1 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES 2 - - - - - - - - - - - - x RICHLIN SECURITY SERVICE : 3 4 COMPANY, : Petitioner : 5 б : No. 06-1717 v. 7 MICHAEL CHERTOFF, : 8 SECRETARY OF HOMELAND : 9 SECURITY. : 10 - - - - - - - - - - - x 11 Washington, D.C. Wednesday, March 19, 2008 12 13 14 The above-entitled matter came on for oral 15 argument before the Supreme Court of the United States 16 at 10:05 a.m. 17 APPEARANCES: 18 BRIAN WOLFMAN, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf 19 of the Petitioner. 20 ANTHONY YANG, ESQ., Assistant to the Solicitor General, 21 Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on behalf of 22 the Respondent. 23 24 25

1	CONTENTS	
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	PAGE
3	BRIAN WOLFMAN, ESQ.	
4	On behalf of the Petitioner	3
5	ANTHONY YANG, ESQ.	
б	On behalf of the Respondent	26
7	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF	
8	BRIAN WOLFMAN, ESQ.	
9	On behalf of the Petitioner	53
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:05 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	first this morning in Case 06-1717, Richlin Security
5	Service versus Chertoff.
6	Mr. Wolfman.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF BRIAN WOLFMAN
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. WOLFMAN: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
10	please the Court:
11	The Federal Circuit affirmed an award of
12	attorney fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act, or
13	EAJA, to Petitioner Richlin Security Service Company,
14	but it denied Richlin an award for paralegal services at
15	market rates on the ground that statutory attorney fees
16	do not include work done by paralegals.
17	The Federal Circuit was wrong because, as
18	this Court has explained, the statutory term "attorney
19	fees" and now I'm quoting "takes into account the
20	work not only of attorneys but others whose labor
21	contributes to the work product for which an attorney
22	bills her client." Employing that reasoning, the Court
23	held, in Missouri versus Jenkins, that paralegal fees
24	are compensable at market rates as attorney fees under
25	42 U.S.C. section 1988.

1	The question in this case is whether there
2	is any reason EAJA should be interpreted differently.
3	The answer is no. And, indeed, the only potentially
4	relevant difference between the two statutes that
5	EAJA requires fees to be awarded at prevailing market
6	rates, and section 1988 requires only that fees be
7	reasonable provides stronger support for market-based
8	recovery of paralegal fees under EAJA than it would
9	under section 1988.
10	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Wolfman, what about
11	the cap that's not present in 1988 and is present in
12	EAJA?
13	MR. WOLFMAN: Well, Justice Ginsburg, that
14	really is, when we get down to it, what the government's
15	argument boils down to. And I think the cap is
16	irrelevant for two reasons, both of which are important.
17	First, and let me let me first state the argument;
18	then I'll give you the answers.
19	The argument that the government posits
20	is taking a lead from the Federal Circuit is that
21	paralegal services can't be compensable at market rates
22	under EAJA because then paralegal services would be
23	fully or largely compensable, while lawyers' fees to
24	the extent that they exceed the cap would not be. And
25	again there are two answers to that: First, the argument

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1 incorrectly looks at EAJA from today's perspective when 2 lawyers' rates generally exceed the fee cap. 3 JUSTICE SCALIA: Excuse me. The paralegals' 4 rates would also be subject to the -- to the cap. 5 MR. WOLFMAN: Absolutely. 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: They couldn't go above the 7 cap. 8 MR. WOLFMAN: There is no question about 9 that because -- because, Your Honor, they are attorney's 10 fees. 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: Okay. 12 MR. WOLFMAN: That's our submission. But --13 but the problem with looking at it at the current 14 vantage point, which is what the Federal Circuit 15 essentially did, is that at the time EAJA was enacted, 16 most lawyers --17 JUSTICE STEVENS: May I just ask you on that 18 last point: Does the government agree that the 19 paralegals' fees are subject to cap? 20 MR. WOLFMAN: Well, the government would 21 certainly agree that if there are attorney's fees, they 22 are subject to the cap. They are not willing to pay 23 above the cap for anything. 24 JUSTICE SCALIA: Indeed, would insist. 25 MR. WOLFMAN: Yes, indeed, Your Honor. But

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1 anyway --2 JUSTICE STEVENS: But they do not agree with 3 the bottom line that they are subject to the cap? 4 MR. WOLFMAN: Well, what they believe -- the 5 government believes --JUSTICE STEVENS: Because they're attorney's 6 7 fees. 8 MR. WOLFMAN: -- and I'm sure they can explain this better than I can. But what the 9 10 government's position is, is that they are like an 11 out-of-pocket expense --12 JUSTICE SCALIA: Right. 13 MR. WOLFMAN: -- reimbursable only at the 14 cost to the lawyer. That's an interesting question, 15 Your Honor, because one could -- one could posit a 16 situation 20, 30 years out from now, if EAJA were not 17 amended, where even the cost to the lawyer could exceed 18 the cap. So, in a way, the government's argument sort 19 of collapses upon itself. We -- we -- our submission is 20 they are all attorney's fees and they are all subject to 21 the cap. But let me go --22 JUSTICE SOUTER: But you -- isn't that one 23 of the problems with your argument? Because there is 24 something very strange about capping paralegal fees at

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25 the same amount that they would cap a lawyer's fees for,

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1 regardless of what that amount is and when they were 2 setting it.

3 MR. WOLFMAN: Well, again, that's -- that's 4 -- I took to be Justice Ginsburg's question and let me 5 try to answer it. First, as I say, by -- by positing 6 that's a strange situation, which we don't agree with, 7 but even assuming it's a strange situation, again it 8 looks at the situation from today's perspective, not at 9 the time --

JUSTICE SOUTER: No, I'm looking at it from the perspective of the original enactment on your theory at that moment. These fees were legal fees, were attorney fees, and they were capped at the same amount that a lawyer's time was capped at. And that's just odd.

MR. WOLFMAN: Well, I don't believe it's 16 17 odd. And, again, for two reasons: At that point --18 again, you have to take the perspective of where they 19 were at. Lawyers' fees and paralegal fees were really 20 capped at the same point, but all those fees were 21 arrayed, by and large, under the cap so that there would 22 be paralegal fees at a relatively low rate, junior 23 associates at a modest rate, and the senior partner's 24 closer to the cap.

JUSTICE SCALIA: Agent fees --

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1	MR. WOLFMAN: By and large
2	JUSTICE SCALIA: I mean, the problem exists
3	whether or not you make paralegal fees attorney's fees,
4	because agent fees are also subject to the same cap.
5	MR. WOLFMAN: That is true.
б	JUSTICE SCALIA: And agents were paid a good
7	deal less than that.
8	MR. WOLFMAN: That is true. That is another
9	argument that could be made. Agents, who are
10	individuals that are qualified by an administrative
11	agency, in essence, to practice law without the
12	supervision of a lawyer, they are also allowed fees
13	under the administrative part of EAJA, but not under
14	section 2412, which is the court part of EAJA.
15	JUSTICE KENNEDY: You began and it's not
16	just because of my notepad but because I'm interested
17	you told Justice Ginsburg there are two reasons
18	MR. WOLFMAN: Yes.
19	JUSTICE KENNEDY: why the government's
20	cap is wrong. And I'm not even sure you finished the
21	first one. What are the two reasons?
22	MR. WOLFMAN: I would love that opportunity,
23	Your Honor. The first, again, is and let me come
24	back to this if I didn't get it out completely which
25	is that, again, it's looking at the at the problem,

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1 if there is one from the -- the current-day perspective, 2 but what you had at the time, by and large, was that 3 lawyers' and paralegal rates would be arrayed below the 4 It's just not something that would have been cap. 5 within the contemplation of Congress. But let me -б JUSTICE STEVENS: But may I ask you on that: 7 Supposing at the time the statute was enacted, paralegals' fees were not generally treated as lawyers' 8 fees, but rather were treated as disbursements; would 9 10 that make a difference?

11 MR. WOLFMAN: That might have made a 12 difference, but that was not the case, Your Honor. In 13 fact, what the Court pointed out in Missouri versus 14 Jenkins, which was 1989, nine years later, paralegal 15 fees -- it appeared to be that they were separately 16 billed in about three-quarters of all law firms. In 17 1980 it was probably fewer. There was a transition 18 going on.

But let me give you the Court's response to that problem in Missouri versus Jenkins, to the extent that it is a problem. And what the Court said was, whether they're separately billed or not, they were subsumed within the lawyer's rates like other forms of overhead. That's what the Court said in Missouri versus Jenkins. And the question of how they are billed

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1 doesn't -- doesn't inform the question of how you
2 interpret the term "attorney's fees." That's what the
3 Court said in Missouri versus Jenkins and what it
4 reaffirmed two years later in the West Virginia
5 Hospitals versus Casey.

6 Now, let me, if I could, get to the second 7 point which Justice Kennedy asked me about. The second 8 point is that the government's argument proves far too much, because under the Federal Circuit's theory, which 9 10 the government has now adopted, the fees generated by 11 law firm associates would also not be compensable at 12 market rates because a much higher percentage of an 13 associate's billed rate would also fall below the cap as 14 compared to the senior partners in the firm. In other 15 words, it doesn't help explain the problem.

16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I'm sorry. Is your 17 point there that most associates are billed at less than 18 \$125 an hour?

19 No. That's not my point, Your MR. WOLFMAN: 20 Honor. My point is this: The -- the theory of the 21 government's argument is that you would -- you would be, 22 in essence, giving too much recovery to the lower -- to 23 the lower-billed billing agents, whether they be paralegals, junior associates, and so forth. 24 And it --25 when you get up to the senior partners --

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Too much money
2	proportionally.
3	MR. WOLFMAN: Proportionally.
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay.
5	MR. WOLFMAN: Exactly. That's the argument.
6	In all events, some of those various individual's rates
7	will be compensated under EAJA.
8	Our point is that it proves far too much
9	because the junior associates are much more like the
10	paralegals than the senior associates at the largest K
11	Street or Wall Street law firms. And my only point my
12	only submission point in that regard is that it shows
13	that the government's argument proves too much because
14	it illustrates that the government's concern and the
15	Federal Circuit's concern, the anomaly that they have
16	pointed out, has nothing to do with the statutory term
17	"attorney fees" and nothing to do with paralegals, per
18	se. It's the phenomenon that's at work is the fact that
19	the rate the hyperinflation in the legal services
20	market as a whole has outstripped EAJA. That's the
21	phenomenon on which the Federal Circuit, in truth, was
22	relying, even though they put it to the paralegal
23	question.
24	JUSTICE ALITO: If if paralegal charges

25 are not fees but are other expenses, what would be the

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1 standard for determining the rate at which they would be 2 compensable? Would it necessarily be cost under this 3 statute or would it simply be what is reasonable? 4 MR. WOLFMAN: Well, that's -- that's an 5 excellent question. I think it, in part, undermines the б government's position because what happened here is that 7 the Federal Circuit and the Board of Contract Appeals below said, well, it's cost to the lawyer, and we are 8 going to do an Internet search and we are going to find 9 10 what paralegal salaries are and divide it by the 11 requisite number of hours in any year. And we are going to make it \$35 an hour, and we are going to determine 12 13 that's the cost to the law firm. 14 But, of course, that's -- that's not the 15 cost to the law firm. What about the overhead? What 16 about the rent, utilities, and so forth, what about 17 benefits? So what you would have is a very complex cost 18 analysis.

Now, you're suggesting, Your Honor, that we could do it on some vague notion of reasonableness. But the problem is that the -- the fee-shifting statutes either look to market rate or actual cost. But what is interesting about the actual cost argument here -- and that's true across the entire range of fee-shifting statutes -- and what's interesting about --

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1	JUSTICE SCALIA: This problem is going to
2	exist anyway, isn't it? I mean, even if you don't cram
3	paralegals into the other expenses, there are going to
4	be other expenses that are in the other expenses.
5	MR. WOLFMAN: But
6	JUSTICE SCALIA: You're going to have to
7	have this same problem and what about the overhead
8	and so forth?
9	MR. WOLFMAN: No, that is with respect,
10	Justice Scalia, that is not correct because the problem
11	here is and I'm using your words is that the
12	government is cramming a in-house professional
13	services service into a place where no court
14	virtually in the history of American jurisprudence has
15	ever put it. Out-of-pocket
16	JUSTICE ALITO: Well, if if it's simply
17	reasonableness because I don't see anything in the
18	statute that says that all non-fee expenses are
19	compensable at cost if it's simply reasonableness,
20	would it be possible to say that what would be
21	reasonable would be a rate that preserves the ratio
22	between attorney's fees and paralegal fees that existed
23	at the time when the statute was enacted so that you
24	wouldn't have the problem of attorneys being compensated
25	at the same rate as paralegals?

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1	MR. WOLFMAN: Let me let me answer that
2	in two ways: If you were to preserve the ratio, then it
3	seems to me that the in many markets, the paralegals
4	are going to get right near the cap anyway or, you know,
5	between \$75 and \$100, because we know that many lawyers'
6	rates are well above the cap. If you preserve that
7	ratio
8	JUSTICE ALITO: No. No. If the ratio if
9	lawyers were I know that if lawyers were compensated
10	at \$125 an hour when this was enacted and paralegals
11	were compensated at \$75, then it would be a 2-1 ratio,
12	and you'd preserve that.
13	MR. WOLFMAN: Yes. You could do that, and
14	then what you would have is just a static rate for all
15	players in the market, and there's no suggestion that
16	Congress intended that. After all, I'm using the term
17	"prevailing market rates."
18	JUSTICE SCALIA: Am I mistaken am I
19	mistaken you claim that even if they are expenses,
20	they should they should be paid for at market rate,
21	don't you?
22	MR. WOLFMAN: Well, not quite market rate,
23	but this goes to I said I had two responses to
24	Justice Alito's question.
25	And the problem is that when we talk about

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1 out-of-pocket expenses, again, which is where the 2 government is trying to shoe-horn the paralegal 3 services, we talk about out-of-pocket expenses for the 4 client, for the prevailing party. Expenses, whether 5 they are out-of-pocket expenses or attorney fees are -are awarded to the prevailing party, and the cost faced б 7 by the prevailing party is the cost to the prevailing 8 party, what it paid for the paralegal services.

9 Now, that will approximate the market rate, 10 no question about it. It might not always be synonymous 11 with it.

Justice Alito, I am not suggesting that 12 13 Congress could not have done it that way, but there is 14 no suggestion that it did. After all, in this statute, 15 compared to other fee-shifting statutes, it specifically 16 said it wants to work at the prevailing market rate. 17 And the only reason that in some markets for some 18 lawyers the -- the ceiling, the cap has become a floor 19 is because of hyperinflation in the legal services 20 market. It has nothing to do with the compensability of 21 paralegal services vis-a-vis junior associates, as I've 22 mentioned.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Wolfman, if there's any discretion in the district judge in setting the amount of the fee, then why wouldn't it be appropriate

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to say: Now there's a cap for the lawyer is \$125 an hour, but we know the true market rate for that lawyer is \$200; we're going to do the same thing with the paralegal. The true market rate is X, and we're going to knock it down so that it will match the knock-down for the lawyer.

7 MR. WOLFMAN: Well, the reason for that 8 is -- is that there -- there is no suggestion at all 9 that that's what was being contemplated in this statute. 10 And that may be the way that if you had seen this 11 phenomenon that's developed, which again is 12 hyperinflation in the legal services market, you might 13 have written it that way.

14 It's true that the courts have discretion. 15 There's always a reasonableness factor. But the 16 overriding factor is the market rate. The Congress said 17 "prevailing market rate." And to me, that would be 18 outside the bounds of any discretion that had been 19 afforded.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: But isn't it likely that when Congress said that, it was not thinking of paralegals?

23 MR. WOLFMAN: No. I think -- I don't think
24 -- with respect, I don't think that's the question.
25 Going -- that takes us back to Missouri versus Jenkins,

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and what the Court said there is that you have this word "attorney's fee," and the way of thinking of attorney's fees is to include everything that goes into the labor of the attorney that ultimately gets billed to the client and that paralegal services are an aspect of that.

7 Two years later, in West Virginia University 8 Hospitals, the Court made -- made essentially the same point again, which is that -- that at the time that all 9 10 these fee-shifting statutes were passed, paralegal 11 services, to the extent that they existed, were 12 traditionally subsumed within the lawyer's rate. And so 13 that once law firms started billing for them 14 separately --

15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I'm sorry. 16 "Traditionally subsumed in the lawyer's rate," are you 17 suggesting, when this statute was passed, they weren't 18 billed separately to the client?

MR. WOLFMAN: No. I'm not suggesting that. I'm saying traditionally, well before they were passed, they were subsumed to the market rate. There -- there came to be a tradition, roughly in the '70s and early '80s, for the separate billing. And what the Court held emphatically in Missouri versus Jenkins was that the separate billing didn't tell you anything about whether

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1 they were attorney's fees.

2 Let me -- let me -- if I could extend my 3 answer a little bit. You have to appreciate what the 4 government's argument is here. The government's argument 5 is that if the paralegal fee, the paralegal services, are 6 subsumed within the lawyer's rate, if there were a law 7 firm out there that still didn't do the separate billing, that would be compensable as an attorney's fees when 8 billed within the lawyer's rates. But if they're billed 9 10 separately under EAJA, the government's position is 11 they're not compensable at market rates. 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: Of course, that's no loss 13 to the government because when you put it into the 14 lawyer's rate, you hit the ceiling for the lawyer's rate 15 that much sooner. 16 MR. WOLFMAN: That is true --17 JUSTICE SCALIA: I can see why that would --18 MR. WOLFMAN: -- but that was not true in 19 1980. And that's the point we are making here. And 20 it's true that it may not be, in this day and age --21 JUSTICE SOUTER: I'm sorry. Why wasn't it 22 true in 1980? You simply mean in 1980 the two together 23 wouldn't have gotten as high as the cap? MR. WOLFMAN: Absolutely. If you -- in most 24 25 markets for most lawyers -- we deal with this

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1 extensively in our brief. We cite case after case to 2 this effect. And I think -- and I don't mean to be glib 3 here -- I think the way to put this, that in 1980 and 4 1985, that the statute covered virtually all lawyers' 5 fees rather comfortably on Main Street, if not necessarily on K Street and Wall Street. I mean -- and 6 7 that's what the statute was for. 8 I know it's hard to appreciate that now, 9 when we see, you know, very high rates from the large 10 law firms, but put yourself back in that perspective, 11 which is -- in that vantage point, which we try to do in 12 our brief. 13 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Assume that our decision will in part drive the market either way, what we do 14 15 will effect the way paralegals are used, the way billing is done. If that is true, is there some utility in 16 17 simply following the EAJA so we give a consistent signal 18 to the market and then if Congress wants to change it, 19 it can? I mean --20 MR. WOLFMAN: I'm not sure I understand the 21 question. 22 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Rather than follow EAJA, I mean follow 1988 -- follow Jenkins. Follow Jenkins. 23 MR. WOLFMAN: Well, I certainly think 24 25 there's utility in doing that, and Congress can revisit

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1	this. The difficulty is that Congress has not revisited
2	it. And Congress could revisit this and make I think
3	it's it is clear right now that the the purposes
4	of the statute are not being fully carried out because,
5	again, of the hyperinflation in legal services.
6	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Are there some
7	disutilities from an economic standpoint in having two
8	structures: Jenkins for one kind of cases, EAJA in the
9	other cases as the government wants?
10	MR. WOLFMAN: Is there some
11	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Are there some
12	disadvantages to the system?
13	MR. WOLFMAN: I of course, we don't think
14	there are, but the to be candid, the the Federal
15	Circuit pointed to one purported disadvantage. The
16	Federal Circuit claimed that to the extent that there
17	was some incentive that would be driven by a contrary
18	decision, it would be that lawyers would shunt off more
19	work than is efficient to paralegals, and it's
20	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that's I saw
21	that analysis. This Act only applies when the
22	government's position is not substantially justified.
23	People are not going to structure their billing
24	arrangements assuming the government's position is not
25	even going to be substantially justified.

