1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
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3	14 PENN PLAZA LLC, ET AL., :
4	Petitioners :
5	v. : No. 07-581
6	STEVEN PYETT, ET AL. :
7	x
8	Washington, D.C.
9	Monday, December 1, 2008
LO	
L1	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
L2	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
L3	at 11:00 a.m.
L4	APPEARANCES:
L5	PAUL SALVATORE, ESQ., New York, N.Y.; on behalf of the
L6	Petitioners.
L7	DAVID C. FREDERICK, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of
L8	the Respondents.
L9	CURTIS E. GANNON, ESQ., Assistant to the Solicitor
20	General, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on
21	behalf of the United States, as amicus curiae,
22	supporting the Respondents.
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:00 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	next in Case 07-581, 14 Penn Plaza LLC v. Pyett.
5	Mr. Salvatore.
6	ORAL ARGUMENT OF PAUL SALVATORE
7	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
8	MR. SALVATORE: Thank you, Mr. Chief
9	Justice, and may it please the Court:
LO	There are three reasons why this Court
L1	should reverse the Second Circuit's blanket ban on
L2	collectively bargained, arbitral forum forum
L3	selection clauses.
L4	First, the Second Circuit ignored section
L5	9(a) of the National Labor Relations Act, by which
L6	Congress empowered unions to bargain on behalf of their
L7	employees over anything germane to the working
L8	environment, including methods of workplace dispute
L9	resolution.
20	The forum in which an ADEA claim is heard
21	falls squarely in that authority. Indeed, forbidding
22	unions from bargaining about the procedural right to an
23	arbitral forum will carve a judicial exception into the
24	labor law permitting employers to bypass the union and
25	deal directly with their employees defeating Congress!

- 1 national labor policy.
- 2 Second, the Second Circuit failed to
- 3 consider Congress's strong endorsement of workplace
- 4 arbitration contained in both the FAA and section 301.
- 5 Third, the Second Circuit erroneously and
- 6 exclusively relied on Alexander versus Gardner-Denver.
- 7 Gardner-Denver is a case about claim preclusion, not
- 8 about enforcing an agreement to arbitrate a statutory
- 9 claim.
- 10 JUSTICE SOUTER: Mr. Salvatore, you take the
- 11 position that the only thing that is at stake here is
- 12 simply, in effect, the selection of the arbitral forum.
- 13 What do you -- what do you say to the
- 14 argument that, in fact, the -- under -- under the
- 15 collective bargaining agreement, the employee is subject
- 16 not merely to the right of the union to choose the
- 17 arbitral forum, but, in fact, to -- to assert any claim
- 18 at all? What -- what is your answer to that?
- 19 MR. SALVATORE: Your Honor, in -- in our
- 20 collective bargaining agreement, the collective
- 21 bargaining agreement here, the -- the union -- the
- 22 employee tenders the claim to the union. And in the
- 23 majority of cases the -- the employee and the union's
- 24 interests will be aligned, and the --
- 25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But here it wasn't.

JUSTICE SOUTER: Yes. What -- what --1 2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Here we are dealing with claims that the union said: Sorry, we are not going to 3 4 process these claims because we have some tension since 5 the younger workers that replaced you, we also represent 6 them. 7 So you are proposing, as far as I understand it, a situation where these workers would have no 8 individual right at all if the union says: We -- we 9 10 won't represent you. 11 MR. SALVATORE: No, Your Honor. The -- the clause requires all claims to be arbitrated, and "all 12 claims" means that the individuals then have to go to 13 14 arbitration with their private counsel in this case and 15 -- and have their claims heard in the arbitral forum. 16 So that no one is denying --17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Where does -- where does 18 the contract say anything about the -- the individual 19 succeeding to whatever arrangement there is between the 20 union and the employer? 21 MR. SALVATORE: Your Honor, I'm looking at 22 the petition appendix. 23 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought that only --24 only the union can invoke the arbitration clause, not an

25

individual.

- 1 MR. SALVATORE: No, Your Honor. That's --
- 2 that's not the -- the way the contract reads. I'm
- 3 looking at the petition appendix page 48a, which is the
- 4 "no discrimination" clause.
- 5 And just -- just as a quick prelude to --
- 6 before I -- I go through that language, I just want to
- 7 -- to note that this argument that these employees were
- 8 not bound to go individually to arbitration was never
- 9 raised below.
- 10 The Second Circuit did not consider it.
- 11 Indeed, the Second Circuit found that the clause covered
- 12 these employees, and -- and this only came up in the
- 13 Respondents' brief in this Court after cert was granted,
- 14 the red brief.
- 15 So that this -- this argument is one that
- 16 the factual premises for were never considered below in
- 17 the district court or in -- in the court of appeals.
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Just so I'm clear --
- 19 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I don't -- I don't wish to
- 20 delay your reading, but -- but as -- as part of the
- 21 decision we have to make, don't we have to have in the
- 22 background the consideration of the -- that the
- 23 potentiality that the union might do just what it did
- 24 here, and that would help, it seems to me, inform our
- 25 decision on the question that you are presenting.

1	Now, whether or not it's properly raised
2	here, I do agree with you it comes rather late. But
3	isn't it a factor that we must necessarily consider?
4	MR. SALVATORE: Yes, Your Honor. And
5	and, indeed, the collective bargaining agreements and
6	we'll look at the language in 1 second are are, as
7	this Court has recognized, a little more complicated to
8	understand than than average contracts. You have to
9	look at the practice and the custom.
10	The practice here for this union has been to
11	turn over claims to the individuals. We've had this
12	clause in place for nine years. The New York courts
13	have enforced it repeatedly and and
14	JUSTICE SCALIA: Is this included in the
15	question presented anyway?
16	MR. SALVATORE: It was it was not, Your
17	Honor.
18	JUSTICE SCALIA: Does it have anything to do
19	with the way the Second Circuit resolved this case?
20	MR. SALVATORE: It does not, Your Honor.
21	JUSTICE SCALIA: The Second Circuit simply
22	said you could not deprive an individual of the right to
23	a court trial.
24	MR. SALVATORE: Absolutely, Justice Scalia.
25	JUSTICE SCALIA: And the issue is whether

- 1 MR. SALVATORE: A blanket ban --
- 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: Now, if -- if we held that
- 3 you can require the individual to go to arbitration, in
- 4 some later case we could confront the question of
- 5 whether, if the union is in exclusive control of the
- 6 arbitration and the -- the individual will not get a
- 7 fair arbitrated deal, that would invalidate it.
- But it has nothing to do with the question
- 9 presented: Is an arbitration clause which clearly and
- 10 unmistakably waives the union member's right to a
- 11 judicial forum enforceable?
- MR. SALVATORE: Absolutely, Justice Scalia.
- 13 That is my argument with respect to why this does not
- 14 need to be taken up now.
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: So I -- I hate to get into
- 16 this, you know, nine years' history of dealings between
- 17 the union and -- and the employees.
- 18 MR. SALVATORE: There is no factual record,
- 19 Your Honor, for it in the record at all. And --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, there is at least
- 21 some. The collective bargaining agreement is in here.
- 22 And if we are deciding anything at all, we are going to
- 23 decide whether in this case the -- the Second Circuit
- 24 was correct.
- The question is posed in generality, but we

- 1 are not going to decide the general question in total
- 2 ignorance of this case. And in this case, we've got the
- 3 particular collective bargaining agreement in front of
- 4 us, and you started to answer the question that -- that
- 5 I and Justice Ginsburg posed by referring to the "no
- 6 discrimination" clause.
- 7 MR. SALVATORE: Yes, Your Honor.
- 8 JUSTICE SOUTER: And will -- will you go on
- 9 to that?
- 10 MR. SALVATORE: I will. The clause is -- I
- 11 am looking now at petition appendix 48a, the "no
- 12 discrimination" clause. This is the -- the clause at
- issue in this case. It covers any present or future
- 14 employee. It goes on to state the -- the types of
- 15 protected characteristics that are covered by this
- 16 clause as well as the -- the relevant statutes
- 17 incorporating statutory law, public law, in the -- in
- 18 the clause.
- 19 And then in the second-to-last sentence five
- 20 lines up from the bottom it, states: "All such claims
- 21 shall be subject to the grievance and arbitration
- 22 procedure (Articles V and VI) as the sole and exclusive
- 23 remedy for violations."
- 24 JUSTICE SCALIA: What does that mean? Does
- 25 that mean that they must go to arbitration even if the

