1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE	UNITED STATES
2		x
3	CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF	:
4	THE UNITED STATES, ET AL.,	:
5	Petitioners	:
6	v.	: No. 06-939
7	EDMUND G. BROWN, JR.,	:
8	ATTORNEY GENERAL OF	:
9	CALIFORNIA, ET AL.	:
LO		x
L1	Washing	ton, D.C.
L2	Wednesda	ay, March 19, 2008
L3		
L4	The above-entitle	ed matter came on for oral
L5	argument before the Supreme Con	urt of the United States
L6	at 11:07 a.m.	
L7	APPEARANCES:	
L8	WILLIS J. GOLDSMITH, ESQ., New	York, N.Y.; on behalf
L9	of the Petitioners.	
20	THOMAS G. HUNGAR, ESQ., Deputy	Solicitor General,
21	Department of Justice, Wash	ington, D.C.; on behalf of
22	the United States, as amicus	s curiae, supporting the
23	Petitioners.	
24	MICHAEL GOTTESMAN, ESQ., Washin	ngton, D.C.; on behalf
25	of the Respondents.	

1	CONTENTS	
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	PAGE
3	WILLIS J. GOLDSMITH, ESQ.	
4	On behalf of the Petitioners	3
5	THOMAS G. HUNGAR, ESQ.	
6	On behalf of the United States, as amicus	
7	Curiae, supporting the Petitioners	16
8	MICHAEL GOTTESMAN, ESQ.	
9	On behalf of the Respondents	26
10	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF	
11	WILLIS J. GOLDSMITH, ESQ.	
12	On behalf of the Petitioners	55
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1	PROCEEDINGS	
2	(11:07 a.m.)	
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument	
4	next in Case 06-939, Chamber of Commerce versus Brown.	
5	Mr. Goldsmith.	
6	ORAL ARGUMENT OF WILLIS J. GOLDSMITH	
7	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS	
8	MR. GOLDSMITH: Mr. Chief Justice, and may	
9	it please the Court:	
10	In AB 1889, California defunded employer	
11	speech about union organizing because the State's labor	
12	policy is that such speech interferes with employee free	
13	choice. The Federal policy is that employer speech	
14	enhances employee free choice. California's labor	
15	policy is designed to discourage exactly what the NLRA	
16	promotes. The fact that California implemented its	
17	labor policy as an exercise of its spending authority is	
18	irrelevant under Gould. If the	
19	JUSTICE SCALIA: Why do you say the labor	
20	policy promotes it? It certainly permits it, but	
21	what what	
22	MR. GOLDSMITH: Well, Your Honor, I think	
23	that if you look at the exceptions to the policy, in	
24	particular those that allow State funds to be spent for	
25	things that clearly facilitate union organizing for	

1 example, that it's not prohibited under AB --2 JUSTICE SCALIA: No, I'm talking about the 3 -- the Federal policy. You say the Federal policy 4 promotes this employer speech. Why do you say it 5 promotes it? It clearly permits it. It clearly does not discourage it, but is that the same as promoting it? 6 7 MR. GOLDSMITH: I think -- I think it is, Your Honor. I think that the cases of this Court and 8 the cases of the NLRB have made clear that free, open, 9 10 robust debate is important on all matters having to do 11 with the union/employer relationship. That was 12 certainly what the Court noted in Linn. 13 The fact that employer speech is, I think, absolutely critical to an employee being well-enough 14 15 informed to make an informed judgment about whether to 16 say yes or no to a union, further underscores the point. 17 A union election or any situation involving 18 a contest of any sort between a union and an employer is 19 something on which both parties should have the right to 20 speak, and to speak in a noncoercive way, and I think 21 that clearly the National Labor Relations Act promotes 22 that. 23 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Then why did Congress in several statutes have a provision from which California 24

copied when it enacted this measure? In several

25

- 1 statutes, the Congress has said this Federal money will
- 2 go to the grantee, if the grantee says it will not use
- 3 any money that we give them to assist, promote, or deter
- 4 union organizing.
- 5 MR. GOLDSMITH: Your Honor, those are three
- 6 statutes that the court below and Respondents rely on
- 7 heavily. Those statutes, first of all, I don't think in
- 8 any way reflect the meaning or the sense of Congress
- 9 that employer speech is to be inhibited in connection
- 10 with union organizing. Those in no way, I think,
- 11 reflect the overall intent of Congress. More ever,
- 12 nothing in those statutes, in any way, undercuts the
- 13 basic principles of the --
- 14 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But they run against that
- 15 principle because they say at least under these programs
- 16 -- I think there were more than three. Wasn't Medicare
- 17 --
- 18 MR. GOLDSMITH: Medicare was the fourth, I
- 19 believe. It was a regulation not a statute. But
- 20 certainly in doing that, Congress didn't in any way
- 21 modify the NLRA. There's nothing in the legislative
- 22 history of those statutes that suggests that this
- 23 Court's principles, as laid down in Machinists and
- 24 Garmon, were in any way to be inhibited. And, moreover,
- 25 what Congress can do certainly doesn't mean that the

- 1 States have the same right. But --
- 2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Those -- those grantees
- 3 would be subject to the NLRA. So, as to them, it is
- 4 modified.
- 5 MR. GOLDSMITH: Well, it's not modified in
- 6 the same way that AB 1889 modifies it, Your Honor.
- 7 First of all, under those statutes there is no
- 8 requirement that funds be segregated. There is no
- 9 possibility of litigation, treble damages to follow.
- 10 There is no possibility of attorneys' fees to the
- 11 prevailing party. So those statutes are, I think, are
- 12 really unique and don't in any way change the basic
- 13 principle that I think all labor lawyers would agree,
- 14 and that is that, under the National Labor Relations
- 15 Act, all parties to a union election or any issue
- 16 between a union and an employer have the right to speak
- in a noncoercive way.
- 18 JUSTICE BREYER: Say: Speak, go ahead,
- 19 speak, speak. Just not on our nickel.
- MR. GOLDSMITH: Well, I think that's clearly
- 21 what they say, but it's not that simple given the way
- 22 this statute operates, Your Honor.
- JUSTICE BREYER: And they also say -- by the
- 24 way, that you answer this, I'd keep this in mind -- you
- 25 may be right about it being too much of an

- 1 administrative burden, the treble damages et cetera, but
- 2 they've made major concessions here, and they say that's
- 3 a matter to be worked out on remand. And it may be that
- 4 they have to be very careful about inhibiting your
- 5 speech.
- 6 So let's go back over those administrative
- 7 provisions one by one. They are suggesting to us, as I
- 8 read it, don't do that now.
- 9 MR. GOLDSMITH: If I may respond to both
- 10 questions, Your Honor. First of all the notion that one
- 11 can use your own money, to use the vernacular, and use
- 12 it to speak, doesn't answer the most basic question that
- 13 the statute presents, and that is that whether you can
- 14 or you can't -- and I'll get to that in a moment -- the
- 15 fact is that California has regulated, used its spending
- 16 power to make labor policy, something that this Court
- 17 has made clear, in Gould and various other cases, it
- 18 cannot do. But even getting past that, which I think is
- 19 the end of the case, there are certain employers,
- 20 certain Petitioners here who are a hundred percent
- 21 funded by the State. They have no ability, as a result
- 22 -- when I say "funded by the State" I mean they depend
- 23 for their income on State programs, let's say -- they
- 24 have no ability, none, to speak to employees.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well --

1 MR. GOLDSMITH: The State has effectively --2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's not the 3 State's fault. 4 MR. GOLDSMITH: Well, the State's argument 5 to that, Mr. Chief Justice, is that that's a free-market choice. They can either do business in California or 6 7 not. And I would refer the Court --8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, they can do business with other entities beside the State. 9 10 MR. GOLDSMITH: They can, Your Honor, that's 11 true, but that doesn't answer the question because for those that -- because of the service that they provide, 12 such as under Medi-Cal, they have chosen to be in 13 14 business with the State. They are being forced to make an election between doing business with the State or 15 giving up an NLRA-protected right. That is --16 17 JUSTICE BREYER: If you have -- you have a 18 park service of the State and have you a hotdog stand 19 there, it runs the hotdogs, it's private, but the State 20 pays for everything. The State pays for everything. 21 And it happens that, in the grant, they have no place 22 for talking about the union. You're saying they are 23 required to add to the legislation, a special grant, so that the employer can speak of the union? 24 25 MR. GOLDSMITH: Well, a grant presents a

- 1 slightly different problem.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Why? Why? Because they
- 3 say here we are talking about 100 percent money that
- 4 comes out of the State treasury and all we are saying is
- 5 use that money for the State purposes, and those
- 6 purposes do not include talking one way or the other
- 7 about the union.
- 8 MR. GOLDSMITH: Well, that may be the case
- 9 for a particular program or a particular grant, but
- 10 that's not what AB 1889 does, Your Honor. AB 1889
- 11 affects on an across-the-board basis every single
- 12 contractor, every single employer doing business with
- 13 the State of California. So if -- if the State could
- 14 show that it were making that -- it was making that
- 15 policy decision for some fiscal purpose, then there
- 16 might be an argument. But that's concededly not the
- 17 case here, whereas --
- 18 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought you -- you are
- 19 bringing a facial challenge, and I thought that you must
- 20 show, not that the State must show, and the State -- the
- 21 simple argument is look we are paying for certain
- things, and we want to get what we paid for. There are
- 23 a lot of other things that we could have paid for, but
- 24 we -- we want to get, say, a training program for
- 25 elementary schoolteachers. And that has nothing to do

- 1 with union organizing. We don't want to pay for union
- 2 organizing.
- 3 MR. GOLDSMITH: That might be an argument
- 4 that the State could advance credibly if in fact this
- 5 statute had anything to do with saving money. It
- 6 doesn't. The court below unanimously concluded that
- 7 this was not anything that had anything to do with the
- 8 fiscal issues; it had solely to do with making labor
- 9 policy. And as far as a facial challenge is concerned,
- 10 Your Honor, the fact is that this statute was applied to
- 11 the Petitioners. The Petitioners --
- 12 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Where did the lower court
- 13 say it has nothing to do with the State getting what it
- 14 is paying for and not paying for things it doesn't want
- 15 to pay for?
- 16 MR. GOLDSMITH: Well, Your Honor, that's, of
- 17 course, my vernacular for --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: That in --
- 19 MR. GOLDSMITH: -- what the court said, but
- 20 what the court did say was that the State passed --
- 21 legislature passed and the governor signed AB 1889
- 22 solely for labor policy purposes, and that's clear from
- 23 the preamble to the statute. The preamble to the
- 24 statute says, it is the policy of the State of
- 25 California -- in so many words -- that employer speech

- 1 interferes with employee free choice. There's nothing
- 2 in the record. There's no attempt at all to suggest
- 3 that anything achieved by 1889 saves the State a dime.
- 4 That's an argument --
- 5 JUSTICE GINSBURG: So it would come out --
- 6 it would come out differently if the statute has said,
- 7 we want to get what we pay for and we don't -- we choose
- 8 not to pay for labor relations?
- 9 MR. GOLDSMITH: Well, if the State could
- 10 establish that it was acting as a proprietor, within
- 11 meaning of this Court's decision in Boston Harbor, and
- 12 establish as a proprietor that it was doing something to
- 13 advance a fiscal purpose, then perhaps a statute so
- 14 worded would survive the pre-emption challenge. But
- 15 that is clearly not what happened here. There's no
- 16 evidence that that happened, and that is not the purpose
- or the effect of AB 1889.
- 18 And as to the facial challenge issue, if I
- 19 could answer both Justice Breyer and Your Honor, the
- 20 fact is that this statute was applied to the
- 21 Petitioners. The Petitioners went into district court
- 22 and they said, this applies to us, it's burden some for
- 23 us to do -- to do what the statute purports to require
- 24 us to do. The district court granted an injunction and
- 25 so on.

1	But whether it's a facial challenge or
2	as-applied challenge I think really makes no difference
3	here. The Ninth Circuit found that AB 1889 was not
4	pre-empted as a matter of law. Our position is that AB
5	1889 is pre-empted as a matter of law. The purpose and
6	effect are clear. Sending this back to remand to
7	develop facts or trying to sort this out and whether
8	it's a facial or as-applied challenge really doesn't
9	change the basic fact that the court below, as I said,
LO	decided this as a matter of law and NLRA pre-emption
L1	generally raises purely legal issues.
L2	The legal issue is whether or not the
L3	Federal scheme has been interfered with, and I think
L4	that any fair reading of this statute makes it
L5	abundantly clear that that's exactly what happened.
L6	California was very open about it. The preamble says
L7	precisely that: We believe that employer speech
L8	interferes with employee free choice. So that they
L9	passed a statute that is designed to and does severely
20	inhibit an employer's ability to speak. That's what
21	they wanted to do; that's what they did; and that
22	interferes with the Federal policy.
23	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Did they say something
24	different from what Congress said in those three or four
25	statutes that were mentioned earlier?

25

- 1 MR. GOLDSMITH: In terms of using the words 2 assist, promote and deter, those words appear in those 3 statutes in that Medicare regulation, or statute, 4 component of the Medicare statute, and those appear also 5 in, in AB 1899. 6 But, you know, again, Your Honor, from my 7 perspective I think, you know, it's clear that nothing in those statutes changed the fundamental policy that 8 speech, free speech, for both employers and for unions 9 10 is something to be encouraged in the context of a union 11 organizing drive for a number of reasons, not the least 12 of which employees are allowed and entitled to hear both 13 sides of the picture before being put in the position 14 where they have to make a choice. California believes 15 that employer speech is a bad thing. AB 1899 is a reflection of that. They believe it's bad because it 16 17 interferes with employee free choice. 18 JUSTICE ALITO: If you take the example of a nursing home that participates in the Medi-Cal program, 19 20 what does this require? They have to segregate the 21 funds that they get from the State, and they can't use 22 -- is it the case they can't use any of those funds for 23 union-related speech or just the portion that does not
- MR. GOLDSMITH: They can't use any of those

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represent profits?

