1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE	UNITED STATES
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3	CARLSBAD TECHNOLOGY,	:
4	INC.,	:
5	Petitioner	:
6	v.	: No. 07-1437
7	HIF BIO, INC., ET AL.	:
8		x
9	Washington, D.C.	
LO	Tuesday	, February 24, 2009
L1		
L2	The above-entitled matter came on for ora	
L3	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States	
L4	at 11:20 a.m.	
L5	APPEARANCES:	
L6	GLENN W. RHODES, ESQ., San Fran	ncisco, Cal.; on behalf of
L7	the Petitioner.	
L8	THEODORE S. ALLISON, ESQ., Wash	nington, D.C.; on behalf
L9	of the Respondents.	
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23		
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1	CONTENTS	
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	PAGE
3	GLENN W. RHODES, ESQ.	
4	On behalf of the Petitioner	3
5	THEODORE S. ALLISON, ESQ.	
6	On behalf of the Respondents	20
7	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF	
8	GLENN W. RHODES, ESQ.	
9	On behalf of the Petitioner	40
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:20 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	next in Case 07-1437, Carlsbad Technology v. HIF Bio,
5	Inc.
6	Mr. Rhodes.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF GLENN W. RHODES
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. RHODES: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
10	please the Court:
11	The single issue presented in this case is
12	whether the bar to review under 1447(d) is applicable to
13	a district court's discretionary decision to decline the
14	exercise of supplemental jurisdiction. In this case,
15	after the district court dismissed Respondents' Federal
16	RICO claim, the district court remanded the remaining
17	State law claims under 1367(c). That was not a remand
18	based upon a lack of subject matter jurisdiction because
19	jurisdiction was specifically conferred upon the court
20	by 1367(a).
21	It's been the rule for some 30 years that
22	the bar of 1447(d) is limited to the specific grounds
23	set forth in 1447(c). And for reference the statutes
24	are on page 2 and 3 of Petitioner's blue brief.
25	Those two grounds are a remand that's based

- 1 upon a lack of subject matter jurisdiction and a remand
- 2 that is based upon any defect other than a lack of
- 3 subject matter jurisdiction if it's raised by a timely
- 4 motion for remand filed within 30 days of the notice of
- 5 removal. The only prong of 1447(c) that's applicable in
- 6 this case is whether this remand is one that's based
- 7 upon a lack of subject matter jurisdiction.
- 8 Now, Congress clearly conferred jurisdiction
- 9 on the district courts in 1367(a), where the case
- 10 contains a Federal claim and related State law claims,
- 11 and a remand based upon a court's discretion to decline
- 12 to exercise supplemental jurisdiction is not a remand
- 13 that's based upon the court's lack of subject matter
- 14 jurisdiction.
- Jurisdiction either exists or it does not.
- 16 A district court's power to hear a case and its power to
- 17 decline the exercise of jurisdiction are part and parcel
- 18 of the same thing. Absent the power to hear a case, a
- 19 district court cannot decline to exercise that -- or
- 20 cannot exercise discretion to decline to exercise that
- 21 jurisdiction.
- Now, in the -- this Court's Osborn v. Haley
- 23 case, it made reference back to Carnegie-Mellon and also
- 24 United Mine Workers v. Gibbs, that even if only State
- 25 law claims are remaining in the case after the Federal

- 1 claim has been resolved, the district court has
- 2 discretion consistent with Article III to retain
- 3 jurisdiction over that cause of action.
- 4 Now, this is inconsistent with the Federal
- 5 Circuit's analysis in this case, that a remand based
- 6 upon 1367(c) is a remand based upon a lack of subject
- 7 matter jurisdiction because in its view an independent
- 8 basis for that jurisdiction is lacking.
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Isn't there something odd
- 10 about saying if it's really fundamental like the
- 11 presence or absence of subject matter jurisdiction, that
- 12 is not reviewable? It's not disputed, right? That if
- 13 the district court says, I lack subject matter
- 14 jurisdiction over, let's say, the RICO claim, as wrong
- 15 as that might be, that would not be reviewable, right?
- 16 MR. RHODES: Justice Ginsburg, I agree with
- 17 that, because if the court does say that I am remanding
- 18 this because, either rightly or wrongly, I lack subject
- 19 matter jurisdiction, then that would fall squarely
- 20 within 1447(c) and (d).
- 21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Though that could be a
- 22 very grave error and yet, on a matter of discretion,
- 23 that that would be reviewable. And I appreciate your
- 24 statutory argument, but it just seems odd to think that
- 25 Congress would want to be firm that if the -- if the

- 1 remand is for lack of subject matter jurisdiction, wrong
- 2 or right, no review; but if it's a discretionary
- 3 exercise -- I could keep this, but I choose not to --
- 4 that that is reviewable.
- 5 That doesn't make a whole lot of sense to
- 6 say the judge who could keep it or remand it, that that
- 7 action is reviewable, but the action of saying I don't
- 8 have jurisdiction, when indeed the court did have
- 9 jurisdiction, is just totally immune from review.
- 10 MR. RHODES: I agree with you, Justice
- 11 Ginsburg, that that seems rather confusing. I would
- 12 address my answer in this way: The review ban of
- 13 1447(d) arose in the situations where apparently
- 14 Congress wanted to -- to inhibit the abuse by those
- 15 seeking only to delay the case by filing a motion for
- 16 remand.
- 17 For example, a case that is filed in State
- 18 court that clearly expresses no Federal question or
- 19 diversity issue, yet the defendant, in order to delay
- 20 the case, will then remove it to Federal court. In
- 21 those situations, Congress wants to prevent those kinds
- 22 of frivolous removals to Federal court.
- But here, in our particular case -- and
- 24 maybe -- let me back up a minute. Maybe we should look
- 25 at that in a different way, because even though you may

- 1 have a legitimate basis for removing the case to Federal
- 2 court and the district court disagrees with you, perhaps
- 3 the better policy is that those types of remands should
- 4 not be reviewable, even though sometimes a district
- 5 court is going to get them wrong.
- 6 But in this particular case, there was a
- 7 Federal RICO claim asserted against us in State court,
- 8 and as a defendant we were not removing that case on
- 9 some frivolous basis. We were removing it because we
- 10 were entitled to be in Federal court.
- 11 It was only after the district judge
- 12 dismissed the Federal RICO count -- and there was no
- 13 motion for remand on this case filed by Respondents --
- 14 the district court sua sponte decided that he was not
- 15 going to exercise his power to hear this case because he
- 16 thought there were legitimate State law claims and he
- 17 remanded on that basis. Now, that's a discretionary
- 18 remand, and normally we would be arguing that where
- 19 discretion is exercised by a district court, it should
- 20 be reviewable for an abuse of discretion.
- 21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But wouldn't it be -- I
- 22 mean, here the district judge said: I got rid of the
- 23 RICO claim; all that's left are State law claims, and
- there's no Federal interest in this case anymore.
- 25 They're all State law claims, they belong in State

- 1 court, good-bye. I could keep it, I choose not to,
- 2 because it isn't a sound use of the resources of the
- 3 Federal court.
- Now, even if you're right that this is a
- 5 discretionary decision, so you can't say no jurisdiction
- 6 because the discretion implies that there is power,
- 7 isn't it 99 cases out of 100 that the court of appeals,
- 8 assuming reviewability, will say, we should defer to the
- 9 district judges on questions of this nature, the
- 10 district judge's decision that this isn't worth the time
- 11 of the Federal court?
- 12 MR. RHODES: I'm not sure about the number
- 13 of -- percentage of cases that -- that there is going to
- 14 be a decision by the appellate court to say we shouldn't
- 15 interfere in that, Justice Ginsburg.
- 16 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But wouldn't you -- as a
- 17 practical judgment, the Federal claim is gone, there is
- 18 pendent jurisdiction -- or it's now supplemental
- 19 jurisdiction -- over the State claim, but the district
- 20 court is told by Congress: It's your call; it's a
- 21 matter of discretion. And the judge gives one of the
- 22 reasons that's enumerated, that reason being that the
- 23 State claims are overwhelming in this case, the RICO
- 24 claim is dismissed, thinking it was worthless, so it's a
- 25 State case.

Τ	why would a court of appeals overturn such a
2	judgment?
3	MR. RHODES: I think, Justice Ginsburg, I
4	can give you an answer to that because there is a recent
5	case that's in our brief, the Brookshire case from the
6	Fifth Circuit, where the district court exercised
7	jurisdiction over Federal and supplemental claims, and
8	did that for quite a while and ruled on a number of
9	dispositive motions; and then basically on the eve of
10	trial, after resolving the Federal claim, remanded it
11	back to State court.
12	The Fifth Circuit, because it had the
13	ability to review that, under the statutory
14	construction, was able to review that on the basis of an
15	abuse of discretion and said that the district court had
16	definitely abused its discretion. After retaining
17	jurisdiction for that length of time and then returning
18	it to State court, that was a waste of judicial
19	resources.
20	JUSTICE GINSBURG: But that because you'd
21	would have to retread the same ground in the State court
22	that had already been covered in the Federal court, but
23	that's not the kind of case that was presented here. I
24	know the case has lingered for a long time, but there
25	was no processing of those State law claims. The judge

- 1 concentrated on RICO, threw it out, and said, the rest
- 2 of the claims I'm not interested in.
- 3 So it's not a case like the Fifth Circuit
- 4 where there was a large investment of Federal court
- 5 energy and time, and sending it back would mean going
- 6 over once again what had already transpired in the
- 7 Federal court.
- 8 MR. RHODES: That is true. This case is
- 9 different because what the -- what the district court
- 10 had labeled as legitimate State law claims as to, for
- 11 example, inventorship, we argued are within the
- 12 exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal court, and that is
- 13 why we appealed to the Federal Circuit in order to have
- 14 that issue resolved.
- 15 Here, if we went back to State court, we
- 16 would be in the position of having to argue to the State
- 17 court that the State court lacked jurisdiction to hear
- 18 that claim because it was something that was within the
- 19 exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal court. It seems
- 20 that in this particular situation it would be better to
- 21 have the Federal Circuit to pass upon the exclusivity of
- 22 the inventorship issue under the patent laws rather than
- 23 have to go back to State court and work back up through
- 24 the State court system to have that resolved.
- 25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Could you explain why

- 1 that is a Federal question? It's a dispute over the
- 2 ownership of this invention, right? So it's not a
- 3 question of the validity of a patent or infringement of
- 4 a patent? It's just the invention is like any res, and
- 5 two parties are disputing about ownership. Why is --
- 6 why does that become a Federal case?
- 7 MR. RHODES: It became a Federal question
- 8 because in our view it arose under the patent laws
- 9 because when they filed their complaint, even though
- 10 they couched it in terms of purely State law claims,
- 11 they did allege that we had falsely claimed to be the
- inventors; and the basis for that claim that we falsely
- 13 claimed to be the inventors was the oath and declaration
- 14 that was filed in connection with our patent
- 15 applications at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.
- So what they were raising was an issue with
- 17 respect to our ability to claim to be the inventors of
- 18 what we claimed in our U.S. patent applications.
- 19 Therefore, since that falls squarely under our
- 20 entitlement to -- to inventorship, of what we claim to
- 21 be the inventors, under Article I, section 8, it seemed
- 22 to us that that clearly fell within the exclusive
- 23 jurisdiction of the Federal court.
- JUSTICE STEVENS: May I just ask one sort of
- 25 a preliminary question? If we just applied the plain

