 matter [4] 12:3 14:25 37:7 50:8 matters [1] 11:9 mayhem [2] 40:17 41:4 mean [19] 8:6 12:19 21:11 23:14 **25**:21 **34**:2 **40**:13.22 **41**:5 **42**:8 **43**:2 **44**:16 **45**:5 **47**:16 **49**:6 **52**:5,20 **55**:7 meaning [2] 38:3 47:9 means [10] 3:17 15:14,16,18,18, 19 **30**:16 **35**:22 **43**:18 **59**:21 meant [1] 44:12 meanwhile [1] 20:14 meat [1] 55:10 mechanism [4] 24:13 33:9 46:21 **51:**4 meeting [2] 40:24 57:25 member [1] 35:4 mens [1] 58:14 mentioned [1] 60:2 merely [1] 36:12 might [7] 32:25 33:4,4,5 40:16 43: 3 44:19 militate [1] 17:7 militates [1] 28:8 misconduct [3] 41:6 14 45:2 misnomer [1] 47:25 miss [1] **33**:21 misunderstanding [1] 9:10 misunderstands [1] 30:6 modern [1] 29:4 moment [2] 25:5 42:14 monitored [1] 15:20 monitoring [5] 29:15 31:14,14 47: months [13] 8:18.19.21 10:1.4.24 **11:**25 **21:**10 **46:**18,23,24 **59:**20,23 moreover [1] 61:4 morning [1] 3:4 most [5] 31:6,6 38:23 41:1,1

mostly [1] 32:18

ms [17] 3:19.24 4:3.6 5:16.22 15:4 16:23 17:7 41:21 53:9 59:11.13.19. 22.24 61:24 much [8] 7:14.15 8:14 32:3 40:4 **41:**5,12 **56:**13 murder [2] 40:17 41:4 must [3] 5:23 29:12 30:8

nacdl [2] 13:15 17:13 nafd [1] 17:14 name [1] 24:21 narrow [5] 6:11 12:12,15 15:9 52: nature [2] 10:7 30:6 nebulous [1] 17:24 necessary [3] 8:12 18:10 38:21 needs [1] 8:5 neither [3] 19:5 29:16 48:10 never [3] 28:4 43:24 44:12 new [10] 8:1.21 9:20 14:25 15:2 38 7 **40**:9 **45**:7 **52**:2 **53**:6 next [2] 61:8,10 ninth [4] 33:16 36:9.12.17 nonstatutory [1] 17:24 nor [2] 19:6 55:4 notable [1] 60:9 nothing [6] 4:13 30:13,16 61:14, 14,16 notice [1] 40:21 **notify** [1] **14:**3 notion [1] 19:23 nullity [2] 39:3 49:1 number [3] 57:2 59:20,23

obligation [3] 43:6 54:16,17 obligations [2] 30:12 43:14 obtaining [1] 26:3 obvious [3] 22:19 31:6 40:13 obviously [4] 24:2 41:5 42:14 45: occasionally [1] 34:11 occur [3] 13:18 22:19 43:14 occurred [6] 6:15 10:8.24 11:2 21: 10 46:17 occurring [1] 57:6 occurs [4] 12:9 28:5 32:24 46:4 odd [1] 13:5 offense [3] 13:24 15:4,10 offenses [2] 10:7 20:25 offers [1] 53:8 office [2] 34:18 50:23 officer [22] 13:3 18:13 25:12 26:8 **27**:14 **29**:10 **30**:9 **33**:14.18.20 **35**:1. 4 **40**:1,2 **41**:8,8,13 **53**:24 **54**:18 **57**: 5.25 58:16 officers [5] 14:13 55:13 61:7,9,11 often [1] 26:6 okay [8] 11:22 25:19 26:22 32:20 33:24 42:1 51:13 54:5 once [4] 6:16 28:5 34:8 35:13