- 1 funds. The notion that profits -- the statute doesn't
- 2 say a word about profits, and, of course, if the statute
- 3 were to say something about profits, it would make
- 4 segregation of accounts problem in the statute even
- 5 worse than it already is.
- 6 But what a nursing home has to do is to
- 7 track every single possible circumstance under which an
- 8 employee of the nursing home engaged in speech that was
- 9 designed to assist -- which don't happen very often,
- 10 presumably -- promote or deter union organizing.
- 11 And let me try to bring it down to what
- 12 really happens in the union organizing campaign. This
- is, by and large, a seven-day-a-week, 24-hour a day
- 14 operation. There are any number of encounters during
- 15 the course of the union organizing drive that the
- 16 employer responsible for complying with AB 1899 may
- 17 never even know about.
- 18 So, for example, if an employee goes to his
- 19 supervisor and says union X is trying to organize
- 20 nursing home, what do you know about union X? And the
- 21 supervisor says, well, the only thing I know about union
- 22 X is they used to represent the nursing home across the
- 23 street, and then that nursing home is now closed.
- Now, that may be a purely factual statement,
- 25 purely true statement. That's certainly what the

- 1 employer would argue. What the union might argue is
- 2 that no, no. You have to put that in context, and that
- 3 was a statement designed to deter the employee from
- 4 voting for union X.
- Now, if the employer guesses wrong on that
- 6 issue, that is the employer says, well, this is factual,
- 7 it's not something designed to deter union organizing,
- 8 he is subject under the statute to litigation for not
- 9 having segregated -- and I don't know what he would
- 10 really segregate; the statute is unclear. Do you
- 11 segregate the time? Do you account for the time that
- 12 the employer spent talking --
- 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: Even if he guesses right,
- 14 he is subject to the litigation.
- MR. GOLDSMITH: I'm sorry.
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: You said if he quesses
- 17 wrong, he is subject to litigation. He is subject to
- 18 the litigation even if he guesses right.
- 19 MR. GOLDSMITH: That's correct, Your Honor,
- 20 and unlike the prevailing party as the defendant, or the
- 21 prevailing party will of course -- the prevailing
- 22 plaintiff and the prevailing intervenors will recover
- 23 reasonable costs of attorney's fees, the prevailing
- 24 defendant under this statute does not. There is --
- 25 there is no question that it's even impossible for an

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1	employer under the situation that I described to
2	effectively account for that encounter that I describe
3	between an employer and employee.
4	Do you take the 30 seconds that it took and
5	allocate 30 seconds of the salary? Do you take the
6	overtime for the week that the supervisor might have
7	worked? There is really no way that the statute allows
8	for that to happen, and it I think underscores the
9	degree to which this statute interferes dramatically
10	with NLRA protected rights.
11	If there are no further questions, I'd like
12	to reserve the rest of my time for rebuttal.
13	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
14	You've got a friend on the other side still
15	MR. GOLDSMITH: I'm sorry, Your Honor. I
16	forgot about that.
17	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Hungar.
18	ORAL ARGUMENT OF THOMAS G. HUNGAR,
19	ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES,
20	AS AMICUS CURIAE,
21	SUPPORTING THE PETITIONERS
22	MR. HUNGAR: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,

The National Labor Relations Act manifests

and may it please the Court:

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- 1 dividing labor and management. State laws that restrict
- 2 speech regarding unionization frustrate that fundamental
- 3 national policy and are therefore pre-empted, as this
- 4 Court held in Linn.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What about the
- 6 spending clause question? You -- the Federal Government
- 7 has a lot of programs where they use their own money and
- 8 they come with a lot of conditions, and you -- your
- 9 office frequently argues that those are justified under
- 10 the spending clause. Why isn't what California is doing
- 11 here similarly justified?
- MR. HUNGAR: Well, first of all, obviously,
- 13 Your Honor, the National Labor Relations Act does not
- 14 constrain Congress' ability to impose particular
- 15 restrictions. It does constrain the State's ability to
- 16 use their spending power to regulate, as this Court held
- 17 in Gould and in Nash.
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How do we tell
- 19 whether they are using their spending power to regulate
- 20 as opposed to simply attaching conditions to what's done
- 21 with State funds?
- MR. HUNGAR: The Court has identified
- 23 several factors that it has used to distinguish
- 24 regulatory from proprietary conduct, first and foremost,
- 25 as this Court said in Boston Harbor. It looks to

- 1 whether the State is acting in order to effectuate
- 2 policy or is instead seeking to achieve cost savings
- 3 program efficiency and the like. In addition, the Court
- 4 looks to whether the measure --
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: On a case like Rust
- 6 versus Sullivan, is the Federal Government acting to
- 7 promote policy, or is it simply acting in a proprietary
- 8 capacity?
- 9 MR. HUNGAR: Well, of course, that question
- 10 did not come up in Rust against Sullivan because there
- 11 was in a NLRA pre-emption issue there, and the question
- 12 that the State was --
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I'm talking about
- 14 spending power versus regulatory power in general.
- 15 MR. HUNGAR: But what the Court did say in
- 16 Rust is that the government has a legitimate policy
- 17 interest in advancing its preference for life, in that
- 18 case, that the Congress was entitled to advance. The
- 19 problem here is that the policy interest that the State
- 20 is advancing, a policy interest that says employer
- 21 speech regarding unionization interferes with employee
- 22 free choice, is a policy that is directly contrary to
- 23 the Federal policy under the Act as Congress and the
- 24 board have repeatedly recognized, and that this Court
- 25 has repeatedly recognized.

1	So, there is no legitimate interest
2	supporting what the State is doing here, it's an
3	interest directly contrary to Federal policy, unlike in
4	Rust and other First Amendment cases.
5	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, give me an
6	example of a spending clause provision that would be
7	acceptable, not necessarily in this context, but in
8	general, because you would say, well, that's not trying
9	to implement a policy at all.
10	MR. HUNGAR: Well, if the one of the
11	amicus briefs in this case points to a rule that the
12	State has adopted recently apparently in the Medi-Cal
13	context, which says that they will only reimburse
14	administrative costs of hospitals up to the 50th
15	percentile of costs incurred by similar facilities.
16	That's obviously not attempting to regulate
17	any particular labor speech or any other type of
18	conduct. It's simply saying we are only going to
19	regulate this category, this broad general category of
20	costs to a certain level. It's not targeted at a
21	specific category of disfavored speech because the State
22	disfavors that speech. It's simply attempting to save
23	money.
24	That clearly would not be pre-empted, even

though it might have a disproportionate impact on a

25

- 1 particular hospital that's engaged in a costly --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Would your answer be the
- 3 same if -- if -- and I hide contrary to fact, perhaps,
- 4 that a magic administrative scheme were invented so that
- 5 there was no administrative problem, we could identify
- 6 with the greatest of ease each penny that came from a
- 7 State and which did not? And then the State said, you
- 8 know, we do have a policy here. We actually favor labor
- 9 unions in our State, and some other State might have a
- 10 different policy. But we think it best that the State
- 11 officials involved when their company -- when their
- 12 department is being organized, to say nothing. We think
- 13 it best that the employers that we pay a hundred percent
- 14 to, given their -- their strong funding by the State,
- 15 that they got to find some money elsewhere, and those we
- 16 pay 50 percent to better use the private money, not use
- 17 our money.
- Now, no administrative burden whatsoever,
- 19 but that's the policy. Now, is there some rule or
- 20 statute that would make that unlawful or pre-empted that
- 21 policy?
- MR. HUNGAR: Justice Breyer, I think -- I'm
- 23 assuming in your hypothetical that this hypothetical
- 24 law, in addition to posing no administrative burdens
- 25 also doesn't have the strict liability of treble

- 1 damages.
- 2 JUSTICE BREYER: No, on all these things
- 3 which I think they are asking us on the other side to
- 4 leave for another day, none of them exist. They all
- 5 work perfectly. It's only the magic system has been
- 6 developed to, without any extraneous burden, segregate
- 7 the State money from the non-State money. And the only
- 8 rule is don't use the State money when you speak.
- 9 That's the only rule.
- 10 MR. HUNGAR: Justice Breyer --
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: By the way, other states
- 12 have exactly opposite rules, they are right-to-work
- 13 states. They give you extra State money. So -- but one
- 14 State has this rule and --
- 15 MR. HUNGAR: Obviously that would be a very
- 16 different case.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Ah, well, if it's a very
- 18 different case, then why aren't they right to say this
- 19 is a facial challenge, leave that very different case
- 20 which raises all the issues to be worked out when we
- 21 discover whether this is --
- 22 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why do you say it's a very
- 23 different case Mr. Hungar? I don't really understand
- 24 it.
- 25 MR. HUNGAR: It's a very different case in

- 1 the sense that in this case it's -- from every one of
- 2 the factors that this Court has looked to, to determine
- 3 regulatory versus proprietary -- and this case cuts
- 4 fairly in favor of the conclusion of the unanimous court
- 5 of appeals, all 15 judges, that this is regulatory.
- 6 It's punitive; it's government-wide; it's not program-
- 7 or contract-specific; it's not the kind of conduct that
- 8 private entities engage in. All of the factors -- and
- 9 it's expressly as well as obviously, in effect, intended
- 10 to disfavor a particular kind of speech that Congress
- 11 favors.
- 12 So everything cuts in favor of it being
- 13 regulatory; whereas, in your hypothetical, most of those
- 14 considerations would not. However, I think it's still
- 15 the case that in that hypothetical, what the State is
- 16 doing is regulating -- for labor policy reasons it's
- 17 disfavoring a particular type of speech. The State does
- 18 not have any obligation under the Act to fund
- 19 unionization speech, but what it can't do under the Act
- 20 is deny a government benefit because of a -- a labor
- 21 policy. That's what this Court held in Nash.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Is my right-to-work example
- 23 equally -- equally pre-empted?
- MR. HUNGAR: Yes, I think it would be. But,
- 25 again --

- 1 JUSTICE BREYER: So, they could not say in
- 2 Utah, to take a State at random, the -- here we have
- 3 government grants and there's overhead, and we would
- 4 like you to spend this overhead; indeed, you're
- 5 certainly free to spend this overhead in speaking as
- 6 much as you want, should there be an organizing
- 7 campaign. Don't worry about spending the government
- 8 part. Can they do that? You say no, they couldn't?
- 9 MR. HUNGAR: Well -- I took your -- the Utah
- 10 example to be one where the State was somehow mandating
- 11 this particular expenditure.
- JUSTICE BREYER: No.
- MR. HUNGAR: If the State is simply -- is
- 14 not taking -- is taking a hands-off approach, it's hard
- 15 to characterize it as regulation. But what this Court
- 16 held in Nash, what this Court held in Gould, what this
- 17 Court held in Livadas is, when the State is denying
- 18 benefits -- even though there might be plenty of
- 19 legitimate reasons that might enable it to deny benefits
- 20 -- if it's denying benefits for the purpose of advancing
- 21 labor policy in an area where Congress has said there is
- 22 to be no regulation, that's pre-empted, and that's
- 23 doubly pre-empted here where the labor policy that the
- 24 State is advancing is directly contrary to the Federal
- 25 labor policy that Congress and the Board have

- 1 enunciated.
- 2 And with respect to the facial versus
- 3 as-applied or the suggestion that somehow because you
- 4 might be able to craft a statute that would achieve some
- of the effects of this statute in a nonpre-empted way,
- 6 that doesn't make this statute not facially pre-empted.
- 7 This statute has the punitive provisions with the strict
- 8 liability, treble damages, the segregation requirement
- 9 that's virtually impossible to apply in practice, the
- 10 clear expressive mission of a regulatory policy that's
- 11 contrary to Federal policy.
- 12 This is the statute that is in front of the
- 13 Court. This is the statute that is facially
- 14 unconstitutional, and that's the issue that the Court
- 15 should decide in order to correct the Ninth Circuit's
- 16 error, which said it's both facially and as applied
- immune from pre-emption challenge before it --
- 18 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What policy was Congress
- 19 implementing in the Federal funding statute that
- 20 California copied?
- 21 MR. HUNGAR: Your Honor, California did not
- 22 copy any Federal statutes. None of the Federal statutes
- 23 has a segregation requirement; none of them imposes
- 24 strict liability, punitive damages.
- 25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But they do say that the

- 1 money is not to be spent to assist, promote, or deter
- 2 union organizing.
- MR. HUNGAR: Yes, there are three Federal
- 4 statutes that impose use restrictions.
- 5 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And why do they do that?
- 6 MR. HUNGAR: It's not clear why they did
- 7 that, other than obviously they were choosing not to
- 8 compensate those particular kinds of costs as well as
- 9 the others. Congress is entitled to carve out
- 10 particular exceptions to the general nonregulatory
- 11 provisions of the Act, just as it has done in section
- 12 8(c), where they have carved out coercive employer and
- 13 union speech for regulation, even though other speech is
- 14 to be unregulated.
- 15 It's important to understand also that the
- 16 general policy in Federal grant programs is to the
- 17 contrary. There is no such restriction in the vast
- 18 majority of Federal grant programs involving the vast
- 19 majority of Federal grant money.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you don't -- there's
- 21 no reason, rhyme or reason to what they would have done
- 22 in these three statutes that you say is flatly contrary
- 23 to national labor relations policy?
- MR. HUNGAR: Well, it's not contrary to
- 25 national labor relations policy, because Congress has

- 1 chosen to create an exception, and it has the right to
- 2 do so; the State does not.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: It was labor policy. I
- 4 mean, you have to acknowledge it was labor policy in
- 5 these other cases, just a different labor policy that
- 6 the Federal Government wanted, right?
- 7 MR. HUNGAR: In -- in a specific program --
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: Right.
- 9 MR. HUNGAR: -- which obviously the State's
- 10 law does not apply to those programs; it applies to
- 11 State spending across the board.
- 12 Thank you.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 14 Mr. Hungar.
- Mr. Gottesman.
- 16 ORAL ARGUMENT OF MICHAEL GOTTESMAN
- 17 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS
- 18 MR. GOTTESMAN: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
- 19 it please the Court:
- 20 Until this statute was enacted, California
- 21 was in the anomalous position that it was financing
- 22 speech on one side of union organizing campaigns but not
- on the other, because most grants, programs, contracts
- 24 include employment costs as an allowable cost.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, so was anyone

- 1 who hired a company to do any kind of work, right?
- 2 Because the Federal policy meant that they couldn't try
- 3 to restrict what activities the company engaged in with
- 4 respect to union organizing.
- 5 MR. GOTTESMAN: Yes. I mean, a private
- 6 employer could have said the same things that the State
- 7 said: don't use our money to do this. And they would
- 8 not have violated anything by doing that.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: I'm not sure why you
- 10 characterize California as financing one side of a
- 11 debate, because -- and this I think is sort of the nub
- 12 of the disagreement between the two sides here -- their
- 13 argument is that a State can determine what it wants to
- 14 buy with its money, but what California is doing is
- 15 telling its contractor what it can do with the money
- 16 after the State has got what it paid for.
- 17 MR. GOTTESMAN: That's not correct, Your
- 18 Honor.
- 19 JUSTICE SOUTER: And that's the --
- 20 MR. GOTTESMAN: That's what they claim.
- 21 JUSTICE SOUTER: I understand that is the
- 22 basic distinction between a case like Rust and a case
- 23 like this.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Right.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: They're trying to control

