1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
2	X
3	KAY BARNES, ETC., ET AL., :
4	Petitioners :
5	v. : No. 01-682
6	JEFFREY GORMAN. :
7	X
8	Washington, D.C.
9	Tuesday, April 23, 2002
LO	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
L1	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States at
L2	11:12 a.m.
L3	APPEARANCES:
L4	LAWRENCE S. ROBBINS, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of
L5	the Petitioners.
L6	GREGORY G. GARRE, ESQ., Assistant to the Solicitor
L7	General, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; or
L8	behalf of the United States, as amicus curiae,
L9	supporting the Petitioners.
20	SCOTT L. NELSON, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of the
21	Respondent.
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1	CONTENTS	
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	PAGE
3	LAWRENCE S. ROBBINS, ESQ.	
4	On behalf of the Petitioners	3
5	GREGORY G. GARRE, ESQ.,	
6	On behalf of the United States,	
7	as amicus curiae, supporting the Petitioners	16
8	SCOTT L. NELSON, ESQ.	
9	On behalf of the Respondent	21
10	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF	
11	LAWRENCE S. ROBBINS, ESQ.	
12	On behalf of the Petitioners	42
13		
14	·	
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:12 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST: We'll hear argument
4	next in No. 01-682, Kay Barnes v. Jeffrey Gorman.
5	Mr. Robbins.
6	ORAL ARGUMENT OF LAWRENCE S. ROBBINS
7	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
8	MR. ROBBINS: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice, and
9	may it please the Court:
10	The Eighth Circuit held in this case that a
11	private plaintiff may obtain punitive damages in an action
12	brought against municipal government defendants under
13	section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and title II
14	of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
15	Although the court of appeals identified
16	substantial evidence in the legislative record that
17	Congress never intended this result, it thought that this
18	Court's decision in Franklin against Gwinnett County
19	Public Schools left it little or no choice in the matter.
20	As the Eighth Circuit read Franklin, once a cause of
21	action has been created or inferred, it presumptively
22	carries with it all common law remedies, including
23	punitive damages, unless Congress has specifically said
24	otherwise.
25	QUESTION: Mr. Robbins, did any did the

- 1 petitioners raise the Newport case at any time below?
- MR. ROBBINS: No.
- 3 QUESTION: Why not?
- 4 MR. ROBBINS: The -- the party --
- 5 QUESTION: I mean, it looks like the most
- 6 obvious source of law on this topic. What's going on
- 7 here?
- 8 MR. ROBBINS: In the lower court, my client took
- 9 the position that it was, in fact, an arm of the State,
- 10 not an arm of the municipal government. For various
- 11 factors -- it cited various factors that in its view
- warranted an Eleventh Amendment immunity, not a City of
- 13 Newport immunity. The court of appeals, in the decision
- being reviewed before this Court today, rejected that
- 15 argument. We have not separately sought certiorari on
- 16 that decision.
- 17 But I -- I do want to add on that point, Justice
- 18 O'Connor, that in our view it would be a mistake to take
- 19 respondent's suggestion that because my client took that
- 20 position in the lower court, that this Court should
- 21 therefore turn a blind eye to the City of Newport
- 22 doctrine. It seems to us that it's quite analogous to a
- 23 situation in which a litigant, for example, decided to
- 24 argue only legislative history in the lower court and then
- 25 before this Court -- and then someone said, well, you're

- 1 therefore constrained not to look at the words of the
- 2 statute. That seems --
- 3 QUESTION: It doesn't change the issue, I take
- 4 it.
- 5 MR. ROBBINS: It does not change the issue. The
- 6 position the client took below was always that punitive
- damages are unwarranted for a variety of reasons,
- 8 including a reason that we are now urging by virtue of the
- 9 client having lost the Eleventh Amendment immunity issue
- 10 below.
- 11 QUESTION: Was there a reason?
- 12 QUESTION: And I suppose it's not like an
- 13 immunity from suit that can be waived. It's -- we use the
- 14 term immunity, but it's not that sort of immunity.
- MR. ROBBINS: Exactly. It -- it is exactly the
- 16 sense in which it was used in City of Newport as a
- 17 background principle of law that Congress is assumed to
- 18 have taken into consideration in enacting the actual test.
- 19 And we --
- 20 QUESTION: Doesn't the Eighth Circuit allow you
- 21 to argue in the alternative? I mean, you couldn't have
- 22 said we have Eleventh Amendment immunity and -- and if we
- don't, we're a municipality, and therefore Newport
- 24 applies. You could have done that, I suppose.
- 25 MR. ROBBINS: I -- I think counsel could have

- 1 taken that measure. They didn't, but I don't think that
- 2 it -- that that amounts to a waiver.
- 3 QUESTION: What are we supposed to do then?
- 4 Because it seems to me that you're arguing there are two
- 5 possibilities. One possibility is no one gets punitive
- 6 damages no matter who he sues, and the second is that,
- 7 anyway, a person who sues a municipality can't get
- 8 punitive damages. Your second argument may be a lot
- 9 stronger than the first. So, am I supposed to go to the
- 10 second argument that nobody has argued in the courts below
- 11 at all, bypassing them, or am I supposed to go to the
- 12 first argument which has enormous implications well beyond
- 13 this case?
- MR. ROBBINS: Well, I think the answer, Justice
- 15 Breyer, is that we have urged both arguments. I think we
- 16 -- we could prevail on the basis of either presumption.
- 17 I -- I would, however, tell you why I think the
- 18 Court ought to address the broader issue and that is
- 19 because, given the construction of Franklin that the
- 20 Eighth Circuit took in this case, there is no good reason
- 21 to believe that were City of Newport called to their
- 22 attention, they would have come out any differently. The
- 23 Eighth Circuit took Franklin to say that unless -- given
- 24 that there's a cause of action, whether explicit --
- whether express or implied, that must necessarily carry

- 1 with it all common law remedies unless Congress has said
- 2 otherwise, which it rarely does --
- 3 QUESTION: Well, the Eighth Circuit said
- 4 appropriate remedies. So, don't we have to look at what
- 5 appropriate means in this context?
- 6 MR. ROBBINS: Well, I think that -- that's the
- 7 language from Franklin.
- 8 QUESTION: Yes.
- 9 MR. ROBBINS: And we think Franklin is properly
- 10 confined to compensatory remedies for the reasons we've
- 11 said in the brief. The Eighth Circuit's view of
- 12 appropriate, however, Your Honor, was that it is
- 13 synonymous with whatever the common law has traditionally
- 14 made available by virtue of State law, by virtue of
- 15 Federal law, by virtue of the entire corpus of law. And
- 16 whatever you can find on the books is, therefore,
- 17 appropriate within the meaning of Franklin, as the Eighth
- 18 Circuit saw it, and that, Justice Breyer, to return to
- 19 your question, is a doctrine of enormous capacity.
- 20 QUESTION: Mr. Robbins, I don't understand why
- 21 you say if this Court says Newport or Fact Concepts,
- 22 whatever you want to call it -- it says, a municipality is
- 23 immune. Period. That takes care of your case, and if the
- 24 Court -- this Court were to say, Eighth Circuit, you
- 25 overlooked the fact that municipalities are immune and

- 1 therefore in -- in this case you are wrong, and we
- 2 reverse, now, that takes care of your client. Right?
- 3 MR. ROBBINS: Well, I -- I think it does. If --
- 4 QUESTION: And why should we in your case, where
- 5 there is a clear ground, not decide it on that basis? Why
- 6 should we go to the next case that doesn't involve a
- 7 municipality?
- 8 MR. ROBBINS: Let me say two things with respect
- 9 to that, Justice Ginsburg. First of all, the last thing I
- 10 want to do is talk the Court out of ruling for my client
- 11 on any ground.
- 12 (Laughter.)
- 13 MR. ROBBINS: So, if the Court believes City of
- 14 Newport is sufficient -- and we think it's quite powerful
- 15 -- we'll certainly be glad of that result. But let me say
- 16 two more things about it.
- 17 The first is even City of Newport requires
- 18 looking to the next step and asking, okay, that's the
- 19 presumption. It's a strong presumption. Is there
- 20 specific evidence in the statute that overcomes it? For
- 21 all the reasons we've said in the brief and I'd be glad to
- 22 turn to, the evidence in this statute is quite
- 23 extraordinarily compelling that, to the contrary, punitive
- 24 damages were foreclosed.
- 25 Second, I -- I wish I could be as confident as

- 1 the Court's -- as Your Honor's question suggests, that
- were this case to return to the Eighth Circuit with
- 3 nothing but a ruling about City of Newport, you know, in
- 4 its sails, that the Eighth Circuit would take that mandate
- 5 and take it and -- and come out differently. I'm not
- 6 quite so confident about that because of the sweep of how
- 7 they read Franklin.
- 8 QUESTION: If the Court --
- 9 OUESTION: We would -- the -- the broader
- 10 position would be -- would be taking the case on the same
- 11 basis that the Eighth Circuit decided it. Right? On the
- 12 broader ground.
- 13 MR. ROBBINS: I think that's correct.
- 14 QUESTION: And there -- this is not a
- 15 constitutional matter.
- MR. ROBBINS: No.
- 17 QUESTION: So, the doctrine of -- of observing
- 18 the narrowest possible constitutional ground does not
- 19 apply here. Right?
- 20 MR. ROBBINS: No. Quite -- quite the contrary.
- 21 The question presented is what do these statutes mean
- 22 after all.
- 23 QUESTION: So, this would be an opportunity to
- 24 -- to do what the Court is supposed to do, and that is
- 25 clean up confusion below on the meaning of a statute, and

- 1 the broader confusion is certainly much -- much more worth
- 2 clearing up than the narrower confusion.
- 3 MR. ROBBINS: Right, and I might say one of the
- 4 matters we've pointed to in the petition for certiorari
- 5 is, in fact, that this misconstruction of Franklin is not
- 6 confined to this case, to this statute, and certainly to
- 7 the Eighth Circuit. It is a wide-ranging, I think, over-
- 8 reading of what this Court said -- not just meant, but
- 9 said -- in Franklin itself. And perhaps I might just turn
- 10 briefly to that initial question.
- It seems to us, for several reasons, the Eighth
- 12 Circuit has badly misunderstood what Franklin says. It
- doesn't cover punitive damages. That's the short of the
- 14 matter. Punitive damages were, after all, not sought by
- 15 the plaintiff in Franklin, but more to the point, the
- 16 premise of Franklin against Gwinnett County was drawn from
- 17 Bell against Hood and the cases that underlie Bell against
- 18 Hood, and that is an explicitory, compensatory rationale.
- 19 The idea in Bell was that courts have an authority --
- 20 QUESTION: Explicitory?
- 21 (Laughter.)
- MR. ROBBINS: I'm sorry?
- 23 QUESTION: Did you say explicitory?
- MR. ROBBINS: Good heavens, I hope not.
- 25 (Laughter.)

- 1 QUESTION: I like it though. It's good.
- 2 (Laughter.)
- 3 MR. ROBBINS: Well, what -- what I certainly
- 4 meant to say is that Bell and Hood stem from a line of
- 5 authority that says that courts have the authority, the
- 6 inherent authority I -- I had meant to say, when -- when
- 7 charged with the construction of a statute to make good
- 8 the wrong done. And that is about as clear a statement of
- 9 a compensatory rationale as you could have.
- 10 Franklin did not suggest that a plaintiff who
- 11 has been made whole, as Mr. Gorman was to the tune of \$1
- million in compensatory damages, including \$150,000 in
- 13 pain and suffering, has a right inferable through a
- 14 statute that speaks not a word to the matter, to an
- 15 additional presumption of punishment.
- 16 QUESTION: Well, did the compensatory damages in
- 17 this case include damages for humiliation, or am I wrong
- 18 about that?
- 19 MR. ROBBINS: I -- I do not -- I have not seen
- 20 an indication that it included that. I --
- 21 QUESTION: In -- in this -- is the jury
- 22 instructed in this jurisdiction that compensatory damages
- 23 include damages? Of course, pain and suffering, but is
- 24 that also humiliation? I thought humiliation was covered
- as part of the compensatory award.