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1	MR. WOLFMAN: I certainly agree that it is
2	unlikely, but as we point very unlikely. I agree
3	with that, Mr. Chief Justice, but there is another point
4	that I would make that we cover quite extensively in our
5	brief, which is that which is that I think you
6	have to step back and think about that for a second,
7	what the Federal Circuit did.
8	The notion that lawyers are going to shunt
9	off work to paralegals that they wouldn't otherwise
10	have, there are runs head long into both economic and
11	ethical constraints on the profession. Economic,
12	because if that was occurring, i.e., people were
13	lawyers were giving paralegals work that they could not
14	sensibly do, clients would, one, insist that work not be
15	allocated like that; or, two, take their business
16	elsewhere. That's the economic constraints. If, in
17	other words, the whole premise
18	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That point makes
19	some assumptions about the relative abilities, say, of
20	junior associates and senior paralegals that I'm not
21	sure are well founded.
22	(Laughter.)
23	MR. WOLFMAN: Well, Mr. Chief Justice, I
24	will I believe that you have greater experience on
25	that than I do.

21

1	But I think the other answer to that is the
2	ethical constraints. Even if there weren't economic
3	constraints I mean, as we pointed out in our brief,
4	sure, the paralegal profession has become an impressive
5	one. They do a lot of things that lawyers used to do,
6	no question. But a lawyer can't shunt off work that
7	they can't handle because there are ethical constraints.
8	I can't, for instance, give a paralegal,
9	say, responsibility for principal responsibility for
10	writing an appellate brief. I could not or would not do
11	that because they can't do that, generally speaking,
12	because of their training and experience.
13	So I just think that falls apart. And
14	as you say, Mr. Chief Justice, the fact that of the
15	substantial justification defense and other reasons as
16	well, it's unlikely and this gets back to Justice
17	Kennedy's questions unlikely that law firms will
18	structure their practices and businesses around this
19	problem.
20	The real problem, though, is not an attack
21	on the government fisc, as we point out in our brief.
22	The impact on the public fisc for rejecting the Federal
23	Circuit's decision would be negligible. It's worth
24	noting, though, that the Federal Circuit's decision
25	would have an impact on clients most affected by it.

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1	Three groups comprise the great majority of
2	EAJA applicants: Small businesses like Richlin,
3	disabled veterans, and disabled Social Security
4	claimants. In all three situations, clients will lose
5	if paralegal services are awarded at the cost of those
6	services to their lawyers. For the latter two groups,
7	veterans and Social Security claimants, Federal law, in
8	fact, requires that EAJA that the EAJA fee be paid to
9	the claimant.
10	So, although it makes economic sense for
11	paralegals to work on significant aspects of Social
12	Security and veterans' cases and that's set out at
13	some length in the amicus brief of the National
14	Association of Legal Assistants the claimants will
15	lose those fees under the government's view of EAJA.
16	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Is that pertinent
17	is that pertinent on the cap questions we've been
18	discussing too? I mean, if you're representing a
19	disabled veteran, is the lawyer typically charging more
20	than \$125 an hour?
21	MR. WOLFMAN: No. This is how it works, and
22	that's why I said Federal law provides for this. And
23	let me give you the citations. They are also set forth
24	in footnote 2 of this Court's decision in Scarborough.
25	The way the Social Security and veterans

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situations work -- and, again, they comprise the majority of these cases -- is that the Federal law allows the lawyer to take a contingent fee out of the back benefits, not to exceed 20 and 25 percent of the veterans' or Social Security claimants' back benefits, respectively.

7 But then what Federal law also provides -and the citations are Public Law 99-80 section 3 and 8 Public Law 102-572 section 506(c) -- Federal law 9 10 provides that to the extent that there is an EAJA fee, 11 the lawyer may not double-dip and has to send that fee 12 directly back to the client. So for these relatively 13 impecunious claimants, essentially chopping the 14 paralegal fee in third or in half or something like that 15 would have a real impact on claimants. It's hard to --16 JUSTICE BREYER: I know no one else -- I will 17 not say no one else, but not everyone else places the 18 importance on legislative history that I do, but I do. 19 And I saw here that the Senate Judiciary Committee 20 considered all these arguments; they wrote a report; and 21 they sided with the government. 2.2 MR. WOLFMAN: Well --

JUSTICE BREYER: And I know it was there, but it doesn't matter to me it was on a bill that was later not passed, and then unless there is something

24

1 different --

2	MR. WOLFMAN: Well
3	JUSTICE BREYER: for that reason, because
4	in my own mind I'm thinking there were a group of people
5	on the committee, they went through the issue, they
6	reflected views of their principles, they work it out,
7	and unless something changed that makes me think that
8	isn't the working out of it, I would put a lot of weight
9	on it.
10	MR. WOLFMAN: Well
11	JUSTICE BREYER: And now you're going to
12	tell me what there is, I hope.
13	MR. WOLFMAN: I'm certainly going to do
14	that, Justice Breyer. The first thing is and I do
15	want to point out for the benefit of the other members
16	of the Court that is that that piece of legislative
17	history accompanied vetoed legislation. But let me also
18	say that, and we explain this at some length both in
19	our opening and reply briefs, that the government relies
20	on a snippet saying that paralegals paralegal
21	services can be awarded, and then it says paren, at
22	cost. But there are a number of other aspects of that
23	same piece of legislative history that point in exactly
24	the opposite direction in terms of market rate recovery,
25	and in fact the Court cites excuse me, the committee

1 cites a case from the Sixth Circuit, the Northcross 2 case, in which paralegal services were awarded at market 3 rates. 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And of course they 5 may mean -- may have meant "cost" to the client. 6 MR. WOLFMAN: And that is -- and that was my 7 next point, Mr. Chief Justice, which is that it said "at 8 cost," but at whose cost? And the problem here is that this fee-shifting statute and every other fee-shifting 9 10 statute of which I am aware awards a fee to the 11 prevailing party. The purpose of the statute is not to 12 enrich lawyers. The purpose of the statute is to 13 provide incentive for lawyers to handle cases on behalf 14 of clients. Unless the Court has any further questions, 15 I'll reserve the balance of my time. 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel. 17 Mr. Yanq. 18 ORAL ARGUMENT OF ANTHONY YANG 19 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT 20 MR. YANG: Thank you Mr. Chief Justice, and 21 may it please the Court: 2.2 EAJA authorizes Federal agencies to award 23 two distinct categories of litigation expenses against 24 the United States: fees and other expenses. The most 25 natural reading of "attorney's fees" is one that embraces

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an attorney's time, payments for an attorney's time, whereas the broader term "other expenses" naturally encompasses outlays that are paid by an attorney during tits representation of a client including the cost of paralegals whose work may be necessary for the preparation of a client's case.

7 Congress recognized this distinction between 8 "attorney's fees" and "other expenses" when it enacted 9 EAJA in 1980. The relevant Senate report, like EAJA's 10 House report, stated that the ceiling on "attorney's 11 fees" --

12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You say the relevant 13 one was of course on a legislation that wasn't passed, 14 right?

15 MR. YANG: Actually this is even before EAJA 16 lapsed the first time; this is upon EAJA's initial 17 enactment in 1980, there was a Senate report and a House 18 report and both have functionally identical language. 19 The Senate report states that quote, "attorney's fees 20 relates only to the compensation of lawyers themselves" 21 and then goes on to explain that costs connected with 22 their representation of a particular interest in a 23 proceeding is not affected by the limitation that is the 24 cap on attorney's fees. When Congress then reenacted 25 EAJA after its repeal, Congress again made clear -- and

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this is the report that, Mr. Chief Justice, you were referring to -- made clear that the "other expenses" of EAJA fees includes an attorney's out-of-pocket expenses, and that those out-of-pocket expenses were illustrated by the specific example of paralegal time being reimbursed at cost.

7 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What is cost? One could 8 say, I'm going to look at the Internet and come up with 9 \$35 dollars an hour, or you could say in the case of a 10 paralegal there is a part of the overhead, there is the 11 fringe benefits -- so just giving the hourly rate is 12 deceptive of what the actual cost is to the law firm, 13 because the law firm has to add on to determine what in 14 fact it's paying for the paralegal, the fringe benefits 15 and part of the overhead.

16 MR. YANG: Justice Ginsburg, the government 17 agrees that more than simply salary would be 18 reimbursable as cost. And I think the appropriate way 19 to calculate cost in the context of paralegals would 20 be -- would parallel how the government calculates its 21 cost for attorneys when the government seeks attorney's 22 fees. And what the government does is it uses salary as 23 a baseline and then adds -- for the government it's 29 --24 or approximately 29 percent of salary for other benefits. 25 And --

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but it might
2	be quite different for a private practitioner. Your
3	benefits for health care will probably cost you a lot
4	less than private practice and doesn't that make the
5	paralegal fees quite different from the other items of
6	expenses that are listed? You know, expert witnesses,
7	you get a bill, that's how much it costs the lawyer.
8	Studies, analysis, engineering reports, you don't have to
9	figure overhead benefits with respect to any of those.
10	All of a sudden you throw in another item, paralegal
11	costs, you put those under costs, and now you've got to
12	go through this elaborate calculation that is going to be
13	not worth it, almost, for a typical firm representing a
14	small client.

15 MR. YANG: Mr. Chief Justice, I'm not sure that I agree with some of the premises that you had. 16 17 First, with respect to the analysis and reports and 18 such, those are not always things that are done outside 19 a law firm. The statutory text, in fact, allows the 20 reimbursement of costs for any study, analysis, report, test or project; it's not limited to things that are 21 22 done outside of a firm. It may often be done outside --23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, most firms, 24 an engineering report would be outside the --25 MR. YANG: Perhaps an engineering

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1 report, except for maybe, some intellectual property 2 firms but --3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: It seems to me the 4 question is a valid one; you're running away from the 5 question. 6 MR. YANG: Well --7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And I'll let you answer. 8 It suggests this further inquiry. Suppose that a solo 9 practitioner knows that a paralegal in another firm is 10 very good at this and he asks the other lawyer, may I 11 use your paralegal, and he just sends that lawyer the bill. What -- how would that be billed under your view? 12 13 MR. YANG: Well, there is now two questions 14 in the air. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, you can answer 15 16 Justice Kennedy's first. 17 JUSTICE KENNEDY: They both -- they both 18 apply to -- they both apply to outside experts. 19 MR. YANG: Well, when a paralegal is 20 outsourced, which is your question, there is two 21 potential situations. One may be that the paralegal is 22 less expensive, and if that were the case you would 23 think that firms would normally outsource their 24 paralegals if it's less expensive to obtain them from 25 the outside than the inside.

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but that
2	wasn't Justice Kennedy's question. His was the
3	outsourced paralegal is better at the particular task.
4	MR. YANG: Well, if the outsourced paralegal
5	is better, it may be that the actual cost to the firm is
6	the cost that the firm pays for that paralegal to the
7	third party, Your Honor.
8	JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, in that case it would
9	bill the paralegal the same way it would bill, I take
10	it, the expense of, let's say, having water tested in a
11	pollution case. It would it would I take it it
12	would bill the client dollar for dollar what it had to
13	pay.
14	MR. YANG: In fact that's right
15	JUSTICE SOUTER: And I
16	MR. YANG: and not add profit on to that
17	that paralegal as well.
18	JUSTICE SOUTER: They don't add a profit and
19	they don't add a profit on to to travel expenses and
20	things like that.
21	MR. YANG: Right.
22	JUSTICE SOUTER: So that in each if that
23	is so in each case, "cost" means cost to the client,
24	and you're coming up with a new category of expense,
25	which is cost to someone else, and why should there be a

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subcategory of expense, in which "cost" does not mean cost to the client when every other category of expense does mean cost to the client?

4 MR. YANG: Justice Souter, every other 5 category does not mean cost to the client. In fact, 6 EAJA specifically provides for fees, but the fees are 7 based on the prevailing market rates for similar 8 services.

9 JUSTICE SOUTER: Because there is a separate 10 provision for fees.

MR. YANG: That's correct, Your Honor.JUSTICE SOUTER: Yes.

13 MR. YANG: But in that context a client need 14 not incur any legal fees, have any obligation to pay any 15 fees, and courts routinely award EAJA fees when there 16 has been no cost paid by the client in fees, and 17 similarly, even if the client has no obligation ultimately to pay the cost in those circumstances --18 19 where for instance a firm is providing pro bono services 20 or a legal services organization is providing pro bono 21 services to a client -- the client does not have to 22 incur or pay the costs.

The question is whether those costs have been ultimately incurred and have been incurred at the rate that the firm has incurred the cost on behalf of

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1 the client.

2	JUSTICE STEVENS: May I ask this question?
3	Maybe this is a just the same question Justice
4	Kennedy asked, but I want to be sure of your answer.
5	Suppose you had an independent firm of paralegals. I
б	don't know whether the market contains them, but it
7	surely could. A firm that they are all paralegals, and
8	they then bill the law firm at their own hourly rate, and
9	then the law firm in turn bills the client. In that
10	situation, would the market rate of the independent firm
11	of paralegals govern?
12	MR. YANG: It would be the rate that is
13	ultimately paid. If you're outsourcing the paralegals
14	it would be the rate paid by the firm for those
15	paralegals. Now it may also be, for instance
16	JUSTICE STEVENS: Do I understand the
17	government's position that the the result is
18	different if a firm uses its own paralegals as opposed
19	to outsourcing them?
20	MR. YANG: The result is not different, Your
21	Honor. The result is the same in the sense that the
22	firm's cost
23	JUSTICE STEVENS: No. But under my example
24	they would be paying the market rate for paralegals, and
25	I think you say they could be reimbursed for that.

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1	MR. YANG: It wouldn't necessarily be the
2	market rate. It would be what they are paying, which may
3	well reflect the market rate.
4	JUSTICE STEVENS: They are in the market
5	to make business. I presume the paralegals would charge
6	the going rate.
7	MR. YANG: If
8	JUSTICE STEVENS: Assume that they also
9	charged the market rate.
10	MR. YANG: It may be. But if it's the
11	market rate, there would presumably be no incentive for
12	a firm to outsource its paralegals.
13	JUSTICE KENNEDY: But again, you're not
14	answering the hypothetical. Let's assume two cases:
15	Case A, you hire an outside paralegal at \$85 an hour.
16	He is outside, he is independent. He is just like the
17	expert engineer in the Chief Justice's question, \$85 an
18	hour. Case two, it's your own paralegal. The
19	prevailing rate for which you charge general clients is
20	\$85 an hour.
21	Why should there be a difference?
22	MR. YANG: There should be a difference,
23	Your Honor, because with respect to outsourced firms,
24	there is no concern that a firm is going to add well,
25	if the firm is only going to bill at its cost, the firm

34

2 paralegal. 3 So if, for instance, the firm paid \$85, under 4 our view the firm could not turn around and charge \$95 5 to the client. Likewise -- and the reason that this is important in the EAJA context --6 7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Under your view, they 8 can't even charge \$85 an hour. MR. YANG: Well, that's correct if their 9 10 cost, actual cost would be less in-house. And the 11 reason that's important is because in EAJA, unlike 12 section 1988, there are several statutory differences. 13 One, EAJA provides for other expenses, so the term 14 "attorney's fees" is not the only term that needs to be 15 construed by the Court. "Other expenses" needs to be 16 construed in a manner that gives it meaningful effect. 17 And Congress recognized, again, in the 18 legislative history -- to the extent you could disagree 19 on the meaning of "other expenses" -- Congress was very 20 clear both in 1980 and then again in 1984 that "other 21 expenses" -- attorney's fees do not include things that 22 attorneys pay and only compensates attorneys for their 23 own hourly rate. 24 And the reason that the fee cap is

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important is because EAJA, as this Court recognized in

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is not going to add additional profit to the outsourced

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Underwood, is not intended to be fully compensatory. If
 the cap for --

3 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I know you said that a 4 few times and you have authority for it, but it seems to 5 me odd if you look at 1988 and if the attorney's fees and costs -- and costs is very limited in the statute in 6 7 1920 -- and if you have attorney's fees and other 8 expenses, "other expenses" is a much larger category than "costs" within 1988. So I -- I would think that, well, 9 10 EAJA is the more compensatory because it allows for more 11 items.

MR. YANG: Justice Ginsburg, under Jenkins' 12 13 rationale, Jenkins recognized that when there is not 14 another -- another box of other expenses, where in a 15 statute which was intended to be fully compensatory, 16 that attorney's fees necessarily must include 17 compensation for all types of costs that a lawyer might 18 incur in the presentation/representation of a client. 19 That works for section 1988.

But if that rationale were applied to the EAJA context, if "attorney's fees" were given the same meaning in EAJA, there is little or no work for other expenses to be done in the statute, because already you've pushed all of those expenses into the box of attorney's fees and --

36

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, your
2	this question only arises when the position of your
3	client was not substantially justified. Now under
4	those and it was designed, to some extent, to
5	penalize you because because of that fact. Why
6	should we adopt a construction that, in effect,
7	penalizes the client who has had to face the Federal
8	Government when the Federal Government's position was
9	not substantially justified? They are going to have to
10	pay the paralegal fees at market rates, but they are
11	only going to get compensation at cost.
12	MR. YANG: Mr. Chief Justice, the reason
13	that you would adopt our construction is because
14	Congress is balancing more than the intent to provide
15	compensation for prevailing parties in EAJA. It was
16	also intending to balance the effect on the Federal fisc
17	and limit the government's exposure as a means of
18	passing the Act. One of the reasons
19	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's kind of a
20	stretch to suggest in a situation where they pass a law
21	that only applies to individuals or small businesses
22	where they put a cap in and so on, that another way that
23	we are going to prevent damage to the fisc was to treat
24	paralegal expenses as costs rather than at market rate.
25	I suspect that was not foremost in their mind.