- 1 their profits as opposed to determining what they get --
- 2 what you get for your money. And how do you respond to
- 3 that?
- 4 MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, that's true if it were
- 5 the case that the State's statute said: Even after you
- 6 have earned this money by performing all the service we
- 7 asked, you still can't -- it's therefore now your money;
- 8 you can't use it. That is not what the statute means.
- 9 That is -- the State has been very clear about that.
- 10 JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, is there any case in
- 11 which California claims that it has not gotten the
- 12 service that it paid for as a result of the position
- 13 which an employer -- a grantee employer took on -- on a
- 14 unionization issue?
- 15 MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, there haven't been any
- 16 cases decided under this statute, but what the court of
- 17 appeals pointed out is that the Petitioners did not move
- 18 for summary judgment on the ground that you're
- 19 forbidding us from using our money. They moved for
- 20 summary judgment solely on the ground that it was the
- 21 obligation of the State to give them money that they
- 22 could use for these purposes. And that it was wrong --
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, that's not quite
- 24 accurate. They moved for summary judgment on the ground
- 25 that what the State was doing was in effect regulating

- 1 labor relations --
- 2 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- and that that
- 4 activity was pre-empted.
- 5 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right. Well, yes, on that
- 6 core issue, they said to -- to tell us that we cannot
- 7 use State funds for this purpose -- well, they are still
- 8 State funds -- is to regulate us. And we submit that
- 9 that is wrong. This is --
- 10 JUSTICE SOUTER: Why do you say "while they
- 11 are still State funds" -- the -- the money that the --
- 12 that any employer is using, I presume, to the extent
- that it can be identified, is money in the employer's
- 14 pocket. And the only claim that California would have,
- 15 it seems to me from the pre-emption argument, is that in
- 16 fact we are buying a form of speech or a form of
- 17 promotion of labor policy when we contract with social
- 18 service agencies or whatnot. But I don't understand
- 19 that to be California's argument at all.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: No. Our argument -- let's
- 21 take one of the two provisions that the district court
- 22 struck down, and that Petitioners argue properly struck
- 23 down. It said that when we give you grant money, don't
- 24 use that money for this purpose. Now, the State gives
- 25 them the money up front, before they have provided the

- 1 services. And that's true universally.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Yes, but if they give them
- 3 grant money -- let's say it's a grant rather than a
- 4 contract, and I assume that's, you know, the point
- 5 you're making. When they give them grant money, I
- 6 assume they're giving them grant money in order to do or
- 7 to perform whatever kind of service or function the
- 8 agency is devoted to performing.
- 9 MR. GOTTESMAN: Correct.
- 10 JUSTICE SOUTER: Not to -- not to enforce
- 11 labor policy of one sort or another, but to promote the
- 12 arts or conservation or whatever the organization does.
- 13 And there's no argument here that the organization is --
- 14 is failing to promote conservation or the arts or
- 15 whatever, and that for that reason, California isn't
- 16 getting what it's paying for. The argument is that
- 17 whatever California has to -- I'm sorry, whatever the
- 18 organization has to spend, say, on its labor relations,
- 19 which is something that is left over from its promotion
- 20 of the arts, cannot be spent except in accordance with
- 21 California policy.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, first, if they don't
- 23 spend all the grant money on the prescribed purposes,
- 24 they have to give it back to the State because grants
- 25 aren't profit --

- 1 JUSTICE SOUTER: Yes, but I assume they are
- 2 entitled to some overhead cost which would include the
- 3 cost of their employee-related -- managing employee
- 4 relations?
- 5 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right. And that's --
- 6 JUSTICE SOUTER: So that wouldn't be money
- 7 left over. That would --
- 8 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right, but that, Your Honor,
- 9 is where the concern that the State was addressing comes
- 10 in.
- 11 Traditionally, when the State gave grant
- 12 money, one of the permissible uses of that money was for
- 13 the costs of employees who had to perform the grant, and
- 14 without this limitation, that would have included the
- 15 employer spending the money to combat unions. That
- 16 would be -- could arguably be a legitimate cost.
- 17 JUSTICE SOUTER: So, is the argument that
- 18 the employer in fact -- that the employer is in fact
- 19 devoting less of the grant money to the purpose of the
- 20 grant, so that it falls within Rust?
- 21 MR. GOTTESMAN: Well -- yes. Well, our
- 22 position is certainly yes. That is, the State is
- 23 entitled to prescribe what it is prepared to pay for in
- 24 a grant and what not, and it is not required to
- 25 subsidize the employer's campaign --

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: But the --
- 2 MR. GOTTESMAN: -- against a union or for a
- 3 union, for that matter.
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: The difference between this
- 5 and Rust is that the Federal Government in Rust was
- 6 assuredly following a Federal policy.
- 7 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right.
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: But it was a Federal policy
- 9 that the Federal Government had every right to
- 10 implement. We do not want to support abortions.
- 11 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right.
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: The issue here is whether
- 13 the policy that California is trying to implement --
- 14 namely, we do not want the employer to -- in its view --
- 15 disrupt the -- the labor management relations by -- by
- 16 opposing union -- unionization.
- 17 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right.
- 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: That -- that is the issue,
- 19 whether that is a policy that California can -- can
- 20 implement.
- 21 MR. GOTTESMAN: That is not the State's
- 22 policy, and the preamble to the statute does not say:
- 23 the State disapproves of employers spending money. What
- 24 it says --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, but the policy

- 1 -- the policy is they don't want employers to talk about
- 2 unionization.
- 3 MR. GOTTESMAN: No. They don't want them to
- 4 spend them the employer's money -- the State's money to
- 5 talk about unionization.
- 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why? Because it's wasting
- 7 the money or because that is their --
- 8 MR. GOTTESMAN: Because the State wants --
- 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: -- their labor policy?
- 10 MR. GOTTESMAN: Because the State wants to
- 11 be neutral, and that -- the right --
- 12 JUSTICE SOUTER: Then that -- then that, it
- 13 seems to me, cuts the feet off your argument of a moment
- 14 ago, that in fact the State's concern is that it's
- 15 getting less of what it thought it was getting for with
- 16 its grant, because more is being spent on labor policy.
- 17 And now, it seems to me, you're saying no, that's not
- 18 the case. It is simply the fact that the time that the
- 19 employer spends in talking with employees, whatever the
- 20 subject is, involves a policy that California does not
- 21 want to support, and, therefore, California prohibits
- 22 them spending that time for purely policy reasons.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, it prohibits them
- 24 using the State's money to do it. Of course they can
- 25 use their own money to do it.

1 JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, your argument a 2 moment ago is that they were using the State's money because in fact they were providing less of the service 3 4 that the grant was for and spending that in -- in 5 conversation with employees about labor unions. And it seems to me your answer to Justice Scalia was 6 7 inconsistent with that. Your answer to Justice Scalia, 8 as I understood it, was it is simply that they do not want that policy being implemented by anyone who gets 9 10 any money from the State within that State. 11 MR. GOTTESMAN: I don't think I said "inconsistently." What I said was, previously it was 12 13 within the permissible scope of a grant to spend money 14 in an organizing campaign, either assisting, promoting, 15 or deterring unionization. The State is now saying that will no longer be. We don't really want to spend grant 16 17 money on that, and our reason is that we think we -- the 18 State's money should not be used by either side in that 19 union organizing --20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How is that -- how 21 is that different from saying there's a Federal rule, an 22 OSHA requirement you've got to have certain protective 23 devices or whatever, and the State says, well, we want 24 to get the most out of our money, so our money cannot be 25 used to put in these federally required safety devices;

- 1 you can use somebody else's money for that. Why isn't
- 2 that the same thing here? You're saying there's a
- 3 Federal labor policy that allows this, and we don't want
- 4 our money to be spent implementing that policy or
- 5 pursuant to that policy.
- 6 MR. GOTTESMAN: Because there is no Federal
- 7 labor policy that requires States to use State treasury
- 8 money to finance a party who is engaged in this debate.
- 9 That's why this is just like Rust.
- 10 JUSTICE SCALIA: Just like -- like Gould. I
- 11 mean, there is a case where a State used State money, no
- 12 contracting with any -- with any company that's been
- 13 convicted of unfair labor practices three times.
- 14 Strictly State contracting policy, we just don't want to
- 15 spend our money dealing with such a person.
- 16 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right, but there we're
- 17 saying we won't deal with you. That's -- that would
- 18 classically -- if the State in this case said, no
- 19 employer who opposes unions can have a State contract,
- 20 that would be Gould. It would also be a violation of
- 21 the First Amendment.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Why wouldn't that be the
- 23 State's managing its own money? It's our money.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, But it is not --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: We just don't want to deal

- 1 with people who oppose unions.
- 2 MR. GOTTESMAN: No, there's a huge
- 3 difference between saying, don't use our money to do
- 4 something, and saying, we won't deal with you even when
- 5 you use your own money to do it. The implication that
- 6 this is pre-emptive --
- 7 JUSTICE SOUTER: But on your argument, there
- 8 is no "your own money." You're saying that everything
- 9 that the grantee gets in a grant situation is the
- 10 government's money.
- 11 MR. GOTTESMAN: Correct.
- 12 JUSTICE SOUTER: But that distinction that
- 13 you just made in answer to Justice Scalia could not be
- 14 drawn.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, if they have their own
- 16 money, they can spend it on that. They just can't use
- 17 the State's money.
- 18 JUSTICE SOUTER: No, the hypothesis of this
- 19 whole argument is that we are talking with a grantee who
- 20 was fully funded by -- I thought fully funded by the
- 21 State, and I thought that was your strongest argument.
- 22 So that this alternative -- well, you can use your own
- 23 money -- is an alternative which, you know, by the very
- 24 hypothesis that we are arguing on, will never exist.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, if we have a grantee

- 1 who has no other money, that doesn't mean the State has
- 2 an obligation to provide them money to oppose
- 3 unionization. It would be very odd to believe -- and
- 4 this is, after all, implied pre-emption -- that it was
- 5 Congress's intent without mentioning it to say that it
- 6 is the obligation of States to provide funding to
- 7 employers to do this.
- 8 JUSTICE STEVENS: Mr. Gottesman, can I ask
- 9 sort of a background question to be sure I understand
- 10 your position?
- 11 Am I correct in assuming that if the State
- 12 of California had its labor relations agency make it an
- 13 unfair labor practice to engage in this employer speech
- 14 described here, that that would be pre-empted?
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Employer speech with its own
- 16 money?
- 17 JUSTICE STEVENS: Yes.
- 18 MR. GOTTESMAN: Of course that would be
- 19 pre-empted, absolutely pre-empted.
- JUSTICE STEVENS: Okay.
- 21 MR. GOTTESMAN: If not pr-empted, it would
- 22 certainly be a violation of the First Amendment as well,
- 23 to punish them for engaging in speech.
- 24 JUSTICE STEVENS: Well, if they adopted the
- 25 rule that the Federal labor board applied prior to the

- 1 Taft-Hartley Act.
- 2 MR. GOTTESMAN: Exactly.
- JUSTICE STEVENS: That's what I'm asking.
- 4 MR. GOTTESMAN: Exactly. Yes.
- 5 JUSTICE STEVENS: That would be pre-empted?
- 6 MR. GOTTESMAN: Of course that would be
- 7 pre-empted.
- JUSTICE STEVENS: I want to be sure.
- 9 MR. GOTTESMAN: Our position, however, is
- 10 that it's quite different to say that the National Labor
- 11 Relations Act requires the State to pay for these
- 12 activities. And --
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why --
- 14 JUSTICE STEVENS: It does require that this
- 15 -- it arguably requires that this area of combat between
- 16 labor and management be unregulated.
- 17 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right. And this is not
- 18 regulation, for the very reasons that this Court in
- 19 Regan and Rust and in a whole line of cases had said
- 20 that it is not regulation to simply say, we the
- 21 government are not going to pay for this activity.
- 22 That's all that California is saying in this
- 23 case: we are not going to pay for it. It's the policy
- 24 of the State not to interfere in these union organizing
- 25 drives; therefore -- and this is the precise words of

- 1 the preamble -- "for this reason, the State should not
- 2 subsidize."
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I think your reason for not
- 4 paying for this activity is that you don't like this
- 5 activity.
- 6 MR. GOTTESMAN: That's not true.
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: I call that -- I call that
- 8 regulating the activity.
- 9 MR. GOTTESMAN: That is not at all the case,
- 10 Your Honor. There's nothing in this preamble -- the
- 11 other side keeps characterizing the preamble, which they
- 12 don't include in their statutory appendix, as saying, we
- don't like the employer doing it. That's not what it
- 14 says; it's on page 3.
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, you allow the
- 16 employer to engage in all other employee relations, and
- 17 you're willing -- that can be done without -- the one
- 18 thing the employer can't do is speak out against the
- 19 union. This isn't because you don't --
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, you've got for or
- 21 against. This is content discrimination, not viewpoint
- 22 discrimination; and it is content discrimination whose
- 23 purpose is to keep the State's funds out of this area of
- 24 context. The taxpayers' money should not be spent
- 25 supporting one side and not the other in these disputes.

