## Indiana Election Commission Minutes February 27, 2024

**Members Present:** Paul Okeson, Chairman of the Indiana Election Commission ("Commission"); Suzannah Wilson Overholt, Vice Chair of the Commission; Karen Celestino-Horseman, member; Litany A. Pyle, Member.

Members Absent: None.

**Staff Attending:** J. Bradley King, Co-Director, Indiana Election Division of the Office of the Secretary of State (Election Division); Angela M. Nussmeyer, Co-Director of the Election Division; Matthew Kochevar, Co-General Counsel of the Election Division; Valerie Warycha, Co-General Counsel of the Election Division; Abbey Taylor, Campaign Finance staff, Indiana Election Division; Michelle Thompson, Campaign Finance staff, Indiana Election Division.

Others Attending: Ms. Stella Anderson; Mr. Kyle Babcock; Mr. Raymond Baker; Ms. Ali Bartlett; Mr. Scott Bieniek; Ms. Christine Bohm; Ms. Beth Boyce; Mr. David Crooks; Ms. Tamie Dixon-Tatum; Mr. Mark Dole; Mr. Bronson Nicholas Dossett; Ms. Lisa Fisher; Ms. Chunia Graves; Mr. Keith Graves; Mr. Greg Hahn; Mr. Mitchell Harper; Ms. Michelle Harter; Ms. Kelli Heuer; The Hon. Andrea Hunley, Indiana State Senator; Mr. Thomas John; Mr. Benjamin Kester; Mr. Trent Lester; Ms. Myrna Martin; Mr. Carl McGiliger; Ms. McSpadden; Mr. David Nicholson; Mr. Brett Roy; Ms. Shackleford; Mr. Ryan Shouse; Ms. Sarah Shydale; Mr. Sutton; Ms. Deandra Thompson; Mr. Thomas Wheeler; Mr. Russell Willis; Ms. Kelly B. Wittman; The Hon. Victoria Garcia-Wilburn, Indiana State Representative; Mr. Will Young; Mr. David Ziemba.

#### 1. Call to Order:

The Chair called the February 27, 2024 meeting of the Commission to order at 10:00 a.m. EST in Conference Room B, Indiana Government Center South, 402 West Washington Street, Indianapolis.

#### 2. Transaction of Commission Business:

The Commission proceeded to transact the business set forth in the Transcript of Proceedings for this meeting prepared by Maria W. Collier, RPR, CRR, of Stewart Richardson and Associates, which is incorporated by reference into these minutes.

The following scrivener's errors are corrected:

Page 25, line 4, replace "disappearing" with "disagreement".

Page 40, line 1, replace "September 28" with "December 8".

Page 51, line 12, after "is", insert "an".

Page 72, line 10, replace "Associate" with "Commissioner".

Page 82, line 11, replace "cost" with "costly".

Page 219, line 5, replace "Tommy" with "Tom".

Page 219, line 5, replace "IC 3-8-2-7(4)(a)" with "IC 3-8-2-7(a)(4)".

Page 228, line 12, replace "computer" with "computerized".

Page 252, line 20, replace "an empiric" with "a pyrrhic".

Page 256, line 18, replace "Mr." with "Ms."

Page 260, line 22, replace "State Voter System" with "State Voter Registration System".

The Commission adjourned its meeting at 4:38 p.m. EST.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Bradley King J. Bradley King

Co-Director

Co-Director

APPROVED:

Paul Okeson, Chairman

## In the Matter Of:

## INDIANA ELECTION COMMISSION PUBLIC SESSION

# **Transcript of Proceedings**

February 27, 2024



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2	INDIANA ELECTION COMMISSION
3	PUBLIC SESSION
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7	Conducted on: February 27, 2024
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10	
11	Conducted at: Indiana Government Center South 402 West Washington Street, Conference Room B
12	Indianapolis, Indiana
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15	
16	A Stenographic Record by:
17	Maria W. Collier, RPR, CRR
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	STEWART RICHARDSON & ASSOCIATES Registered Professional Reporters
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1	APPEARANCES
2	INDIANA ELECTION COMMISSION:
3	Paul Okeson - Chairman
4	Suzannah Wilson Overholt - Vice Chairman
5	Litany Pyle - Member
6	Karen Celestino-Horseman - Member
7	
8	INDIANA ELECTION DIVISION STAFF:
9	Angela M. Nussmeyer - Co-Director
10	J. Bradley King - Co-Director
11	Matthew Kochevar - Co-Counsel
12	Valerie Warycha - Co-Counsel
13	Michelle Thompson - Campaign Finance Director
14	Abbey Taylor - Campaign Finance Director
15	
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1	INDEX OF AGENDA ITEMS		
2		PAGE	
3	Call to Order and Determination of Quorum	5	
4	Documentation of Compliance with Open	5	
5	Door Law	3	
6	Approval of September 22, 2023 Indiana Election Commission Minutes	6	
7		7	
8	Campaign Finance Ratification of Settlement Agreements and Approval of Orders from Previous Commission Meeting	/	
9		9	
10	Candidate Challenges	_	
11	Motion to Dismiss:	14	
12	Bartlett v. Carter (Cause 2024-01)	14	
13	Challenge Hearings:	15	
14	Kester v. Trump (Cause 2024-02)	15	
15	Whitley v. Biden (Cause 2024-03)	67	
16	Wittman v. Dixon-Tatum (Cause 2024-04)	70	
17	Martin v. Nicholson (Cause 2024-05)	100	
18	Crooks v. Moore (Cause 2024-06)	118	
19	Bohm v. Schrader (Cause 2024-07)	120	
20	Urick v. Shydale (Cause 2024-08)	127	
21	Eldridge v. Shydale (Cause 2024-30)	127	
22	Willis v. Brown (Cause 2024-09)	143	
23	Heuer v. Brown (Cause 2024-13)	143	
24	Willis v. King (Cause 2024-10)	149	
25	Heuer v. King (Cause 2024-14)	149	

1	INDEX OF AGENDA ITEMS (Cont.)		
2		PAGE	
3	Willis v. Pfenninger (Cause 2024-11)	153	
4	Heuer v. Pfenninger (Cause 2024-25)	153	
5	Bieniek v. Lester (Cause 2024-20)	183	
6	Dole v. Fox (Cause 2024-21)	190	
7	Baker v. Thompson (Cause 2024-22)	193	
8	Boyce v. Mahant (Cause 2024-23)	205	
9	Anderson v. Graves (Cause 2024-24)	216	
10	Camp v. Bonahoom (Cause 2024-27)	250	
11	Hathaway v. Breaux (Cause 2024-28)	256	
12	Roy v. Dossett (Cause 2024-29)	258	
13	Weingarten v. Banks (Cause 2024-31)	271	
14 15 16	Advisory Opinion Request from the Honorable Victoria Garcia-Wilburn, Indiana State Representative, and the Honorable Andrea Hunley, Indiana State Senator	272	
17	Challenge Hearings:		
18	Anderson v. Graves (Cause 2024-24)	297	
19	(resumed)		
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I call to order the Indiana Election Commission meeting public session, today's date Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., Conference Room B here at Government Center South.

The following members of the Commission are present: Myself, Chairman Paul Okeson; Vice Chair Suzannah Wilson Overholt; Member Karen Celestino-Horseman; and to my right, Member Litany Pyle. I also recognize the Indiana Election Division staff: Co-Director Brad King, Co-Director Angie Nussmeyer, Co-Counsels Matthew Kochevar and Valerie Warycha, to my right. And again our good friend Court Reporter Maria Collier from Stewart Richardson Deposition Services is joining us once again.

And before we go on, I'd like to remind everyone, for purposes of getting the record straight, if you are providing any testimony or interaction with the Commission today, please speak clearly, state your name, and then spell it for the court record.

With that, we'll move on to documentation of the Open Door Law. I request co-directors have given proper notice.

Mr. King.

2.2

```
MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, members of the
 1
     Commission, on behalf of myself and Co-Director
 2.
 3
     Nussmeyer, we certify that notice of this meeting
 4
     was given in compliance with the Indiana Open Door
 5
     Law.
 6
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Thank you.
 7
          Next we have approval of our September 22,
     2023, Commission meeting minutes. I recognize the
 8
 9
     co-directors to present the minutes.
10
          MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, on behalf of myself
11
     and Co-Director Nussmeyer, we present to you the
12
     September 22, 2023, Indiana Election Commission
13
     minutes and recommend them to you for your
14
     approval.
15
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So moved.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Thank you.
17
          Is there a second?
18
          MS. PYLE:
                     Second.
19
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Any discussion?
20
          Hearing none on the minutes, all those in
21
     favor signify by saying "Aye."
2.2
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
23
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
24
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
25
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Aye.
```

The "ayes" have it. The minutes are approved.

Anyone planning to testify today or provide any information to the Commission I would like to take administration of the oath by Matthew Kochevar, so please stand.

Mr. Kochevar.

2.

2.2

MR. KOCHEVAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If you plan on testifying before the Indiana Election Commission, please rise, raise your right hand, and say "I do" after recitation of the oath.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm, under the penalties of perjury, that the testimony you are about to give to the Indiana Election Commission is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Please say "I do."

ALL: I do.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you, Mr. Kochevar.

We have a pretty heavy schedule today with some campaign candidate challenge hearings that we will get to in a moment. Before heading into that, we will take care of a couple of housekeeping items, campaign finance matters. The Commission will consider approval of campaign finance orders from previous meetings and the ratification of settlement agreements regarding campaign finance

violations. 1 2 I recognize Ms. Taylor and Ms. Thompson from 3 the Election Commission campaign finance staff to 4 present these matters. MS. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, members of the 5 Commission, behind your campaign finance tab in 6 your binders, there's a list of committees that are 7 ready to ratify that have agreed to pay the 8 settlement agreement and waive a hearing. 9 10 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a motion to ratify 11 the campaign finance settlements as presented? 12 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So moved. 13 MS. PYLE: Second. 14 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Having a motion and a 15 second, is there any discussion on the matters, any 16 questions? 17 Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying "Aye." 18 19 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 20 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 21 MS. PYLE: Aye. 2.2 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. 23 The "ayes" have it. The matters are settled. 24 Thank you. Next we'll establish the --25 CHAIRMAN OKESON:

```
1
     oh, we have adoption of the orders?
 2
          MS. THOMPSON:
                         Yes.
 3
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yes.
                                  Sorry.
 4
          MS. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, members of the
 5
     Commission, Orders 2023-422 through 2023-431 have
     been prepared from the actions taken at the
 6
     September 22, 2023, meeting, and these orders are
 7
     ready for adoption.
 8
 9
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a motion to
10
     approve?
11
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So moved.
12
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Second?
13
          MS. PYLE:
                     Second.
14
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Any discussion, questions?
15
          All those in favor signify by saying "Aye."
16
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
17
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
18
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
19
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
20
          The "ayes" have it. Thank you. Appreciate
21
     it.
2.2
          Now we'll move on to candidate challenge
23
     hearing procedures. We will now begin
24
     consideration of candidate challenges based on the
25
     order in which the challenges were filed with the
```

```
1
     Election Division, subject to consolidating some
     challenges which present essentially identical
 2
     issues to the Commission. I remind everyone to
 3
 4
     identify yourself again when you begin speaking,
 5
     and spell your name for the court reporter.
 6
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Mr. Chairman.
                           Yes.
 7
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
 8
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Before we begin, can
 9
     we go ahead and get consensus on using the hand
10
     stamp for signatures.
11
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Valerie, any concern?
12
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        No.
13
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            There's a motion to consent.
     Second?
14
15
          MS. PYLE: Second.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Any discussion?
17
          Hearing none, all those in favor.
18
          Aye.
19
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
20
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
21
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
2.2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we'll do it by consent.
23
          And I will say, as I read off these
24
     procedures, we intend to keep them. We will run it
25
     fairly and efficiently, try and get through the
```

entire list and agenda of cases, so please abide by them, if you will.

2.

2.2

In the past, the Commission has followed certain procedures for conducting candidate challenge hearings, and I move the Commission use the following procedures for today:

When each candidate challenge is called, the hearing will begin by recognizing Election Division staff to provide information about documents provided to Commission members, including candidate challenge forms, and the notice given to the candidate and the challenger.

Unless there is objection, the documents provided to the Commission by the Election Division will be entered into the record of this meeting.

After the Election Division staff completes its presentation, the challenger will be recognized first. The challenger or the challenger's authorized representative, if written authorization was given for said representative and filed with the Election Division, may present their case for no more than five minutes, unless the Commission votes to allow additional time for the presenter.

Commission members may ask questions during a presentation, but the time spent answering these

questions will not be counted against the presenter's time. The Election Division may signal the Chair when the presenter's time is up.

2.

2.2

If the presenter offers additional documents or other physical evidence not previously received by the Division or the Commission, the original must be provided to the Election Division, and I would direct you to Valerie Warycha, to my right, to hand such documents to preserve the record.

The candidate or candidate's representative will be recognized following the last presentation by a challenger. The candidate may present their case for no more than five minutes as well, unless the Commission votes to allow additional time for that presenter.

Following presentation by a challenger, the candidate may cross-examine the challenger.

Following the presentation by a candidate, the challenger may cross-examine the candidate.

Cross-examination in all cases will be limited to two minutes, unless the Commission votes to allow additional time. The cross-examination must be limited to questions regarding statements made by the presenter during their opening five minutes.

Following presentation by a candidate, the

challenger may present a rebuttal for no more than 1 2 two minutes. 3 The Commission may dismiss the cause of any 4 challenger who has failed to appear to testify before the Commission. 5 If more than one challenge has been filed 6 against an individual candidate, the Commission may 7 consolidate the challenges, but will provide the 8 9 same equal -- excuse me -- same amount of time for 10 each individual challenger and equal time to the 11 candidate. 12 Is there a second to my motion for the 13 Commission to adopt these procedures for today's 14 hearings? 15 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second. 16 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Any discussion? Any 17 questions? Hearing none, all those in favor signify by 18 19 saying "Aye." 20 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: 21 Aye. 2.2 MS. PYLE: Aye. 23 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. 24 The "ayes" have it, and those are the 25 procedures.

```
1
          Moving right into the agenda then, we have the
     Bartlett v. Carter challenge, 2024-01, in the
 2
 3
     matter of the challenge to Autumn Carter, candidate
 4
     for Democratic Party nomination for State
 5
     Representative, District 95. After filing the
     challenge in this matter, the challenger, the
 6
     Honorable John Bartlett, filed a request to
 7
     withdraw the challenge.
 8
 9
          The Election Division has provided copies of
10
     the candidate filing challenge form, copy of notice
11
     given in this matter, and a copy of the motion to
12
     withdraw in your binders.
13
          I therefore move that the Commission dismiss
14
     this cause based on the challenger's withdrawal of
     the challenge. Is there a second?
15
16
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
                                   Second.
17
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Having a second, any
18
     discussion? Any questions?
19
          Hearing none, all those in favor signify by
20
     saying "Aye."
21
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
                                   Aye.
22
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
23
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
24
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Aye.
25
          The "ayes" have it. The motion is adopted and
```

this case is dismissed. The Election Division will be directed to include the name of Ms. Carter on the certified list of primary candidates sent to county election boards.

Next on the agenda in filing order we have Kester v. Trump, Challenge 2024-02, in the matter of the challenge to Donald J. Trump, candidate for the Republican Party nomination for President of the United States.

The Election Division has provided copies of the candidate filing challenge form, with attachments, and a copy of notice given in this matter in your binders.

I now recognize Mr. Kester, the challenger, for presentation, unless...

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Yes. Mr. Chairman, if I might, before we get started on this, I just wanted to disclose the fact that I believe it's the Trump campaign that is represented by the same firm where my husband is employed.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: And he is an owner.

But I do not believe that creates -- is having any impact on my judgment, but I guess Mr. Wheeler might disagree.

```
1
         MR. WHEELER: Oh, not at all. But I left the
     firm at the end of the year, so I'm now with the
 2
 3
     firm of Bose McKinney & Evans.
 4
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Oh, right, you left.
 5
     I forgot.
         MR. WHEELER: So I just wanted to clarify.
 6
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: There never would
 7
    have been a conflict. Mr. Wheeler knows my
 8
 9
    background. Okay. Never mind. I forgot that
10
    part.
11
                            Presume for the record all
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
12
    has been appropriately dealt with.
13
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
                                   Yes.
14
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Anything from the
     co-division before we start on this matter?
15
16
         MR. KOCHEVAR: I don't know how both
     co-directors want to go, if we want to ping back
17
18
    and forth on presenting the record or if we want to
19
    handle them based on the candidate and which
20
    primary they're running in. I forget how we
21
    usually do this. It's been two years. But I defer
2.2
    to both co-directors on how they want to present.
23
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: You don't use it on a daily
24
    basis, so...
          MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, my recollection is
25
```

```
1
     that Mr. Kochevar is correct that, in terms of
     staff presentations, depending upon the party
 2
 3
     affiliation of the candidate involved, the Election
     Division for that staff will make an initial
 4
 5
     presentation of the record.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            I think that's how we listed
 6
 7
     it in the proceedings.
 8
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        Sure.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Valerie.
 9
10
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        So this one is filed by Benjamin
11
     Kester. He is challenging the candidacy of Donald
12
     J. Trump for U.S. president, and the claim is the
13
     candidate is disqualified from holding public
14
     office under Section 3 of the 14th Amendment of the
     U.S. Constitution.
15
16
          And I believe this is Mr. Kester that is here
17
     to make his presentation.
                      I have a few documents.
18
          MR. KESTER:
19
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Before you go on,
20
     Mr. Kochevar, do you have anything to add to that?
21
          MR. KOCHEVAR: I have nothing to add to that.
22
                        I'll start the five minutes
          MS. WARYCHA:
23
     then.
```

MR. WHEELER: Mr. Chairman, we have a preliminary objection.

```
CHAIRMAN OKESON: Do we take that first?
 1
 2.
          State your name, and you know the game.
 3
          MR. WHEELER:
                        Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our
 4
     preliminary objection --
 5
          THE REPORTER: Could you state your name,
 6
     please.
                        I'm sorry. Thomas Wheeler with
 7
          MR. WHEELER:
     the law firm of Bose McKinney & Evans. Ali
 8
 9
     Bartlett, one of my partners, is here, as is Carlin
10
     Yoder, who is chairman of the Trump campaign in the
11
     state of Indiana.
12
          What we filed with the Commission members just
13
     now is a preliminary jurisdictional objection to
     the filing. There's two motions there. The first
14
     motion is based on --
15
16
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Sorry to interrupt.
17
     But have you provided copies of this to the
     Commission?
18
19
          MR. WHEELER: We have not yet.
20
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Can we get those
21
     first, please.
2.2
          MR. WHEELER:
                        Absolutely. I'm sorry.
23
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: And before you go on,
24
     Mr. Wheeler, are we following proper procedure
25
     here?
```

```
1
          MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, I'll defer to
     counsel, but the proceedings of the Commission
 2
 3
     today are governed by the Administrative Orders and
 4
     Procedures Act and Indiana Code 4-21.5.
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Does it permit such a filing
     at the time of Commission?
 6
          MS. WARYCHA: I believe it does, yes, sir.
 7
 8
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Okay. Thank you. Sorry
 9
     about that.
10
          MR. WHEELER: And I'll just summarize.
11
     There's two motions here. The first motion is a
12
     preliminary jurisdictional motion based on
13
     IC 3-8-1-6(a). As was noted, Mr. Kester's
14
     challenge is based on Section 3 of the 14th
15
     Amendment of the Constitution. IC 3-6-1-6(a), and
16
     this is noted in the motion you have in front of
17
     you, that statute specifically excludes sections
     like -- a Section 3, 14th Amendment challenge.
18
19
     limits candidate challenges to, and I quote, "A
20
     candidate for the office of President and Vice
21
     President of the United States must have the
22
     qualifications provided in Article 2, Section 1,
23
     Clause 4."
24
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Can you please give
25
     us the citation again.
```

MR. WHEELER: Sure. And it's set out fully in the motion. IC 3-8-6-1-6(a). It's four sections behind the base candidate challenge statute.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Sorry We're getting your

2.

2.2

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Sorry. We're getting your documents distributed.

MR. WHEELER: No, no. I understand, and I apologize.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: You're fine. So right now we're talking about the first motion.

MR. WHEELER: The second motion is the federal argument, and it's the argument that we made in front of Supreme Court on the fact that Section 3 doesn't apply to the president.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: And I'm sorry. You said 3-8-6-6, but it looks like it's all 3-8-1-6.