one [31] 6:5 7:17 9:12 13:6 14:16 **16**:17,18 **17**:2,3 **19**:24 **24**:1 **25**:16, 24 26:7.24 27:5.17 34:14 35:18 36: 17 **37**:1.4 **41**:11.11 **42**:11 **43**:13 **44**: 15,17 53:14 54:12 56:19 ongoing [1] 29:12 only [17] 5:16 7:18 10:6,19 13:6 **14**:8 **15**:9 **20**:2 **27**:4 **37**:10 **42**:4 **46**: 20 49:8,25 54:10 56:23 60:14 opening [1] 52:7 operate [1] 18:5 operating [1] 57:24 opportunity [1] 60:17 opposed [1] 49:13 oral [4] 2:2,5 3:7 28:22 order [2] 23:6 50:11 ordered [1] 23:1 ordinarily [2] 16:8 27:11 ordinary [2] 17:2 26:6 oriented [1] 55:13 other [17] 7:10 11:8.9 14:10 19:2 **20**:16 **22**:24 **23**:12,20 **25**:24,25 **26**: 24 33:21 40:15 42:11 53:4 61:18 ought [1] 34:6 out [24] 9:22 11:25 17:25 21:9 31: 8.20 32:3.14 33:11.15 37:21 39:1.8 **41**:3 **42**:9 **43**:3 **45**:11 **48**:22 **49**:23 **50**:2 8 16 **51**:23 **55**:23 outcome [1] 49:2 over [3] 23:10 35:21 40:18 own [1] **5**:15

page [2] 2:2 52:6 parole [22] 4:9,10,15,18 8:8 19:3,4, 11 **20**:5,9,20 **21**:1,2,3,5,7,9,14 **22**: 17.20 60:12.19 parolee [4] 20:24 21:1,3,4 part [7] 10:14 15:8,13 23:21,23 37: 19 **49**:21 particular [3] 16:1,20 42:5 parties [3] 6:7,11 11:12 party [1] 48:10 passed [1] 52:13 pattern [5] 14:10.17 16:22 25:8 36: patterns [1] 26:1 pending [2] 14:7 25:22 people [2] 3:12 61:16 percent [3] 7:23 57:15 61:1 perfect [1] **60**:16 perfectly [1] 26:7 perhaps [1] 7:12 period [35] 3:21 4:1,5 5:18,20 6: 21 7:13,17 8:2 9:4 11:23 12:4 14:1 **17**:19 **20**:25 **23**:2 **24**:2 **31**:3 **32**:25 33:6.21 34:1 37:23 38:9 39:21 42:3 **43**:15 **44**:8 **45**:2 **46**:5 **48**:4,4 **56**:3 **59:**8.15 permits [1] 30:16 person [44] **4**:25 **5**:6 **6**:3,16,18,20 7:9,12,24 8:11,13 13:12,23 14:2,3,

likely [1] 18:3

15 15:21 16:6.13 18:11 22:4 23:1. 10,25 24:7,9,12 25:9 27:18,20 39: 10.11.15.18.19.24 47:18 49:15 50: 24 53:4 54:12 56:24 59:8 61:4 person's [1] 16:12 perspective [2] 17:21 18:4 petitioner [7] 2:4,10 3:8 48:2 49: 24 52:6 53:4 petitioners [1] 59:2 petitioner's [5] 30:1 31:23 46:9, 17 **54**:3 phone [1] 13:2 physical [1] **42**:10 physically [1] 18:24 picks [1] 43:7 picture [1] 9:15 piece [1] 28:7 plainly [1] 24:2 **plausible** [1] **50**:18 pleading [1] 35:7 pleads [1] **34**:12 please [2] 3:10 28:25 point [15] 4:24 6:5 10:5 14:20 18:9 18 **22:**24 **26:**24 **37:**5.10 **42:**9 **44:**4 **45**:16 **49**:23 **50**:8 pointed [2] 31:20 55:23 pointing [2] 43:3 54:11 policy [1] 49:13 portion [2] 42:17 61:5 portions [1] **61**:18 position [6] 3:19 4:6 6:7 27:1 28:9 possession [1] 12:17 possibility [1] 59:6 possible [3] 29:17 31:2 33:20 post-37-month [1] 11:1 post-abscondment [1] 47:21 post-confinement [5] 29:15,16 **31:**14 **47:**11.12 postdating [1] 32:1 power [2] 45:23 50:5 practical [1] 12:3 practice [2] 17:2 55:16 precedents [1] 29:5 preceding [1] 29:7 precludes [2] 36:14,23 predated [1] 56:4 preexisting [2] 51:10 57:20 **prefatory** [1] **61**:5 prefer [1] 48:17 premised [1] 19:25 preponderance-of-the-eviden ce [1] 44:25 presented [2] 8:24 60:21 presumably [1] **21**:16 pretty [5] 20:7 35:14,16 40:13 54: prevail [1] 59:11 prevents [1] 36:22 previously [2] 8:15 20:3 primary [1] 48:20 principles [2] 30:19 57:19