- 1 MR. ROBBINS: I -- we have included the
- 2 instruction, Justice Kennedy, at page 72 of the joint
- 3 appendix, and I do not find a specific reference to that.
- 4 I'd be glad to see if I can --
- 5 QUESTION: Well, I guess it -- it goes to the
- 6 make-whole point. Assume a jurisdiction where humiliation
- 7 is not part of the compensatory award, could the argument
- 8 be made, well, in order to make the person whole, you must
- 9 give punitive damages because it includes damages for
- 10 humiliation?
- MR. ROBBINS: Well, I guess I'd be inclined to
- 12 -- to think about that in a case in which somebody had
- 13 argued that below or here.
- 14 QUESTION: But it wouldn't achieve that.
- MR. ROBBINS: But -- but --
- 16 QUESTION: It wouldn't achieve that. Would it,
- 17 Mr. Robbins? I mean, you -- you would not tell the jury,
- 18 you know -- you're telling the jury, punish this person if
- 19 you think he deserves punishment. You're not telling the
- 20 jury, by the way, humiliation damages are not available,
- 21 and therefore give this fellow as -- as much humiliation
- 22 damages, calling them punitive damages, as --
- 23 QUESTION: But I want you to assume -- and I
- 24 believe this is the law in many jurisdictions -- that
- 25 punitive damages are given in part to ease the -- the --

- 1 it's smart money in order to ease the -- the pain that the
- person suffers, et cetera.
- 3 MR. ROBBINS: Right. I -- I don't want to
- 4 quarrel with the hypothetical, Justice Kennedy. It may
- 5 very well be that pain and suffering already embraces that
- 6 concept. In many jurisdictions, pain and suffering is not
- 7 compensable as a compensatory damages. And it may be that
- 8 in the jurisdictions to which Your Honor adverts, punitive
- 9 damages are used to supplement a compensatory regime that
- 10 falls short of pain and suffering, which is not the case
- 11 here. This man received \$150,000 --
- 12 QUESTION: I understand.
- 13 MR. ROBBINS: -- for the category called pain
- and suffering and he was made whole. And there's no
- 15 suggestion that he wasn't made whole.
- 16 The suggestion is that my clients should be
- 17 punished, and that is something as to which the statute
- 18 provides absolutely no --
- 19 QUESTION: Well, that's true, but the statute
- 20 doesn't say specifically about whether to give an
- 21 injunction, about whether you could give a trademark
- 22 remedy. I mean, normally what the decisions have been of
- 23 the Court under Franklin -- I'm simply focusing you on
- 24 their main argument. Under Franklin, the courts decide
- 25 there either is an ordinary private right of action, et

- 1 cetera, or there isn't. And if there is, you take it as
- 2 it is, ordinarily. And if there isn't, there's nothing.
- 3 MR. ROBBINS: Well --
- 4 QUESTION: Why should we divide up, in other
- 5 words -- there's this amount of the common law action, but
- 6 not that amount. There's -- why -- how do we know that we
- 7 have the two-witness rule or the -- or the parol evidence
- 8 rule? I mean, there are lots of controversial things in
- 9 common -- in common law actions --
- MR. ROBBINS: Yes.
- 11 QUESTION: -- that private people can bring.
- 12 So, why separate out from that whole package suddenly
- 13 punitive damages? That's --
- MR. ROBBINS: Precisely because this is not a
- 15 common law action. This is a Federal statute --
- 16 QUESTION: All right.
- 17 MR. ROBBINS: -- as to which --
- 18 OUESTION: So, which one shall we separate out?
- 19 Just punitives or what?
- 20 MR. ROBBINS: Well, as to which Congress has
- 21 spoken. It has adopted title VI remedies that are quite
- 22 robust, which come with title VI regulations that are
- 23 enormously detailed, freighted with due -- levels of due
- 24 process that are quite unusual. And yet, we propose to
- 25 overlay a punitive damages remedy that comes with none of

- 1 those protections. It would work an extraordinary anomaly
- 2 to layer punitive damages on a regime like this. This is
- 3 not, after all, a question that is committed to the courts
- 4 like some of those doctrines. The parole evidence rule
- 5 may in some jurisdictions have originally been enacted or
- 6 not.
- 7 But the fact is this is a statute, and Congress
- 8 spoke rather clearly to what it -- it wanted the statute
- 9 to accomplish. And some of the things it expressly said
- 10 cannot live with the things that respondent proposes to
- 11 import into it.
- 12 And let me just say one other thing, and I
- 13 noticed that my white light on, as -- I do want to reserve
- 14 some time for rebuttal.
- This is also a Spending Clause statute, and I
- 16 know this gets back to a -- a threshold issue that both
- 17 Your Honor and Justice Ginsburg suggested perhaps the
- 18 Court could pretermit. I think it would be a mistake,
- 19 given that the task is to construe the statute, to ignore
- 20 the fact that it was enacted pursuant to a contractual
- 21 regime in which punitive damages historically and for a
- 22 variety of sensible reasons are especially inappropriate.
- 23 And if there are no questions, I -- I would like
- 24 to reserve the balance of my time for rebuttal.
- 25 QUESTION: Very well, Mr. Robbins.

1	Mr. Garre, we'll hear from you.
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF GREGORY G. GARRE
3	ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES,
4	AS AMICUS CURIAE, SUPPORTING THE PETITIONERS
5	MR. GARRE: The statutes at issue in this case,
6	section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and title II of the
7	ADA, do not sanction the award of punitive damages which
8	are, by their definition, damages in excess of that
9	necessary to make good any wrong done.
10	Now, there are several both section 504 and
11	title II derive their remedies expressly from title VI of
12	the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which operates as a
13	condition on the receipt of Federal financial assistance.
14	And it seems to me that to us that there are several
15	facets of the title VI statutory scheme which make it
16	particularly inappropriate to infer a punitive damages
17	remedy.
18	The first is, is that title VI, although it's
19	silent with respect to a compensatory remedy, expressly
20	provides for punitive and regulatory measures in the event
21	that the violation of its nondiscrimination provision. Ir
22	particular, the statute provides for a termination of
23	Federal funding, which this Court has itself recognized is
24	a very severe severe remedy that can have a powerful
25	deterrent effect.

- 1 In addition, the statute authorizes
- 2 administrative enforcement actions, actions that -- in
- 3 which the regulatory agencies, who have responsibility for
- 4 enforcing section 504 and title II, can take remedial
- 5 action, order remedial action, short of funding
- 6 termination.
- 7 Now, the second aspect of title VI and title VI
- 8 statutory scheme it seems to us to be quite pertinent is
- 9 that punitive damages are themselves antithetical to
- 10 Spending Clause legislation like title VI because the
- 11 availability of unbounded punitive damages awards can
- 12 actually have the effect of diverting resources from
- achieving the important objectives of the underlying
- 14 spending programs.
- 15 QUESTION: Tell me. I just can't recall. Have
- we held that punitive damages are available on the Bivens
- 17 action?
- 18 MR. GARRE: We think the Court addressed that in
- 19 passing in the Carlson v. Green case, and we think that
- 20 that -- the discussion of punitive damages in that case is
- 21 properly regarded as -- as dictum in that case. But --
- 22 but --
- 23 QUESTION: So, do -- do I infer from your --
- from your response that it is the position of the
- 25 Department that punitive damages should not be awarded in

- 1 Bivens cases?
- 2 MR. GARRE: Yes, but there are two distinctions
- 3 between Bivens and this case.
- 4 First, in the Bivens context, there aren't
- 5 statutory penal and regulatory measures that can be used
- 6 like funding termination or administrative enforcement
- 7 actions to take deterrence measures when -- when needed to
- 8 deter violations.
- 9 And second, in the Bivens context, this Court is
- 10 giving effect to a constitutional tort that it alone has
- 11 recognized. In -- in this context, the Court is
- 12 purporting to ascertain Congress's intent in enacting
- 13 section 504 in title II.
- 14 QUESTION: What about 1983? This Court has said
- 15 that punitive damages are available.
- MR. GARRE: That -- that's correct, Justice
- 17 Ginsburg. And -- and first of all, if I can make two
- 18 points -- first, in that context, again, there is no
- 19 express statutory penal or regulatory measures that
- 20 Congress created to provide deterrence as it did under
- 21 title VI, the remedies at issue in this case.
- 22 And secondly, what's important, we think, about
- 23 the Smith case, in which this Court recognized a punitive
- 24 damages remedy under section 1983 -- is that in that case,
- 25 the Court didn't start with the presumption that punitive

- 1 damages were available and simply look to see if Congress
- 2 had said otherwise. And that's the presumption that the
- 3 court of appeals applied in this case.
- 4 Instead, the Court purported to engage in an
- 5 inquiry of Congress's intent and -- and focused on the
- 6 fact that when -- when Congress enacted section 1983, it
- 7 made very clear that it was adopting a special species of
- 8 tort liability looking to the -- the State common law at
- 9 the time which provided for punitive damages there. So,
- 10 we think that the section 1983 case is quite different
- 11 than this case. The Court --
- 12 QUESTION: But you -- and you rely on the heavy
- 13 gun in statutes like title VI, title IX. That heavy gun
- is so heavy that it's never used. I mean, in the case
- 15 that we will hear tomorrow, the statement was made, well,
- 16 yes, it would be a drastic sanction to withdraw Federal
- funds, but in 30 years it hasn't happened.
- 18 MR. GARRE: Well, first of all, it does happen.
- 19 It happened in the Grove City case that came here, and I
- 20 could point Your Honor to additional examples in which the
- 21 termination funding mechanism has been used. Now, to be
- 22 sure, it -- it's an unusual remedy and it's a harsh
- 23 remedy, and simply because it's not used in more cases
- doesn't mean that it doesn't have a deterrent effect.
- 25 OUESTION: Under the Rehabilitation Act, it has

- 1 been used under 504?
- 2 MR. GARRE: Yes. I could point you to -- to one
- 3 case. It's -- it's not a case cited in the brief. It's a
- 4 court of appeals case, Freeman v. Cavassos, 939 F.2d.
- 5 1527, which is one example.
- 6 But -- but again, the -- the Federal Government
- 7 -- Congress gave the Federal Government and the Federal
- 8 agencies authority to enforce these provisions short of
- 9 funding termination. The -- the agencies receive
- 10 thousands of complaints each year under title II and
- 11 section 504. And they investigate those complaints
- 12 commeasurate with the seriousness of the allegations
- raised in those complaints, and they are successful in
- 14 negotiating compliance agreements, ranging from informal
- 15 agreements to formal settlement agreements, in which those
- 16 alleged to -- to have engaged in discrimination agree to
- 17 take corrective measures to eliminate discrimination and,
- in some cases, to pay monetary sums.
- 19 Now, the -- the Federal agencies have entered
- 20 into more 300 of those agreements under title II alone in
- 21 the past 8 years. So, there is an administrative process
- in place. It's statutory -- statutorily created by
- 23 Congress, and we think that that process itself counsels
- 24 heavily against judicial inference of punitive damages.
- Or in addition, to return to the -- the Court's

- 1 Franklin case, the Franklin case is grounded on the notion
- 2 that the Federal courts have the authority to provide a
- 3 remedy when necessary to make good the wrong done. That
- 4 principle has no application to and has never been
- 5 extended to punitive damages. It would be a quantum leap
- 6 for this Court to extend the Franklin principle to
- 7 punitive damages.
- 8 Punitive damages, the Court has recognized, are
- 9 both quasi-criminal, unpredictable, and at times have a
- 10 devastating effect. Those characteristics of punitive
- damages make them uniquely suited for careful legislative
- 12 judgment. Congress in section 504 and title II has not
- 13 made any legislative judgment that punitive damages should
- 14 be available, and therefore, this Court should reverse the
- 15 decision below.
- If there are no further questions.
- 17 OUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Garre.
- Mr. Nelson, we'll hear from you.
- 19 ORAL ARGUMENT OF SCOTT L. NELSON
- 20 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- 21 MR. NELSON: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
- 22 please the Court:
- This case presents the issue of whether Congress
- 24 foreclosed awards of punitive damages when it enacted the
- 25 rights of action to enforce section 504 of the

- 1 Rehabilitation Act and title II of the ADA which together
- 2 prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities
- 3 in the provision of public services.
- 4 The text, structure, policies, and legislative
- 5 history of the ADA disclose no prohibition on the award of
- 6 punitive damages. Absent such a prohibition --
- 7 QUESTION: Well, if -- now that the Eleventh
- 8 Amendment immunity issue is gone, don't we have to deal
- 9 with City of Newport?
- MR. NELSON: Well, I think the answer to that,
- 11 Justice O'Connor, is no. Had the defendants wished to
- 12 preserve the ability to argue for immunity on City of
- 13 Newport, they were free to do so in the lower courts.
- 14 QUESTION: Well, do you say that we are
- 15 precluded from considering that authority as we resolve
- 16 this case?
- MR. NELSON: No, I don't say --
- 18 QUESTION: No.
- 19 MR. NELSON: -- you're precluded from it. It's
- 20 -- it's a --
- 21 QUESTION: No. So, are you going to deal with
- 22 it then?
- 23 MR. NELSON: Yes. I -- I do intend to deal with
- 24 that.
- I'd like to start by dealing with -- with the