MR. WHEELER: 3-8-1-6. Did I misspeak? I apologize. 3-8-1-6.

So the statute under which the challenge has been made is the general statute. It is the statute that applies to all candidates, state or federal, that want to be on the ballot. The specific statute that deals with the president makes it clear that you cannot bring just any challenge under the Constitution. You may bring challenges under Article 2, Section 1, that's it,

which is the basic qualifications for the president, not under Section 3, 14 or anywhere else.

2.

2.2

And if you look at the second paragraph, part (b), the General Assembly, in this statute, considered Section 3, 14 challenges and limited those to presidential electors. As you know, there's five constitutional officers in the U.S. Constitution. It's the president, vice president, Senate, House, and then presidential electors.

So they made it clear, the legislature's made it clear in this statute, which is the more specific statute -- I know all of you guys are all attorneys here. The Indiana Supreme Court has made it absolutely clear that a specific statute controls over a general statute. This is a specific statute that says that the only challenge to a president can be made in Indiana under the qualifications under Article 2, Section 1, Clause 4 of the Constitution. It limits Section 1, which is the basis for the candidate challenge.

Therefore, our position that we take in the motion is that the Commission lacks the jurisdiction to even hear this, which is a preliminary thing that the Commission, sitting as

administrative law judges, has to deal with before hearing the challenge.

2.

2.2

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Mr. Wheeler, how do you reach that conclusion? I mean, it just states that you have to have the qualifications of one particular clause of the Constitution, but it does not state, it does not state, that this is the only basis upon which you can be challenged. It's just simply stating Indiana says you have to meet these qualifications.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Do we have to take a motion and second it before we have any engagement here?

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: We can ask questions.

MS. WARYCHA: Yeah, you can ask questions.

MR. WHEELER: Sure, it does. The statute, the general statute -- and all of our statutes, we have general provisions and then we have specific provisions. The general provision applies to all candidates, which is the first part upon which it's brought. The Constitution says -- the Indiana Constitution says statute and IAC rules.

With respect to this statute, this is a specific statute passed to deal with the president and the vice president, and then under it it deals with presidential electors, which makes it clear

- 1 | that the Indiana General Assembly, when it enacted
- 2 | that, intended to limit, in that specific
- 3 | circumstance, the challenge to a president only to
- 4 | Article 2, Section 1 challenges and does not
- 5 | contemplate Section 3 because part (b) does add
- 6 that for presidential electors.
- 7 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Well, that's
- 8 | presidential electors. We're not having
- 9 presidential electors here, and, in fact, the fact
- 10 | that they didn't say the only qualification you
- 11 | must meet is this, I mean for president and vice
- 12 | president, also says something.
- Now, my question is, since we just got your
- 14 brief, do you have any legislative history, any
- 15 case law, anything that supports your
- 16 | interpretation of this?
- 17 MR. WHEELER: Sure. If you look in there, the
- 18 | statute was amended in 1993. Before that, both the
- 19 presidential section, part (a) and part (b), just
- 20 | had the qualifications section. In 1993, the
- 21 | legislature looked at those two and they amended
- 22 | part (b) to add Section 3 in there. They did not
- 23 | amend it to section (a).
- Now, as I'm sure you know, Indiana doesn't
- 25 | have any legislative history, but we can presume --

1 | and the Indiana Supreme Court has done that.

2 | That's why you read the statutes to harmonize with

3 each other. We can presume, when they amended the

presidential election statute to add presidential

electors section, part (b), to add in 1993

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Section 3 of the 14th amendment, they chose not to

make that same amendment in part (a) dealing with

the president, which is basically a recognition of

the arguments that have been made to the Supreme

Court, which is that it doesn't apply to the

11 | president or the vice president, Section 3.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I'm sorry, but I just cannot agree with that interpretation because, for an elector, what you're saying is that you cannot be an insurrectionist to help to serve to cast electoral votes for the president of the United States. It's not saying there that, as a candidate for president of the United States, it doesn't say that you can or can't be an insurrectionist.

So, I mean, I would be much more comfortable with this -- we tend to, here at the Commission, to be inclusive and, you know, to hear a challenge like this. And, you know, I am personally not comfortable with adding a brand-new interpretation of this law that has not been interpreted by

Indiana court.

2.

2.2

And true, while we don't have legislative history, what I should have said was the disappearing about histories regarding the adoption of the Indiana constitutions or any amendments and such, so I apologize for my misstatement. But since we are now traversing a brand-new area of law, I am not comfortable giving this provision such a narrow, narrow reading and would prefer just to proceed to hear the challenge.

So I would move that we deny the motion and proceed to the challenge.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yes. First, motion. Is there a second?

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I have a second, a motion and a second.

Any questions, Litany?

MS. PYLE: I don't think so.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Any discussion?

This is, unless I'm mistaken, the first time
I've dealt with such a motion on the other side of
it, so I appreciate you giving me a couple minutes.
But I certainly applaud your attempts and the legal
gymnastics to get to this point.

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1
          But we have a motion to -- how did you state
 2.
     that, deny the --
 3
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: To deny the motion to
 4
     dismiss.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Motion to deny the motion
 5
     and proceed with the challenge.
 6
 7
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: And we have a second.
 8
 9
          Okay. All those in favor signify by saying
10
     "Aye."
11
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
12
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
13
          MS. PYLE: Aye.
14
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
          The "ayes" have it. We will proceed with the
15
16
     challenge.
17
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And, Mr. Wheeler, I
     also applaud your creativity. You are an excellent
18
     lawyer. We all know that.
19
20
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Mr. Wheeler, I think, if I
21
     understood correctly, your second motion was more
2.2
     for background and not to each --
23
          MR. WHEELER: The second motion probably is
24
     appropriately dealt with after because it is a
25
     Section 3, Article 14 actual argument, and it's our
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1
     Supreme Court argument, for all intents and
     purposes. So it's more appropriately addressed
 2.
 3
     after the challenger speaks.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So this constitutes a
 4
 5
     motion, and I guess we need to vote on it.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Are you talking about
 6
     the motion to take --
 7
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: For the second.
 8
                                             So he has a
     second filing that he made to the state Election
 9
10
     Commission.
11
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: But, Mr. Wheeler, you
12
     were just saying that you think that this should be
13
     addressed when we get into the challenge itself?
14
          MR. WHEELER: It's essentially a merits
15
     argument. So think of -- I made a 12(b)(1), okay,
16
     and this is essentially a 12(b)(6) motion.
                            Is this a motion -- would
17
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
     you be willing to withdraw it for the purposes of
18
19
     this proceeding?
20
          MR. WHEELER: We'll withdraw it -- I want to
21
     keep it on based upon the -- but we're willing to
2.2
     hold in abeyance until the challenger makes his
23
     argument.
24
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: The way I understand,
25
     Mr. Chairman, what he's saying is that we'll go
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1
     ahead, go through the challenge, and at the end he
     can then -- using the evidence and what has been
 2
 3
     presented and discussed, he can then make a motion
     before we decide.
 4
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So to clarify, this is not
 5
     jurisdictional; correct?
 6
 7
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   No.
          MR. WHEELER: It is jurisdictional, yes.
 8
 9
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: But it goes to the
10
     merits.
11
          MR. WHEELER: But it is also jurisdictional
12
     because the point of the argument is that under
13
     Indiana elections, Section 3, Article 14, my
14
     position, the General Assembly has made it clear
15
     that that does not apply, one.
16
          This argument says, look, under federal law,
17
     the federal law makes it very clear that Section 3,
18
     Article 14 does not apply to the president, which
19
     is, again, jurisdictional because, if it doesn't
20
     apply to the president, then no violation of the
21
     Constitution and therefore you wouldn't have
22
     jurisdiction to hear it.
23
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        Mr. Chairman.
24
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Yeah.
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25

MS. WARYCHA:

When Ms. Bartlett handed me the

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1
     motion, she handed me both, I think, out of
     convenience, but I really only heard her say
 2.
 3
     something about the first. So I do think that we
 4
     could move forward with the challenge and then they
 5
     could move to the second motion even though --
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: And alternatively, if
 6
     we need to, couldn't we have a motion to table the
 7
     second motion, and then we can --
 8
 9
          MS. WARYCHA: I think that would work, yes.
10
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: If we need to clarify
11
     things.
12
          MR. WHEELER: I thought that's what the
13
     Commission and I had --
14
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Yes. I think we're
15
     on the same page.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So motion to?
17
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I'll change the
18
     language. Yes. I move to table the second motion
19
     to dismiss.
20
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Second?
         MS. PYLE:
21
                     Second.
2.2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: All those in favor signify
23
     by saying "Aye."
24
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
25
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
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1
          MS. PYLE:
                    Aye.
 2
                            Thank you for your help.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
 3
                 Back on track. Where were we?
 4
     Mr. Kester?
                       I have a few documents.
 5
          MR. KESTER:
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you please say your
 6
 7
     name and spell it for the court record.
          MR. KESTER: My name is Benjamin Kester,
 8
     B-e-n-j-a-m-i-n, K-e-s-t-e-r.
 9
10
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Thank you.
11
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Mr. Kester, has the
12
     other side been given copies of the documents?
13
          MR. KESTER: No. One of those copies is for
14
     them.
            I'm sorry.
15
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            We can share. Go ahead.
16
          MR. KESTER: Thank you for agreeing to hear
17
     this challenge today. So I'll try to stick to the
18
     facts here. He already referenced the challenge
     under Indiana Code 3-8-1-2, that the Election
19
20
     Commission shall deny a filing if you determine
21
     that the candidate has not complied with the
2.2
     applicable requirements for the candidate set forth
23
     in the Constitution.
          So a few facts here. I believe that Mr. Trump
24
25
     has failed to meet the qualifications to serve
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under the Constitution of the United States,
Section 3 of the 14th Amendment, that "No person
shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress,
or elector of President and Vice President, or hold
any office, civil or military, under the United
States, or under any State, who, having previously
taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an
officer of the United States, or as a member of any
state legislature, or as an executive or judicial
officer of any State, to support the Constitution
of the United States, shall have engaged in
insurrection or rebellion against the same, or
given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But
Congress may vote by two-thirds of each House
remove such disability."

2.

Congress has, in fact, conducted a vote, so on January 13th, the House of Representatives voted on House Resolution 24, which you have in front of you, the 117th Congress, that in a bipartisan majority, in a vote of 232 to 197, found that President Trump incited an insurrection against the Government of the United States. This went to the Senate February 13th after Mr. Trump was out of office, and, again, a majority, 57, found him guilty, 43 did not. I recognize that this failed

to meet the bar for impeachment. Mr. Trump was out of office at this time. So those are the facts.

2.

I want to go on and read something from the January 6th report that was referenced in the Government Accountability report. You have statements in here showing the statements that Mr. Trump made to the crowd that was gathered, but I want to speak about what that insurrection detailed.

So over the course of about seven hours, more than 2,000 protesters entered the U.S. Capitol on January 6th, disrupting the peaceful transfer of power and affecting the safety of the vice president and members of Congress. The attack resulted in assaults on at least 174 police officers, including 114 Capitol Police and 60 D.C. Metropolitan Police Department officers. These events led to at least seven deaths and caused about 2.7 billion in estimated costs.

During this insurrection, Mr. Trump gave aid by withholding federal law enforcement and the National Guard, which is detailed in the January 6th report. The full title of that is "Final Report of the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United

States Capitol." That's on page 67, and I've provided it.

2.2

He also gave comfort to the insurrectionists by public statement validating their chants as they assaulted the Capitol. He posted this on Twitter saying "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our country and our Constitution, giving states a chance to certify a correct set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth."

That's also quoted in the papers I've given you.

And he has continued after the insurrection to advocate for those people who assaulted police officers and entered the Capitol illegally.

Famously, right after these events, he said "These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously and viciously stripped away from the great patriots who have been badly and unfairly treated for so long. Go home with love and in peace. Remember this day forever."

And more recently, his Truth Social account has advocated to free all J6 political prisoners, is how he refers to them.

1 So with that, I will take your questions or yield to the candidate. 2 3 MS. WARYCHA: It just went five. 4 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Thank you. All 5 right. They have the right to question; correct? 6 Yeah. Mr. Wheeler, do you have any questions? 7 MR. WHEELER: We have no questions. 8 9 sorry. 10 CHAIRMAN OKESON: You're up. 11 MS. BARTLETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and 12 members of the Commission. My name is Ali 13 Bartlett, A-l-i, B-a-r-t-l-e-t-t, and I'm also with 14 Bose McKinney & Evans. While we feel that the merits of the challenge 15 16 were not directly addressed by the challenger, 17 before we address the merits of our argument, we do 18 have one additional procedural motion that we'd 19 like to proceed with. This motion is a motion to 20 disqualify, and we'd like to proceed with this 21 ahead of our substantive argument. 2.2 Under Indiana Code Section 4-21.5-3-9(d), we 23 have a right to disqualify a commissioner who has 24 expressed personal bias, prejudice, or other

prejudice for anyone as a member of these

25

proceedings. And so under the law, the members of the Commission, when hearing these challenges, function as administrative law judges and therefore cannot specifically express prejudice against any of the parties.

2.2

As you'll see, we've provided an Exhibit A, which we believe does illustrate prejudice by one of the members of the Commission, and therefore we would move to disqualify Commissioner

Celestino-Horseman prior to proceeding with the substantive arguments.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: This is the Exhibit A?

MS. BARTLETT: Yes, this is the Exhibit A.

And we'll give you a second to review the motion.

We would like to note, under the same statute and with all due respect, there was an opportunity for Commissioner Celestino-Horseman to recuse herself at the outset. Because the recusal did not take place, therefore we're moving forward with this motion to disqualify because we feel there is a level of impartiality that's been publicized ahead of this hearing. And while we hoped for a recusal, we didn't have it, so we'd like to proceed with the motion.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Mr. Chair, may I

1 respond to this motion? CHAIRMAN OKESON: Go ahead. 2. 3 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Thank you. Since it 4 does involve me. They've attached one article. For clarification for those in the audience who 5 aren't familiar with it, I do a monthly column for 6 the Indianapolis Business Journal, and in one of my 7 columns, I did an article that was titled 8 9 "Candidates should be judged by the company they 10 keep" and brought up the question about certain of 11 our candidates running for state offices and their 12 endorsement of Donald Trump. 13 Now, we are political appointees to this Commission, Ms. Bartlett, so you may not be aware 14 15 of this. But what happens is that --16 MS. BARTLETT: I'm aware. 17 18 forward by the Democratic Party chairman --19

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: -- our names are put

MS. BARTLETT: Sure.

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MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: -- and their names -please let me finish. Don't respond while I'm talking. And their names are put forward by the Republican Party chairman.

The overriding thing that we have going on here -- and we work well together for the most

part. I'd say 99 percent of the time we work well together. But the overriding thing that we all have to do is we take an oath to protect and support the Constitutions of Indiana and the United States and protecting the voters and voter integrity and all of that.

2.2

So, you know, I'm not quite sure what your point is. In actuality, can I be looking at the law -- I'm a lawyer; I do it all the time. And you're a lawyer, and you know that we have many personal opinions regarding the facts of our cases, but we go forward and we follow the law because that's what we are required to do. And that is the same situation here.

So I would respectfully ask my fellow commissioners to deny this motion for me to recuse myself, because I don't intend to. And secondly, I find it very peculiar that they wait until this point in the process, after I have spoken up about not granting your motion to dismiss, and just raise this now, letting the other side go forward and just raising this now, because it leads me to conclude that they just didn't like what I said or how I voted. So I would not encourage that kind of behavior either. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN OKESON: This is new water for me. 2 Valerie.

MS. WARYCHA: Yeah. This is the first time I've seen it come up as well, so I'm reading here on the fly, but I do have some concerns for you, Mr. Chairman. As I'm looking at 4-21.5-3-6, I'm going to paraphrase here, but an individual as a person presiding in a proceeding under, it's referencing AOPA, 28 through 31 of this chapter and knowingly or intentionally violates Section 11, 12 or 13 of this chapter commits a Class A misdemeanor.

And let me tell you why I bring that up for you. Bear with me as I flip around here too.

Indiana Code 4-21.5-3-12, administrative law judge prohibited acts and disqualifications, this is where it talks about an administrative law judge who comments publicly, except in a hearing scheduled or proceeding about pending or impending proceedings, which I haven't read the article. I'm just going off of what --

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: It doesn't have any --

MS. WARYCHA: -- was just said a second ago.

I just want to bring that up so that you're aware

that it looks like, if a judge moves forward who would be violating 12, you could have some issues under 36 for letting that go on. I don't see a mechanism for --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: And that applies to me as the chair presiding over the proceeding.

MS. WARYCHA: As the chair. As I'm looking at 36, an individual presiding in a proceeding who knowingly and intentionally. And I wouldn't say that you violated 12, but if -- depending on what the article says, I do have some concerns about --

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I guess I would point out, so this article is dated December 8, 2023, so it was before any challenge. I guess my -- I understand what you're saying. I think that this -- I mean, all of us -- well, I guess I'm presuming that all of us engage in a certain level of political activity on behalf of our parties or we would not be sitting in these chairs, number one, right? Well, I mean, we're affiliated with our parties. I mean, that's the way it is. But the other reason we're here is because we've demonstrated that, despite our affiliations, we can rule on these matters.

But anyway, to address your point, I just want

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     to point out this article is dated September 28,
     2023, before this challenge was ever -- well, I
 2
 3
     quess I don't know the date. I'm assuming that
     Mr. Kester didn't file -- yeah, February 13, 2024,
 4
     was when he filed the challenge. So in terms of
 5
     this article, there was no challenge pending at the
 6
     time, and this is not commenting on the challenge.
 7
     It's not commenting on the proceeding pending --
 8
 9
          MS. WARYCHA: I'm just going to --
10
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: -- before the
     Commission.
11
12
          MS. WARYCHA: I apologize. I want to let you
13
     finish.
14
          I'm reading this as we're going here, but if
15
     you keep going, an administrative law judge who
16
     engages in financial or business dealings, and I
17
     don't know if you're paid for that column or any of
     those details, but it reflects on the judge's
18
19
     administrative impartialities.
20
          I would just encourage everybody to read
21
     Section 12 before we go forward of Indiana Code
2.2
     4-21.5-3-12 because that's giving -- that's, I
23
     think, what everybody needs to review here with
24
     this challenge. And then, like I said,
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Mr. Chairman, I have some concerns under 36 for

25

1 you.

2.

2.2

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I will clarify. I don't get paid any money, as much as I might like to, for doing this, but I do get a one-year subscription to the IBJ.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is that in trade for you writing the column?

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Yeah. They give that to me as my compensation so I can read my own publication.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Co-Counsel Kochevar, out of appropriateness, would you like to weigh in?

MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes, yes. Again, we're not administrative -- we don't practice administrative law except for at a Commission meeting, so these are all relatively new. But first and foremost, looking at 4-11-21.5-3-36 and looking at how it is set out, it reads "An individual who (1) serving alone or with others as an administrative law judge or as a person presiding in a proceeding under Sections 28 through 31 of this chapter and (2) knowingly or intentionally violates Sections 11, 12, or 13 of this chapter commits a Class A misdemeanor."

So that's two subdivisions separated by an

"and" clause, which under statutory construction, as I understand it, means you have to meet those two items.

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So while the second item, which my co-counsel has referred to in Sections 11, 12, and 13, may touch on those things, we are not -- I don't believe that this particular administrative law hearing touches Sections 28 through 31, only to say that because we explicitly exclude it from our election code. We put in parts of the Administrative Orders and Procedures Act. We, as a matter of practice, even before I started at the Commission ten years ago -- or sorry -- at the Division ten years ago, have explicitly removed I think those sections have to do those sections. with specific agencies, but unfortunately, since I don't have those sections in this book, I don't remember what they are.

So I feel that for Section 38, I don't feel that we do need to be worried about that since I don't believe we're meeting that subdivision 1. We are not dealing with anything that is covered under Sections -- what was it? -- 28 through 31 of this particular chapter.