- This court in the Linn case -- and I want to quote this sentence, because this is the key to why a
- 3 policy of neutrality with respect to the use of the
- 4 State's money is not, you know, regulated. We -- this
- 5 was a case in which, to be sure, it was the Federal
- 6 Government was denying food stamps to strikers. And the
- 7 claim was that was a violation of their associational
- 8 rights under the First Amendment. Everybody else who
- 9 satisfies the test for food stamps is entitled to them,
- 10 but we are not going to give them to strikers.
- 11 And when the Federal Government is asked why
- 12 is that, they said, well, we don't want to get involved.
- 13 To be sure if we give them the money, that would make it
- 14 likely the strike would go on longer. But we are not
- 15 being anti-union. We just want to be hands off. We
- 16 want to be -- we don't want Federal money spent to help
- one side or the other in this labor dispute.
- 18 And what this Court said was, we have little
- 19 trouble in concluding that that provision is rationally
- 20 related to the legitimate governmental objective of
- 21 avoiding undue favoritism to one side or the other in
- 22 private labor disputes.
- Now, that's the core of what this statute is
- 24 about. The labor union --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You're saying it

- 1 doesn't give favoritism to one side or another?
- 2 MR. GOTTESMAN: It just takes the State's
- 3 money out.
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So that depends, as
- 5 a practical matter, on the view that there are at least
- 6 some employers who would be arguing in favor of
- 7 unionization?
- 8 MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, it wouldn't matter if
- 9 they were arguing for or against. The point is that --
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes, but my point is
- 11 that there are precious few who argue in favor of it.
- 12 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right. Well that may well
- 13 be true, but the point is when they are arguing against
- 14 the union, until this statute State money was being used
- 15 to argue against the union, the union was not getting
- 16 any State money to respond. The State was funding one
- 17 side of this dispute. And the notion that it was an
- 18 implied purpose of Congress in the National Labor
- 19 Relations Act to compel States to fund one side of a
- 20 dispute with a subsidy is -- would be remarkable.
- 21 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, when the State pays a
- 22 program participant -- let's again take the case of a
- 23 nursing home -- for providing services to patients who
- 24 are covered by Medi-Cal, and money is paid to the
- 25 nursing home, it's your position that remains the State

- 1 's money.
- 2 MR. GOTTESMAN: If this -- if the nursing
- 3 home -- there are a number of different ways in which
- 4 this money is paid to the State. If the situation is
- 5 the nursing home first provides the services and when
- 6 they have done so billed the State for the money, that's
- 7 not State funds. Once they receive the money, since
- 8 they put the money up in front to provide the service,
- 9 they are being reimbursed for it, that's not the State's
- 10 funds. It's the State's funds if the State gives them
- 11 the money up front.
- 12 As is true universally with respect to
- 13 grants. We give you this money. This money now because
- 14 of this statute its purposes are limited so that they do
- 15 not include engaging in -- one side or the other in
- 16 union organizing. If you have your own money, feel free
- 17 to spend your own money on that, but we are not giving
- 18 you this money for that purpose.
- 19 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Let me just be clear. The
- 20 statute with reference to State contractors, which is
- 21 the \$50,000 statute, and the statute with reference to
- 22 private employers, which is the \$10,000 statute, in all
- of those cases, the law is applicable only if the money
- 24 is paid before all the work is done?
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Yes. If you look at the

- 1 contract one, which is not actually before the Court
- 2 because nobody had standing -- the district court ruled
- 3 to raise it -- it says the State funds to assist,
- 4 promote or defer -- union organizing during the life of
- 5 the contract are not to be spent on this.
- 6 So once the contract is done, that is --
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, the question of when
- 8 the contract is done is different from the question of
- 9 when the money is paid.
- 10 MR. GOTTESMAN: Of course. Right.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: He is asking with when the
- 12 money is paid.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: So when you pay the money up
- 14 front and you say here is your money to do the
- 15 contract --
- 16 JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, what about the
- 17 situation in which the contract runs for a year and you
- 18 bill monthly? On your theory the contract is still
- 19 going on and yet there is no prepayment. I assume on
- 20 your argument they would be just as bound by the
- 21 California policy as if they got a hundred percent
- 22 payment up front.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, that's -- that's a
- 24 question about a meaning of a provision that isn't at
- 25 this issue in this case. The ones that are at issue in

- 1 this case --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, do you concede that
- 3 if they -- if all they did under a 12-month contract
- 4 was -- was bill for services rendered every past 30
- 5 days, that there would be either no application of the
- 6 California law or that the application would be
- 7 pre-empted?
- 8 MR. GOTTESMAN: That might well be the case.
- 9 But we don't have an interpretation of that provision of
- 10 the California law.
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: I'm sorry. That was an
- 12 either/or.
- 13 (Laughter.)
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: Which might be the case?
- 15 MR. GOTTESMAN: Oh. I say it might be the
- 16 case.
- 17 JUSTICE SOUTER: It's like saying yes.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Yes.
- 19 (Laughter.)
- MR. GOTTESMAN: But again, that issue isn't
- 21 here. What we've got here are programs, some of which
- 22 the State advances the money, and some of which it pays
- 23 after the services have been completed.
- JUSTICE BREYER: So you did on that point on
- 25 page 27 and 25 and 29 of the AFL-CIO brief, I took the

- 1 statements there, where it would say "organizations,"
- 2 namely organizations, even those that receive a hundred
- 3 percent of their money from the State are free to use
- 4 their profits?
- 5 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right.
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: If there are any, or any
- 7 other non-state moneys they had?
- 8 MR. GOTTESMAN: And we the State responded
- 9 say the same thing in our brief. We say it at pages 26
- 10 to 27: The State maintains a legitimate interest in
- 11 program funds until such time as the program participant
- 12 has provided the State with a service the State has
- 13 funded.
- 14 JUSTICE BREYER: So if you sell them tables
- 15 and they write you a check, the State, for the tables,
- 16 at that point the check is yours?
- 17 MR. GOTTESMAN: Of course.
- 18 JUSTICE BREYER: All right.
- 19 MR. GOTTESMAN: There is no question about
- 20 that, because in that case, that would be covered by the
- 21 contract provision that isn't here. But it says once
- 22 the contract is completed, it's your money.
- So the concern here only is that they not
- 24 use our money. The State's brief also says --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What if there is a

- 1 warranty for another year, say if these tables break you
- 2 have to replace them?
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, that's a question
- 4 of -- remember, neither of the lower courts has
- 5 interpreted this statute. This statute has never been
- 6 interpreted. That's -- and what the court of appeals
- 7 said is that's because the argument that you all have
- 8 been asking me about was not raised in summary judgment
- 9 by the Petitioners. Their core argument is the State
- 10 has an obligation to subsidize our speech. And that's
- 11 the only issue they brought up on summary judgment.
- 12 Because Judge Beezer in the panel decision said, oh,
- 13 look at all these, quote, as he called them, horribles
- 14 that will come from this, Judge Beezer got into all
- 15 these issues: The accounting would be burdensome, that
- it's going to be the employer's own money.
- 17 And what the majority said is, number one,
- 18 that's not here. And number two, they said this -- I
- 19 believe it's on page 34 of the appendix but I'm not
- 20 certain of the -- wait a minute, I can tell you the
- 21 exact page. Yes, it's page 34, in a sense the parade of
- 22 horribles goes far beyond the scope of plaintiff's
- 23 facial challenge, that is the challenge they brought on
- 24 summary judgment. The district court made no findings
- 25 nor is there evidence that this statute, quote, "co-ops

- 1 the payments for goods and services and profits realized
- 2 under a contract ."
- JUSTICE BREYER: What is your recommendation
- 4 as to -- we've heard today, too, in the briefs it's
- 5 there, I put the thing that I've heard as -- well, the
- 6 example with the tables is an example of it. When does
- 7 the profit actually accrue? Is there treble damage
- 8 provision that makes this much worse? Are there
- 9 administrative requirements that in practice make it
- 10 impossible? Is it administered in such a way that the
- 11 employee we heard about would just not know what to say,
- 12 the employer's representative?
- 13 All those things could be problems, and you
- 14 say, well, they haven't been dealt with yet. And your
- 15 recommendation as to what we should do is what?
- 16 MR. GOTTESMAN: Is affirm, because all the
- 17 court has said is the motion for summary judgment was
- 18 improperly granted.
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: And if we did that, how
- 20 would all these problems be worked out? I mean, how
- 21 would the arguments that you -- they think are far too
- burdensome, you think they are not and can be done
- 23 properly, how does that get worked out?
- 24 MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, first of all, let's
- 25 talk about the burdens, the accounting burdens, which

- 1 are actually quite minimal under Medicaid, because they
- 2 already have to do this because the Federal Medicaid
- 3 requires them to -- to account for which were allowable
- 4 expenditures and which were not in a very detailed
- 5 accounting form. And of course, the Federal Medicaid
- 6 says that this is not allowable expenditure, so they
- 7 have to do this anyway, half this money is Federal and
- 8 half is is State.
- 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: You're not going to go
- 10 through all of these one by one, are you?
- 11 MR. GOTTESMAN: Pardon? No. I just wanted
- 12 to give an example of that.
- But with respect to each of these, we need
- 14 to have a record. For example, on the burdens there is
- 15 an affidavit from an accounting firm submitted by the
- 16 defendants that says this is really not burdensome at
- 17 all.
- 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: Let me ask you a basic
- 19 question that doesn't require you to get into one by
- 20 one. Suppose you have a State that doesn't want to have
- 21 its money used to assist unions. This is an antiunion
- 22 State and it adopts the same kind of law that you have.
- 23 And it simply says, none of -- none of this State's --
- 24 yes, you can recognize unions if you like, but none of
- 25 the money that we give you --

- 1 MR. GOTTESMAN: Give who.
- 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: -- shall be used -- shall
- 3 be used for collective bargaining or for any -- any
- 4 activities involving unions.
- 5 MR. GOTTESMAN: That would be -- that would
- 6 be the moneys we give to the employer?
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: Same. Yes.
- 8 MR. GOTTESMAN: I'm not sure which question
- 9 you're asking.
- 10 JUSTICE SCALIA: To the employer. No
- 11 employer getting money from the State can expend any of
- 12 our money -- the same way yours is -- in collective
- 13 bargaining with unions or in anything else. Now, we are
- 14 not stopping employers from doing that. We just don't
- 15 like unions, and it's our money and we don't want this
- 16 employer to use it for unions. Would that be all right.
- 17 MR. GOTTESMAN: I think that would be
- 18 problematic but only for this reason. If the employer
- 19 is allowed to spend the State's money to -- to bargain
- 20 with nonunion employees and you know medical
- 21 researchers, whatever, negotiate contracts with them,
- 22 but the State says you can't do it for collective
- 23 bargaining, then that is exactly the Livadas case. That
- 24 is the case in which the State is saying your
- 25 entitlement to a State benefit turns on whether you are

- 1 unionized or not. In this case we'll let the employer
- 2 do this with nonunion employees, but not with unionized
- 3 employees. But if the State said we don't want to pay
- 4 for the costs of negotiating --
- 5 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why does that -- why does
- 6 that make a difference? If it violates Federal policy,
- 7 it violates Federal policy. Livadas said you can't do
- 8 it because it violates Federal policy, which is to favor
- 9 unionization, and not to deter.
- 10 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right. But this statute
- 11 neither favors nor deters. This statute --
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: You could say the same
- 13 about that other one.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: This statute simply says we
- 15 don't want to subsidize either party, and as a practical
- 16 matter we are only subsidizing one party in union
- 17 organizing.
- 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: So does the statute I
- 19 posit. Just don't use State money. You can use all of
- 20 your own money to deal with unions; just we don't want
- 21 our money used for it.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Right.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: That clearly would be
- 24 banned and I don't see why yours is any different.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Well because -- it would not

- 1 be banned if the State had said we don't want you to use
- 2 State money to negotiate contracts with any of your
- 3 employees; that would not be banned. It would be banned
- 4 if they singled out only unionized employees that you're
- 5 not allowed to use it with. You're allowed to use it
- 6 with nonunion employees.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I want to get back
- 8 to your responses on the procedural costs of the case.
- 9 You said we don't know what the regulatory burden would
- 10 be with respect to accounting rules.
- 11 MR. GOTTESMAN: Yes. There is a State
- 12 disputed facts in the district court on that.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Does it make any
- 14 difference if the argument is which is what I understood
- 15 it to be, that you can't regulate at all? It's not
- 16 simply that you can't regulate so long as it's
- 17 particularly burdensome, but you don't have the
- 18 authority to regulate in this at all.
- 19 MR. GOTTESMAN: But our argument is that
- 20 this is not regulation. To say that the State money is
- 21 not going to be spent for this is not regulation. Just
- 22 as Regan and Rust says --
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That gets to the --
- MR. GOTTESMAN: It just says--
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That gets to the

- 1 spending clause question. We're not -- I mean, we can
- 2 address that without deciding whether the regulations
- 3 are particularly burdensome. You were saying well, the
- 4 accounting is not a big problem.
- 5 MR. GOTTESMAN: Yes.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But it doesn't mean
- 7 that it's necessarily spending as opposed to regulation.
- 8 MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, we are not regulating
- 9 whether the employer opposes unions. What we are
- 10 regulating is what they do with the State's money.
- 11 That's the only regulation that's here. We are saying
- 12 don't use our money for this purpose. The only
- 13 regulation that's going on is to see whether you use the
- 14 State's money --
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That doesn't seem to
- 16 me to be responsive to my question. Your point was
- 17 well, we don't know how burdensome a particular
- 18 regulation is. If you lose on the question of whether
- 19 it's spending or regulation, we don't have to wait to
- 20 see how burdensome it is if we think you're not entitled
- 21 to regulate at all.
- MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, if you say that a
- 23 State's position, "we don't want our money to be
- 24 used" --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You're getting back

- 1 to the spending question.
- 2 MR. GOTTESMAN: -- is regulation --
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I'm putting that
- 4 aside.
- 5 MR. GOTTESMAN: I'm having -- the problem
- 6 I'm having with Your Honor's question is presuming the
- 7 answer to something. The -- if this is regulation, then
- 8 there is a serious prospect of its being pre-emptive,
- 9 but this is not regulation.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Regardless of
- 11 whether -- regardless of whether it's burdensome
- 12 regulation.
- 13 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: If it's regulation
- 15 why isn't that appropriate to deal with on summary
- 16 judgment. Not the spending question we have -- that's a
- 17 different issue. But if there is no difference with
- 18 respect to regulation whether it's burdensome or not, so
- 19 we don't have to have further proceedings on whether
- 20 it's burdensome.
- 21 MR. GOTTESMAN: Right. But the only issue
- they raised on summary judgment is that to deny us your
- 23 money, the State's money, is regulation. And our
- 24 position is that to deny you the State's money is not
- 25 regulation, any more than it was in Regan, in Rust, in

- 1 this whole line of cases where the Court has said the
- 2 government's choice not to subsidize an activity is not
- 3 regulation.
- 4 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But on that point you're
- 5 in disagreement with the Ninth Circuit, and --
- 6 MR. GOTTESMAN: Yes, we are. The Ninth
- 7 Circuit misunderstood Boston Harbor. It thought Boston
- 8 Harbor created two boxes that represented the whole
- 9 world. You're either a market participant or you're a
- 10 regulator. That's not what Boston Harbor said, if you
- 11 go back and look at it. What Boston Harbor said, if you
- 12 regulate you are vulnerable to pre-emption arguments; if
- 13 you are not regulating, then you are free of pre-emption
- 14 concerns.
- 15 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So the principal rationale
- 16 for the Ninth Circuit's opinion is incorrect in your
- 17 view?
- 18 MR. GOTTESMAN: Well, it's not -- no. The
- 19 Ninth Circuit also talked about the First Amendment and
- 20 got it right. It said when it talked about the dissent
- 21 had said what this State is doing is violating the First
- 22 Amendment, and the Ninth Circuit's response is no,
- 23 that's not right. All this is is withholding a subsidy,
- 24 and the First Amendment cases are clear: that's not
- 25 regulation of a speech.