- 1 union decides that, you know, this claim is -- is so
- 2 insignificant we don't want to take it to arbitration?
- 3 MR. SALVATORE: What this means, Justice
- 4 Scalia, is that these individuals cannot go to court.
- 5 They have to go either through the union, as has been
- 6 the practice here, or the union will turn the claim over
- 7 to them and let them go by themselves.
- 8 JUSTICE SOUTER: Where did we get this
- 9 phrase -- where do we get the language "or the union
- 10 will turn over to them"? The only thing that I can see
- 11 in here that addresses that is on page 46a. And the --
- 12 the clause there reads: "All union claims are brought
- 13 by the union alone, and no individual shall have the
- 14 right to compromise or settle any claim without the
- 15 written permission of the union."
- 16 There is -- there's a lot of gray area in
- 17 that, but the one thing that seems clear is that the
- 18 union has total control of any claim, including an
- 19 arbitration claim.
- 20 And that seems to lend some substance to the
- 21 -- to the point made by the other side that if we accept
- 22 your position here, we are accepting a position not
- 23 nearly -- that the designation -- a procedural
- 24 designation of a forum should be enforced but that, in
- 25 fact, total control over the assertion of a statutory

- 1 Federal right is also being ceded. Now, why doesn't
- 2 that language from section 46 support that?
- 3 MR. SALVATORE: Your Honor, it does not
- 4 support it for the -- for the following reason. The --
- 5 the section 30 clause on page 48a, the "no
- 6 discrimination" clause, was added in 1999. It was added
- 7 after the Court's decision in Wright. It was added to
- 8 comply with Wright. That's an undisputed fact.
- 9 It -- it was added as a separate section
- 10 with a separate arbitration promise because "all claims"
- 11 is broader than "union claims." "Union claims" was
- 12 something that goes back for 75 years, but before we put
- in section 30 --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, but it says "all such
- 15 claims." "Such claims" refers among other things to the
- 16 statutory right.
- 17 MR. SALVATORE: That's correct.
- 18 JUSTICE SOUTER: And if the statutory right
- 19 is the appropriate section of an arbitration agreement
- 20 and the union has ultimate control of the arbitration
- 21 agreement, then it follows that the union has got
- 22 ultimate control over the assertion of the statutory
- 23 right.
- MR. SALVATORE: No, Your Honor, not unless
- 25 -- not if the union turns that over. The employee's

- 1 reading --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Where -- where is the
- 3 guarantee that the -- if the union says, we don't want
- 4 to touch this, as in this case, that the employee has
- 5 the right either to arbitrate or, for that matter, to
- 6 sue? Where do you find that?
- 7 MR. SALVATORE: Your Honor, that -- that
- 8 right is -- is described from this language, "all such
- 9 claims." There is another route. What Articles IV, V,
- 10 and VI describe is that -- that the --- you must go to
- 11 the office of the contract arbitrator, and it doesn't
- 12 specify whether you go with the union or you go by
- 13 yourself.
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: Has any court decided this
- 15 issue of the interpretation of the collective bargaining
- 16 agreement in this particular?
- 17 MR. SALVATORE: No court has decided this
- 18 very issue like this, Justice Alito. But what the New
- 19 York courts have said is, in interpreting this clause
- 20 over the last nine years, that they compel the
- 21 individual union member to go to arbitration and -- when
- 22 they have brought claims in court in violation of this
- 23 clause.
- 24 JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Salvatore, I -- I
- 25 didn't think we took this case to -- to determine the

- 1 specific meaning as to this issue of this -- of this
- 2 particular contract, which is not an issue of national
- 3 importance. Why -- why must we decide the case here?
- 4 Could we not simply decide that the Second
- 5 Circuit was either correct, in which case the case would
- 6 be over, or incorrect to say that you -- that you -- you
- 7 cannot -- you cannot in a collective bargaining
- 8 agreement have the union responsible for arbitration of
- 9 title VII claims? Why couldn't we just decide that?
- 10 And then if there is any issue of whether
- 11 such concession to the union deprives an individual of
- 12 even the right to arbitration, that can -- that can be
- decided on remand by the Second Circuit, couldn't it?
- 14 MR. SALVATORE: Absolutely, Justice Scalia.
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: And the Second Circuit
- 16 could look into all of these details.
- MR. SALVATORE: Absolutely.
- 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: And inquire into the New
- 19 York law that you're talking about now and that I don't
- 20 recall being in any of the briefing.
- 21 MR. SALVATORE: It is, Justice Scalia. It's
- 22 cited in our briefing. There is a long footnote listing
- 23 the cases.
- But -- but you're right, the -- the issue
- 25 here really is, can the union agree to this? And that

- 1 goes to Congress's giving the union the power under
- 2 section 9(a) of the National Labor Relations Act to be
- 3 the exclusive bargaining representative --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: I ask you -- let me ask you
- 5 a naive question possibly or may -- may reflect a
- 6 misunderstanding. But my understanding is that suppose
- 7 you are -- you are an employee. You believe your
- 8 employer discriminated against you, say, on gender
- 9 grounds. You have to go to the EEOC.
- 10 Now, the EEOC looks into it, and very often
- 11 what they do is they don't really resolve it. They just
- 12 give you a letter that gives you a right to sue.
- So here Congress was so worried about this
- 14 kind of thing that they said our specialized agency, you
- 15 know, won't be the bottom line. People will go there
- 16 and then they have a right to sue later.
- Now, that's how Congress felt about this
- 18 particular statute. Why would they want the union to be
- 19 the bottom line when, in fact, the employee himself
- 20 hasn't agreed? I mean, the employee might agree in the
- 21 first place. He might say I'm going to take that
- letter, I'm not going to bring my suit. That's up to
- 23 him or her. But here the employee wants to bring her
- 24 suit, just like the EEOC letter.
- MR. SALVATORE: Well, Justice Breyer, the

- 1 ADEA provides not only a right to go to court after
- 2 you've gotten your right-to-sue letter or waited 60
- 3 days, but -- but it also provides multiple -- as this
- 4 Court recognized in Gilmer, multiple avenues that
- 5 Congress wants to use: Conciliation, persuasion,
- 6 conference --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Exactly. That's my point,
- 8 is that the statute as a whole reflects a considerable
- 9 effort not to let this employee get cut off at the pass,
- 10 and an employee who is reasonably determined to get to
- 11 court probably can do it. It's not definite. The EEOC
- 12 doesn't have to give them a letter giving them a right
- 13 to sue, but probably can do it.
- And if that's a situation where you have
- 15 this whole expert thing cut in, it seems to me there's a
- 16 parallel here that Congress then wouldn't want the union
- 17 and the employer together to be able to cut that right
- 18 to sue off, at least not very easily.
- MR. SALVATORE: Justice Breyer, you have
- 20 competing policies here because you have the policies of
- 21 the labor laws which say that unions should have a -- a
- 22 broad portfolio of -- of topics to bargain about. This
- 23 Court has said that anything germane to the working
- 24 environment, dispute resolution mechanisms --
- 25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But the union could not