Nonetheless, as for the other matters about

- 1 | disqualification, ex parte communications, all
- 2 | those things, the code is plain. I recognize that
- 3 | this motion is something that is covered in
- 4 | 4-21.5-3-9, it has been brought forward, and it's
- 5 | up to the administrative law judges, all of you, to
- 6 determine its merits and move forward.
- 7 CHAIRMAN OKESON: So what you're saying is the
- 8 | motion filed to dismiss does follow those
- 9 guidelines? Is that what you're saying?
- 10 MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes, it would be. A motion has
- 11 | been brought forward that an administrative law
- 12 | judge, a member of this Commission, is
- 13 disqualified. Your action, you have to decide that
- 14 | either you uphold the motion and you disqualify
- 15 | same member or --
- 16 CHAIRMAN OKESON: And I do that singly?
- MS. WARYCHA: I don't think so. No, I think
- 18 | that would be a vote.
- 19 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay.
- 20 MS. WARYCHA: And just to comment on what 28,
- 21 | 29, and 30 is, those are final orders and authority
- 22 | to issue for the ultimate authority, which in this
- 23 | matter you all would be the ultimate authority at
- 24 | the agency level.
- 25 So, Matthew, just so you know I do think 28

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1
     would apply. It's all about issuing orders, and I
     think we just don't have it in our code book
 2.
 3
     because we don't issue a lot of final orders.
 4
          MR. KOCHEVAR: I'd have to study it a little
 5
     bit more, but I would just say, nonetheless, I
     think the next step is clear is to handle this
 6
     motion as you would handle any other ones like the
 7
     first motion to dismiss and that we go from there.
 8
 9
          I'll just say this: I mean, if there's any
10
     disagreement here, there is an ability to appeal
11
     these matters into Marion County court. And that's
12
     all I have to say because I'd have to look at the
13
     sections myself when I can get into my laptop.
14
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Mr. Chairman, I --
15
     okay.
16
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I have a question.
17
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Sure.
18
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Looking at
19
     4-21.5-3-12 and what they're arguing has to do with
20
     financial or business dealings, I guess my -- I
21
     read that provision now and I'm wondering, so it
2.2
     doesn't define what financial or business dealings
23
           I'm wondering if, for example, campaign
24
     contributions that we make fall into that.
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May I?

25

MS. BARTLETT:

1 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: No. We're just 2. discussing up here. Just wait. 3 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Does anyone have an opinion? VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So I'm asking the 4 5 attorneys because I'm thinking, you know, we don't recuse ourselves because of the fact that we've 6 made campaign contributions to candidates, and our 7 campaign records are public. I mean, I just --8 9 MS. WARYCHA: Mr. Chairman, I think at this 10 point I agree with Counsel Kochevar that it would 11 be proper for the four commissioners to take a vote 12 on how they want to handle this motion to 13 disqualify Commissioner Celestino-Horseman. 14 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Remind me, there are certain 15 things that require a majority; there are certain 16 things that require unanimity. Where does this fall? 17 18 MS. WARYCHA: If this was to go two-two, you 19 would deadlock. You would need a majority of three 20 to make that change. 21 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. 2.2 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So it needs the 23 majority to pass. 24 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. So moving back, that

did not count against your five minutes.

25

1 MS. BARTLETT: No.

2.

2.2

CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a motion from you. Is there anything you'd like to add before we consider that motion?

MS. BARTLETT: Yes. And just to be clear, the basis for the motion does not have anything to do with financial compensation or anything of that nature, and this motion is made with all due respect. Under the law, it brings about the question of a judge's personal bias or prejudice, and the details in the article that struck us were related to the comments on January 6th, the insurrection, et cetera, and, with all due respect, not related to the financial or business interests.

And so, you know, the motion is made on the basis of the personal bias or prejudice. That's why we brought about the motion. Obviously yield to the Commission's discretion. Just bringing it forth as part of the procedure.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: And just another clarification. If the motion were upheld, what happens next?

MS. WARYCHA: I believe you would go forward with the challenge.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: With three members?

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1
          MS. WARYCHA: Yes, if that was the way -- if
     it was upheld, yeah, you would move forward with
 2
 3
     the three members and still have the hearing.
 4
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So we don't have to
 5
     have four to proceed?
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Which always struck me as
 6
     odd because doesn't the challenge require a
 7
     unanimous vote of four?
 8
 9
          MS. WARYCHA: No.
                             You have to have three.
10
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Okay.
11
          MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes. To provide context here,
12
     the statutory requirement for action by this
13
     Commission is three. It's not a majority. So if
14
     you were to uphold and Ms. Celestino-Horseman had
15
     to step out, you still need three votes on whatever
16
     motions you take.
17
          MR. WHEELER: Just one point of clarification,
18
     and I apologize. I believe when I was sitting in
19
     that chair, wouldn't they be able to appoint a
20
     proxy if she recused?
21
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        Yes.
22
          MR. WHEELER:
                        So you would have four members.
23
     I assume you've got proxies in the back ready to go
24
     when people do -- all right. Maybe not.
25
     typically in situations like this where someone
```

```
1
     would recuse, you would appoint a proxy, so I
     assume that --
 2
 3
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, at running the risk of
 4
     looking too far down the road, why don't we just
 5
     tackle this motion to disqualify Member Karen
     Celestino-Horseman. We'll vote on that and we'll
 6
     kind of go from there, if that's all the same.
 7
          Do we need a second? So is there a motion to
 8
 9
     accept the respondent's motion to disqualify?
10
          Okay. So is there a motion to deny the
11
     request to disqualify?
12
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So moved.
13
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have a motion.
                                                   Ιs
14
     there a second?
15
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Second.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a motion and a
17
     second. So that motion is to deny your petition to
     dismiss.
18
19
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: No, to disqualify.
20
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: To disqualify. Sorry.
21
     Motion upon motion. So we have a motion to deny
2.2
     the request. We have a second. All those in favor
23
     of that motion signify by saying "Aye."
24
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
25
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
```

```
1
                            Those not in favor signify
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
 2
     by saying "No."
 3
          No.
 4
          MS. PYLE:
                     No.
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So the motion to deny does
     not pass. So where does that leave us?
 6
          MR. KING: Move on with business.
 7
          MS. WARYCHA: I'll start the clock when you're
 8
 9
     ready, Mr. Chairman.
10
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I'm sorry. I didn't
11
     hear. Where --
12
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            We proceed.
13
          MS. WARYCHA: Are you ready for me to start
14
     the clock?
15
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Yes.
16
          MS. BARTLETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
17
     members of the Commission. I appreciate your
     consideration of our procedural motions.
18
19
          While we don't feel that Mr. Kester's
20
     presentation of the challenge hits on the
21
     substantive basis of his argument, we will respond
2.2
     with five points that largely mirror the initial
23
     motion to dismiss and is centered around a
24
     jurisdictional argument at its core.
25
          First and foremost, the petitioner's challenge
```

is legally defective on its face. Presidential qualification disputes are nonjudicial political questions under the Constitution of the United States. Under the United States Constitution, political questions are, quote, beyond the court's jurisdiction and, likewise, beyond the jurisdiction of state election boards.

2.2

In other states where we've heard similar challenges and otherwise, courts have observed that, quote, the vast weight of authority has held that the Constitution commits to Congress and the electors the responsibility of determining matters of presidential candidates' qualifications.

Similar decisions involving presidential candidate John McCain, Barack Obama, Ted Cruz, and Kamala Harris, quote, the Constitution assigns to Congress, and not to the courts, the responsibility of determining whether a person is qualitied to serve as president. So whether a candidate may legitimately run for office is a political question that the Court may not answer.

Further, the constitutional authority of the Electoral College in Congress is specifically highlighted as it comes to the qualifications for the office of president of the United States. The

political question doctrine instructs the Court to refrain from superseding the judgments of the nation's voters and those federal government entities the Constitution designates as the proper forums to determine the eligibility of presidential candidates. That's a quote from a case out of the New York Supreme Court.

2.

2.2

As these courts have continually observed, the Constitution contains a host of provisions specifying how electors for president are appointed, how the electoral votes are cast and counted, what happens if the result is unqualified presidential candidate, and how Congress may respond if the voters choose someone who may be disqualified under Section 3 of the 14th Amendment. So the Constitution specifically addresses what happens but specifically refrains from granting jurisdiction over presidential qualifications to the Election Commission here today or judicial proceedings in general.

On top of that, presidential qualification disputes are not properly decided in state and local proceedings because of, quote, the potentiality of embarrassment from multifarious pronouncements by various departments on one

question. Basically we can't -- we do not have the jurisdiction to make this type of determination at the Election Commission level here today.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Any questions?

MS. BARTLETT: Sorry. I have a couple additional points here.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Just took a breath.
CHAIRMAN OKESON: Sorry.

MS. BARTLETT: The petitioner is asking the Commission to revisit a decision that's already expressly made by the United States Senate. The articles of impeachment that were brought against President Trump by the House of Representatives specifically and prominently invoke Section 3 of the 14th Amendment. President Trump's alleged incitement of insurrection on January 6th were brought about before the Senate and the House trial manager specifically asked the Senate to disqualify President Trump from future federal office holding. They did not, and they acquitted President Trump.

The petitioner asks the Commission to second-guess and undo that decision that was made by the United States Senate already. This cannot be done without expressing lack of the respect due to coordinate branches of government. Presidential

qualification disputes are political questions and they belong in Congress.

2.

2.2

Number two, Section 3 of the 14th Amendment can easily be enforced only as prescribed by Congress. The petitioner before you today asks the Commission to determine that someone, the president, is disqualified from holding office under Section 3 of the 14th Amendment by virtue of having engaged in insurrection against the United States.

But just months after the 14th Amendment itself was enacted, the chief justice of the Supreme Court of the United States at that time himself held that this determination can only be made in proceedings prescribed by Congress. And I quote, the intention of the people of the United States in adopting the 14th Amendment was to create a disability to be made operative by the legislation of Congress in the ordinary course. For 150 years after Section 3's enactment, that's exactly how it was enforced, only as prescribed by Congress.

Now, after January 6th --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a motion to grant any further time?

1 How much do you have left? MS. BARTLETT: I can summarize the last few 2 3 points quickly, if you'd like. 4 MS. PYLE: I would move to allow that. 5 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Second. Any discussion? 6 Hearing none, all those in favor. 7 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: 8 Aye. 9 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 10 MS. PYLE: Aye. 11 MS. BARTLETT: Sure. Thank you. So 12 generally, Congress has not said anything to 13 require or authorize this board before us today to 14 investigate whether anyone is disqualified under 15 Section 3. 16 Finally, Section 3 does not apply to the 17 president, which is largely reflective of the 18 argument that my colleague previously set forth. 19 But reading the phrases in harmony with the rest of 20 the Constitution makes it quite clear that this 21 does not apply to the president, and, again, my 2.2 colleague previously made that argument. 23 So, again, it does not bar anyone from the 24 presidency. Section 3 does not specifically bar

anyone from the presidency. Again, it's reflective

25

1 of the arguments previously made by my colleague.

2 | And it actually does not bar running for office in

general. By its plain language, a disqualification

under Section 3 of the 14th Amendment prohibits an

5 | individual only from holding office, quote/unquote,

not from appearing on a ballot or being elected.

So for all of the foregoing reasons, we hold that not only does the Commission before us today not have jurisdiction over the matter, but the matter itself is not specifically addressed under Section 3 of the 14th Amendment.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you. Two-minute cross-examination. And please keep it only to the questions -- your questions raised to the material that she provided -- they provided. Sorry.

MR. KESTER: Yeah. I don't have much here.

But did I understand right that your first claim is that only presidents can be insurrectionists but any other office insurrectionists are barred from serving?

MS. BARTLETT: No. I said that Section 3 of the 14th Amendment does not apply to the office of the president of the United States specifically.

MR. KESTER: Okay. Let's see. That might be the only question that I have for you.

```
1
          Do I get two more minutes at the end?
 2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            I don't believe so.
     believe those two minutes were cross-examination.
 3
     Let me go back to my procedures. I don't think
 4
 5
     there was afforded a closing argument.
               I think your two minutes for
 6
     cross-examination on each side and rest your case.
 7
          MR. KESTER: Okay. May I address the
 8
 9
     Commission real quick?
10
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Unfortunately, your time to
11
     do that was prior to this, unless you have any
12
     further questions for the challenger.
13
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I would move that,
14
     since we extended the time for the other side and
15
     he got up and thought he meant to do
16
     cross-examination rather than conclude his response
17
     to this, I would move that we give him --
          How much time do you need, two minutes?
18
19
          MR. KESTER: One minute.
20
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Take two.
21
          I would move that we give him two minutes to
2.2
     allow him to make his statement.
23
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            There's a motion.
24
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second.
25
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: A second. Any questions?
```

1 I don't have any questions. MS. PYLE: 2 CHAIRMAN OKESON: All those in favor signify 3 by saying "Aye." 4 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 5 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 6 MS. PYLE: Aye. 7 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. All those not in favor. 8 9 MS. PYLE: I said "Aye." 10 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Oh, you said "Aye." 11 motion passes. 12 Thank you. My kids asked me last MR. KESTER: 13 night how I got selected to do this, and I thought 14 about it while I was sitting here. The framers of 15 our Constitution put it in the hands of the people 16 to bring challenges. Indiana's Constitution has 17 graciously allowed this mechanism for any voter to 18 bring these challenges, so I appreciate the 19 opportunity. 20 And I believe today you have the opportunity 21 to affirm what Congress affirmed and that many 2.2 Hoosiers observed on live television on January 6, 23 2021, that Mr. Trump incited an insurrection 24 against the United States Government and is 25 constitutionally ineligible to serve. So thank you for your time.

2.

2.2

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I'd like to ask you a question along those lines.

MR. KESTER: Sure.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: You just said it in a way that resonated with me. But it should be in the hands of the voters, so why would you want to deny the voters the chance to vote on the presidency with Donald J. Trump on the ballot?

MR. KESTER: Well, we're here today to hear challenges to the ballot. There are a lot of voters that may feel disenfranchised, if that's the right word to use, that their chosen politician isn't going to be on the ballot. Some people aren't going to qualify for various reasons, so this is the rule.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I was just echoing your statement in the form of a question.

Okav. So where are we?

MS. WARYCHA: You're ready to make a motion to vote on the matter or you can have more discussion.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Sure.

MS. PYLE: Ms. Bartlett, quick question. You were saying that the 14th Amendment, that it was about holding office and not being on the ballot,

```
1
     so is the argument there this isn't ripe?
 2.
          MS. BARTLETT:
                         Sure, yes. Correct.
 3
          MS. PYLE: I just wanted to clarify.
 4
          MS. BARTLETT: That Section 3 of Article 14
 5
     does not -- or sorry -- the 14th Amendment does not
     specifically apply to being on the ballot as a
 6
     candidate, but rather holding office and
 7
     technically not the office of the presidency in
 8
 9
     general.
                    Okay.
10
          MS. PYLE:
                            Thank you.
11
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Anyone else?
12
          So is there a motion to be offered? We have a
13
     challenge to Trump being on the ballot. Anyone
14
     want to offer a motion?
15
          MS. PYLE: I would move to deny the challenge.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a motion to deny.
17
     Is there a second?
          I'll second it.
18
          Any discussion?
19
20
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Mr. Chairman.
21
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Yes.
2.2
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Thank you. Contrary
23
     to what's been presented today regarding my
24
     position, I take this very seriously. I have
25
     practiced election law for years. I have practiced
```

constitutional law. And I take my responsibilities in that regard very, very seriously.

2.2

And contrary to what was represented previously, I didn't label Donald Trump an insurrectionist in my article. I questioned his actions on the day of January 6th, but I did not attach that label.

Now I find myself today having to sit here and actually decide the issue. And I'm going to tell you, as a lawyer looking at it with my head, as an American looking at it with my heart, this is a terrible decision to have to make.

When I accepted this appointment, I did -- as I stated earlier, I did take an oath to protect and uphold the Indiana and U.S. Constitutions, and I take that very, very seriously. The Constitution says that someone who has committed -- who is an insurrectionist cannot serve as president. But no courts -- and Ms. Bartlett capably outlined the law, of which I have read so much on all of this now, but as she outlined, those are the positions that the Trump campaign has taken. But there has been no uniform decision made by our courts of all the various points that she raised, and that is what is ultimately resting with the United States

Supreme Court. And as we are sitting here today, we do not have that direction. So, again, I am left to make my own decision.

2.

2.2

So here are my conclusions: Immediately after the November 2020 election, Donald Trump began making claims of fraud. He began to deliberately and intentionally undermine people's faith in our electoral process. As we know, he was never able to secure proof of such fraud, and he knew at the time that he was making those misrepresentations that they were untrue. We've heard this from his own staff attorneys and his staff members.

Now, Donald Trump was also well aware of the impact this information was having upon his supporters. He watched daily as the anger grew and ultimately issued a call to action. His call was, "Come to Washington, D.C., on January 6th, where like-minded people are going to gather and we're going to let our leaders know that we didn't like this election result."

Once they gathered at the Capitol, Donald J.

Trump told them, "Let's march on down there and let

Congress know how you feel. I will be there with

you." He stood up there and said that. We all

watched it on TV. He dangled himself as the

proverbial carrot from the stick to get those folks down there to the Capitol.

2.2

Now, for several hours after -- and he told them he would be there, but, as we know, he did not show up. And for several hours afterwards, no one heard anything from Donald Trump. We know he was sitting in the White House watching the violence, watching what was happening, and he took no action, despite pleas from his own daughter, he took no action to try and stop this. He didn't ask them to stop. He didn't do anything in that regard. Instead, what he was hoping, what he intended when he started all of this was to somehow stop the transfer of power. And that constitutes insurrection, as far I'm concerned.

Now, while Donald Trump didn't storm the steps of the Capitol, he is the one who aimed and pulled the trigger on the violence that occurred on January 6th, is the one who delayed and stopped the transition of power, and the only reason he spoke out later was because he saw that it was not going to succeed.

So now I am left to decide what to do. My vote today will likely not make a difference, and my life will probably be much easier if I had just

kept my mouth shut. But those who know me know that I am not one who keeps my mouth shut when I think something needs to be said.

So in support of our U.S. Constitution, in support of America, and as an American who loves her country and the law, I vote to grant the challenge. I am going to vote to grant the challenge.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: So there's a -- the motion is to deny the challenge. And I appreciate your opinion and your comments offered.

For the record, I would want to ensure that those are not the comments of this body but those of Member Karen Celestino-Horseman alone. Whether I agree or disagree with much or all of it is probably not relevant, but as I stated before, I think it's up to the people of Indiana to decide how Indiana elects its next president. And I find nothing sufficient in what's been offered today or at any other time to deny Donald Trump access to the ballot.

But we have a motion and a second.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I'd like to comment.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Please.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Sorry. I would just

1 say I wanted to comment because, while I in no way approve of the actions of Donald Trump on 2. 3 January 6th, the thing that I find odd about our 4 situation here is, in reading very carefully 5 Indiana's laws regarding what it takes to be a candidate for president on the ballot, before I was 6 looking at the constitutional provision that's 7 referenced in 3-8-1-6 with respect to presidents, 8 all it has to do with is electors. So it seems 9 10 really odd to me that Indiana law says, well, as 11 long as you can get enough electors, you can be on 12 the ballot in the general election, which seems to 13 be missing a whole lot of steps.

14

15

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So I guess, no, I'm not going to go to the General Assembly and ask them to make changes. But anyway -- I wish I thought that would be a reasonable and productive thing to do. But anyway, so looking at that, it's just strange to me that Indiana law doesn't incorporate even the very basic provisions about what it should take to be a president.

And I also -- I know that this issue is currently pending before the United States Supreme Court, and I just -- much as I wish I felt like we could do something about it here, I don't. I think

there are issues out there that need to be resolved 1 by entities other than us. 2. 3 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Got to follow what the law 4 says here in Indiana. 5 Litany? MS. PYLE: Our duty here is to defend Indiana 6 law, and I don't think that we've had any judicial 7 rulings or anything else that have showed us that 8 9 Indiana law has been violated here, so I would call 10 for a vote, Mr. Chairman. 11 CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have a motion and a 12 second to deny the challenge. All those in favor 13 signify by saying "Aye." 14 Aye. 15 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 16 MS. PYLE: Aye. 17 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Those opposed. 18 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: 19 CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have one nay. The 20 majority carries. The motion to deny 21 disqualification of Donald Trump prevails, and I would direct the Election Division to include the 2.2 23 name of Mr. Donald J. Trump on the certified list 24 of candidates sent to all county election boards.

25

Thank you.

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MS. WARYCHA: Mr. Chair.
 1
 2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Yes.
 3
          MS. WARYCHA: Just so we exhaust
 4
     administrative remedies in case somebody does want
 5
     to go to court, we need to have a motion made the
     other way so we can show it exhausted.
 6
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Actually, technically, I
 7
     think Karen did make that motion, didn't she?
 8
 9
          MS. WARYCHA: Okay. Perfect.
10
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: And I apologize.
11
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   What?
12
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Technically, at the end of
13
     your conveyance of thoughts there, you did move.
14
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I corrected myself
15
     and said I would vote to grant the challenge, and
16
     that was what was said.
17
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: What I hear you saying, for
18
     AOPA purposes, we need to have a motion to uphold.
19
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I didn't make a
20
     motion.
21
          MS. WARYCHA: You didn't.
2.2
          MR. KOCHEVAR:
                         May I?
23
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Sure.
24
          MR. KOCHEVAR: So usually during candidate
25
     challenge hearings, the huge one that I'm recalling
```

back in 2016 with the challenge to Todd Young, the two motions that have been most common have been motion to uphold the challenge, motion to dismiss the challenge. But since the motion that was made was that motion to deny the challenge, that is final action by this Commission. I would advise that there's no other motion to be made. This matter is now concluded.