prior [1] 60:5 prison [18] 5:8 7:12 9:20 14:15 15: 5 **16**:10.11.14 **18**:20.22.23.25 **24**: 10 25:9.10 42:2.4 59:22 prisoner [4] 20:17 42:1 44:19 45: prisoners [4] 42:9 45:18 52:25 53: probably [1] 41:1 probation [31] 8:8 13:3 14:13 18: 13 **25**:12 **26**:8 **27**:14 **29**:10 **30**:9 **33**: 14,18,20 **34**:18 **35**:1,3 **38**:20 **40**:1,2 **41**:8,8,13 **50**:23 **53**:24 **54**:18 **55**:13 **57:**4,25 **58:**16 **61:**7,9,11 problem [9] 9:8,11 12:13,15 13:4 **34**:5 **39**:4 **40**:7 **60**:8 problems [1] 60:5 proceed [1] 29:12 process [1] 34:17 program [1] 33:17 proposed [1] 61:19 proposes [1] 19:9 proposition [2] **22**:18 **61**:22 prosecution [1] 15:2 prospective [1] 20:2 prospectively [3] 4:12 19:5.18 protections [1] 45:9 prove [1] 30:18 proven [1] 35:13 provides [1] 20:7 provision [12] 20:13.14 27:2 52: 15,17,20,23,24 **54**:11 **55**:1,22 **61**:5 punishment [2] 8:10 37:23 pure [1] 48:11 purely [1] 47:25 purpose [1] 49:22 purposes [1] 61:25 put [2] 50:22 52:20 puts [2] 49:24 55:10 putting [1] 55:6

O

question [10] 3:11 6:10 8:24 15: 10 17:22 52:19 54:4 56:19 59:6 60: 20 questions [6] 4:21 17:16 18:1 28: 10 30:21 53:13

quick [1] 56:19

quite [4] 18:17 45:4 47:15 56:6

R

range [5] 9:6 10:22 15:11 31:25 53:19
rather [7] 6:22 14:16 22:13 44:24, 25 55:13 58:16
rea [1] 58:14
reactions [1] 12:5
read [3] 24:24 39:1 61:12
real [3] 32:2,7,10
reality [1] 40:10
realize [2] 25:13,14
really [16] 6:3,6,25 7:19 10:20 11:

5 14:25 19:2 25:18 31:21 40:11 43: 4 **47**:24 **48**:10.11 **52**:8 real-world [2] 13:21 34:3 reason [6] 8:6 14:21 43:2 49:7 55: reasonable-doubt [1] 45:1 reasons [2] 11:9 51:12 rebuts [1] 19:23 rebuttal [3] 2:8 58:25 59:1 recaptured [1] 42:18 receive [3] 30:23 31:3,7 recognize [3] 18:9 46:15 57:23 recognized [4] 29:13 47:13,15 52: recognizing [1] 61:13 reconstruct [1] 21:15 reenact [1] 20:17 reform [17] 3:15 4:12 6:14 9:9 20: 11.18.21 21:21.22 49:4 50:10.13 **51**:5,18 **55**:2 **56**:17 **61**:18 regime [1] 18:4 regulation [7] 4:11 19:16,17,23 21:12.18.19 reintegrate [1] 8:11 release [95] 3:14,20 4:4,14,19,25 **5**:5.17.23.25 **6**:20 **7**:5.7.11.13.15. 21 8:3,7,15 9:2,5,17,18,21 13:24, 25 **15**:15.24 **16**:20.24 **17**:17.23 **18**: 12 19:10 22:6.10.10 23:3.22.24 24: 1,4,9,11,18 25:16 27:10 29:2,8,10, 14 **30**:5,7,8,10,13 **31**:9 **32**:25 **33**:3 36:19 37:16,18 38:6,11 39:2,15,20, 22 41:12 43:18 44:11.22 45:23 46: 13,14 **47**:2,8,18 **48**:3,8 **51**:21 **52**:2 **53**:7,16,19,23 **54**:2,5 **57**:10 **58**:11 **59**:14.20.24 **61**:25 released [5] 14:2,4,15 25:11 59: relevant [9] 9:23 10:2 17:9 20:23 **21**:6.8 **46**:12.24 **48**:12 relieve [1] 30:12 remains [1] 4:16 remedy [1] 23:17 render [1] 48:25 renders [2] 39:2 58:12 repealed [1] 4:13 repeals [1] 20:12 replacement [1] 20:14 report [4] 25:12 33:13 41:14,24 reported [2] 33:18 41:2 reporting [3] 39:6,8 55:18 require [3] 23:10 29:9 38:23 required [6] 35:18 38:24 40:3 52: 12 58:3 60:13 requirement [1] 58:14 requirements [3] 41:23,24 55:17 requires [3] 5:15 26:11 38:11