- 1 bargain about these anti discrimination rights. These
- 2 are rights given to individuals by Congress. The union
- 3 couldn't bargain about them the way it bargains about
- 4 collective rights, the way it bargains about wages and
- 5 hours and -- and other things. This is -- this is not a
- 6 bargainable right. This is a right -- Congress says you
- 7 as an individual have a right not to be discriminated
- 8 against. There's nothing that the union can bargain
- 9 about.
- 10 MR. SALVATORE: Justice Ginsburg, I agree to
- 11 the degree we're talking about -- you're talking about
- 12 substantive rights. What we are talking about here is a
- 13 procedural switch. As this Court has approved in
- 14 Gilmer, what we are talking about is moving the forum
- 15 from the judicial one to the -- to the arbitral one.
- 16 And here in the -- the scheme of a collective bargaining
- 17 agreement, where arbitration is the preferred remedy and
- 18 has been used for many, many years very successfully in
- 19 the -- in the -- by those parties.
- 20 It's -- it's taking employment arbitration
- 21 and putting it in the collective bargaining context.
- 22 And -- and there is -- unions do this in many different
- 23 ways. Unions bargain about substantive rights. We are
- 24 not talking about substantive rights here, though. We
- 25 are talking about procedural rights. And the policies

- 1 of the labor laws are served and the policies of the
- 2 ADEA and the antidiscrimination statutes are not
- 3 disserved in any way.
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Salvatore, would you --
- 5 would you object to or oppose a ruling that said -- that
- 6 says yes, the -- the right can be subjected to union
- 7 arbitration, but if the union chooses not to arbitrate
- 8 it, the individual must have the right to arbitrate it
- 9 on his own?
- 10 MR. SALVATORE: That's -- that's the
- 11 practice under this agreement, Your Honor. We would --
- 12 we would wholeheartedly endorse that -- that rule
- 13 because, that's the practice here. And there is -- when
- 14 you're talking about statutory rights, why would the
- 15 union want to interfere with the ability of the employee
- 16 to get a forum if their interests are not aligned? This
- 17 goes to the tension that this Court has -- has
- 18 recognized in its prior cases.
- 19 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, that -- that means
- 20 that -- and if there's a totally frivolous claim and the
- 21 employer -- pardon me, the union says we are not going
- 22 to arbitrate, the -- the employee still has the right to
- 23 then proceed? The employer hasn't gotten very much.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: He has got an arbitration
- 25 instead of a lawsuit.

1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: If you would -- if you 2 would answer the question. The employer hasn't gotten 3 very --4 (Laughter.) 5 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- very much for the bargain. 6 7 MR. SALVATORE: Justice Kennedy, the 8 employer has gotten arbitration and --9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: In the hard cases. 10 MR. SALVATORE: Well, in --11 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But it hasn't got the 12 ability to have the union help them weed out frivolous 13 claims. 14 MR. SALVATORE: Well, that's true. The union -- the union wouldn't play that function, except 15 16 that we have in this industry, the real estate industry 17 in New York City, a longstanding relationship that --18 that goes back decades. And -- and -- so it's a mature 19 collective bargaining arrangement. And the --20 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, I'm -- I'm not --21 I'm not sure that employers nationwide would -- would -would accept -- would accept that view. 22 23 MR. SALVATORE: Well, I think that the one 24 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And again, maybe that's --25

- 1 that's a reason for us not to reach it in this case.
- 2 MR. SALVATORE: Well, one of the issues
- 3 that -- that Congress allows the bargaining parties to
- 4 figure out is what the scope of their collective
- 5 bargaining arrangement should be. That's one of the
- 6 hallmarks of the NLRA. So, yes, some collective
- 7 bargaining parties may make that choice, Justice
- 8 Kennedy; others may make a different choice.
- 9 What is the alternative here? The
- 10 alternative is that employers can bypass the union.
- 11 They can just go around the union and -- and have
- 12 individual Gilmer agreements signed up. That's what the
- 13 D.C. Circuit said en banc in -- in -- in the ALPA Pilots
- 14 case.
- 15 And indeed, the -- the union in that case
- 16 was arguing the position that we are arguing here, that
- 17 this is a mandatory subject of bargaining, and this is
- 18 right in the union's portfolio of -- of what they should
- 19 be using to -- to bargain with the employer because it's
- 20 a procedural right and there are no substantive outcomes
- 21 that are diminished in any way whatsoever.
- Unions are deemed trustworthy enough to
- 23 bring lawsuits in the Federal courts on behalf of their
- 24 members. Under principles of associational standing,
- 25 associational standing, the members are bound by

- 1 their -- their union's actions. The EEOC --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: And nonmembers, too?
- 3 What about the people who -- who are not members of the
- 4 union, but they have to pay an equivalent amount for the
- 5 union's services in collective bargaining? They would
- 6 be bound as well? They couldn't --
- 7 MR. SALVATORE: Absolutely, Justice
- 8 Ginsburg. The -- the -- and this type of service
- 9 is one of the core functions that an agency payer would
- 10 have to pay for. The LM-2 that 32B, the local, filed
- 11 here on behalf of 80,000 employees has two agency fee
- 12 payers out of 80,000. So it's not really an issue in
- 13 this case.
- But that's what unions are for. When
- 15 Congress makes them the exclusive bargaining
- 16 representative you're -- you're in for it one way or the
- 17 other. You're -- you're -- either you're in or you're
- 18 out. And if you're in, then you have to go along with
- 19 the -- the -- the entire collective bargaining deal that
- 20 is made --
- 21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: You said -- the -- fine.
- I -- I grasp your answer to that. But you
- 23 said that the employee would have the absolute right if
- 24 the union says, "sorry, for whatever reason we can't
- 25 represent you, " absolute right to that arbitral forum.

- 1 What -- who pays then?
- I mean, if the union is in it, then the
- 3 union and the employer are going to split -- split the
- 4 cost. But what happens when the union drops out and you
- 5 have the individual and the employer in this arbitral
- 6 forum?
- 7 MR. SALVATORE: In -- in this situation, the
- 8 employer pays. That's the only -- the Office of the
- 9 Contract Arbitrator is an -- essentially a mini-
- 10 American Arbitration Association that these parties have
- 11 set up, and the RAB, which is the multi-employer
- 12 organization that represents all the real estate
- 13 employers in -- in New York, they pay for the
- 14 arbitration, because the union in this case has said we
- 15 are not going to pay.
- 16 As you point out rightly, if the union is
- 17 not involved, they -- they shouldn't pay. So there's no
- 18 cost to the employee for that arbitration and -- and as
- 19 Justice Edwards said in the D.C. Circuit coal case, that
- 20 -- that that procedure is -- is a fair one, to have the
- 21 employer pick up the -- the costs given -- given the --
- 22 the balance between the -- the two of them.
- JUSTICE STEVENS: Mr. Salvatore, are you
- 24 going to get to your explanation about Gardner-Denver
- 25 before you're all through?

1 MR. SALVATORE: Yes -- yes, Your Honor, 2 Justice Stevens. Gardner-Denver is -- is a case, as 3 this Court has described, that -- that didn't involve 4 the enforceability of an agreement to arbitrate. 5 Gardner-Denver line of cases, McDonald and Barrentine and Gardner-Denver, had the quite different issue as 6 7 this Court said in Gilmer, of whether a contract-based 8 claim precludes subsequent judicial resolution of a statutory claim; and so that distinguishes the rule. 9 10 But factually these cases are very different as -- as 11 well. Mr. Alexander in Alexander v. Gardner-Denver 12 -- the contract there, the collective bargaining 13 14 agreement, had a plain vanilla arbitration clause. It 15 didn't have a clause like the one we looked at page --16 petition appendix 48a, that incorporated all the -- the 17 statutes and gave the arbitrator the power to sit and --18 and to apply those statutes and apply the law under 19 those statutes and apply the remedies that derive from 20 those statutes. In that case, the arbitrator sat as the 21 proctor of the bargain between the collective bargaining 22 parties, and didn't have that broad authority, as this 23 Court has -- has recognized. 24 And -- and we agree that arbitration that --25 that resolves just a collective bargaining agreement

- 1 claim should not be dispositive of a statutory claim.
- 2 They're fish and fowl. So that Gardner-Denver is
- 3 correctly decided. Gardner-Denver puts out the rule for
- 4 -- for that situation. This is a different situation
- 5 that we are talking about.
- 6 And -- and here, unlike in Gardner-Denver,
- 7 where Mr. Alexander would have had no access to the --
- 8 to have his title VII claim heard if this Court had
- 9 affirmed the Tenth Circuit, he -- the door to the
- 10 courthouse would have been shut in that case for
- 11 Mr. Alexander. Here we are trying to move to compel
- 12 arbitration so that there is a forum, and -- and that
- 13 these individuals -- these employees --
- 14 JUSTICE STEVENS: But not a judicial -- not
- 15 a judicial forum.
- 16 MR. SALVATORE: An arbitral forum, Your
- 17 Honor.
- 18 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Salvatore, would you
- 19 just clarify something for me? I thought that the union
- 20 ceded its rights to the employees and said that they
- 21 could use the collective bargaining agreement's arbitral
- 22 regime so long as they paid for it. But you tell me
- 23 they don't have to pay anything; the employer pays
- 24 everything.
- 25 MR. SALVATORE: That's -- that's correct.