- 1 issue of whether there's a punitive damages remedy at all
- 2 because I think then the Newport issue really is secondary
- 3 to that.
- 4 And the starting point with respect to the
- 5 availability of punitive damages I think has to be this
- 6 Court's decision in Franklin. And it's useful I think to,
- 7 instead of looking at -- at arguments about what underlies
- 8 Franklin, to look at what Franklin said. Quote: "the
- 9 general rule, therefore, is that absent clear direction to
- 10 the contrary by Congress, the Federal courts have the
- 11 power to award any appropriate relief in a cognizable
- 12 cause of action brought pursuant to a Federal statute."
- 13 QUESTION: Franklin wasn't dealing with punitive
- damages, was it?
- 15 MR. NELSON: That's right, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 16 Punitive damage was -- was not the form of relief that was
- 17 being addressed in Franklin.
- 18 QUESTION: And appropriate relief does not sound
- 19 to me to be consistent with your beginning premise which
- 20 was that unless Congress forecloses the remedy, we must
- 21 give it.
- 22 MR. NELSON: Well, I certainly don't mean to say
- 23 that -- that in any particular case, the Court must give
- 24 it unless Congress forecloses it, but if Congress has not
- 25 foreclosed it, it's potentially available if, in view of

- 1 the policies of -- of the particular statute, it's an
- 2 appropriate remedy and in view of the conduct that's being
- 3 addressed. Specifically, under this Court's decisions,
- 4 punitive damages are an appropriate remedy where there's
- 5 willful -- a willful violation or reckless disregard of --
- of the legal entitlements of the plaintiff.
- 7 QUESTION: Well, what do you make of the -- the
- 8 argument that the whole touchstone for damages here is
- 9 504, which is essentially the -- the spending power -- the
- 10 -- the -- a statute resting on the spending power? The
- 11 closest analogy to that is with contract, and you don't
- 12 get punitive damages from contract.
- 13 MR. NELSON: Well, there -- there are two
- 14 answers to that. The first is that the touchstone is not
- 15 simply 504, but also the ADA, which is not a Spending
- 16 Clause enactment at all. The second is that --
- 17 QUESTION: But that referred to 504 for -- for
- 18 -- in effect, for its remedial scheme.
- 19 MR. NELSON: To the extent that -- that what it
- 20 -- what it says is that the remedies available, the
- 21 remedies being a private right of action -- and that does
- 22 not necessarily, however, import a limitation imposed on
- that remedy from above by the Spending Clause that doesn't
- inhere in the -- in the nature of the statute itself,
- 25 assuming that the Spending Clause does impose that

- 1 limitation, which I don't concede, and I'll get to in a
- 2 moment.
- 3 But this Court actually addressed a similar
- 4 situation in the Darrone case. The issue there was the
- 5 remedies available under section 504 for a case of
- 6 employment discrimination, and 504 in turn incorporates
- 7 the remedies available under title VI. Title VI said
- 8 there is no remedy available for employment discrimination
- 9 under title VI except with regard to a Federal program
- 10 where the funding is for employment purposes. This Court
- 11 said that by incorporating the title VI remedies, section
- 12 504 did not incorporate that limitation on the remedial
- 13 scheme that had nothing to do with the policies underlying
- 14 section 504 which were to eliminate discrimination against
- 15 the handicapped more broadly.
- 16 Similarly, under the Americans with Disabilities
- 17 Act, the -- the purpose of that act is to extend even
- 18 further than 504 the prohibition on and the remedies for
- 19 discrimination against persons with disabilities. And to
- 20 import into that statutory scheme a limit on relief that
- 21 -- that would pull it back and -- and restrict it to
- 22 what's appropriate on a Spending Clause measure would be
- 23 inappropriate under, I think, the mode of analysis this
- 24 Court used in Darrone.
- But in any event, even if one looks only at

- 1 section 504, the Spending Clause analogy to contract
- 2 doesn't limit remedies available to contractual remedies.
- 3 This Court I think made clear, both in Franklin and then
- 4 more recently in Davis v. Monroe County, that although the
- 5 obligation that an entity may undertake under the Spending
- 6 Clause is contractual in the sense that it's voluntary and
- 7 it has to be clearly stated what the substantive
- 8 requirements you're subjecting yourself to when you accept
- 9 Federal funding are, that that does not carry with it the
- 10 notion that you're limited to a, quote, "contract" remedy.
- In Davis, what the plaintiff sought in her
- 12 complaint was punitive and compensatory damages for
- injuries that had been inflicted on her. She, of course,
- 14 was not a party to any contract. What she was seeking was
- quintessentially a tort recovery, and this Court held in
- 16 Davis that as long as the requirement that the conduct was
- 17 intentional, it was a violation that was -- that -- that a
- 18 person in authority had knowledge of and had -- had
- 19 allowed the situation to go forward, that if those
- 20 conditions, which were Spending Clause conditions under
- 21 the Gebser decision -- if those conditions were met, you
- 22 could go forward and obtain the type of tort remedial
- 23 relief that the plaintiff was --
- QUESTION: Well, you say -- you say she wasn't a
- 25 party to the contract. She -- she was a beneficiary of

- 1 the contract, surely. I mean --
- MR. NELSON: Well, you could, I suppose,
- 3 analogize her to a third party beneficiary, but to suggest
- 4 that --
- 5 QUESTION: And contract actions were original
- 6 tort actions. It's easy to characterize a contract action
- 7 as a tort action. Right? It's just assumpsit.
- MR. NELSON: Well, and in fact --
- 9 QUESTION: I -- I'm not sure a whole lot hangs
- 10 on --
- MR. NELSON: -- that -- that argument can go the
- other way, too, because the States are broadly recognizing
- 13 that -- that malicious and bad faith breaches of contract
- 14 carry with them tort remedies.
- 15 But I'll give another example. This Court in a
- 16 couple of decisions, Wright v. Roanoke Housing Authority,
- 17 and Wilder v. Virginia Hospital Association, held that
- 18 under Spending Clause enactments, obligations can be
- imposed on the recipients of funds that are enforceable
- that create enforceable rights under section 1983.
- 21 And this Court has repeatedly held, most
- 22 recently I think in City of Monterey v. Del Monte Dunes,
- that 1983 is ever and always a tort remedy.
- 24 OUESTION: Mr. -- Mr. Nelson, why don't we look
- 25 specifically at this context, which is the ADA, and the

- 1 anomaly that when Congress thought about punitive damages,
- 2 as we know it did in the employment part, it provided for
- 3 them with qualifications and with caps on amount. So, it
- 4 would be passing strange, would it not, that when Congress
- 5 is explicit about punitive damages, it contains them, and
- 6 it when it says not one word one way or another, they are
- 7 unlimited because that's -- as I take your argument to be,
- 8 under part 3, there are the caps and the qualifications,
- 9 but under part 2, it's public service, no limitation.
- 10 MR. NELSON: It's under title I that the caps
- 11 apply, Justice Ginsburg, and I think that what that
- 12 illustrates is not -- not the point that -- that Congress
- didn't intend to provide these remedies. You have to look
- 14 at -- at the timing of the enactments and the background
- 15 of those changes to the -- in the Civil Rights Act of
- 16 1991.
- 17 As the ADA was originally enacted, title I,
- 18 consonant with title VII, didn't provide a damages remedy
- of any kind. It didn't provide an entitlement to any
- 20 legal forms of relief. It was limited to equitable relief
- 21 following the -- the title VII model.
- 22 No such limitation has ever been placed on title
- 23 II. In title II, Congress simply incorporated by
- 24 reference an action for legal remedies that this Court had
- 25 already recognized to exist.

- Now, then in 1991, Congress expanded the relief
- 2 under title I of the ADA, as well as under title VII of
- 3 the Civil Rights Act for the first time ever to allow a
- 4 damages remedy, either compensatory or punitive, for
- 5 employment discrimination to which those statutes applied.
- And what that illustrates is simply the history
- 7 that Congress has been very wary about providing broad
- 8 damages remedies in the employment discrimination area and
- 9 in 1981, it relaxed that unwillingness to some degree, but
- 10 then placed a cap on it. But in title II, it's quite
- 11 clear, from the original 1990 legislation, that Congress
- 12 didn't impose that circumscribed set of employment
- discrimination remedies on title II. So, by expanding
- title I, that doesn't either limit title II or imply that
- 15 title II was ever intended to be limited.
- 16 QUESTION: Am I right that title III says no
- 17 punitive damages?
- 18 MR. NELSON: Title III says no punitive damages
- 19 at all as part of a -- of a remedial scheme that is
- 20 similarly circumscribed to -- to title I, although in
- 21 somewhat different ways, a remedial scheme that under
- 22 title III doesn't make a private right of action for
- 23 damages of any kind available to an individual plaintiff.
- 24 Under title III, it's only the Attorney General who can
- ever sue for any damages, and then when Congress -- it --

- 1 having made a -- a damages remedy available to the
- 2 Attorney General, it then went on to say, and under this
- 3 statute, damages doesn't include punitive damages.
- I think to the extent that sheds any light on
- 5 title II at all, we know that in title II, Congress knew
- 6 that it was creating a damages remedy. That it didn't
- 7 limit those damages, as it did in title III, when it
- 8 created that limited damages remedy through the Attorney
- 9 General, is, if anything, an indication that no limitation
- 10 was intended.
- 11 QUESTION: Why? Why? Because -- why -- why
- 12 would somebody want to -- title II has to do with actions
- against a government basically, doesn't it?
- MR. NELSON: That's correct.
- 15 QUESTION: So -- so, I thought punitives are
- 16 primarily designed to compensate an individual who's not
- 17 going to be compensated. It's just a way of wielding a
- 18 very big club against the people who behaved badly.
- 19 MR. NELSON: Well --
- 20 QUESTION: Now, why would you want that big club
- 21 to be wielded against private people in limited amounts,
- 22 but when you get to a government which, after all,
- 23 represents the entire public, you say the sky is the
- 24 limit? Newport would suggest where the government is
- 25 involved it's less reasonable to assess punitives than

- 1 where a private individual is.
- MR. NELSON: Well, I think the -- part of the
- 3 answer to that is the whole structure of the ADA remedial
- 4 scheme indicates an intention to make broader remedies
- 5 available against public entities than private entities to
- 6 begin with. That's why, when the ADA was originally
- 7 enacted, there were all these limits placed on title III,
- 8 no compensatory damages even, limits on title I against
- 9 private and public employers, not even any compensatory
- 10 damages. Clearly, in title II, everyone agrees that
- 11 Congress made available a remedy there that is much more
- 12 extensive than it made against private employers or
- 13 private offerors of public accommodations.
- Now, why Congress did that I think is -- is
- perhaps somewhat obscure, but it seems to relate back to
- 16 the entire history, starting with the 1964 Civil Rights
- 17 Act, where Congress was very hesitant about imposing broad
- 18 remedies against private actors, possibly in part due to
- 19 the -- the effectiveness of their lobbyists, which --
- 20 which may have been greater in this instance than those of
- 21 -- of public employers and entities.
- 22 But for whatever reason Congress did it, it's
- 23 clear that Congress did enact broader remedies under title
- 24 II than under those titles that are applicable to --
- 25 QUESTION: But that's an anomaly too because in

- 1 title -- title III, which is the -- the title that imposes
- 2 -- title I is the one -- employment. Right?
- 3 MR. NELSON: Correct.
- 4 QUESTION: And are government employers liable
- 5 for punitive damages under title I?
- 6 MR. NELSON: No, they are not.
- 7 QUESTION: So, your -- your notion that -- that
- 8 the government is not well representative in the
- 9 legislature -- here is a title that says, private sector,
- 10 you're going to be stuck. You're going to be subject to
- 11 punitive damages, but not government entities.
- MR. NELSON: Well, that -- that was -- that was
- what happened in the 1991 round. Presumably the -- the
- 14 Congress there obviously did made -- make a considered
- 15 choice not to impose those remedies on -- on public
- 16 actors.
- But I think, you know, to step back even
- 18 further, one has to look at the fact that both section
- 19 504, by virtue of the 1986 Rehabilitation Act amendments,
- 20 and the ADA, by virtue of -- of section 502, are subject
- 21 as a general rule to the principle that -- that Congress
- 22 very deliberately said public entities, and in particular
- 23 States, are going to be subject to the full range of
- 24 remedies that are available against private defendants.
- 25 Congress did that explicitly in both those -- both those

- 1 statutes.
- 2 And I think what that indicates is that there
- 3 has been a considered judgment in these statutes that,
- 4 especially in the area of the provision of public
- 5 services, Congress wants broad remedies to be made
- 6 available against the public entities that are subject to
- 7 it. It's true that Congress made a different judgment in
- 8 1991 when it extended the -- the remedies for employment
- 9 discrimination. But except for that provision of the
- 10 statute where public employers were given a special
- 11 exemption, the rest of the statute evinces an -- an
- 12 intention by Congress that public entities not get special
- 13 exemptions.
- 14 QUESTION: But doesn't that seem rather
- 15 perverse?
- 16 MR. NELSON: Well, I think it -- it seems -- it
- 17 seems to me that -- that one can look at it either way.
- 18 It's perverse if you're a public entity; it's not perverse
- 19 if you're a business entity that feels like anti-
- 20 discrimination laws trench on the -- the freedom of
- 21 businesses to operate in the way they want to operate.
- I think what Congress has done with respect to
- 23 discrimination against persons with disabilities, first in
- 24 making the 504 remedies available against recipients of
- 25 Federal funds, and then in making the title II remedies

- 1 available against public entities, is -- is Congress has
- 2 made a judgment that says, we think discrimination against
- 3 persons with disabilities is particularly objectionable
- 4 when engaged in by the government, just as in the
- 5 fourth --
- 6 QUESTION: But -- but your -- your Newport case
- 7 certainly suggests that traditionally public entities are
- 8 treated differently than private entities for the same
- 9 conduct if you're talking about punitive damages.
- 10 MR. NELSON: That's certainly true. And -- and
- 11 what I think is distinctive about Newport, to begin with,
- 12 here I do believe that -- that if the Court were to
- 13 considered that under these statutes there is a punitive
- damages remedy available generally, and then the question
- 15 is should these particular defendants be freed from it
- 16 under a City of Newport rationale, that -- that it's fair
- 17 for this Court to hold the -- the defendant to the rule
- 18 that it generally applies, which is that if you want to
- 19 argue something like that, raise an issue like that, you
- 20 should do it in the lower courts.
- 21 But even looking beyond that, what we have in --
- 22 in these statutes is in the --
- 23 QUESTION: About the issue, are you -- are you
- 24 suggesting that it is not included in the question
- 25 presented?