2.

2.2

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you agree with that?

MS. WARYCHA: I agree with Matthew, yes.

Thank you. I just wanted to make sure we were fully exhausted. I appreciate that.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: All right. Moving on. Thank you.

Next case I have is Whitley v. Biden challenge, Cause No. 2024-03, in the matter of the challenge to Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr., candidate for Democratic Party nomination for President of the United States.

The Election Division has provided copies of the candidate filing challenge form, with attachments, and a copy of the notice given in this matter in your binders.

Anything from the co-directors before we proceed?

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1
                        All right. Just to give --
          MS. WARYCHA:
          MR. KOCHEVAR: Oh, Valerie?
 2.
 3
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        Yeah, Matthew.
          MR. KOCHEVAR: This is against a democrat one,
 4
     so I'll --
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Yeah.
 6
          MR. KOCHEVAR: So members of the Commission,
 7
     what are in your binders are as follows:
                                                It is a
 8
 9
     copy of the challenge filed by the challenger,
10
     Gabriel M. Whitley, including his statement in
11
     paragraph No. 6 of the matter of his challenge.
12
     Also before you is an appearance form filed by
13
     David Ziemba here representing Joseph Biden in this
14
     matter, as well as a copy of the CAN-7 request for
15
     presidential primary ballot placement in 2024 filed
16
     by Candidate Biden, as well as a copy of the
17
     hearing and information that we did send the
18
     hearing out timely to both parties.
19
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Thank you.
20
          Valerie, anything?
21
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        I don't have anything to add.
2.2
     Thank you.
23
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: I recognize Mr. Whitley, the
24
     challenger, for your presentation. Going once,
25
     Mr. Whitley? Going twice. No Mr. Whitley?
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```
1
          Okay. I guess we want to proceed.
                                              The
 2
     challenger isn't here.
 3
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Don't the rules
 4
     provide that if the challenger doesn't show --
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Based on the
 5
     challenger's failure to appear, I would move that
 6
     we dismiss the challenge or deny the challenge or
 7
     whatever, dismiss.
 8
 9
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would it be dismiss or deny?
10
     Either.
11
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Apparently dismiss.
12
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have a motion to
13
     dismiss the challenge based on a lack of presence
14
     from the challenger. Is there a second?
15
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Second.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Any questions, comments?
17
          MS. PYLE:
                     No.
                            Concerns?
18
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
19
          I'll take the matter to a vote. All those in
20
     favor signify by saying "Aye."
21
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
22
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
23
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
24
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
25
          The "ayes" have it. The matter is closed.
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The challenge is dismissed.

2.

2.2

MR. ZIEMBA: Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I am going to call for about a five-minute recess.

MS. WARYCHA: Say whenever we're going to come back. That's the key under AOPA. So if you want a five-minute recess, we'll be back at 11:20.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: 11:20 at this same location. (Recess taken.)

CHAIRMAN OKESON: All right. We're ready to proceed. Resuming the meeting, on my agenda I have next Wittman v. Dixon-Tatum challenge, Cause No. 2024-04, in the matter of the challenge to Tamie Dixon-Tatum, candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for governor.

Again, the Election Division has provided copies of the candidate filing challenge form, with attachments, and a copy of notice given in this matter in your binders.

## Anything?

MR. KOCHEVAR: This is for a Democratic candidate, so just to summarize, in your binder is a copy of the candidate challenge filed by the challenger. It includes an attachment titled "Candidate Filing Challenge." Also in there is an

- 1 appearance form for counsel for the challenger; a copy of their declaration -- the copy of the 2. 3 challenged candidate's declaration of candidacy, 4 the CAN-2; along with attachment of their statement 5 of economic interest required by law to be filed by the candidate when they file their CAN-2; the 6 notice of the hearing; documentation that the 7 notice of the hearing was sent to both parties. 8 9
  - In addition, I will note that counsel appearance notice was filed for the challenged candidate, and there wasn't time to have it three-hole punched and added to the binder, but it was distributed before the meeting, so that is also part of this hearing.
    - CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you, Mr. Kochevar.
  - With that, I recognize Ms. Wittman, the challenger, for presentation.
  - MR. ZIEMBA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. My name is David Ziemba. I'm representing Ms. Wittman. I entered my appearance last week.
  - CHAIRMAN OKESON: That was filed appropriately?

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11

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MR. ZIEMBA: That's correct. The spelling is D-a-v-i-d, last name is Z, as in zebra, -i-e-m, as

1 in Mary, -b, as in boy, -a, as in apple. Again,
2 I'm representing Ms. Wittman.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Did you get that?

2.2

THE REPORTER: Could you speak up just a little bit. You faded at the end.

MR. ZIEMBA: Absolutely. I'm sorry. Z, as in zebra, -i-e-m, as in Mary, -b, as in boy, -a, as in apple. Again, I'm representing Ms. Wittman in this matter, and as just a point of personal privilege, it's an honor to be in front of Associate Horseman. She inspired me to enter the law 15 years ago when I saw her take a case in the United States Supreme Court. It was an election matter, so it's an honor to be in front of her.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: And here you are.

MR. ZIEMBA: And here I am. All right.

So this was timely filed. Ms. Wittman is challenging the candidacy of Ms. Dixon-Tatum primarily on Indiana Code 3-8-2-8 that she has failed to obtain and submit the necessary 4,500 signatures, 500 in each congressional district.

To summarize before I call Ms. Wittman as a witness, Ms. Dixon-Tatum has received the following in each of the nine districts that have been certified by county clerks as well as accepted by

- 1 | the secretary of state's office: In the 1st
- 2 District, she has zero certified signatures; in the
- 3 | 2nd, she has one; in the 3rd, she has 356; in the
- 4 | 4th, she has 25; in the 5th, she has 749; in the
- 5 6th, she has 187; in the 7th, she has 463; in the
- 6 8th, she has 27; and in the 9th, she has 88.
- 7 | Collectively put together, that is 1,896
- 8 | signatures, which falls well below the 4,500
- 9 requirement. Again, the only congressional
- 10 | district that the county clerks have certified and
- 11 | the secretary of state's office has accepted is the
- 12 | 5th District, which is 749 signatures.
- 13 At this time we would call Ms. Wittman up to
- 14 | the stand to testify.
- 15 CHAIRMAN OKESON: This all goes under the
- 16 | five-minute presentation, I assume, so just to make
- 17 | you aware.
- 18 | MS. WARYCHA: We're at three minutes.
- MR. ZIEMBA: Ms. Wittman, can you please state
- 20 | your name and spell it for us.
- MS. WITTMAN: Before I do that, thank you very
- 22 | much for hearing this challenge. I appreciate your
- 23 | time and your efforts to maintain election
- 24 | integrity in the state of Indiana.
- 25 | My name is Kelly B. Wittman, K-e-l-l-y, B.,

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1
     Wittman, W-i-t-t-m-a-n.
 2.
          MR. ZIEMBA:
                       Ms. Wittman, are you a registered
 3
     voter here in Indiana?
 4
          MS. WITTMAN: Yes, sir, I am.
 5
          MR. ZIEMBA:
                       Where are you registered to vote?
                        I am registered in Precinct
 6
          MS. WITTMAN:
     WY045, which is in the township of Wayne in
 7
 8
     Speedway.
 9
          MR. ZIEMBA:
                      Did you file a challenge against
     Ms. Dixon-Tatum?
10
11
          MS. WITTMAN: Yes, sir, I did. I filed the
12
     challenge on February 14th.
13
          MR. ZIEMBA:
                       And that falls within the
14
     statutory period beforehand?
15
          MS. WITTMAN:
                        Yes, sir.
16
                       Why did you file the challenge?
          MR. ZIEMBA:
17
          MS. WITTMAN:
                        I filed the challenge because in
     Indiana, as I have worked on a campaign, the
18
19
     requirement to get three things to be on the ballot
20
     is in statute. Those three things are you have to
21
     file your declaration of candidacy, you have to
2.2
     file your financial affidavit, and you are required
23
     to get petitions from registered voters to the tune
24
     of 4,500, 500 in each of the congressional
     districts.
25
```

As I tracked petitions on all the candidates throughout that time period, and that time period is January 10th to -- I'm sorry -- prior to January 10th. Once you get to that point, you should have your signatures submitted. You have an open window to start submitting your signatures to each of the 92 clerks' offices. As I monitored petitions that were being turned in through a report that is sent out to party leaders -- it's the Indiana petition signature count by congressional district -- I tracked that Ms. Dixon-Tatum did not have the required 4,500.

I believe election integrity matters. I believe that the rules are the rules, and you have to work hard, whether you disagree with the rules or not. And it's incumbent upon us to make sure we follow the law if we're going to be an elected official.

MR. ZIEMBA: Now, Ms. Wittman, did you request the signatures, the complete file from the secretary of state's office for Ms. Dixon-Tatum?

MS. WITTMAN: Yes. On Monday, February 12th,
I filed a request for records with the Election
Commission office, reviewed that digitally, and
then came in on the 13th and went through every one

1 of the petitions that were submitted by Ms. Dixon-Tatum, came back in on the next day and 2. 3 completed a second count. I did bring a copy of the digital record that 4 5 was provided as a records request for you. that box are the petitions that were submitted by 6 Ms. Tamie Dixon-Tatum. 7 MR. ZIEMBA: And based on your personal 8 9 review, did you confirm the counts from the 10 secretary of state's office? 11 MS. WITTMAN: Yes. 12 MR. ZIEMBA: And were they short, except for 13 Congressional District 5, of the 500 requirement? 14 MS. WITTMAN: Yes. 15 MR. ZIEMBA: No further questions of 16 Ms. Wittman from me. 17 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah. If you have any 18 evidence that you referred to and you want to enter 19 it into the record, please give it to Valerie. 20 It's a box. Thank you very much MR. ZIEMBA: for that. We would submit that as Exhibit 1. 21 22 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Does opposing counsel 23 need to take a look at that?

MS. HARTER: I'll take a quick peek.

Thank you,

MR. ZIEMBA:

24

1 Ms. Celestino-Horseman. 2 There is one caveat obviously. 3 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Wait a minute. 4 time is up. 5 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yes. MR. ZIEMBA: Can I have an additional 6 30 seconds? 7 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I move that he have 8 9 an additional minute. 10 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Second? Is there a second? 11 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Oh, second. Sorry. 12 I thought you were seconding it. Second. 13 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Any concern or questions? 14 All those in favor signify by saying "Aye." 15 Aye. 16 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 17 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 18 MS. PYLE: Aye. 19 MR. ZIEMBA: One caveat to the box, because 20 it's in the record, there is a portion of the box 21 that signatures are actually separated. If you see 2.2 it and it's vertical instead of horizontal in the 23 box, Ms. Wittman, if you could tell us why that's 24 vertical. 25 MS. WITTMAN: Upon examining all of the

petitions that were in the election clerk's office, I noticed 394 blank forms. They had no signature, and they also therefore had no certification by the county clerk's office. So 394 pages I counted twice, actually three times because I wanted to make sure, and then those are flipped up because they would not be considered valid petitions for the purpose of...

2.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I have a quick question. So when you say "blank" pages, you mean there was absolutely nothing written on them?

MS. WITTMAN: Correct. If you look at the affidavit that I submitted, you'll see a screenshot. Most of them had her name, Tamie Dixon-Tatum for governor, at the top part that you're required to fill out with the office that you're running for, but then there are no sections in lines 1 through 10; therefore, those weren't submitted to the county clerks' offices to be verified because there are no signatures on them.

So blank forms were submitted as part of her record, and, again, when you fill out your CAN-2, you certify that you've met the requirements. So 394 pages were submitted knowingly that they were blank.

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1
          MR. ZIEMBA: Any other questions?
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: What's at the bottom of that
 2.
 3
     CAN-2 when you sign it?
          MS. WARYCHA: The affidavit.
 4
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah. You sign knowingly
     what?
 6
                        That the information is
 7
          MS. WARYCHA:
     accurate.
 8
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Cross-examination for
 9
10
     two minutes, and, again, please keep it to the
11
     material that was offered in the presentation.
12
          MR. ZIEMBA:
                      She's got to come up.
13
          MS. HARTER:
                      Yeah. I just have a couple of
14
     quick questions.
                      So --
15
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Please state your name and
16
     spell it.
17
                      Oh, I'm sorry. Michelle Harter,
          MS. HARTER:
18
     M-i-c-h-e-l-l-e, and then Harter is H-a-r-t-e-r.
19
     And I represent Tamie. I'm counsel.
20
          Just one quick question I want to follow up
21
         During your testimony, you testified that, you
2.2
     know, you believe in election integrity and that
     candidates need to work hard. And I just want to
23
24
     ask you, is that some sort of assertion of fact
25
     that Tamie did not work hard to secure signatures?
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1 MS. WITTMAN: No.

2.2

MS. HARTER: Okay. Just wanted to clear that up. I didn't think that that's what you were implying, but I wanted to get that on the record. Thank you.

MS. WITTMAN: I would say that the candidate -- other candidate for governor for whom I supervise those petitions, signature collections, did work hard, so I can speak to that.

MS. HARTER: Okay. All right.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Anything further on your cross-examination?

MS. HARTER: No. I'm going to have Tamie testify in a minute. I just want to make sort of a threshold statement here. So Tamie gathered many more signatures than what were certified. And we're going to talk about some of the irregularities that she experienced with submitting her petitions and then having them totally rejected for reasons that are -- you know, she doesn't really have a lot of recourse with the counties on that.

And then generally, Indiana is 50 out of 50 for voter turnout, which is an embarrassing statistic. It came out through our Indiana Bar

Foundation just a few weeks ago. One of the reasons is we have a lot of candidates in Indiana who run unopposed, and so if Tamie is not on the ballot, we will have a single candidate for democratic governor.

2.

2.2

So here Tamie submitted signatures in all of the districts. Each page has about ten lines. She submitted approximately 3,700 signatures, but there were some extra in Marion County, a few over, so over 3,200 of 4,500, or 71 percent.

Previously, a prior version of this Commission let Todd Young on the ballot. He was just a few signatures short. It was a split vote. Todd Young had significant resources. He had party leadership backing. It was surprising and embarrassing that he was not compliant with the signature requirement. And at the time when his challenge was in motion, we had our lawmakers saying, hey, we need to do something about this signature requirement, we're one of the most restrictive states, it's time to change it. But then he was let on the ballot, and all of a sudden that quieted down really quick, hasn't been mentioned since.

I know that this Commission is not inclined to hear constitutional or equitable arguments here,

but I'm going to make one because I think it's important. It's important to note that Tamie substantially complied with the signature requirement to the best of her ability. She is not independently wealthy. She has to work a job. She can't quit her job to collect signatures. She does not have the party leadership backing; whereas, her opponent had the party leadership gathering signatures for her. Tamie did not have that luxury. It's very expensive and it's very cost -- cost for time to get these signatures. We all know this.

2.2

Tamie will tell you about the irregularities where her signatures were submitted and they sat in an office and weren't certified, which is completely out of her control, very demoralizing.

Without Tamie on the ballot, we have

McCormick, who recently switched parties. So she

was a Republican; now she's a Democrat. She's the

party leadership's choice. Tamie is a consistent,

lifelong Democrat. If we're looking at what voters

want, voters want someone who is consistent, right,

with the party. And they should at least have a

choice. McCormick can change her mind about her

party, but maybe some voters want someone who has

been consistent about their party. If McCormick runs unopposed, like I said, Democratic voters have no choices.

2.

2.2

And then we know that, in 2022, we had two African-American candidates who were removed from the ballot because they could not comply with the signature requirement. And I know this Commission said that didn't matter about race or gender or personal circumstances, but I don't want to get to 2026 and again be standing here representing another African-American woman who is being told you have no recourse, you can't appear, when it's clear we have historical evidence that this requirement disparately treats certain groups of people.

And it's not a solution to say legislature can fix it. They have no incentive to do so. This system helps the incumbents keep their seats. It's also not a solution to tell Tamie, who can't afford to hire signature gatherers, that she can entertain an expensive lawsuit to fight this. I'm asking that this Commission, we stop kicking the can down the road and pushing the burden onto someone else and we solve the problem now.

That concludes what I need to say. I don't

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1
     know if you want to hear Tamie's testimony about
     what happened with her signatures. We know she
 2
 3
     didn't get exactly 4,500. We also know that to get
     4,500, right, you need to collect, like, 7,000.
 4
 5
     They reject so many. They reject them for strange
     things like not putting four-year dates, so instead
 6
     of putting 1982, you put 82, they'll reject it.
 7
     They'll reject it if someone didn't sign a
 8
 9
     signature with handwriting. But students aren't
10
     even being taught handwriting anymore, so some
11
     younger folks, they don't know how to sign their
12
     names.
          So there's so many different irregularities.
13
14
     There's really no way to go back to the county and
15
     contest these things. When this happens, as it did
16
     to Tamie, and she got all of her signatures
17
     rejected after they sat in an office for ten days,
18
     she has no control.
19
          So I guess that concludes my time.
20
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Could we let
21
     Ms. Dixon-Tatum here know how much time she has,
2.2
     because it was her counsel took --
23
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            The five minutes expired.
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MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Oh, the five minutes expired.

24

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1
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah.
                                   Would you like to
     offer a motion to extend?
 2.
 3
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: All right. I'll make
 4
     a motion to extend for two minutes.
 5
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
                                   Second.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: All those in favor signify
 6
     by saying "Aye."
 7
 8
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
 9
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
10
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
11
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
12
          We'll give you two more minutes.
13
          MS. HARTER: Tamie, would you just tell us
14
     about what happened in District 1 with your
15
     signatures.
16
          MS. DIXON-TATUM: Yes.
                                  What happened in
17
     District 1, I was called by someone out of the
     voter registration office, and I was told that the
18
19
     stamp, the postage stamp mark was January 30th.
20
     But she was calling me on February, I want to say,
     the 11th, and she was saying, "Your signatures,
21
2.2
     they're not going to be counted because they didn't
23
     get in on time."
24
          And so I asked her, "What does the envelope
25
     say?"
```

1 And she said, "It says January 30th." And I said, "Now what's today?" 2. 3 And she told me, "The 11th." And so I said, "Well, what happened?" 4 5 She said, "I don't know, but I can't count them." 6 So that happened in District 1, where there 7 was 45 pages. 8 9 It also happened in District 2, which is, 10 like, the South Bend area. Again, the State should 11 have those because when I last spoke with 12 South Bend, they said they mailed those petitions 13 to all of you. But, again, it was postmarked on 14 one date, but then ten days later those signatures 15 couldn't be counted and then eventually were sent 16 back to the State. 17 So there's a few other instances where things 18 like that were happening, and, again, those were 19 out of my control. And one person said, "Well, why 20 didn't you just drive them in like other people?" 21 And I said, "Well, I thought that the mail 22 still works." It only takes three days to mail 23 anything across the state, anything across the 24 U.S., so I don't understand why it would take ten

days for something to go from Anderson, Indiana, to

1 South Bend or to Crown Point, Indiana. So, again, those are two of the major 2. 3 instances, but there were other instances across 4 the state that happened in the same fashion, so I 5 just wanted to make that point and be clear on 6 that. 7 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I just have a couple 8 questions. 9 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Sure. 10 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So I just want to --11 so with respect to District 1, did you submit 500 12 signatures. 13 MS. DIXON-TATUM: No, ma'am. I don't believe 14 that all 500 were there. It was close but not 500. 15 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: That's all I have. 16 MS. DIXON-TATUM: And that was also because 17 some were obviously thrown out. About 28 to 18 30 percent of signatures are thrown out for the 19 various reasons that were spoke of, be it that --20 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: My question was --21 so, I guess, to clarify, did you submit 500 2.2 signatures for District 1? 23 MS. DIXON-TATUM: I submitted the 45 pages 24 to --25 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: It's not pages.