- 1 language of 1447(d), then this case was properly
- 2 remanded, and it was -- the remand order is not subject
- 3 to review. Is that correct?
- 4 MR. RHODES: Yes. If we just read 1447(d)
- 5 on its face, that's --
- 6 JUSTICE STEVENS: What really prevents us --
- 7 MR. RHODES: -- seems to be what it says.
- JUSTICE STEVENS: -- from reaching that
- 9 decision in this case? Because actually it's an open
- 10 question because you are both arguing about it here and
- 11 you certainly disagree. Why couldn't we just simply
- 12 say, for this particular category of remand orders,
- we'll just apply the plain language of 1447(d)?
- MR. RHODES: That would be going against the
- 15 rule that was set out in Thermtron, that 1447(d) was
- 16 limited to only the specified grounds of 1447(c), which
- 17 are lack of --
- 18 JUSTICE STEVENS: I understand. It would be
- 19 a modification of the dicta in Thermtron, but why
- 20 wouldn't that be a simple solution to this case?
- 21 MR. RHODES: I'm not sure that would be a
- 22 simple solution to this case, Justice Stevens, and the
- 23 reason for that is that if we -- if the Court decides to
- 24 do that, then we return to those areas where total chaos
- 25 could really break out, and the reason for that is that

- 1 we would be in a situation where district courts can --
- 2 can dress up in language that is lack of subject matter
- 3 jurisdiction and remand cases, knowing that there is not
- 4 going to be any review.
- 5 JUSTICE STEVENS: No, no. That wouldn't --
- 6 that wouldn't avoid the plain language of the statute.
- 7 Pretextual district court orders wouldn't avoid the
- 8 plain language of the statute.
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But the --
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: There'd be no need
- 11 to dress up anything. I mean, that's Justice Stevens's
- 12 point. You wouldn't have to dress up anything; if you
- 13 send it back, it's not reviewable.
- MR. RHODES: If we were to read 1447(d),
- 15 just plainly on its face without --
- 16 JUSTICE GINSBURG: How could we do that in
- 17 light of Thermtron? Thermtron went against the clear
- 18 text of the statute that says remands are not
- 19 reviewable, period; and in Thermtron the Court said,
- 20 yes, they are sometimes, if we think it's so outrageous
- 21 for a district judge to say: Yes, I've got jurisdiction
- 22 over this case, but my docket is so crowded, and this is
- 23 a -- this is a small-change case; it belongs in State
- 24 court.
- 25 The Court, I think, was outraged by a

- 1 district court thinking that it could dump a case simply
- 2 because it was too busy with more important things.
- 3 That was -- that was the setting of Thermtron, and to
- 4 reach the result that the Court reached, the Court had
- 5 to go against the language of the statute which -- which
- 6 read in absolute terms.
- But anyway, the Court did that, and then
- 8 they gave a rationale for what the new test was going to
- 9 be. It was no longer going to be remands are no longer
- 10 -- remands are not reviewable; it's going to be -- that
- 11 applies only to the cases where -- what was it,
- 12 subsections (c) and (d) of 1447? That -- it -- the
- 13 Court read the statute to say less than it in fact did.
- 14 That's what Thermtron did.
- 15 MR. RHODES: That is the exact holding of
- 16 Thermtron, that they were not going to construe that so
- 17 woodenly to allow a district court to abdicate its
- 18 mandatory jurisdiction.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, "woodenly" is
- 20 a bit much. I mean, they're going to read it not to say
- 21 what it says. And Thermtron involved the court saying:
- 22 I'm not going to take this because I'm too busy with
- 23 other things. I mean, it could be limited to that
- 24 unusual situation, couldn't it?
- 25 MR. RHODES: Mr. Chief Justice, it could,

- 1 but --
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I think it would
- 3 solve the problem Justice Ginsburg pointed out earlier,
- 4 that this way you don't get to appeal big things like no
- 5 subject matter jurisdiction, but you do get to appeal
- 6 picayune things.
- 7 MR. RHODES: Again, I'm not sure how we
- 8 would divide those up between big things and picayune
- 9 things. But I think, to answer your question, we have
- 10 30 years of this particular rule under Thermtron being
- 11 uniformly applied by all the circuit courts of appeal,
- 12 and they have found this to be a workable statutory
- interpretation to give them a framework to handle these
- 14 kinds of cases. And it's not a situation where the
- 15 circuit courts of appeal have run away from situations
- 16 like this, where remands have been based upon declining
- 17 to exercise discretionary power to send it back to State
- 18 court. They have seemed to want to work within the
- 19 statutory framework to review those kinds of cases.
- 20 And I think it would be a large departure to
- 21 go back and try to modify what all the circuit courts of
- 22 appeal, except for maybe the Federal Circuit, has
- 23 adopted as a workable framework in order to solve these
- 24 kinds of problems.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, the only -- one

- 1 clear way to do it would be to overrule Thermtron, but
- 2 neither party has asked for that. You haven't asked for
- 3 it, and the other side hasn't asked for it.
- 4 MR. RHODES: That's correct, Justice
- 5 Ginsburg.
- 6 JUSTICE STEVENS: You just have to
- 7 distinguish Thermtron. You don't have to overrule it.
- 8 It still applies on its facts.
- 9 That's a very different problem. When the
- 10 judge says, I'm too busy to hear this, I'm going to send
- 11 it back to State court, that's what Thermtron resolved.
- MR. RHODES: And yet --
- 13 JUSTICE STEVENS: And this is not -- that's
- 14 not involved here.
- 15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But your concern is what
- 16 was the Court's reasoning, and you could apply the
- 17 Court's reasoning, its interpretation of 1447.
- 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: You have to get rid of
- 19 Quackenbush, too, don't you?
- MR. RHODES: Yes, Quackenbush is a --
- 21 JUSTICE SCALIA: Throw that overboard, too?
- MR. RHODES: We would have to overthrow that
- 23 as well, and the reason for that is because Quackenbush
- 24 was a remand based upon abstention -- abstention-based
- 25 remand under Burford, and in that case, this Court found

- 1 that abstention-based remands did not fall within either
- 2 prong of 1447(c). So -- in fact, this Court gave that
- 3 very little attention in Quackenbush before it moved on
- 4 to the 1291 issue.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You thought the
- 6 Respondents asked us to overrule Thermtron. On page 22,
- 7 you say, "Respondents' implicit request for this Court
- 8 to overrule Thermtron should be rejected."
- 9 MR. RHODES: Yes, we did say that, and I'm
- 10 not sure that they -- they expressly said you should
- 11 overrule Thermtron, but the strong suggestion in their
- 12 brief was perhaps you should.
- 13 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, isn't it -- isn't it
- 14 also the case that Congress has amended the relevant
- 15 provisions of 1447 since Thermtron and they have not
- 16 seen fit to overrule or change those provisions?
- 17 MR. RHODES: Given the fact that Congress
- 18 has twice amended 1447(c) after Thermtron, it seems that
- 19 they have actually ratified this Court's statutory
- 20 construction under Thermtron, and have agreed to it --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So this gets a lot
- 22 of attention across the street? The reviewability of
- 23 remand orders gets --
- 24 (Laughter.)
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I mean, in one of

- 1 those provisions, they said this was only technical
- 2 amendments, and if they're just doing technical
- 3 amendments, that doesn't mean they have to look at it
- 4 and approve the whole thing.
- 5 MR. RHODES: No, Mr. Chief Justice, if they
- 6 wanted to get rid of Thermtron they could have done it
- 7 in a very direct way.
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, that's right, but
- 9 what if we want to get rid of it?
- 10 (Laughter.)
- MR. RHODES: I can't suggest what the Court
- 12 might finally decide other than to say that -- that,
- 13 again, the circuit courts of appeal have uniformly
- 14 applied this. They seem to be --
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, they don't
- 16 have a choice, right? They can't say, I don't like the
- 17 Supreme Court rule so I'm not going to apply it, other
- 18 than the Federal Circuit.
- 19 (Laughter.)
- 20 MR. RHODES: Actually, Mr. Chief Justice,
- 21 that was going to be my next point, about the Federal
- 22 Circuit, but -- it does, again, provide a workable
- 23 framework for dealing with these issues, and it seems to
- 24 be a very large departure to go back and wipe out the
- 25 last 30 years of case law that has been developed to

- 1 handle these issues. It would be a large departure.
- If there's no other questions, I'll reserve
- 3 the remainder of my time for rebuttal.
- 4 JUSTICE STEVENS: Let me just make one
- 5 comment on the large departure: Would it be a large
- 6 departure if we just said, in the very narrow category
- 7 of cases where there has been a remand on the basis of
- 8 -- the district judge doesn't want to exercise
- 9 supplementary jurisdiction over State law claims, that's
- 10 not appealable, period? Just say that's a slight
- 11 exception from Thermtron?
- 12 MR. RHODES: Well, Mr. Chief Justice --
- 13 sorry -- Justice Stevens, that would be an exception
- 14 under Thermtron that doesn't seem to be called for
- 15 because the way it's been interpreted, it has to be --
- 16 and the way even the amendments in '88 and again in '96
- 17 -- it's only barred if it's for a lack of subject matter
- 18 jurisdiction, and plainly here a discretionary remand is
- 19 not for that basis.
- JUSTICE STEVENS: They're not amendments of
- 21 subsection (d), and subsection (d) is what has the
- 22 language that really reads right on this case.
- MR. RHODES: Well, I think the other -- the
- 24 other problem with that is the whole doctrine of -- of
- 25 supplemental jurisdiction that was first laid out in

- 1 Carnegie-Mellon and United Mine Workers, where the
- 2 difference between remands under 1367(c) seem not to
- 3 overlap with the remands under 1447(d) and 1441. So if
- 4 we made that an exception and we pulled this into
- 5 1447(d), it -- I'm not sure what the consequences would
- 6 be from doing that.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 8 Mr. Allison.
- 9 ORAL ARGUMENT OF THEODORE S. ALLISON
- 10 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS
- 11 MR. ALLISON: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
- 12 please the Court:
- 13 Let me begin with Petitioner's counsel's
- 14 last remark, and that is that we don't know what the
- 15 consequences would be, except that we do know that by
- 16 applying the review bar to supplemental jurisdiction
- 17 remands, it would bring us closer to achieving the
- 18 purpose that has been expressed in the statutes of
- 19 Congress since 1887.
- I know that the Court is familiar with the
- 21 late Chief Justice Rehnquist's dissenting opinion when
- 22 he was an Associate Justice in the Thermtron case, and
- 23 Justice Rehnquist at that time wrote that there had been
- 24 no cases since the review bar was put into place in 1887
- 25 -- no cases where exceptions to review had been

- 1 recognized. He believed that it was a plenary bar on
- 2 review.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But that was a dissenting
- 4 opinion, and that was how many years ago? How many
- 5 years?
- 6 MR. ALLISON: Justice Ginsburg, it -- it was
- 7 a dissenting opinion, and it was in 1976, and we
- 8 certainly would not cite it as authoritative except for
- 9 our confidence in Justice Rehnquist's review of the law
- 10 as it existed at that time.
- 11 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you have a majority
- 12 rationale that says, although 1447(d) reads in absolute
- 13 terms, in fact the only remands that it -- that it
- 14 covers are those based on a defect in the removal or
- 15 lack of subject matter jurisdiction. So you can't --
- 16 you can't say, well, Thermtron had a result that we can
- 17 limit to Thermtron's own unusual facts, because the
- 18 Court gave a rationale. I mean, courts give reasons for
- 19 what they do. And the Court drastically limited 1447(d)
- when it said 1447(d) has to be read consonant with
- 21 1447(c), and 1447(c) deals with only two kinds of
- 22 remands, one for defective removal and the other for
- 23 lack of subject matter jurisdiction.
- MR. ALLISON: That is -- that is correct,
- 25 Justice Ginsburg. And, in fact, to harken to your

- 1 earlier question, to Your Honor's earlier question, we
- 2 are not asking for Thermtron to be overruled, but I
- 3 think, in effect, to be updated.
- 4 The Court in Thermtron did give a rationale,
- 5 and the rationale that it gave was that it viewed -- the
- 6 opinion for the Court by Justice White -- viewed 1447(c)
- 7 as being the sole source of Federal remand power. And
- 8 as the Court noticed in the ensuing 30, 40 -- excuse
- 9 me -- yes, 40-odd years, there have been a number of
- 10 other sources of remand power recognized.
- 11 And we see no reason why the holding in
- 12 Thermtron should not be overruled but be updated to
- 13 recognize that -- that the spirit of what the Court held
- in that case would be served and would be harmonized
- 15 with the review bar as it has existed lo these 120
- 16 odd-years, would be served by expanding the -- excuse
- 17 me, contracting the reach of Thermtron so that it is not
- 18 simply 1447(c) remands, but any remand authorized by
- 19 statute.
- 20 JUSTICE SOUTER: Okay. But no matter -- no
- 21 matter what adjective or what verb you use, that's
- 22 overruling a very clear rule of Thermtron. And we
- 23 normally operate on a theory that when a conventional
- 24 statute is construed by this Court, it stays construed
- 25 until Congress changes it.