- 1 That's the union counsel's affidavit. He was saying he
- 2 doesn't -- the union doesn't want to pick up the costs,
- 3 Justice Ginsburg, but the collective bargaining
- 4 agreement says there is two payers in the Office of the
- 5 Contract Arbitrator, the RAB and the union. If the
- 6 union is not paying, then the RAB has to pay.
- 7 Mr. Chief Justice, I'd like to reserve the
- 8 rest of my time for rebuttal, please.
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 10 Mr. Frederick.
- 11 ORAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID C. FREDERICK
- 12 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS
- MR. FREDERICK: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 14 Justice, and may it please the Court:
- 15 The Second Circuit's judgment should be
- 16 affirmed for three reasons. First, a collective
- 17 bargaining agreement gives the union exclusive control
- 18 over workers' grievances. Second, unions have inherent
- 19 conflicts of interest with respect to individual
- 20 statutory antidiscrimination rights; and third, unions
- 21 lack authority to serve as gatekeepers of individual
- 22 workers' substantive ADEA rights.
- With respect to the first point, a
- 24 collective bargaining agreement generally gives the
- 25 union exclusive control over whether to bring grievances

- 1 on behalf of workers and how such grievances are
- 2 pursued. In such circumstances, which is this case, the
- 3 worker does not evince the requisite agreement to
- 4 arbitrate and control over the arbitral forum to satisfy
- 5 this Court's standards in Gilmer for effectively
- 6 vindicating the worker's statutory antidiscrimination
- 7 rights.
- 8 JUSTICE ALITO: Under your first point, are
- 9 you saying it's impossible for there to be a collective
- 10 bargaining agreement that reads the way Mr. Salvatore
- 11 reads this collective bargaining agreement; a collective
- 12 bargaining agreement which says that the union -- that
- 13 the grievance must be arbitrated, and it will be done
- 14 either by the union, or if the union declines to pursue
- 15 it, by the individual employee?
- 16 MR. FREDERICK: Justice Alito, I've looked
- 17 comprehensively through the cases. We've never found a
- 18 collective bargaining agreement that gives the kind of
- 19 interpretation that Mr. Salvatore offered in this case.
- 20 Now, is it theoretically possible that a collective
- 21 bargaining agreement would confer on individuals the
- 22 rights this Court said in Gilmer are necessary to
- 23 effectively vindicate that? I would acknowledge it's
- 24 theoretically possible, but it has to be done within the
- 25 confines of whether there is actual consent by the

- 1 individual to the arbitration, whether the individual
- 2 has control over the mechanisms of arbitration, and
- 3 whether or not the structure of the arbitral forum
- 4 effectively vindicates the individual's substantive
- 5 rights.
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: But there is nothing in
- 7 Federal labor law that would preclude the negotiation of
- 8 a collective bargaining agreement like that?
- 9 MR. FREDERICK: Nothing except this Court's
- 10 case in Magnavox, where the Court said that the union
- 11 may not bargain away an individual's rights where there
- 12 would be a conflict between the union's interests and
- 13 the individual's. Here, because this is a
- 14 discrimination claim, unions are often brought as
- 15 defendants in such claims, particularly in circumstances
- 16 as here, where the union agreed to the conditions that
- 17 gave rise to the discrimination on the basis of age by
- 18 these workers.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: But, even in a case in
- 20 which you don't have -- let's assume -- just assume for
- 21 the sake of argument that we don't have the
- 22 discrimination issue or the conflict issue. I
- 23 understood you elsewhere to be arguing that there had to
- 24 be the kind of knowing, intelligent, and individual
- 25 waiver, which I would suppose a collective bargaining

- 1 agreement will never include. So I thought it was
- 2 the -- ultimately the implication of your argument that
- 3 in any -- in any case in which arbitration is claimed,
- 4 there would have to be -- or a right to go to
- 5 arbitration is claimed by the employer -- there would
- 6 have to be, not merely the collective bargaining
- 7 agreement, but a specific waiver by the employee to --
- 8 to go ahead and do that. Is that correct?
- 9 MR. FREDERICK: That -- that's correct.
- 10 JUSTICE SOUTER: Okay.
- 11 MR. FREDERICK: And that's why I think the
- 12 Gilmer point is -- is essential here, Justice Souter and
- 13 Justice Alito. Because in Gilmer there was individual
- 14 consent; there needs to be such individual consent under
- 15 the ADEA waiver provision itself, and knowing and
- 16 individual waiver is necessary before the person can
- 17 waive the substantive ADEA rights. That would need to
- 18 be part of the hypothetical collective bargaining
- 19 agreement that I was positing with Justice Alito.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Right.
- 21 JUSTICE ALITO: Would that mean --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Go ahead.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Would that mean that the
- 24 employer could not unilaterally impose an arbitration
- 25 requirement on employees?

- 1 MR. FREDERICK: I think that would follow,
- 2 as that be -- would be a condition of employment that
- 3 could not be imposed. The Air Line --
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It wouldn't be
- 5 unilaterally imposing, right? You would say if you're
- 6 going to work for me, you've got to arbitrate, and that
- 7 could be negotiated, theoretically, with individual
- 8 employee. And -- I mean, the whole point, the whole
- 9 benefit of collective bargaining is that that doesn't
- 10 happen. You say, well, the employer has a lot of
- 11 leverage if he wants to insist upon that, but it would
- 12 not -- it would be a matter for negotiation between the
- 13 individual and the company.
- MR. FREDERICK: That's correct, Mr. Chief
- 15 Justice, but there are two different points at which the
- 16 condition of employment arose. I understood the
- 17 questions on this side to be after the agreement had
- 18 taken place and the worker was already on the work site.
- 19 Under your hypothetical, if an employee gains entrance
- 20 to the workforce and is asked, "will you sign this,"
- 21 there is individual consent in that circumstance. That
- 22 is the fact situation in the Air Line Pilots case.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: But the one thing that's
- 24 uniform throughout in your answer is that the collective
- 25 bargaining agreement alone can never subject the

- 1 employee to -- to mandatory arbitration?
- 2 MR. FREDERICK: That's -- that's how we read
- 3 this Court's cases --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: And it's also true -- is
- 5 that also true with an ordinary tort suit or any other
- 6 kind of suit?
- 7 MR. FREDERICK: Sorry. With an ordinary --
- JUSTICE BREYER: A tort suit. It says, some
- 9 -- the union -- the same thing here, but we are not
- 10 concerned with discrimination; we are concerned with
- 11 workplace safety. Somebody is hurt as a result of a
- 12 machine improperly functioning, or there isn't adequate
- 13 notice or so forth. Is your view the same there?
- 14 MR. FREDERICK: Well, I think that those
- 15 category of cases do stand in a different position
- 16 because there is less of an inherent conflict of
- 17 interest. The union there --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Why?
- 19 MR. FREDERICK: Well, the union is not going
- 20 to be the defendant typically in a tort case where the
- 21 employer is responsible.
- 22 JUSTICE BREYER: Doesn't this allow
- 23 discrimination -- doesn't this refer to discrimination
- 24 by the employer?
- MR. FREDERICK: It refers to discrimination,