37

1	MR. YANG: Well, Mr. Chief Justice, I think						
2	the legislative history illustrates that, in fact,						
3	paralegals and other costs						
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that assumes						
5	when they said "costs," that they meant costs to the firm						
6	as opposed to costs to the client. And that, I think, is						
7	entirely an open question.						
8	MR. YANG: Well, the relevant page of the						
9	legislative history in 1984 that you're talking about						
10	explains that Congress wanted to adopt the views of the						
11	Administrative Conference in its model rules, and goes						
12	on to quote the Administrative Conference						
13	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, not to belabor						
14	the point, it meant that the people who drafted the						
15	Senate report may have meant that.						
16	MR. YANG: Well, that's a problem with all						
17	legislative history.						
18	JUSTICE BREYER: I don't think it is a						
19	problem with legislative history.						
20	(Laughter.)						
21	MR. YANG: It's a feature of all legislative						
22	history.						
23	JUSTICE BREYER: I think that the people in						
24	Congress who hire their staffs pay attention to what						
25	the staffs say in precisely the same way that any other						

38

1 executive --

2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Do we know what the 3 President's view was on that question when he signed the 4 legislation into law, which is what he was required to 5 do before it became law and which he did not do under 6 the prior bill? 7 MR. YANG: The President did not express a view, but what we do know is that the legislative 8 9 history in 1984 dealt with language that was identical 10 to that ultimately passed by the Senate -- by Congress 11 and signed by the President. And that legislative history explains and quotes the Administrative 12 13 Conference that says that what should be awarded is an 14 award of reasonable expenses of the attorney. 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Do you know of any other 16 case where we used -- I mean it just gets worse and 17 worse. Do you know any other case where we've used the 18 legislative history of a vetoed bill to determine the 19 meaning of a later bill that was not vetoed? 20 Yes, Justice Scalia. MR. YANG: 21 JUSTICE SCALIA: Good. What is it? This Court has twice cited 22 MR. YANG: 23 unanimous opinions, the same report that we cite here, 24 one of which was in the Jean opinion. In fact, the 25 Court not only cited the Senate report, but also cited

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1	the House report to the 1984 bill.
2	JUSTICE SCALIA: When was that?
3	MR. YANG: Jean?
4	JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes.
5	MR. YANG: Pardon my
6	JUSTICE SCALIA: Never mind. Don't take
7	don't waste your time.
8	MR. YANG: Jean was 1990.
9	JUSTICE BREYER: I mean that wouldn't be
10	surprising would it, that wouldn't be surprising because
11	you have, in fact, very complex bills that have 14
12	sections and section of the B bill could have been
13	vetoed been vetoed because of a problem with section
14	14 and the repassed without section 14, in which case the
15	legislative history for the other 13 sections would be
16	highly illuminating as to what they mean.
17	MR. YANG: And in fact Congress recognized that,
18	Justice Breyer, when it reenacted readdressed the bill
19	in 1985, the relevant legislative history specifically
20	references the bill that existed before, that it was
21	reported by the Senate
22	JUSTICE BREYER: The question that I had in
23	respect to this statute is is that my impression and
24	here I'd like to know how they bill secretary's
25	times. I'd like to know how they bill rent. And my

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thought is -- and I want to be either verified or told I'm wrong and explain it -- that when you have no cap, the lawyer and the client want to shove everything possible into the rubric attorney's fees, including the kitchen sink, if the plumber is there in the kitchen of the law firm.

(Laughter.)

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3 JUSTICE BREYER: That's fine. No problem.9 There is no other way to get paid for them.

10 But where you have a cap, you should shove 11 everything the other side, if expenses are going to be 12 paid for, because that cap means that the lawyer will 13 not get his full pay back and therefore, the lower the 14 cap, the more you want to be sure it's covering only 15 that lawyer's time. And everything else goes into 16 expense so that you can pay the lawyer adequately and he 17 will recover his expenses elsewhere.

18 Was that the theory of this bill? Is there 19 any evidence that that was the theory? If you did it 20 that way, would anything get mixed up?

21 MR. YANG: Well, the theory of the bill was 22 that attorney's fees would be based at prevailing market 23 rates, and that prevailing market rates would embody a 24 certain set of costs that might be reimbursed. I would 25 think that the prevailing practice is not to bill

41

1	separately for the kitchen sink, but as the Court					
2	explained in Missouri versus Jenkins, Missouri's					
3	analysis would extend to your hypothetical, Justice					
4	Breyer. It explains that reasonable attorney's fees had					
5	to cover all kinds of costs, including the costs of					
6	secretaries, messengers, librarians or janitors who					
7	might well be cleaning the kitchen sink.					
8	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Am I right that when this					
9	language first came in this is in relation to Justice					
10	Breyer's question there was no cap? When did the					
11	when was the cap put on?					
12	MR. YANG: The cap in EAJA was imposed from					
13	the very beginning.					
14	JUSTICE GINSBURG: It was.					
15	MR. YANG: Yes. It was. It was in the					
16	Senate bill. It was it was removed by subcommittee,					
17	reinserted by the full Judiciary Committee, passed the					
18	Senate, came over to the House and continued on for					
19	passage in 1980.					
20	JUSTICE GINSBURG: It would be a lot of					
21	weight to put on three little words: "Billed at					
22	cost." If you just read those words, it could be the					
23	costs to the client, the cost to the law firm and then					
24	you'd have to go to this further document, the					
25	Administrative Conference document, it's rather thin I					

42

1 think.

2 MR. YANG: Well, Justice Ginsburg, we are 3 relying not only on the 1984 but also on the 1980 4 legislative history, which although it does not 5 specifically refer to paralegals, explains that in 6 connection with the term "attorney's fees" and the 7 ceiling on attorney's fees -- and I'll quote again from the Senate report, which was the first: "The ceiling on 8 attorney's fees relates only to the compensation of 9 10 lawyers" themselves. And then goes on to say: That 11 does not include other "costs connected with their representation of a particular interest in a proceeding." 12 13 And when Congress did that, it specifically 14 recognized that it was taking a different approach than that taken in other fee-shifting statutes. The very 15 16 next sentence explains that the committee notes that 17 this section is not intended to limit or affect the 18 computation of reasonable "attorney's fees" under any 19 other provision of law, and gave as an example the Civil 20 Rights Act. That is section 1988. 21 So Congress knew from the very beginning 22 that its treatment of attorney's fees as being limited 23 only to attorneys and the larger, more capacious category

of "other expenses" as capturing all other costs that an attorney might incur in the representation of a client

43

1 was one that was both different from other statutes, and 2 one that was intended by Congress. And it's reflected 3 not only by the legislative history, but again by the 4 fee caps.

5 The fee caps I believe you started here were specifically designed and set by reference to attorney's б 7 rates, the exceptions to the fee caps again specifically 8 reference attorneys. There is an exception that you can exceed the fee cap when there is a limited availability 9 10 of the attorneys qualified at the proceedings involved. 11 And it would be anomalous in that context where Congress 12 has paid particular attention to the billing rates of 13 attorneys, set the cap based on attorney's rates with no 14 reference to paralegals to assume --

15 JUSTICE STEVENS: May I go back --MR. YANG: -- that Congress intended --16 17 JUSTICE STEVENS: May I go back to the 18 point, because I think you were cut off before you went 19 into the full legislative history. I'm still concerned 20 about the argument that even if they are not fees but 21 rather costs, that the costs should be those that are 22 billed to the client. And you think there is some 23 conclusive answer in the legislative history that that's 24 not the case.

MR. YANG: Well, the legislative history

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1 when you -- again, if you look to what Congress was 2 talking about, both the Administrative Conference rules 3 and the quotation of the Administrative Conference rules 4 _ _ 5 JUSTICE STEVENS: Which took place when? 6 This was in 1984. MR. YANG: 7 JUSTICE STEVENS: At that time were they 8 billing paralegal's fees at cost to the client? Was 9 it --10 MR. YANG: In fact, Your Honor, there was a 11 dispute. The legislative history speaks to the 12 controversy that evolved regarding the -- whether other 13 expenses of the term would include more than what was 14 specifically enumerated in the statute. And what we 15 cite to in our brief as a footnote at page 28, footnote 16 12, there was a dispute. Several courts had concluded 17 that paralegals were reimbursed at cost. In fact, the 18 Northcross decision, which the committee report 19 specifically references -- concluded that it was costs 20 to the attorney, as this Court recognized in Jenkins. 21 Footnote seven of Jenkins discusses the Northcross

22 decision and explains that Northcross awarded

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23 out-of-pocket expenses for attorney's fees at the cost 24 to the attorney.

And so, when you take that controversy which

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1 had evolved regarding how you compensate these other 2 expenses -- and specifically paralegal expenses -- along 3 with Congress's statement that it intended to compensate 4 out-of-pocket expenses incurred with connection to a 5 case, the model rules and Northcross when you combine that with the statement that paralegals are to be 6 7 compensated at cost, seems clear to us that Congress is intending that in contrast to attorney's fees, which 8 have a profit element embedded in them and a profit 9 10 element capped by the fee cap that Congress imposed in 11 1980, that when read together, it seems fairly clear 12 to us that Congress intended --13 JUSTICE STEVENS: Yes, but every expense 14 that's reimbursed at cost has a profit element in it for 15 whoever performed the service. 16 MR. YANG: But when it's within the control 17 of the firm --18 JUSTICE STEVENS: Business or otherwise. 19 MR. YANG: -- when it's within the control of 20 the firm, there is a particular danger that the firm can 21 inflate its own costs. Whereas when it's going out to 22 the market, of course, it's not going to control the 23 profits. 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, maybe this is 25 the same question Justice Breyer asked, but I haven't --

46

1 I didn't grasp the answer. Under your system it would 2 make sense for lawyers to charge separately for 3 photocopy services, telephone services, so on because 4 then they are not going to be subject to the attorney 5 fee cap. And they may think, look, the difference between cost and market rate is relatively small; the 6 7 difference between our hourly rate and \$125 is large. MR. YANG: You're asking about the 8 incentives that firms might have. 9 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I'm just 11 saying if we adopt your position, isn't it going to be, 12 I guess, worse for your client because firms will, as 13 I've been told firms sometimes do, charge separately for 14 things at a higher rate than their cost? They will 15 charge a higher rate for photocopy services because they 16 try to factor into it overhead and things like that, than 17 cost. 18 MR. YANG: Overhead profit. We don't believe it's actually going to change any practices, 19 20 because ultimately, when you're looking at what costs 21 are reimbursable under EAJA, it has to be costs that are 22 not traditionally already paid for in the attorney's 23 fees. So you have to look not to the practice of the specific firm that's at issue, you have to look at the 24 prevailing practice. 25

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I would say
2	I would say that it's now traditional for firms to
3	charge, say, more for their photocopy services than it
4	cost them.
5	MR. YANG: Well, if that's the case under
6	our reading, of course, we would we would say that
7	that is that is not a type of expense that was
8	contemplated by EAJA, because Congress already provided
9	for profits that attorneys get from representing a party
10	within the attorney fee and cap that.
11	The whole idea of a cap is to limit the
12	reimbursement that a firm might get from EAJA below what
13	the prevailing market rates for the services would be.
14	If the the prevailing market rates were below the
15	cap, the cap never comes into play. The only reason for
16	that cap is to limit compensation below market rates.
17	And it would be anomalous to allow
18	JUSTICE STEVENS: The cap doesn't apply
19	to expenses, does it?
20	MR. YANG: I didn't catch
21	JUSTICE STEVENS: The cap does not apply to
22	reimbursement of expenses at cost?
23	MR. YANG: Precisely, because in our view
24	expenses are at cost and it is not you don't have the
25	same danger of having firms imbedding profit within

48

their own rate.

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JUSTICE STEVENS: It seems to me just the opposite just as the Chief Justice suggests. It seems to me you're creating an incentive for the firms to -to charge as much as they can -- I mean, under market rates for everything other than the time of the lawyer himself.

MR. YANG: But again, and under our view if 8 9 they were to -- if a firm were to charge, say, 50 cents 10 for a photocopy and it only cost 10 or 15 cents for that 11 photocopy, under our view the firm would only be reimbursed for the 15 cents. There's not an incentive 12 13 to bill the client for anything more, because under --14 JUSTICE STEVENS: No, "other costs" could 15 reasonably be interpreted to include overhead. It's not 16 just the paper and the copying time. 17 MR. YANG: Overhead, we don't believe, is

18 fairly attributable to a particular case. And, in fact, 19 Congress was specific about this particular point on 20 overhead in the legislative history.

21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I think you 22 missed my point. It was even if you're right, 50 cents 23 and they only can charge 15 cents, they have an 24 incentive to separately charge for photocopying, because 25 they get the 15 cents, and otherwise if they're -- it's

49

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1	going to they are going to lose it over the cap if
2	you say no, that's part of the attorney's fees.
3	MR. YANG: I guess you're right to some
4	extent there would be an incentive to shift out costs
5	even though it would be less of an incentive than
б	shifting out costs plus profit. But the reason that
7	that the the reason that we think that that's a bit
8	different is because, again, Congress intended for the
9	profit-making part of a an attorney's compensation to
10	come out of attorney's fees, and then are capped. And
11	there is very little incentive to to shift out fees
12	unless the market itself is already doing that. And if
13	the market itself is already billing for photocopies,
14	then that's what you're going to get. Even if you
15	didn't separately charge for photocopies as part of your
16	rate, you could bill under EAJA. The market is
17	providing for photocopies being billed separately, you
18	can simply submit a request for photocopies.
19	JUSTICE SCALIA: When you have a you can
20	submit it in a letter. I've looked in your brief, I can't
21	find this Jean case that you mentioned on use of veto.
22	I have a certain morbid interest in it.
23	(Laughter.)
24	MR. YANG: It's at 496 U.S. 154. And
25	it's I believe it's cited, it's Commissioner, INS

50

versus Jean. And I apologize if it's not there, but I thought it was.

3 JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes. No, it's all right. 4 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I'd like to go back to a 5 question that Justice Kennedy asked of Mr. Wolfman. Isn't there -- doesn't it make sense to take a word like 6 7 "attorney's fees" and like the word "discrimination," we have many different anti-discrimination statutes, but 8 9 there has been an attempt to give that word 10 "discrimination" the same meaning in all those statutes. 11 And here the term "attorney's fees," if it means that 12 includes paralegals in 1988, why not say every time 13 "attorney's fees" comes up, that's what it's going to 14 mean?

15 MR. YANG: As a general rule, in 16 fee-shifting statutes that are like section 1988, that 17 is in fact the rule. But the rule that similar words 18 are given a similar meaning readily yields when there is 19 indication that Congress did not intend the same to 20 apply here, and in fact for instance in the Fogerty 21 versus Fantasy case, the Court specifically rejected the 22 approach of adopting the understanding of reasonable 23 attorney's fees applied in other fee-shifting statutes, 24 because it found that the policy and legislative history 25 of the Copyright Act required, or at least suggested,

Official

1 that Congress intended something else. 2 And here, not only do we have a different 3 legislative history, we have fundamentally different 4 statutory text. There is a second category of "other 5 expenses" that must be given meaning in conjunction with "attorney's fees." It did not -б 7 JUSTICE ALITO: Well on that point, does the 8 statute say that all non fee expenses are compensable at 9 cost? Or are you arguing that the work that's done by 10 paralegals is a study or analysis project? 11 MR. YANG: It's either a -- it can be a study 12 or analysis or at least analogous to that type of a -- a 13 _ _ 14 JUSTICE ALITO: Which is it, is it a study 15 analysis or project? That seems like a strange way of 16 describing it. 17 MR. YANG: It can be -- it can be a project, 18 for instance in this case, the paralegal compiled the 19 relevant information regarding how much wages needed to 20 be developed -- repaid on the merits of the case, how much 21 taxes needed to be reimbursed. That could be understood 22 as a project, particularly when Congress has modified it 23 with any, the word "any" before. 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, there are 25 occasions, aren't there, when the government is entitled

52

1 to attorney's fees? 2 MR. YANG: There are occasions. 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Do you know how you 4 bill paralegal times -- time in those situations? 5 MR. YANG: We often don't bill them 6 separately. 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You often don't bill 8 them separately. MR. YANG: I -- I asked this question. I 9 10 have not been able to determine that we have ever billed 11 paralegal time separately. Normally, we're like every 12 other litigant in a normal fee-shifting statute that 13 would simply provide for attorneys' fees; and again, the 14 way the government calculates it, it is based on its 15 overall costs per benefit, ends up being 29 percent of 16 salary. There is an attorney's fee that benefits --17 percentage and a small overhead charge as well. For the 18 attorney's fee, but not separately for paralegals. 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Yang. 20 Mr. Wolfman, you have four minutes remaining. 21 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF BRIAN WOLFMAN 22 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER 23 MR. WOLFMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice. I want to start where the discussion left 24 25 off. It harkens back to something that Mr. Yang said

Official

53

1 towards the beginning of his argument. He said that, 2 that if the Federal Circuit weren't affirmed, that there 3 would be no meaning to the term "other expenses," but 4 that's just not so; it would begin to lose its meaning. 5 It means things like travel, long distance б phone, copying, the types of things we think of as 7 out-of-pocket expenses. The problem here is they are 8 shoe-horning a -- the government is shoe-horning what is always conceived of as an in-house professional service 9 10 as an out-of-pocket expense, and it just does not fit 11 there.

12 Let me turn to the legislative history and 13 I'd like to do two things with that before I close. The 14 first is, let's presuppose that it should be given some 15 weight, as Justice Breyer has suggested, and the problem 16 is that it just doesn't bear the weight that the 17 government gives the report. If you look at -- and this 18 is discussed at length at page 12 of our reply brief --19 let's turn for instance to the Administrative Conference 20 report. Here's what it says. It's a 46 Federal 21 Register 32913. It says that: With regard to expenses, 22 they should be compensable whenever the lawyer, quote, 23 "ordinarily charges clients separately for such 24 expenses." That's the situation today with paralegal 25 expenses.