- 1 And I don't -- I don't see how you can
- 2 follow the line of reasoning that you're proposing, even
- 3 though you talk about updating and harmonizing, without
- 4 violating that basic stare decisis rule.
- 5 MR. ALLISON: It's -- it's an essential
- 6 question, Justice Souter. And I think the way we
- 7 harmonize it is to say that Thermtron has indeed been
- 8 pared back by the Court's subsequent decisions. And, of
- 9 course, it is our second argument that the Court do
- 10 something with the rule in Thermtron.
- 11 Our primary argument gets to the question of
- 12 the statutory language and whether a Cohill remand falls
- 13 within it. But our secondary argument is to say,
- 14 certainly, it's well recognized that Cohill disapproved
- 15 and pared down that portion of Thermtron that held that
- 16 the only remand power is the remand power expressed in
- 17 1447(c).
- 18 In a -- in a later case, in Quackenbush, the
- 19 question of whether mandamus or appeal was the
- 20 appropriate vehicle for challenging remand orders. And
- 21 in that case, again, the Court said that we are -- we
- 22 are disavowing Thermtron's sweeping statement that
- 23 mandamus is the only vehicle for challenging a remand
- 24 order.
- 25 JUSTICE SOUTER: We did -- we did not

- 1 disavow the relationship between (c) and (d).
- 2 MR. ALLISON: Indeed, the Court did not.
- 3 And we suggest again only -- it is only a suggestion in
- 4 our brief that the Court might wish to look at the
- 5 ensuing history since Thermtron and make a similar
- 6 limiting statement that recognizes that a lot of remand
- 7 authority has been established since Thermtron in a
- 8 number of statutes and by, of course -- by the Court's
- 9 holding in Cohill.
- 10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What in addition to the
- 11 civil rights provision?
- MR. ALLISON: Well, indeed in Things
- 13 Remembered, the Court was considering whether a 1447 --
- 14 whether 1447's review bar applied to a remand under
- 15 1452. 1452 is another statute that deals with remands
- in the context of cases associated with bankruptcy
- 17 issues. And in that case, there was a remand for
- 18 failing to follow a removal procedure, and the Court
- 19 held, citing -- citing Rice, United States versus Rice,
- 20 based on Congress's awareness of the universality of the
- 21 review ban, that when another statute comes into place
- 22 that provides for remand, the review bar applies whether
- 23 or not -- of course --
- 24 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Then that's a specific
- 25 statute that would prevail over the general provision.

1 MR. ALLISON: It's a little bit -- Justice 2 Ginsburg, a little bit different than the Court's 3 decision in Osborn, in which the much more specific 4 Westfall Act Provision was held to prevail over 1447. 5 In Things Remembered, it was simply the fact 6 that the review bar was held to apply to a remand, even 7 according -- under another statute, and, of course, recognizing that there are now other statutory bases for 8 remand. The interesting thing about 1452 -- and Justice 9 10 Ginsburg, I believe that you wrote the concurrence on 11 this -- is that 1452 provides for remand on any equitable ground and that such remands are not subject 12 13 to review by appeal or otherwise. 14 So 1452, again, expresses, I think, a trend in the thinking of Congress, if there is such a thing as 15 16 the thinking of Congress, that -- that the review bar 17 will be expanded and will even include such 18 discretionary decisions by a district court as any 19 equitable ground. 20 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But Things Remembered, I 21 think, was raised very carefully, just to say that the question that's before the Court now has not been 22 23 decided before, the precise question here --24 MR. ALLISON: Yes.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- of discretionary

25

1 remand? 2 MR. ALLISON: That is --3 JUSTICE GINSBURG: So I think -- I looked 4 again at Things Remembered, and it turned out to be just 5 as I remembered it --6 (Laughter.) 7 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- that it was neutral, 8 colorless. It just said we haven't been confronted with this issue. And I think Powerex said the same thing, 9 although it said it in more definite terms -- it is far 10 from clear. 11 MR. ALLISON: That is true, and that is what 12 13 the Federal Circuit said -- meant when it said that 14 Powerex made the question precedential. Because, 15 certainly, if Things Remembered had decided the issue 16 that's before the Court today, I think the issue 17 wouldn't be before the Court today. And that, of 18 course, is why we're here. 19 But the Thermtron -- the Thermtron issue really is our second argument, and it -- it is a very 20 21 gentle argument that the Court -- and if the Court 22 certainly wishes to continue discussing that, that is --23 that is very profitable for what we're doing here today. 24 But the first argument is that, harkening back to your original questions, Justice Ginsburg, why 25

- 1 shouldn't a remand when only State law claims remain in
- 2 a case, as in Cohill and as in 1367(c)(3) -- why should
- 3 that not come within the language of 1447(c), what I'll
- 4 call the jurisdictional clause, because it clearly is a
- 5 matter that is only of concern to State courts? And I
- 6 think that the Court in United Mine Workers v. Gibbs
- 7 made clear that when all State -- all the Federal claims
- 8 have left the case and only State law claims remain,
- 9 that it's almost presumptive that those should be sent
- 10 back --
- 11 JUSTICE STEVENS: Yes, but your opponent's
- 12 argument is that the -- the claims that remain do
- 13 include a Federal claim.
- 14 MR. ALLISON: That's true, Justice Stevens.
- 15 That is his argument, and I think what's important about
- 16 that argument is the inconsistency it sets up. It
- 17 essentially casts a net that draws in these supplemental
- 18 jurisdiction cases. And what the net does is it allows
- 19 the courts of appeals to review some artful pleading
- 20 issues, which is essentially what we have here. We have
- 21 State law claims, and our opponents are suggesting that
- 22 these are, in fact, disguised Federal claims that must
- 23 be heard in Federal court.
- 24 JUSTICE STEVENS: What about the ruling on
- 25 the RICO claim itself? That was clearly a Federal

- 1 issue.
- 2 MR. ALLISON: Yes. The RICO claim was
- 3 what -- was what gave the district court jurisdiction
- 4 over the case in the first place. And it's interesting
- 5 that in the -- in the district court's decision, it made
- 6 me think -- it made me think a little bit of the Waco
- 7 case, because in the district court's decision, the
- 8 district court very clearly said, first, I have no
- 9 jurisdiction over these State law claims, and I'm going
- 10 to remand them, and now I will turn to the RICO claim
- 11 which creates a conundrum that I'm not sure --
- 12 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Where did the -- maybe
- 13 the district judge didn't say that. Maybe you can point
- 14 me to the place where it did. But if it did say it,
- 15 it's flatly wrong, because there is -- that's what
- 16 supplemental jurisdiction is. It's says you have
- 17 jurisdiction. It's a huge difference between you have
- 18 no jurisdiction, you are powerless --
- MR. ALLISON: Yes.
- 20 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- and you have power,
- 21 but it's up to you to exercise it or not.
- MR. ALLISON: Justice Ginsburg, that's why
- 23 we didn't -- we didn't press that point because I think
- 24 -- I think that even we can see that the court exercised
- 25 its jurisdiction to decide and dismiss the RICO claim,

- 1 although it's reminiscent of -- of -- of the decision
- 2 in Kircher --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: It -- it wasn't a
- 4 discretionary decision about RICO. RICO -- there was no
- 5 Federal claim stated. That's out of it.
- 6 MR. ALLISON: Right.
- 7 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What the district court
- 8 has jurisdiction over are the supplemental claims, which
- 9 it can choose not to exercise, but it can say, "I don't
- 10 have jurisdiction, because Congress has given
- 11 supplemental jurisdiction but then left it to the court
- 12 to remand on stated conditions.
- But you -- you seem to conflate the absence
- 14 of subject matter jurisdiction with a discretionary
- 15 decision not to exercise subject matter jurisdiction
- 16 that the court undoubtedly has.
- 17 MR. ALLISON: Well, Justice Ginsburg, I have
- 18 made every effort not to conflate those two -- those two
- 19 concepts, and in fact we did say that when -- when a
- 20 court acquires supplemental jurisdiction in a case, that
- 21 that is a species of subject matter jurisdiction. At
- 22 that point -- as the Court held in City of Chicago v.
- 23 International College of Surgeons. At that point the
- 24 court does have a mandatory discretion to -- or
- 25 mandatory jurisdiction to exercise power over the entire

- 1 Article III case.
- 2 But we then argue when the Federal claims
- 3 leave, the case that jurisdiction changes. That
- 4 jurisdiction changes from a mandatory one that the
- 5 Court, as in Thermtron, would certainly be concerned if
- 6 a district court abjured its jurisdiction that's
- 7 mandatory. But it changes by operation of 1367 from
- 8 mandatory to discretionary. And when Congress passed
- 9 1367 in 1990, Congress intended to codify the existing
- 10 law right up through Cohill on the subject of
- 11 supplemental jurisdiction, combining ancillary and
- 12 pendent in the --
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So your idea is
- 14 there is jurisdiction, but when the Federal claims fall
- 15 out, then there's no jurisdiction?
- 16 MR. ALLISON: Yes, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay, but that seems
- 18 to me to echo the fundamental misperception that if you
- 19 have Federal jurisdiction based on a particular event --
- 20 let's say, if you're dumping chemicals in the water,
- 21 that gives you a Federal cause of action; you have
- 22 Federal jurisdiction; there's a trial. It turns out you
- 23 weren't dumping chemicals -- you don't then say, there
- 24 was no jurisdiction; there was jurisdiction before, but
- 25 once the finding is made that the facts didn't support

- 1 it, then there was no jurisdiction. You say, there was
- 2 jurisdiction all the time, and you lose.
- 3 MR. ALLISON: There was -- there was indeed
- 4 jurisdiction. And what we argue is that the nature of
- 5 the change, when it goes from mandatory, the concern of
- 6 Thermtron, to discretionary, which gives -- virtually
- 7 pushes out of the Federal court to the State courts
- 8 anytime up until trial -- the nature of that
- 9 jurisdiction changes, and we believe that that is not
- 10 what Congress intended by the words "subject matter
- 11 jurisdiction" in 1447(c).
- 12 So if we come back to the words of the
- 13 statute, the words of the statute should be construed
- 14 broadly in order to serve the purposes of -- of remand.
- 15 The Court has made clear that concerns of comity and
- 16 federalism say that we should construe 1447 in favor of
- 17 remand, and I believe that that should extend to the
- 18 concept of the whole delay and shuttling.
- 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But then -- then what you
- 20 are doing is that you are using the label "subject
- 21 matter jurisdiction" in a way that seems to me, that is,
- 22 there are many categories that could be ambiguous at the
- 23 edges, but not subject matter jurisdiction. Subject
- 24 matter jurisdiction means, court, you have no power,
- 25 period. There's no diversity, there's no Federal

- 1 question, there's no other basis for the Federal court
- 2 to exercise jurisdiction. And to say, well, we can
- 3 extend the label "subject matter jurisdiction" to
- 4 include a case where the district court chooses not to
- 5 hear certain claims, even though it has jurisdiction
- 6 over them, I think is a -- is a -- a misapplication of
- 7 the notion subject matter jurisdiction.
- 8 MR. ALLISON: It is -- it is a difficult --
- 9 a difficult conundrum. I think maybe all conundra are
- 10 difficult, but this one particularly. And, Justice
- 11 Ginsburg, in the opinion that you wrote for the Court in
- 12 the Arbaugh case, you very clearly pointed out that the
- word "jurisdiction" is used in a variety of ways by
- 14 legal scholars, by --
- 15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Yes, but not subject
- 16 matter jurisdiction. Jurisdiction is personal
- 17 jurisdiction, subject matter jurisdiction. What I did
- 18 in Arbaugh was to explain that all kinds of things, like
- 19 time limits on when you can sue, have been labeled
- 20 jurisdictional and mandatory when in fact they are not.
- 21 They are simply statutes of limitation.
- 22 MR. ALLISON: That -- that is correct, but
- 23 that's the same -- that is the nature -- that's the
- 24 nature of the problems that the Court confronted in
- 25 Kircher and Powerex. Again, this is by analogy only.