- 1 What the Ninth Circuit thought erroneously
- 2 is that Boston Harbor had denied it the right to take
- 3 that same view, because it thought that Boston Harbor
- 4 said that everything is regulation unless it's market
- 5 participation, and that's not what Boston Harbor said,
- 6 and this is not regulation.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Counsel.
- 8 Mr. Goldsmith, you have four minutes
- 9 remaining.
- 10 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF WILLIS J. GOLDSMITH
- 11 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
- 12 MR. GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 13 Justice.
- 14 I'd just like to make a few comments in
- 15 rebuttal. First of all, the preamble of the statute
- 16 makes it absolutely clear as to what the State's purpose
- 17 is. It's at page 3a of the appendix of the petition.
- 18 It says it is the policy of the State not to interfere
- 19 with an employee's choice about whether to join or to be
- 20 represented by a labor union. For this reason the State
- 21 should not subsidize -- and so on.
- 22 So clearly the State has a labor policy
- 23 position. It's a position as I said at the outset that
- 24 is completely contrary to that of the NLRA. The NLRA's
- 25 position is that employers just like unions ought to

- 1 have the right to speak in a noncoercive way to their
- 2 employees.
- 3 Secondly, it is not our position that the
- 4 NLRA requires the State to fund activities. It is our
- 5 position that the NLRA and the decisions of this Court
- 6 make it abundantly clear that the States are to stay out
- 7 of this area altogether, period. And that would be the
- 8 case whether it is the kind of statute that Justice
- 9 Scalia was posing a question about, whether it was in
- 10 effect anti-union or pro-union. It doesn't matter.
- 11 They are both pre-empted.
- 12 The State has no business making labor
- 13 policy. The decisions of this Court, the unanimous
- 14 decisions of this Court in several circumstances I think
- 15 make that very clear. And the Ninth Circuit did find
- 16 that for all practical purposes, the State was
- 17 regulating by making labor policy.
- 18 If I could make two points about neutrality.
- 19 First of all, the statute is anything but neutral.
- 20 First of all, the State's policy is not one of
- 21 neutrality. As I just read from the preamble they have
- 22 a position; the position is that noncoercive employer
- 23 speech interferes with employee free choice, and the
- 24 statute follows that position.
- 25 The decision to withdraw funds is not the

- 1 same thing as being neutral. Your Honor made a
- 2 reference to the Hyde amendment. The Hyde amendment,
- 3 Congress withdrew funds from -- from abortion
- 4 practitioners. It was not neutral about abortion. And
- 5 California here has made a judgment about noncoercive
- 6 speech.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What about the Lyng
- 8 case that Mr. Gottesman cited in response to that
- 9 argument?
- 10 MR. GOLDSMITH: The Lyng case seems to me to
- 11 be completely off the point on the pre-emption issue.
- 12 But there is no question, Your Honor, Mr. Chief Justice,
- 13 that Congress can make judgments about what it chooses
- 14 to fund or not to fund. That did not open the door to
- 15 the States to do whatever they wanted to do by way of
- 16 funding or not funding. Lyng addressed a
- 17 constitutional --
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, Lyng said that
- 19 the -- that Congress was being neutral not that it was
- 20 making a choice on how to spend its funds. And I
- 21 understood Mr. Gottesman's point to be that so too,
- 22 here, California is being neutral.
- MR. GOLDSMITH: But California is -- is not
- 24 being neutral, not just because of what the preamble
- 25 says but because of the add-ons to the statute if you

- 1 will. California has taken it much farther than simply
- 2 withdrawing the subsidy. California has taken it to the
- 3 point that you're exposed to treble damages, but then
- 4 you have minute tracking and segregation of fund
- 5 details, and California has taken it even one step
- 6 farther and said on the other hand, if you want to spend
- 7 State money to facilitate union organizing, that's
- 8 perfectly fine with us. You can spend money to give
- 9 access to union representatives to property. You can
- 10 use State money to -- to facilitate neutrality
- 11 agreements of one sort or another. Anything that would
- 12 help a union organize employees, that's fine by us.
- So California is not neutral in the same way
- 14 that Lyng was neutral, but again I would suggest that,
- 15 Mr. Chief Justice, that Lyng didn't open the door, any
- 16 more than Rust or Regan opened the door to the States to
- 17 make labor policy by granting or withholding moneys in
- 18 any way that they saw fit. Thank you.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 20 Mr. Goldsmith.
- 21 The case is submitted.
- 22 (Whereupon, at 12:08 p.m., the case in the
- 23 above-entitled matter was submitted.)

24

25

A	add 8:23	19:4 35:21	argument 1:15	В
<b>AB</b> 3:10 4:1 6:6	addition 18:3	37:22 40:8	2:2,10 3:3,6	back 7:6 12:6
9:10,10 10:21	20:24	54:19,22,24	8:4 9:16,21	30:24 51:7
11:17 12:3,4	address 52:2	57:2,2	10:3 11:4	52:25 54:11
13:5,15 14:16	addressed 57:16	<b>amicus</b> 1:22 2:6	16:18 26:16	background
<b>ability</b> 7:21,24	addressing 31:9	16:20 19:11	27:13 29:15,19	37:9
12:20 17:14,15	<b>add-ons</b> 57:25	anomalous	29:20 30:13,16	<b>bad</b> 13:15,16
<b>able</b> 24:4	administered	26:21	31:17 33:13	<b>banned</b> 50:24
abortion 57:3,4	47:10	answer 6:24	34:1 36:7,19	51:1,3,3
abortions 32:10	administrative	7:12 8:11	36:21 43:20	bargain 49:19
above-entitled	7:1,6 19:14	11:19 20:2	46:7,9 51:14	bargaining 49:3
1:14 58:23	20:4,5,18,24	34:6,7 36:13	51:19 55:10	49:13,23
absolutely 4:14	47:9	53:7	57:9	basic 5:13 6:12
37:19 55:16	adopted 19:12	antiunion 48:21	arguments	7:12 12:9
abundantly	37:24	anti-union	47:21 54:12	27:22 48:18
12:15 56:6	adopts 48:22	40:15 56:10	<b>arts</b> 30:12,14,20	<b>basis</b> 9:11
acceptable 19:7	advance 10:4	anyway 48:7	aside 53:4	<b>Beezer</b> 46:12,14
access 58:9	11:13 18:18	apparently	asked 28:7	<b>behalf</b> 1:18,21
account 15:11	advances 44:22	19:12	40:11	1:24 2:4,6,9,12
16:2 48:3	advancing 18:17	appeals 22:5	<b>asking</b> 21:3 38:3	3:7 16:19
accounting	18:20 23:20,24	28:17 46:6	43:11 46:8	26:17 55:11
46:15 47:25	affidavit 48:15	<b>appear</b> 13:2,4	49:9	believe 5:19
48:5,15 51:10	<b>affirm</b> 47:16	APPEARAN	<b>assist</b> 5:3 13:2	12:17 13:16
52:4	<b>AFL-CIO</b> 44:25	1:17	14:9 25:1 43:3	37:3 46:19
accounts 14:4	agencies 29:18	appendix 39:12	48:21	believes 13:14
accrue 47:7	agency 30:8	46:19 55:17	assisting 34:14	benefit 22:20
accurate 28:24	37:12	applicable 42:23	associational	49:25
achieve 18:2	<b>ago</b> 33:14 34:2	application 44:5	40:7	benefits 23:18
24:4	<b>agree</b> 6:13	44:6	<b>assume</b> 30:4,6	23:19,20
achieved 11:3	agreements	applied 10:10	31:1 43:19	best 20:10,13
acknowledge	58:11	11:20 24:16	assuming 20:23	<b>better</b> 20:16
26:4	<b>Ah</b> 21:17	37:25	37:11	<b>beyond</b> 46:22
across-the-bo	<b>ahead</b> 6:18	applies 11:22	assuredly 32:6	big 52:4
9:11	<b>AL</b> 1:4,9	26:10	as-applied 12:2	<b>bill</b> 43:18 44:4
Act 4:21 6:15	<b>ALITO</b> 13:18	<b>apply</b> 24:9 26:10	12:8 24:3	billed 42:6
16:24 17:13	41:21 44:11,14	approach 23:14	attaching 17:20	<b>board</b> 18:24
18:23 22:18,19	allocate 16:5	appropriate	attempt 11:2	23:25 26:11
25:11 38:1,11	<b>allow</b> 3:24 39:15	53:15	attempting	37:25
41:19	allowable 26:24	area 23:21 38:15	19:16,22	<b>Boston</b> 11:11
acting 11:10	48:3,6	39:23 56:7	ATTORNEY	17:25 54:7,7
18:1,6,7	allowed 13:12	arguably 31:16	1:8	54:10,11 55:2
activities 27:3	49:19 51:5,5	38:15	attorneys 6:10	55:3,5
38:12 49:4	<b>allows</b> 16:7 35:3	<b>argue</b> 15:1,1	attorney's 15:23	<b>bound</b> 43:20
56:4	alternative	29:22 41:11,15	authority 3:17	boxes 54:8
activity 29:4	36:22,23	argues 17:9	51:18	break 46:1
38:21 39:4,5,8	altogether 56:7	arguing 36:24	avoiding 40:21	<b>Breyer</b> 6:18,23
54:2	amendment	41:6,9,13	<b>a.m</b> 1:16 3:2	8:17 9:2 11:19

20:2,22 21:2	California's	3:4	<b>clause</b> 17:6,10	conclusion 22:4
21:10,11,17	3:14 29:19	change 6:12	19:6 52:1	conditions 17:8
22:22 23:1,12	<b>call</b> 39:7,7	12:9	clear 4:9 7:17	17:20
44:24 45:6,14	<b>called</b> 46:13	changed 13:8	10:22 12:6,15	conduct 17:24
45:18 47:3,19	campaign 14:12	characterize	13:7 24:10	19:18 22:7
<b>brief</b> 44:25 45:9	23:7 31:25	23:15 27:10	25:6 28:9	Congress 4:23
45:24	34:14	characterizing	42:19 54:24	5:1,8,11,20,25
<b>briefs</b> 19:11	campaigns	39:11	55:16 56:6,15	12:24 17:14
47:4	26:22	check 45:15,16	clearly 3:25 4:5	18:18,23 22:10
<b>bring</b> 14:11	capacity 18:8	<b>Chief</b> 3:3,8 7:25	4:5,21 6:20	23:21,25 24:18
bringing 9:19	careful 7:4	8:2,5,8 16:13	11:15 19:24	25:9,25 41:18
<b>broad</b> 19:19	<b>carve</b> 25:9	16:17,22 17:5	50:23 55:22	57:3,13,19
brought 46:11	<b>carved</b> 25:12	17:18 18:5,13	<b>closed</b> 14:23	congressional
46:23	case 3:4 7:19 9:8	19:5 26:13,18	coercive 25:12	16:25
<b>Brown</b> 1:7 3:4	9:17 13:22	26:25 28:23	collective 49:3	Congress's 37:5
burden 7:1	18:5,18 19:11	29:3 32:25	49:12,22	connection 5:9
11:22 20:18	21:16,18,19,23	34:20 38:13	<b>combat</b> 31:15	conservation
21:6 51:9	21:25 22:1,3	40:25 41:4,10	38:15	30:12,14
burdens 20:24	22:15 27:22,22	45:25 51:7,13	come 11:5,6	considerations
47:25,25 48:14	28:5,10 33:18	51:23,25 52:6	17:8 18:10	22:14
burdensome	35:11,18 38:23	52:15,25 53:3	46:14	constitutional
46:15 47:22	39:9 40:1,5	53:10,14 55:7	comes 9:4 31:9	57:17
48:16 51:17	41:22 43:25	55:12 57:7,12	comments 55:14	constrain 17:14
52:3,17,20	44:1,8,14,16	57:18 58:15,19	Commerce 1:3	17:15
53:11,18,20	45:20 49:23,24	<b>choice</b> 3:13,14	3:4	<b>content</b> 39:21,22
business 8:6,9	50:1 51:8 56:8	8:6 11:1 12:18	company 20:11	contest 4:18
8:14,15 9:12	57:8,10 58:21	13:14,17 18:22	27:1,3 35:12	context 13:10
56:12	58:22	54:2 55:19	<b>compel</b> 41:19	15:2 19:7,13
<b>buy</b> 27:14	cases 4:8,9 7:17	56:23 57:20	compensate	39:24
<b>buying</b> 29:16	19:4 26:5	choose 11:7	25:8	contract 29:17
	28:16 38:19	chooses 57:13	completed 44:23	30:4 35:19
<u>C</u>	42:23 54:1,24	choosing 25:7	45:22	43:1,5,6,8,15
C 2:1 3:1	category 19:19	<b>chosen</b> 8:13 26:1	completely	43:17,18 44:3
California 1:9	19:19,21	Circuit 12:3	55:24 57:11	45:21,22 47:2
3:10,16 4:24	<b>certain</b> 7:19,20	54:5,7,19 55:1	complying	contracting
7:15 8:6 9:13	9:21 19:20	56:15	14:16	35:12,14
10:25 12:16	34:22 46:20	Circuit's 24:15	component 13:4	contractor 9:12
13:14 17:10	certainly 3:20	54:16,22	concede 44:2	27:15
24:20,21 26:20	4:12 5:20,25	circumstance	concededly 9:16	contractors
27:10,14 28:11	14:25 23:5	14:7	concern 31:9	42:20
29:14 30:15,17	31:22 37:22	circumstances	33:14 45:23	contracts 26:23
30:21 32:13,19	cetera 7:1	56:14	concerned 10:9	49:21 51:2
33:20,21 37:12	challenge 9:19	cited 57:8	concerns 54:14	contract-speci
38:22 43:21	10:9 11:14,18	claim 27:20	concessions 7:2	22:7
44:6,10 57:5	12:1,2,8 21:19	29:14 40:7	concluded 10:6	contrary 18:22
57:22,23 58:1	24:17 46:23,23	claims 28:11	concluding	19:3 20:3
58:2,5,13	Chamber 1:3	classically 35:18	40:19	23:24 24:11