54

1	Then it's true that the ACUS, the
2	Administrative Conference, did not issue a hard and fast
3	rule with respect to paralegal expenses. But that of
4	course is because the market wasn't uniform at that time
5	as it is today. Today it's nearly ubiquitous that
6	paralegal services are are separately billed. But
7	listen to what the court what the ACUS did say. They
8	didn't they declined to issue a rule because, quote,
9	"practices with respect to charging clients for paralegal
10	time vary depending on locality and field of practice."
11	But that statement reflects exactly our
12	position: That the rule the Court embraced in Jenkins
13	is that the compensability of paralegal services should
14	replicate prevailing practices in the market.
15	Now let me just end by by on this
16	note. If there is also the question raised about
17	whether you should give any weight to this this
18	report at all. We say that you should not, for the
19	reasons essentially in Justice Scalia's last question
20	on that topic; but we do we do talk about why the
21	Jean decision's use of that report does not bear the
22	weight that the government gives us gives it, and
23	that's on pages 13 and 14 of our brief, our reply brief.
24	And the reason is is because in Jean, no one brought
25	to the Court's attention in any of the briefs the problem

55

1 that the -- that legislative history accompanied vetoed 2 legislation. When it was brought to the Court's 3 attention in the Scarborough case three years ago, 4 neither the majority opinion nor the dissent cited that 5 report. 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but --7 Justice Breyer is correct, isn't he, that there was no 8 reason for the Senate to sort of redo a report that they 9 had already done on a bill that was substantially 10 identical? 11 MR. WOLFMAN: That might be true in some 12 circumstances, but that's not what happened in 1985. 13 There was an extensive House report accompanying that 14 legislation. There was no Senate report. The House 15 report --16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: There was no Senate 17 report because they had done it just the previous year. 18 MR. WOLFMAN: I think not, Your Honor. 19 There were some other things taken up in that House 20 report and the House report is quite extensive and it 21 says nothing; it's silent on the question of paralegal 2.2 services. 23 Look, let me just say as I close that -- may I answer the question? 24 25 Let me just say as I close that -- that if

56

1	the Court wishes to look at that report, at the very
2	best for the government, it's a wash. Thank you very
3	much.
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel,
5	The case is submitted.
6	(Whereupon, at 11:06 a.m., the case in the
7	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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13	
14	
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16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	

A	agree 5:18,21	applicants 23:2	associate's	authority 36:4
abilities 21:19	6:2 7:6 21:1,2	applied 36:20	10:13	authorizes
able 53:10	29:16	51:23	Association	26:22
above-entitled	agrees 28:17	applies 20:21	23:14	availability 44:9
1:14 57:7	air 30:14	37:21	assume 19:13	award 3:11,14
Absolutely 5:5	Alito 11:24	apply 30:18,18	34:8,14 44:14	26:22 32:15
18:24	13:16 14:8	48:18,21 51:20	assumes 38:4	39:14
Access 3:12	15:12 52:7,14	appreciate 18:3	assuming 7:7	awarded 4:5
accompanied	Alito's 14:24	19:8	20:24	15:6 23:5
25:17 56:1	allocated 21:15	approach 43:14	assumptions	25:21 26:2
accompanying	allow 48:17	51:22	21:19	39:13 45:22
56:13	allowed 8:12	appropriate	attack 22:20	awards 26:10
account 3:19	allows 24:3	15:25 28:18	attempt 51:9	aware 26:10
Act 3:12 20:21	29:19 36:10	approximate	attention 38:24	a.m 1:16 3:2
37:18 43:20	amended 6:17	15:9	44:12 55:25	57:6
51:25	American 13:14	approximately	56:3	
actual 12:22,23	amicus 23:13	28:24	attorney 3:12,15	B
28:12 31:5	amount 6:25 7:1	arguing 52:9	3:18,21,24	B 40:12
35:10	7:13 15:25	argument 1:15	7:13 11:17	back 8:24 16:25
ACUS 55:1,7	analogous 52:12	2:2,7 3:3,7	15:5 17:4 27:3	19:10 21:6
add 28:13 31:16	analysis 12:18	4:15,17,19,25	39:14 43:25	22:16 24:4,5
31:18,19 34:24	20:21 29:8,17	6:18,23 8:9	45:20,24 47:4	24:12 41:13
35:1	29:20 42:3	10:8,21 11:5	48:10	44:15,17 51:4
additional 35:1	52:10,12,15	11:13 12:23	attorneys 3:20	53:25
adds 28:23	anomalous	18:4,4 26:18	13:24 28:21	balance 26:15
adequately	44:11 48:17	44:20 53:21	35:22,22 43:23	37:16
41:16	anomaly 11:15	54:1	44:8,10,13	balancing 37:14
administrative	answer 4:3 7:5	arguments	48:9 53:13	based 32:7
8:10,13 38:11	14:1 18:3 22:1	24:20	attorney's 5:9	41:22 44:13
38:12 39:12	30:7,15 33:4	arises 37:2	5:21 6:6,20 8:3	53:14
42:25 45:2,3	44:23 47:1	arrangements	10:2 13:22	baseline 28:23
54:19 55:2	56:24	20:24	17:2,3 18:1,8	bear 54:16
adopt 37:6,13	answering 34:14	arrayed 7:21 9:3	26:25 27:1,1,8	55:21
38:10 47:11	answers 4:18,25	asked 10:7 33:4	27:10,19,24	began 8:15
adopted 10:10	ANTHONY	46:25 51:5	28:3,21 35:14	beginning 42:13
adopting 51:22	1:20 2:5 26:18	53:9	35:21 36:5,7	43:21 54:1
affect 43:17	anti-discrimin	asking 47:8	36:16,21,25	behalf 1:18,21
affirmed 3:11	51:8	asks 30:10	41:4,22 42:4	2:4,6,9 3:8
54:2	anyway 6:1 13:2	aspect 17:5	43:6,7,9,18,22	26:13,19 32:25
afforded 16:19	14:4	aspects 23:11	44:6,13 45:23	53:22
age 18:20	apart 22:13	25:22	46:8 47:22	belabor 38:13
agencies 26:22	apologize 51:1	Assistant 1:20	50:2,9,10 51:7	believe 6:4 7:16
agency 8:11	Appeals 12:7	Assistants 23:14	51:11,13,23	21:24 44:5
agent 7:25 8:4	APPEARAN	associates 7:23	52:6 53:1,16	47:19 49:17
agents 8:6,9	1:17	10:11,17,24	53:18	50:25
10:23	appeared 9:15	11:9,10 15:21	attributable	believes 6:5
10.23	appellate 22:10	21:20	49:18	benefit 25:15

53:15	21:5 22:3,10	case 3:4 4:1 9:12	21:3,18,23	32:2,3,5,13,16
benefits 12:17	22:21 23:13	19:1,1 26:1,2	22:14 23:16	32:17,21,21
24:4,5 28:11	45:15 50:20	27:6 28:9	26:4,7,16,20	33:1,9 35:5
28:14,24 29:3	54:18 55:23,23	30:22 31:8,11	27:12 28:1	36:18 37:3,7
29:9 53:16	briefs 25:19	31:23 34:15,18	29:1,15,23	38:6 41:3
best 57:2	55:25	39:16,17 40:14	30:15 31:1	42:23 43:25
better 6:9 31:3,5	broader 27:2	44:24 46:5	34:17 37:1,12	44:22 45:8
bill 24:24 29:7	brought 55:24	48:5 49:18	37:19 38:1,4	47:12 49:13
30:12 31:9,9	56:2	50:21 51:21	38:13 39:2	clients 21:14
31:12 33:8	business 21:15	52:18,20 56:3	46:24 47:10	22:25 23:4
34:25 39:6,18	34:5 46:18	57:5,6	48:1 49:3,21	26:14 34:19
39:19 40:1,12	businesses 22:18	cases 20:8,9	52:24 53:3,7	54:23 55:9
40:18,20,24,25	23:2 37:21	23:12 24:2	53:19,23 56:6	client's 27:6
41:18,21,25	23.2 37.21	26:13 34:14	56:16 57:4	close 54:13
42:16 49:13	С	Casey 10:5	chopping 24:13	56:23,25
50:16 53:4,5,7	C 2:1 3:1	catch 48:20	Circuit 3:11,17	closer 7:24
56:9	calculate 28:19	categories 26:23	4:20 5:14	collapses 6:19
billed 9:16,22,25	calculates 28:20	category 31:24	11:21 12:7	combine 46:5
10:13,17 17:4	53:14	32:2,5 36:8	20:15,16 21:7	come 8:23 28:8
17:18 18:9,9	calculation	43:23 52:4	26:1 54:2	50:10
30:12 42:21	29:12	ceiling 15:18	Circuit's 10:9	comes 48:15
44:22 50:17	candid 20:14	18:14 27:10	11:15 22:23,24	51:13
53:10 55:6	cap 4:11,15,24	43:7,8	circumstances	comfortably
billing 10:23	5:2,4,7,19,22	cents 49:9,10,12	32:18 56:12	19:5
17:13,23,25	5:23 6:3,18,21	49:22,23,25	citations 23:23	coming 31:24
18:7 19:15	6:25 7:21,24	certain 41:24	24:8	Commissioner
20:23 44:12	8:4,20 9:4	50:22	cite 19:1 39:23	50:25
45:8 50:13	10:13 14:4,6	certainly 5:21	45:15	committee
bills 3:22 33:9	15:18 16:1	19:24 21:1	cited 39:22,25	24:19 25:5,25
40:11	18:23 23:17	25:13	39:25 50:25	42:17 43:16
bit 18:3 50:7	27:24 35:24	change 19:18	56:4	45:18
Board 12:7	36:2 37:22	47:19	cites 25:25 26:1	Company 1:4
boils 4:15	41:2,10,12,14	changed 25:7	Civil 43:19	3:13
bono 32:19,20	42:10,11,12	charge 34:5,19	claim 14:19	compared 10:14
bottom 6:3	44:9,13 46:10	35:4,8 47:2,13	claimant 23:9	15:15
bounds 16:18	47:5 48:10,11	47:15 48:3	claimants 23:4,7	compensability
box 36:14,24	48:15,15,16,18	49:5,9,23,24	23:14 24:5,13	15:20 55:13
Breyer 24:16,23	48:21 50:1	50:15 53:17	23.14 24.3,13	compensable
25:3,11,14	capacious 43:23	charged 34:9	claimed 20:16	3:24 4:21,23
38:18,23 40:9	capped 7:13,14	charges 11:24	cleaning 42:7	10:11 12:2
40:18,22 41:8	7:20 46:10	54:23	clear 20:3 27:25	13:19 18:8,11
40:18,22 41.8	50:10	charging 23:19	28:2 35:20	52:8 54:22
42.4 40.23 54:15 56:7	capping 6:24	55:9	46:7,11	compensate
Breyer's 42:10	caps 44:4,5,7	Chertoff 1:7 3:5	client 3:22 15:4	46:1,3
BRIAN 1:18 2:3	capturing 43:24	Chief 3:3,9	17:5,18 24:12	compensated
2:8 3:7 53:21	care 29:3	10:16 11:1,4	26:5 27:4	11:7 13:24
brief 19:1,12	carried 20:4	17:15 20:20	29:14 31:12,23	14:9,11 46:7
NIICI 17.1,12		17.13 20.20	27.17 31.12,23	17.7,11 40.7
	1	1	1	1

compensates	considered	42:22,23 45:8	creating 49:4	difficulty 20:1
35:22	24:20	45:17,23 46:7	current 5:13	direction 25:24
compensation	consistent 19:17	46:14 47:6,14	current-day 9:1	directly 24:12
27:20 36:17	constraints	47:17 48:4,22	cut 44:18	disabled 23:3,3
37:11,15 43:9	21:11,16 22:2	48:24 49:10		23:19
48:16 50:9	22:3,7	52:9	D	disadvantage
compensatory	construction	costs 27:21 29:7	D 3:1	20:15
36:1,10,15	37:6,13	29:11,11,20	damage 37:23	disadvantages
compiled 52:18	construed 35:15	32:22,23 36:6	danger 46:20	20:12
completely 8:24	35:16	36:6,9,17	48:25	disagree 35:18
complex 12:17	contains 33:6	37:24 38:3,5,5	day 18:20	disbursements
40:11	contemplated	38:6 41:24	deal 8:7 18:25	9:9
comprise 23:1	16:9 48:8	42:5,5,23	dealt 39:9	discretion 15:24
24:1	contemplation	43:11,24 44:21	deceptive 28:12	16:14,18
computation	9:5	44:21 45:19	decision 19:13	discrimination
43:18	context 28:19	46:21 47:20,21	20:18 22:23,24	51:7,10
conceived 54:9	32:13 35:6	49:14 50:4,6	23:24 45:18,22	discussed 54:18
concern 11:14	36:21 44:11	53:15	decision's 55:21	discusses 45:21
11:15 34:24	contingent 24:3	counsel 26:16	declined 55:8	discussing 23:18
concerned 44:19	continued 42:18	37:1 52:24	defense 22:15	discussion 53:24
concluded 45:16	Contract 12:7	57:4	denied 3:14	dispute 45:11,16
45:19	contrary 20:17	course 12:14	Department	dissent 56:4
conclusive 44:23	contrast 46:8	18:12 20:13	1:21	distance 54:5
Conference	contributes 3:21	26:4 27:13	depending	distinct 26:23
38:11,12 39:13	control 46:16,19	46:22 48:6	55:10	distinction 27:7
42:25 45:2,3	46:22	55:4	describing	district 15:24
54:19 55:2	controversy	court 1:1,15	52:16	disutilities 20:7
Congress 9:5	45:12,25	3:10,18,22	designed 37:4	divide 12:10
14:16 15:13	copying 49:16	8:14 9:13,21	44:6	document 42:24
16:16,21 19:18	54:6	9:24 10:3	determine 12:12	42:25
19:25 20:1,2	Copyright 51:25	13:13 17:1,8	28:13 39:18	doing 19:25
27:7,24,25	correct 13:10	17:23 25:16,25	53:10	50:12
35:17,19 37:14	32:11 35:9	26:14,21 35:15	determining	dollar 31:12,12
38:10,24 39:10	56:7	35:25 39:22,25	12:1	dollars 28:9
40:17 43:13,21	cost 6:14,17	42:1 45:20	developed 16:11	double-dip
44:2,11,16	12:2,8,13,15	51:21 55:7,12	52:20	24:11
45:1 46:7,10	12:17,22,23	57:1	difference 4:4	drafted 38:14
46:12 48:8	13:19 15:6,7	courts 16:14	9:10,12 34:21	drive 19:14
49:19 50:8	23:5 25:22	32:15 45:16	34:22 47:5,7	driven 20:17
51:19 52:1,22	26:5,8,8 27:4	Court's 9:19	differences	D.C 1:11,18,21
Congress's 46:3	28:6,7,12,18	23:24 55:25	35:12	
conjunction	28:19,21 29:3	56:2	different 25:1	E
52:5	31:5,6,23,23	cover 21:4 42:5	29:2,5 33:18	E 2:1 3:1,1
connected 27:21	31:25 32:1,2,3	covered 19:4	33:20 43:14	EAJA 3:13 4:2,5
43:11	32:5,16,18,25	covering 41:14	44:1 50:8 51:8	4:8,12,22 5:1
connection 43:6	33:22 34:25	covering 41.14 cram 13:2	52:2,3	5:15 6:16 8:13
46:4	35:10,10 37:11	cramming 13:12	differently 4:2	8:14 11:7,20
TU.T	55.10,10 57.11	cranning 13.12	······································	
	1	1	1	1

	I	I	I	
18:10 19:17,22	enumerated	46:2,2,4 48:19	falls 22:13	53:1,13
20:8 23:2,8,8	45:14	48:22,24 52:5	Fantasy 51:21	fee-shifting
23:15 24:10	Equal 3:12	52:8 54:3,7,21	far 10:8 11:8	12:21,24 15:15
26:22 27:9,15	ESQ 1:18,20 2:3	54:24,25 55:3	fast 55:2	17:10 26:9,9
27:25 28:3	2:5,8	expensive 30:22	feature 38:21	43:15 51:16,23
32:6,15 35:6	essence 8:11	30:24	Federal 3:11,17	53:12
35:11,13,25	10:22	experience	4:20 5:14 10:9	fewer 9:17
36:10,21,22	essentially 5:15	21:24 22:12	11:15,21 12:7	field 55:10
37:15 42:12	17:8 24:13	expert 29:6	20:14,16 21:7	figure 29:9
47:21 48:8,12	55:19	34:17	22:22,24 23:7	find 12:9 50:21
50:16	ethical 21:11	experts 30:18	23:22 24:2,7,9	fine 41:8
EAJA's 27:9,16	22:2,7	explain 6:9	26:22 37:7,8	finished 8:20
early 17:22	events 11:6	10:15 25:18	37:16 54:2,20	firm 10:11,14
economic 20:7	evidence 41:19	27:21 41:2	fee 5:2 15:25	12:13,15 18:7
21:10,11,16	evolved 45:12	explained 3:18	17:2 18:5 23:8	28:12,13 29:13
22:2 23:10	46:1	42:2	24:3,10,11,14	29:19,22 30:9
effect 19:2,15	exactly 11:5	explains 38:10	26:10 35:24	31:5,6 32:19
35:16 37:6,16	25:23 55:11	39:12 42:4	44:4,5,7,9	32:25 33:5,7,8
efficient 20:19	example 28:5	43:5,16 45:22	46:10 47:5	33:9,10,14,18
either 12:22	33:23 43:19	exposure 37:17	48:10 52:8	34:12,24,25,25
19:14 41:1	exceed 4:24 5:2	express 39:7	53:16,18	35:3,4 38:5
52:11	6:17 24:4 44:9	extend 18:2 42:3	fees 3:12,15,19	41:6 42:23
elaborate 29:12	excellent 12:5	extensive 56:13	3:23,24 4:5,6,8	46:17,20,20
element 46:9,10	exception 44:8	56:20	4:23 5:10,19	47:24 48:12
46:14	exceptions 44:7	extensively 19:1	5:21 6:7,20,24	49:9,11
embedded 46:9	excuse 5:3 25:25	21:4	6:25 7:12,12	firms 9:16 11:11
embody 41:23	executive 39:1	extent 4:24 9:20	7:13,19,19,20	17:13 19:10
embraced 55:12	exist 13:2	17:11 20:16	7:22,25 8:3,3,4	22:17 29:23
embraces 26:25	existed 13:22	24:10 35:18	8:12 9:8,9,15	30:2,23 34:23
emphatically	17:11 40:20	37:4 50:4	10:2,10 11:17	47:9,12,13
17:24	exists 8:2		11:25 13:22,22	48:2,25 49:4
Employing 3:22	expense 6:11	$\frac{\mathbf{F}}{\mathbf{r}}$	15:5 17:3 18:1	firm's 33:22
enacted 5:15 9:7	31:10,24 32:1	face 37:7	18:8 19:5	first 3:4 4:17,17
13:23 14:10	32:2 41:16	faced 15:6	23:15 26:24,25	4:25 7:5 8:21
27:8	46:13 48:7	fact 9:13 11:18	27:8,11,19,24	8:23 25:14
enactment 7:11	54:10	22:14 23:8	28:3,22 29:5	27:16 29:17
27:17	expenses 11:25	25:25 28:14	32:6,6,10,14	30:16 42:9
encompasses	13:3,4,4,18	29:19 31:14	32:15,15,16	43:8 54:14
27:3	14:19 15:1,3,4	32:5 37:5 38:2	35:14,21 36:5	fisc 22:21,22
ends 53:15	15:5 26:23,24	39:24 40:11,17	36:7,16,21,25	37:16,23
engineer 34:17	27:2,8 28:2,3,4	45:10,17 49:18 51:17,20	37:10 41:4,22	fit 54:10
engineering	29:6 31:19	,	42:4 43:6,7,9	floor 15:18
29:8,24,25	35:13,15,19,21	factor 16:15,16 47:16	43:18,22 44:20	Fogerty 51:20
enrich 26:12	36:8,8,14,23		45:8,23 46:8	follow 19:22,23
entire 12:24	36:24 37:24	fairly 46:11 49:18	47:23 50:2,10	19:23,23
entirely 38:7	39:14 41:11,17	fall 10:13	50:11 51:7,11	following 19:17
entitled 52:25	43:24 45:13,23	1all 10.13	51:13,23 52:6	footnote 23:24
	l	l	I	Ι