- 1 We are not concerned about -- about labels like that, if
- 2 the district court believed that it was remanding the
- 3 case because it lacked jurisdiction.
- 4 But I'm coming back now to subject matter
- 5 jurisdiction, and I have found no case in this Court
- 6 that has given a definition -- City of Chicago with its
- 7 mandatory language was the closest I was able to find.
- 8 The Koffski case, out of the Seventh
- 9 Circuit, is the one case I was able to find from a
- 10 higher court that said that supplemental jurisdiction is
- 11 technically a form of subject matter jurisdiction. And
- 12 what we argue --
- 13 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Why is it only technical?
- 14 It says, court, you can exercise power. Subject matter
- 15 jurisdiction is the power that the court has to hear a
- 16 given controversy, and under supplemental jurisdiction,
- 17 there is undoubted power in the district court to hear
- 18 those claims.
- 19 MR. ALLISON: In its -- certainly, in its, I
- 20 think -- in its -- in its textbook sense, that is what
- 21 subject matter -- when the world is divided between
- 22 subject matter and personal and then the third,
- 23 territorial, which I think is a relation -- has a
- 24 relation to personal -- when the world is divided along
- 25 those lines, then subject matter takes on the broadest

- 1 possible meaning, but we have conflicting broad
- 2 policies. On the one hand, we have a broad definition
- 3 of subject matter definition; on the other hand, we have
- 4 a statute that should be construed to favor remand at
- 5 almost all lawful costs.
- And -- and subject matter, if we step back
- 7 from our -- our dichotomy, personal and subject matter,
- 8 subject matter also means, as -- as Your Honor said at
- 9 the beginning of this argument, something that is --
- 10 that is a subject with which the Federal courts should
- 11 be concerned, and on which they should expend their
- 12 resources. And we now have the circuit courts hearing
- 13 appeals from decisions -- discretionary decisions
- 14 because they are technically within the realm of subject
- 15 matter jurisdiction.
- 16 But clearly, State law claims are not the
- 17 subject matter with which the Federal courts should
- 18 routinely be concerned, and that's why United Mine
- 19 Workers -- and Cohill echoed it -- said, these claims
- 20 should be sent back, and Cohill even -- both cases even
- 21 said that the propriety of remanding the claims should
- 22 be reviewed at every stage in the litigation. That --
- 23 that I think presents us a pretty strong policy by this
- 24 Court that remand is to be indulged at almost any lawful
- 25 cost.

1 JUSTICE GINSBURG: You -- you put it in 2 terms in your brief -- if I understood your position 3 correctly -- yes, there is subject matter jurisdiction 4 over supplemental claims, but once the district court 5 chooses not to exercise that jurisdiction, it -- and these were the words you used -- "it divests itself of 6 7 jurisdiction." 8 MR. ALLISON: Yes. The -- the argument -and I was attempting to make a technical argument in the 9 10 brief, and I think today I'm speaking in slightly more 11 global terms -- but the technical argument is that when a district court makes a decision, in the words of 12 13 Gibbs, that it would be inappropriate to exercise 14 jurisdiction over those claims, then the claims are to 15 be remanded --16 JUSTICE ALITO: What if the court changes 17 its mind? What if it grants a motion for 18 reconsideration? Then it reacquires the jurisdiction? 19 MR. ALLISON: Well, Justice Alito, the question of whether it changes its mind I think is 20 21 intricately bound up in this question of reviewability because the cases that we found that -- that talked 22 23 about reconsideration talked about reconsideration only because there was the potential for review of these 24 25 orders.

1 I think the norm for a remanded case is that 2 the order of remand is entered, and the order of remand is certified and mailed to the State court, and the 3 4 district court no longer has jurisdiction at that point. 5 Now, certainly it could reconsider as it's 6 engaged in its decision process. It could go back and 7 forth, and reconsider before it signs the order. But 8 that's no different than -- than many other cases in which the court can make a discretionary decision that 9 10 it has no jurisdiction. The only --11 JUSTICE GINSBURG: The discretionary --12 JUSTICE SOUTER: But your --13 JUSTICE GINSBURG: The discretionary 14 decision is that it chooses not to hear the case. It's 15 not -- there's no discretion there. There's nothing 16 discretionary about saying we have no jurisdiction. "We 17 have no jurisdiction" means we have no power. So the --18 the two are just at odds with each other. No power, yes 19 power, but we choose not to exercise it. 20 MR. ALLISON: And I think -- I think that 21 the -- again, the purpose of the review bar as it's been 22 expressed for over a hundred years has been to trust 23 district judges to make these decisions and then get the 24 case where it needs to be to be resolved on its merits. 25 So to say that the court chooses not to hear the case,

- 1 it -- it suggests something a little bit less gray than
- 2 the decision that I believe the court would make when it
- 3 decides that it's inappropriate to hear the case, in the
- 4 words of Gibbs.
- 5 JUSTICE SOUTER: You -- you think that
- 6 choosing not to hear is distinguishable from a decision
- 7 that it is inappropriate to hear?
- 8 MR. ALLISON: I -- I meant only to suggest
- 9 that it is not a -- it is not a choice. It's a -- it is
- 10 not an ill-considered choice. Certainly, there's a
- 11 choice involved in the decision that it would be
- 12 inappropriate. But I don't see -- and I -- I wanted to
- 13 resist a rhetorical question, but then I don't see how
- 14 anyone could say when a court is faced with -- with only
- 15 State-law claims that it could either decide or not, and
- 16 it decides it would be inappropriate to retain
- 17 jurisdiction over those claims, that somehow it should
- 18 retain jurisdiction over those claims.
- 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, that would argue
- 20 for a highly deferential standard of review, respecting
- 21 the district judge's determination that it's not what --
- 22 it hasn't invested any time in these questions, and it
- 23 shouldn't because they are purely State-law questions.
- 24 That's -- but that's something quite different from --
- 25 from a -- the -- the terminology that you used is

- 1 troublesome because a court doesn't have power to divest
- 2 itself of jurisdiction.
- If Congress gives it jurisdiction, it has
- 4 it, and the court can't divest itself of that. It can,
- 5 if Congress permits it, decline to exercise
- 6 jurisdiction, but a court is not capable of divesting
- 7 itself of jurisdiction.
- 8 MR. ALLISON: I believe -- well -- and --
- 9 and this is a mechanical argument, but I believe that
- 10 when the court makes the decision and then -- and then
- 11 executes the remand, that that is divesting itself of
- 12 jurisdiction. And perhaps it was -- perhaps it was a
- 13 poor -- a poor word choice.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: But even -- even on your
- 15 analysis it seems to me that the -- the cart is before
- 16 the horse, because it is -- it is not remanding because
- 17 it does not have jurisdiction. What you are saying is
- 18 that after it remands, it loses jurisdiction, and those
- 19 are two very distinct categories.
- 20 The -- the premise for the declaration that
- 21 it does not have jurisdiction is a premise that even on
- 22 your argument does not arise until following remand. So
- 23 there's no way you can fit it, it seems to me, into the
- 24 category of -- of remanding because at the point of
- 25 deciding to remand it has no jurisdiction. That, in

- 1 fact, is false.
- MR. ALLISON: It is simply a question, I
- 3 think, of -- of the choice of the word "divest" and what
- 4 that means. I would -- I would analogize in order to
- 5 perhaps make it seem more -- more accurate -- I would
- 6 analogize to what a district court now can do under
- 7 section 1447(e), where it makes a decision applying the
- 8 law, using its discretion, to allow joinder of a
- 9 nondiverse party that would then destroy diversity and
- 10 require the case to be remanded.
- 11 And I would say in that case that the court
- 12 makes a decision that divests it of jurisdiction, and it
- is very technical to say that -- that, yes, it lacks
- 14 jurisdiction as soon as it enters the order admitting
- 15 that party to the case. But that may very well be the
- 16 same order that remands the case to the State court.
- But I -- I do -- I do see that there is
- 18 power. And if the case is going to turn on power, as
- 19 the Court -- some of the language in Powerex suggested
- 20 that it might, then I don't know that we -- I don't know
- 21 that we make much headway.
- But I -- I see 1447(c), lacks subject
- 23 matter jurisdiction, as being broad enough to
- 24 comfortably take in the situation where the State-law
- 25 claims, not really within the subject matter of the

Т	district court's power, are determined inappropriate for
2	that court to hear and sent back. And it would bring us
3	that much closer to realizing the purpose of the review
4	bar that has existed since 1887, taking a category of
5	cases out of the jurisdiction of the circuit courts.
6	I I had wanted to offer the Court some
7	statistics, as maybe law professors might, about the
8	number of cases that are heard on this type of appeal.
9	I can say that the cases that we found in our footnotes
10	18 through 20 represent something close to the universe
11	of cases in which discretion was found to be abused.
12	And that abuse of discretion is nowhere near as
13	egregious as the legal errors that a district court
14	might commit in making erroneous judgments that it has
15	no jurisdiction which were nonetheless subjected to the
16	review bar in Kircher and Powerex.
17	If there are no further questions
18	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel,
19	MR. ALLISON: I will stop now. Thank
20	you.
21	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you.
22	Mr. Rhodes, you have four minutes remaining.
23	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF GLENN W. RHODES
24	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
25	MR. RHODES: I just had a few quick points

- 1 that I'd like to point out.
- 2 First, I would just like to reiterate that
- 3 when Congress enacted 1367, that gave it Article III
- 4 jurisdiction in those matters, just as 1331 and 1332 do.
- 5 I would also like to reiterate that -- that
- 6 stare decisis should be maintained over this statutory
- 7 interpretation because it has proved to be workable,
- 8 rather than not workable.
- 9 Again, the circuit courts -- even though as
- 10 Mr. Chief Justice has iterated that they have to follow
- 11 this, they have found it to be a workable framework.
- 12 And, again, as the Court expressed in Powerex, they
- 13 agree that in Quackenbush that Thermtron was not
- 14 altered. And Congress has -- has seemingly ratified
- 15 this Court's interpretation in Thermtron, and as it has
- 16 been applied in Quackenbush.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I suppose, though,
- 18 if it would be an abuse of discretion for the district
- 19 court to retain jurisdiction, then maybe there is --
- 20 there never was jurisdiction, right? You said they have
- 21 discretion to exercise or not. Well, if it turns out
- 22 they don't have discretion to exercise -- you know,
- 23 because it's a huge State claim and a tiny Federal claim
- 24 -- why wouldn't that properly be regarded as an absence
- 25 of jurisdiction?