- 1 and, as we cite on page 27 of our brief, there are
- 2 provisions in the antidiscrimination laws that are
- 3 specifically directed at union discrimination. The
- 4 legislative history of these statutes indicates that
- 5 discrimination by unions was one of the concerns
- 6 animating Congress --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Now, you say section 30 --
- 8 it doesn't say anything about union discrimination
- 9 particularly; it just talks about discrimination.
- 10 MR. FREDERICK: Yes. In fact --
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: Fine. So you're saying
- 12 sometimes unions do discriminate?
- MR. FREDERICK: And that's why --
- 14 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. And sometimes
- 15 unions also would rather have the more effective machine
- 16 or sometimes unions feel that their workers are stupid
- 17 not to read the machine label properly or -- I mean, I
- 18 can replicate anything you -- I think. We can think of
- 19 tort suits, the two of us, which could put unions and
- 20 employees on opposite shores, just as we can think of
- 21 discrimination suits. Most unions don't want
- 22 discrimination. I mean, most of the time. And most
- 23 unions don't want dangerous machines most of the time.
- So if I decide for you in this case, am I
- 25 also saying that they can't arbitrate ordinary tort

- 1 suits or contract suits or just whether or not the
- 2 workplace which is made of wood is filled with termites?
- 3 I mean, you know?
- 4 MR. FREDERICK: I think, Justice Breyer,
- 5 that the discrimination cases do stand in a different
- 6 category because of the inherent conflict of the --
- 7 JUSTICE BREYER: Is that the only reason?
- 8 Because, in other words, if I think I see no more reason
- 9 why a union today, whatever was true 40 years ago --
- 10 that I see no more reason today why a union would like
- 11 discrimination than I can see a reason why they would
- 12 like a dangerous machine.
- MR. FREDERICK: I don't think Congress --
- 14 JUSTICE BREYER: If I think that, then I
- 15 should decide against you?
- 16 MR. FREDERICK: Well, no, because there are
- 17 two other reasons: The exclusive control over the
- 18 machinery and the union serving as the gatekeeper.
- 19 I'm not aware of tort suits being subjects
- 20 of collective bargaining, Justice Breyer. Nor am I
- 21 aware of cases in which the unions have given up
- 22 individuals' tort claims in situations, principally
- 23 because unions are not the persons against whom such
- 24 tort suits are brought.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, but those -- I'm

- 1 sorry.
- 2 Those examples are examples. You're getting
- 3 down to individual cases. I thought you drew the global
- 4 line in answer -- which would answer Justice Breyer's
- 5 question by saying the -- in the cases that we're
- 6 talking about here, Congress has passed a statute giving
- 7 a specific individual right and that individual right
- 8 cannot in effect be compromised except in -- except in
- 9 violation of that statute, and that's where we draw the
- 10 global line. So that when you got to torts, you'd look
- 11 at the individual situation rather than draw a
- 12 categorical line.
- MR. FREDERICK: Yes, you would, but the
- 14 principles this Court has applied in looking at that
- 15 broad line -- I'm trying to suggest that there might be
- 16 situations in which those principles, where the union is
- 17 serving as the gatekeeper, thereby not allowing a person
- 18 to vindicate his individual rights in the tort context,
- 19 to be not --
- JUSTICE SOUTER: I agree with you, but I
- 21 think -- I don't want to put words in Justice Breyer's
- 22 mouth --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Very helpful of you.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: But I thought what he was
- 25 getting at is, if I hold for you here, am I going to

- 1 have to hold for you in every case in which somebody has
- 2 in effect a tort claim which is subject to an
- 3 arbitration clause?
- 4 MR. FREDERICK: And the answer is no. I
- 5 thought --
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: Then I replicate my
- 7 question because what I'm thinking is simply that there
- 8 are thousands, maybe tens of thousands, kinds of claims
- 9 that people go to arbitration over. And what I'm
- 10 wondering here is if you win here, what is the set of
- 11 such claims that I have now said that a union, through a
- 12 collective bargaining contract, can force the employee
- 13 against his will to go to arbitration over? I don't
- 14 have a feeling for that from the briefs. I don't have a
- 15 feeling that you want to say that discrimination claims
- 16 are special in that regard, that there's no line in that
- 17 regard, or that there's some other line.
- 18 MR. FREDERICK: Well, Justice Breyer, I
- 19 think that your question really is getting at the theory
- 20 behind collective bargaining agreements and what extent
- 21 the union can exercise control over the individual
- 22 rights and circumstances of employment. That question
- 23 is a very complex question over which many, many --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, can you give me a
- 25 hint as to the principle?

1	(Laughter.)
2	MR. FREDERICK: I well, I think that
3	there are limits, of course, on the union's authority
4	that have been recognized in this Court's decisions, and
5	I don't think that ruling in the workers' favor in this
6	circumstance opens up any kind of Pandora's box at all,
7	because all we are arguing for is that the
8	Gardner-Denver line, which was written by this Court
9	unanimously more 30 years ago, continue to be the law of
10	the land, as the Court has reaffirmed it in cases like
11	
12	JUSTICE ALITO: What if a collective
13	bargaining agreement requires the arbitration of
14	discrimination claims that are not based on Federal law?
15	Maybe they are based on they are based on State law
16	that goes further than Federal law, or maybe they are
17	based on a type of discrimination that's prohibited by
18	neither Federal nor State law. Maybe it's
19	discrimination against young people under 40. Could
20	those be those would still be discrimination claims
21	with the same potential for with a potential for a
22	conflict of interest. Could they be subjected to
23	mandatory arbitration?
24	MR. FREDERICK: I I think that is a
25	harder case Justice Alito but I think that the answer

- 1 under this Court's decisions in Gardner-Denver points
- 2 the way here, in footnote 19 of the decision. Where the
- 3 union controls that process and where the union is a
- 4 potential defendant in that circumstance, the workers'
- 5 individual rights cannot be subordinated --
- 6 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What about --
- 7 MR. FREDERICK: -- to the union's control.
- 8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- if it's not a
- 9 statutory right; it's just a wrongful discharge? One
- 10 practical problem is so often these are overlapping
- 11 claims. You can say, "I was discriminated against
- 12 before because of my age. I was arbitrarily
- 13 discriminated against. It was a wrongful discharge. It
- 14 was a discharge without just cause." Usually, there's
- 15 multiple claims that can be made, and some of them would
- 16 be bargainable, I mean, would come under the union -- I
- 17 mean if it was just a question of the worker says, "I
- 18 was discharged without just cause, " no title VII or
- 19 anything else, that would come under the arbitration
- 20 clause, wouldn't it?
- 21 MR. FREDERICK: Yes, and I think that there
- 22 have been conditions of employment and discharge that
- 23 have been arbitrable, and I don't see that there is a --
- 24 an issue there where -- except where that intersection
- 25 with the statutory discrimination rights occurs. And

- 1 Congress has made a different policy judgment with
- 2 respect to individual waivers of such rights in having
- 3 those --
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why has it? Why has it? I
- 5 mean, let's assume that my gripe with my employer is
- 6 that he hasn't paid me my salary for the last two
- 7 months. Now, you can't take away my right to that
- 8 unless I voluntarily waived it. What is sacrosanct
- 9 about the fact that my grievance here has some
- 10 discrimination attached to it?
- 11 Your briefing talks as though it is
- 12 something totally apart from a mere economic right.
- 13 Ninety-nine percent of the time, you're talking about
- 14 economics. "I was fired because of discrimination." "I
- 15 wasn't promoted because of discrimination, and therefore
- 16 I lost this -- this amount of money or that amount of
- money."
- 18 Why is it unthinkable that the -- that the
- 19 employee would have to go through the union-prescribed
- 20 arbitration for the fact that he wasn't paid for the
- 21 last three months but does not have to do it for an
- 22 economic injury that occurs because of discrimination?
- MR. FREDERICK: Well, I'm not sure actually
- 24 in answering your hypothetical that they would
- 25 necessarily have to go through the union on the