45:15,15,21	glib 19:2	groups 23:1,6	28:9 34:15,18	45:13 49:15
foremost 37:25	go 5:6 6:21	guess 47:12 50:3	34:20 35:8	includes 28:3
forms 9:23	29:12 42:24		hourly 28:11	51:12
forth 10:24	44:15,17 51:4	H	33:8 35:23	including 27:4
12:16 13:8	goes 14:23 17:3	half 24:14	47:7	41:4 42:5
23:23	27:21 38:11	handle 22:7	hours 12:11	incorrectly 5:1
found 51:24	41:15 43:10	26:13	House 27:10,17	incur 32:14,22
founded 21:21	going 9:18 12:9	happened 12:6	40:1 42:18	36:18 43:25
four 53:20	12:9,11,12	56:12	56:13,14,19,20	incurred 32:24
fringe 28:11,14	13:1,3,6 14:4	hard 19:8 24:15	hyperinflation	32:24,25 46:4
full 41:13 42:17	16:3,4,25	55:2	11:19 15:19	independent
44:19	20:23,25 21:8	harkens 53:25	16:12 20:5	33:5,10 34:16
fully 4:23 20:4	25:11,13 28:8	head 21:10	hypothetical	indication 51:19
36:1,15	29:12 34:6,24	health 29:3	34:14 42:3	individuals 8:10
functionally	34:25 35:1	hear 3:3		37:21
27:18	37:9,11,23	held 3:23 17:23	I	individual's
fundamentally	41:11 46:21,22	help 10:15	idea 48:11	11:6
52:3	47:4,11,19	high 18:23 19:9	identical 27:18	inflate 46:21
further 26:14	50:1,1,14	higher 10:12	39:9 56:10	inform 10:1
30:8 42:24	51:13	47:14,15	illuminating	information
	good 8:6 30:10	highly 40:16	40:16	52:19
G	39:21	hire 34:15 38:24	illustrated 28:4	initial 27:16
G 3:1	gotten 18:23	history 13:14	illustrates 11:14	inquiry 30:8
general 1:20	govern 33:11	24:18 25:17,23	38:2	INS 50:25
34:19 51:15	government	35:18 38:2,9	imbedding	inside 30:25
generally 5:2	4:19 5:18,20	38:17,19,22	48:25	insist 5:24 21:14
9:8 22:11	6:5 10:10	39:9,12,18	impact 22:22,25	instance 22:8
generated 10:10	13:12 15:2	40:15,19 43:4	24:15	32:19 33:15
Ginsburg 4:10	18:13 20:9	44:3,19,23,25	impecunious	35:3 51:20
4:13 8:17	22:21 24:21	45:11 49:20	24:13	52:18 54:19
15:23 16:20	25:19 28:16,20	51:24 52:3	importance	intellectual 30:1
28:7,16 36:3	28:21,22,23	54:12 56:1	24:18	intend 51:19
36:12 42:8,14	37:8 52:25	hit 18:14	important 4:16	intended 14:16
42:20 43:2	53:14 54:8,17	HOMELAND	35:6,11,25	36:1,15 43:17
51:4	55:22 57:2	1:8	imposed 42:12	44:2,16 46:3
Ginsburg's 7:4	government's	Honor 5:9,25	46:10	46:12 50:8
give 4:18 9:19	4:14 6:10,18	6:15 8:23 9:12	impression	52:1
19:17 22:8	8:19 10:8,21	10:20 12:19	40:23	intending 37:16
23:23 51:9	11:13,14 12:6	31:7 32:11	impressive 22:4	46:8
55:17	18:4,4,10	33:21 34:23	incentive 20:17	intent 37:14
given 36:21	20:22,24 23:15	45:10 56:18	26:13 34:11	interest 27:22
51:18 52:5	33:17 37:8,17	hope 25:12	49:4,12,24	43:12 50:22
54:14	grasp 47:1	Hospitals 10:5	50:4,5,11	interested 8:16
gives 35:16	great 23:1	17:8	incentives 47:9	interesting 6:14
54:17 55:22,22	greater 21:24	hour 10:18	include 3:16	12:23,25
giving 10:22	ground 3:15	12:12 14:10	17:3 35:21	Internet 12:9
21:13 28:11	group 25:4	16:2 23:20	36:16 43:11	28:8
	8 r			

	1	1	1	1
interpret 10:2	21:3,18,23	Kennedy's	29:7 30:10,11	36:6 43:22
interpreted 4:2	22:14,16 23:16	22:17 30:16	36:17 41:3,12	44:9
49:15	24:16,23 25:3	31:2	41:16 49:6	line 6:3
involved 44:10	25:11,14 26:4	kind 20:8 37:19	54:22	listed 29:6
in-house 13:12	26:7,16,20	kinds 42:5	lawyers 4:23 5:2	listen 55:7
35:10 54:9	27:12 28:1,7	kitchen 41:5,5	5:16 7:19 9:3,8	litigant 53:12
irrelevant 4:16	28:16 29:1,15	42:1,7	14:5,9,9 15:18	litigation 26:23
issue 25:5 47:24	29:23 30:3,7	knew 43:21	18:25 19:4	little 18:3 36:22
55:2,8	30:15,16,17	knock 16:5	20:18 21:8,13	42:21 50:11
item 29:10	31:1,2,8,15,18	knock-down	22:5 23:6	locality 55:10
items 29:5 36:11	31:22 32:4,9	16:5	26:12,13 27:20	long 21:10 54:5
i.e 21:12	32:12 33:2,3	know 14:4,5,9	43:10 47:2	look 12:22 28:8
	33:16,23 34:4	16:2 19:8,9	lawyer's 6:25	36:5 45:1 47:5
$\frac{J}{J}$	34:8,13 35:7	24:16,23 29:6	7:14 9:23	47:23,24 54:17
janitors 42:6	36:3,12 37:1	33:6 36:3 39:2	17:12,16 18:6	56:23 57:1
Jean 39:24 40:3	37:12,19 38:1	39:8,15,17	18:9,14,14	looked 50:20
40:8 50:21	38:4,13,18,23	40:24,25 53:3	41:15	looking 5:13
51:1 55:21,24	39:2,15,20,21	knows 30:9	lead 4:20	7:10 8:25
Jenkins 3:23	40:2,4,6,9,18		left 53:24	47:20
9:14,20,25	40:22 41:8	$\frac{\mathbf{L}}{\mathbf{L}}$	legal 7:12 11:19	looks 5:1 7:8
10:3 16:25	42:3,8,9,14,20	labor 3:20 17:4	15:19 16:12	lose 23:4,15 50:1
17:24 19:23,23	43:2 44:15,17	language 27:18	20:5 23:14	54:4
20:8 36:12,13	45:5,7 46:13	39:9 42:9	32:14,20	loss 18:12
42:2 45:20,21	46:18,24,25	lapsed 27:16	legislation 25:17	lot 22:5 25:8
55:12	47:10 48:1,18	large 7:21 8:1	27:13 39:4	29:3 42:20
judge 15:24	48:21 49:2,3	9:2 19:9 47:7	56:2,14	love 8:22
Judiciary 24:19	49:14,21 50:19	largely 4:23	legislative 24:18	low 7:22
42:17	51:3,4,5 52:7	larger 36:8	25:16,23 35:18	lower 10:22
junior 7:22	52:14,24 53:3	43:23	38:2,9,17,19	41:13
10:24 11:9	53:7,19,23	largest 11:10	38:21 39:8,11	lower-billed
15:21 21:20	54:15 55:19	Laughter 21:22 38:20 41:7	39:18 40:15,19	10:23
jurisprudence	56:6,7,16 57:4	· · · ·	43:4 44:3,19	M
13:14 Justice 1:21 3:3	Justice's 34:17	50:23 law 8:11 9:16	44:23,25 45:11	Main 19:5
3:9,12 4:10,13	justification	10:11 11:11	49:20 51:24	
5:3,6,11,17,24	22:15	12:13,15 17:13	52:3 54:12	majority 23:1 24:2 56:4
6:2,6,12,22 7:4	justified 20:22	12.13,13 17.13	56:1	making 18:19
7:10,25 8:2,6	20:25 37:3,9	22:17 23:7,22	length 23:13	manner 35:16
8:15,17,19 9:6	K	24:2,7,8,9,9	25:18 54:18	March 1:12
10:7,16 11:1,4	K 11:10 19:6	28:12,13 29:19	letter 50:20	market 3:15,24
11:24 13:1,6	Kennedy 8:15	33:8,9 37:20	let's 31:10 34:14	4:5,21 10:12
13:10,16 14:8	8:19 10:7	39:4,5 41:6	54:14,19	11:20 12:22
14:18,24 15:12	19:13,22 20:6	42:23 43:19	librarians 42:6 Likewise 35:5	14:15,17,20,22
15:23 16:20	20:11 30:3,7	lawyer 6:14,17	limit 37:17	15:9,16,20
17:15 18:12,17	30:17 33:4	8:12 12:8 16:1	43:17 48:11,16	16:2,4,12,16
18:21 19:13,22	34:13 35:7	16:2,6 22:6	43:17 48:11,16 limitation 27:23	16:17 17:21
20:6,11,20	51:5	23:19 24:3,11	limited 29:21	18:11 19:14,18
20.0,11,20	51.0	20.17 21.0,11	mmteu 29.21	10.11 19.1 1,10
	1	I	I	I

25:24 26:2	17:24 42:2	number 12:11	15:1,3,5 28:3,4	19:15 20:19
32:7 33:6,10	Missouri's 42:2	25:22	45:23 46:4	21:9,13,20
33:24 34:2,3,4	mistaken 14:18		54:7,10	23:11 25:20
34:9,11 37:10	14:19	0	overall 53:15	27:5 28:19
37:24 41:22,23	mixed 41:20	O 2:1 3:1	overhead 9:24	30:24 33:5,7
46:22 47:6	model 38:11	obligation 32:14	12:15 13:7	33:11,13,15,18
48:13,14,16	46:5	32:17	28:10,15 29:9	33:24 34:5,12
49:5 50:12,13	modest 7:23	obtain 30:24	47:16,18 49:15	38:3 43:5
50:16 55:4,14	modified 52:22	occasions 52:25	49:17,20 53:17	44:14 45:17
markets 14:3	moment 7:12	53:2	overriding	46:6 51:12
15:17 18:25	money 11:1	occurring 21:12	16:16	52:10 53:18
market-based	morbid 50:22	odd 7:15,17 36:5		paralegal's 45:8
4:7	morning 3:4	Okay 5:11 11:4	P	parallel 28:20
match 16:5		once 17:13	P 3:1	Pardon 40:5
matter 1:14	N	open 38:7	page 2:2 38:8	paren 25:21
24:24 57:7	N 2:1,1 3:1	opening 25:19	45:15 54:18	part 8:13,14
mean 8:2 13:2	National 23:13	opinion 39:24	pages 55:23	12:5 19:14
18:22 19:2,6	natural 26:25	56:4	paid 8:6 14:20	28:10,15 50:2
19:19,23 22:3	naturally 27:2	opinions 39:23	15:8 23:8 27:3	50:9,15
23:18 26:5	near 14:4	opportunity	32:16 33:13,14	particular 27:22
32:1,3,5 39:16	nearly 55:5	8:22	35:3 41:9,12	31:3 43:12
40:9,16 49:5	necessarily 12:2	opposed 33:18	44:12 47:22	44:12 46:20
51:14	19:6 34:1	38:6	paper 49:16	49:18,19
meaning 35:19	36:16	opposite 25:24	paralegal 3:14	particularly
36:22 39:19	necessary 27:5	49:3	3:23 4:8,21,22	52:22
51:10,18 52:5	need 32:13	oral 1:14 2:2 3:7	6:24 7:19,22	parties 37:15
54:3,4	needed 52:19,21	26:18	8:3 9:3,14	partners 10:14
meaningful	needs 35:14,15	ordinarily 54:23	11:22,24 12:10	10:25
35:16	negligible 22:23	organization	13:22 15:2,8	partner's 7:23
means 31:23	neither 56:4	32:20	15:21 16:4	party 15:4,6,7,8
37:17 41:12	never 40:6 48:15	original 7:11	17:5,10 18:5,5	26:11 31:7
51:11 54:5	new 31:24	outlays 27:3	22:4,8 23:5	48:9
meant 26:5 38:5	nine 9:14	outside 16:18	24:14 25:20	pass 37:20
38:14,15	non 52:8	29:18,22,22,24	26:2 28:5,10	passage 42:19
members 25:15	non-fee 13:18	30:18,25 34:15	28:14 29:5,10	passed 17:10,17
mentioned	normal 53:12	34:16	30:9,11,19,21	17:20 24:25
15:22 50:21	normally 30:23	outsource 30:23	31:3,4,6,9,17	27:13 39:10
merits 52:20	53:11	34:12	34:15,18 35:2	42:17
messengers 42:6	Northcross 26:1	outsourced	37:10,24 46:2	passing 37:18
MICHAEL 1:7	45:18,21,22	30:20 31:3,4	52:18 53:4,11	pay 5:22 31:13
mind 25:4 37:25	46:5	34:23 35:1	54:24 55:3,6,9	32:14,18,22
40:6	note 55:16	outsourcing	55:13 56:21	35:22 37:10
minutes 53:20	notepad 8:16	33:13,19	paralegals 3:16	38:24 41:13,16
missed 49:22	notes 43:16	outstripped	5:3,19 9:8	paying 28:14
Missouri 3:23	noting 22:24	11:20	10:24 11:10,17	33:24 34:2
9:13,20,24	notion 12:20	out-of-pocket	13:3,25 14:3	payments 27:1
10:3 16:25	21:8	6:11 13:15	14:10 16:22	pays 31:6
				↓ √ -