Т	MR. RHODES: My response to that, Mr. Chief
2	Justice, is that until a court decides that it was an
3	abuse of discretion, the district court had jurisdiction
4	under 1367(c) to either exercise that power or not
5	exercise that power.
6	And unless there's any further questions for
7	me, I ask that the this be remanded to the Federal
8	Circuit to decide on the merits of the appeal.
9	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
10	The case is submitted.
11	(Whereupon, at 12:17 p.m., the case in the
12	above-entitle matter was submitted.)
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14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	

A	25:24 26:2,12	24:14 41:16	authorized	belongs 13:23
abdicate 14:17	27:14 28:2,19	applies 14:11	22:18	better 7:3 10:20
	28:22 29:6,17	16:8 24:22	avoid 13:6,7	big 15:4,8
<b>ability</b> 9:13	30:16 31:3	apply 12:13	awareness 24:20	<b>Bio</b> 1:7 3:4
11:17	32:8,22 33:19	16:16 18:17	a.m 1:14 3:2	<b>bit</b> 14:20 25:1,2
abjured 30:6	35:8,19 36:20	25:6	<b>a.iii</b> 1.14 3.2	28:6 37:1
<b>able</b> 9:14 33:7,9	37:8 38:8 39:2	<b>applying</b> 20:16	В	blue 3:24
above-entitle	40:19	39:7	back 4:23 6:24	<b>bound</b> 35:21
42:12	allow 14:17 39:8		9:11 10:5,15	break 12:25
above-entitled	allows 27:18	appreciate 5:23	10:23,23 13:13	brief 3:24 9:5
1:12		appropriate 23:20	15:17,21 16:11	17:12 24:4
absence 5:11	altered 41:14		18:24 23:8	
29:13 41:24	ambiguous	approve 18:4	26:25 27:10	35:2,10
Absent 4:18	31:22	<b>Arbaugh</b> 32:12	31:12 33:4	bring 20:17 40:2
absolute 14:6	amended 17:14	32:18	34:6,20 36:6	<b>broad</b> 34:1,2
21:12	17:18	areas 12:24	40:2	39:23
abstention	amendments	argue 10:16		broadest 33:25
16:24	18:2,3 19:16	30:2 31:4	ban 6:12 24:21	broadly 31:14
abstention-ba	19:20	33:12 37:19	bankruptcy	Brookshire 9:5
16:24 17:1	analogize 39:4,6	argued 10:11	24:16	Burford 16:25
abuse 6:14 7:20	analogy 32:25	arguing 7:18	bar 3:12,22	busy 14:2,22
9:15 40:12	analysis 5:5	12:10	20:16,24 21:1	16:10
41:18 42:3	38:15	argument 1:13	22:15 24:14,22	<u>C</u>
abused 9:16	ancillary 30:11	2:2,7 3:3,7	25:6,16 36:21	
40:11	<b>answer</b> 6:12 9:4	5:24 20:9 23:9	40:4,16	c 2:1 3:1 14:12
accurate 39:5	15:9	23:11,13 26:20	<b>barred</b> 19:17	24:1
achieving 20:17	anymore 7:24	26:21,24 27:12	based 3:18,25	Cal 1:16
acquires 29:20	anytime 31:8	27:15,16 34:9	4:2,6,11,13 5:5	call 8:20 27:4
Act 25:4	anyway 14:7	35:8,9,11 38:9	5:6 15:16	called 19:14
action 5:3 6:7,7	apparently 6:13	38:22 40:23	16:24 21:14	capable 38:6
30:21	<b>appeal</b> 15:4,5,11	<b>arose</b> 6:13 11:8	24:20 30:19	carefully 25:21
addition 24:10	15:15,22 18:13	<b>artful</b> 27:19	bases 25:8	Carlsbad 1:3
address 6:12	23:19 25:13	Article 5:2	basic 23:4	3:4
adjective 22:21	40:8 42:8	11:21 30:1	basically 9:9	Carnegie-Mel
admitting 39:14	appealable	41:3	<b>basis</b> 5:8 7:1,9	4:23 20:1
adopted 15:23	19:10	asked 16:2,2,3	7:17 9:14	<b>cart</b> 38:15
ago 21:4	appealed 10:13	17:6	11:12 19:7,19	case 3:4,11,14
agree 5:16 6:10	<b>appeals</b> 8:7 9:1	asking 22:2	32:1	4:6,9,16,18,23
41:13	27:19 34:13	asserted 7:7	beginning 34:9	4:25 5:5 6:15
agreed 17:20	APPEARAN	Associate 20:22	<b>behalf</b> 1:16,18	6:17,20,23 7:1
AL 1:7	1:15	associated 24:16	2:4,6,9 3:8	7:6,8,13,15,24
<b>Alito</b> 17:13	appellate 8:14	assuming 8:8	20:10 40:24	8:23,25 9:5,5
35:16,19	applicable 3:12	attempting 35:9	believe 25:10	9:23,24 10:3,8
allege 11:11	4:5	attention 17:3	31:9,17 37:2	11:6 12:1,9,20
Allison 1:18 2:5	applications	17:22	38:8,9	12:22 13:22,23
20:8,9,11 21:6	11:15,18	authoritative	believed 21:1	14:1 16:25
21:24 23:5	applied 11:25	21:8	33:2	17:14 18:25
24:2,12 25:1	15:11 18:14	authority 24:7	belong 7:25	19:22 20:22
24.2,12 23.1	10.11 10.11			
		•	•	•

	•	<u> </u>	1	•
22:14 23:18,21	20:7,11,21	clause 27:4	confronted 26:8	40:18 42:9
24:17 27:2,8	30:13,16,17	<b>clear</b> 13:17 16:1	32:24	counsel's 20:13
28:4,7 29:20	40:18,21 41:10	22:22 26:11	confusing 6:11	<b>count</b> 7:12
30:1,3 32:4,12	41:17 42:1,9	27:7 31:15	Congress 4:8	<b>course</b> 23:9 24:8
33:3,5,8,9 36:1	choice 18:16	<b>clearly</b> 4:8 6:18	5:25 6:14,21	24:23 25:7
36:14,24,25	37:9,10,11	11:22 27:4,25	8:20 17:14,17	26:18
37:3 39:10,11	38:13 39:3	28:8 32:12	20:19 22:25	<b>court</b> 1:1,13
39:15,16,18	<b>choose</b> 6:3 8:1	34:16	25:15,16 29:10	3:10,15,16,19
42:10,11	29:9 36:19	<b>close</b> 40:10	30:8,9 31:10	4:19 5:1,13,17
cases 8:7,13	chooses 32:4	<b>closer</b> 20:17	38:3,5 41:3,14	6:8,18,20,22
13:3 14:11	35:5 36:14,25	40:3	Congress's	7:2,2,5,7,10,14
15:14,19 19:7	choosing 37:6	closest 33:7	24:20	7:19 8:1,3,7,11
20:24,25 24:16	<b>circuit</b> 9:6,12	codify 30:9	connection	8:14,20 9:1,6
27:18 34:20	10:3,13,21	Cohill 23:12,14	11:14	9:11,15,18,21
35:22 36:8	15:11,15,21,22	24:9 27:2	consequences	9:22 10:4,7,9
40:5,8,9,11	18:13,18,22	30:10 34:19,20	20:5,15	10:12,15,17,17
casts 27:17	26:13 33:9	College 29:23	considering	10:19,23,24
categories 31:22	34:12 40:5	colorless 26:8	24:13	11:23 12:23
38:19	41:9 42:8	combining	consistent 5:2	13:7,19,24,25
category 12:12	Circuit's 5:5	30:11	consonant 21:20	14:1,4,4,7,13
19:6 38:24	cite 21:8	come 27:3 31:12	construction	14:17,21 15:18
40:4	citing 24:19,19	comes 24:21	9:14 17:20	16:11,25 17:2
cause 5:3 30:21	City 29:22 33:6	comfortably	construe 14:16	17:7 18:11,17
certain 32:5	civil 24:11	39:24	31:16	20:12,20 21:18
certainly 12:11	<b>claim</b> 3:16 4:10	coming 33:4	construed 22:24	21:19 22:4,6,8
21:8 23:14	5:1,14 7:7,23	comity 31:15	22:24 31:13	22:13,24 23:9
26:15,22 30:5	8:17,19,24	comment 19:5	34:4	23:21 24:2,4
33:19 36:5	9:10 10:18	commit 40:14	contains 4:10	24:13,18 25:18
37:10	11:12,17,20	complaint 11:9	context 24:16	25:22 26:16,17
certified 36:3	27:13,25 28:2	concentrated	continue 26:22	26:21,21 27:6
challenging	28:10,25 29:5	10:1	contracting	27:23 28:3,8
23:20,23	41:23,23	<b>concept</b> 31:18	22:17	28:24 29:7,11
<b>change</b> 17:16	claimed 11:11	concepts 29:19	controversy	29:16,20,22,24
31:5	11:13,18	concern 16:15	33:16	30:5,6 31:7,15
changes 22:25	claims 3:17 4:10	27:5 31:5	conundra 32:9	31:24 32:1,4
30:3,4,7 31:9	4:25 7:16,23	concerned 30:5	conundrum	32:11,24 33:2
35:16,20	7:25 8:23 9:7	33:1 34:11,18	28:11 32:9	33:5,10,14,15
chaos 12:24	9:25 10:2,10	concerns 31:15	conventional	33:17 34:24
chemicals 30:20	11:10 19:9	concurrence	22:23	35:4,12,16
30:23	27:1,7,8,12,21	25:10	correct 12:3	36:3,4,9,25
Chicago 29:22	27:22 28:9	conditions 29:12	16:4 21:24	37:2,14 38:1,4
33:6	29:8 30:2,14	conferred 3:19	32:22	38:6,10 39:6
Chief 3:3,9	32:5 33:18	4:8	correctly 35:3	39:11,16,19
13:10 14:19,25	34:16,19,21	confidence 21:9	cost 34:25	40:2,6,13
		conflate 29:13	costs 34:25	
15:2 17:5,21	35:4,14,14	29:18	costs 34:5 couched 11:10	41:12,19 42:2 42:3
17:25 18:5,15	37:15,17,18 39:25		coursel 20:7	courts 4:9 13:1
18:20 19:12	37.43	conflicting 34:1	Counsel 20: /	Courts 4.9 13.1
	I	I	l	l

	1	1	1	1
15:11,15,21	38:5	3:13 6:2 7:17	<b>doing</b> 18:2 20:6	established 24:7
18:13 21:18	declining 15:16	8:5 15:17	26:23 31:20	<b>ET</b> 1:7
27:5,19 31:7	<b>defect</b> 4:2 21:14	19:18 25:18,25	drastically	<b>eve</b> 9:9
34:10,12,17	defective 21:22	29:4,14 30:8	21:19	<b>event</b> 30:19
40:5 41:9	defendant 6:19	31:6 34:13	draws 27:17	exact 14:15
court's 3:13	7:8	36:9,11,13,16	dress 13:2,11,12	example 6:17
4:11,13,16,22	defer 8:8	discussing 26:22	<b>dump</b> 14:1	10:11
16:16,17 17:19	deferential	disguised 27:22	dumping 30:20	exception 19:11
23:8 24:8 25:2	37:20	dismiss 28:25	30:23	19:13 20:4
28:5,7 40:1	definite 26:10	dismissed 3:15	<b>D.C</b> 1:9,18	exceptions
41:15	definitely 9:16	7:12 8:24		20:25
covered 9:22	<b>definition</b> 33:6	dispositive 9:9	<b>E</b>	exclusive 10:12
covers 21:14	34:2,3	dispute 11:1	<b>E</b> 2:1 3:1,1	10:19 11:22
creates 28:11	delay 6:15,19	disputed 5:12	earlier 15:3 22:1	exclusivity
crowded 13:22	31:18	disputing 11:5	22:1	10:21
	departure 15:20	dissenting 20:21	echo 30:18	excuse 22:8,16
D	18:24 19:1,5,6	21:3,7	<b>echoed</b> 34:19	executes 38:11
<b>d</b> 3:1 5:20 14:12	destroy 39:9	distinct 38:19	<b>edges</b> 31:23	exercise 3:14
19:21,21 24:1	determination	distinguish 16:7	effect 22:3	4:12,17,19,20
days 4:4	37:21	distinguishable	<b>effort</b> 29:18	4:20 6:3 7:15
dealing 18:23	determined 40:1	37:6	egregious 40:13	15:17 19:8
deals 21:21	developed 18:25	<b>district</b> 3:13,15	either 4:15 5:18	28:21 29:9,15
24:15	dichotomy 34:7	3:16 4:9,16,19	17:1 37:15	29:25 32:2
decide 18:12	dicta 12:19	5:1,13 7:2,4,11	42:4	33:14 35:5,13
28:25 37:15	difference 20:2	7:14,19,22 8:9	enacted 41:3	36:19 38:5
42:8	28:17	8:10,19 9:6,15	energy 10:5	41:21,22 42:4
decided 7:14	different 6:25	10:9 13:1,7,21	engaged 36:6	42:5
25:23 26:15	10:9 16:9 25:2	14:1,17 19:8	ensuing 22:8	exercised 7:19
decides 12:23	36:8 37:24	25:18 28:3,5,7	24:5	9:6 28:24
37:3,16 42:2	difficult 32:8,9	28:8,13 29:7	entered 36:2	existed 21:10
deciding 38:25	32:10	30:6 32:4 33:2	<b>enters</b> 39:14	22:15 40:4
decision 3:13	direct 18:7	33:17 35:4,12	<b>entire</b> 29:25	existing 30:9
8:5,10,14 12:9	disagree 12:11	36:4,23 37:21	entitled 7:10	exists 4:15
25:3 28:5,7	disagrees 7:2	39:6 40:1,13	entitlement	expanded 25:17
29:1,4,15	disapproved	41:18 42:3	11:20	expanding
35:12 36:6,9	23:14	diversity 6:19	enumerated	22:16
36:14 37:2,6	disavow 24:1	31:25 39:9	8:22	<b>expend</b> 34:11
37:11 38:10	disavowing	divest 38:1,4	equitable 25:12	explain 10:25
39:7,12	23:22	39:3	25:19	32:18
decisions 23:8	discretion 4:11	divesting 38:6	erroneous 40:14	expressed 20:18
25:18 34:13,13	4:20 5:2,22	38:11	error 5:22	23:16 36:22
36:23	7:19,20 8:6,21	divests 35:6	<b>errors</b> 40:13	41:12
decisis 23:4 41:6	9:15,16 29:24	39:12	<b>ESQ</b> 1:16,18 2:3	expresses 6:18
declaration	36:15 39:8	divide 15:8	2:5,8	25:14
11:13 38:20	40:11,12 41:18	<b>divided</b> 33:21,24	essential 23:5	expressly 17:10
decline 3:13	41:21,22 42:3	docket 13:22	essentially 27:17	extend 31:17
4:11,17,19,20	discretionary	doctrine 19:24	27:20	32:3