- 1 nonpayment because of the Fair Labor Standards Act case.
- 2 This Court in Barrentine said that, where an FLSA claim
- 3 is at issue, the worker does not -- is not confined or
- 4 precluded after arbitrating at the union grievance
- 5 process from bringing an FLSA suit in court.
- 6 So I want to reserve, accepting all of your
- 7 hypothetical, Justice Scalia, but in further answer to
- 8 the point, I think it's important to keep in mind that
- 9 in the discrimination context, you're talking about more
- 10 than just money. Here my clients are older workers who
- 11 are forced into more physically strenuous positions that
- 12 they had gotten away from by virtue of their growth in
- 13 seniority at the building.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, isn't that
- 15 kind of conflict always present whenever you have
- 16 collective action? I mean, you may be a particularly
- 17 good worker and could demand a higher wage than the
- 18 union has negotiated, but you're still bound by the
- 19 collective bargaining agreement. That happens in every
- 20 situation where you have collective action.
- 21 MR. FREDERICK: Certainly, Mr. Chief
- Justice, but where Congress has made a choice that
- 23 individual claims for antidiscrimination rights need to
- 24 be vindicated in particular ways, and where this Court's
- 25 --

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: WELL, CHEY CON'C
2	have to be vindicated in particular ways. The
3	individuals can agree to arbitrate these claims, and
4	they would be the arbitration would be binding.
5	MR. FREDERICK: Certainly, but there is
6	individual consent in that circumstance. I would like
7	to make a couple of other points before closing.
8	One is that on pages 4 to 5 in the brief in opposition
9	to cert we specifically raise the issue that the union
10	controls the arbitration, and there is no opportunity
11	for individual arbitration under this collective
12	bargaining agreement.
13	There is nothing in the provision set out in
14	the petition appendix that gives individual rights the
15	individuals the right to arbitrate under this
16	collective bargaining agreement. The payment provision
17	calls for 50 percent by the employer and 50 percent by
18	the employee with the employer having the sole right to
19	terminate the arbitrator for any or no reason at all.
20	JUSTICE SCALIA: You did raise that issue,
21	but you didn't say that the consequence of that issue
22	was that you win. You said the consequence of the fact
23	that that issue was involved in this case was a good
24	reason not to for us to accept cert. And we didn't
25	take your advice on that.

1 MR. FREDERICK: Well --2 JUSTICE SCALIA: But it's a totally 3 different issue whether because of that question you --4 you should -- you should win the case. 5 MR. FREDERICK: Certainly, the interpretation of the collective bargaining agreement is 6 7 fairly included within the question presented. this Court found in Wright in a situation where it 8 granted certiorari on the very same question here but 9 10 then looked at the specific provisions of the collective 11 bargaining agreement to determine that, in fact, under 12 the facts there a different rule applied for a clear and 13 unambiguous waiver. 14 All we are saying here is that under this 15 provision there is no opportunity for the individual to 16 arbitrate, and that raises a -- a problem analogous to 17 the one that is in Wright. We think that is fairly 18 included within the question presented and that the 19 Court can affirm on that basis. Certainly where the Second Circuit had relied on precedent that said that 20 21 where the individual doesn't have a right, that it is union control of arbitration, that is consistent with 22 23 Gardner-Denver. 24 JUSTICE SCALIA: It doesn't have to be 25 within the question presented. You -- you can sustain

- 1 the judgment below on any ground.
- MR. FREDERICK: Well, I think that --
- 3 JUSTICE SCALIA: The only question is
- 4 whether we will -- we will agree that we should inquire
- 5 into new ground. That's all.
- 6 MR. FREDERICK: My only point is that this
- 7 is one of those fuzzy areas where we are not making an
- 8 independent, alternate ground of affirmance. I think
- 9 our argument is fairly included within the question
- 10 presented and can be affirmed on the basis of that
- 11 argument.
- 12 If the Court has no further questions --
- 13 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What about the argument
- 14 that you are -- if you win this case, you are subjecting
- 15 the employee to a worse situation because the employer
- 16 will simply say: Fine, I don't have to bargain anything
- 17 with the union. If you want to work in this workplace,
- 18 you sign an arbitration agreement that says you have no
- 19 access to the court, and you have to -- just like in
- 20 Gilmer, just like in Circuit City.
- 21 MR. FREDERICK: Well, Justice Ginsburg, I
- 22 guess I'd answer that question by saying, we will pay
- 23 our money and take our chances in the sense that the
- 24 unions here are supporting the workers where the unions
- 25 are acknowledging that there is this kind of conflict of

- 1 interest. And the question of whether or not imposing
- 2 arbitration on individual workers would be a condition
- 3 of employment, that is a question that you can safely
- 4 leave for another day.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, they may go
- 6 the other way. They may say: Look, we don't like to
- 7 arbitrate. In fact, the arbitration is a great benefit
- 8 to workers because it's very expensive to bring these
- 9 claims, even with the prospect of recovering fees.
- 10 Most of them like the idea that the union is
- 11 going to stand up for them and take it to management,
- 12 but they could say: Look, we don't want it. If -- if
- 13 you are discriminated against, you know, sue us.
- 14 MR. FREDERICK: Mr. Chief Justice, in fact,
- 15 empirically that's not correct. There is a study that
- 16 is cited in a footnote in one of the amicus briefs that
- 17 arbitration is more expensive than bringing civil
- 18 litigation. And it's because the -- under -- under
- 19 their provision if you pay 50 percent of the
- 20 arbitrator's costs, you can run up quite a big tab that
- 21 you would not have to pay --
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But under my
- 23 scenario, the employer wouldn't have to pay for
- 24 arbitration. There would be -- there would be no
- 25 arbitration at all.

- 1 MR. FREDERICK: Well, under your scenario, I
- 2 think where the employer would control the arbitral
- 3 process, the arbitrator knows who is buttering his
- 4 bread.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No. There is no
- 6 arbitration. The employer says: Look, I don't think I
- 7 discriminate. I've got a good record. I'm not going to
- 8 agree to arbitrate claims. I'm going to make people go
- 9 to court because there will be fewer claims brought.
- 10 MR. FREDERICK: And -- and that has been the
- 11 law for 30 years, and we think it should continue to be
- 12 the law, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 13 If the marketplace is going to help weed out
- 14 those claims, that's certainly the province of lawyers
- 15 taking these cases and clients deciding whether or not
- 16 to take it to litigation.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, I mean, my point
- 18 is that there are benefits to employees from arbitration
- 19 as well.
- 20 MR. FREDERICK: Certainly --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But the employer may
- 22 not agree to it. If he doesn't have any protection, if
- 23 it doesn't buy him anything, if employees can still go
- 24 to court, what's the -- what's the point?
- 25 MR. FREDERICK: But that's why this Court

- 1 has always said that individual consent and agreement is
- 2 a fundamental precept of arbitration, and where that
- 3 agreement is absent, a worker should not be forced to
- 4 that route. Thank you.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 6 Mr. Frederick.
- 7 Mr. Gannon.
- 8 ORAL ARGUMENT OF CURTIS E. GANNON
- 9 ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES,
- 10 AS AMICUS CURIAE,
- 11 SUPPORTING THE RESPONDENTS
- 12 MR. GANNON: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
- 13 please the Court:
- 14 Respondents' fundamental right to a
- 15 workplace free of invidious, class-based discrimination
- 16 is something their union had no power to barter away in
- 17 collective bargaining, and the union --
- 18 JUSTICE BREYER: I -- I just want to be sure
- 19 that at some point you'd answer this question, if you
- 20 can: I -- I -- the issue in front of us, as I see it,
- 21 is just what you said: When can a union require the
- 22 worker to accept arbitration rather than a court case in
- 23 an instance where the union member has not signed a
- 24 special waiver? That's the question, right? Okay.
- 25 And what I think some of us were struggling

- 1 for here is: If we say yes to you they can force them,
- or no to you they can't, what's the principle?
- Now, the easiest kind of case where you tend
- 4 to think they can force the worker into arbitration is
- 5 where the right grows out of the collective bargaining
- 6 agreement, period.
- 7 Then we have what we were talking about with
- 8 Justice Souter, a common law tort claim. Then we might
- 9 have a State law giving a claim. Then we might have a
- 10 Federal law like this one giving a claim.
- 11 And we just heard, as soon as Justice Scalia
- 12 thought of such a case, then the response was, which was
- 13 the FLSA: Oh, well, maybe we can't, you know, force the
- 14 worker to give that one up either.
- 15 So what is the line here that we are drawing
- 16 with this case? Is it a line that says discrimination
- 17 laws, Federal, are special? Federal laws are special?
- 18 State laws are special? Common law is special?
- 19 Collective bargaining, too? What is the principle?
- MR. GANNON: Yes, Justice Breyer. This
- 21 Court's cases have not yet described a specific line,
- 22 and --
- JUSTICE BREYER: That's why I am asking you
- 24 for the principle.
- 25 (Laughter.)