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1
     What's the number of signatures that you submitted?
 2
                            About 450.
          MS. DIXON-TATUM:
 3
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Nothing further.
 4
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: A question.
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Sure.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So you never called
 6
     the clerk's office in District 1 there to verify
 7
 8
     that they had received your signatures?
 9
          MS. DIXON-TATUM: Well, I had other people,
10
     volunteers because I didn't have a paid staff, so I
11
     had volunteers who were helping me, and they were
12
     doing follow-up calls. I'm not sure what happened
13
     there.
14
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. So you didn't
15
     check to see if anyone had called to verify that
16
     the signatures had been received?
17
          MS. DIXON-TATUM: Yes, yes. I was working
18
     with my volunteers to follow up.
19
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: No.
                                        That wasn't my
20
     question. My question was, you didn't know your
     signatures -- let's make it easier. You didn't
21
2.2
     know your signatures had not been received until
23
     they called you to tell you that?
24
          MS. DIXON-TATUM: Yes, ma'am. That is
25
     correct.
```

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. And there is nothing that prohibits you from making calls to these clerks' offices to check. Are you aware of that?

2.2

MS. DIXON-TATUM: I am aware of that, and -MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And are you also
aware that you can call the clerk's office and ask
them what the status is on the review of your
signatures and they will tell you, okay, well, it
looks like you've got these. This number was
knocked out or these were knocked out.

And you can go in and you can say, oh, wait a minute, you shouldn't have knocked that out because, and show them why it shouldn't have been knocked out. Were you aware of any of that?

MS. DIXON-TATUM: Yes, ma'am. And also I'm also aware that I'm not wealthy, and I had to work, and so I do have volunteers. And we did the best that we could under the circumstances that we were. Again, if I would have had paid staff, then that would set the tone a little bit different. But I had to work 40 hours plus a week.

And so as much as I am qualified and wanting to run for governor of Indiana, I was faced with a number of challenges that many people do not have

to face because, again, I'm not wealthy, I'm not the party favorite. So I had to do triple, quadruple time work that most people in this position would not have to do. Again, if they're wealthy, Mr. Rust paid over 300-something-thousand dollars just to help him collect signatures, and he failed to get that done. And he had to quit his full-time job, and he is also a wealthy person.

2.

So this whole signature piece is unfair and unconstitutional because that it really knocks out the candidates who are wanting to represent Indiana for the people and serve the people. So, yes, ma'am, I did my best, and I am aware of all of those things, but please consider the position that I'm also in.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Well, I'll wait until we have our discussion.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: So I have a quick question. Certainly in our long history as a state with elections, not every candidate that gets on the ballot is considered wealthy or privileged in some way. So what would you say to a candidate who, under similar circumstances and similar disadvantages or hurdles as you're espousing, who does meet the signature requirement, who does

1 successfully get on the ballot? How would you 2. create equity there? 3 MS. DIXON-TATUM: So if you're speaking of Ms. Jamie --4 5 CHAIRMAN OKESON: I'm speaking generally. MS. DIXON-TATUM: Okay. Well, in general or 6 with regards to Ms. Jamie, she was able to raise 7 \$17,000. She did have one paid staff. And it also 8 9 appears that she had some sort of party support 10 because, again, kudos to her, she made it. 11 So, again, when you have that type of party 12 support, when you have that type of money, you can 13 do those things. But when you work a full job and 14 then I am an African-American person, and so 15 there's some special hurdles that come along with 16 the signature gathering piece as well. And so I'm 17 asking you to consider all of those elements as 18 well. 19 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I quess my problem 20 here is you keep saying that you didn't have these 21 resources. 2.2 MS. DIXON-TATUM: Yes, ma'am. 23 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I don't think it's 24 too much for the State to say, okay, you don't have

a lot of money, but at least you've got to get

these signatures to show us that you have some support amongst the people.

2.

2.2

And to get those signatures, as our chair was asking, you have to have volunteers who support you and are willing to go out and do that. And all these candidates still also use volunteers to do that. And the Republican candidate that you are talking about, as far as I know, she had no party support, but she had a heck of a network of people that supported her, and she was able to do it.

So it's not a matter of discrimination or anything else. It's a matter of, when you file to represent the entire state of Indiana and all its people, the State is essentially, the way I interpret the signature requirement, is essentially saying, look, we just want to know that you have some kind of base of support, some kind of groundswell that will support your candidacy, because if everybody could run for governor, then our elections would be such chaos and it would cost us so much to do an election. So --

MS. HARTER: I want to jump in. So it's not that Tamie didn't have support. She had, you know, substantial compliance with it if her signatures would have been accepted and certified.

And she's not saying that there's discrimination on the face of this signature requirement. It's we can't ignore the disparate treatment in the way that it actually plays out. We know she's not the first. It seems that very consistently that we're excluding African-American candidates.

2.2

And in terms of election integrity, the system, I believe it's 3-1-2-10 or some -- I'm sorry if I'm misstating it, but there's a statute that says that the Republican and the Democratic parties shall hold a primary election. And if you have one candidate, it's a very hollow -- it doesn't really fulfill that. Right? So one candidate isn't really an election. Okay? So they're going to win no matter what.

So it's not like we have this ballot overcrowding issue in Indiana, right, and, oh, we need to get rid of frivolous candidacies. That may be true in other places, but it's not true in Indiana. We can barely find people who are willing to run.

So it's not that we're flooded with candidates who have support, and it's not that Tamie didn't have support, and it's not that we're saying that

the actual requirement on its face is discriminatory because we know it applies to everyone. It's just we have to look at what we know, the actual evidence of who is being excluded by these things, and there seems to be a race and a socioeconomic piece here. Sure, there's people who are able to achieve it anyway, but those are the exception. Those are the rare cases. It's not --

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I'm sorry to interrupt, but the bottom line to all this is that you said that Ms. Wittman acknowledged that she only got about 3,700 signatures, which is --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: 3,200.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: 3,200, which is far less than what was required. Even if you go back and look at the Todd Young, which I was not on the Election Commission, I think that was a matter of, what, three or four votes? So it was very minimal. Now, in this case, it is much bigger than that.

And I also have to address something else that you said, which I really kind of found offensive. You stood up there and said something to the effect that they were only applying this law as to -- it's only being applied to African-American candidates, and that is not true. That is not true in any

sense of the word. We have many African-American candidates who are going to be on the ballot this year who have not been challenged. It's a very simple requirement to get the signatures, and so I -- but I do want to make that clarification. I mean, I did find that rather offensive.

2.

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: I would echo that. I think we've been pretty consistent in the application.

Right, wrong, or indifferent, we're not lawmakers here.

MS. HARTER: I understand. I want to just address something. I was not saying that this Commission did anything untoward. I'm just saying that the practical reality is that the folks that are subject to challenges and end up being excluded do tend to be African-American women. I'm not saying you did anything wrong. I'm not saying that you did that purposefully. I'm just saying if we look at what actually happens, not what you're doing, but the statutory requirement itself works to disparately treat people.

So I'm not saying that this Commission -- I think this Commission works overtime to do what is fair within the confines of what you do. I'm not criticizing this Commission. I want to be really

clear about that.

2.

2.2

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: If I could, so I was on the Commission for the Todd Young issue, and I was on the Commission dealing with the two female African-American candidates. I think that was two years ago or four years ago.

And I will say that, with the Todd Young issue, it was not a matter that he had not -- he had submitted submission signatures. There were -- the discussion was over it was questioning some of those signatures. So, number one, he had met the threshold requirement of at least submitting the minimum number of signatures, and it became a question of whether any of those signatures were not going to be counted.

The unfortunate circumstance with the other two African-American female candidates you've been discussing is that, unfortunately, they just, as with your client, did not even meet -- that's why I asked my very pointed question about did you submit at least the 500 signatures, and the answer was no for District 1, because that's -- it is a different story, a different situation, I think, if we at least get the minimum number of signatures submitted because, again, that is the statutory

requirement that we apply across the board.

2.

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The very unfortunate circumstance that has occurred now in these past two election cycles is that we have had three female African-American candidates disqualified because they didn't meet that threshold requirement, along with other individuals who did not meet that threshold requirement. They're not the only ones who have not been granted to have their names appear on the ballot. There are other individuals too that haven't met the requirement.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: There were several in that last round.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Yeah. So, again, we are applying the law that has been determined. It is not up to us to change the law. And I see -- and I don't see any basis for any claim that it is -- that the impact, that it has a discriminatory impact. I mean, the impact it has, I think, is across the board. If you don't have the support to get the signatures, I mean, you don't meet the requirements.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I think you were afforded a two-minute cross-examination. In light of the time that we've afforded, I think we should move towards

1 that, if you'd like to do so. We would forego 2. MR. ZIEMBA: 3 cross-examination. I think the points by the -the questions by the Commission have covered what I 4 5 would ask. We would just reserve any time for rebuttal. 6 CHAIRMAN OKESON: There's no rebuttal time. 7 MR. ZIEMBA: Oh, well, then never mind. 8 9 by me. 10 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. 11 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And, Mr. Chair, I 12 would like to note that Valerie McCray, who was one 13 of the African-American candidates you were talking 14 about that did not meet the signature requirement 15 the last time, met it successfully this time and 16 exceeded the requirement. 17 MS. DIXON-TATUM: And she had two years to do 18 so. 19 No, she did not. MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: MS. DIXON-TATUM: From the last time --20 21 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: She did not. She

She took from this session and she went learned. and she put together an organization, and she had a group of people who supported her, and she learned from it. I would strongly encourage you to do the

2.2

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24

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same should you wish to run for office again like
 1
 2
     this.
 3
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Thank you.
 4
          MS. DIXON-TATUM:
                            Thank you.
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have a challenge to
 6
     Tamie Dixon-Tatum to be on the ballot candidate for
     Democratic Party nomination for governor. Do we
 7
     need a motion?
 8
 9
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I would move to
10
     dismiss the challenge -- or no, grant. No, no, no,
11
     grant the challenge.
12
          MS. DIXON-TATUM: Thank you, thank you, thank
13
     you.
14
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Grant the challenge.
15
     Sorry.
16
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And I'll second.
17
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a second.
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     have a motion to grant the challenge to ballot
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     access for Tamie Dixon-Tatum. We have a second.
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          Any discussion? Any questions?
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          All those in favor signify by saying "Aye."
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          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
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          MS. PYLE: Aye.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
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The "ayes" have it. That being said, the challenge is upheld. The Election Division is directed to not include Tamie Dixon-Tatum on the certified list of primary candidates sent to the county election boards and to indicate that the name of this candidate is not to be printed on the ballot.

MR. ZIEMBA: Thank you very much.

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: Next we have Martin v. Nicholson, Cause 2024-05, in the matter of the challenge to David L. Nicholson, candidate for Democratic Party nomination for State Senate District 32.

MR. KOCHEVAR: Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, in your binders you will find under this cause a copy of the candidate challenge that was filed by the challenger along with an attachment to that challenge. In addition, you'll find a copy of the candidate's declaration of candidacy, their CAN-2, along with a receipt showing that a statement of economic interest has been filed, a copy of the notice hearing and copy showing that that notice hearing was sent to both the challenger and the challenged candidate.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: With that, I'll recognize

Ms. Martin, challenger, for your presentation.

MS. MARTIN: Good morning.

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: Good morning.

MS. MARTIN: Yes. My name is Myrna Martin.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: We've got a couple minutes of the morning left.

MS. MARTIN: Right. M-y-r-n-a, Martin, M-a-r-t-i-n.

This is a simple challenge. The statute states that a candidate must file the proper paperwork for a Senate or House seat. Therefore, the issue here is that, after scanning all new candidates and names on the ballots for the primary election slated for May 7, 2024, in comparison to statements of economic interest statements, did not see that Mr. Nicholson listed under the chamber of Senate in year 2024.

On primary ballot listing for Senate, has defendant's name, Mr. Nicholson name, listed on Senate side District 32. However, on the Indiana General Assembly side for statements of economic interest, his statement is not there on the chamber side of the House of Representatives, and it appears that Mr. Nicholson submitted this document instead.

1 So I am questioning how a person running for a seat with the House of Representatives 2 3 documentation submitted. This is concerning who 4 would be serving in office to represent and uphold 5 public policy who does not choose the correct paperwork. Each candidate listed on both the 6 members and candidates side understand it's 7 submitted a statement of economic interest for 8 9 Senate. 10 As a voter myself, I thought this person was 11

As a voter myself, I thought this person was listed in a previous election, so knowing that he could not submit the proper paperwork as he has done before in a previous election, that's my challenge.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you like to cross-examine? And please limit it to questions related to the testimony given.

MR. NICHOLSON: I'd just like to make a statement.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, you'll get that chance in a moment. This is your opportunity to cross-examine Ms. Martin.

MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. I have no questions.

MS. MARTIN: Should I have a seat?

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yes.

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MR. NICHOLSON: Let me just give a brief chronology.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Your name.

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MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, my name is Dave Nicholson, D-a-v-i-d, N-i-c-h-o-l-s-o-n.

Just a brief chronology of the situation. On February the 8th, I showed up at the secretary of state's office to file for secretary -- or file for State Senate, and I knew I had to file an economic interest statement. And the gentleman who was waiting on me at that point in time directed me to the House Secretary's office.

I went to the House Secretary's office, filed my economic interest statement, got my receipt, brought it back down. A young lady waited on me, checked the documents, filed me, and I assumed everything was okay until I received the notice in the mail of this challenge. At that point -- that was on Saturday, January -- or February 17th.

February 20th, Tuesday, I came in. I went to the secretary of state's office to see what I could do to rectify the situation. They directed me to go to the Election Division office. I went to the Election Division office, and they directed me to go to the secretary of state's office. And from

there I went to the secretary of the Senate's office and told her the situation. And she wasn't sure what she could do, but she did allow me to go ahead and file the economic interest statement with the secretary of state's -- or with the secretary of the Senate's office, which I have. I booked my original and a copy for you.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Please give it to her.

MS. NUSSMEYER: When was it filed?

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MS. WARYCHA: The 20th of February.

MR. NICHOLSON: So at this point, I know nothing else I could do to rectify the situation, and I see no reason why I should not be allowed to continue being a State Senate candidate.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Go back and explain to me again how the secretary of state's office -- what did you say happened there?

MR. NICHOLSON: I went in to file for State
Senate, and I knew I had to file an economic
interest statement. And I asked the gentleman who
was waiting on me at that point in time where I
needed to go to do that, and he sent me to the
secretary of the House. And I assumed that's the
way the procedure was at this point in time.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Did you read the

forms that you were filling out?

MR. NICHOLSON: Yes.

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MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And were you at all surprised that it said House of Representatives instead of Senate.

MR. NICHOLSON: Like I said, I assumed I was being directed appropriately.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I guess, I mean, it's unfortunate that it happened, but part of the reason why you're required to file these is so that people can see them to see what your economic interests are since you want to be an elected officeholder. And by filing it in the wrong office -- as far as you know, did the House of Representatives forward it over to the State Senate, say, oh, this was mistakenly filed with us?

MR. NICHOLSON: They accepted my form. They gave me my form that I had to take down to the secretary of state's office, which it clearly said the House, and people in the secretary of state's office looked at it, said okay, and filed me.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And so but you -- you get instructions when you file for office, correct, written instructions that tell you what's needed?

And the secretary of state, the website page for

1 the Election Division and everything, there's a whole great, big handbook, and it sets forth all 2 3 the things you have to do to be a candidate. you take a look at that before you filed? 4 5 MR. NICHOLSON: Not in detail, no. MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Well, in the future, 6 7 no matter what happens here today, I strongly suggest that you take a look at that candidate 8 9 handbook before you do anything. It becomes --10 when you're running for office, it becomes your 11 bible, so to speak. 12 MR. NICHOLSON: Yes, I understand that. 13 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I have a question for 14 our counsel, when we're ready, about the statute. 15 So the statutes regarding statement of economic 16 interests say -- so I'm looking at 2-2.2-2-1. 17 Wait, no, I'm looking at 2-2.2-2 that says the --18 subsection B in that says that you have to file --19 the candidate has to file with the principal 20 administrative officer. And then there's 2-2.2-7-7 21 that talks about the duties of the principal 22 administrative officer. Is the principal 23 administrative officer defined anywhere? 24 MR. KOCHEVAR: No.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So it's -- go ahead.

MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes. I anticipated this particular question, so I believe that in the Title 2 chapter that is being referred to, the principal administrative officer is defined in Indiana Code 2-2.2-1-16. And that essentially means that, in the House chamber, that is the clerk of the Indiana House of Representatives. In the State Senate chamber, that is the secretary of the State Senate.

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: So you would interpret that that was filed with the inappropriate administrative --

MR. KOCHEVAR: So there are various sections. For Title 2, which created the statement of economic interest, there is a section of law that provides that, when you are not an incumbent member but you wish to become a candidate, under law, you must file the statement of economic interest form that was created by the General Assembly with the principal administrative officer, which means that, as I read that particular statute, when you want to become a candidate for State Senate, you must file that statement of economic interest with the secretary of the State Senate. That's how at least I read Title 2. I'll defer to others to --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: So what I hear you saying is, in this case, they have not accurately filed, legitimately filed the statement of economic interest.

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MR. KOCHEVAR: Based on the record before us and the filing that we have, we have a receipt showing that a statement of economic interest was filed with the House and not the Senate, so that would be the case that we have the wrong receipt.

MS. WARYCHA: I would agree with Mr. Kochevar and would add, in addition to the statute,

Commissioner Karen Celestino-Horseman has said we put together candidate guides. And in those candidate guides it specifically -- we do not use the term "principal administrative officer." I believe we say the House of the clerk -- or the principal clerk of the House and principal secretary of the Senate, so that is spelled out in the guides as well.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: So I guess my question is, is filing your statement of economic interest in the wrong place the equivalent of not filing it at all?

MS. WARYCHA: I would say it's not compliant with the law.

MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes, that is correct. Just I'll refer you over to Indiana Code 3-8-1-33 and Indiana Code 3-8-2-11. These both speak to statement of economic interest in regards to state legislative candidates. The requirement placed on both candidates and upon our office and the secretary of state's office is clear that you must have the proper documentation showing that the proper statement of economic interest, as required under that section in Title 2, must be filed. We must have evidence that. That is that receipt.

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I will also tell you, as you've seen and now it's been entered into the record, the receipts that are used by the House and the Senate are distinctly different. The House uses a quarter sheet as their receipt showing that they're filed and signed by a representative of the House clerk's office. The State Senate uses a very small slip of paper that can be very hard to scan sometimes, and it's signed by a representative of the secretary of the State Senate.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: And there's nothing statutorily or by rule or policy that allows for some erroneous filings to be corrected?

MS. WARYCHA: No. I would say the statute is

1 quite clear that, after the deadline for the declaration of candidacies, we cannot amend. 2. 3 so based on the filings that came before us today, that date says February 20th that it was filed with 4 5 the Senate. That's after the filing deadline for a declaration of candidacy, and we, being the 6 Election Division or the secretary of state, would 7 be prohibited from taking it after that deadline. 8 9 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Do you have the 10 language --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Do you agree with that?

MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes, just so much to say that,
yes, before we hit the candidate deadline, if there
is an error, the candidate, if the candidate knows
about it, is informed, or otherwise learns it, we
do accept amendments to the filing. So there are a
chance to correct it but up to the deadline for
filing as a candidate. After that deadline, our
office does not accept any more filings, as
required by law.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Sorry.

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VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Well, do we have -- unless I'm blind to it, but I don't see 2-2.2-1-16 in our book.

MS. WARYCHA: It's not, but I can give it to

1 you right here. VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Yeah, because I'm 2 3 really curious because I don't -- the statutes 4 aren't saying what you guys are saying they're 5 saying. Oh, so there it does say that. Okay. MS. WARYCHA: Our code books are selective on 6 these statutes. 7 8 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Yeah, apparently. 9 MS. WARYCHA: We can only print so much. 10 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: We're on a need-to-know basis online here. 11 12 CHAIRMAN OKESON: I have not been paying 13 attention on time. Have we concluded? 14 MS. WARYCHA: We are done. I stopped the time 15 once we started asking questions. 16 CHAIRMAN OKESON: You have a two-minute opportunity to cross-examine Mr. Nicholson, if 17 18 you'd like to do so. 19 MS. MARTIN: The Commission asked the 20 questions that I wanted to cross-examine. 21 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Thank you. 2.2 MR. NICHOLSON: Can I ask one question? 23 my candidacy was accepted by the secretary of state's office, does that mean that the secretary 24

of state's office violated the law?

1 That's not a matter before CHAIRMAN OKESON: this board to consider, I don't believe. 2 3 MS. WARYCHA: Agreed. 4 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. So we have a 5 challenge presented. Is there a motion? MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. It is with 6 great reluctance, but the law is the law, that I 7 make a motion that we grant the challenge. 8 9 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a second? 10 MS. PYLE: Second. 11 CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have a motion to 12 uphold the challenge and we have a second. 13 Any further discussion, contemplation? 14 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I will say that it's 15 unfortunate, but we can't -- because we have our 16 election code -- this is the election code, and as 17 she said, this is just the selected provisions. 18 if we say, well, you were just a little bit out of 19 whack on that, we'll let you slide by, then we open 20 up a whole other can of worms. So we try, as best 21 we can, to follow it. 2.2 So next time you want to run, get that 23 candidate handbook. It will tell you everything

that you have to do, and you don't need to rely on

anybody else. These folks have put it in writing

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for you, and you've got it right in front of you.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I think I tend to lean in that -- I mean, we just got done hearing a matter where the application of the standards needs to apply, and I feel like we're kind of faced with a similar question in a slightly different manner. But I don't know.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Well, and, see, to me, this is a little bit different because the last one I was asking did you at least submit the 500 signatures. So we've got a candidate who followed -- I mean, he was directed to someone's office to file the -- to get the economic interest form. It was the wrong office, but that's what is kind of giving me pause is that he did file a statement of economic interest. It was with the wrong office in the right building.

And that's what concerns me because I'm thinking, well, he's saying he was told to go to the House clerk or whatever, and he went there and no one there said you're in the wrong place. And so he fills it out, takes it back to the secretary of state's office, no one there catches it. Now, granted, I guess if it were me, I would said why am I filling out a statement for the House of

Representatives if I'm running for Senate.

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, and I go to Valerie's comment about the adequate materials that are provided by the Election Division for candidate filings.

MS. WARYCHA: And if I could, I'll just read out of Indiana Code 3-8-2-7. This would be subsection, I think, A(7). The following statement is required with the declaration of candidacy: A statement that the candidate has attached either of the following to the declaration: A copy of the statement of economic interest file stamped by the office required to receive the statement of economic interest. A receipt or photocopy is also acceptable. So just wanted to give that statute as well for consideration.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So, Valerie, if -so, you know, he did raise a question that I kind
of wondered about. Should the secretary of state
have accepted his filing since he didn't have --

MS. WARYCHA: Well, I would say the secretary of state's office is ministerial in their responsibility, meaning that they accept what they get on face value. It's kind of like the two-primary rule. If they get one that someone

didn't mark or they did mark, they are instructed to accept it in that they are ministerial, and it's up to a voter of the district to challenge it. So that is the guidance given to staff.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: The secretary of state accepted the qualified form filed with the House irrespective of whether --

MS. WARYCHA: Yeah.

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MR. KOCHEVAR: To provide a response, I would just add, in a perfect world, yes. We're all experts here, speaking for the Election Division staff. We created the forms. We've been doing this for a long time. But, again, in a perfect world, yes, this would have been caught, as a candidate, no, this is the wrong receipt, you may want to fix this before accepting for filing, or even if it came to our office and we would have caught it on the back end.

But speaking for myself, we are not perfect, and if you look at our candidate list, we have hundreds of candidates who file with us alone that we certify down to the counties. But I will say this: It is not out of the question that a filing, it gets accepted, gets file stamped, it's received in our office and it's processed even though

1 something statutorily may be missing. CHAIRMAN OKESON: And it's not for the 2. 3 secretary of state to make that determination at the time of accepting the filing? 4 5 MS. WARYCHA: No. Ministerial is the legal term that they accept the filing as they get it. 6 7 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. One last question for me, Mr. Kochevar or Valerie. Has anything like 8 9 this come up before? Do we have any past precedent 10 on an erroneous filing of an economic interest 11 statement for a candidate that's been dealt with 12 before? 13 Not in my time here. I would MS. WARYCHA: 14 defer to Brad. He's our historian. MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, no, I don't recall a 15 situation exactly paralleling the facts of this 16 17 one. 18 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. We have a motion and 19 a second to uphold the challenge. 20 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Yeah. There was a 21 second. 2.2 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Let's do it by roll call. 23 Those in favor. Karen Celestino-Horseman -- we'll 24 go left to right -- how do you vote? 25 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So the motion is to

1 uphold the challenge? 2. CHAIRMAN OKESON: To uphold the challenge. 3 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Because of the way 4 the law is written, I feel like I have to follow 5 that, so I'm going to say grant the challenge. 6 CHAIRMAN OKESON: You vote for the motion? 7 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Yes. CHAIRMAN OKESON: Suzannah Wilson Overholt? 8 9 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: This is very 10 difficult, but I feel like I need to vote to uphold 11 the challenge based on law. 12 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. I too will vote in 13 support of the motion. 14 Litany? 15 MS. PYLE: I would vote to uphold the 16 challenge as well. I think the law is pretty 17 clear, although unfortunate. 18 CHAIRMAN OKESON: That being said, the challenge is upheld. The Election Division is 19 20 directed not to include David L. Nicholson in the 21 certified list of primary candidates sent to county 2.2 election boards and to indicate that the name of 23 this candidate is not to be printed on the ballot. 24 Thank you. 25 MS. MARTIN: Thank you.

1 Next on the list I have CHAIRMAN OKESON: Crooks v. Moore, Cause 2024-06, in the matter of 2. 3 the challenge to Kellie Moore, candidate for the 4 Democratic Party nomination for United States Representative, District 8. 5 Mr. Kochevar. 6 Mr. Chairman, members of the 7 MR. KOCHEVAR: Commission, in your binders you will find a copy of 8 9 the CAN-1 candidate challenge that's been filed by 10 the challenger, along with the CAN-2 declaration of 11 candidacy, a notice of hearing that was sent to 12 both the challenger and challenged candidate, as 13 well as documentation showing that that notice of 14 hearing was sent to both parties. 15 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. With that, I 16 recognize Mr. Crooks, the challenger, for your five 17 minutes of presentation. 18 MR. CROOKS: To help speed up your meeting, 19 rules are rules. That's all I've got to say. 20 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Will you at least state your 21 name and spell it, sir. 2.2 Sorry. David Crooks. MR. CROOKS: And rules 23 are rules, and I hope you'll --

MS. WARYCHA: Spell it, please.

MR. CROOKS: C-r-o-o-k-s. Been a while since

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1 I've been up here. 2 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is Ms. Moore present? Would 3 Ms. Moore like to -- do you want to proceed or does 4 anyone want to make a motion based on the absence of Ms. Moore? 5 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Well, I quess I 6 would -- well, I would like to acknowledge for the 7 record that it appears that she did -- I mean, her 8 CAN-2 is indeed not notarized. At least the one 9 10 we've got here in the file is not notarized. 11 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you affirm that, 12 Valerie? 13 MS. WARYCHA: Yes, yes. CHAIRMAN OKESON: Matt, is that correct? 14 15 MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes. And I will also tell you 16 that I was the one who put the file stamp on this. 17 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Based on that, I 18 would move that we uphold the challenge. 19 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. 20 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Second. 21 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Having a second, any 2.2 questions, comments? 23 So we have a motion to uphold the challenge presented by Mr. Crooks and a second. All those in 24 25 favor signify by saying "Aye."

1 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 2 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 3 MS. PYLE: Aye. 4 CHAIRMAN OKESON: The "ayes" have it. The motion carries. 5 The 6 challenge is upheld. The Election Division is 7 directed not to include Kellie Moore in the certified list of primary candidates sent to county 8 9 election boards and indicate the name of this 10 candidate not to be printed on the ballot. Thank you. 11 MR. CROOKS: 12 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Thank you for your 13 brevity, Mr. Crooks. 14 MR. CROOKS: Just trying to get home. 15 CHAIRMAN OKESON: We appreciate it. 16 I hope I'm pronouncing this right. Bohm v. Schrader, Cause No. 2024-07, in the matter of the 17 18 challenge to Thomas A. Schrader, candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for United States 19 20 Representative, District 3. 21 Mr. Kochevar. 2.2 MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes. Mr. Chairman, members of 23 the Commission, in your meeting binder is a copy of 24 the CAN-1 candidate challenge filed by the 25 challenger as well as attached documents that came

along with that challenge. And also in here, once I get through everything, though it was part of the documentation that was filed by the challenger, there is another copy of the candidate's CAN-2 declaration of candidacy form. There is the notice of hearing that was sent to both parties as well as documentation showing that that notice was sent to both parties by the Election Division. 

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you.

Ms. Bohm.

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MS. BOHM: Good morning. Christine Bohm, C-h-r-i-s-t-i-n-e, Bohm, B-o-h-m.

I am here for the second time. In 2022, I came through with the exact same challenge against Mr. Schrader. Basically he has run seven times and has never filed a single financial form. He has run for the federal office. I believe this will be his fifth turn. And he has run for local office twice.

You have copies of where we are trying to prove the negative, which, as you know, is difficult to do. You have printouts from the Allen County Election Board that shows in 2015 and 2019 where his name should have been had he filed his financial paperwork, and then you also have copies

from the FEC website that show no records found for 1 Mr. Schrader. 2. 3 There are some other minor issues on the CAN, 4 one of them being that he's not actually a 5 registered Democrat under that name. I know under federal office you only have to be a resident of 6 that district, but he is signing as a registered 7 In 2022, he used an alias to file his CAN-2 8 9 forms. 10 So I am asking that he be removed from the 11 ballot simply because, in the last approximately 12 20 years, he has not upheld any federal nor state 13 finance records. 14 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is Mr. Schrader present? 15 Mr. Schrader? Anyone representing Mr. Schrader? 16 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I would move that the 17 challenge be upheld. CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a motion. 18 Is there 19 a second? 20 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second. 21 CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have a motion to 2.2 uphold the challenge and a second. 23 Any discussion, any questions, Litany? 24 MS. PYLE: No.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Valerie.

MS. WARYCHA: Mr. Chairman, I agree that
Mr. Schrader, based off his evidence, looks like,
hasn't filed any campaign finance reports under
3-9, and I'll defer to Matthew. I'm struggling
here to find a way we can disqualify someone simply
off of the campaign finance filings.

MR. KOCHEVAR: I don't -- well, yes, as
Co-Director Nussmeyer reminds me and as I remember
the record and as testimony has revealed, this
exact same challenge on a number, if not all, of
these grounds was brought before this Commission in
2022. This Commission upheld that challenge, and
this person was not a candidate in the Democratic
primary for a federal office. So our own
precedence says that we have.

Another thing that you can, just to answer substantively what my co-counsel has brought up, is that parts of challenges, they all have to do with qualifications, but they also have to do with statutorily completing, in this case, the candidate form as required by law. These have been brought up in many of the candidate challenge hearings before you. There are a number of other grounds that are in the record right now that are in your meeting binder.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: So this is a qualified challenge?

MR. KOCHEVAR: I believe this is a qualified challenge. Mostly -- and, for me, I would cite on the precedence, but there's enough here on the written record also on other grounds that I believe this Commission can also rely on when they vote.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Valerie.

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MS. WARYCHA: Thank you, Mr. Kochevar. That's helpful. So would you say the grounds, then, for the challenge would be perjury of the name or the information about the name?

MR. KOCHEVAR: Oh, I will not go -- just speaking for myself, yeah, I will not go so far as perjury. I'm not a criminal attorney or whatnot. But I think there's also -- putting perjury aside, we also can take the statement that is above the person's signature on the back of this CAN-2 that was notarized. We also can take into effect whether or not by signing this form and it not being completed as provided by law, that is something that -- I'm trying to find the words -- essentially that this Commission can be taken up, that I think basically that it was not completed as required by law.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: You're referring to the statement "I certify the information in this Declaration of Candidacy is true and complete, and that I meet the specific requirements of this office"?

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MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes. It can be taken in two ways, perjury, but that's for the other side.

That's putting that aside. But also by my saying that, if you find anything that's in the record that makes this not, I'm going to say, factual, then that definitely is something that you can take into consideration.

And that's why I'm referring you over to 3-2-7, which is the statutory provision that requires, one, what needs to be in this declaration of candidacy, this CAN-2, as well as instructions to the candidates on how they need to be completed.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And you have to complete this CAN accurately and factually too. And so he was asked specifically if he had filed his prior campaign finance reports, and he said yes, but we know that's not true.

So we're not actually using his campaign finance stuff to say that's the basis. What we're saying is that his misrepresentations about filing

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     his campaign finance reports is what's gotten him
 2
     in trouble.
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          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Well, the campaign
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     finance -- never mind.
                             Sorry.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, the fact that
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     Mr. Schrader is not here to respond to any of this
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     is problematic. But we do have a motion and a
 7
     second to uphold the challenge.
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          Any other comments or input?
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          MS. WARYCHA: I was curious for Ms. Bohm, what
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     does it mean when it says under No. 6 on the CAN-1
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     challenge, you put "office sought invalid"?
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          MS. BOHM: Check the spelling. It's minor.
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     It's a typo, but it matters. Representative.
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          MS. WARYCHA: Oh, okay.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, I guess we'll call the
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     vote here. We have a motion and a second to uphold
     the challenge excluding Mr. Schrader from the
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     ballot. All those in favor signify by saying
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     "Aye."
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          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
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          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
          The "ayes" have it. The motion carries.
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                                                     The
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1 challenge is upheld. The Election Division is directed not to include Thomas A. Schrader in the 2 3 certified list of primary candidates sent to county 4 election boards and to indicate that the name of 5 this candidate is not to be printed on the ballot. MS. BOHM: Thank you. 6 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Next we have Urick v. 7 Shydale, Cause 2024-08, also Eldridge v. Shydale, 8 9 Cause 2024-30, in the matter of the challenge to 10 Sarah Shydale -- I hope I'm pronouncing that 11 correctly -- candidate for the Democratic Party 12 nomination for Indiana State Representative, District 97. And also 2024-30, the challenge to 13 14 Sarah Shydale, candidate for Democratic Party, 15 District 97, is an identical matter. 16 Are the representatives of both present? 17 Are we taking these together? Yeah. We want 18 to take these sort of concurrently. 19 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I would think so. 20 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Do we have to make a motion to that effect? 21 2.2 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I would move that we 23 consolidate these two challenges. 24 MS. PYLE: Second. CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a motion and a 25

1 second to consolidate 2024-08 and 2024-30. Any discussion or questions? 2. 3 Hearing none, all those in favor signify by 4 saying "Aye." 5 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: 6 Aye. MS. PYLE: 7 Aye. 8 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. 9 The "ayes" have it. The matters are 10 consolidated. 11 Mr. Kochevar. 12 MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes. Mr. Chairman, members of 13 the Commission, looking at your tab for Cause 14 No. 2024-08, you will find a copy of the CAN-1 candidate challenge filed by the challenger along 15 16 with attached documents, a copy of the candidate's 17 declaration of candidacy and attached statement of economic interest that was filed with the State, as 18 19 well as a notice of hearing and documentation 20 showing that that notice of hearing was sent to 21 both parties by the Election Division. 22 And then if you look at Tab 30, same thing, 23 CAN-1 candidate challenge along with an attachment, 24 a copy of the candidate's CAN-2 and attached

statement of economic interest receipt that was