- 1 MR. NELSON: No, I'm not making that argument.
- 2 QUESTION: Then -- then did you in your brief in
- 3 opposition point out that this was not properly raised in
- 4 the lower courts?
- 5 MR. NELSON: Yes, that was pointed out in the
- 6 brief in opposition.
- 7 QUESTION: I want to be sure you -- suppose that
- 8 we did look at the Newport issue. I'm not saying that we
- 9 should, but suppose we did. And suppose that you lost on
- 10 your point that it should be waived or deemed waived.
- 11 What would your -- is there any response to their claim on
- 12 the merits that -- that Newport makes clear that they are
- 13 not liable in punitive damages?
- MR. NELSON: Yes. I think -- I think that --
- 15 that the first response is that through the Rehabilitation
- 16 Act amendments of 1986, which are codified at 42 U.S.C.,
- 17 section 2000(d)(7), and also in section 502 of the ADA,
- which is codified at 42 U.S.C., section 12202, those
- 19 provisions are fundamentally incompatible with the notion
- 20 of Newport immunity.
- 21 And I want to just start by expressing my
- 22 understanding of what Newport immunity is in light of this
- 23 Court's decision in -- in the Vermont Natural Resources
- 24 case. It's not specifically an immunity that is municipal
- 25 immunity. It's an immunity or a -- or a general

- 1 presumption against awards of punitive damages against
- 2 State and local governments as a class. And -- and what
- 3 it says where it operates is that those defendants as a
- 4 class have an exemption against a particular form of
- 5 relief that is otherwise available against private actors.
- 6 In the Rehabilitation Act amendments and in
- 7 section 502 of the ADA, what Congress said expressly is
- 8 that as to remedies against States, which are one of the
- 9 entities entitled to the Newport presumption, they're
- 10 subject to the same remedies under the statutes as are any
- other private or public entities, meaning if you can get
- 12 it against a private entity, you can get it against a
- 13 State. And that takes away the fundamental premise of
- 14 Newport, which is that governmental entities as a class
- 15 are entitled to a special exemption. What these statutes
- 16 say is that governmental entities as a class are entitled
- 17 to no special exemption. And the City of Newport issue I
- 18 think simply goes away.
- 19 I'd also suggest that one of the fundamental
- 20 premises of City of Newport is not present under these
- 21 statutes, and that is that there's an adequate alternative
- 22 deterrent. And -- and in this case, what we're talking
- about when we're talking about punitive damages as a
- deterrent, to answer Justice Kennedy's question earlier of
- 25 Mr. Robbins, in this case the compensatory damages award

- did include pain, suffering, humiliation, and mental
- 2 damages. So, we're not talking about punitive damages
- 3 here as a surrogate for some component of compensatories.
- 4 We're talking about it as a remedy designed to provide a
- 5 deterrent that will assist in -- in Congress's goal of
- 6 eliminating discrimination against persons with
- 7 disabilities.
- 8 And in -- in Newport, this Court looked at the
- 9 1983 remedy and said, yes, punitive damages are an
- 10 important element of deterrence with respect to civil
- 11 rights violations that are subject to section 1983. But
- we have a better deterrent which is the availability of
- 13 punitive damages against individual defendants who
- 14 actually make the decisions to carry out the -- the
- 15 wrongful acts that 1983 is responding to. Now, whether
- 16 that judgment is -- as to which is more effective, is
- 17 correct or not, that's the line the Court drew in Newport.
- 18 But under these statutes, that remedy is not
- 19 available because section 504 and title II of the ADA make
- 20 quite clear that they provide remedies only against the
- 21 entities. There's no right of action against a -- an
- 22 individual under title II of the ADA or under section 504
- 23 of the Rehabilitation Act. So, with respect to these
- 24 statutes, deterrence against the entity is all you've got
- and all you can rely on.

1 And that's yet another reason why Newport's 2 policies are inapplicable here. And Newport was very clear that beyond looking at the immunity, as -- as it 3 used the term, of municipalities as a -- as a sort of 4 5 standard to try to determine what the legislature was 6 thinking about when it enacted the statute, the Court was 7 also going to look at the policies of the particular 8 statutes to determine whether or not immunity from 9 punitive damages accorded with those policies. And given the distinctions between the ADA and section 504, those 10 11 policies are not served here by immunizing the -- the 12 defendants against punitive damages on -- under a Newport 13 rationale. I'd also like to get back for a moment, if I 14 15 could, to the -- the notion that what's going on in 16 Franklin is limited to compensatory remedies and that -that the idea of -- of punitive damages as one of the 17 normal modes of relief offered by the Federal courts is 18 not really what the Court was talking about in Franklin. 19 20 I think that's inconsistent not only with Bivens where in Carlson v. Green this Court, I think, held that punitive 21 22 damages are available in Bivens actions because, as one of 23 the ordinary remedial mechanisms available to the Federal courts, they were particularly appropriate for the redress 24 of constitutional violations. 25

- 1 The reason I say that that's a holding is the
- 2 issue in Carlson was not whether there was a -- a right of
- 3 action for any relief at all under the Eighth Amendment.
- 4 It was conceded that -- that the plaintiff could get
- 5 injunctive relief against an Eighth Amendment violation if
- 6 there was a pervasive --
- 7 QUESTION: Mr. Nelson, last year in -- in the
- 8 Alexander case and this year in the Malesko case, we've
- 9 indicated that we're taking a much more critical look, I
- 10 think, at these kind of claims than we ever did in
- 11 Carlson.
- MR. NELSON: Well, Mr. Chief Justice, I don't
- 13 think that that's -- that that's quite right with respect
- 14 to -- with respect to the evolution of this Court's
- 15 doctrine. I think what the Court said, in -- in
- 16 particular in Sandoval, was that -- that the Court had
- 17 backed away from the notion that for every right, there
- 18 has to be a remedy and had gone to the -- the Court v. Ash
- 19 notion, that what we're looking for when we're trying to
- 20 determine whether a right of action exists is
- 21 congressional intent.
- 22 But that was true at the time of -- of Franklin
- 23 as well and the Court in Franklin said that's a separate
- 24 question from what relief you get when it's conceded that
- 25 there is a right of action to begin with.

- 1 And similarly, in Malesko, this Court said,
- 2 we're not going to recognize a right of action against
- 3 this particular entity. The question, when it's clear
- 4 that Congress has made a right of action available, as it
- 5 is here, and what form of relief is appropriate, is a
- 6 different matter.
- 7 QUESTION: Well, but what -- what you're arguing
- 8 basically is that every one of these things is fixed in
- 9 time permanently not just as to its holding, but as -- as
- 10 to language in it. And what I'm trying to suggest is that
- 11 that is not always necessarily so, that the Court may take
- 12 a slightly different view some -- now than it did 10 years
- 13 ago.
- MR. NELSON: Well, Mr. Chief Justice, I think
- 15 that's clearly -- that's clearly true. And the question
- 16 that -- that we as -- as lawyers are trying to -- to deal
- 17 with is -- is how, in light of changes in precedent and --
- 18 and changes in evolution of the Court's doctrine over
- 19 time, what aspects can we pull out and -- and hold
- 20 constant or -- or use to make arguments as to what the
- 21 rule remains.
- 22 And to me, looking at Franklin, which was a case
- 23 that -- first of all, all nine Justices concurred in the
- 24 holding at the time. Second, it came at a point where
- 25 this Court had already evolved far away from the every

- 1 right must have a remedy doctrine and was looking very
- 2 specifically at whether or not Congress had intended to
- 3 allow a right of action. But what the opinion for the
- 4 Court said and even the concurrence said was when it's
- 5 crystal clear that Congress said there's a right of action
- 6 here, does -- do we infer limits on our ability to provide
- 7 appropriate relief when Congress hasn't given us guidance
- 8 on that subject?
- 9 QUESTION: And didn't say anything about whether
- 10 punitives would be appropriate relief because all Franklin
- 11 involved was compensatory damages. Before that, it was
- 12 thought that there were no compensatory damages under
- spending statutes. To clarify that, they used the phrase
- 14 appropriate relief. So, we've never had any holding that
- 15 under Franklin punitive damages would be appropriate.
- 16 MR. NELSON: That's correct, Justice Ginsburg.
- 17 On the other hand, the Court has certainly held that
- 18 punitive damages are appropriate in implied statutory
- 19 rights of action, the most notable being section 1981
- which, unlike section 1983, is an implied right of action.
- 21 Section 1981 doesn't say anything about creating a right
- 22 for anybody to go in and get enforcement, and the Court
- 23 has held not only is there a right of action there, but
- 24 held as recently as the Pollard case, which I believe was
- last year, that under 1981 the scope of relief includes

- 1 punitive damages.
- I think that what that reflects is the Franklin
- 3 principle, that when there's a cause of action, when it's
- 4 a cause of action such as these, that is, essentially a
- 5 tort remedy, that the traditional range of relief that's
- 6 appropriate for such rights is provided. And that range
- 7 of relief includes punitive damages.
- 8 And -- and again, the issue in this case is not
- 9 whether on the facts punitive damages are appropriate,
- 10 because that hasn't yet been decided, but whether ever
- 11 punitive damages are appropriate under this statute. And
- 12 I think Franklin speaks to the question not in its express
- 13 holding but its rationale which -- which I believe has
- 14 survived down to the present.
- 15 Unless there are any further questions, I will
- 16 leave it at that.
- 17 QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Nelson.
- 18 Mr. Robbins, you have 4 minutes remaining.
- 19 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF LAWRENCE S. ROBBINS
- 20 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
- 21 MR. ROBBINS: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 22 Let me turn -- go back for just a moment to the
- 23 1991 act because I think its -- its significance here is
- 24 terribly important and quite a bit different from
- 25 respondent's characterization.

- The 1991 act amended title I of the ADA and also
- 2 the Rehabilitation Act to provide a capped punitive
- 3 damages remedy available only to -- only to
- 4 nongovernmental entities. This case obviously involves an
- 5 uncapped award, indeed an award four times the size of the
- 6 cap, applied only to governmental entities and not in an
- 7 employment setting. That's more than simply anomalous.
- 8 It is, I think, completely implausible for reasons that I
- 9 think go beyond what -- what Mr. Nelson has described to
- 10 you.
- The fact is title I was enacted in its original
- 12 form at the very same time that Congress was considering
- the 1991 legislation. Everyone in Congress knew that when
- they enacted in title I that there shall be the same
- 15 remedies as title VII -- everyone knew that at that very
- 16 moment laying before another committee in Congress was the
- 17 very legislation that is being characterized as the 1991
- 18 legislation, as if it happened much later. These happened
- 19 simultaneously and everyone knew that punitive damages
- 20 were around the corner. In my view, when you look at what
- 21 Mr. Nelson called the timing of the enactments, you really
- 22 have to read title I as if it enacted a punitive damages
- and capped and targeted and calibrated.
- 24 Title III also has a penalty provision.
- 25 Although it forbids punitive damages, to go back to

- 1 Justice Ginsburg's question, it has a civil penalties
- 2 provision. So, the thing that is remarkable about
- 3 respondent's position and the position you would be urged
- 4 to adopt is that although title I of the ADA has a limited
- 5 punitive damages provision applicable only to employment
- 6 cases and exempting the government, and although title III
- 7 has a civil penalties provision applicable only to public
- 8 accommodations, title II, which is silent, shall have an
- 9 unlimited punitive damages provision which can be applied
- 10 against governmental entities. And it is against
- 11 governmental entities and only governmental entities that
- 12 title II applies.
- 13 And City of Newport, I should add, doesn't
- 14 change just how anomalous that is. The Rehabilitation Act
- amendments go not one step in the direction of overturning
- 16 City of Newport. The Rehabilitation Act amendments say
- 17 only this, that the States shall be liable for whatever
- 18 remedies are applicable to other public entities or
- 19 private entities. It doesn't tell us what those shall be,
- 20 and in our view punitive damages aren't available against
- 21 anybody under title II. So, it -- it hardly advances
- 22 respondent's position to say that there shall be
- 23 applicable to the States whatever is applicable to anyone
- 24 else.
- The other thing is, what are those other public