	Ī		l	
25:17,22,24	courts 46:4	degree 16:9	disagreement	<b>D.C</b> 1:11,21,24
55:24	<b>Court's</b> 5:23	denied 55:2	27:12 54:5	
control 27:25	11:11	deny 22:20	disapproves	E
conversation	covered 41:24	23:19 53:22,24	32:23	<b>E</b> 2:1 3:1,1
34:5	45:20	denying 23:17	discourage 3:15	earlier 12:25
convicted 35:13	<b>co-ops</b> 46:25	23:20 40:6	4:6	earned 28:6
copied 4:25	craft 24:4	department	discover 21:21	ease 20:6
24:20	create 26:1	1:21 20:12	discrimination	<b>EDMUND</b> 1:7
<b>copy</b> 24:22	created 54:8	depend 7:22	39:21,22,22	<b>effect</b> 11:17 12:6
<b>core</b> 29:6 40:23	credibly 10:4	depends 41:4	disfavor 22:10	22:9 28:25
46:9	critical 4:14	Deputy 1:20	disfavored	56:10
correct 15:19	<b>curiae</b> 1:22 2:7	describe 16:2	19:21	effectively 8:1
24:15 27:17	16:20	described 16:1	disfavoring	16:2
30:9 36:11	<b>cuts</b> 22:3,12	37:14	22:17	effects 24:5
37:11	33:13	designed 3:15	disfavors 19:22	effectuate 18:1
cost 18:2 26:24		12:19 14:9	disproportion	efficiency 18:3
31:2,3,16	D D	15:3,7	19:25	either 8:6 34:14
costly 20:1	<b>D</b> 3:1	detailed 48:4	dispute 40:17	34:18 44:5
<b>costs</b> 15:23	damage 47:7	details 58:5	41:17,20	50:15 54:9
19:14,15,20	<b>damages</b> 6:9 7:1	<b>deter</b> 5:3 13:2	disputed 51:12	either/or 44:12
25:8 26:24	21:1 24:8,24	14:10 15:3,7	disputes 39:25	election 4:17
31:13 50:4	58:3	25:1 50:9	40:22	6:15 8:15
51:8	day 14:13 21:4	determine 22:2	disrupt 32:15	elementary 9:25
counsel 16:13	days 44:5	27:13	dissent 54:20	else's 35:1
55:7	deal 35:17,25	determining	distinction	employee 3:12
course 10:17	36:4 50:20	28:1	27:22 36:12	3:14 4:14 11:1
14:2,15 15:21	53:15	deterring 34:15	distinguish	12:18 13:17
18:9 33:24	dealing 35:15	deters 50:11	17:23	14:8,18 15:3
37:18 38:6	dealt 47:14	develop 12:7	<b>district</b> 11:21,24	16:3 18:21
43:10 45:17	debate 4:10	developed 21:6	29:21 43:2	31:3 39:16
48:5	16:25 27:11	<b>devices</b> 34:23,25	46:24 51:12	47:11 56:23
<b>court</b> 1:1,15 3:9	35:8	devoted 30:8	dividing 17:1	employees 7:24
4:8,12 5:6 7:16	decide 24:15	devoting 31:19	<b>doing</b> 5:20 8:15	13:12 31:13
8:7 10:6,12,19	decided 12:10	difference 12:2	9:12 11:12	33:19 34:5
10:20 11:21,24	28:16	32:4 36:3 50:6	17:10 19:2	49:20 50:2,3
12:9 16:23	deciding 52:2	51:14 53:17	22:16 27:8,14	51:3,4,6 56:2
17:4,16,22,25	decision 9:15	different 9:1	28:25 39:13	58:12
18:3,15,24	11:11 46:12	12:24 20:10	49:14 54:21	employee's
22:2,4,21	56:25	21:16,18,19,23	door 57:14	55:19
23:15,16,17	decisions 56:5	21:25 26:5	58:15,16	employee-rela
24:13,14 26:19	56:13,14	34:21 38:10	<b>doubly</b> 23:23	31:3
28:16 29:21	defendant 15:20	42:3 43:8	dramatically	employer 3:10
38:18 40:1,18	15:24	50:24 53:17	16:9	3:13 4:4,13,18
43:1,2 46:6,24	defendants	differently 11:6	<b>drawn</b> 36:14	5:9 6:16 8:24
47:17 51:12	48:16	<b>dime</b> 11:3	<b>drive</b> 13:11	9:12 10:25
54:1 56:5,13	defer 43:4	directly 18:22	14:15	12:17 13:15
56:14	defunded 3:10	19:3 23:24	drives 38:25	14:16 15:1,5,6

	1		1	
15:12 16:1,3	enunciated 24:1	58:7,10	27:10	57:14,14 58:4
18:20 25:12	equally 22:23,23	facilities 19:15	<b>find</b> 20:15 56:15	fundamental
27:6 28:13,13	erroneously	<b>fact</b> 3:16 4:13	findings 46:24	13:8 17:2
29:12 31:15,18	55:1	7:15 10:4,10	fine 58:8,12	<b>funded</b> 7:21,22
31:18 32:14	error 24:16	11:20 12:9	<b>firm</b> 48:15	36:20,20 45:13
33:19 35:19	<b>ESQ</b> 1:18,20,24	20:3 29:16	<b>first</b> 5:7 6:7 7:10	<b>funding</b> 20:14
37:13,15 39:13	2:3,5,8,11	31:18,18 33:14	17:12,24 19:4	24:19 37:6
39:16,18 49:6	establish 11:10	33:18 34:3	30:22 35:21	41:16 57:16,16
49:10,11,16,18	11:12	factors 17:23	37:22 40:8	<b>funds</b> 3:24 6:8
50:1 52:9	<b>et</b> 1:4,9 7:1	22:2,8	42:5 47:24	13:21,22 14:1
56:22	Everybody 40:8	facts 12:7 51:12	54:19,21,24	17:21 29:7,8
employers 7:19	evidence 11:16	factual 14:24	55:15 56:19,20	29:11 39:23
13:9 20:13	46:25	15:6	<b>fiscal</b> 9:15 10:8	42:7,10,10
32:23 33:1	exact 46:21	<b>failing</b> 30:14	11:13	43:3 45:11
37:7 41:6	exactly 3:15	<b>fair</b> 12:14	<b>fit</b> 58:18	56:25 57:3,20
42:22 49:14	12:15 21:12	fairly 22:4	<b>flatly</b> 25:22	further 4:16
55:25	38:2,4 49:23	falls 31:20	follow 6:9	16:11 53:19
employer's	example 4:1	<b>far</b> 10:9 46:22	following 32:6	
12:20 29:13	13:18 14:18	47:21	follows 56:24	G
31:25 33:4	19:6 22:22	<b>farther</b> 58:1,6	<b>food</b> 40:6,9	<b>G</b> 1:7,20 2:5 3:1
46:16 47:12	23:10 47:6,6	fault 8:3	forbidding	16:18
employment	48:12,14	<b>favor</b> 20:8 22:4	28:19	Garmon 5:24
26:24	exception 26:1	22:12 41:6,11	forced 8:14	general 1:8,20
<b>enable</b> 23:19	exceptions 3:23	50:8	foremost 17:24	18:14 19:8,19
enacted 4:25	25:10	favoritism 40:21	<b>forgot</b> 16:16	25:10,16
26:20	exercise 3:17	41:1	<b>form</b> 29:16,16	generally 12:11
encounter 16:2	exist 21:4 36:24	<b>favors</b> 22:11	48:5	getting 7:18
encounters	<b>expend</b> 49:11	50:11	<b>found</b> 12:3	10:13 30:16
14:14	expenditure	<b>Federal</b> 3:13 4:3	four 12:24 55:8	33:15,15 41:15
encourage 16:25	23:11 48:6	4:3 5:1 12:13	fourth 5:18	49:11 52:25
encouraged	expenditures	12:22 17:6	<b>free</b> 3:12,14 4:9	GINSBURG
13:10	48:4	18:6,23 19:3	11:1 12:18	4:23 5:14 6:2
enforce 30:10	exposed 58:3	23:24 24:11,19	13:9,17 16:25	9:18 10:12,18
engage 22:8	expressive 24:10	24:22,22 25:3	18:22 23:5	11:5 12:23
37:13 39:16	expressly 22:9	25:16,18,19	42:16 45:3	24:18,25 25:5 25:20
engaged 14:8	extent 29:12	26:6 27:2 32:5	54:13 56:23	25:20 give 5:3 19:5
20:1 27:3 35:8	extra 21:13	32:6,8,9 34:21	free-market 8:5	21:13 28:21
engaging 37:23	extraneous 21:6	35:3,6 37:25	frequently 17:9	29:23 30:2,5
42:15	F	40:5,11,16	friend 16:14	30:24 40:10,13
enhances 3:14 entities 8:9 22:8	facial 9:19 10:9	48:2,5,7 50:6,7	front 24:12	41:1 42:13
entitled 13:12	11:18 12:1,8	50:8	29:25 42:8,11 43:14,22	48:12,25 49:1
18:18 25:9	21:19 24:2	federally 34:25 feel 42:16	43:14,22 frustrate 17:2	49:6 58:8
31:2,23 40:9	46:23	fees 6:10 15:23	fully 36:20,20	given 6:21 20:14
52:20	facially 24:6,13	feet 33:13	<b>function</b> 30:7	gives 29:24
entitlement	24:16	finance 35:8	fund 22:18	42:10
49:25	facilitate 3:25	financing 26:21	41:19 56:4	giving 8:16 30:6
77.23		imancing 20.21	71.17 JU. <del>1</del>	g : g :: 5 : 0 : 0
	I	l	I	I

	1	1	1	1
42:17	52:8,22 53:2,5	hands 40:15	<b>Hungar</b> 1:20 2:5	34:7
<b>go</b> 5:2 6:18 7:6	53:13,21 54:6	hands-off 23:14	16:17,18,22	inconsistently
40:14 48:9	54:18 57:8	happen 14:9	17:12,22 18:9	34:12
54:11	Gottesman's	16:8	18:15 19:10	incorrect 54:16
goes 14:18 46:22	57:21	happened 11:15	20:22 21:10,15	incurred 19:15
<b>going</b> 19:18	<b>Gould</b> 3:18 7:17	11:16 12:15	21:23,25 22:24	informed 4:15
38:21,23 40:10	17:17 23:16	happens 8:21	23:9,13 24:21	4:15
43:19 46:16	35:10,20	14:12	25:3,6,24 26:7	<b>inhibit</b> 12:20
48:9 51:21	government	<b>Harbor</b> 11:11	26:9,14	inhibited 5:9,24
52:13	17:6 18:6,16	17:25 54:7,8	<b>Hyde</b> 57:2,2	inhibiting 7:4
Goldsmith 1:18	22:20 23:3,7	54:10,11 55:2	hypothesis	injunction 11:24
2:3,11 3:5,6,8	26:6 32:5,9	55:3,5	36:18,24	intended 22:9
3:22 4:7 5:5,18	38:21 40:6,11	hard 23:14	hypothetical	intent 5:11
6:5,20 7:9 8:1	governmental	hear 3:3 13:12	20:23,23 22:13	16:25 37:5
8:4,10,25 9:8	40:20	heard 47:4,5,11	22:15	interest 18:17
10:3,16,19	government's	heavily 5:7		18:19,20 19:1
11:9 13:1,25	36:10 54:2	<b>held</b> 17:4,16	<u> </u>	19:3 45:10
15:15,19 16:15	government	22:21 23:16,16	identified 17:22	interfere 38:24
55:8,10,12	22:6	23:17	29:13	55:18
57:10,23 58:20	governor 10:21	<b>help</b> 40:16 58:12	identify 20:5	interfered 12:13
goods 47:1	grant 8:21,23,25	<b>hide</b> 20:3	<b>immune</b> 24:17	interferes 3:12
<b>gotten</b> 28:11	9:9 25:16,18	<b>hired</b> 27:1	<b>impact</b> 19:25	11:1 12:18,22
Gottesman 1:24	25:19 29:23	history 5:22	implement 19:9	13:17 16:9
2:8 26:15,16	30:3,3,5,6,23	<b>home</b> 13:19 14:6	32:10,13,20	18:21 56:23
26:18 27:5,17	31:11,13,19,20	14:8,20,22,23	implemented	interpretation
27:20,24 28:4	31:24 33:16	41:23,25 42:3	3:16 34:9	44:9
28:15 29:2,5	34:4,13,16	42:5	implementing	interpreted 46:5
29:20 30:9,22	36:9	<b>Honor</b> 3:22 4:8	24:19 35:4	46:6
31:5,8,21 32:2	granted 11:24	5:5 6:6,22 7:10	implication 36:5	intervenors
32:7,11,17,21	47:18	8:10 9:10	implied 37:4	15:22
33:3,8,10,23	grantee 5:2,2	10:10,16 11:19	41:18	invented 20:4
34:11 35:6,16	28:13 36:9,19	13:6 15:19	important 4:10	involved 20:11
35:24 36:2,11	36:25	16:15 17:13	25:15	40:12
36:15,25 37:8	grantees 6:2	24:21 27:18	impose 17:14	involves 33:20
37:15,18,21	granting 58:17	31:8 39:10	25:4	involving 4:17
38:2,4,6,9,17	grants 23:3	57:1,12	imposes 24:23	25:18 49:4
39:6,9,20 41:2	26:23 30:24	<b>Honor's</b> 53:6	impossible	irrelevant 3:18
41:8,12 42:2	42:13	horribles 46:13	15:25 24:9	issue 6:15 11:18
42:25 43:10,13	greatest 20:6	46:22	47:10	12:12 15:6
43:23 44:8,15	<b>ground</b> 28:18,20	hospital 20:1	improperly	18:11 24:14
44:18,20 45:5	28:24	hospitals 19:14	47:18	28:14 29:6
45:8,17,19	guesses 15:5,13	hotdog 8:18	include 9:6	32:12,18 43:25
46:3 47:16,24	15:16,18	hotdogs 8:19	26:24 31:2	43:25 44:20
48:11 49:1,5,8		huge 36:2	39:12 42:15	46:11 53:17,21
49:17 50:10,14	H	hundred 7:20	included 31:14	57:11
50:22,25 51:11	half 48:7,8	20:13 43:21	income 7:23	issues 10:8
51:19,24 52:5	<b>hand</b> 58:6	45:2	inconsistent	12:11 16:25