	<b>first</b> 19:25 26:24	<b>give</b> 9:4 15:13	40:2	interesting 25:9
face 12:5 13:15	28:4,8 41:2	21:18 22:4	heard 27:23	28:4
faced 37:14	<b>fit</b> 17:16 38:23	given 17:17	40:8	interfere 8:15
fact 14:13 17:2	flatly 28:15	29:10 33:6,16	hearing 34:12	International
17:17 21:13,25	<b>follow</b> 23:2	gives 8:21 30:21	held 22:13 23:15	29:23
25:5 27:22	24:18 41:10	31:6 38:3	24:19 25:4,6	interpretation
29:19 32:20	following 38:22	<b>GLENN</b> 1:16	29:22	15:13 16:17
39:1	footnotes 40:9	2:3,8 3:7 40:23	HIF 1:7 3:4	41:7,15
facts 16:8 21:17	<b>form</b> 33:11	<b>global</b> 35:11	<b>higher</b> 33:10	interpreted
30:25	<b>forth</b> 3:23 36:7	<b>go</b> 10:23 14:5	<b>highly</b> 37:20	19:15
failing 24:18	<b>found</b> 15:12	15:21 18:24	history 24:5	intricately 35:21
<b>fall</b> 5:19 17:1	16:25 33:5	36:6	holding 14:15	invention 11:2,4
30:14	35:22 40:9,11	goes 31:5	22:11 24:9	inventors 11:12
falls 11:19 23:12	41:11	<b>going</b> 7:5,15	<b>Honor</b> 34:8	11:13,17,21
false 39:1	four 40:22	8:13 10:5	Honor's 22:1	inventorship
falsely 11:11,12	framework	12:14 13:4	horse 38:16	10:11,22 11:20
familiar 20:20	15:13,19,23	14:8,9,10,16	huge 28:17	invested 37:22
far 26:10	18:23 41:11	14:20,22 16:10	41:23	investment 10:4
<b>favor</b> 31:16 34:4	Francisco 1:16	18:17,21 28:9	hundred 36:22	involved 14:21
February 1:10	frivolous 6:22	39:18		16:14 37:11
Federal 3:15	7:9	good-bye 8:1	I	<b>issue</b> 3:11 6:19
4:10,25 5:4	fundamental	grants 35:17	idea 30:13	10:14,22 11:16
6:18,20,22 7:1	5:10 30:18	grave 5:22	<b>III</b> 5:2 30:1 41:3	17:4 26:9,15
7:7,10,12,24	further 40:17	<b>gray</b> 37:1	ill-considered	26:16,19 28:1
8:3,11,17 9:7	42:6	ground 9:21	37:10	<b>issues</b> 18:23
9:10,22 10:4,7		25:12,19	immune 6:9	19:1 24:17
10:12,13,19,21	G	<b>grounds</b> 3:22,25	implicit 17:7	27:20
11:1,6,7,23	G 3:1	12:16	implies 8:6	iterated 41:10
15:22 18:18,21	general 24:25		important 14:2	
22:7 26:13	gentle 26:21	<u>H</u>	27:15	<u>J</u>
27:7,13,22,23	Gibbs 4:24 27:6	Haley 4:22	inappropriate	joinder 39:8
27:25 29:5	35:13 37:4	hand 34:2,3	35:13 37:3,7	judge 6:6 7:11
30:2,14,19,21	<b>Ginsburg</b> 5:9,16		37:12,16 40:1	7:22 8:21 9:25
30:22 31:7,25	5:21 6:11 7:21	19:1	include 25:17	13:21 16:10
32:1 34:10,17	8:15,16 9:3,20	harken 21:25	27:13 32:4	19:8 28:13
41:23 42:7	10:25 13:9,16	harkening 26:24	inconsistency	judges 8:9 36:23
federalism	15:3,25 16:5	harmonize 23:7	27:16	judge's 8:10
31:16	16:15 21:3,6	harmonized	inconsistent 5:4	37:21
fell 11:22	21:11,25 24:10	22:14	independent 5:7	judgment 8:17
<b>Fifth</b> 9:6,12 10:3	24:24 25:2,10	harmonizing	indulged 34:24	9:2
<b>filed</b> 4:4 6:17	25:20,25 26:3	23:3	infringement	judgments
7:13 11:9,14	26:7,25 28:12	headway 39:21	11:3 <b>inhibit</b> 6:14	40:14
<b>filing</b> 6:15	28:20,22 29:3	hear 3:3 4:16,18 7:15 10:17	intended 30:9	judicial 9:18
finally 18:12	29:7,17 31:19 32:11,15 33:13		31:10	jurisdiction 3:14,18,19 4:1
<b>find</b> 33:7,9	35:1 36:11,13	16:10 32:5 33:15,17 36:14	interest 7:24	' '
<b>finding</b> 30:25	37:19	36:25 37:3,6,7	interest 7:24	4:3,7,8,12,14 4:15,17,21 5:3
0	. , , , ,	1 10.7.1 17.1.10.7	i mieresieu 10.2	1 4.1.2.1/.41.2.3
<b>firm</b> 5:25	37.17	30.25 37.3,0,7		,,
0	37.17	00.20 07.0,0,7		,,