```
1
     filed with the State, and notice of hearing and
     documentation that the notice of hearing was sent
 2
 3
     by the Division to the parties.
          There was also earlier -- closer to the
 4
 5
     Commission hearing today, there was an appearance
     notice filed on behalf of the challenger, Myla
 6
     Eldridge, that she would be represented by counsel.
 7
     That's in Cause No. 2024-30, so that is also part
 8
     of the record. I don't know if there was time to
 9
10
     get if into your binders, but it was received.
11
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: No, it's here.
12
          MR. KOCHEVAR: Okay. Great. Thank you.
13
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            With that --
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Mr. Chair, I'm sorry
14
15
     to interrupt you, but Mr. Hahn has appeared on
16
     behalf of Ms. Eldridge, correct?
17
          MR. HAHN:
                     Correct.
18
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: But you have not
19
     appeared on behalf of Mr. Urick, right?
20
          MR. HAHN:
                     No. Have we?
          MS. BARTLETT: Our appearance was just filed
21
2.2
     for Myla Eldridge.
23
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. Just for Myla.
24
     So is Mr. Urick here?
25
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Mr. Urick?
```

```
1
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So if he's not here,
 2.
     he can't present the challenge, correct?
 3
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            That's correct. He can't
 4
     present on Cause 2024-08.
 5
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So should we just
 6
     dismiss that challenge?
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We consolidated.
 7
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I know, but if he's
 8
 9
     not here to present evidence on it and they're not
10
     representing him anyway --
11
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I would move that we
12
     now bifurcate the challenges.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I'll second that.
13
14
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We're going to separate
15
     these matters by a vote here. We have a motion to
16
     do so and a second.
17
          Any questions, thoughts?
          All those in favor signify by saying "Aye."
18
19
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
20
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
21
          MS. PYLE: Aye.
2.2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Aye.
23
          The "ayes" have it. The matters are now
24
     separated.
25
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Now I move to dismiss
```

```
1
     the Urick challenge.
 2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            So it would be a motion to
 3
     dismiss Cause 2024-08.
 4
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second that.
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a motion and a
 6
     second.
 7
          Any discussion?
          Hearing none, all those in favor signify by
 8
 9
     saying "Aye."
10
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
11
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
12
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
13
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Aye.
14
          The "ayes" have it. That matter -- I mean --
15
          MS. PYLE: I guess I would move to take this
16
     one out of order, as we've already discussed it, in
17
     the Shydale matter.
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I'd second that.
18
19
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have a motion to
20
     consider Cause 2024-30 out of order and a second.
21
          Any questions, comments, concerns?
22
          Hearing none, all those in favor signify by
23
     saying "Aye."
24
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
25
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
```

```
1
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
 2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Aye.
 3
          The "ayes" have it.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Mr. Chair, aren't you
 4
 5
     glad you're serving with three attorneys?
 6
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            It helps a lot.
          So with that, we'll recognize Eldridge.
 7
                     Thank you. My name is Greg Hahn.
 8
          MR. HAHN:
 9
     I'm with Bose McKinney & Evans law firm here in
10
     Indianapolis.
11
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you spell that for us,
12
     please.
13
                     Sure.
                            Which part, Hahn? H-a-h-n
          MR. HAHN:
14
     with Bose, B-o-s-e, McKinney, M-c-K-i-n-n-e-y, &
15
     Evans, E-v-a-n-s.
16
                            Thank you, sir.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
17
          MR. HAHN: You are welcome. And we're here --
     I'm here with my partner Alexandra Bartlett, who is
18
19
     also with Bose. And thank you for this
20
     opportunity, Mr. Chairman, members of the
21
     Commission, to be here and present to present our
2.2
     challenge.
23
          First and foremost, you'll note that the facts
24
     we present here today have been updated since the
25
     time of the filing of the original challenge as
```

- 1 | additional information was gathered. However, the
- 2 | outcome remains the same. Based upon all available
- 3 | information that we have and have reviewed,
- 4 | Ms. Shydale did not reside in House District 97,
- 5 | and that's the seat that she is seeking to run.
- 6 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Counselor, you said
- 7 | the information has been updated. Is there
- 8 | something we should be looking at?
- 9 MR. HAHN: No. It's the same. It doesn't
- 10 | make any difference.
- MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay.
- 12 MR. HAHN: Thank you. And she did not live in
- 13 | the district prior to the date of the election for
- 14 | this office. And then Ms. Bartlett is going to go
- 15 | through the legal aspects of this and answer any
- 16 questions as far as that goes.
- 17 | CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you.
- 18 MS. BARTLETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
- 19 | members of the Commission. Obviously here to show
- 20 my bipartisanism today, I guess. Like Greg said,
- 21 | my name is Ali Bartlett, B-a-r-t-l-e-t-t, with Bose
- 22 McKinney & Evans.
- As Greg mentioned, after reviewing all
- 24 | available information, under Indiana Code
- 25 | 3-8-1-14-2, that code requires that in order to be

eligible for election as a representative to the Indiana General Assembly, a candidate must reside within the House district they seek to represent for at least one year prior to the election for such an office.

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- Ms. Shydale filed a provisional ballot and request to change her voter registration to her current registration address, which is within House District 97, but she filed that change on November 7, 2023. That date is more than one year prior to the 2024 general election, and as a result, we request that Ms. Shydale be deemed ineligible for placement on the primary ballot. And we'll be happy to answer any questions.
- MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So you're saying that on November 7, 2023, she asked -- she went to the polling place and changed her address.
- MS. BARTLETT: That's our understanding, yes, based on the materials we have.
- MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And she changed her address to the address that she filed for her candidacy on?
  - MS. BARTLETT: Correct.
- MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And you're saying then that that falls a year -- is not a year till

1 this election. MS. BARTLETT: Right. So this election is 2 3 November 5, 2024. 4 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Falls short by two days. 5 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So you're basing this on the date that she went to voter registration and 6 asked for it to be changed? 7 MS. BARTLETT: So that was the first date that 8 9 her voter registration was updated and the address 10 was changed. 11 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So do you know what 12 date she actually moved to the new address? 13 MS. BARTLETT: No. The only information 14 that's publicly available on the address change is the voter registration, so obviously that's all we 15 16 have access to. MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And she -- when she 17 18 cast a provisional, she went to her old precinct? 19 MS. BARTLETT: I don't know. 20 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Because you are 21 entitled to vote at your old precinct for a year. 2.2 MS. BARTLETT: Sure. Yes. I don't know. Τ 23 don't have that information. Apologies. 24 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: All right. And

25

welcome to the light side.