penalize 37:5 penalizes 37:7 people 20:23 49:19,22 52:7 15:7,16 16:17 people 20:23 15:7,16 16:17 26:11 32:7 11:13 proves 10:8 11:8 provide 26:13 37:14 53:13 provided 48:8 provided 48:7 23:22 453:15 percent 24:4 polity 51:24 quote 27:19 38:12 43:7 55:14 28:24 53:15 percent 24:4 polity 51:24 polity 51:24 positi 6:15 percent 24:4 polity 51:24 47:25 48:13,14 provided 48:7 prevent 37:23 provided 48:7 provided 48:7 provided 48:7 provided 48:7 provided 48:10 provided 48:7 provided 48:10 provided 48:7 provided 48:10 provises 56:17 provises 56:17 provises 56:17 provises 56:17 provises 56:17 provises 26:17 provises 21:17 provises 26:17 provises 26:17 provises 21:17 provises 26:17 provises 21:17 provises 21:17 provises 21:17 profession 21:11 profession 21:11 propert 21:22 provises					
penalizes 37:7 people 20:23 pointed 9:13 11:16 20:15 26:11 32:7 34:19 37:15 11:13 provide 26:13 37:14 53:13 38:12 43:7 guotes 39:12 guotes 39:12 38:14,23 percent 24:4 28:24 53:15 positing 7:5 percentage	penalize 37:5	49:19,22 52:7	15:7,16 16:17	proves 10:8 11:8	quote 27:19
people 20:23 11:16 20:15 34:19 37:15 provide 26:13 54:22 55:8 21:12 25:4 22:3 41:22,23,25 37:14 55:13 guoting 39:12 percent 24:4 pollution 31:11 55:14 provide 48:8 guoting 3:19 percent 24:4 pollution 31:11 prevent 37:23 provide 48:7 23:22 47,10 percornage position 6:10 prevoits 56:17 32:20 50:17 rate 7:22,23 performed 12:6 18:10 principles 25:6 guoting 32:19 rate 7:22,23 performed 12:6 18:10 private 29:2,4 43:19 public 22:22 12:14,22 performed 12:6 18:10 probably 9:17 public 22:22 12:12,21 12:25 14:4,20 pertiment 23:16 possible 13:20 29:3 purporet 20:15 14:22 15:9,16 23:17 41:4 problem 5:13 purpose 20:11 17:12,16:21 phenomenon 29:4 41:25 12:12 purpose 20:11 16:2:4,16,17 photocopying qretices 22:18 40:13 41:8 25:8 29:11 33:12,14:42	-	,	26:11 32:7	-	-
21:12 25:4 22:3 41:22,23,25 37:14 53:13 quotes 39:12 38:14,23 policy 51:24 polition 31:11 provides 47: guoting 7:5 percent 24:4 polition 31:11 prevent 37:23 23:22 24:7:10 32:6 35:13 10:12 53:17 position 6:10 principal 22:9 provides 47: raised 55:16 perspective 5:1 37:2,8 47:11 prio 39:6 32:20 50:17 raised 55:16 prisples 25:6 37:2,8 47:11 pro 32:19,9 provision 32:10 12:12:12:13:11 19:10 postib 13:20 probably 9:17 24:8,9 purported 20:15 13:22:15:9,16 23:17 41:4 problem 5:13 purpose 20:31 putpose 20:32 16:6:14,14 23:13 practices 21:18 potential 30:21 practices 21:18 purpose 20:31 13:12,14:24 phone 54:6 practices 22:18 14:25 22:19:20 put 11:22 13:15 37:24 47:67 places 24:17 present 41:11,1 48:23 product 3:21 product 3:21 qualified 8:10 phone 54:6 preserve 14:12,6 31:19 3	-	-		provide 26:13	54:22 55:8
38:14,23 policy 51:24 47:25 48:13,14 provided 48:8 quoting 3:19 28:24 53:15 positio 6:15 position 6:10 prevent 37:23 23:22 247,10 R 3:1 10:12 53:17 position 6:10 principal 22:9 providing 32:19 R 3:1 percentage position 6:10 principal 22:9 provision 32:10 R 3:1 perspective 5:1 37:2,8 47:11 prio 39:6 provision 32:10 rate 7:22,23 perspective 5:1 37:2,8 47:11 pro 32:19,20 public 22:22 12:1,21 3:21 pertoinant 23:16 possible 13:20 probably 9:17 24:8,9 13:25 14:14,20 pertoinal 30:21 problem 51:13 purpose 20:31 14:22 15:9,16 14:22 15:9,16 23:17 41:4 potential 9:43 10:15 12:21 purpose 20:3 18:6,14,14 3:13 53:22 practices 1:1 13:1,7,10,24 pushed 36:24 29:11 33:12,14,24 phoneocopies practices 22:18 proceeding 47:15 55:25 37:22 42:11,21 34:19 35:23 37:24 47:67 potocopy 47:3 prec	-			-	
percent 24:4 pollution 31:11 55:14 provides 4:7 R 28:24 53:15 posit 6:15 prevent 37:23 23:22 24:7,10 R 10:12 53:17 positing 7:5 providing 32:19 raised 55:16 performed 12:6 18:10 principles 25:6 32:20 50:17 raised 55:16 performed 20:22,24 33:17 principles 25:6 providing 32:19 raised 55:16 performed 55:12 pro 32:19,20 public 22:22 12:1,22 13:21 19:10 posits 4:19 probably 9:17 24:8,9 13:25 14:14,20 portinal 30:21 sc.2,25 9:20,21 26:12 14:22 15:9,16 16:2,4,16,17 23:17 Partice 8:11 13:1,7,10,24 purpose 20:3 18:6,14,14 3:13 53:22 practice 8:11 13:1,7,10,24 pushed 36:24 25:24 28:11 phonocopies 47:19 55:9,14 54:7,15 55:25 37:22 42:11,21 32:2,14,24 photocopy 47:3 prose 29:3 0:9 proceeding 44:10 qualified 8:10 42:10 5:2,4 9:3 photocopy 47:3					-
28:24 53:15 posit 6:15 prevent 37:23 23:22 24:7,10 R 10:12 53:17 positing 7:5 previous 56:17 32:6 35:13 providing 32:19 46:15 20:22,24 33:17 principles 25:6 providing 32:10 raised 55:16 7:8,11,18 9:1 55:12 prosible 13:20 principles 25:6 providing 32:10 rate 7:22,23 19:10 posits 4:19 prosible 13:20 providing 32:10 rate 7:22,23 performent 23:16 postible 13:20 private 29:2,4 43:19 10:13 11:19 23:17 potential 30:21 probably 9:17 purpose 26:11 16:24,16.17 16:24,16.17 719 2:4,9 3:8 practices 8:11 potential 30:21 purpose 20:3 purpose 20:3 26:12 17:12,16,21 11:18,21 16:11 47:23,25 55:10 practices 22:19,20 put 11:22 13:15 32:25 33:8,10 33:12,14,24 photocopy 47:3 29:2 30:9 profession 21:11 profession 21:11 profession 21:11 10:1 11:23 34:19 35:23 37:24 47:6,7 photocopy 19 preremise 21:17 present 4:11,11	,			-	
percentage 10:12 53:17 performed positing 7:5 position 6:10 previous 56:17 principla 22:9 32:6 35:13 providing 32:19 R 3:1 raised 55:16 range 12:24 46:15 20:22,24 33:17 perspective 5:1 37:2,8 47:11 principla 22:9 probably 9:17 providing 32:19 provision 32:10 rate 7:22,23 performed 10:13 11:19 55:12 provision 32:10 rate 7:22,23 performed 20:22,24 33:17 problem 5:13 puplic 22:22 13:25 14:14,20 pertinent 23:16 possible 13:20 29:3 purpose 20:11 10:13 11:19 23:17 41:4 problem 5:13 purposes 20:3 18:6,14,14 31:13 53:22 practices 8:11 13:1,7,10,24 purposes 20:3 18:6,14,14 phonocopies 47:19 55:9,14 54:7,15 55:15 37:22 42:11,21 34:2,3,6,9,11 photocopy 47:3 precisely 38:25 27:23 43:12 qualified 8:10 42:1 52,4 9:3 piplace 13:13 45:5 27:6 22:1 11:11:12 11:6 14:6,17 piplace 24:17 preserve 13:21 professional 13:12 54:24 18:13 19:11 piplace 32:10 pr	-	-		-	R
10:12 53:17 position 6:10 principal 22:9 providing 32:19 raised 55:16 46:15 20:22,24 33:17 prior 39:6 provision 32:10 raised 55:16 9erspective 5:1 37:2,8 47:11 prior 39:6 provision 32:10 raised 55:16 19:10 positis 4:19 probably 9:17 24:8,9 10:13 11:19 23:17 41:4 problem 5:13 purported 20:15 14:22 15:9.16 11:19 2:4,9 3:8 potential 30:21 8:2,25 9:20,21 26:12 17:12,16,21 11:19 2:4,9 3:8 practices 8:11 13:1,7,10,24 purposes 20:3 18:6,14,14 phenomenon 29:4 41:25 14:25 22:19,20 put 11:22 13:15 32:25 33:8,10 11:18,21 16:11 47:23,25 55:10 26:8 38:16,19 18:13 19:3,10 33:12,14,24 photocopy 47:3 29:2 30:9 proceeding Q 44:10 44:19 35:23 protis 11:15 (7:15 48:3 premise 21:17 profession 21:11 10:11 12:23 11:6 14:6,17 piace 23:16,23 premise 29:16 proceedings 44:10 rates 3:15,24 4:66		-	L	,	R 3:1
performed 46:15 12:6 18:10 20:22.24 33:17 prospective 5:1 37:2,8 47:11 principles 25:6 prior 39:6 prior 39:6 32:20 50:17 provision 32:10 range 12:24 rate 7:22,23 19:10 37:2,8 47:11 posits 4:19 private 29:2,4 pro 32:19,20 43:19 10:13 11:19 23:17 41:4 pro 32:19,20 public 22:22 12:1,22 13:21 19:10 possible 13:20 29:3 purported 20:15 14:22 15:9,16 23:17 41:4 8:2,25 9:20,21 26:12 17:12,16,21 1:19 2:4,9 3:8 potential 30:21 10:15 12:21 purpose 20:3 18:6,14,14 3:13 53:22 practices 8:11 13:1,7,10,24 purposes 20:3 18:6,14,14 phonomeon 29:4 41:25 14:25 22:19,20 18:13 19:3,10 33:12,14,24 photocopies 47:19 55:9,14 54:7,15 55:25 37:22 42:11,21 34:23,36,9,11 photocopy 47:3 29:2 30:9 proceeding 44:10 qualified 8:10 7:24 47:6,7 photocopy 47:3 29:2 30:9 proceeding 44:10 42:1 5:2,4 9:3 50:16 places 24:17 presint 41:1,11 <t< td=""><td></td><td>- 0</td><td></td><td></td><td>raised 55:16</td></t<>		- 0			raised 55:16
46:15 20:22,24 33:17 prior 39:6 provision 32:10 rate 7:22,23 perspective 5:1 37:2,8 47:11 prior 39:6 provision 32:10 rate 7:22,23 19:10 posits 4:19 pro 32:19,20 public 22:22 21:1,22 13:21 pertinent 23:16 posits 4:19 problem 5:13 purpose 26:11 10:13 11:19 23:17 41:4 problem 5:13 purpose 26:11 16:2,4,16,17 pertinent 23:16 potential 30:21 8:2,25 9:20,21 26:12 purposes 20:3 18:6,14,14 3:13 53:22 practice 8:11 13:1,7,10,24 pushed 36:24 25:24 28:11 phone 54:6 practices 22:18 40:13 41:8 25:8 29:11 34:2,3,69,11 photocopies 47:19 55:9,14 54:7,15 55:25 37:22 42:11,21 34:19 35:23 protise 23:17 premise 29:16 promise 29:16 product 3:21 qualified 8:10 44:10 qualified 8:10 rates 3:15,24 4:6 product 3:21 profession 21:11 10:11:12:3 11:6 14:6,17 places 24:17 presentation/r profession 21:11		-	-		range 12:24
perspective 5:1 37:2,8 47:11 private 29:2,4 43:19 10:13 11:19 7:8,11,18 9:1 55:12 pro 32:19,20 public 22:22 12:1,22 13:21 19:10 posits 4:19 probably 9:17 24:8,9 13:25 14:14,20 19:10 posits 4:19 probably 9:17 24:8,9 13:25 14:14,20 19:10 posits 4:19 problem 5:13 purported 20:15 14:22 15:9,16 23:17 41:4 problem 5:13 purpores 20:3 18:6,14,14 pitotomenon 29:4 41:25 14:25 22:19,20 putlit:22 13:15 32:25 33:8,10 11:18,21 16:11 47:23,25 55:10 26:8 38:16,19 putl:1:22 13:15 32:25 33:8,10 11:18,21 16:11 47:19 55:9,14 54:7,15 55:25 proceeding protocopy 47:3 29:2 30:9 proceeding photocopying precisely 38:25 27:23 43:12 qualified 8:10 50:16 rates 3:15,24 4:6 play 48:15 present 4:11,11 profession 21:11 10:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,17 play 48:15 present 4:11,11 profession 21:11 10:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,17 play 48:15 present 4:11,11 <	-				U
7:8,11,18 9:1 55:12 pro 32:19,20 public 22:22 12:1,22 13:21 19:10 posits 4:19 probably 9:17 29:3 purported 20:15 14:22 15:9,16 23:17 41:4 problem 5:13 purported 20:15 14:22 15:9,16 14:22 15:9,16 Petitioner 1:5 potential 30:21 8:2,25 9:20,21 26:12 purposes 20:3 18:6,14,14 29:4 41:25 14:25 22:19,20 put 11:22 13:15 32:25 33:8,10 31:2,14,24 phenomenon 29:4 41:25 14:25 22:19,20 put 11:22 13:15 32:25 33:8,10 11:18,21 16:11 47:23,25 55:10 26:8 38:16,19 18:13 19:3,10 33:12,14,24 photocopies 50:13,15,17,18 practices 22:18 40:13 41:8 25:8 29:11 34:23,6,9,11 9hotocopy 47:3 precisely 38:25 27:23 43:12 pulatified 8:10 42:1 5:2,4 9:3 9hotocopy 47:3 present 4:11,11 profession 21:11 10:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,17 9laces 24:17 present 4:11,11 profession 21:11 10:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,17 9lay 48:15 preserve 13:21 47:18 48:25 38:7 39:3 48:19 32:23 33:2,3	- · -	,		-	· · · · · ·
19:10 posits 4:19 probably 9:17 24:8.9 13:25 14:14.20 pertinent 23:16 posits 4:19 probably 9:17 29:3 purported 20:15 14:22 15:9,16 23:17 41:4 probably 9:17 29:3 purported 20:15 14:22 15:9,16 Petitioner 1:5 potential 30:21 probably 9:17 26:12 purpores 26:11 14:22 15:9,16 1:19 2:4,9 3:8 potential 30:21 probably 9:17 26:12 purpores 20:3 18:6,14,14 3:13 53:22 practice 8:11 13:1,7,10,24 pushed 36:24 25:24 28:11 33:12,14,24 photocopies practices 22:18 40:13 41:8 25:8 29:11 34:19,30.0 33:12,14,24 photocopy 47:3 29:2 30:9 proceeding qualified 8:10 44:10 qualified 8:10 pice 25:16,23 present 4:11,11 profession 21:11 10:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,17 places 24:17 present 4:11,11 profession 21:11 13:12 51.2 32:23 33:2,3 32:12 32:3 places 24:17 present 4:1.1,11 profit 31:16,18 30:4,520 31:2 37:10 41:23,23 36:18 plause 3:10 preserve 14:2,6 <td></td> <td>,</td> <td>-</td> <td></td> <td></td>		,	-		
point possible 13:20 possible 13:21 possible 13:22 possible 13:20 possible 13:21 possible 13:21 </td <td>, ,</td> <td></td> <td> /</td> <td>-</td> <td>· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·</td>	, ,		/	-	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
23:17 41:4 problem 5:13 purpose 26:11 16:2,4,16,17 Petitioner 1:5 potential 30:21 8:2,25 9:20,21 26:12 17:12,16,21 1:19 2:4,9 3:8 potentially 4:3 10:15 12:21 purpose 26:11 25:24 28:11 3:13 53:22 practice 8:11 13:1,7,10,24 pushed 36:24 25:24 28:11 phenomenon 29:4 41:25 21:17 pushed 36:24 25:24 28:11 photocopies 47:19 55:9,14 54:7,15 55:25 77:22 42:11,21 34:19 35:23 50:13,15,17,18 practices 22:18 40:13 41:8 25:8 29:11 34:2,3,6,9,11 photocopy 47:3 29:2 30:9 proceedings qualified 8:10 47:14,15 49:1 49:10,11 48:23 proceedings 44:10 rates 3:15,24 4:6 42:15 2:2,4 9:3 place 13:13 45:5 27:6 22:4 12:5 14:24 13:12,14,24 26:3 32:7 places 24:17 present 4:11,11 profession 21:11 10:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,17 18:9,11 19:9 places 21:10 preserve 14:2,6 31:19 35:1 32:23 33:2,3 37:10 41:23,23 37:10 41:23,23 37:10 41:23,23 play		-		,	· · · · · ·
Petitioner 1:5 1:19 2:4,9 3:8 3:13 53:22 potential 30:21 potentially 4:3 1:15 2:21 p2:25 9:20,21 10:15 12:21 purposes 20:3 purposes 20:3	-	-			,
1:19 2:4,9 3:8 potentially 4:3 10:15 12:21 purposes 20:3 18:6,14,14 3:13 53:22 potentially 4:3 10:15 12:21 purposes 20:3 18:6,14,14 phenomenon 29:4 41:25 14:25 22:19,20 put 11:22 13:15 32:25 33:8,10 11:18,21 16:11 47:23,25 55:10 26:8 38:16,19 18:13 19:3,10 33:12,14,24 phone 54:6 practices 22:18 40:13 41:8 25:8 29:11 34:2,3,69,11 photocopies 50:13,15,17,18 precisely 38:25 27:23 43:12 qualified 81:0 photocopying premise 21:17 product 3:21 fordut 7:4:9:25 9:23 10:12 pice 25:16,23 preparation profession 21:11 10:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,17 place 13:13 45:5 present 4:11,11 professional 15:10 16:24 26:3 32:7 plates 3:10 preserve 14:2,6 14:12 30:4,5,20 31:2 44:7,12,13 plumber 41:5 preserve 13:21 47:18 48:25 38:7 39:3 ratio 13:21 14:2 plumber 41:5 preserve 13:21 47:18 48:25 38:7 39:5 ratio 13:21 14:2 plus 50:6 President''s 39:3 48:9 53:9 55:16,1	- · ·		-		
3:13 53:22practice 8:1113:1,7.10,24pushed 36:2425:24 28:11phenomenon29:4 41:2513:1,7.10,24put 11:22 13:1532:25 33:8,1011:18,21 16:1147:23,25 55:1026:8 38:16,19put 11:22 13:1533:12,14,24photocopies47:19 55:9,1440:13 41:825:8 29:1134:2,36,9,11photocopy 47:329:2 30:9proceeding27:23 43:12qualified 8:1047:14,15 49:1photocopy 47:329:2 30:9proceeding27:23 43:12qualified 8:1042:1 5:2,4 9:3photocopyingpremise 21:17proceedings44:1044:10rates 3:15,24 4:6photocopyingpremise 29:16profession 21:1110:1 11:2311:6 14:6,17piace 25:16,23presentation/rprosent 4:11,11profession 21:1110:1 11:2311:6 14:6,17place 24:17present 4:11,11professional15:10 16:2426:3 32:713:12 54:9players 14:15preserve 14:2,631:19 35:132:22 33:2,348:13,114,1626:2114:1246:9,9,1434:17 37:249:6plumber 41:5preserves 13:2177:18 48:2538:7 39:3ratio 13:21 14:2plus 50:6presimablyprofit 46:2346:25 51:536:207:17,20 10:7,8presumablyprofit-making56:21,24readdressed7:17,20 10:7,8presuma 34:5project 29:2123:17 26:1436:207:19 18:19presuma 34:5project 29:2123:17 26:14readdressed19:11 21:2,3presuma 34:5		-	, , ,		
bit is 10.0000primited of 1111.11,11,11,11primited of 1111.11,11,11primited of 11phenomenon29:4 41:2514:25 22:19,20put 11:22 13:1532:25 33:8,1011:18,21 16:1147:23,25 55:1026:8 38:16,1918:13 19:3,1033:12,14,24photocopies47:19 55:9,1454:7,15 55:2537:22 42:11,2134:19 35:2350:13,15,17,18practitionerproblems 6:2377:22 42:11,2134:19 35:23photocopy 47:329:2 30:9proceeding37:24 47:6,747:15 48:3precisely 38:2527:23 43:12qualified 8:1047:15 48:3precisely 38:2527:23 43:12qualified 8:1049:10,1148:23proceeding44:10rates 3:15,24 4:6photocopyingpremise 21:17profession 21:1101:1 11:2311:6 14:6,17place 13:13 45:527:622:410:1 11:2311:6 14:6,17places 24:17present 4:11,11professional15:10 16:2426:3 32:7players 14:15greserve 14:2,631:19 35:132:23 33:2,348:13,14,1626:2114:1246:9,9,1434:17 37:249:6plumber 41:5president 39:750:640:22 42:1014:7,8,11point 5:14,1839:11profit 46:2346:25 51:536:207:17,20 10:7,8President's 39:348:953:9 55:16,1936:207:17,20 10:7,8presumablyproject 29:2123:17 26:14readdressed11:8,11,1234:1150:923:17 26:1446:11 <tr< td=""><td>,</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr<>	,				
In:18.21 16:11 47:23.25 55:10 26:8 38:16,19 18:13 19:3,10 33:12,14,24 photocopies 47:23,25 55:10 26:8 38:16,19 18:13 19:3,10 33:12,14,24 photocopies 47:19 55:9,14 54:7,15 55:25 37:22 42:11,21 34:19 35:23 50:13,15,17,18 practitioner problems 6:23 proceeding qualified 8:10 44:10 47:14,15 49:1 47:15 48:3 precisely 38:25 27:23 43:12 proceeding qualified 8:10 44:10 rates 3:15,24 4:6 photocopying premise 21:17 preduct 3:21 product 3:21 profession 21:11 10:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,17 place 13:13 45:5 27:6 present 4:11,11 professional 13:12 54:9 19:21 22:6 37:10 41:23,23 play 48:15 preserve 14:2,6 31:19 35:1 32:23 33:2,3 48:13,14,16 play 48:15 preserve 14:2,6 31:19 35:1 32:22 42:10 14:7,12,13 play 8:16 preserve 13:21 47:18 48:25 38:7 39:3 ratio 13:21 14:2 plumber 41:5 president's 39:3 profit 46:23 46:25 51:5 36:20 readdressed point 5:14,18		-		-	
phone 54:6practices 22:1840:13 41:825:8 29:1134:2,3,6,9,11photocopies47:19 55:9,1454:7,15 55:2537:22 42:11,2134:19 35:2350:13,15,17,18practitionerproblems 6:23proceeding37:22 42:11,2134:19 35:2347:15 48:3precisely 38:2527:23 43:12problems 6:2377:24 47:6,749:10,1148:23proceedings44:10qualified 8:1044:10photocopyingpremise 21:17profession 21:1110:1 11:2311:6 14:6,1749:24premise 29:16product 3:21profession 21:1110:1 11:2311:6 14:6,17place 25:16,23preparationprofessional15:10 16:2426:3 32:7places 24:17present 4:11,11professional15:10 16:2426:3 32:7play 48:15preserve 14:2,631:19 35:132:23 33:2,348:13,14,1626:2114:12profit 31:16,1830:4,5,20 31:244:7,12,13plumber 41:5preserves 13:2147:18 48:2538:7 39:3rationale 36:13point 5:14,1839:11profits 46:2346:25 51:536:20pint 1:1,1234:11project 29:2150:640:22 42:1014:7,8,11pint 1:12,3presume 34:5project 29:2150:16,1956:21,2440:18pint 1:12,3presume 34:5project 29:2130:1340:18pint 21:2,354:14property 30:1guital 4:22 21:440:18pint 3:12,5352:10,15,17,22property 30:1guital 4:22 21:4	1		,	-	,
photocopies 47:19 55:9,14 54:7,15 55:25 37:22 42:11,21 34:19 35:23 photocopy 47:3 practitioner problems 6:23 qualified 8:10 37:24 47:6,7 47:15 48:3 precisely 38:25 proceeding qualified 8:10 47:14,15 49:1 9hotocopying premise 21:17 44:10 qualified 8:10 42:1 5:2,4 9:3 9hotocopying premise 21:17 proceedings qualified 8:10 42:1 5:2,4 9:3 9hotocopying premise 21:17 profession 21:11 10:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,17 9hotocopying preparation professional 15:10 16:24 26:3 32:7 9laces 24:17 present 4:11,11 professional 15:10 16:24 26:3 32:7 9layers 14:15 preserve 14:2,6 31:19 35:1 32:23 33:2,3 48:13,14,16 26:21 14:12 46:9,9,14 34:17 37:2 49:6 9lumber 41:5 president's 39:3 48:9 50:6 46:25 51:5 rational 36:13 7:17,20 10:7,8 president's 39:3 48:9 50:9 36:20 76:6 11:8,11,12 34:11 proportionally 56:21,24 76:6:	,		,		
50:13,15,17,18 problems 6:23 problems 6:23 37:24 47:6,7 47:15 48:3 precisely 38:25 29:2 30:9 proceeding 47:15,17,18 49:10,11 48:23 proceedings 44:10 qualified 8:10 47:14,15 49:1 49:24 premise 21:17 product 3:21 product 3:21 6:14 7:4 9:25 9:23 10:12 place 13:13 45:5 27:6 22:4 12:5 14:24 18:9,11 19:9 places 24:17 present 4:11,11 professional 15:10 16:24 26:3 32:7 play 48:15 preserve 14:2,6 31:19 35:1 30:4,5,20 31:2 44:7,12,13 plaese 3:10 preserves 13:21 47:18 48:25 38:7 39:3 ratio 13:21 14:2 plumber 41:5 president 39:7 50:6 40:22 42:10 14:7,8,11 point 5:14,18 39:11 profit 46:23 46:25 51:5 ratio 13:21 14:2 plus 50:6 presumably profit 46:23 46:25 51:5 ratio 13:21 14:2 plus 50:6 presumably profit 46:23 46:25 51:5 ratio 13:21 14:2 plus 50:6 presumably profit 46:23 46:25 51:5 ratio 13:21 14:2	-	-			
Dotocopy 47:3 47:15 48:329:2 30:9 proceedingproceeding proceedingsQ47:14,15 49:1 50:1649:10,11 48:2348:23 premise 21:17 place 25:16,23 place 13:13 45:5premise 21:17 premation44:10 product 3:21 profession 21:11qualified 8:10 44:1042:1 5:2,4 9:3 9:23 10:1210:1 11:23 place 24:17 place 13:13 45:5preparation 22:4profession 21:11 22:410:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,179:23 10:12 9:23 10:1211:6 14:6,17 place 24:17 places 24:17 places 24:17 places 24:17 places 24:17present 4:11,11 present 4:11,11 present 4:11,11 present 4:11,11 professional 13:12 54:915:10 16:24 15:10 16:24 26:3 32:726:3 32:7 37:10 41:23,23 48:912:12 plumber 41:5 preserve 14:2,6 26:2114:12 14:12profit 31:16,18 31:19 35:1 32:23 33:2,3 31:19 35:130:4,5,20 31:2 30:4,5,20 31:2 34:17 37:244:7,12,13 44:17 37:210:17,19,20 10:17,19,20 11:8,11,12 11:8,11,12president's 39:3 39:1148:9 profit 46:23 48:953:9 55:16,19 53:9 55:16,19 36:2036:20 read 42:22 46:11 rationale 36:13 36:2011:8,11,12 11:11 11:21:2,3 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21 24:14project 29:21 52:10,15,17,22 20:1330:13 quetted 42:22 40:1311:11 29:2,5 56:2052:10,15,17,22 90:23,5 56:2040:18 reading 26:25			· ·	57:22 42:11,21	
Protecting 47:15 48:3 49:10,11Precisely 38:25 48:23Proceeding proceedings 44:10Qualified 8:10 44:10Finite 971 for tates 3:15,24 4:6photocopying 49:24 piece 25:16,23 place 13:13 45:5premise 21:17 premises 29:16 preparation44:10 profession 21:11question 4:1 5:8 6:14 7:4 9:2550:16 for tates 3:15,24 4:6place 13:13 45:5 places 24:17 plaxes 14:15present 4:11,11 present 4:11,11 present 4:11,11 professionalprofession 21:11 10:1 11:2310:1 11:23 11:6 14:6,17 12:5 14:2411:6 14:6,17 12:5 14:24place 3:10 26:21present 4:11,11 present 4:11,11 places 24:17professional profit 31:16,18 30:4,5,20 31:215:10 16:24 30:4,5,20 31:226:3 32:7 30:4,5,20 31:2plates 3:10 26:21preserve 14:2,6 14:1231:19 35:1 46:9,9,1430:4,5,20 31:2 31:19 35:144:7,12,13 30:4,5,20 31:2plumber 41:5 plus 50:6 10:17,19,20 11:8,11,12president 39:7 39:350:6 40:22 42:1040:13 36:20for 11/1/11/11 11:12,3 21:18,21:12,3 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21project 29:21 54:14 property 30:1 property 30:130:13 40:18 40:18 40:18		-	-	0	,
49:10.1148:23proceedings44:10rates 3:15,24 4:6photocopying 49:24premise 21:17proceedings44:10question 4:1 5:84:21 5:2,4 9:3piece 25:16,23preparationprofession 21:1110:1 11:2311:6 14:6,17place 13:13 45:527:622:412:5 14:2418:9,11 19:9places 24:17present 4:11,11professional15:10 16:2426:3 32:7play 48:15present 4:11,11professional15:10 16:2426:3 32:7play 48:15preserve 14:2,631:19 35:132:23 33:2,348:13,14,1626:2114:1246:9,9,1434:17 37:249:6plumber 41:5president 39:750:640:22 42:1014:7,8,11point 5:14,1839:11profits 46:2346:25 51:5rationale 36:137:17,20 10:7,8presumablyprofit-making50:956:21,24read 42:2211:8,11,1234:1150:923:17 26:1430:1346:1117:9 18:19presumably52:10,15,17,2230:1340:1819:11 21:2,354:14property 30:1quite 14:22 21:440:1821:18 22:2154:14property 30:1quite 14:22 21:4reading 26:2519:11 21:2,354:14property 30:1quite 14:22 21:4reading 26:25			•	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	,
bitsprotectingsprotectingsquestion 4:1 5:84:21 5:2,4 9:3protocopying 49:24premise 21:17 premises 29:16product 3:21 profession 21:11question 4:1 5:84:21 5:2,4 9:3pice 25:16,23preparation 27:6profession 21:11 22:410:1 11:2311:6 14:6,17place 13:13 45:527:6profession 21:11 22:410:1 11:2311:6 14:6,17places 24:17present 4:11,11 present 4:15professional15:10 16:2426:3 32:7play 48:15present 4:11,11 preserve 14:2,6profit 31:16,18 31:19 35:130:4,5,20 31:244:7,12,13plases 3:10preserve 14:2,631:19 35:1 46:9,9,1432:23 33:2,348:13,14,16plumber 41:5preserves 13:21 President 39:747:18 48:25 50:638:7 39:3 46:23ratio 13:21 14:2 14:7,8,11plus 50:6President's 39:3 presumablyprofit 46:23 50:946:25 51:5 23:17 26:14rationale 36:13 36:2010:17,19,20presume 34:5 presumablyproject 29:21 52:10,15,17,2223:17 26:14 30:13readdressed 40:1811:12:2,3 21:18 22:2154:14 property 30:1 prevailing 4:5property 30:1 proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25		- •		-	
49:24 piece 25:16,23 place 13:13 45:5premises 29:16 preparation 27:6product 3:21 profession 21:116:14 7:4 9:25 10:1 11:239:23 10:12 11:6 14:6,17 12:5 14:24place 24:17 places 24:17present 4:11,11 present 4:11,11 play 48:15present 4:11,11 present 4:11,11 present 4:15professional 13:12 54:915:10 16:24 19:21 22:626:3 32:7 37:10 41:23,23players 14:15 26:2136:18 preserve 14:2,6profit 31:16,18 31:19 35:130:4,5,20 31:2 32:23 33:2,344:7,12,13 44:7,12,13plumber 41:5 plus 50:6 point 5:14,18 10:17,19,20preserves 13:21 presumably 39:1147:18 48:25 50:6 profit 46:2338:7 39:3 48:9ratio 13:21 14:2 14:7,8,11 rationale 36:13 36:207:17,20 10:7,8 10:17,19,20presumably presumably 11:8,11,12presume 34:5 50:9project 29:21 52:10,15,17,2230:13 40:13readdressed 40:18 29:2,5 56:2019:11 21:2,3 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:2154:14 property 30:1 proportionallyproject 29:21 29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25	,	- · · -	- 0		· · · ·
piece 25:16,23 place 13:13 45:5premise 25:16 preparation 27:6profession 21:11 22:410:1 11:23 12:5 14:2411:6 14:6,17 18:9,11 19:9place 13:13 45:527:622:412:5 14:2418:9,11 19:9place 24:17 play 48:15present 4:11,11 presentation/rprofessional 13:12 54:915:10 16:2426:3 32:7players 14:15 please 3:1036:18 preserve 14:2,6profit 31:16,18 31:19 35:130:4,5,20 31:244:7,12,13plamber 41:5 plumber 41:5preserves 13:21 President 39:747:18 48:25 50:638:7 39:3 48:948:13,14,16plumber 41:5 plumber 41:5president's 39:3 presumably47:18 48:25 50:638:7 39:3 48:9ratio 13:21 14:2 14:7,8,11ratio 13:21 14:2 profits 46:2346:25 51:5 40:22 42:1014:7,8,11 42:2ratio 13:21 14:2 46:11ristin 11:134:11 presumablyprofit 46:23 50:946:25 51:5 52:10,15,17,22ratio 13:21 14:2 46:1111:8 12:2:3 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:2154:14 prevailing 4:5project 29:21 52:10,15,17,2230:13 40:18 40:1840:18 reading 26:25				-	,
place 13:13 45:5proplace 13:13 45:5proplace 13:13 45:5proplace 13:13 45:5proplace 13:13 45:5proplace 13:13 45:5professional12:5 14:2418:9,11 19:9places 24:17present 4:11,11professional13:12 54:919:21 22:637:10 41:23,23players 14:1536:18profit 31:16,1830:4,5,20 31:244:7,12,13please 3:10preserve 14:2,631:19 35:132:23 33:2,348:13,14,1626:2114:1246:9,9,1434:17 37:249:6plumber 41:5preserves 13:2147:18 48:2538:7 39:3ratio 13:21 14:2plus 50:6President 39:750:640:22 42:1014:7,8,11point 5:14,1839:11profits 46:2346:25 51:536:2010:17,19,20presumablyprofit-making56:21,24read 42:2211:8,11,1234:1150:923:17 26:1440:1819:11 21:2,3presuppose52:10,15,17,2230:1340:1821:18 22:2154:14property 30:1quite 14:22 21:4readily 51:18proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25		-			
place 13:13 43:13121:03121:03121:03121:03121:03places 24:17present 4:11,11professional15:10 16:2426:3 32:7play 48:15presentation/r36:18profit 31:16,1830:4,5,20 31:237:10 41:23,23players 14:15preserve 14:2,631:19 35:132:23 33:2,348:13,14,1626:2114:1246:9,9,1434:17 37:249:6plumber 41:5preserves 13:2147:18 48:2538:7 39:3ratio 13:21 14:2plus 50:6President 39:750:640:22 42:1014:7,8,11point 5:14,1839:11profits 46:2346:25 51:5said 13:21 14:210:17,19,20presumablyprofit-making50:9greations 22:1746:1111:8,11,1234:1150:9project 29:2123:17 26:1436:2019:11 21:2,3presume 34:5project 29:2123:17 26:1446:1119:11 21:2,3presume 34:5property 30:1quite 14:22 21:4readdressed19:11 21:2,3prevailing 4:5proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25					,
play 48:15presentation/rprotestional13:12 54:919:21 22:637:10 41:23,23players 14:1536:18profit 31:16,1830:4,5,20 31:244:7,12,13please 3:10preserve 14:2,611:19 35:132:23 33:2,348:13,14,1626:2114:1246:9,9,1434:17 37:249:6plumber 41:5preserves 13:2147:18 48:2538:7 39:3ratio 13:21 14:2plus 50:6President 39:750:640:22 42:1014:7,8,11point 5:14,1839:11profits 46:2346:25 51:5rationale 36:137:17,20 10:7,8President's 39:3profit-making53:9 55:16,1936:2010:17,19,20presumablyproject 29:2123:17 26:14readdressed11:8,11,1234:1150:9project 29:2123:17 26:14readdressed19:11 21:2,354:14property 30:1property 30:1guite 14:22 21:4readily 51:1825:15,23 26:7prevailing 4:5proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25	-				· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
players 14:1536:18profit 31:16,1830:4,5,20 31:244:7,12,13please 3:10preserve 14:2,614:12profit 31:16,1830:4,5,20 31:244:7,12,1326:2114:1246:9,9,1434:17 37:248:13,14,16plumber 41:5preserves 13:2147:18 48:2538:7 39:348:13,21 14:2plus 50:6President 39:750:640:22 42:1014:7,8,11point 5:14,1839:11profits 46:2346:25 51:5stationale 36:137:17,20 10:7,8President's 39:348:953:9 55:16,1936:2010:17,19,20presumablyprofit-making50:9read 42:2211:8,11,1234:1150:9project 29:2130:1346:1117:9 18:19presume 34:5project 29:2130:1340:1819:11 21:2,354:14proportionally29:2,5 56:20readily 51:1825:15,23 26:7prevailing 4:5proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25	-	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			
please 3:10 26:21preserve 14:2,6 14:1231:19 35:1 46:9,9,1432:23 33:2,3 34:17 37:248:13,14,16 49:6plumber 41:5 plus 50:6preserves 13:21 President 39:747:18 48:25 50:638:7 39:3 40:22 42:1048:13,14,16 49:6point 5:14,18 10:17,19,20president's 39:3 presumably48:9 profits 46:2332:23 33:2,3 44:17 37:248:13,14,16 49:610:17,19,20 11:8,11,12president's 39:3 34:11profits 46:23 presumably36:20 profit-making 50:9rationale 36:13 36:2011:8,11,12 17:9 18:19 19:11 21:2,3 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21presume 34:5 54:14 prevailing 4:5project 29:21 52:10,15,17,2230:13 quite 14:22 21:4 29:2,5 56:20readily 51:18 reading 26:25		-			,
26:2114:1246:9,9,1434:17 37:249:6plumber 41:5preserves 13:2147:18 48:2538:7 39:3ratio 13:21 14:2plus 50:6President 39:750:640:22 42:1014:7,8,11point 5:14,1839:11profits 46:2346:25 51:5rationale 36:137:17,20 10:7,8President's 39:348:953:9 55:16,1936:2010:17,19,20presumablyprofit-making56:21,24read 42:2211:8,11,1234:1150:9project 29:2123:17 26:14readdressed19:11 21:2,3presuppose52:10,15,17,2230:13quite 14:22 21:4readily 51:1821:18 22:2154:14proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25	1 V		-		, ,
plumber 41:5preserves 13:2147:18 48:2538:7 39:3ratio 13:21 14:2plus 50:6President 39:750:640:22 42:1014:7,8,11point 5:14,1839:11profits 46:2346:25 51:514:7,8,117:17,20 10:7,8President's 39:348:953:9 55:16,1936:2010:17,19,20presumablyprofit-making50:956:21,24read 42:2211:8,11,1234:1150:9project 29:2123:17 26:1436:1117:9 18:19presume 34:5project 29:2152:10,15,17,2230:1340:1819:11 21:2,354:14property 30:1guite 14:22 21:4readily 51:1825:15,23 26:7prevailing 4:5proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25		-		,	
plus 50:6President 39:750:640:22 42:1014:7,8,11point 5:14,1839:11profits 46:2340:22 55:15rationale 36:137:17,20 10:7,8President's 39:348:953:9 55:16,1936:2010:17,19,20presumablyprofit-making56:21,24read 42:2211:8,11,1234:1150:9questions 22:1746:1117:9 18:19presume 34:5project 29:2123:17 26:14readdressed19:11 21:2,354:14property 30:1quite 14:22 21:4readily 51:1825:15,23 26:7prevailing 4:5proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25					
point 5:14,1839:11profits 46:2346:25 51:5rationale 36:137:17,20 10:7,8President's 39:348:953:9 55:16,1936:2010:17,19,20presumablyprofit-making56:21,24read 42:2211:8,11,1234:1150:9guestions 22:1746:1117:9 18:19presume 34:5project 29:2123:17 26:14readdressed19:11 21:2,354:14property 30:1guite 14:22 21:4readily 51:1825:15,23 26:7prevailing 4:5proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25	-	-			
7:17,20 10:7,8 10:17,19,20President's 39:3 presumably 34:11Profits 10:29 48:953:9 55:16,19 56:21,2436:20 read 42:22 46:1111:8,11,12 17:9 18:19 19:11 21:2,3 21:18 22:21 25:15,23 26:7presume 34:5 presumpose 54:14project 29:21 52:10,15,17,2253:9 55:16,19 56:21,2436:20 read 42:22 46:1111:8,11,12 17:9 18:19 19:11 21:2,3 21:18 22:21 25:15,23 26:7presume 34:5 presuppose 54:14project 29:21 52:10,15,17,2253:9 55:16,19 50:936:20 read 42:22 46:1111:8,11,12 17:9 18:19 19:11 21:2,3 21:18 22:21 21:18 22:21presume 34:5 54:14project 29:21 52:10,15,17,2230:13 quite 14:22 21:4readdressed 40:1811:8,11,12 19:11 21:2,3 21:18 22:2154:14 property 30:1 proportionallypresume 34:5 29:2,5 56:20readily 51:18 reading 26:25	-				
10:17,19,20 11:8,11,12presumably 34:11profit-making 50:956:21,24 questions 22:17read 42:22 46:1117:9 18:19 19:11 21:2,3presume 34:5 presupposeproject 29:21 52:10,15,17,2256:21,24 questions 22:17read 42:22 46:1121:18 22:21 25:15,23 26:7prevailing 4:5project 29:21 property 30:1 proportionally56:21,24 questions 22:17read 42:22 46:1110:17,19,20 11:8,11,12presume 34:5 project 29:21 52:10,15,17,22project 29:21 30:1323:17 26:14 40:18readdressed 40:18	· ·		-		
10:11,12,1234:1150:9questions 22:1746:1117:9 18:19presume 34:5project 29:2123:17 26:14readdressed19:11 21:2,354:14property 30:1quite 14:22 21:4readily 51:1825:15,23 26:7prevailing 4:5proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25				,	
17:9 18:19 19:11 21:2,3 21:18 22:21presume 34:5 presuppose 54:14project 29:21 52:10,15,17,2223:17 26:14 30:13readdressed 40:1819:11 21:2,3 21:18 22:2154:14 property 30:1 prevailing 4:5project 29:21 52:10,15,17,2223:17 26:14 30:13readdressed 40:1820:12 20:12 21:18 22:2154:14 property 30:1project 29:21 54:1429:2,5 56:20reading 26:25	, ,		-	,	
19:11 21:2,3 21:18 22:21presuppose 54:14 prevailing 4:552:10,15,17,22 property 30:1 proportionally30:13 quite 14:22 21:4 29:2,5 56:2040:18 readily 51:18 reading 26:25		• · · ·		-	
21:18 22:2154:14property 30:1quite 14:22 21:4readily 51:1825:15,23 26:7prevailing 4:5proportionally29:2,5 56:20reading 26:25		presume 34:5			
25:15,23 26:7 prevailing 4:5 proportionally 29:2,5 56:20 reading 26:25	19:11 21:2,3	presuppose	52:10,15,17,22		
	21:18 22:21	54:14	property 30:1	-	•
38:14 44:18 14:17 15:4,6,7 11:2,3 quotation 45:3 48:6	25:15,23 26:7	prevailing 4:5	proportionally		U
	38:14 44:18	14:17 15:4,6,7	11:2,3	quotation 45:3	48:6
		I	I	I	l