1 entities if not, among other things, municipal governments 2 like my client? By carving out, in other words, municipal governments, the 1986 amendment is a very strange way to 3 4 overrule the doctrine in -- in City of Newport, and I 5 would respectfully suggest that it does no such thing. 6 Let me -- let me end with this point. And we 7 haven't -- we haven't mentioned the history of judicial 8 interpretation of title VI and section 504, which had never -- never, not once -- ever been construed to permit 9 punitive damages at any of the times in history that these 10 11 statutes were meticulously amended and -- and previous 12 remedy provisions incorporated going forward. 13 But I do want to end with where Mr. Nelson 14 began. Thank you, Mr. Robbins. 15 QUESTION: 16 MR. ROBBINS: Perhaps not. 17 (Laughter.) CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST: You've already ended. 18 19 (Whereupon, at 12:08 p.m., the case in the above-entitled matter was submitted.) 20 21 2.2 23 2.4 25

AL 1:3 arm 4:9.10 Alexander 39:8 **around** 43:20 **ability** 22:12 41:6 allegations 20:12 ascertain 18:12 about 8:16 9:3.6 11:8.18 12:12 13:20 alleged 20:16 **Ash** 39:18 13:21 18:14,22 23:7 28:1,5 29:7 allow 5:20 29:3 41:3 asking 8:18 31:17 34:9,11,23 36:23,23 37:2,4 **allowed** 26:19 aspect 17:7 38:6,19 41:9,21 44:2 alone 18:10 20:20 aspects 40:19 **above** 24:23 **already** 13:5 28:25 40:25 45:18 assess 30:25 **above-entitled** 1:10 45:20 assist 37:5 **alternative** 5:21 36:21 **absent** 22:6 23:9 **although** 3:15 16:18 26:4 29:20 assistance 16:13 absolutely 13:18 43:25 44:4.6 Assistant 1:16 accept 26:8 always 5:6 27:23 40:11 Association 27:17 accommodations 31:13 44:8 amended 43:1 45:11 assume 12:6.23 accomplish 15:9 amendment 4:12 5:9,22 22:8 39:3,5 assumed 5:17 accorded 38:9 45:3 assuming 24:25 achieve 12:14.16 amendments 32:19 35:16 36:6 44:15 assumpsit 27:7 achieving 17:13 44:16 attention 6:22 act 3:13.14 16:6.12 19:25 22:1 25:17 **Americans** 3:14 25:16 **Attorney** 29:24 30:2,8 25:17 28:15 29:3 31:17 32:19 35:16 amicus 1:18 2:7 16:4 **authority** 10:19 11:5,5,6 20:8 21:2 36:6 37:23 42:23 43:1.2 44:14.16 among 45:1 22:15 26:18 27:16 action 3:11,21 6:24 13:25 14:5,15 amount 14:5,6 28:3 authorizes 17:1 17:5,5,17 21:25 23:12 24:21 27:6,7 amounts 6:2 30:21 availability 17:11 23:5 37:12 28:24 29:22 37:21 39:3,20,25 40:2,4 available 7:14 12:20 17:16 18:15 19:1 analogize 27:3 41:3,5,19,20,23 42:3,4 analogous 4:22 21:14 23:25 24:20 25:5,7,8 26:2 actions 14:9 17:2,2 18:7 27:5,6 30:12 analogy 24:11 26:1 29:23 30:1 31:5,11 32:24 33:6,24 38:22 analysis 25:23 34:1,14 36:5 37:19 38:22,23 40:4 actors 31:18 32:16 36:5 **anomalous** 43:7 44:14 43:3 44:20 acts 37:15 anomaly 15:1 28:1 31:25 award 11:25 12:7 16:7 22:5 23:11 **actual** 5:18 36:25 43:5.5 another 27:15 28:6 38:1 43:16 actually 17:12 25:3 37:14 answer 6:14 22:10 31:3 36:24 awarded 17:25 **ADA** 16:7 22:1,5 24:15 27:25 28:17 answers 24:14 awards 17:11 21:24 36:1 29:2 31:3,6 32:20 35:17 36:7 37:19 anti 33:19 away 36:13,18 39:17 40:25 37:22 38:10 43:1 44:4 antithetical 17:9 **a.m** 1:12 3:2 add 4:17 44:13 anybody 41:22 44:21 addition 17:1 20:25 **anyone** 44:23 additional 11:15 19:20 anything 30:9 41:9,21 back 15:16 25:21 31:15 32:17 38:14 address 6:18 anyway 6:7 42:22 43:25 addressed 17:18 23:17 24:3 25:3 appeals 3:15 4:13 19:3 20:4 **backed** 39:17 adequate 36:21 **APPEARANCES** 1:13 background 5:17 28:14 **administrative** 17:2 18:6 20:21 appendix 12:3 **bad** 27:13 adopt 44:4 **applicable** 31:24 44:5,7,18,23,23 badly 10:12 30:18 adopted 14:21 application 21:4 balance 15:24 adopting 19:7 **applied** 19:3 29:5 43:6 44:9 Barnes 1:3 3:4 advances 44:21 **applies** 5:24 34:18 44:12 **basically** 30:13 40:8 adverts 13:8 apply 9:19 28:11 basis 6:16 8:5 9:11 after 9:22 10:14 15:3 30:22 **appropriate** 7:4,5,12,17 23:11,18 **before** 1:11 4:14,25 41:11 43:16 **again** 18:18 20:6 42:8 24:2,4 25:22 38:24 40:5 41:7,10,14 began 45:14 against 3:12,18 10:16,17,17 20:24 41:15,18 42:6,9,11 **begin** 31:6 34:11 39:25 22:2 25:14,19 30:13,18,21 31:5,8,12 April 1:9 beginning 23:19 31:18 32:24 33:6,23,24 34:1,2 36:1 **behalf** 1:14,18,20 2:4,6,9,12 3:7 16:3 area 29:8 33:4 36:1,4,5,8,12,12 37:6,13,20,21,24 21:20 42:20 argue 4:24 5:21 22:12 34:19 38:12 39:5 40:2 44:10,10,20 **behaved** 30:18 **argued** 6:10 12:13 agencies 17:3 20:8,9,19 arguing 6:4 40:7 **being** 4:14 23:17 24:2.21 41:19 43:17 ago 40:13 argument 1:11 2:2,10 3:3,6 4:15 6:8 **believe** 6:21 12:24 34:12 41:24 42:13 **agree** 20:16 6:10,12 12:7 13:24 16:2 21:19 24:8 believes 8:13 agreements 20:14,15,15,20 27:11 28:7 35:1 42:19 **Bell** 10:17.17.19 11:4 **agrees** 31:10 **arguments** 6:15 23:7 40:20 below 4:1 5:6.10 6:10 9:25 12:13

21:15 **change** 5:3,5 44:14 **conceded** 39:4,24 **beneficiary** 26:25 27:3 changes 28:15 40:17,18 concept 13:6 **better** 37:12 characteristics 21:10 Concepts 7:21 between 18:3 38:10 characterization 42:25 concurred 40:23 beyond 6:12 34:21 38:3 43:9 concurrence 41:4 characterize 27:6 **big** 30:18.20 condition 16:13 characterized 43:17 **bit** 42:24 charged 11:7 conditions 26:20,20,21 **Bivens** 17:16 18:1,3,4,9 38:20,22 Chief 3:3.8 21:21 23:15 39:12 40:14 **conduct** 24:2 26:16 34:9 **blind** 4:21 42:21 45:18 confident 8:25 9:6 confined 7:10 10:6 **books** 7:16 **choice** 3:19 32:15 **both** 6:15 15:16 16:10 21:9 26:3 32:18 **Circuit** 3:10,20 5:20 6:20,23 7:3,18 confusion 9:25 10:1.2 32:25.25 7:24 9:2,4,11 10:7,12 **Congress** 3:17,23 5:17 7:1 14:20 breaches 27:13 Circuit's 7:11 15:7 18:20 19:1,6 20:7,23 21:12,23 **Breyer** 6:15 7:18 circumscribed 29:12,20 23:10,20,24,24 28:1,4,12,23 29:1,7 **brief** 7:11 8:21 20:3 35:2,6 cited 4:11 20:3 29:11,25 30:5 31:11,14,17,22,23 **City** 4:12,21 5:16 6:21 8:13,17 9:3 **briefly** 10:10 32:14,21,25 33:5,7,12,22 34:1 36:7 **bring** 14:11 19:19 22:9,12 27:22 34:16 36:17,20 40:4 41:2,5,7 43:12,13,16 **broad** 29:7 31:17 33:5 44:13.16 45:4 congressional 39:21 **broader** 6:18 9:9,12 10:1 31:4,23 civil 16:12 28:15 29:3 31:16 37:10 Congress's 18:12 19:5 37:5 **broadly** 25:15 27:12 44:1.7 consideration 5:18 **brought** 3:12 23:12 claim 35:11 **considered** 32:14 33:3 34:13 business 33:19 **claims** 39:10 **considering** 22:15 43:12 consistent 23:19 businesses 33:21 clarify 41:13 **class** 36:2,4,14,16 consonant 28:18 bypassing 6:11 constant 40:20 Clause 15:15 17:10 24:16,23,25 \mathbf{C} 25:22 26:1,6,20 27:18 constitutional 9:15,18 18:10 38:25 C 2:1 3:1 **clean** 9:25 constrained 5:1 calibrated 43:23 clear 8:5 11:8 19:7 23:9 26:3 29:11 construction 6:19 11:7 call 7:22 31:23 35:12 37:20 38:3 40:3 41:5 construe 15:19 called 6:21 13:13 43:21 clearing 10:2 construed 45:9 calling 12:22 **clearly** 15:8 26:7 31:10 40:15,15 contains 28:5 came 1:10 19:19 40:24 **client** 4:8,19 5:6,9 8:2,10 45:2 context 7:5 18:4,9,11,18 27:25 **cap** 29:10 43:6 clients 13:16 **contract** 24:11,12 26:1,10,14,25 27:1 capacity 7:19 closest 24:11 27:5.6.13 capped 43:2,23 club 30:18.20 contractual 15:20 26:2,6 caps 28:3,8,10 **codified** 35:16,18 contrary 8:23 9:20 23:10 care 7:23 8:2 cognizable 23:11 controversial 14:8 careful 21:11 **come** 6:22 9:5 14:22 corner 43:20 Carlson 17:19 38:21 39:2,11 comes 14:25 corpus 7:15 commeasurate 20:12 correct 9:13 18:16 30:14 32:3 37:17 carries 3:22 carry 6:25 26:9 27:14 37:14 committed 15:3 41:16 carving 45:2 committee 43:16 corrective 20:17 case 3:10 4:1 6:13,20 7:23 8:1,4,6 9:2 **common** 3:22 7:1,13 14:5,9,9,15 19:8 counsel 5:25 9:10 10:6 11:17 12:12 13:10 16:5 compelling 8:23 counsels 20:23 17:19,20,21 18:3,21,23,24 19:3,10 compensable 13:7 County 3:18 10:16 26:4 19:11,14,19 20:3,3,4 21:1,1,23 compensate 30:16 **couple** 27:16 22:16 23:23 25:4,5 34:6 35:24 36:22 compensated 30:17 course 11:23 26:13 **court** 1:1,11 3:9,15 4:8,13,14,20,20 36:25 39:8,8 40:22 41:24 42:8 43:4 compensatories 37:3 45:19 compensatory 7:10 10:18 11:9,12,16 4:24,25 6:18 7:21,24,24 8:10,13 9:8 cases 10:17 18:1 19:23 20:18 44:6 11:22.25 12:7 13:7.9 16:19 26:12 9:24 10:8 13:23 15:18 16:23 17:18 category 13:13 29:4 31:8.9 36:25 38:16 41:11.12 18:9,11,14,23,25 19:3,4,11 20:4 cause 3:20 6:24 23:12 42:3.4 complaint 26:12 21:6,8,14,22 23:23 25:3,10,24 26:3 Cavassos 20:4 complaints 20:10.11.13 26:15 27:15.21 28:24 34:12.17 37:8 certainly 8:15 10:1,6 11:3 23:22 34:7 completely 43:8 37:17 38:6,19,21 39:15,16,18,23 34:10 41:17 40:1,11,25 41:4,17,22 compliance 20:14 component 37:3 **certiorari** 4:15 10:4 courts 6:10 10:19 11:5 13:24 15:3 cetera 13:2 14:1 concede 25:1 21:2 22:13 23:10 34:20 35:4 38:18