- 1 MR. GANNON: I think that the -- the best
- 2 line that we have is -- is stated in both Gardner-Denver
- 3 and Barrentine as contrasting statutory rights that are
- 4 related to collective activity, and especially economic
- 5 activity, are the kinds of things that are normally
- 6 delegated to the union. Those are the sorts of things
- 7 that the union can actually engage in collective
- 8 bargaining about. And when the union negotiates the
- 9 underlying right, then it makes perfect sense that the
- 10 labor arbitration framework that's set forth here would
- 11 continue to resolve disputes that are arising under --
- 12 out of that specific right.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Why -- why doesn't this
- 14 come within that?
- MR. GANNON: Because --
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why don't many of these
- 17 cases, if not most of them, come within that? The union
- 18 negotiates the salaries for various levels, and then the
- 19 person says: I should be at this level. The only
- 20 reason I didn't get it was that I was discriminated
- 21 against.
- MR. GANNON: Well, I -- I think, Justice
- 23 Scalia --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: You -- you call it a
- 25 non-economic -- phooey, it's an economic case.

- 1 MR. GANNON: But I think what's important,
- 2 Justice Scalia, is -- is, though -- is the line that the
- 3 Court stated in Barrentine: That if a statute is
- 4 designed to give specific, minimum protections to
- 5 individual workers, then that's the sort of thing that
- 6 the union doesn't have the power to engage in collective
- 7 bargaining over.
- 8 And so your salary may well be something
- 9 that the union can normally bargain about. But if you
- 10 want to assert that the -- that the employer or the
- 11 union -- because both are the types -- the types of
- 12 entities that can be charged with discrimination under
- 13 title VII or the ADA or these other statutes -- the
- 14 reason that they gave you a lower salary was on the
- 15 basis of something for which you had a Federal statutory
- 16 protection, then -- then you have an independent
- 17 statutory right that the union's majoritarian
- 18 decisionmaking processes should not be in the process of
- 19 controlling.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: It is not taking away the
- 21 right. The -- the union is not taking away the right.
- 22 It's just saying to vindicate it, you have to go through
- 23 arbitration instead of to the courts.
- 24 MR. GANNON: Yes. And the difference is
- 25 that the union is making the decision about where the

- 1 claim will be vindicated. And in this case in
- 2 particular, the union is going to control whether the
- 3 claim will actually be able to be officially vindicated.
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You -- you focus on
- 5 the fact that Congress has given an individual right,
- 6 but for the many matters that you say are the subject of
- 7 collective bargaining, you don't need a statute. I
- 8 don't need a statute to negotiate with someone whether I
- 9 get paid \$20 an hour or \$15 an hour for a particular
- 10 job. And, yet, that is something that you give up when
- 11 you join the union, and you are subject to collective
- 12 bargaining.
- MR. GANNON: Absolutely, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, why isn't it
- 15 -- why isn't it the same with these statutory rights?
- 16 Why aren't they subject to collective bargaining as
- 17 well?
- 18 MR. GANNON: Well, I -- even the employer
- 19 here is not claiming that the underlying statutory right
- 20 is subject to collective bargaining. They are just
- 21 saying --
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No. No. I am --
- 23 the forum -- the forum for asserting the right.
- 24 MR. GANNON: Well, in this instance Congress
- 25 gave individual employees the right to bring a civil

- 1 action in a judicial forum as a means of enforcing their
- 2 antidiscrimination claims. And although arbitration may
- 3 always provide an alternative forum to that, this Court
- 4 has repeatedly made clear that arbitration is always a
- 5 matter of contract. And it does not impose on the
- 6 employer any more than on the employee a requirement
- 7 that they arbitrate a claim when they --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why would any
- 9 employer want to agree to arbitration under this system?
- 10 He gets nothing from it. You said you get to -- to
- 11 arbitrate except when you don't arbitrate.
- MR. GANNON: Well, with -- Mr. Chief
- 13 Justice, I don't think that that's true. Since 1974,
- 14 this has been the law of the land, and it is been even
- 15 after Gilmer in every circuit except the Fourth Circuit.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That just begs the
- 17 question that your interpretation of Gardner-Denver is
- 18 correct.
- 19 MR. GANNON: Well, it -- it is the
- 20 prevailing interpretation in every circuit that has
- 21 considered the question since Gilmer except the Fourth
- 22 Circuit. And if you look at the empirical data that's
- 23 mentioned in some of amicus briefs, including in
- 24 particular the amicus brief of the National Academy of
- 25 Arbitrators, it is true that even when there is just a

- 1 labor arbitration machinery that was invalid under the
- 2 terms of Gardner-Denver and would not be binding on the
- 3 employee if the employee happens to lose in that
- 4 arbitration, in most of those cases when the employee
- 5 loses that arbitration, he does not go on to file an
- 6 independent case --
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Your position -- so
- 8 your position is going to hurt most employees, because
- 9 assuming that the employer wants to arbitrate, the union
- 10 gets something in return for agreeing to that. I don't
- 11 know what it is, another 50 cents an hour, if you agree
- 12 to arbitrate all these claims. Well, you don't get that
- 13 anymore, because an employer is not going to agree to
- 14 arbitrate if it -- if the employees don't have to
- 15 arbitrate.
- 16 MR. GANNON: Well, we don't think that there
- is any reason why the employees will not be able to make
- 18 agreements with the employers, as was made possible in
- 19 Gilmer. And so that the point is that it just can't be
- 20 a vicarious agreement to arbitration on behalf of the --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, the employees
- 22 have no -- no leverage. I mean, if the -- if the
- 23 employer wants to say, look, if you want to work here,
- 24 you've got to arbitrate -- I mean, the employees don't
- 25 have bargaining leverage. That's the whole reason you

- 1 have a union.
- 2 MR. GANNON: Well, I mean, there was an
- 3 argument in Gilmer that they didn't have leverage,
- 4 either. And the Court stressed that as long as the
- 5 employee has actually agreed to it, that -- and -- and
- 6 as long as the arbitral forum is going to be adequate to
- 7 provide for effective vindication of the underlying
- 8 statutory rights, then -- then the arbitral forum would
- 9 be adequate --
- 10 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Suppose the employer did
- 11 have the practice that the Chief Justice suggested, it
- 12 tells each employee you have to sign an arbitration
- 13 form, could the union in its collective bargaining
- 14 negotiations say that you will withdraw this form and
- 15 that you shall not impose this obligation?
- MR. GANNON: Well, that's -- as
- 17 Mr. Frederick mentioned and is as discussed in several
- 18 of the briefs, that's an undecided question of labor
- 19 law. The National Labor Relations Board --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: I'm asking your view. If
- 21 a case came up to it, how would that be decided --
- MR. GANNON: Well --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Because I'm concerned it's
- 24 the same thing the Chief Justice mentioned. I just
- 25 don't think the employer is going to get very much under