	46.1.50.10	57.1	01.1.07.1.10	
reaffirmed 10:4	46:1 52:19	57:1	31:1 37:1,19	section 3:25 4:6
real 22:20 24:15	regardless 7:1	reported 40:21	38:4,13 39:2	4:9 8:14 24:8,9
really 4:14 7:19	Register 54:21	reports 29:8,17	46:24 47:10	35:12 36:19
reason 4:2 15:17	reimbursable	representation	48:1 49:21	40:12,13,14
16:7 25:3 35:5	6:13 28:18	27:4,22 43:12	52:24 53:3,7	43:17,20 51:16
35:11,24 37:12	47:21	43:25	53:19 56:6,16	sections 40:12
48:15 50:6,7	reimbursed	representing	57:4	40:15
55:24 56:8	28:6 33:25	23:18 29:13	roughly 17:22	Security 1:3,9
reasonable 4:7	41:24 45:17	48:9	routinely 32:15	3:4,13 23:3,7
12:3 13:21	46:14 49:12	request 50:18	rubric 41:4	23:12,25 24:5
39:14 42:4	52:21	required 39:4	rule 51:15,17,17	see 13:17 18:17
43:18 51:22	reimbursement	51:25	55:3,8,12	19:9
reasonableness	29:20 48:12,22	requires 4:5,6	rules 38:11 45:2	seeks 28:21
12:20 13:17,19	reinserted 42:17	23:8	45:3 46:5	seen 16:10
16:15	rejected 51:21	requisite 12:11	running 30:4	Senate 24:19
reasonably	rejecting 22:22	reserve 26:15	runs 21:10	27:9,17,19
49:15	relates 27:20	respect 13:9		38:15 39:10,25
reasoning 3:22	43:9	16:24 29:9,17	<u> </u>	40:21 42:16,18
reasons 4:16	relation 42:9	34:23 40:23	S 2:1 3:1	43:8 56:8,14
7:17 8:17,21	relative 21:19	55:3,9	salaries 12:10	56:16
22:15 37:18	relatively 7:22	respectively	salary 28:17,22	send 24:11
55:19	24:12 47:6	24:6	28:24 53:16	sends 30:11
REBUTTAL	relevant 4:4	Respondent	saw 20:20 24:19	senior 7:23
2:7 53:21	27:9,12 38:8	1:22 2:6 26:19	saying 17:20	10:14,25 11:10
recognized 27:7	40:19 52:19	response 9:19	25:20 47:11	21:20
35:17,25 36:13	relies 25:19	responses 14:23	says 13:18 25:21	sense 23:10
40:17 43:14	relying 11:22	responsibility	39:13 54:20,21	33:21 47:2
45:20	43:3	22:9,9	56:21	51:6
recover 41:17	remaining 53:20	result 33:17,20	Scalia 5:3,6,11	sensibly 21:14
recovery 4:8	removed 42:16	33:21	5:24 6:12 7:25	sentence 43:16
10:22 25:24	rent 12:16 40:25	revisit 19:25	8:2,6 13:1,6,10	separate 17:23
redo 56:8	repaid 52:20	20:2	14:18 18:12,17	17:25 18:7
reenacted 27:24	repassed 40:14	revisited 20:1	39:15,20,21	32:9
40:18	repeal 27:25	Richlin 1:3 3:4	40:2,4,6 50:19	separately 9:15
refer 43:5	replicate 55:14	3:13,14 23:2	51:3	9:22 17:14,18
reference 44:6,8	reply 25:19	right 6:12 14:4	Scalia's 55:19	18:10 42:1
44:14	54:18 55:23	20:3 27:14	Scarborough	47:2,13 49:24
references 40:20	report 24:20	31:14,21 42:8	23:24 56:3	50:15,17 53:6
45:19	27:9,10,17,18	49:22 50:3	se 11:18	53:8,11,18
referring 28:2	27:19 28:1	51:3	search 12:9	54:23 55:6
reflect 34:3	29:20,24 30:1	Rights 43:20	second 10:6,7	service 1:3 3:5
reflected 25:6	38:15 39:23,25	ROBERTS 3:3	21:6 52:4	3:13 13:13
44:2	40:1 43:8	10:16 11:1,4	secretaries 42:6	46:15 54:9
reflects 55:11	45:18 54:17,20	17:15 20:20	SECRETARY	services 3:14
regard 11:12	55:18,21 56:5	21:18 23:16	1:8	4:21,22 11:19
54:21	56:8,13,14,15	26:4,16 27:12	secretary's	13:13 15:3,8
regarding 45:12	56:17,20,20	29:1,23 30:15	40:24	15:19,21 16:12
			l	