42:24 38.24 enforceable 27:19,20 Court's 3:18 9:1 20:25 23:6 24:3 differently 6:22 9:5 34:8 **enforcement** 17:2 18:6 41:22 35:23 39:14 40:18 **direction** 23:9 44:15 enforcing 17:4 disabilities 3:14 22:2 25:16,19 33:23 cover 10:13 engage 19:4 34:3 37:7 covered 11:24 engaged 20:16 34:4 disclose 22:5 **create** 27:20 **enormous** 6:12 7:19 **created** 3:21 18:20 20:22 30:8 discrimination 20:16.17 22:2 25:6.8 enormously 14:23 **creating** 30:6 41:21 25:14,19 29:5,8,13 33:9,20,23 34:2 entered 20:19 critical 39:9 37:6 entire 7:15 30:23 31:16 **entities** 31:5,5,21 32:11,22 33:6,12 crystal 41:5 discussion 17:20 curiae 1:18 2:7 16:4 disregard 24:5 34:1,7,8 36:9,11,14,16 37:21 43:4,6 **distinctions** 18:2 38:10 44:10.11.11.18.19 45:1 D **entitled** 36:9.15.16 distinctive 34:11 **D** 3:1 diverting 17:12 entitlement 28:19 **damage** 23:16 divide 14:4 entitlements 24:6 **entity** 26:5 33:18,19 36:12 37:24 40:3 damages 3:11,23 5:7 6:6,8 8:24 10:13 doctrine 4:22 7:19 9:17 39:15 40:18 41:1 45:4 10:14 11:12,16,17,22,23 12:9,9,20 equitable 28:20 12:22,22,25 13:7,9 14:13,25 15:2,21 doctrines 15:4 **especially** 15:22 33:4 **done** 5:24 11:8 16:9 21:3 33:22 16:7,8,16 17:9,11,16,20,25 18:15,24 **ESQ** 1:14,16,20 2:3,5,8,11 down 42:14 19:1,9 20:24 21:5,7,8,11,13,24 22:6 essentially 24:9 42:4 drastic 19:16 23:1,5,14 24:4,8,12 26:12 28:1,5,18 et 1:3 13:2,25 29:4,8,17,18,23,25 30:1,3,3,6,7,8 drawn 10:16 **ETC** 1:3 31:8,10 32:5,11 34:9,14 35:13 36:1 drew 37:17 even 8:17 25:17,25 31:8,9 32:17 34:21 36:23,25 37:2,2,9,13 38:9,12,17,22 due 14:23,23 31:18 41.4 **Dunes** 27:22 41:11,12,15,18 42:1,7,9,11 43:3,19 event 16:20 25:25 43:22,25 44:5,9,20 45:10 **D.C** 1:8,14,17,20 ever 27:23 28:22 29:3,15,25 39:10 **Darrone** 25:4.24 42:10 45:9 \mathbf{E} **Davis** 26:4.11.16 every 39:17 40:8,25 **deal** 22:8,21,23 40:16 E 2:1 3:1.1 **everyone** 31:10 43:13,15,19 **dealing** 22:25 23:13 each 20:10 evidence 3:16 8:20,22 14:7 15:4 decide 8:5 13:24 earlier 36:24 evinces 33:11 **decided** 4:23 9:11 42:10 evolution 39:14 40:18 ease 12:25 13:1 decision 3:18 4:13,16 21:15 23:6 evolved 40:25 easy 27:6 26:21 35:23 effect 16:25 17:12 18:10 19:24 21:10 exactly 5:15.15 decisions 13:22 24:3 27:16 37:14 24:18 **example** 4:23 20:5 27:15 **deemed** 35:10 effective 37:16 examples 19:20 defendant 34:17 effectiveness 31:19 except 25:9 33:9 Eighth 3:10.20 5:20 6:20.23 7:3.11.17 **defendants** 3:12 22:11 32:24 34:15 excess 16:8 36:3 37:13 38:12 7:24 9:2,4,11 10:7,11 39:3,5 exempting 44:6 either 6:16 13:25 29:4,14 33:17 definition 16:8 **exemption** 33:11 36:4,15,17 degree 29:9 element 37:10 exemptions 33:13 **Del** 27:22 Eleventh 4:12 5:9.22 22:7 exist 28:25 eliminate 20:17 25:14 exists 39:20 deliberately 32:22 **Department** 1:17 17:25 eliminating 37:6 expanded 29:1 **derive** 16:11 embraces 13:5 expanding 29:13 described 43:9 **employers** 31:9,12,21 32:4 33:10 **explicit** 6:24 28:5 deserves 12:19 employment 25:6,8,10 28:2 29:5,8,12 explicitly 32:25 **designed** 30:16 37:4 32:2 33:8 43:7 44:5 **explicitory** 10:18,20,23 detailed 14:23 enact 31:23 express 6:25 18:19 42:12 **deter** 18:8 enacted 15:5.20 19:6 21:24 28:17 expressing 35:21 **determine** 38:5.8 39:20 31:7 38:6 43:11,14,22 expressly 15:9 16:11,19 36:7 **enacting** 5:18 18:12 extend 21:6 25:17 **deterrence** 18:7,20 37:10,24 **deterrent** 16:25 19:24 36:22.24 37:5 enactment 24:16 **extended** 21:5 33:8 37:12 enactments 27:18 28:14 43:21 extensive 31:12 devastating 21:10 end 45:6.13 extent 24:19 30:4 **dictum** 17:21 **ended** 45:18 extraordinarily 8:23 different 19:10 29:21 33:7 40:6.12 **enforce** 20:8 21:25 extraordinary 15:1

held 3:10 17:16 26:15 27:17,21 38:21 eye 4:21 G 41:17,23,24 **G** 1:16 2:5 3:1 16:2 F her 26:11,13 27:3 Garre 1:16 2:5 16:1.2.5 17:18 18:2.16 **facets** 16:15 hesitant 31:17 19:18 20:2 21:17 fact 4:9 7:21,25 10:5 15:7,20 19:6 historically 15:21 **gave** 20:7 **history** 4:24 22:5 29:6 31:16 45:7,10 27:8 32:18 43:11 **Gebser** 26:21 **factors** 4:11.11 hold 34:17 40:19 general 1:17 23:9 29:24 30:2,9 32:21 **facts** 42:9 **holding** 39:1 40:9.24 41:14 42:13 35:25 Honor 7:12 13:8 15:17 19:20 **fair** 34:16 generally 34:14,18 **faith** 27:13 Honor's 9:1 gets 6:5 15:16 **falls** 13:10 Hood 10:17.18 11:4 **Ginsburg** 8:9 15:17 18:17 28:11 hope 10:24 far 40:25 41:16 Hospital 27:17 **Federal** 7:15 14:15 16:13,23 19:16 Ginsburg's 44:1 20:6,7,7,19 21:2 23:10,12 25:9 26:9 Housing 27:16 give 12:9,21 13:20,21 23:21,23 27:15 33:25 38:18,23 **humiliation** 11:17,24,24 12:6,10,20 given 6:19,23 12:25 15:19 33:10 38:9 **feels** 33:19 12:21 37:1 41:7 fellow 12:21 hypothetical 13:4 **giving** 18:10 financial 16:13 glad 8:15,21 12:4 **find** 7:16 12:3 **go** 6:9,11 8:6 26:19,22 27:11 41:22 **first** 6:9,12 8:9,17 16:18 18:4,17,18 idea 10:19 38:17 42:22 43:9,25 44:15 19:18 24:14 29:3 33:23 35:15 40:23 identified 3:15 **goal** 37:5 **fixed** 40:8 **ignore** 15:19 goes 12:5 36:18 focused 19:5 **II** 3:13 16:6,11 17:4 18:13 20:10,20 **going** 4:6 22:21 30:17 32:10,10,23 focusing 13:23 21:12 22:1 28:23,23 29:10,13,14,15 38:7,15 40:2 45:12 following 28:21 30:5,5,12 31:10,24 33:25 37:19,22 gone 22:8 39:18 **forbids** 43:25 44:8,12,21 **good** 6:20 10:24 11:1.7 16:9 21:3 **III** 29:16,18,22,24 30:7 31:7 32:1 foreclosed 8:24 21:24 23:25 Gorman 1:6 3:4 11:11 **forecloses** 23:20.24 43:24 44:6 **government** 3:12 4:10 20:6,7 30:13 **form** 23:16 36:4 40:5 43:12 **illustrates** 28:12 29:6 30:22,24 32:4,8,11 34:4 44:6 **formal** 20:15 immune 7:23.25 governmental 36:14,16 43:6 44:10 forms 28:20 **immunity** 4:12,13 5:9,13,14,14,22 44:11,11 **forward** 26:19,22 45:12 22:8,12 35:20,22,24,25,25 38:3,8 **governments** 36:2 45:1,3 immunizing 38:11 **four** 43:5 greater 31:20 fourth 34:5 implausible 43:8 Green 17:19 38:21 Franklin 3:18,20 6:19,23 7:7,9,17 implications 6:12 **GREGORY** 1:16 2:5 16:2 9:7 10:5,9,12,15,16 11:10 13:23,24 **implied** 6:25 41:18,20 **ground** 8:5,11 9:12,18 21:1,1,6 23:6,8,8,13,17 26:3 38:16 **imply** 29:14 grounded 21:1 **import** 15:11 24:22 25:20 38:19 39:22,23 40:22 41:10,15 42:2 Grove 19:19 42:12 **important** 17:13 18:22 37:10 42:24 guess 12:5,11 free 22:13 **impose** 24:25 29:12 32:15 guidance 41:7 **freed** 34:15 **imposed** 24:22 27:19 gun 19:13.13 freedom 33:20 imposes 32:1 Gwinnett 3:18 10:16 Freeman 20:4 imposing 31:17 freighted 14:23 inapplicable 38:2 Н **from** 5:13 7:7 10:16 11:4 14:12 16:1 **inappropriate** 15:22 16:16 25:23 hand 41:17 inclined 12:11 16:11 17:12,23,24 20:14 21:18 handicapped 25:15 22:15,19 24:12,23 29:11 34:15 38:8 include 11:17.23 30:3 37:1 **hangs** 27:9 39:17,24 40:25 42:24 included 11:20 12:1 34:24 **happen** 19:18 full 32:23 includes 12:9 41:25 42:7 happened 19:17,19 32:13 43:18,18 **fundamental** 36:13.19 **including** 3:22 5:8 11:12 hardly 44:21 incompatible 35:19 **fundamentally** 35:19 harsh 19:22 **funding** 16:23 17:5 18:6 19:21 20:9 inconsistent 38:20 **having** 5:9 30:1 25:10 26:9 incorporate 25:12 hear 3:3 16:1 19:15 21:18 funds 19:17 27:19 33:25 **incorporated** 28:23 45:12 heavens 10:24 **further** 21:16 25:18 32:18 42:15 incorporates 25:6 heavily 20:24 incorporating 25:11 **F.2d** 20:4 heavy 19:12,13,14 indeed 43:5