- 1 this interpretation. And that may, ultimately, hurt the
- 2 employee.
- MR. GANNON: We think that as long as the
- 4 employees have been -- have been able to indicate
- 5 exactly the same level of individual agreement that was
- 6 upheld in Gilmer and that the arbitral forum itself is
- 7 going to be adequate, that that takes care of that half
- 8 of the question.
- 9 The National Labor Relations Board, which
- 10 has -- which would be entitled to deference on this
- 11 question and which has never spoken to the labor law
- 12 question of what role the unions might be able to play
- in helping facilitate the agreements negotiated between
- 14 the employers and the individual employees, it could
- 15 come out in at least three different ways.
- 16 One of them is the arrangement outlined in
- 17 the ALPA D.C. Circuit decision that -- that Petitioners
- 18 rely upon. But, of course, that's an instance where
- 19 there were two completely separate agreements. The
- 20 employment arbitration was agreed to by the employees
- 21 before they are even represented by the union. It was
- 22 at the outset of the establishment of the employment
- 23 relationship, which Mr. Frederick discusses.
- 24 JUSTICE SOUTER: But doesn't it boil down --
- 25 doesn't your argument really boil down to this: That

- 1 the only case in which it's really going to matter is
- 2 the case in which the arbitration agreement contains a
- 3 clause that gives the union plenary authority over the
- 4 disposition of the claim? And I say that for this
- 5 reason. If -- if this is outside the subject of
- 6 mandatory bargaining, then the employer can impose it;
- 7 in effect, as a matter of individual contract.
- 8 If it's within the subject of mandatory
- 9 bargaining but it's not effective unless the employee
- 10 also signs at the time of the incident or at the time he
- 11 is hired an individual waiver, then, in fact, the only
- 12 case in which it's going to make any difference as to
- 13 whether you win or he wins is the case in which the
- 14 agreement has got a clause in there that gives the union
- 15 plenary authority to dispose of the claim.
- 16 Isn't that correct?
- MR. GANNON: Well, not necessarily, Justice
- 18 Souter, because there are all sorts of other attributes
- 19 of the arbitral forum that might -- might well be
- 20 relevant to the question of whether it's sufficient to
- 21 effectively vindicate the underlying substantive rights.
- 22 In Gilmer itself, the Court specifically considered
- 23 whether the employee, Mr. Gilmer, would have an
- 24 opportunity to play a role in selecting the arbitrator.
- In this instance, even under Petitioner's

- 1 view of the CBA, which we don't think is supported by
- 2 the text of the CBA, this -- these employees are still
- 3 stuck with an arbitrator who has been chosen by the
- 4 employer and by the union. And those are the two
- 5 entities that have already decided that their claim is
- 6 meritless.
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: You're just using more
- 8 variables to Justice Souter's question. If those
- 9 variables are satisfied, what's -- what is your answer
- 10 to his question?
- 11 MR. GANNON: If the variables are --
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: You're saying that this
- 13 might be -- this might not be true and that may not be
- 14 true, but suppose all of those other requirements are
- 15 satisfied?
- 16 MR. GANNON: We think that there needs to be
- 17 individual agreement in order to comply with Gilmer
- 18 because of the underlying inherent tension between the
- 19 collective interests of the union and the individual
- 20 interests of the employees, especially in
- 21 antidiscrimination statutes.
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 23 Mr. Salvatore, you have four minutes
- 24 remaining.
- 25 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF PAUL SALVATORE

1	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
2	MR. SALVATORE: Thank you, Mr. Chief
3	Justice. A couple of quick points in response.
4	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Salvatore, would you
5	straighten out this business it seems about who pays?
6	Mr. Frederick said that 50 percent would have to be paid
7	by the employee. If the union bows out and there is
8	just the employer and the employee in the arbitration,
9	that the employee would have to pick up 50 percent. I
LO	think I understood him to say that.
L1	MR. SALVATORE: And I refer you, Justice
L2	Ginsburg, to page 47a of the joint of the petition
L3	appendix, which contains the mainframe arbitration
L4	Article VI of this collective bargaining agreement, the
L5	last paragraph
L6	JUSTICE GINSBURG: What page did you did
L7	you reference?
L8	MR. SALVATORE: 47a of the petition
L9	appendix, the last paragraph on that page.
20	JUSTICE SCALIA: Article VII, no? Article
21	VII?
22	MR. SALVATORE: I'm sorry?
23	JUSTICE SCALIA: You said Article VI. Isn't
24	it Article VII, if it's on 47a?

MR. SALVATORE: Article VI starts on 43a.

25

- 1 It goes all the way over to 47a of the petition
- 2 appendix, right before the ellipses at the bottom of the
- 3 page.
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: Oh, I see. Okay.
- 5 MR. SALVATORE: Again, VI.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I got you.
- 7 MR. SALVATORE: The costs of the Office of
- 8 the Contract Arbitrator shall be shared equally in a
- 9 manner determined by the union and the RAB. The way
- 10 that the parties -- the bargaining parties have
- 11 determined that these costs be shared is that if -- if
- 12 the union is not involved in a case, the employer pays.
- 13 And -- and so, that's -- I mean, that's right from the
- 14 --
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Where does that appear?
- 16 JUSTICE SOUTER: Is that written down
- 17 somewhere?
- 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: Where does that appear?
- 19 MR. SALVATORE: That's -- that's the -- the
- 20 agreement between the collective bargaining parties.
- 21 It's not -- it's not written down beyond that -- that --
- 22 that place. The office -- that place in the contract.
- 23 The Office of the Contract Arbitrator is -- is -- is a
- 24 place. It's an arbitration forum. It's like going to
- 25 the American Arbitration Association.

1 It has hearing rooms. It -- it -- there --2 it has administrators who assign the arbitrators. The 3 arbitrators aren't picked out of -- you know, by one 4 side or the other. Yes, they are put on the panel by --5 by the bargaining parties, but they are picked by a case 6 administrator. 7 There are 700 arbitrations that go on in 8 this industry every year, and that's why instead of going to the American Arbitration Association, these 9 10 parties a long time ago set up their own. A couple --JUSTICE GINSBURG: If the -- if the idea is 11 12 that the union cedes its right to the worker, then 13 doesn't it have to -- doesn't the burden go with the 14 right as well? I mean, the -- if the union would pay, 15 you're saying that the employer will just accept that 16 the employer picks up the entire tab? 17 MR. SALVATORE: Yes, Justice Ginsburg. And 18 there are -- are several points. First, there is no 19 conflict here in this case. The union did the right thing. It turned the claim over to the individual 20 21 employees with their private counsel and let them go 22 arbitrate it themselves. They refused. This isn't a Magnavox situation. The union is not --23 24 JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, they didn't turn it

over, did they, until the action had been brought in the

25

- 1 Federal court? I mean, they didn't -- maybe I'm wrong
- 2 in this, but I didn't think that on day one they -- they
- 3 said, oh, well, because the union doesn't want to
- 4 proceed with this, you're welcome to chuq ahead by
- 5 yourself.
- 6 MR. SALVATORE: Let me explain that time
- 7 frame, Justice Souter. What happened here was the claim
- 8 was originally tendered by these employees to the union
- 9 to bring an arbitration. The union decided after the
- 10 first hearing day with the arbitrator that they couldn't
- 11 go forward for whatever reasons -- it's not in the
- 12 record -- and then they -- several months went by, these
- 13 employees filed with their counsel at the EEOC under
- 14 Waffle House, we did nothing and waited and the --
- 15 representing the employers, and then the -- the lawsuit
- 16 was filed.
- 17 At that point the record is clear that
- 18 demand was made on -- on the employee's counsel,
- 19 Mr. Kreisberg -- it's in his affidavit -- that -- that
- 20 he return to Arbitrator Pfeiffer to the pending
- 21 arbitration and continue in that forum, and he refused
- 22 to. That was the basis of the motion to compel.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 24 The case is submitted.
- MR. SALVATORE: Thank you.

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