5:7,8,11,14,19         21:11,25 22:6         14:5 19:22         looked 26:3         Mine 4:24 20:1           6:1,8,9 8:5,18         22:20 23:6,25         23:12 27:3         lose 31:2         27:6 34:18           8:19 9:7,17         24:10,24 25:1         33:7 39:19         loses 38:18         minute 6:24           10:12,17,19         25:9,20,25         large 10:4 15:20         lot 6:5 17:21         minutes 40:22           11:23 13:3,21         26:3,7,25         late 20:21         24:6         32:6           19:9,18,25         28:12,20,22         Laughter 17:24         18:10,19 26:6         mailed 36:3         minutes 40:22           20:16 21:15,23         29:3,7,17         18:10,19 26:6         law 3:17 4:10,25         maintained 41:6         majority 21:11         modification           29:8,10,11,14         33:13 35:1,16         9:25 10:10         making 40:14         modify 15:21           29:15,20,21,25         35:19 36:11,12         11:10 18:25         23:19,23         7:13 35:17           30:15,19,22,24         38:14 40:18,21         27:8,21 28:9         30:4,7,8 31:5         7:13 35:17           31:9,11,21,23         42:9         39:8 40:7         30:4,7,8 31:5         32:20 33:7         N           32:7,13,16,16         K         laws 10:22 11:8         <
S:19 9:7,17
10:12,17,19
11:23 13:3,21       26:3,7,25       18:24 19:1,5,5       24:6       misapplication         14:18 15:5       27:11,14,24       28:12,20,22       Laughter 17:24       M       32:6         19:9,18,25       29:3,7,17       18:10,19 26:6       mailed 36:3       30:18         27:18 28:3,9       30:13,16,17       31:19 32:10,15       7:16,23,25       maintained 41:6       modification         29:8,10,11,14       33:13 35:1,16       9:25 10:10       making 40:14       modify 15:21         29:15,20,21,25       35:19 36:11,12       11:10 18:25       23:19,23       motion 4:4 6:15         30:15,19,22,24       38:14 40:18,21       27:8,21 28:9       mandatory       14:18 29:24,25         30:24 31:1,2,4       41:10,17 42:2       39:8 40:7       30:4,7,8 31:5       32:20 33:7       moved 17:3         31:24 32:2,3,5       K       1aws 10:22 11:8       4:1,3,7,13 5:7       N       N2:1,1 3:1         32:17,17 33:3       1ax 10,12
14:18 15:5       27:11,14,24       late 20:21       32:6         19:9,18,25       29:3,7,17       18:10,19 26:6       mailed 36:3       30:18         27:18 28:3,9       30:13,16,17       18:10,19 26:6       maintained 41:6       majority 21:11         29:8,10,11,14       33:13 35:1,16       9:25 10:10       making 40:14       modification         29:15,20,21,25       35:19 36:11,12       11:10 18:25       23:19,23       modify 15:21         30:15,19,22,24       38:14 40:18,21       27:8,21 28:9       mandatory       14:18 29:24,25         30:24 31:1,2,4       41:10,17 42:2       30:10 34:16       30:4,7,8 31:5       30:4,7,8 31:5         31:24 32:2,3,5       42:9       39:8 40:7       30:4,7,8 31:5       30:4,7,8 31:5         32:7,13,16,16       Keep 6:3,6 8:1       laws 10:22 11:8       4:1,3,7,13 5:7       N         N2:1,1 3:1       narrow 19:6
19:9,18,25   29:3,7,17   18:10,19 26:6   law 3:17 4:10,25   29:8,10,11,14   29:15,20,21,25   30:3,4,6,11,14   30:15,19,22,24   30:24 31:1,2,4   31:9,11,21,23   31:24 32:2,3,5   32:7,13,16,16   32:17,17 33:3   keep 6:3,6 8:1
20:16 21:15,23 27:18 28:3,9 28:16,17,18,25 29:8,10,11,14 29:15,20,21,25 30:3,4,6,11,14 30:15,19,22,24 30:24 31:1,2,4 31:24 32:2,3,5 32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3  29:3,7,17 30:13,16,17 30:13,16,17 30:13,16,17 30:13,16,17 30:13,16,17 30:13,16,17 30:10,19 26:6 law 3:17 4:10,25 7:16,23,25 9:25 10:10 11:10 18:25 19:9 21:9 27:1 27:8,21 28:9 30:10 34:16 30:18 maintained 41:6 making 40:14 mandamus 23:19,23 mandatory 14:18 29:24,25 30:4,7,8 31:5 30:18 modification 12:19 modify 15:21 motion 4:4 6:15 7:13 35:17 motions 9:9 motions 9:9
27:18 28:3,9 28:16,17,18,25 29:8,10,11,14 29:15,20,21,25 30:3,4,6,11,14 30:15,19,22,24 30:24 31:1,2,4 31:24 32:2,3,5 32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3  27:18 28:3,9 30:13,16,17 30:13,16,17 31:19 32:10,15 30:13,16,17 31:19 32:10,15 7:16,23,25 7:16,23,25 9:25 10:10 12:19 making 40:14 making 40:14 making 40:14 mandamus 12:19 modification 12:19 modify 15:21 mandamus 23:19,23 mandatory 14:18 29:24,25 30:24,7,8 31:5 30:4,7,8 31:5
28:16,17,18,25 29:8,10,11,14 29:15,20,21,25 30:3,4,6,11,14 30:15,19,22,24 30:24 31:1,2,4 31:19,11,21,23 31:24 32:2,3,5 32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3  31:19 32:10,15 7:16,23,25 9:25 10:10 11:10 18:25 19:9 21:9 27:1 27:8,21 28:9 30:10 34:16 39:8 40:7 14:18 29:24,25 30:4,7,8 31:5 30:4,7,8 31:5 30:4,7,8 31:5 30:4,7,8 31:5 30:4,7,8 31:5 10
29:8,10,11,14 29:15,20,21,25 30:3,4,6,11,14 30:15,19,22,24 30:24 31:1,2,4 31:9,11,21,23 31:24 32:2,3,5 32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3  33:13 35:1,16 35:19 36:11,12 11:10 18:25 19:9 21:9 27:1 27:8,21 28:9 30:10 34:16 39:8 40:7 14:18 29:24,25 30:4,7,8 31:5 30:4,7,8 31:5
29:15,20,21,25 30:3,4,6,11,14 30:15,19,22,24 30:24 31:1,2,4 31:9,11,21,23 31:24 32:2,3,5 32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3  35:19 36:11,12 36:13 37:5,19 38:14 40:18,21 41:10,17 42:2 42:9  30:10 34:16 39:8 40:7 lawful 34:5,24 laws 10:22 11:8    mandamus
30:3,4,6,11,14 30:15,19,22,24 30:24 31:1,2,4 31:9,11,21,23 31:24 32:2,3,5 32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3  36:13 37:5,19 19:9 21:9 27:1 23:19,23 19:9 21:9 27:1 23:19,23 19:9 21:9 27:1 23:19,23 14:18 29:24,25 30:4,7,8 31:5
30:15,19,22,24 30:24 31:1,2,4 31:9,11,21,23 31:24 32:2,3,5 32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3  38:14 40:18,21 41:10,17 42:2 42:9  30:10 34:16 39:8 40:7  lawful 34:5,24 laws 10:22 11:8
30:24 31:1,2,4 31:9,11,21,23 31:24 32:2,3,5 32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3  41:10,17 42:2 42:9  30:10 34:16 39:8 40:7 30:4,7,8 31:5 32:20 33:7 Matter 1:12 3:18 keep 6:3,6 8:1  keep 6:3,6 8:1 leave 30:3  41:10,17 42:2 42:9  30:10 34:16 30:4,7,8 31:5 32:20 33:7 Matter 1:12 3:18 N2:1,1 3:1 narrow 19:6
31:9,11,21,23 31:24 32:2,3,5 32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3  42:9  Solid 10:22 11:8   30:4,7,8 31:5   32:20 33:7   matter 1:12 3:18   N 2:1,1 3:1   narrow 19:6
31:24 32:2,3,5 32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3   K   Lawful 34:5,24   32:20 33:7   M   N 2:1,1 3:1   Lawful 32:17,17 33:3   Lawful 34:5,24   Laws 10:22 11:8   Lawful 34:5,24   Lawf
32:7,13,16,16 32:17,17 33:3   K   Keep 6:3,6 8:1   Iaws 10:22 11:8   matter 1:12 3:18   N 2:1,1 3:1   narrow 19:6
32:17,17 33:3   keep 6:3,6 8:1   leave 30:3   4:1,3,7,13 5:7   narrow 19:6
33:5,10,11,15   kind 9:23   left 7:23 27:8   5:11,13,19,22   nature 8:9 31:4
33:16 34:15 <b>kinds</b> 6:21 15:14 29:11 6:1 8:21 13:2 31:8 32:23,24
35:3,5,7,14,18   15:19,24 21:21   legal 32:14   15:5 19:17   near 40:12
36:4,10,16,17 32:18 40:13 21:15,23 22:20 <b>need</b> 13:10
37:17,18 38:2   Kircher 29:2   legitimate 7:1   22:21 27:5   needs 36:24
38:3,6,7,12,17 32:25 40:16 7:16 10:10 29:14,15,21 <b>neither</b> 16:2
38:18,21,25 <b>know</b> 9:24 20:14 <b>length</b> 9:17 31:10,21,23,24 <b>net</b> 27:17,18
39:12,14,23   20:15,20 39:20   let's 5:14 30:20   32:3,7,16,17   neutral 26:7
40:5,15 41:4 39:20 41:22 <b>light</b> 13:17 33:4,11,14,21 <b>never</b> 41:20
41:19,20,25   <b>knowing</b> 13:3   <b>limit</b> 21:17   33:22,25 34:3   <b>new</b> 14:8
42:3   Koffski 33:8   limitation 32:21   34:6,7,8,15,17   nondiverse 39:9
jurisdictional     limited 3:22   35:3 39:23,25   norm 36:1
27:4 32:20 L 12:16 14:23 42:12 normally 7:18
<b>Justice</b> 3:3,9 5:9 <b>label</b> 31:20 32:3 21:19 <b>matters</b> 41:4 22:23
5:16,21 6:10   labeled 10:10   limiting 24:6   mean 7:22 10:5   notice 4:4
7:21 8:15,16   32:19   limits 32:19   13:11 14:20,23   noticed 22:8
9:3,20 10:25   labels 33:1   line 23:2   17:25 18:3   notion 32:7
11:24 12:6,8   lack 3:18 4:1,2,7   lines 33:25   21:18   number 8:12 9:8
12:18,22 13:5 4:13 5:6,13,18 lingered 9:24 meaning 34:1 22:9 24:8 40:8
13:9,10,11,16 6:1 12:17 13:2 litigation 34:22 means 31:24 9:17 21:15 23 Pub. 17 2 25 1 2 34:8 36:17
14:19,25 15:2   11ttle 1/:3 25:1,2   34.6 30.17
15:3,25 16:4,6   lacked 10:17   28:6 37:1   39:4   O 2:1 3:1
16:13,15,18,21 33:3 locking 5:8 lo 22:15 meant 26:13 oath 11:13
17:5,13,21,25   lacking 5:8   long 9:24   37:8   odd 5:9,24   odd 3:6:18
18:5,8,15,20   lacks 39:13,22   longer 14:9,9   mechanical 38:9   odds 36:18
19:4,12,13,20   laid 19:25   36:4   merits 36:24   odd-years 22:16   language 12:1   lack 6:24, 18:3   42:8   offer 40:6
20.7,11,21,22 12.2.6.9 100k 0.24 18.5 12.0 Off or 11.15
20:23 21:3,6,9   12:13 13:2,6,8   24:4   <b>mind</b> 35:17,20   <b>Office</b> 11:15

	 	l		
<b>Okay</b> 22:20	<b>P</b> 3:1	38:24 41:1	problem 15:3	37:22,23 40:17
30:17	page 2:2 3:24	pointed 15:3	16:9 19:24	42:6
once 10:6 30:25	17:6	32:12	problems 15:24	<b>quick</b> 40:25
35:4	parcel 4:17	<b>points</b> 40:25	32:24	<b>quite</b> 9:8 37:24
<b>open</b> 12:9	<b>pared</b> 23:8,15	policies 34:2	procedure 24:18	
operate 22:23	<b>part</b> 4:17	<b>policy</b> 7:3 34:23	process 36:6	R
operation 30:7	particular 6:23	<b>poor</b> 38:13,13	processing 9:25	R 3:1
opinion 20:21	7:6 10:20	portion 23:15	professors 40:7	raised 4:3 25:21
21:4,7 22:6	12:12 15:10	position 10:16	profitable 26:23	raising 11:16
32:11	30:19	35:2	<b>prong</b> 4:5 17:2	ratified 17:19
opponents 27:21	particularly	possible 34:1	properly 12:1	41:14
opponent's	32:10	potential 35:24	41:24	rationale 14:8
27:11	parties 11:5	<b>power</b> 4:16,16	proposing 23:2	21:12,18 22:4
oral 1:12 2:2 3:7	<b>party</b> 16:2 39:9	4:18 7:15 8:6	propriety 34:21	22:5
20:9	39:15	15:17 22:7,10	proved 41:7	reach 14:4 22:17
<b>order</b> 6:19 10:13	pass 10:21	23:16,16 28:20	provide 18:22	reached 14:4
12:2 15:23	passed 30:8	29:25 31:24	provides 24:22	reaching 12:8
23:24 31:14	patent 10:22	33:14,15,17	25:11	reacquires
36:2,2,7 39:4	11:3,4,8,14,15	36:17,18,19	provision 24:11	35:18
39:14,16	11:18	38:1 39:18,18	24:25 25:4	read 12:4 13:14
orders 12:12	pendent 8:18	40:1 42:4,5	provisions 17:15	14:6,13,20
13:7 17:23	30:12	<b>Powerex</b> 26:9,14	17:16 18:1	21:20
23:20 35:25	percentage 8:13	32:25 39:19	pulled 20:4	reads 19:22
original 26:25	period 13:19	40:16 41:12	purely 11:10	21:12
Osborn 4:22	19:10 31:25	powerless 28:18	37:23	realizing 40:3
25:3	permits 38:5	practical 8:17	purpose 20:18	really 5:10 12:6
outraged 13:25	personal 32:16	precedential	36:21 40:3	12:25 19:22
outrageous	33:22,24 34:7	26:14	purposes 31:14	26:20 39:25
13:20	Petitioner 1:5	precise 25:23	pushes 31:7	realm 34:14
overboard	1:17 2:4,9 3:8	preliminary	<b>put</b> 20:24 35:1	reason 8:22
16:21	40:24	11:25	<b>p.m</b> 42:11	12:23,25 16:23
overlap 20:3	Petitioner's 3:24	premise 38:20		22:11
overrule 16:1,7	20:13	38:21	Q	reasoning 16:16
17:6,8,11,16	picayune 15:6,8	presence 5:11	Quackenbush	16:17 23:2
overruled 22:2	<b>place</b> 20:24	presented 3:11	16:19,20,23	reasons 8:22
22:12	24:21 28:4,14	9:23	17:3 23:18	21:18
overruling	<b>plain</b> 11:25	presents 34:23	41:13,16	rebuttal 2:7
22:22	12:13 13:6,8	<b>press</b> 28:23	question 6:18	19:3 40:23
overthrow	plainly 13:15	presumptive	11:1,3,7,25	recognize 22:13
16:22	19:18	27:9	12:10 15:9	recognized 21:1
overturn 9:1	pleading 27:19	Pretextual 13:7	22:1,1 23:6,11	22:10 23:14
overwhelming	please 3:10	pretty 34:23	23:19 25:22,23	recognizes 24:6
8:23	20:12	prevail 24:25	26:14 32:1	recognizing
ownership 11:2	plenary 21:1	25:4	35:20,21 37:13	25:8
11:5	<b>point</b> 13:12	prevent 6:21	39:2	reconsider 36:5
P	18:21 28:13,23	prevents 12:6	questions 8:9	36:7
<u>r</u>	29:22,23 36:4	primary 23:11	19:2 26:25	reconsideration
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
				<del>_</del>