indicated 39:9 **knew** 30:5 43:13,15,19 \mathbf{M} **indicates** 31:4 33:2 know 9:3 12:18 14:6 15:16 28:2 30:5 made 7:14 11:11 12:8 13:14,15 19:7 **indication** 11:20 30:9 32:17 19:15 21:13 26:3 30:1 31:11.12 **individual** 29:23 30:16 31:1 37:13.22 knowledge 26:18 32:14 33:5,7 34:2 40:4 infer 16:16 17:23 41:6 main 13:24 inferable 11:13 make 11:7 12:8 16:9,15 18:17 21:3 inference 20:24 L 1:20 2:8 21:19 21:11 24:7 29:22 31:4 32:14 37:14 inferred 3:21 language 7:7 40:10 37:19 40:20 inflicted 26:13 last 8:9 39:7 41:25 makes 35:12 **informal** 20:14 **later** 43:18 make-whole 12:6 **inhere** 24:24 **Laughter** 8:12 10:21,25 11:2 45:17 making 33:24,25 35:1 inherent 11:6 **law** 3:22 4:6 5:17 7:1,13,14,15,15 Malesko 39:8 40:1 **initial** 10:10 12:24 14:5,9,15 19:8 malicious 27:13 injunction 13:21 **LAWRENCE** 1:14 2:3,11 3:6 42:19 man 13:11 injunctive 39:5 laws 33:20 mandate 9:4 injuries 26:13 lawyers 40:16 many 12:24 13:6 inquiry 19:5 **layer** 15:2 matter 1:10 3:19 6:6 9:15 10:14 11:14 instance 31:20 **laying** 43:16 40:6 45:20 instead 19:4 23:7 leap 21:5 matters 10:4 instructed 11:22 leave 42:16 may 3:9,11 6:8 13:4,7 15:5 21:21 26:5 left 3:19 instruction 12:2 31:20 40:11 **intend** 22:23 28:13 legal 24:6 28:20,24 mean 4:5 5:21 9:21 12:17 13:22 14:8 **intended** 3:17 29:15 30:10 41:2 **legislation** 17:10 29:11 43:13,17,18 19:14,24 23:22 27:1 intent 18:12 19:5 39:21 **legislative** 3:16 4:24 21:11,13 22:4 meaning 7:17 9:25 36:11 **intention** 31:4 33:12 **legislature** 32:9 38:5 means 7:5 intentional 26:17 less 30:25 meant 10:8 11:4.6 let 8:8,15 15:12 42:22 45:6,6 interpretation 45:8 measure 6:1 25:22 investigate 20:11 **levels** 14:23 measures 16:20 18:5,7,19 20:17 liability 19:8 involve 8:6 mechanism 19:21 involved 30:25 41:11 **liable** 32:4 35:13 44:17 mechanisms 38:23 involves 43:4 **light** 15:13 30:4 35:22 40:17 mental 37:1 issue 5:3,5,9 6:18 15:16 16:5 18:21 **like** 4:5 5:12 11:1 15:2,4,23 17:10 mentioned 45:7 21:23 22:8 23:1,2 25:4 34:19,23 18:6 19:13 22:25 33:19 34:19,19 merits 35:12 35:8 36:17 39:2 42:8 38:14 45:2 met 26:21 **IX** 19:13 **limit** 25:20 26:2 29:14 30:7.24 meticulously 45:11 **limitation** 24:22 25:1,12 28:9,22 30:9 might 10:3,9 **limited** 26:10 28:20 29:15 30:8,21 million 11:12 **Jeffrey** 1:6 3:4 38:16 44:4 minutes 42:18 ioint 12:2 limits 31:7.8 41:6 misconstruction 10:5 judgment 21:12,13 33:3,7 34:2 37:16 line 11:4 37:17 mistake 4:18 15:18 judicial 20:24 45:7 litigant 4:23 misunderstood 10:12 **jurisdiction** 11:22 12:6 **little** 3:19 mode 25:23 jurisdictions 12:24 13:6,8 15:5 live 15:10 model 28:21 lobbyists 31:19 jury 11:21 12:17,18,20 **modes** 38:18 just 10:8,9 14:19 15:12 17:15 27:7 **local** 36:2 moment 25:2 38:14 42:22 43:16 30:17 34:4 35:21 40:9 42:22 44:14 long 26:16 monetary 20:18 **Justice** 1:17 3:3,8 4:17 6:14 7:18 8:9 **look** 5:1 7:4 19:1 23:8 27:24 28:13 money 13:1 12:2 13:4 15:17 18:16 21:21 22:11 32:18 33:17 35:8 38:7 39:9 43:20 Monroe 26:4 23:15 28:11 36:24 39:12 40:14 **looked** 37:8 **Monte** 27:22 41:16 42:21 44:1 45:18 **looking** 8:18 19:8 23:7 34:21 38:3 Monterey 27:22 Justices 40:23 39:19 40:22 41:1 more 8:16 10:1,15 19:23 20:20 25:15 looks 4:5 25:25 26:4 31:11 37:16 39:9 43:7 K **lost** 5:9 35:9 most 4:5 27:21 41:19 Kay 1:3 3:4 **lot** 6:8 27:9 **much** 10:1,1 12:21 31:11 39:9 43:18 Kennedy 12:2 13:4 **lots** 14:8 municipal 3:12 4:10 35:24 45:1,2 Kennedy's 36:24 lower 4:8,20,24 22:13 34:20 35:4 municipalities 7:25 38:4

kind 28:19 29:23 39:10

municipality 5:23 6:7 7:22 8:7 only 4:24 25:25 29:24 37:20 38:20 **petitioners** 1:4,15,19 2:4,7,12 3:7 4:1 must 6:25 12:8 23:20,23 41:1 41:23 43:3,3,6 44:5,7,11,17 16:4 42:20 operate 33:21,21 **phrase** 41:13 **operates** 16:12 36:3 **place** 20:22 N 2:1.1 3:1 **opinion** 41:3 **placed** 28:22 29:10 31:7 narrower 10:2 opportunity 9:23 **plaintiff** 3:11 10:15 11:10 24:6 26:11 narrowest 9:18 opposition 35:3.6 26:23 29:23 39:4 oral 1:10 2:2 3:6 16:2 21:19 **Natural** 35:23 please 3:9 21:22 order 12:8 13:1 17:5 point 4:17 10:15 12:6 19:20 20:2 23:4 **nature** 24:24 necessarily 6:25 24:22 40:11 ordinarily 14:2 28:12 35:3,10 40:24 45:6 necessary 16:9 21:3 ordinary 13:25 38:23 pointed 10:4 35:5 **points** 18:18 needed 18:7 original 27:5 29:11 43:11 **policies** 22:4 24:1 25:13 38:2,7,9,11 negotiating 20:14 **originally** 15:5 28:17 31:6 other 14:4 15:12 27:12 36:11 41:17 **Nelson** 1:20 2:8 21:18,19,21 22:10,17 Pollard 41:24 22:19,23 23:15,22 24:13,19 27:2,8 44:18.25.25 45:1.2 **position** 4:9,20 5:6 9:10 17:24 44:3,3 27:11,24 28:10 29:18 30:14,19 31:2 **otherwise** 3:24 7:2 19:2 36:5 44:22 possibilities 6:5 32:3,6,12 33:16 34:10 35:1,5,14 ought 6:18 possibility 6:5 39:7,12 40:14 41:16 42:17 43:9,21 out 6:22 8:10 9:5 14:12,18 35:3,5 possible 9:18 45:13 37:14 40:19 45:2 never 3:17 19:14 21:4 41:14 45:9,9 over 10:7 40:18 possibly 31:18 potentially 23:25 Newport 4:1,13,21 5:16,23 6:21 7:21 overcomes 8:20 8:14,17 9:3 22:9,13 23:2 30:24 34:6 overlay 14:25 power 23:11 24:9,10 overlooked 7:25 powerful 8:14 16:24 34:11,16 35:8,12,20,22 36:9,14,17 36:20 37:8,17 38:2,12 44:13,16 45:4 overrule 45:4 precedent 40:17 Newport's 38:1 overturning 44:15 Precisely 14:14 next 3:4 8:6,18 O'Connor 4:18 22:11 **precluded** 22:15,19 nine 40:23 **premise** 10:16 23:19 36:13 P nobody 6:10 premises 36:20 nondiscrimination 16:21 **P** 3:1 **present** 36:20 42:14 none 14:25 package 14:12 **presented** 9:21 34:25 presents 21:23 nongovernmental 43:4 page 2:2 12:2 **pain** 11:13,23 13:1,5,6,10,13 37:1 **normal** 38:18 preserve 22:12 normally 13:22 **parol** 14:7 Presumably 32:13 **notable** 41:19 parole 15:4 **presumption** 6:16 8:19,19 11:15 **nothing** 9:3 14:2 25:13 part 11:25 12:7,25 28:2,8,9 29:19 18:25 19:2 36:1,9 **noticed** 15:13 31:2.18 presumptively 3:21 **notion** 21:1 26:10 32:7 35:19 38:15 **particular** 16:22 23:23 24:1 32:22 pretermit 15:18 prevail 6:16 39:17.19 34:15 36:4 38:7 39:16 40:3 particularly 16:16 34:3 38:24 previous 45:11 \mathbf{O} primarily 30:16 **party** 4:4 26:14,25 27:3 O 2:1 3:1 passing 17:19 28:4 **principle** 5:17 21:4,6 32:21 42:3 objectionable 34:3 **private** 3:11 13:25 14:11 24:21 29:22 past 20:21 objectives 17:13 pay 20:18 30:21 31:1,5,9,12,13,18 32:9,24 obligation 26:5 **penal** 18:5,19 34:8 36:5,11,12 44:19 obligations 27:18 penalties 44:1,7 **process** 14:24 20:21,23 obscure 31:15 penalty 43:24 program 25:9 observing 9:17 **people** 14:11 22:2 30:18,21 programs 17:14 **obtain** 3:11 26:22 **perhaps** 10:9 15:17 31:15 45:16 prohibit 22:2 obvious 4:6 Period 7:23 **prohibition** 22:5,6 25:18 obviously 32:14 43:4 permanently 40:9 **properly** 7:9 17:21 35:3 **offered** 38:18 **permit** 45:9 propose 14:24 proposes 15:10 offerors 31:13 **person** 6:7 12:8,18 13:2 26:18 okav 8:18 persons 25:19 33:23 34:3 37:6 protections 15:1 once 3:20 45:9 pertinent 17:8 **provide** 18:20 21:2 28:13,18,19 37:4 one 6:5,5 10:3 14:18 15:12 20:2,5 pervasive 39:6 37:20 41:6 43:2 provided 19:9 28:2 42:6 25:25 28:6,6 32:2,18 33:17 36:8,19 **perverse** 33:15,18,18 38:17,22 40:8 44:15 petition 10:4 provides 13:18 16:20,22

providing 29:7 rather 15:8 33:14 30:1,6,8 31:11 34:14 37:4,9,18 **provision** 16:21 22:3 33:4,9 43:24 rationale 10:18 11:9 34:16 38:13 39:18 41:1 42:5 43:3 45:12 44:2.5.7.9 42:13 repeatedly 27:21 **provisions** 20:8 35:19 45:12 read 3:20 9:7 43:22 representative 32:8 reading 10:8 **public** 3:19 22:3 28:9 30:23 31:5,9,13 represents 30:23 really 23:2 38:19 43:21 31:21 32:15,22 33:4,6,10,12,18 34:1 requirement 26:16 34:7 36:11 44:7.18.25 reason 5:8.11 6:20 31:22 38:1 39:1 requirements 26:8 pull 25:21 40:19 reasonable 30:25 requires 8:17 reasons 5:7 7:10 8:21 10:11 15:22 **punish** 12:18 reserve 15:13.24 resolve 22:15 punished 13:17 43:8 **punishment** 11:15 12:19 rebuttal 2:10 15:14,24 42:19 resources 17:12 35:23 **punitive** 3:11,23 5:6 6:5,8 8:23 10:13 recall 17:15 **respect** 8:8 16:19 23:4 33:22 37:10 10:14 12:9,22,25 13:8 14:13,25 15:2 **receipt** 16:13 37:23 39:13,14 15:21 16:7,16,20 17:9,11,16,20,25 receive 20:9 respectfully 45:5 18:15.23.25 19:9 20:24 21:5.7.8.10 received 13:11 respondent 1:21 2:9 15:10 21:20 recently 26:4 27:22 41:24 21:13,24 22:6 23:1,5,13,16 24:4,12 respondent's 4:19 42:25 44:3,22 26:12 28:1,5 29:4,17,18 30:3 32:5 recipients 27:19 33:24 responding 37:15 32:11 34:9,13 35:13 36:1,23 37:2,9 reckless 24:5 response 17:24 35:11,15 recognize 40:2 responsibility 17:3 37:13 38:9,12,17,21 41:15,18 42:1,7 42:9,11 43:2,19,22,25 44:5,9,20 recognized 16:23 18:11,23 21:8 rest 33:11 resting 24:10 45:10 28:25 **punitives** 14:19 30:15,25 41:10 recognizing 27:12 restrict 25:21 result 3:17 8:15 purported 19:4 record 3:16 recovery 26:15 return 7:18 9:2 20:25 purporting 18:12 reverse 8:2 21:14 purpose 25:17 redress 38:24 purposes 25:10 reference 12:3 28:24 reviewed 4:14 referred 24:17 pursuant 15:20 23:12 **right** 8:2 9:11,19 10:3 11:13 13:3,25 reflects 42:2 **p.m** 45:19 14:16 23:15 24:21 27:7 29:16,22 regard 25:9 32:2 37:21 39:2,13,17,20,25 40:2,4 Q regarded 17:21 41:1.3.5.20.21.23 qualifications 28:3,8 regime 13:9 15:2,21 **rights** 16:12 21:25 27:20 28:15 29:3 quantum 21:5 regulations 14:22 31:16 37:11 41:19 42:6 regulatory 16:20 17:3 18:5,19 quarrel 13:4 Roanoke 27:16 quasi-criminal 21:9 **Rehabilitation** 3:13 16:6 19:25 22:1 **Robbins** 1:14 2:3,11 3:5,6,8,25 4:2,4 **question** 3:25 4:3,5 5:3,11,12,20 6:3 32:19 35:15 36:6 37:23 43:2 44:14 4:8 5:5,15,25 6:14 7:6,9,20 8:3,8,13 7:3,8,19,20 8:4 9:1,8,9,14,17,21,23 44:16 9:13,16,20 10:3,22,24 11:3,19 12:1 10:10,20,23 11:1,16,21 12:5,14,16 **REHNQUIST** 3:3 45:18 12:11,15,17 13:3,13 14:3,10,14,17 12:23 13:12.19 14:4.11.16.18 15:3 rejected 4:14 14:20 15:25 36:25 42:18,19,21 15:25 17:15,23 18:14 19:12,25 relate 31:15 45:15.16 relaxed 29:9 robust 14:22 21:17 22:7,14,18,21 23:13,18 24:7 24:17 26:24 27:5,9,24 29:16 30:11 relief 23:11,16,18 25:20 26:23 28:20 round 32:13 rule 14:7,8 15:4 23:9 32:21 34:17 30:15.20 31:25 32:4.7 33:14 34:6.14 28:20 29:1 36:5 38:18 39:3,5,24 34:23,24 35:2,7 36:24 39:7,24 40:3 40:5 41:7,10,14,25 42:5,7 40.21 40:7,15 41:9 42:12,17 44:1 45:15 rely 19:12 37:25 ruling 8:10 9:3 questions 15:23 21:16 42:15 remaining 42:18 \mathbf{S} quintessentially 26:15 remains 40:21 quite 4:22 8:14,22 9:6,20,20 14:21,24 remarkable 44:2 **S** 1:14 2:1,3,11 3:1,6 42:19 17:8 19:10 29:10 37:20 39:13 42:24 remedial 17:4,5 24:18 25:12 26:22 sails 9:4 quote 23:8 26:10 29:19,21 31:3 38:23 same 9:10 34:8 36:10 43:12,14 sanction 16:7 19:16 remedies 3:22 7:1.4.10 14:21 16:11 Sandoval 39:16 18:21 24:20,21 25:5,7,11,18 26:2,2 **R** 3:1 saw 7:18 27:14 28:13.24 29:8.13 31:4.18.23 raise 4:1 34:19 32:15,24 33:5,8,24,25 36:8,10 37:20 saving 35:8 raised 20:13 35:3 38:16 43:15 44:18 says 7:21,22 10:12 11:5 24:20 28:6 range 32:23 42:5,6 remedy 13:22 14:25 16:17,19,24 29:16,18 32:9 34:2 36:3 ranging 20:14 18:24 19:22,23 21:3 23:1,20 24:2,4 **scheme** 16:15 17:8 24:18 25:13,20