respect [2] 34:17 43:6 respectful [1] 11:4 respectfully [5] 16:2 33:7 43:20 54:22 59:16 respond [1] 22:24 respondent [2] 2:7 28:23 restrictions [1] 44:14 result [4] 3:23 4:17 40:5 41:15 resulting [1] 9:6 results [2] 9:8 10:22 resumes [1] 18:21 retains [1] 27:8 reticulated [1] 60:11 returned [1] 18:22 rev [1] 23:15 revocation [20] 3:16 7:9.24 8:22 **15**:9 **18**:7 **23**:8.17 **24**:13 **28**:1 **31**:17. 25 **32**:4 **40**:6 **41**:16 **47**:3 **48**:14 **49**: 11 52:12 53:5 revoke [3] 21:5 27:9 46:12 revoked [4] 7:11 9:18 24:9 46:14 revokes [1] 6:19 rewind [1] 23:9 rewinds [1] 28:1 rewound [1] 6:24 rico [15] **3**:5.19.24 **4**:3 **5**:16.22 **15**: 4 **16**:23 **53**:9 **59**:11,13,19,22,24 **61**: rico's [3] 4:6 17:7 41:21 rises [1] 17:17 roberts [7] 3:3 28:12.21 41:18.20 **58:**20,24 rooted [1] 27:1 roy [1] 47:13 rule [19] 19:8 20:3,6 42:4 43:4,13, 22 45:17 48:2.8.11.17.17.18 52:12 **59**:10,17 **60**:18 **61**:20 rules [1] 60:7 run [5] 31:8 37:21 41:22 43:7 44: running [4] 23:4 39:9 40:17 41:3 runs [3] 11:24 19:2 32:14

S

same [9] 5:7 16:9 19:20 24:15 42: 24 43:1.10 46:1 60:17 sanction [4] 31:17 32:4 40:9 47: satisfies [1] 16:18 satisfy [1] 58:14 satisfying [2] 16:12 48:6 saying [8] 12:20 17:2 23:16 24:14 **37:**18 **44:**5,9 **53:**21 says [11] 15:17 21:12 27:7 32:23 **36**:2,13 **50**:4 **55**:8 **60**:23 **61**:3,14 scenario [3] 27:5 32:22 44:22 schedule [1] 21:13 scheduled [1] 19:11 scheme [3] 4:18 37:14 58:8 score [1] 16:4 searches [1] 41:10 second [3] 20:3 52:7 59:16