	1	<u> </u>	1	<u> </u>
21:20 46:15	43:7,11,16	38:10,16 40:17	54:11	medical 49:20
	44:2,11,14,17	40:22,24 41:18	looked 22:2	Medicare 5:16
J	44:24 45:6,14	55:20,22 56:12	looks 17:25 18:4	5:18 13:3,4
<b>J</b> 1:18 2:3,11 3:6	45:18,25 47:3	56:17 58:17	lose 52:18	Medi-Cal 8:13
55:10	47:19 48:9,18	laid 5:23	<b>lot</b> 9:23 17:7,8	13:19 19:12
<b>join</b> 55:19	49:2,7,10 50:5	large 14:13	lower 10:12 46:4	41:24
<b>JR</b> 1:7	50:12,18,23	Laughter 44:13	<b>Lyng</b> 57:7,10,16	mentioned
<b>Judge</b> 46:12,14	51:7,13,23,25	44:19	57:18 58:14,15	12:25
judges 22:5	52:6,15,25	law 12:4,5,10		mentioning 37:5
judgment 4:15	53:3,10,14	20:24 26:10	M	MICHAEL 1:24
28:18,20,24	54:4,15 55:7	42:23 44:6,10	Machinists 5:23	2:8 26:16
46:8,11,24	55:13 56:8	48:22	magic 20:4 21:5	mind 6:24
47:17 53:16,22	57:7,12,18	laws 17:1	maintains 45:10	minimal 48:1
57:5	58:15,19	lawyers 6:13	major 7:2	minute 46:20
judgments	<b>justified</b> 17:9,11	<b>leave</b> 21:4,19	majority 25:18	58:4
57:13		<b>left</b> 30:19 31:7	25:19 46:17	minutes 55:8
<b>Justice</b> 1:21 3:3	K	legal 12:11,12	<b>making</b> 9:14,14	mission 24:10
3:8,19 4:2,23	<b>keep</b> 6:24 39:23	legislation 8:23	10:8 30:5	misunderstood
5:14 6:2,18,23	keeps 39:11	legislative 5:21	56:12,17 57:20	54:7
7:25 8:2,5,8,17	KENNEDY	legislature	management	modified 6:4,5
9:2,18 10:12	42:19 54:4,15	10:21	17:1 32:15	modifies 6:6
10:18 11:5,19	key 40:2	legitimate 18:16	38:16	modify 5:21
12:23 13:18	<b>kind</b> 22:7,10	19:1 23:19	managing 31:3	moment 7:14
15:13,16 16:13	27:1 30:7	31:16 40:20	35:23	33:13 34:2
16:17,22 17:5	48:22 56:8	45:10	mandating	money 5:1,3
17:18 18:5,13	kinds 25:8	let's 7:6,23	23:10	7:11 9:3,5 10:5
19:5 20:2,22	know 13:6,7	29:20 30:3	manifests 16:24	17:7 19:23
21:2,10,11,17	14:17,20,21	41:22 47:24	March 1:12	20:15,16,17
21:22 22:22	15:9 20:8 30:4	level 19:20	market 54:9	21:7,7,8,13
23:1,12 24:18	36:23 40:4	liability 20:25	55:4	25:1,19 27:7
24:25 25:5,20	47:11 49:20	24:8,24	matter 1:14 7:3	27:14,15 28:2
26:3,8,13,18	51:9 52:17	<b>life</b> 18:17 43:4	12:4,5,10 32:3	28:6,7,19,21
26:25 27:9,19		limitation 31:14	41:5,8 50:16	29:11,13,23,24
27:21,25 28:10	labor 3:11,14,17	limited 42:14	56:10 58:23	29:25 30:3,5,6
28:23 29:3,10	3:19 4:21 6:13	line 38:19 54:1	matters 4:10	30:23 31:6,12
30:2,10 31:1,6	6:14 7:16 10:8	<b>Linn</b> 4:12 17:4	mean 5:25 7:22	31:12,15,19
31:17 32:1,4,8	10:22 11:8	40:1	26:4 27:5	32:23 33:4,4,7
32:12,18,25	16:24 17:1,13	litigation 6:9	35:11 37:1	33:24,25 34:2
33:6,9,12 34:1	19:17 20:8	15:8,14,17,18	47:20 52:1,6	34:10,13,17,18
34:6,7,20	22:16,20 23:21	little 40:18	meaning 5:8	34:24,24 35:1
35:10,22,25	23:23,25 25:23	Livadas 23:17	11:11 43:24	35:4,8,11,15
36:7,12,13,18	25:25 26:3,4,5	49:23 50:7	means 28:8	35:23,23 36:3
37:8,17,20,24	29:1,17 30:11	long 51:16	meant 27:2	36:5,8,10,16
38:3,5,8,13,14	30:18 32:15	longer 34:16	measure 4:25 18:4	36:17,23 37:1
39:3,7,15 40:25 41:4,10	33:9,16 34:5	40:14		37:2,16 39:24
41:21 42:19	35:3,7,13	look 3:23 9:21	<b>Medicaid</b> 48:1,2 48:5	40:4,13,16
41.21 42.19	37:12,13,25	42:25 46:13	40.3	41:3,14,16,24
	37.12,13,23		l	

42:1,4,6,7,8,11	<b>Ninth</b> 12:3	officials 20:11	P	pays 8:20,20
42:13,13,16,17	24:15 54:5,6	<b>oh</b> 44:15 46:12	<b>P</b> 3:1	41:21 44:22
42:18,23 43:9	54:16,19,22	Okay 37:20	page 2:2 39:14	penny 20:6
43:12,13,14	55:1 56:15	once 42:7 43:6	44:25 46:19,21	people 36:1
44:22 45:3,22	NLRA 3:15 5:21	45:21	46:21 55:17	percent 7:20 9:3
45:24 46:16	6:3 12:10	ones 43:25		20:13,16 43:21
48:7,21,25	16:10 18:11	open 4:9 12:16	pages 45:9	45:3
49:11,12,15,19	55:24 56:4,5	57:14 58:15	paid 9:22,23	percentile 19:15
50:19,20,21	NLRA's 55:24	opened 58:16	27:16 28:12	perfectly 21:5
51:2,20 52:10	NLRA-protec	operates 6:22	41:24 42:4,24	58:8
52:12,14,23	8:16	operation 14:14	43:9,12	perform 30:7
53:23,23,24	NLRB 4:9	opinion 54:16	panel 46:12	31:13
58:7,8,10	noncoercive	<b>oppose</b> 36:1	parade 46:21	performing 28:6
moneys 45:7	4:20 6:17 56:1	37:2	<b>Pardon</b> 48:11	30:8
49:6 58:17	56:22 57:5	opposed 17:20	park 8:18	period 56:7
monthly 43:18	nonpre-empted	28:1 52:7	part 23:8	period 50.7 permissible
motion 47:17	24:5	opposes 35:19	participant	31:12 34:13
move 28:17	nonregulatory	52:9	41:22 45:11	permits 3:20 4:5
moved 28:19,24	25:10	opposing 32:16	54:9	perints 5.20 4.3
1110veu 20.19,24	nonunion 49:20	opposite 21:12	participates	person 33.13
N	50:2 51:6	oral 1:14 2:2 3:6	13:19	petition 55:17
N 2:1,1 3:1	non-state 21:7	16:18 26:16	participation	Petitioners 1:5
Nash 17:17	45:7	order 18:1 24:15	55:5	1:19,23 2:4,7
22:21 23:16	noted 4:12	30:6	particular 3:24	2:12 3:7 7:20
national 4:21	notion 7:10 14:1	organization	9:9,9 17:14	10:11,11 11:21
6:14 16:24	41:17	30:12,13,18	19:17 20:1	11:21 16:21
17:3,13 25:23	nub 27:11	, ,	22:10,17 23:11	28:17 29:22
25:25 38:10	number 13:11	organizations 45:1,2	25:8,10 52:17	46:9 55:11
41:18	14:14 42:3	·	particularly	
necessarily 19:7		organize 14:19 58:12	51:17 52:3	<b>picture</b> 13:13
52:7	46:17,18		parties 4:19	place 8:21
need 48:13	nursing 13:19	organized 20:12	6:15	plaintiff 15:22
negotiate 49:21	14:6,8,20,22	organizing 3:11	party 6:11 15:20	plaintiff's 46:22
51:2	14:23 41:23,25	3:25 5:4,10	15:21 35:8	please 3:9 16:23
negotiating 50:4	42:2,5	10:1,2 13:11	50:15,16	26:19
neither 46:4	<b>N.Y</b> 1:18	14:10,12,15	passed 10:20,21	plenty 23:18
50:11	0	15:7 23:6 25:2	12:19	pocket 29:14
neutral 33:11	02:13:1	26:22 27:4	patients 41:23	point 4:16 30:4
56:19 57:1,4	<b>objective</b> 40:20	34:14,19 38:24	pay 10:1,15 11:7	41:9,10,13
57:19,22,24	obligation 22:18	42:16 43:4	11:8 20:13,16	44:24 45:16
58:13,14	28:21 37:2,6	50:17 58:7	31:23 38:11,21	52:16 54:4
neutrality 40:3	46:10	OSHA 34:22	38:23 43:13	57:11,21 58:3
56:18,21 58:10	<b>obviously</b> 17:12	ought 55:25	50:3	pointed 28:17
never 14:17	19:16 21:15	outset 55:23	paying 9:21	points 19:11
36:24 46:5	22:9 25:7 26:9	overall 5:11	10:14,14 30:16	56:18
New 1:18	odd 37:3	overhead 23:3,4	39:4	policy 3:12,13
nickel 6:19	office 17:9	23:5 31:2	payment 43:22	3:15,17,20,23
IIICKCI U.17	UIIICE 17.7	overtime 16:6	payments 47:1	4:3,3 7:16 9:15

10:9,22,24	10:23 12:16	private 8:19	11:10,12	17:6 18:9,11
12:22 13:8	32:22 39:1,10	20:16 22:8	prospect 53:8	37:9 43:7,8,24
17:3 18:2,7,16	39:11 55:15	27:5 40:22	protected 16:10	45:19 46:3
18:19,20,22,23	56:21 57:24	42:22	protective 34:22	48:19 49:8
19:3,9 20:8,10	precious 41:11	problem 9:1	provide 8:12	52:1,16,18
20:19,21 22:16	precise 38:25	14:4 18:19	37:2,6 42:8	53:1,6,16 56:9
22:21 23:21,23	precisely 12:17	20:5 52:4 53:5	provided 29:25	57:12
23:25 24:10,11	preference	problematic	45:12	questions 7:10
24:18 25:16,23	18:17	49:18	provides 42:5	16:11
25:25 26:3,4,5	prepared 31:23	problems 47:13	providing 34:3	quite 28:23
27:2 29:17	prepayment	47:20	41:23	38:10 48:1
30:11,21 32:6	43:19	procedural 51:8	provision 4:24	<b>quote</b> 40:2 46:13
32:8,13,19,22	prescribe 31:23	proceedings	19:6 40:19	46:25
32:25 33:1,9	prescribed	53:19	43:24 44:9	
33:16,20,22	30:23	<b>profit</b> 30:25	45:21 47:8	R
34:9 35:3,4,5,7	presents 7:13	47:7	provisions 7:7	<b>R</b> 3:1
35:14 38:23	8:25	profits 13:24	24:7 25:11	<b>raise</b> 43:3
40:3 43:21	presumably	14:1,2,3 28:1	29:21	raised 46:8
50:6,7,8 55:18	14:10	45:4 47:1	<b>pro-union</b> 56:10	53:22
55:22 56:13,17	presume 29:12	<b>program</b> 9:9,24	pr-empted	raises 12:11
56:20 58:17	presuming 53:6	13:19 18:3	37:21	21:20
portion 13:23	prevailing 6:11	22:6 26:7	<b>punish</b> 37:23	random 23:2
<b>posing</b> 20:24	15:20,21,21,22	41:22 45:11,11	punitive 22:6	rationale 54:15
56:9	15:23	programs 5:15	24:7,24	rationally 40:19
<b>posit</b> 50:19	previously	7:23 17:7	purely 12:11	read 7:8 56:21
position 12:4	34:12	25:16,18 26:10	14:24,25 33:22	reading 12:14
13:13 26:21	pre-empted	26:23 44:21	purports 11:23	realized 47:1
28:12 31:22	12:4,5 17:3	prohibited 4:1	purpose 9:15	<b>really</b> 6:12 12:2
37:10 38:9	19:24 20:20	prohibits 33:21	11:13,16 12:5	12:8 14:12
41:25 52:23	22:23 23:22,23	33:23	23:20 29:7,24	15:10 16:7
53:24 55:23,23	24:6 29:4	promote 5:3	31:19 39:23	21:23 34:16
55:25 56:3,5	37:14,19,19	13:2 14:10	41:18 42:18	48:16
56:22,22,24	38:5,7 44:7	18:7 25:1	52:12 55:16	reason 25:21,21
possibility 6:9	56:11	30:11,14 43:4	purposes 9:5,6	30:15 34:17
6:10	pre-emption	promotes 3:16	10:22 28:22	39:1,3 49:18
possible 14:7	11:14 12:10	3:20 4:4,5,21	30:23 42:14	55:20
<b>power</b> 7:16	18:11 24:17	promoting 4:6	56:16	reasonable
17:16,19 18:14	29:15 37:4	34:14	pursuant 35:5	15:23
18:14	54:12,13 57:11	promotion	<b>put</b> 13:13 15:2	reasons 13:11
practical 41:5	pre-emptive	29:17 30:19	34:25 42:8	22:16 23:19
50:15 56:16	36:6 53:8	properly 29:22	47:5	33:22 38:18
practice 24:9	principal 54:15	47:23	putting 53:3	rebuttal 2:10
37:13 47:9	principle 5:15	property 58:9	<b>p.m</b> 58:22	16:12 55:10,15
practices 35:13	6:13	proprietary		receive 42:7
practitioners	principles 5:13	17:24 18:7	Q 7.12	45:2
57:4	5:23	22:3	question 7:12	recognize 48:24
preamble 10:23	<b>prior</b> 37:25	proprietor	8:11 15:25	recognized