24:23 25:8 26:10 27:23 28:18 29:4

29:19.21 31:4

rarely 7:2

Schools 3:19 suit 5:13 **sound** 23:18 **suited** 21:11 **scope** 41:25 source 4:6 **SCOTT** 1:20 2:8 21:19 **speaks** 11:14 42:12 sums 20:18 second 6:6,8,10 8:25 17:7 18:9 24:16 **special** 19:7 33:10,12 36:15,17 supplement 13:9 40:24 species 19:7 **supporting** 1:19 2:7 16:4 secondary 23:2 **specific** 8:20 12:3 **suppose** 5:12,24 27:2 35:7,9,9 secondly 18:22 **specifically** 3:23 13:20 24:3 27:25 supposed 6:3.9.11 9:24 **section** 3:13 16:6.10 17:4 18:13.24 35:24 41:2 **Supreme** 1:1.11 19:6,10 20:11 21:12,25 25:5,11,14 **spending** 15:15 17:10,14 24:9,10,15 sure 19:22 27:9 35:7 24:23,25 25:22 26:1,5,20 27:18 26:1 27:20 32:18,20 35:17,17,18 surely 27:1 36:7 37:11,19,22 38:10 41:19,20,21 41:13 surrogate 37:3 **spoke** 15:8 45:8 survived 42:14 sector 32:9 **spoken** 14:21 sweep 9:6 see 12:4 19:1 standard 38:5 synonymous 7:13 seeking 26:14 start 18:25 22:25 35:21 seem 33:14 starting 23:4 31:16 seems 4:22 5:2 6:4 10:11 16:14 17:8 **T** 2:1.1 **State** 4:9 7:14 19:8 36:2,13 31:15 33:16,17 stated 26:7 take 4:18 5:3 9:4,5 14:1 17:4 18:7 statement 11:8 19:15 20:17 28:7 40:11 seen 11:19 sense 5:16 26:6 States 1:1,11,18 2:6 16:3 27:12 32:23 taken 5:18 6:1 sensible 15:22 takes 7:23 8:2 36:13 36:8 44:17,23 **separate** 14:12,18 39:23 **statute** 5:2 8:20,22 9:25 10:6 11:7,14 taking 9:10 39:9 separately 4:15 13:17,19 14:15 15:7,8,15,19 16:22 talk 8:10 seriousness 20:12 17:1 23:12 24:1,10,24 30:3 33:10,11 talking 34:9 36:22,23 37:2,4 38:19 **served** 38:11 38:6 42:11 targeted 43:23 service 28:9 statutes 9:21 16:5 19:13 29:5 33:1,3 task 15:19 services 22:3 33:5 tell 6:17 12:17 17:15 44:19 34:13,22 36:10,15,21 37:18,24 38:8 set 29:12 41:13 45:11 telling 12:18,19 statutorily 20:22 term 5:14 38:4 setting 43:7 settlement 20:15 **statutory** 16:15 17:8 18:5,19 20:22 **termination** 16:22 17:6 18:6 19:21 several 10:11 16:10,14 25:20 41:18 20:9 severe 16:24,24 stem 11:4 terribly 42:24 test 5:18 **sheds** 30:4 **step** 8:18 32:17 44:15 **short** 10:13 13:10 17:5 20:8 text 22:4 strange 28:4 45:3 significance 42:23 **strong** 8:19 **Thank** 3:8 21:17 42:17.21 45:15 **their** 6:21 13:24 16:8,11 31:19 35:11 **silent** 16:19 44:8 stronger 6:9 similar 25:3 **structure** 22:4 31:3 themselves 17:9 similarly 25:16 29:20 40:1 stuck 32:10 thing 8:9 15:12 44:2,25 45:5 **simply** 13:23 19:1,23 24:15 28:23 **subject** 32:10,20,23 33:6 36:10 37:11 things 8:8,16 14:8 15:9,10 40:8 45:1 29:6 36:18 43:7 41:8 think 5:25 6:1,14,15,17 7:6,9 8:3,14 simultaneously 43:19 subjecting 26:8 9:13 10:7 12:12,19 15:18 17:18,19 situation 4:23 25:4 26:19 submitted 45:20 18:22 19:10 20:23 22:10 23:2,5,6 **size** 43:5 substantial 3:16 25:23 26:3 27:22 28:11 30:4 31:2,14 **sky** 30:23 substantive 26:7 32:17 33:2,16,22 34:2,11 35:14,14 slightly 40:12 successful 20:13 36:18 38:20,21 39:10,13,15 40:14 **smart** 13:1 suddenly 14:12 42:2,12,23 43:8,9 **Smith** 18:23 thinking 38:6 sue 29:25 Solicitor 1:16 **third** 27:3 sues 6:6,7 **some** 15:4,5,9,14 20:18 29:9 37:3 suffering 11:13,23 13:5,6,10,14 37:1 though 11:1 suffers 13:2 40:12 **thought** 3:17 11:24 28:1 30:15 41:12 sufficient 8:14 somebody 12:12 30:12 thousands 20:10 **suggest** 11:10 27:3 30:24 36:19 someone 4:25 threshold 15:16 **something** 13:17 34:19 40:10 45:5 through 11:13 30:8 35:15 somewhat 29:21 31:15 suggested 15:17 time 4:1 15:14.24 19:9 29:3 39:22 40:9.19.24 43:12 sorry 10:22 suggesting 34:24 sort 5:14 38:4 **suggestion** 4:19 13:15,16 times 21:9 43:5 45:10 sought 4:15 10:14 26:11 suggests 9:1 34:7 timing 28:14 43:21

title 3:13 14:21,22 16:6,11,11,15,18 use 5:13 40:20 wide-ranging 10:7 17:4,7,7,10 18:13,21 19:13,13 20:10 used 5:16 13:9 18:5 19:14,21,23 20:1 wielded 30:21 20:20 21:12 22:1 25:7,7,9,11 28:10 25:24 38:4 41:13 wielding 30:17 **Wilder** 27:17 28:17,18,21,22,23 29:2,2,10,13,14 useful 23:6 willful 24:5,5 29:14,15,16,18,20,22,24 30:5,5,7,12 U.S.C 35:16,18 wish 8:25 31:7,8,10,23 32:1,1,1,2,5,9 33:25 \mathbf{V} 37:19,22 43:1,11,14,15,22,24 44:4,6 wished 22:11 44:8.12.21 45:8 v 1:5 3:4 17:19 20:4 26:4 27:16,17,22 withdraw 19:16 titles 31:24 38:21 39:18 word 11:14 28:6 variety 5:7 15:22 words 5:1 14:5 45:2 today 4:14 together 22:1 various 4:10.11 work 15:1 tomorrow 19:15 Vermont 35:23 worth 10:1 very 13:5 15:25 16:24 19:7 29:7 30:18 wouldn't 12:14,16 topic 4:6 tort 18:10 19:8 26:15,22 27:6,7,14,23 31:17 32:22 38:2 41:1 43:12,15,17 **Wright** 27:16 wrong 8:1 11:8,17 16:9 21:3 touchstone 24:8.14 **VI** 14:21,22 16:11,15,18 17:7,7,10 wrongful 37:15 trademark 13:21 18:21 19:13 25:7,7,9,11 45:8 \mathbf{X} traditional 42:5 view 4:11,18 7:11 23:25 24:2 40:12 traditionally 7:13 34:7 **X** 1:2.7 43:20 44:20 treated 34:8 **VII** 28:18,21 29:2 43:15 trench 33:20 **violation** 16:21 24:5 26:17 39:5 true 13:19 33:7 34:10 39:22 40:15 **violations** 18:8 37:11 38:25 year 20:10 39:7,8 41:25 trv 38:5 Virginia 27:17 years 19:17 20:21 40:12 virtue 5:8 7:14,14,15 32:19,20 trying 39:19 40:10,16 \$ Tuesday 1:9 voluntary 26:6 tune 11:11 **\$1** 11:11 W turn 4:21 8:22 10:9 25:6 42:22 **\$150,000** 11:12 13:11 waived 5:13 35:10.10 **two** 6:4 8:8,16 18:2,17 24:13 two-witness 14:7 waiver 6:2 **type** 26:22 want 4:17 7:22 8:10 12:23 13:3 15:13 01-682 1:5 3:4 30:12,20 33:21 34:18 35:7,21 45:13 U wanted 15:8 unbounded 17:11 **10** 40:12 **wants** 33:5 uncapped 43:5 warranted 4:12 **11:12** 1:12 3:2 **under** 3:12 13:23,24 18:20,24 19:25 wary 29:7 **12:08** 45:19 20:1,10,20 24:3 25:5,7,9,16,23 26:5 **Washington** 1:8,14,17,20 **12202** 35:18 26:20 27:18,20 28:8,9,10 29:2,2,21 wasn't 13:15 23:13 26:24 **1527** 20:5 29:24 30:2 31:23.24 32:5 34:13.16 way 12:20 27:12 28:6 30:17 33:17.21 **16** 2:7 36:10,20 37:18,22,22 38:12 39:3 45:3 **1964** 16:12 31:16 41:12,15,25 42:11 44:21 ways 29:21 **1973** 3:13 underlie 10:17 well 4:25 6:12,14 7:3,6 8:3 11:3,16 **1981** 29:9 41:19,21,25 underlies 23:7 12:5,8,11 13:5,19 14:3,20 15:25 **1983** 18:14,24 19:6,10 27:20,23 37:9 **underlying** 17:13 25:13 19:15,18 22:7,10,14 23:22 24:7,13 37:11,15 41:20 **understand** 7:20 13:12 **1986** 32:19 35:16 45:3 26:24 27:2,8 29:2 30:19 31:2 32:8 understanding 35:22 32:12 33:16 39:12,23 40:7,14 **1990** 29:11 **1991** 28:16 29:1 32:13 33:8 42:23 undertake 26:5 went 30:2 uniquely 21:11 were 6:21 7:24 8:24 9:2 10:14 19:1 43:1,13,17 **United** 1:1,11,18 2:6 16:3 22:13 25:14 26:20,21 27:5 31:7 2 unless 3:23 6:23 7:1 23:20,24 42:15 33:10 34:12 38:24 41:12 43:20 unlike 41:20 45:11 **2** 28:9 unlimited 28:7 44:9 we'll 3:3 8:15 16:1 21:18 **2000(d)(7)** 35:17 unpredictable 21:9 we're 5:23 36:22,23 37:2,4 39:9,19,19 **2002** 1:9 unusual 14:24 19:22 40:2 21 2:9 unwarranted 5:7 we've 7:10 8:21 10:4 39:8 41:14 23 1:9 unwillingness 29:9 white 15:13 3 **urged** 6:15 44:3 whole 11:11 12:8 13:14,15 14:12 24:8 urging 5:8 27:9 31:3 **3** 2:4 28:8

30 19:17		
300 20:20		
4		
4 42:18		
42 2:12 35:16,18		
5		
502 32:20 35:17 36:7		
504 3:13 16:6,10 17:4 18:13 20:1,11		
21:12,25 24:9,15,17 25:5,6,12,14,18		
26:1 32:19 33:24 37:19,22 38:10		
45:8		
7		
72 12:2		
8		
8 20:21		
9		
939 20:4		
	,	