```
1
         MS. BARTLETT: I like to help all of my law
 2.
    partners.
 3
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is it pronounced Shydale?
 4
         MS. SHYDALE:
                        Shydale.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: You have two minutes to
 5
     cross-examine if you'd like to.
 6
         MS. SHYDALE: I have no questions.
 7
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: You have five minutes to
 8
 9
    present.
10
         MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Ms. Shydale, can I
11
     just make this real easy. When did you move to
12
     this new address?
13
         MS. SHYDALE: I have my lease right here.
14
     signed the lease in September, and I moved in
15
    October.
16
         MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. Could you give
17
    your full name and spell it, please.
                        Sarah Shydale. It's S-a-r-a-h,
18
         MS. SHYDALE:
19
    S-h-y-d-a-1-e.
20
         MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And could you show
    that lease to counsel over here.
21
2.2
         MS. SHYDALE: Yes.
                              I'm sorry.
23
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: And, Ms. Warycha, please.
24
         MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: We realize you did
25
    not have the benefit of having those before.
```

1 I'm sorry. I didn't bring MS. SHYDALE: 2. enough copies of it. 3 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: While they're looking 4 that over, did you want to make a presentation? CHAIRMAN OKESON: You have five minutes. 5 MS. SHYDALE: Of course. I was going to point 6 out, as the challenger did, that in 3-8-1-14-2 that 7 I have to reside within the district for one year 8 9 prior to the election. According to Indiana Code 10 3-8-1-1.7, "As used in this chapter, 'before the 11 election' refers to a general, municipal, or 12 special election." 13 And as per Indiana Code 3-5-5-10, "Subject to 14 Section 6 of this chapter, if a person is 15 physically present within another precinct in 16 Indiana with the intention of making that precinct 17 the person's residence, the person loses residency 18 in the precinct that the person left." 19 And as I moved in October, I believe I should 20 be valid to run in this election. 21 MS. PYLE: Question for you. Did you update 22 your driver's license? 23 MS. SHYDALE: I haven't done that in several 24 years. I'm waiting for it to expire.

MS. PYLE: And you know that Indiana statute

1 gives you a time limit to do that, right? 2. MS. SHYDALE: No. 3 MS. PYLE: Is there anything else that shows 4 that you actually moved or intended to move a year before this election besides just this lease? 5 MS. SHYDALE: Intended to? 6 7 MS. PYLE: Yes. That's what the law says, intended. 8 9 It depends on what you consider MS. SHYDALE: 10 intended, I suppose. 11 MS. PYLE: Anything that you can tell us that 12 you had the intention to live inside district? 13 MS. SHYDALE: Prior to a year before the 14 election? 15 MS. PYLE: Yes. 16 MS. SHYDALE: Aside from just seeking the new 17 place to live before my current lease -- at least 18 the previous lease ran out, I had communications 19 with the leasing office. I don't have much in that 20 regard, but I fully intended to before September, 21 as I was talking to the leasing agency -- not the 2.2 leasing agency, the apartment agency for months 23 prior to when I actually signed the lease. 24 MS. PYLE: When did all of your belongings get 25 into this property?

1 MS. SHYDALE: October 15th, I want to say, at 2 the latest. 3 MS. PYLE: All right. 4 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So this lease took 5 effect October 1st? You signed it September 22nd. MS. SHYDALE: And I believe it took effect 6 October 11th. That was when I first paid rent. 7 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. And at that 8 9 point in time you became obligated to pay money, 10 correct? MS. SHYDALE: 11 Yes. 12 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: That's pretty good 13 manifestation of intent to me. 14 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: And do you reside in 15 that apartment now? 16 MS. SHYDALE: Yeah. I have since the move-in 17 date that's on the lease. CHAIRMAN OKESON: You didn't bring any utility 18 19 bills or any other supporting documentation to that 20 effect? 21 I have some letters at my desk MS. SHYDALE: 2.2 upstairs. I work here. But I didn't think to 23 bring them. Also, of course, I do get my utilities through AES, and they send me electric bills with 24 my address on them and such. 25

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Do you all have any evidence that would rebut the fact that she moved into this address in October?

2.2

MS. BARTLETT: I guess, my only question would be, because the lease was signed in September, is there a reason that you didn't then update your voter registration and driver's license? Because there's typically a 30-day requirement to do so. So obviously the only evidence that we had access to was the voter registration update, which occurred when you voted.

MS. SHYDALE: It was a very hectic time for me, and with the insanity of moving, I didn't have time or the opportunity to update my voter registration until we got to the polls, unfortunately.

MS. BARTLETT: While it's not applicable under state law, there is a rule in Marion County that you update your voter registration within 30 days if you have the opportunity.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Well, but let me ask you this: If she took residence on October 11th and the election was November 7th and she went into the polling place and updated her voter registration, then she did it within the 30 days,

1 correct? 2. MS. BARTLETT: Sure. 3 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I just want to make 4 sure I'm correct. Okay. CHAIRMAN OKESON: So to that point, clearly the standard here is the intent to reside. Are we 6 in agreement there? 7 8 MS. WARYCHA: Yes. 9 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Would anyone like to 10 make a motion? 11 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. So when you 12 changed your voter address at the polling place, 13 you had to sign a form for them, correct? 14 MS. SHYDALE: Yes. 15 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And that was under 16 penalties of perjury? 17 MS. SHYDALE: I believe so, yes. MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So I would note that 18 19 IC 3-5-5-6 states "An individual who makes a 20 statement regarding the residence of the 21 individual, under the penalties for perjury, is 22 presumed to reside at the location specified by the 23 individual." 24 So at a bare minimum, he's presumed -- she is 25 presumed to have lived there for -- as of

November 7th, and so -- and she is saying that she moved in October 11th, so although it's not determinative, totally determinative, I think it -- VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Well, I would move to deny the challenge. I mean, we've had challenges

deny the challenge. I mean, we've had challenges like this before based on different residence things, and it's the intent to reside. And I think this is an electronically signed lease. In this day and age, to me, that's sufficient. I think we've accepted evidence equivalent to that in the past, and I think it predates the one-year cut-off requirement, so I would move to deny the challenge.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a motion. Is there a second?

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Second.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Any discussion, questions?

MS. PYLE: While I agree, I don't think the presumption gets us there because that's November 7th and we're looking at the 5th. But I

agree as far as the intent goes.

2.2

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah. Again, affirming that that's sort of where the element of the law was that there was proven intent to reside there prior, I would agree with my colleagues, my counterparts.

So with that, we have a motion to deny the

```
1
     challenge and a second going to the vote.
                                                 All
     those in favor signify by saying "Aye."
 2
 3
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
                                    Aye.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
 4
                                  Aye.
 5
          MS. PYLE:
                    Aye.
 6
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Ave.
 7
          Those opposed?
          The "ayes" have it. The challenge is denied.
 8
     Therefore, I direct the co-division -- or excuse
 9
10
          The Election Division is directed to include
11
     the name of Sarah Shydale in the certified list of
12
     candidates to be printed on the ballot.
13
          Thank you.
14
          MR. HAHN:
                     Thank you.
15
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: And I hate to do this, but I
16
     am going to take another five-minute recess.
                                                    So
17
     we'll be back at 12:55 in this same location.
18
          (Recess taken.)
19
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We're going to get back into
20
          I apologize for drifting a few minutes over my
     it.
21
     commitment.
22
          Moving on, it looks like we have Cause
23
     2024-09, Willis v. Braun, in the matter of the
     challenge to Jonathan D. -- I'm sorry -- Willis v.
24
25
     Brown, in the matter of the challenge to Jonathan
```

- 1 D. Brown, candidate for the Republican Party nomination for United States Representative, 2. 3 District 5. I also see that we have Heuer v. Brown, Cause 4 5 2024-13, also a challenge to Jonathan D. Brown for District 5. 6 Do we have representatives for all parties in 7 attendance? 8 9 MR. WILLIS: Willis and Heuer. 10 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Does it make sense to 11 consolidate these as well? 12 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So Willis and Heuer 13 are here? 14 MR. WILLIS: Yes.
- 15 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah.

16

17

18

19

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21

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23

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- MS. WARYCHA: I would say that just so you know, Mr. Chair, we have noticed that the challenged candidate, Jonathan Brown, I believe, sent Ms. Nussmeyer an email this morning saying he would not be present at today's hearing.
- MS. NUSSMEYER: He called the office this morning and said that he would not be present and just wanted to tell somebody, and I documented it in an email to the board.
- 25 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay.

1 MS. WARYCHA: Thank you. 2 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I'd move to 3 consolidate the challenges. 4 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a second? 5 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Second. CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have a motion to 6 consolidate Cause 2024-09 and Cause 2024-13 and a 7 second. 8 9 Any questions? 10 Hearing none, all those in favor signify by 11 saying "Aye." 12 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 13 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 14 MS. PYLE: Aye. 15 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. 16 The "ayes" have it. The matters are now consolidated. 17 18 Mr. King. 19 I'll take this one. MS. WARYCHA: So this 20 matter in the challenge of the candidate Jonathan 21 D. Brown, the challenge is that Mr. Brown does not 2.2 have two consecutive same party affiliation primary 23 votes as required by Indiana Code 3-8-2-7. For 24 a -- in this record, in your binder, you have the 25 CAN-1 challenge, you have the candidate's CAN-2, as

well as documentation that notice was served in addition to the record that Ms. Nussmeyer spoke of earlier that Mr. Brown had called the office to say he would not be present today.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Thank you. With

that, I'll recognize Mr. Willis. Please state your full name and spell it for the record.

MR. WILLIS: Good morning. Russell Willis, R-u-s-s-e-l-1, W-i-l-l-i-s.

2.2

Very quickly, as outlined, Mr. Brown does not have the two primaries required to run in the Republican primary as required by the IC code she listed. I included in my filing the printout of his SVRS showing only a general election ballot cast in 2020. He has zero primaries.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: What's the other -- a letter from the chairman, is that the other?

MS. WARYCHA: Yes. There is the opportunity to have a letter from the chairman as your other for Indiana Code --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: That's not been provided?

MS. WARYCHA: No, we do not. With your

declaration of candidacy, you could provide that if
you did not have the two-primary vote history.

MR. WILLIS: I am the county chairman of

1 | Madison County, and I did not provide a letter.

2.2

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Thank you.

Given that Mr. Brown is not present to cross-examine, do we need to hear from Heuer too since they're consolidated?

MS. WARYCHA: I believe that would be accurate to give Ms. Heuer the opportunity to make her case as well.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I'm sorry. Ms. Heuer, is she present? Ah.

MS. HEUER: Yes. Good afternoon. My name is Kelli Heuer, K-e-l-l-i, last name H-e-u-e-r.

And I am here challenging Mr. Jonathan D. Brown on the fact that he does not have the two primaries for this office.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Same challenge. Okay. Thank you.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I actually have a question about the law since we're reading our statutes more carefully. Well, I always read them carefully. So the interesting thing about the -- and I'm going to just ask you for how you interpret it. Something that I noticed is that we know that there's the two-primary rule, but the statute doesn't say -- and this is a situation where the

candidate hasn't voted in a primary, period, so do
we interpret the law to mean, if they haven't voted
and want to be one of the major party nominees, are
we reading the statute to mean that your only
avenue, then, is to get certification from the
party chair?

MS. WARYCHA: Yes, that is how I would read it. As Indiana Code 3-8-2-7(A)(4), it says "A statement of the candidate's party affiliation. For purposes of this subdivision, a candidate is considered to be affiliated with a political party only if any of the following applies," and that being the two most recent primaries or the certification of the chair. So that is how I would interpret it.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay.

2.2

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I guess it doesn't say if they didn't vote, but that's what I noticed. It doesn't say what -- it talks about two most recent primaries. So I think by default you have to have the party chair certification, but, again, a point where it's not abundantly clear. We've had a few of these come up.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: But in this case we have neither.

```
1
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Right, right.
 2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Anyone want to make a
 3
     motion?
          MS. PYLE: I would move to uphold the
 4
 5
     challenges.
 6
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Is there a second?
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Second.
 7
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Seconded.
 8
 9
          Any further discussion, questions?
10
          Hearing none, all those in favor signify by
11
     saying "Aye."
12
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
13
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
14
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
15
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
16
          The "ayes" have it. The motion to uphold the
17
     challenge is affirmed. The Election Division is
18
     directed not to include Jonathan D. Brown in the
19
     certified list of primary candidates sent to county
20
     election boards and indicate the name of this
21
     candidate not be printed on the ballot.
2.2
          Thank you. Appreciate it.
23
          Welcome back. Next is Willis v. King,
24
     Cause 2024-10, in the matter of the challenge to
25
     Scott A. King, candidate for Republican Party
```

```
1
     nomination for United States Representative,
 2
     District 5.
          MS. WARYCHA: Mr. Chairman, this is --
 3
 4
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Are there two in this one as
     well?
 5
 6
          MS. WARYCHA: Yes, there are. Mr. Willis and
     Ms. Heuer have both challenged this candidate as
 7
     well, so wanted to bring that up in case you wanted
 8
 9
     to --
10
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah. I'll note the other
11
     cause number is 2024-14, and that's Heuer v. King
12
     again, correct?
13
          MS. HEUER:
                      Yes.
14
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a motion to
15
     consolidate those as well?
16
          MS. PYLE: So moved.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a second?
17
18
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second.
19
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: A second.
20
         Any discussion?
21
          Hearing none, all those in favor signify by
2.2
     saying "Aye."
23
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
24
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
25
          MS. PYLE: Aye.
```

1 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. The "ayes" have it. The causes are now 2. 3 consolidated. 4 Valerie. MS. WARYCHA: Yes. Mr. Willis and Ms. Heuer 5 brought a challenge against candidate Scott A. King 6 for U.S. Representative, District 5. The CAN-1 7 challenge is in your binder. The challenge is 8 because the candidate does not have two consecutive 9 10 same party -- does not have the most recent primary 11 votes as far as the two votes or the county chair 12 sign-off. And that was in your binder on both of them as well as notice to the candidates. 13 14 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. And by the way, is 15 Mr. King present? 16 Okav. Mr. Willis. 17 MR. WILLIS: Russell Willis, R-u-s-s-e-l-l, W-i-l-l-i-s. 18 19 And as outlined, he does not have the two 20 primary votes. Included in my documents that I 21 turned in for Mr. King, he has one primary in 2022 2.2 and that is all. 23 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Ms. Heuer, would you like to 24 make any statements? 25 MS. HEUER: Again, my name, for the record,

```
1
     Kelli Heuer, K-e-l-l-i, last name H-e-u-e-r.
          To just reiterate, Mr. Scott King, I filed
 2.
 3
     this challenge because he only has the one primary
 4
     and not the two.
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. So exact same
     circumstances as the prior cases. Mr. King is not
 6
     present. Is there any motions?
 7
          MS. PYLE: I would move to uphold the
 8
 9
     challenges.
10
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Is there a second?
11
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second.
12
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Having a motion and a second
     to uphold the challenges in Cause 2024-10
13
14
     consolidated with 2024-14.
15
          Any discussion, questions?
16
          Hearing none, all those in favor signify by
17
     saying "Aye."
18
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
19
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                  Aye.
20
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
21
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
2.2
          The "ayes" have it. The motions carry.
23
     Election Division is instructed to direct not to
24
     include Scott A. King in the certified list of
25
     primary candidates sent to the county election
```

```
1
     boards and to indicate that the name of this
     candidate is not to be printed on the ballot.
 2.
 3
          Thank you.
 4
          Moving on.
 5
          MS. WARYCHA: Mr. Chairman, if I might,
     Mr. Willis and Ms. Heuer have also challenged --
 6
     and I apologize; I'm not sure I'm going to say his
 7
     name correctly -- a Mr. --
 8
 9
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Pfenninger.
10
          MS. WARYCHA: -- Pfenninger. Thank you.
11
     Mr. Willis has asked to have that challenge
12
     withdrawn. I do not have that same notice from
13
     Ms. Heuer.
14
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. So we have --
          MS. NUSSMEYER: If I may, Mr. Chairman, in the
15
16
     binder it actually does have the withdrawal -- or
17
     the dismissal from Ms. Heuer. It's in the very
     back of the book.
18
19
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        Thank you.
20
                          She actually sent the email, I
          MS. NUSSMEYER:
21
     think, before Mr. Willis did.
2.2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have Willis v.
23
     Pfenninger, Cause 2024-11, and Heuer v. Pfenninger,
24
     Cause 2024-25. So move to consolidate these?
25
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I move to
```

```
1
     consolidate.
 2.
          MS. PYLE:
                    Second.
 3
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Having a motion to
 4
     consolidate and a second, all those in favor
 5
     signify by saying "Aye."
 6
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
 7
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
 8
          MS. PYLE: Aye.
 9
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
10
          The "ayes" have it, the motions are
11
     consolidated -- or sorry -- the causes are
12
     consolidated. And in each case, we have -- you
13
     both agree to withdraw your contest?
14
          MR. WILLIS: Yes.
15
         MS. HEUER: Yes.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So can we just take a motion
     to dismiss?
17
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So I would move to
18
19
     dismiss the challenges -- or accept their motions
20
     to dismiss. It seems odd. Move to dismiss --
21
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Move to dismiss, yeah. Move
2.2
     to dismiss.
23
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: -- the challenges.
24
          MS. PYLE: Second.
25
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have a motion to
```

dismiss Causes 2024-11 and 2024-25 and a second. 1 2. Any discussion, questions? 3 Hearing none, all those in favor signify by 4 saying "Aye." 5 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 6 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. MS. PYLE: 7 Aye. 8 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. 9 The "ayes" have it. The matter is dismissed. 10 Thank you. 11 MR. WILLIS: Thank you. 12 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Next we have Dixon-Tatum v. 13 McCormick, Cause 2024-12, in the matter of the 14 challenge to Jennifer McCormick, candidate for the 15 Democratic Party nomination for governor. 16 MR. KOCHEVAR: Mr. Chairman, members of the 17 Commission, you'll find in your binder for this 18 cause a copy of the CAN-1 candidate challenge filed 19 by the challenger as well as an appearance for 20 counsel for the challenged candidate, Jennifer G. 21 McCormick; a copy of candidate McCormick's 2.2 declaration of candidacy, the CAN-2 that was filed 23 with the State, along with an attachment of their 24 required statement of economic interest filing; a 25 copy of the notice of hearing that was sent to both