resentencina [1] 10:16

residential [1] 33:17

resolve [1] 30:19

resolved [1] 56:11

resource [1] 34:12

secondary [1] 54:4 second-best [1] 48:17 section [11] 18:7 20:15 27:2.23 **60:**1.9.12.22 **61:**8.8.10 see [2] 22:16 46:22 seem [4] 7:19 9:25 17:20 48:9 seems [10] 4:23 5:21 13:5 15:13 **18**:3 **32**:21 **40**:14 **42**:5 **43**:11 **49**:13 self-consciously [1] 60:11 send [1] 9:19 sends [1] 7:12 sense [5] 6:3 18:23 22:4,8 29:23 sentence [27] 3:25 4:5 5:7.8.20. 24 8:1,23 10:15 16:5,7,11,13,16,18 25 **17**:3,4 **18**:21 **22**:5 **25**:9,10 **42**:2 **44**:14 **50**:17 **53**:6 **59**:19 sentenced [2] 15:5 53:22 sentences [1] 47:5 sentencing [29] 3:15 4:12 6:14, 18 **9**:9,13,14 **10**:12 **15**:9 **20**:11,18, 20,21 21:20,22 24:8 26:17 27:8 31: 22 38:19 49:4 50:10,13 51:5,17 55: 2 **56:**17 **61:**15.18 separate [3] 45:16,16,18 serious [2] 31:6 41:6 serve [4] 7:25 23:1 47:5 49:3 served [5] 6:21 7:16 8:15 25:9.10 serves [3] 18:12 47:14 59:23 service [3] 42:15 44:10 46:2 serving [10] 3:25 5:7,8,24 16:6,25 17:3 22:5 33:12 53:15 set [3] 9:22 15:16 27:23 sets [1] 9:22 seventh [1] 45:10 several [2] 34:3 60:6 shake [1] 32:3 shall [3] 29:9 60:24 61:4 sheds [1] 60:20 she's [6] 9:16 41:22 43:16 44:8 50: 1 **58:**3 shouldn't [1] 23:8 show [3] 40:13,16,21 showing [2] **35**:19 **40**:24 side [2] 22:3,7 sides [1] 16:8 significance [1] 46:20 similarly [1] **33**:2 simple [1] 4:24 simultaneous [1] 4:3 simultaneously [2] 25:15 61:24 since [4] 14:9 21:25 25:24 36:20 single [1] 39:9 singular [1] 14:16 situation [8] 13:23 27:12,17 32:18, 21 **49**:9 **53**:1 **58**:15 situations [1] 57:2 sixth [1] 45:10 society [1] 8:11 sole [1] 6:10 solicitous [1] 35:14 solution [3] 12:12 53:8.11 solved [1] 60:8

somebody [2] 40:21 50:2 someone [4] 18:19 22:8 45:6 53: sorry [6] 11:15.16 14:23 32:8 46:6 **49**:19 sort [3] 7:25 8:7 42:6 sotomayor [23] 14:22,24 24:19, 24 25:18 26:9,15,20 28:15 37:1,4,9, 15 **38**:1,3,10,13,17 **39**:4,18 **40**:7,10 43.2 sounds [1] **34:**15 specifically [1] 60:13 specified [1] 3:21 spent [3] 6:9 8:25 30:15 spirit [2] 24:3 39:20 split [1] 35:21 **splits** [1] **35**:18 squared [1] 4:2 stage [1] 34:24 **stake** [1] **10**:20 standard [4] 17:24 41:11 44:25 start [4] 23:10 25:15 35:23.24 **starts** [1] **17**:19 state [11] 13:24 14:2,14,15 15:5 **25**:1.5.10.12 **33**:12 **51**:10 stated [1] 15:7 states [1] 3:5 status [2] 35:23 42:21 statute [25] 4:10.13 9:22 19:3.18. 25 **20**:12,16 **22**:17 **26**:11,25 **27**:6,6 **28**:8 **38**:18 **52**:23,25 **53**:8,10 **55**:8 60:2.6.10.23 61:2 statutes [3] 29:8 30:14 53:20 statutorily [1] 37:16 statutory [8] 17:6,9 18:2 29:5 37: 14 **54**:11 **58**:8 **61**:22 stead [1] 4:14 still [8] 9:1 11:24 38:5 41:22 43:16 44:5 46:2.16 stop [1] 59:24 stopped [1] 43:11 stopping [3] 6:22 43:24 44:4 stops [5] 18:20 24:6 42:15 43:6 44: stripped [1] 24:12 **stripping** [1] **61**:16 **strips** [1] **6**:20 strong [3] 18:19 20:8 51:24 strongly [1] 18:17 structural [1] 28:7 structure [1] 26:25 subject [14] 3:20 5:16 9:1 15:1.16 **30**:9 **37**:20 **38**:12 **39**:21 **41**:23 **47**: 19 **48**:7 **59**:8.19 subjects [1] 38:7 subsection [2] 49:23 50:9