17:5,11 18:5	23:25 24:5	statutory 3:15	54:15	27:2 35:13,14
20:5 23:5,6	Solicitor 1:20	3:18 11:16	suggesting	43:6 45:13
25:21 26:2	solo 30:8	29:19 35:12	12:19 15:12	51:11 54:3
32:8,19,20,21	sooner 18:15	52:4	17:17,19	terms 25:24
47:3,3,15 48:3	sorry 10:16	step 21:6	suggestion	test 29:21
48:13 55:6,13	17:15 18:21	STEVENS 5:17	14:15 15:14	tested 31:10
56:22	sort 6:18 56:8	6:2,6 9:6 33:2	16:8	text 29:19 52:4
set 23:12,23	Souter 6:22 7:10	33:16,23 34:4	suggests 30:8	Thank 26:16,20
41:24 44:6,13	18:21 31:8,15	34:8 44:15,17	49:3	53:19,23 57:2
setting 7:2 15:24	31:18,22 32:4	45:5,7 46:13	supervision 8:12	57:4
seven 45:21	32:9,12	46:18 48:18,21	support 4:7	theory 7:11 10:9
shift 50:4,11	speaking 22:11	49:2,14	Suppose 30:8	10:20 41:18,19
shifting 50:6	speaks 45:11	strange 6:24 7:6	33:5	41:21
shoe-horn 15:2	specific 28:5	7:7 52:15	Supposing 9:7	thin 42:25
shoe-horning	47:24 49:19	Street 11:11,11	Supreme 1:1,15	thing 16:3 25:14
54:8,8	specifically	19:5,6,6	sure 6:8 8:20	things 22:5
shove 41:3,10	15:15 32:6	stretch 37:20	19:20 21:21	29:18,21 31:20
shows 11:12	40:19 43:5,13	stronger 4:7	22:4 29:15	35:21 47:14,16
shunt 20:18 21:8	44:6,7 45:14	structure 20:23	33:4 41:14	54:5,6,13
22:6	45:19 46:2	22:18	surely 33:7	56:19
side 41:11	51:21	structures 20:8	surprising 40:10	think 4:15 12:5
sided 24:21	staffs 38:24,25	Studies 29:8	40:10	16:23,23,24
signal 19:17	standard 12:1	study 29:20	suspect 37:25	19:2,3,24 20:2
signed 39:3,11	standpoint 20:7	52:10,11,14	synonymous	20:13 21:5,6
significant	start 53:24	subcategory	15:10	22:1,13 25:7
23:11	started 17:13	32:1	system 20:12	28:18 30:23
silent 56:21	44:5	subcommittee	47:1	33:25 36:9
similar 32:7	state 4:17	42:16		38:1,6,18,23
51:17,18	stated 27:10	subject 5:4,19		41:25 43:1
similarly 32:17	statement 46:3,6	5:22 6:3,20 8:4	T 2:1,1	44:18,22 47:5
simply 12:3	55:11	47:4	take 7:18 21:15	49:21 50:7
13:16,19 18:22	states 1:1,15	submission 5:12	24:3 31:9,11	54:6 56:18
19:17 28:17	26:24 27:19	6:19 11:12	40:6 45:25	thinking 16:21
50:18 53:13	static 14:14	submit 50:18,20	51:6	17:2 25:4
sink 41:5 42:1,7	statute 9:7 12:3	submitted 57:5	taken 43:15	third 24:14 31:7
situation 6:16	13:18,23 15:14	57:7	56:19	thought 41:1
7:6,7,8 33:10	16:9 17:17	substantial	takes 3:19 16:25	51:2
37:20 54:24	19:4,7 20:4	22:15	talk 14:25 15:3	three 23:1,4
situations 23:4	26:9,10,11,12	substantially	55:20	42:21 56:3
24:1 30:21	36:6,15,23	20:22,25 37:3	talking 38:9	three-quarters
53:4	40:23 45:14	37:9 56:9	45:2 took 21:2	9:16
Sixth 26:1	52:8 53:12	subsumed 9:23	task 31:3 taxes 52:21	throw 29:10
small 23:2 29:14	statutes 4:4	17:12,16,21		time 5:15 7:9,14
37:21 47:6	12:21,25 15:15	18:6	telephone 47:3 tell 17:25 25:12	9:2,7 13:23
53:17	17:10 43:15	sudden 29:10	term 3:18 10:2	17:9 26:15
snippet 25:20	44:1 51:8,10	suggest 37:20	11:16 14:16	27:1,1,16 28:5
Social 23:3,7,11	51:16,23	suggested 51:25	11.10 14:10	40:7 41:15
	I	I	I	l

45:7 49:6,16	U	vetoed 25:17	West 10:4 17:7	wouldn't 13:24
51:12 53:4,11	ubiquitous 55:5	39:18,19 40:13	We'll 3:3	15:25 18:23
55:4,10	ultimately 17:4	40:13 56:1	we're 16:3,4	21:9 34:1 40:9
times 36:4 40:25	32:18,24 33:13	view 23:15	53:11	40:10
53:4	39:10 47:20	30:12 35:4,7	we've 23:17	writing 22:10
today 54:24 55:5	unanimous	39:3,8 48:23	39:17	written 16:13
55:5	39:23	49:8,11	willing 5:22	wrong 3:17 8:20
today's 5:1 7:8	undermines	views 25:6 38:10	wishes 57:1	41:2
told 8:17 41:1	12:5	Virginia 10:4	witnesses 29:6	wrote 24:20
47:13	understand	17:7	Wolfman 1:18	
topic 55:20	19:20 33:16	virtually 13:14	2:3,8 3:6,7,9	X
tradition 17:22	understanding	19:4	4:10,13 5:5,8	x 1:2,10 16:4
traditional 48:2	51:22	vis-a-vis 15:21	5:12,20,25 6:4	
traditionally	understood		6:8,13 7:3,16	Y
17:12,16,20	52:21	W	8:1,5,8,18,22	Yang 1:20 2:5
47:22	Underwood	wages 52:19	9:11 10:19	26:17,18,20
training 22:12	36:1	Wall 11:11 19:6	11:3,5 12:4	27:15 28:16
transition 9:17	uniform 55:4	want 25:15 33:4	13:5,9 14:1,13	29:15,25 30:6
travel 31:19	United 1:1,15	41:1,3,14	14:22 15:23	30:13,19 31:4
54:5	26:24	53:24	16:7,23 17:19	31:14,16,21
treat 37:23	University 17:7	wanted 38:10	18:16,18,24	32:4,11,13
treated 9:8,9	use 30:11 50:21	wants 15:16	19:20,24 20:10	33:12,20 34:1
treatment 43:22	55:21	19:18 20:9	20:13 21:1,23	34:7,10,22
true 8:5,8 12:24	uses 28:22 33:18	wash 57:2	23:21 24:22	35:9 36:12
16:2,4,14	utilities 12:16	Washington	25:2,10,13	37:12 38:1,8
18:16,18,20,22	utility 19:16,25	1:11,18,21	26:6 51:5	38:16,21 39:7
19:16 55:1	U.S 50:24	wasn't 18:21	53:20,21,23	39:20,22 40:3
56:11	U.S.C 3:25	27:13 31:2	56:11,18	40:5,8,17
truth 11:21	0.5.0 5.25	55:4	word 17:2 51:6	41:21 42:12,15
try 7:5 19:11	V	waste 40:7	51:7,9 52:23	43:2 44:16,25
47:16	v 1:6	water 31:10	words 10:15	45:6,10 46:16
trying 15:2	vague 12:20	way 6:18 15:13	13:11 21:17	46:19 47:8,18
turn 33:9 35:4	valid 30:4	16:10,13 17:2	42:21,22 51:17	48:5,20,23
54:12,19	vantage 5:14	19:3,14,15,15	work 3:16,20,21	49:8,17 50:3
twice 39:22	19:11	23:25 28:18	11:18 15:16	50:24 51:15
two 4:4,16,25	various 11:6	31:9 37:22	20:19 21:9,13	52:11,17 53:2
7:17 8:17,21	vary 55:10	38:25 41:9,20	21:14 22:6	53:5,9,19,25
10:4 14:2,23	verified 41:1	52:15 53:14	23:11 24:1	year 12:11 56:17
17:7 18:22	versus 3:5,23	ways 14:2	25:6 27:5	years 6:16 9:14
20:7 21:15	9:13,20,24	Wednesday	36:22 52:9	10:4 17:7 56:3
23:6 26:23	10:3,5 16:25	1:12	working 25:8	yields 51:18
30:13,20 34:14	17:24 42:2	weight 25:8	works 23:21	\$
34:18 54:13	51:1,21	42:21 54:15,16	36:19	· · · · ·
type 48:7 52:12	veteran 23:19	55:17,22	worse 39:16,17	\$100 14:5
types 36:17 54:6	veterans 23:3,7	went 25:5 44:18	47:12	\$125 10:18
typical 29:13	23:12,25 24:5	weren't 17:17	worth 22:23	14:10 16:1
typically 23:19	veto 50:21	22:2 54:2	29:13	23:20 47:7
				\$200 16:3

\$35 12:12 28:9	26 2:6		
\$75 14:5,11	28 45:15		
\$85 34:15,17,20	29 28:23,24		
35:3,8	53:15		
\$95 35:4	3		
0	$\frac{3}{32:424:8}$		
06-1717 1:6 3:4	30 6:16		
00-1/1/ 1:0 5:4	32913 54:21		
1	52915 54:21		
10 49:10	4		
10:05 1:16 3:2	42 3:25		
102-572 24:9	46 54:20		
102-572 24.9 11:06 57:6	496 50:24		
12 45:16 54:18	470 30.24		
12 49:10 54:18 13 40:15 55:23	5		
13 40:11,14,14	50 49:9,22		
55:23	506(c) 24:9		
15 49:10,12,23	53 2:9		
49:25			
154 50:24	7		
19 1:12	70s 17:22		
191 .12 1920 36:7			
1920 30.7 1980 9:17 18:19	8		
18:22,22 19:3	80s 17:23		
27:9,17 35:20			
42:19 43:3	9		
46:11	99-80 24:8		
1984 35:20 38:9			
39:9 40:1 43:3			
45:6			
1985 19:4 40:19			
56:12			
1988 3:25 4:6,9			
4:11 19:23			
35:12 36:5,9			
36:19 43:20			
51:12,16			
1989 9:14			
1990 40:8			
2			
2 23:24			
2-1 14:11			
20 6:16 24:4			
2008 1:12			
2412 8:14			
25 24:4			
	l	1	l