			l	I
18:24,25	relations 4:21	51:10 53:18	32:25 34:20	48:6,16,23
recommendat	6:14 11:8	respond 7:9	38:13 40:25	49:22 50:14
47:3,15	16:24 17:13	28:2 41:16	41:4,10 45:25	51:22,24 55:18
record 11:2	25:23,25 29:1	responded 45:8	51:7,13,23,25	57:25
48:14	30:18 31:4	Respondents	52:6,15,25	<b>Scalia</b> 3:19 4:2
recover 15:22	32:15 37:12	1:25 2:9 5:6	53:3,10,14	15:13,16 21:22
refer 8:7	38:11 39:16	26:17	55:7 57:7,18	26:3,8 32:1,4,8
reference 42:20	41:19	response 54:22	58:19	32:12,18 33:6
42:21 57:2	relationship	57:8	robust 4:10	33:9 34:6,7
<b>reflect</b> 5:8,11	4:11	responses 51:8	<b>rule</b> 19:11 20:19	35:10,22,25
reflection 13:16	<b>rely</b> 5:6	responsible	21:8,9,14	36:13 39:3,7
<b>Regan</b> 38:19	remaining 55:9	14:16	34:21 37:25	39:15 43:7,11
51:22 53:25	remains 41:25	responsive	<b>ruled</b> 43:2	48:9,18 49:2,7
58:16	<b>remand</b> 7:3 12:6	52:16	<b>rules</b> 21:12	49:10 50:5,12
regarding 17:2	remarkable	rest 16:12	51:10	50:18,23 56:9
18:21	41:20	restrict 17:1	run 5:14	<b>scheme</b> 12:13
regardless 53:10	remember 46:4	27:3	runs 8:19 43:17	20:4
53:11	rendered 44:4	restriction	<b>Rust</b> 18:5,10,16	schoolteachers
regulate 17:16	repeatedly	25:17	19:4 27:22	9:25
17:19 19:16,19	18:24,25	restrictions	31:20 32:5,5	<b>scope</b> 34:13
29:8 51:15,16	replace 46:2	17:15 25:4	35:9 38:19	46:22
51:18 52:21	represent 13:24	result 7:21	51:22 53:25	Secondly 56:3
54:12	14:22	28:12	58:16	seconds 16:4,5
regulated 7:15	representative	rhyme 25:21		section 25:11
40:4	47:12	<b>right</b> 4:19 6:1,16	<u>S</u>	see 50:24 52:13
regulating 22:16	representatives	6:25 8:16	s 2:1 3:1 42:1	52:20
28:25 39:8	58:9	15:13,18 21:18	safety 34:25	seeking 18:2
52:8,10 54:13	represented	26:1,6,8 27:1	salary 16:5	segregate 13:20
56:17	54:8 55:20	27:24 29:2,5	satisfies 40:9	15:10,11 21:6
regulation 5:19	require 11:23	31:5,8 32:7,9	save 19:22	segregated 6:8
13:3 23:15,22	13:20 38:14	32:11,17 33:11	saves 11:3	15:9
25:13 38:18,20	48:19	35:16 38:17	saving 10:5	segregation 14:4
51:20,21 52:7	required 8:23	41:12 43:10	savings 18:2	24:8,23 58:4
52:11,13,18,19	31:24 34:25	45:5,18 49:16	saw 58:18	sell 45:14
53:2,7,9,12,14	requirement 6:8	50:10,22 53:13	saying 8:22 9:4	Sending 12:6
53:18,23,25	24:8,23 34:22	53:21 54:20,23	19:18 33:17	sense 5:8 22:1
54:3,25 55:4,6	requirements	55:2 56:1	34:15,21 35:2	46:21
regulations 52:2	47:9	<b>rights</b> 16:10	35:17 36:3,4,8 38:22 39:12	sentence 40:2
regulator 54:10	requires 35:7	40:8	40:25 44:17	serious 53:8
regulatory	38:11,15 48:3	right-to-work	49:24 52:3,11	service 8:12,18
17:24 18:14	56:4	21:12 22:22		28:6,12 29:18
22:3,5,13	researchers	<b>ROBERTS</b> 3:3	says 5:2 10:24 12:16 14:19,21	30:7 34:3 42:8
24:10 51:9	49:21	7:25 8:2,8	15:6 18:20	45:12
reimburse 19:13	reserve 16:12	16:13,17 17:5	19:13 32:24	services 30:1
reimbursed	respect 24:2	17:18 18:5,13	34:23 39:14	41:23 42:5
42:9	27:4 40:3	19:5 26:13,25	43:3 45:21,24	44:4,23 47:1
related 40:20	42:12 48:13	28:23 29:3	+3.3 +3.41,44	seven-day-a-w
	<u>l</u>	<u> </u>	<u>l                                      </u>	<u> </u>

severely 12:19	7:12,24 8:24	9:13,20,20	33:4,14,24	struck 29:22,22
show 9:14,20,20	12:20 21:8	10:4,13,20,24	34:2,18 35:23	<b>subject</b> 6:3 15:8
side 16:14 21:3	39:18 56:1	11:3,9 13:21	36:17 39:23	15:14,17,17
26:22 27:10	speaking 23:5	17:1,21 18:1	40:4 41:2 42:9	33:20
34:18 39:11,25	special 8:23	18:12,19 19:2	42:10 45:24	submit 29:8
40:17,21 41:1	specific 19:21	19:12,21 20:7	48:23 49:19	submitted 48:15
41:17,19 42:15	26:7	20:7,9,9,10,14	52:10,14,23	58:21,23
sides 13:13	<b>speech</b> 3:11,12	21:7,8,13,14	53:23,24 55:16	subsidize 31:25
27:12	3:13 4:4,13 5:9	22:15,17 23:2	56:20	39:2 46:10
signed 10:21	7:5 10:25	23:10,13,17,24	<b>statute</b> 5:19 6:22	50:15 54:2
similar 19:15	12:17 13:9,9	26:2,11 27:6	7:13 10:5,10	55:21
similarly 17:11	13:15,23 14:8	27:13,16 28:9	10:23,24 11:6	subsidizing
<b>simple</b> 6:21 9:21	17:2 18:21	28:21,25 29:7	11:13,20,23	50:16
<b>simply</b> 17:20	19:17,21,22	29:8,11,24	12:14,19 13:3	subsidy 41:20
18:7 19:18,22	22:10,17,19	30:24 31:9,11	13:4 14:1,2,4	54:23 58:2
23:13 33:18	25:13,13 26:22	31:22 32:23	15:8,10,24	suggest 11:2
34:8 38:20	29:16 37:13,15	33:8,10 34:10	16:7,9 20:20	58:14
48:23 50:14	37:23 46:10	34:10,15,23	24:4,5,6,7,12	suggesting 7:7
51:16 58:1	54:25 56:23	35:7,11,11,14	24:13,19 26:20	suggestion 24:3
single 9:11,12	57:6	35:18,19 36:21	28:5,8,16	suggests 5:22
14:7	<b>spend</b> 23:4,5	37:1,11 38:11	32:22 40:23	<b>Sullivan</b> 18:6,10
singled 51:4	30:18,23 33:4	38:24 39:1	41:14 42:14,20	summary 28:18
situation 4:17	34:13,16 35:15	41:14,16,16,21	42:21,21,22	28:20,24 46:8
16:1 36:9 42:4	36:16 42:17	41:25 42:4,6,7	46:5,5,25	46:11,24 47:17
43:17	49:19 57:20	42:10,20 43:3	50:10,11,14,18	53:15,22
slightly 9:1	58:6,8	44:22 45:3,8	55:15 56:8,19	supervisor
<b>social</b> 29:17	spending 3:17	45:10,12,12,15	56:24 57:25	14:19,21 16:6
solely 10:8,22	7:15 17:6,10	46:9 48:8,20	<b>statutes</b> 4:24 5:1	support 32:10
28:20	17:16,19 18:14	48:22 49:11,22	5:6,7,12,22 6:7	33:21
Solicitor 1:20	19:6 23:7	49:24,25 50:3	6:11 12:25	supporting 1:22
somebody 35:1	26:11 31:15	50:19 51:1,2	13:3,8 24:22	2:7 16:21 19:2
sorry 15:15	32:23 33:22	51:11,20 54:21	24:22 25:4,22	39:25
16:15 30:17	34:4 52:1,7,19	55:18,20,22	statutory 39:12	Suppose 48:20
44:11	53:1,16	56:4,12,16	<b>stay</b> 56:6	<b>Supreme</b> 1:1,15
sort 4:18 12:7	<b>spends</b> 33:19	58:7,10	<b>step</b> 58:5	<b>sure</b> 27:9 37:9
27:11 30:11	<b>spent</b> 3:24 15:12	statement 14:24	STEVENS 37:8	38:8 40:5,13
37:9 58:11	25:1 30:20	14:25 15:3	37:17,20,24	49:8
<b>SOUTER</b> 27:9	33:16 35:4	statements 45:1	38:3,5,8,14	survive 11:14
27:19,21,25	39:24 40:16	states 1:1,4,15	stopping 49:14	system 21:5
28:10 29:10	43:5 51:21	1:22 2:6 6:1	<b>street</b> 14:23	
30:2,10 31:1,6	<b>stamps</b> 40:6,9	16:19 21:11,13	<b>strict</b> 20:25 24:7	T
31:17 33:12	<b>stand</b> 8:18	35:7 37:6	24:24	T 2:1,1
34:1 36:7,12	standing 43:2	41:19 56:6	Strictly 35:14	tables 45:14,15
36:18 43:16	<b>State</b> 3:24 7:21	57:15 58:16	<b>strike</b> 40:14	46:1 47:6
44:2,17	7:22,23 8:1,9	<b>State's</b> 3:11 8:3	<b>strikers</b> 40:6,10	Taft-Hartley
speak 4:20,20	8:14,15,18,19	8:4 17:15 26:9	<b>strong</b> 20:14	38:1
6:16,18,19,19	8:20 9:4,5,13	28:5 32:21	strongest 36:21	take 13:18 16:4
L				

	•	•	•	•
16:5 23:2	three 5:5,16	understood 34:8	25:14 38:16	40:16 48:20
29:21 41:22	12:24 25:3,22	51:14 57:21	use 5:2 7:11,11	49:15 50:3,15
55:2	35:13	<b>undue</b> 40:21	7:11 9:5 13:21	50:20 51:1,7
taken 58:1,2,5	time 15:11,11	<b>unfair</b> 35:13	13:22,25 17:7	52:23 58:6
takes 41:2	16:12 33:18,22	37:13	17:16 20:16,16	wanted 12:21
talk 33:1,5	45:11	<b>union</b> 3:11,25	21:8 25:4 27:7	26:6 48:11
47:25	times 35:13	4:16,17,18 5:4	28:8,22 29:7	57:15
talked 54:19,20	today 47:4	5:10 6:15,16	29:24 33:25	wants 27:13
talking 4:2 8:22	track 14:7	8:22,24 9:7	35:1,7 36:3,5	33:8,10
9:3,6 15:12	tracking 58:4	10:1,1 13:10	36:16,22 40:3	warranty 46:1
18:13 33:19	Traditionally	14:10,12,15,19	45:3,24 49:16	Washington
36:19	31:11	14:20,21 15:1	50:19,19 51:1	1:11,21,24
targeted 19:20	training 9:24	15:4,7 25:2,13	51:5,5 52:12	<b>Wasn't</b> 5:16
taxpayers 39:24	treasury 9:4	26:22 27:4	52:13 58:10	wasting 33:6
tell 17:18 29:6	35:7	32:2,3,16	uses 31:12	way 4:20 5:8,10
46:20	<b>treble</b> 6:9 7:1	34:19 38:24	<b>Utah</b> 23:2,9	5:12,20,24 6:6
telling 27:15	20:25 24:8	39:19 40:24		6:12,17,21,24
terms 13:1	47:7 58:3	41:14,15,15	<b>V</b>	9:6 16:7 21:11
test 40:9	<b>trouble</b> 40:19	42:16 43:4	<b>v</b> 1:6	24:5 47:10
<b>Thank</b> 16:13,22	true 8:11 14:25	50:16 55:20	various 7:17	49:12 56:1
26:12,13 55:7	28:4 30:1 39:6	58:7,9,12	vast 25:17,18	57:15 58:13,18
55:12 58:18,19	41:13 42:12	unionization	vernacular 7:11	ways 42:3
<b>theory</b> 43:18	<b>try</b> 14:11 27:2	17:2 18:21	10:17	Wednesday
thing 13:15	trying 12:7	22:19 28:14	versus 3:4 18:6	1:12
14:21 35:2	14:19 19:8	32:16 33:2,5	18:14 22:3	week 16:6
39:18 45:9	27:25 32:13	34:15 37:3	24:2	well-enough
47:5 57:1	turns 49:25	41:7 50:9	view 32:14 41:5	4:14
things 3:25 9:22	two 27:12 29:21	unionized 50:1,2	54:17 55:3	went 11:21
9:23 10:14	46:18 54:8	51:4	viewpoint 39:21	we'll 3:3 50:1
21:2 27:6	56:18	<b>unions</b> 13:9 20:9	violated 27:8	we're 35:16 52:1
47:13	<b>type</b> 19:17 22:17	31:15 34:5	<b>violates</b> 50:6,7,8	we've 44:21 47:4
think 3:22 4:7,7		35:19 36:1	violating 54:21	whatnot 29:18
4:8,13,20 5:7	U	48:21,24 49:4	violation 35:20	whatsoever
5:10,16 6:11	unanimous 22:4	49:13,15,16	37:22 40:7	20:18
6:13,20 7:18	56:13	50:20 52:9	virtually 24:9	<b>willing</b> 39:17
12:2,13 13:7	unanimously	55:25	voting 15:4	<b>WILLIS</b> 1:18
16:8 20:10,12	10:6	union-related	vulnerable	2:3,11 3:6
20:22 21:3	unclear 15:10	13:23	54:12	55:10
22:14,24 27:11	unconstitutio	union/employer		withdraw 56:25
34:11,17 39:3	24:14	4:11		withdrawing
47:21,22 49:17	undercuts 5:12	unique 6:12	wait 46:20 52:19	58:2
52:20 56:14	underscores	<b>United</b> 1:1,4,15	want 9:22,24	withdrew 57:3
<b>THOMAS</b> 1:20	4:16 16:8	1:22 2:6 16:19	10:1,14 11:7	withholding
2:5 16:18	understand	universally 30:1	23:6 32:10,14	54:23 58:17
<b>thought</b> 9:18,19	21:23 25:15	42:12	33:1,3,21 34:9	word 14:2
33:15 36:20,21	27:21 29:18	unlawful 20:20	34:16,23 35:3	<b>worded</b> 11:14
54:7 55:1,3	37:9	unregulated	35:14,25 38:8	words 10:25
			40:1,12,15,16	

12.1 2 29 25	27 44.25 45 10		
13:1,2 38:25	<b>27</b> 44:25 45:10		
work 21:5 27:1	<b>29</b> 44:25		
42:24	3		
worked 7:3 16:7	<b>3</b> 2:4 39:14		
21:20 47:20,23	3a 55:17		
world 54:9	<b>30</b> 16:4,5 44:4		
worry 23:7	<b>34</b> 46:19,21		
worse 14:5 47:8	<b>34</b> 40.13,21		
wouldn't 31:6	5		
35:22 41:8	<b>50</b> 20:16		
write 45:15	<b>50th</b> 19:14		
wrong 15:5,17	<b>55</b> 2:12		
28:22 29:9			
X	8		
$\frac{\mathbf{x}}{\mathbf{x} \ 1:2,10 \ 14:19}$	<b>8(c)</b> 25:12		
14:20,22 15:4			
14.20,22 13.4			
Y			
year 43:17 46:1			
York 1:18			
\$			
<b>\$10,000</b> 42:22			
<b>\$50,000</b> 42:21			
0			
<b>06-939</b> 1:6 3:4			
1			
<b>100</b> 9:3			
<b>11:07</b> 1:16 3:2			
<b>12-month</b> 44:3			
<b>12:08</b> 58:22			
<b>15</b> 22:5			
<b>16</b> 2:7			
<b>1889</b> 3:10 6:6			
9:10,10 10:21			
11:3,17 12:3,5			
<b>1899</b> 13:5,15			
14:16			
<b>19</b> 1:12			
2			
<b>2008</b> 1:12			
<b>24-hour</b> 14:13			
<b>25</b> 44:25			
<b>26</b> 2:9 45:9			
			_