subset [1] 52:9

substance [1] **47**:22

suggest [1] 30:22

suggesting [1] 43:4

successfully [1] 29:20

suggestion [2] 7:3 8:17 suggests [3] 47:24 49:8 54:10 summons [2] 48:23 51:4 **supervise** [1] **54**:18 supervisee [19] 13:2 27:15 29:1, 9 30:8.14 31:3 33:16 34:19 38:12 **54**:16 **55**:14 **57**:3 **58**:2,9,10,15,17 60:23 supervisees [4] 13:9 14:19 50:13 **51**:22 **supervisee's** [1] **29**:17 **supervising** [1] **36**:15 supervision [34] 15:25 16:19 23: 23 29:3,12,20 30:2,9 35:21 36:22, 23 38:20 39:1,12 40:3 41:22 47:10 48:22.25 50:14 54:13 55:5.7.11.16 **56**:3,5,7,19 **57**:5,17,23 **58**:12,18 supplement [1] 36:2 support [3] 3:22 28:7 61:23 supports [2] 4:6 27:1 suppose [3] 9:14 21:6 56:21 supposed [4] 8:10 21:1 39:7 53: surveillance [1] 31:15 swick [4] 14:6 24:22 33:11 36:25 swift [2] 24:20 26:9 swiftly [2] 27:16,18 system [7] 7:1 29:14 49:3 51:21 **52**:3 **55**:19 **57**:24

table [1] 46:18 talked [2] 27:3 52:14 talks [1] 16:9 tautologically [1] 5:22 tax [2] 57:22 58:4 technically [1] 58:3 tells [2] 55:15 56:13 tend [1] 13:18 tension [2] 46:10 47:17 term [50] 6:17 9:4,21,25 12:9,16 **13**:10,12,19,25 **15**:15 **16**:1 **17**:23 18:12 19:12 21:2 25:15 26:2 27:7,9 13.13.20.21.24.25 28:4 29:2 30:7 31:8 33:12 38:11 41:22 42:16.17 44:10.11 46:2.10 48:6.23 51:24 53: 7 15 23 **54**:1 **56**:4 **58**:10 **60**:14 15 terminate [1] 30:5 terms [13] 9:16 19:2 21:3 37:20 38:5,6 39:7 40:3 48:7 52:4 56:2 57: 16 **58**:4 tethered [1] 56:6 text [4] 3:14,18 29:5 57:15 textual [1] 3:22 theoretically [1] 26:4 theory [2] 30:1 37:17 therefore [2] 9:16.17 there's [15] 3:22 7:9 13:14 17:9,13 18:7 19:14,23 23:11,14,15 26:2 28:

third [1] 20:4 thomas [5] 4:22 28:13 30:22 31: 10.16 thompson [1] 37:3 though [3] 33:2 34:1 52:19 thoughts [3] 12:5 34:8 36:2 three-year [2] 7:17 23:2 throughout [1] 43:14 thrust [1] 22:25 today [4] 4:16 6:2,11 19:9 together [1] 54:19 toll [1] 56:2 tolled [4] 14:1 18:6 43:19 58:10 tolling [42] 3:16 4:8,9,18 11:9,22 **12**:1,11 **13**:8 **14**:18 **19**:3,7,14,19,24 20:17 27:2 30:23 31:5 35:16 43:4.5. 23,24 44:12 45:17,21 46:1 47:25 **48**:1,2,10,11,18 **52**:1,22,24 **55**:3,22 **56**:12 **59**:7 **61**:14 tools [1] **51**:21 topics [1] 61:17 touch [1] 25:1 toward [1] **55**:13 tradition [7] 4:8 18:19 19:24 20:1. 6 22:15.21 traditional [2] 43:5 52:1 treated [2] 56:8.8 treatment [1] 33:17 trial [1] 44:21 tried [1] 45:7 triggers [1] 56:23 true [4] 23:21 33:2 44:16 59:6 trv [1] 60:7 trying [2] 51:18 55:18 turn [1] 18:10 two [7] 7:18 16:8 17:13 20:1 30:19 **35**:17 **57**:16 two-track [1] 4:18 two-yard [1] 61:1 type [5] 12:23 13:6 24:17 42:5 60:

П

types [2] 23:13,21

u.s [1] 61:6 **u.s.c** [2] **39**:2 **55**:10 ultimately [5] 5:10 6:8 14:12 22: unavailable [1] 35:20 under [13] 12:1 18:6 30:8 37:17 **38**:5 **43**:10 **44**:24 **45**:1 **48**:24 **49**:9, 15 58:3 59:7 underlying [1] 6:2 understand [10] 5:3,10 6:1,13 7: 20 12:7 29:24 35:6 46:19 47:16 understanding [1] 7:8 undetected [1] 12:10 undischarged [2] 42:17 58:10 uniform [1] 29:6 unikowsky [41] 2:3,9 3:6,7,9 4:22 **5**:2 **7**:1,22 **8**:16 **9**:7 **10**:10 **11**:7,14, 16,18,20 **12**:7,21,25 **13**:17 **14**:5,23

10 33:15 61:22

thinking [1] 21:16

they've [3] 6:4 8:14 58:9

15:3.12 16:2 21:11 23:7.19 24:22 **25**:7,20 **26**:13,16,22 **28**:20 **32**:23 **52:**21 **58:**24 **59:**1.3 unilateral [1] 59:25 united [1] 3:5 unknown [1] 29:18 unless [2] 18:6 32:14 unlikely [2] 17:20 32:22 unsupervised [3] 30:3,15 53:16 until [8] 13:12 18:7 20:10 27:20 34: 20 **50**:9 **51**:6 **60**:15 unusual [4] 14:11,16 16:22 25:22 unwarranted [1] 30:24 up [11] 14:8 19:6 27:23 35:19,25 38:19 40:13,16,21,24 43:7 upward [1] 10:22

V

vacation [1] 30:17

version [1] 20:16 versus [3] 3:5 56:9,10 via [1] 4:10 view [8] 37:5,13,25 39:17 45:20 50: 11 **57**:9 **58**:7 violate [3] 38:4,6 41:23 violated [10] 4:3 5:19,22 9:16 16: 24 22:9 36:19 37:21 42:3 59:14 violates [2] 21:3 47:18 violating [2] 39:12,15 violation [14] 9:5 12:9,16,23 13:6 17:17 21:13,14 24:17 32:24 38:7 40:14.25 56:7 violations [7] 10:23 11:1 13:5 23: 13.21 52:10.16 violative [1] 40:4 virtually [1] 38:22

W

wait [3] 48:22 50:2 51:23 waiting [1] 50:16 walks [1] 13:17 wanted [3] 47:9 49:6 50:13 wants [2] 48:11 52:24 warrant [26] 6:14 11:23 12:3,10 **13**:3 **14**:4 **24**:7 **25**:2,4 **26**:1,4,8,11, 14 27:7,12,15,19 32:15 38:8 48:23 **49**:9 **50**:24 **51**:3 **57**:9 **60**:14 warranted [1] 21:25 warranting [2] 4:5 5:20 **warrantless** [1] **41**:10 warrants [1] 34:5 wav [15] 5:7 6:13 15:20 18:5 19:2 23:7 27:22 36:14 38:18 40:14 49: 18,25 **56**:7 **57**:6,15 ways [3] 12:22 19:22 49:21 wear [1] 42:4 week [1] 39:6 welcome [2] 4:21 30:21 whatever [3] 7:24 8:22 35:8 whatsoever [1] 51:22 whenever [1] 30:18

whereabouts [2] 29:17 39:25

whereas [1] 44:21 whether [13] 3:12 10:20,21,25 15: 10 16:6 20:24 21:8 38:20 42:9 46:8 12 56:1 whoa [5] 34:21,21,21,22,22 whole [7] 8:1.6 35:16 36:1 43:14 **48:**3.4 whom [1] 57:22 who's [2] 13:23 45:11 will [14] 10:21 12:4 19:19 21:14 27: 25 **33**:20 **41**:1 **42**:16 **48**:21,24 **53**: 23 54:24,25 59:19 wise [1] 22:14 within [1] 11:23 without [3] 4:19 18:1 30:23 wonder [1] 9:9 word [2] 29:25 60:22 words [3] 7:10 18:15 53:5 work [2] 41:9 54:19 works [2] 23:20 37:14 world [4] 7:5 32:2,7,11 worries [1] 11:22 worry [1] 12:1 worst [1] 49:2 wrestling [1] 22:13 written [1] 38:19

Υ

yard [1] **57**:16 yards [1] **57**:18 year [4] **21**:20 **24**:1,6,12 years [8] **18**:23,24 **25**:11 **36**:16 **37**: 17 **38**:4 **51**:5,20

Ζ

zerbst [1] 56:10

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