	 		 	l
35:18,23,23	24:15 25:12	22:15 24:14,21	42:9	<b>side</b> 16:3
reference 3:23	38:18 39:16	24:22 25:6,13	routinely 34:18	<b>signs</b> 36:7
4:23	remark 20:14	25:16 27:19	rule 3:21 12:15	similar 24:5
regarded 41:24	remembered	35:24 36:21	15:10 18:17	<b>simple</b> 12:20,22
Rehnquist 20:23	24:13 25:5,20	37:20 40:3,16	22:22 23:4,10	<b>simply</b> 12:11
Rehnquist's	26:4,5,15	reviewability	ruled 9:8	14:1 22:18
20:21 21:9	reminiscent	8:8 17:22	<b>ruling</b> 27:24	25:5 32:21
reiterate 41:2,5	29:1	35:21	run 15:15	39:2
rejected 17:8	removal 4:5	reviewable 5:12		single 3:11
related 4:10	21:14,22 24:18	5:15,23 6:4,7	S	situation 10:20
relation 33:23	removals 6:22	7:4,20 13:13	<b>S</b> 1:18 2:1,5 3:1	13:1 14:24
33:24	remove 6:20	13:19 14:10	20:9	15:14 39:24
relationship	removing 7:1,8	reviewed 34:22	<b>San</b> 1:16	situations 6:13
24:1	7:9	rhetorical 37:13	<b>saying</b> 5:10 6:7	6:21 15:15
relevant 17:14	represent 40:10	<b>Rhodes</b> 1:16 2:3	14:21 36:16	<b>slight</b> 19:10
remain 27:1,8	request 17:7	2:8 3:6,7,9	38:17	slightly 35:10
27:12	require 39:10	5:16 6:10 8:12	says 5:13 12:7	small-change
remainder 19:3	res 11:4	9:3 10:8 11:7	13:18 14:21	13:23
remaining 3:16	reserve 19:2	12:4,7,14,21	16:10 21:12	sole 22:7
4:25 40:22	resist 37:13	13:14 14:15,25	28:16 33:14	solution 12:20
remand 3:17,25	resolved 5:1	15:7 16:4,12	<b>SCALIA</b> 16:18	12:22
4:1,4,6,11,12	10:14,24 16:11	16:20,22 17:9	16:21 18:8	solve 15:3,23
5:5,6 6:1,6,16	36:24	17:17 18:5,11	scholars 32:14	soon 39:14
7:13,18 12:2	resolving 9:10	18:20 19:12,23	second 23:9	sorry 19:13
12:12 13:3	resources 8:2	40:22,23,25	26:20	sort 11:24
16:24,25 17:23	9:19 34:12	42:1	secondary 23:13	sound 8:2
19:7,18 22:7	respect 11:17	<b>Rice</b> 24:19,19	section 11:21	sound 8.2 source 22:7
	_	<b>RICO</b> 3:16 5:14	39:7	sources 22:10
22:10,18 23:12	respecting 37:20		see 22:11 23:1	
23:16,16,20,23	Respondents	7:7,12,23 8:23	28:24 37:12,13	Souter 22:20
24:6,14,17,22	1:19 2:6 3:15	10:1 27:25	39:17,22	23:6,25 36:12
25:6,9,11 26:1	7:13 17:6,7	28:2,10,25	seeking 6:15	37:5 38:14
27:1 28:10	20:10	29:4,4		speaking 35:10
29:12 31:14,17	response 42:1	rid 7:22 16:18	seemingly 41:14	species 29:21
34:4,24 36:2,2	rest 10:1	18:6,9	seen 17:16	specific 3:22
38:11,22,25	result 14:4	right 5:12,15 6:2	send 13:13	24:24 25:3
remanded 3:16	21:16	8:4 11:2 18:8	15:17 16:10	specifically 3:19
7:17 9:10 12:2	retain 5:2 37:16	18:16 19:22	sending 10:5	specified 12:16
35:15 36:1	37:18 41:19	29:6 30:10	sense 6:5 33:20	<b>spirit</b> 22:13
39:10 42:7	retaining 9:16	41:20	sent 27:9 34:20	sponte 7:14
remanding 5:17	retread 9:21	rightly 5:18	40:2	squarely 5:19
33:2 34:21	return 12:24	<b>rights</b> 24:11	serve 31:14	11:19
38:16,24	returning 9:17	ROBERTS 3:3	served 22:14,16	<b>stage</b> 34:22
remands 7:3	review 3:12 6:2	13:10 14:19	set 3:23 12:15	standard 37:20
13:18 14:9,10	6:9,12 9:13,14	15:2 17:5,21	sets 27:16	stare 23:4 41:6
15:16 17:1	12:3 13:4	17:25 18:15	setting 14:3	<b>State</b> 3:17 4:10
20:2,3,17	15:19 20:16,24	20:7 30:13,17	Seventh 33:8	4:24 6:17 7:7
21:13,22 22:18	20:25 21:2,9	40:18,21 41:17	shuttling 31:18	7:16,23,25,25
	<u> </u>			

	I	Ī	1	Ī
9:11,18,21,25	25:12 29:14,15	<b>T</b> 2:1,1	24:12 25:5,20	turned 26:4
10:10,15,16,17	29:21 30:10	take 14:22 39:24	26:4,15 32:18	turns 30:22
10:23,24 11:10	31:10,20,23,23	takes 33:25	think 5:24 9:3	41:21
13:23 15:17	32:3,7,15,17	talk 23:3	13:20,25 15:2	twice 17:18
16:11 19:9	33:4,11,14,21	talked 35:22,23	15:9,20 19:23	two 3:25 11:5
27:1,5,7,8,21	33:22,25 34:3	technical 18:1,2	22:3 23:6	21:21 29:18,18
28:9 31:7	34:6,7,8,10,14	33:13 35:9,11	25:14,21 26:3	36:18 38:19
34:16 36:3	34:17 35:3	39:13	26:9,16 27:6	type 40:8
39:16 41:23	39:22,25	technically	27:15 28:6,6	types 7:3
stated 29:5,12	subjected 40:15	33:11 34:14	28:23,24 32:6	
statement 23:22	submitted 42:10	Technology 1:3	32:9 33:20,23	U
24:6	42:12	3:4	34:23 35:10,20	understand
<b>States</b> 1:1,13	subsection	terminology	36:1,20,20	12:18
24:19	19:21,21	37:25	37:5 39:3	understood 35:2
<b>State-law</b> 37:15	subsections	terms 11:10	thinking 8:24	undoubted
37:23 39:24	14:12	14:6 21:13	14:1 25:15,16	33:17
statistics 40:7	subsequent 23:8	26:10 35:2,11	third 33:22	undoubtedly
statute 13:6,8,18	sue 32:19	territorial 33:23	thought 7:16	29:16
14:5,13 22:19	suggest 18:11	test 14:8	17:5	uniformly 15:11
22:24 24:15,21	24:3 37:8	text 13:18	threw 10:1	18:13
24:25 25:7	suggested 39:19	textbook 33:20	<b>Throw</b> 16:21	<b>United</b> 1:1,13
31:13,13 34:4	suggesting	Thank 20:7	time 8:10 9:17	4:24 20:1
statutes 3:23	27:21	40:18,19,21	9:24 10:5 19:3	24:19 27:6
20:18 24:8	suggestion	42:9	20:23 21:10	34:18
32:21	17:11 24:3	THEODORE	31:2 32:19	universality
statutory 5:24	suggests 37:1	1:18 2:5 20:9	37:22	24:20
9:13 15:12,19	suggests 57.1 supplemental	theory 22:23	timely 4:3	universe 40:10
17:19 23:12	3:14 4:12 8:18	Thermtron	tiny 41:23	unusual 14:24
25:8 41:6	9:7 19:25	12:15,19 13:17	today 26:16,17	21:17
stays 22:24	20:16 27:17	13:17,19 14:3	26:23 35:10	<b>updated</b> 22:3,12
stays 22.24 step 34:6	28:16 29:8,11	14:14,16,21	told 8:20	updating 23:3
<b>Stevens</b> 11:24	29:20 30:11	15:10 16:1,7	total 12:24	use 8:2 22:21
12:6,8,18,22	33:10,16 35:4	16:11 17:6,8	total 12.24	<b>U.S</b> 11:15,18
13:5 16:6,13	supplementary	17:11,15,18,20	Trademark	
19:4,13,20	19:9	18:6 19:11,14	11:15	V
27:11,14,24	support 30:25	20:22 21:16	transpired 10:6	<b>v</b> 1:6 3:4 4:22,24
Stevens's 13:11	<b>support</b> 30.23 <b>suppose</b> 41:17	22:2,4,12,17	trend 25:14	27:6 29:22
stop 40:19	<b>Supreme</b> 1:1,13	22:22 23:7,10	trial 9:10 30:22	validity 11:3
stop 40.19 street 17:22	18:17	23:15 24:5,7	31:8	variety 32:13
street 17.22 strong 17:11	sure 8:12 12:21	26:19,19 30:5	troublesome	vehicle 23:20,23
34:23	15:7 17:10	31:6 41:13,15	38:1	verb 22:21
sua 7:14	20:5 28:11	Thermtron's	true 10:8 26:12	versus 24:19
sua 7:14 subject 3:18 4:1		21:17 23:22	27:14	view 5:7 11:8
4:3,7,13 5:6,11	Surgeons 29:23 sweeping 23:22	thing 4:18 18:4	trust 36:22	viewed 22:5,6
	• 0	25:9,15 26:9		violating 23:4
5:13,18 6:1 12:2 13:2 15:5	<b>system</b> 10:24	things 14:2,23	try 15:21 Tuesday 1:10	virtually 31:6
19:17 21:15,23	T	15:4,6,8,9	turn 28:10 39:18	
17.17 21.13,23		13.4,0,0,7	turn 20.10 39.18	W
	l ————————————————————————————————————	I	I .	I

		•
<b>W</b> 1:16 2:3,8 3:7	<b>wouldn't</b> 7:21	12:15 13:14
40:23	8:16 12:20	20:3,5 21:12
<b>Waco</b> 28:6	13:5,6,7,12	21:19,20
want 5:25 15:18	26:17 41:24	<b>1447(e)</b> 39:7
18:9 19:8	wrong 5:14 6:1	<b>1452</b> 24:15,15
wanted 6:14	7:5 28:15	25:9,11,14
18:6 37:12	wrongly 5:18	<b>18</b> 40:10
40:6	wrote 20:23	<b>1887</b> 20:19,24
wants 6:21	25:10 32:11	40:4
Washington 1:9	23.10 32.11	<b>1976</b> 21:7
1:18	X	<b>1970</b> 21.7 <b>1990</b> 30:9
	x 1:2,8	1990 30.9
wasn't 29:3	<b>A</b> 1.2,0	2
waste 9:18	<u> </u>	<b>2</b> 3:24
water 30:20	years 3:21 15:10	<b>20</b> 2:6 40:10
way 6:12,25	18:25 21:4,5	<b>2009</b> 1:10
15:4 16:1 18:7	22:9 36:22	<b>2009</b> 1:10 <b>22</b> 17:6
19:15,16 23:6	22.7 30.22	
31:21 38:23	0	<b>24</b> 1:10
ways 32:13	<b>07-1437</b> 1:6 3:4	3
went 10:15		<b>3</b> 2:4 3:24
13:17	1	<b>30</b> 3:21 4:4
weren't 30:23	<b>100</b> 8:7	15:10 18:25
Westfall 25:4	<b>11:20</b> 1:14 3:2	22:8
<b>we'll</b> 3:3 12:13	<b>12:17</b> 42:11	22.0
we're 26:18,23	<b>120</b> 22:15	4
<b>White</b> 22:6	<b>1291</b> 17:4	<b>40</b> 2:9 22:8
<b>wipe</b> 18:24	<b>1331</b> 41:4	<b>40-odd</b> 22:9
wish 24:4	<b>1332</b> 41:4	40-000 22.)
<b>wishes</b> 26:22	<b>1367</b> 30:7,9 41:3	8
woodenly 14:17	<b>1367(a)</b> 3:20 4:9	<b>8</b> 11:21
14:19	<b>1367(c)</b> 3:17 5:6	<b>88</b> 19:16
word 32:13	20:2 42:4	
38:13 39:3	1367(c)(3) 27:2	9
words 31:10,12	1441 20:3	<b>96</b> 19:16
31:13 35:6,12	<b>1447</b> 14:12	<b>99</b> 8:7
37:4	16:17 17:15	
work 10:23	24:13 25:4	
15:18	31:16	
workable 15:12	1447's 24:14	
15:23 18:22		
41:7,8,11	<b>1447(c)</b> 3:23 4:5	
Workers 4:24	5:20 12:16	
20:1 27:6	17:2,18 21:21	
34:19	21:21 22:6,18	
world 33:21,24	23:17 27:3	
worth 8:10	31:11 39:22	
worthless 8:24	<b>1447(d)</b> 3:12,22	
WALLES	6:13 12:1,4,13	
	·	ı