```
1
     parties as well as documentation that we did send
 2
     that notice of hearing to both parties.
 3
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Is Ms. Dixon-Tatum still
 4
     present?
 5
          Okay.
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I would move to
 6
     dismiss the challenge since the challenger is not
 7
 8
     present.
 9
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a second?
10
          MS. PYLE:
                     Second.
11
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. We have a motion to
12
     dismiss the Cause 2024-12 and we have a second.
13
          Any conversation, concerns, questions?
14
          All those in favor signify by saying "Aye."
15
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
16
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Ave.
17
          MS. PYLE: Aye.
18
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Aye.
19
          The "ayes" have it. The matter is dismissed.
20
     Thank you.
21
          MR. ZIEMBA:
                       Thank you.
2.2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Looks like we have
23
     several causes here for the Rust matter. I'm glad
24
     to read them off individually. We have Neal v.
25
     Rust, Cause 2024-15; Shickles v. Rust, Cause
```

- 1 2024-16; Williams v. Rust, Cause 2024-17; Shields
- 2 v. Rust, Cause 2024-18; Stafford v. Rust, Cause
- 3 | 2024-19; and Babcock v. Rust, Cause 2024-26.
- 4 MS. HARTER: Mr. Rust just ran to the restroom
- 5 | because we thought we were going to have that one
- 6 | challenge buffer, so he'll be sure back.
- 7 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Sure.
- 8 MS. WARYCHA: I'll summarize, Mr. Chairman.
- 9 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah, please do. Or do we
- 10 | need to consolidate first?
- 11 MS. WARYCHA: Well, I was going to say that we
- 12 | have six challenges in the case to Mr. Rust, so
- 13 | that would be my recommendation if you would like
- 14 | to consider consolidation.
- 15 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah. They all sort of are
- 16 | along the same lines.
- 17 MS. WARYCHA: Yes, yes. The challenge is
- 18 | under that Indiana Code 3-8-2-7(a)(4) that Mr. Rust
- 19 does not have the primary vote history as required
- 20 by statute or a letter from the chairman. And then
- 21 | under each of these filings, you will find exhibits
- 22 | from the attorneys as well as appearances for each
- 23 | party. Exhibits include -- let's see here. We've
- 24 got depositions, vote history. That pretty well
- 25 | covers it, I believe, as well as notice that was

```
1
     served on both parties.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. So I guess first up
 2.
     we have Mr. Neal --
 4
          MS. WARYCHA: Do you want to move to
     consolidate?
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Oh, sorry. Is there a
 6
     motion to consolidate the six causes?
 7
          MS. PYLE: So moved.
 8
 9
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a second?
10
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second.
11
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we have a motion to
12
     consolidate six causes and a second.
          All those in favor signify by saying "Ave."
13
14
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
15
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
16
         MS. PYLE: Aye.
17
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
          The "ayes" have it. These causes are now
18
19
     consolidated.
20
          Sorry. With that, Mr. Neal.
          MR. SHOUSE: Mr. Chairman and members of the
21
22
     Commission, my name is Ryan Shouse, attorney on
23
     behalf of Mr. Neal and others. That's R-y-a-n,
     S-h-o-u-s-e. Myself and Paul Mullin, M-u-l-l-i-n,
24
25
     and Will Young, Y-o-u-n-g, represent Michael Neal
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- 1 | from Hamilton County, Larry Shickles from Harrison
- 2 | County, Cameron Williams from Marion County, Danny
- 3 | Shields from Monroe County, and Damien Stafford
- 4 | from Whitley County. I will note for the
- 5 | Commission we do not represent Kyle Babcock. But
- 6 | all the individuals who I represent are here today
- 7 | in the crowd.
- 8 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Excuse me one moment.
- 9 Is Mr. Babcock here today?
- 10 MR. BABCOCK: Yes, I'm here.
- 11 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah. Sorry. He approached
- 12 | earlier.
- MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay.
- 14 MR. SHOUSE: Okay. This is a straightforward
- 15 | application of the affiliation statute we just saw
- 16 | two individuals struck under this same statute.
- 17 Mr. Rust is not eligible under the affiliation
- 18 | statute to run as a Republican for the United
- 19 | States Senate in the 2024 primary. Mr. Rust did
- 20 | not vote as a Republican in the last two -- in the
- 21 | two most recent primaries in which he voted. He
- 22 | voted Republican, and the time before that he voted
- 23 | in the Democratic primary. Four of the last five
- 24 | he's voted in were Democratic primaries.
- 25 And then on subsection (b), Mr. Rust did not

receive certification that he is a member of the Republican party from the Jackson County Republican chairperson.

We have included Mr. Rust's voting history as an exhibit to the challenge and an exhibit to our memorandum. And I'll refer -- I won't belabor the memorandum, but I will note that we did draft a full memorandum on these issues for you guys along with exhibits.

Mr. Rust filed a declaration of candidacy, and both boxes -- the CAN-2, both boxes are unchecked. The affiliation statute applies to Mr. Rust just like it applies to all other candidates in the state, and we ask the Commission to uphold the challenges to Mr. Rust and direct the court not to include him on the certified list of primary candidates sent to the county election boards and indicate the name Mr. Rust not be printed on the ballot. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you like to cross-examine?

MS. HARTER: No.

2.2

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Should Mr. Babcock be --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Mr. Babcock, would you like

```
1
    to make any comments?
         MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Or do you want to
 2
 3
     adopt and incorporate what was just said?
 4
         MR. BABCOCK: Would you like me to make my
 5
    presentation now or not?
         MS. WARYCHA: Since you consolidated.
 6
         CHAIRMAN OKESON:
 7
                            Yeah.
         MR. BABCOCK: Okay. First of all, thank you
 8
 9
     everybody for being here as an important part of
10
     the process.
11
         MS. WARYCHA: Spell and say your name.
12
         MR. BABCOCK: Kyle, K-y-l-e, Babcock, B, as in
13
    boy, -a, as in apple, -b, as in boy, -c-o-c-k.
14
          And thank you. I know you're not here for the
15
    high pay, so thank you.
16
          I'm going to start here, I've got some
17
    documents. I made copies. Do I give them to you?
18
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            To Valerie.
19
         MR. BABCOCK: There are four here plus one.
20
         MS. HARTER: And I don't have a copy.
21
         MR. BABCOCK: I made a copy.
2.2
         MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Mr. Babcock, I just
23
    have a question.
24
         MR. BABCOCK: Yes, ma'am.
25
         MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Do you have -- one of
```

the things that you can do is adopt and incorporate what these gentlemen just presented. Is there something further that you want to add?

MR. BABCOCK: I appreciate your advice, but I think my three or four minutes may be a little bit different than theirs. So I appreciate your advice. Thank you for that.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Please proceed.

2.2

MR. BABCOCK: So one of the reasons I'm here is I've read in the press, and that was my complaint, that Mr. Rust has not met the requirements. My understanding is from press reports. I looked at the Indianapolis Star, I looked at the Capital Chronicle, and the AP, three trusted publications. I have not done any other research on his voting record or anything like that.

But as a long-time Republican Party person, elected, nonelected, I take offense and I'm challenging Mr. Rust for his constant challenging of he's involved in the process and he wants to challenge the establishment. I have been on the state platform committee since 2008. I have attended hearings all over the state. Mr. Rust had plenty of opportunities to come and express his

concern about any process in the Republican Party. I've traveled around the state. I've been in every 2. 3 convention since 2008 as an elected delegate.

never seen him there. So when he says he wants to 4

5 shake up the process, I just have one thing:

rules are the rules. 6

1

7

8

9

10

11

12

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14

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16

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18

19

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21

2.2

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24

25

And so I look at this and look back, and even looking at his 2018 voting record, the primary that he is running in right now for United States Senate, he failed to vote in the 2018 primary, one of the most hotly contested Republican primaries in history, Mike Braun, Todd Rokita, Luke Messer. he can't even vote in that primary, that's a problem to me. We have rules. The legislature established the statutes, and that is my point.

I see him talking frequently that he is a Republican. Well, I'm an optimist. I've been an optimist my whole life, just like maybe he's a Republican his whole life, but that doesn't mean I can go to the Optimist Club and file and run. They have rules too. The Republican Party has rules.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you like to cross-examine on anything Mr. Babcock had to offer? MS. HARTER: No.

```
CHAIRMAN OKESON: You have five minutes.
 1
 2
                       I don't get ten because he had
          MS. HARTER:
 3
     five and he had five? Just because he didn't use
 4
     it, I mean. Please.
                                   Since there were two
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Sure.
     presentations, we don't have to vote on it.
 6
     should be afforded ten minutes.
 7
          MS. WARYCHA: Are these all one document
 8
 9
     together for the Commissioners?
10
                       They're separate documents.
          MS. HARTER:
11
     Those are documents I'll reference. Ready?
12
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yes.
13
          MS. HARTER: So as this Commission knows,
14
     there's currently pending before the Indiana
15
     Supreme Court a case challenging the
16
     constitutionality of Indiana Code 3-8-2-7(a)(4).
17
     The Indiana Supreme Court has not yet issued an
18
     opinion on the matter yet. And in any case, win or
19
     lose, we hope the Indiana Supreme Court gets it
20
     right, but Rust will seek intervention from SCOTUS
21
     if we --
2.2
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I have a question for
23
     you.
24
          MS. HARTER:
                       Yes.
25
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   So as an attorney, we
```

realize that you had a very -- and I thought it was extremely well written actually. Judge Dietrick had written an opinion that granted you the injunction that would put Mr. Rust on the ballot. The Indiana Supreme Court had the issue before it of whether it should stay that decision or whether it should go ahead and uphold it. What they did was to stay it and said that they would be issuing an opinion shortly to explain that.

2.

Now, as a practitioner, when a court does something like that, they knew that it was going to make us go back and revert to the law as it stood before Judge Dietrick's opinion. So how do you get around the fact that the Supreme Court, albeit indirectly, has spoken and says that we are to apply the law as it currently stands until they tell us otherwise?

MS. HARTER: That's a great question, and I'm going to explain that as part of my presentation.

So first, I want to point to a case that is in the record. It's a week before. Or actually, so January 18, you might be familiar with the Richard Allen case for the Delphi murders. Okay? So there was oral argument on that case, and that same day the Court issued an order, not a full opinion,

saying this is what we're going to do in the case and here is our order in the interim. And they said very specifically how they were going to rule and what their order was.

2.2

In the Rust case, they didn't say anything about their ultimate order. They said they were going to grant the stay. They didn't say their ultimate order was in favor of either party. And that's important because the Indiana Supreme Court will tell in its order if it has made a final decision. We don't know that the justices have come to rest on this. If you watch the oral argument --

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: But, Counselor, here's my question: The Supreme Court knew that we would be having this hearing, that the deadline for us to rule on challenges was by noon on the 29th. So they knew that, and they told us by giving this stay that we are to proceed under the law as it is written. And so how can we -- I mean, they've told us that, we are to proceed under the law as written and we can't sit as a court, so how can we possibly --

MS. HARTER: I'm getting there.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And I apologize,

- 1 Mr. Rust. I'd love to see you on the ballot.
- 2 MS. HARTER: So I'm going to explain how the
- 3 | timing here is kind of significant and unique. So
- 4 | the state defendants filed their motion for stay
- 5 | contemporaneously with their notice of appeal on
- 6 December 8th. The trial court order, which you
- 7 | have a copy of, was December 7th, if you recall.
- 8 | So there's two things here.
- 9 So first of all, under the appellate rules,
- 10 | they're supposed to file their motion to stay with
- 11 | the trial court unless there's extraordinary
- 12 | circumstances. They've alleged there's
- 13 extraordinary circumstances because they thought
- 14 | the trial court judge would rule against them.
- 15 | That's not extraordinary. That's true when any
- 16 | trial court judge issues an order that he doesn't
- 17 | want to revisit.
- 18 MS. PYLE: Just a quick question. Is that
- 19 what they actually alleged or is that what you're
- 20 | assuming they alleged?
- 21 MS. HARTER: It's in their filings if you read
- 22 | them.
- 23 MS. PYLE: Okay. Just checking.
- MS. HARTER: They said that that was part of
- 25 | the emergency that the trial court judge was

certainly not going to rule for them, which is interesting because the attorney general's office had another case where there was the dollar law. And a building was about to be sold, and there was a three-day window, and they still filed in the trial court. And that wasn't extraordinary, but this is.

So in any case, we had two months, okay, where the Indiana Supreme Court could have ruled that it granted the stay, and it didn't grant it until 23 hours before the challenge deadline. Why is this significant? Because from December 7th through February 13th, at approximately 1 o'clock, Indiana Code 3-8-2-7(a)(4) was enjoined. The candidacy filing period here ran from January 10th to February 9th at noon. During the entirety of the candidate filing period, the statute was enjoined. Okay? This is important.

Rust and I both went to the secretary of state's office together, where we confirmed that the form, even though it had an affiliation section -- it's Part 3 on the CAN-2 -- even though it was there, it's because they don't update the forms but annually and that, at that period, it shouldn't have even been on the form for you to

have to check a box because the statute was enjoined. And furthermore, they confirmed that Mr. Rust did not have to check the box. This was true the entire candidacy period. So --

2.2

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Counselor, but if you -- let's say that your argument is correct and that box shouldn't have been on there. But isn't -- while that stay is pending and if it had held, the fact that they say okay, disregard this because you don't have to worry about it because you voted one primary instead of two, that's the same equivalent, isn't it? Do you see what I'm saying?

MS. HARTER: It's unique because here Rust, had he known of this -- so had the statute been in effect at any point during that candidacy filing period from January 10 to February 9, if he had known, he could have done one of two things that is very important here.

First, he could have went back to his party chair and asked again for certification. This Commission, through its counsel -- and it's in the materials I provided -- wrote in a brief that Mr. Rust's assertion that he would not be certified was speculative and that there was no way to know

if she would change her mind.

2.

2.2

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: First, I would just tell you that there were two members of this Commission who expressed no opinion regarding the position that was taken by the attorney general, who felt it was not proper.

MS. HARTER: Yeah.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: But that aside, you know, the Court, the Indiana Supreme Court, knew all of this. The fact that Mr. Rust was able to go on, that's fine. I mean, I've listened to the appellate arguments. I've read your briefs. I've read Judge Dietrick's opinion and all of that. And I certainly have sympathy for him because I think, as applied to him, there was -- as applied to him, he could not have voted, was it the 2022 municipal elections?

MS. HARTER: He can't vote in any municipal election because he lives outside the city limits.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Right. And so as applied to him, he gets put into a special circumstance that is not applied to people who live within the town limits of Seymour, who all have the opportunity to be able to get to elections.

MS. HARTER: He could have just complied this

past election cycle.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: But I didn't hear that argument made. It was very briefly touched upon. And the Indiana Supreme Court, we'll see if they address it. If they don't, then possibly it could be raised again in the future for something, but --

MS. HARTER: It was briefed, and we didn't -- obviously oral arguments are 20 minutes. We don't get to touch everything.

But there's a second part to this. So the Commission, which is you guys, through counsel -- I understand you might not agree with counsel -- asserted that he could have sought certification and maybe gotten it later, that the party chair could have changed her mind.

What I'm saying is, if the statute had not been in place during that candidate challenge hearing, he would have then had two options. He could have looked for her to certify him, which there's a judicial admission that that was a possibility. And then, secondly, he's running for State Senate. He could live anywhere in the Indiana, which means he could have relocated to --

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Counselor, I'm sorry,

- 1 | but he could have also -- the stay was in place.
- 2 | He knew that -- I mean, the stay was not in place.
- 3 | The decision was there. The stay hadn't been
- 4 decided. He knew there was a request for a stay.
- 5 | So if he knew that there was a request for a stay
- 6 | that could come any day, then he could have gone
- 7 back and asked for the certification then. He had
- 8 reason to, wouldn't he?
- 9 MS. HARTER: Well, no not necessarily. When
- 10 | the stay remained in place -- I mean, we were
- 11 | watching and waiting the entire candidate filing
- 12 | period. The appropriate time for the Court to have
- done something would have been in that window
- 14 because, after that window, he has the opportunity
- 15 to do nothing.
- 16 The other option was he could have relocated.
- 17 | In the materials I provided, we have the affidavit
- 18 | from LaPorte County party chair Al Stevens, who
- 19 would have certified Rust had he moved to LaPorte
- 20 County. Moving, relocating your residence when you
- 21 grew up in Seymour is a big deal. You don't want
- 22 | to have to do that if you don't really have to.
- We got through the candidate filing period,
- 24 and it seemed like things were going well. We
- 25 | couldn't have anticipated that 23 hours before the

close of the challenge hearing that there would be a stay when for two months the Indiana Supreme Court sat on it. And just like they might have anticipated that you all would be hearing a challenge, they also had to anticipate that I would be making these equitable arguments about that window, and they didn't act in that window.

They could have acted in December. They could have acted in January. They could have acted in the middle of the window. They could have acted 23 hours before the close of the candidate filing period, but they did not. We do not know how they are going to rule, and pending right now, also in the materials, is our motion for relief from the stay at least as to Mr. Rust, which they haven't ruled on yet.

So there's a lot of things at play here. He did not have an opportunity to reevaluate his position and seek certification or relocate. We have a pending motion. And the trial court order, you know, it's still out there factually about what happened. The other side has tendered a brief where it challenges Mr. Rust's statistics about the impact of the statute. But the Court found them as a matter of fact, and those factual findings, as

you attorneys know, are reviewed with a deferential standard.

2.

2.2

So while the Supreme Court can take issue with the legal findings and review those de novo, the factual issues about the statistics and how this statute makes it so that the majority of Hoosiers cannot run for office for the party of their choosing, those remain and will likely be deferred to. So --

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Well, Ms. Harter, I mean, so, number one, your client could have done all kinds of things to protect his interests. Like he could have played by the rules in existence hoping -- you know, hope is not a strategy, hope is not a plan, whatever the phrase is. You can always hope that the Supreme Court is going to find a state statute unconstitutional. But all of us in the legal profession, all of us in this state, know that that rarely happens. So putting all his eggs, to draw from your basket, in one basket seems a little risky. Right?

So he could have taken -- he could have relocated, yeah, because it's one of those things, when you're wanting to do something like run for U.S. Senate, which is a really big deal, you might

decide, if you want it that badly, that you make the decision, the big decision, to move somewhere else where you might get certified. Now, that brings to mind carpetbaggers and all that kind of stuff. But anyway, that is something that could be done. Right? He could have done that. He could have said --

2.

MS. HARTER: He started the process.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Well, you know, but it didn't happen. Right? It didn't happen. And, I mean, I agree with what my colleague was saying. The Supreme Court stayed Judge Dietrick's order without any comment, which to most of us is a signal that his order, as well written as it might have been, is probably going to go down the tubes. Right? The Supreme Court is probably not going to be upholding that order.

And, I mean, so the theme of the day has been playing by the rules, and that's the issue. We've got the same issue here that all these other folks have had, which is that, you know, if you want to run as a candidate in this state, there are rules that you have to follow.

And I think too, you know, as part of the -- because there are other court cases that talk about

the fact that the parties have the -- the political parties themselves have the constitutional right to determine who gets to associate with them. There's a 7th Circuit case, a 7th Circuit decision that talks about that.

And so this concept of, well, you don't have the -- you either have to have the two primary votes for the party, which is something you can do, so you don't even have to know who your party chair is. As long as you vote with that party two times the most recent two primaries, you're good to go. Or you need to be friendlier with the party chair of your county. Right? Or find a friendly -- you can forum shop and find someone who is friendly to you.

But, I mean, those are just the rules, and the political parties have -- or the courts have recognized that they have a constitutional right to control, to a certain extent, who gets to be affiliated with them in terms of being a nominee for the primary. And that's -- I mean, none of these arguments overcome that. They just don't overcome it.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, I completely agree, and I think to the point made, the option, being a

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1
     U.S. Senate candidate, to relocate is an option not
     afforded some of these others that have come before
 2.
 3
     me and had great latitude to remedy your own
     situation potentially, albeit not a decision that
 4
 5
     would have been made lightly. But there were paths
     to success there you failed to take advantage of.
 6
 7
          MS. HARTER:
                      Well, he was in the process of
     it, but because the entire candidate challenge
 8
 9
     period -- or filing period we had an injunction in
10
     place, it just wasn't necessary. There's nothing
11
     we can do to undo --
12
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Clearly, that's not right.
13
     At this point, it clearly would be necessary.
14
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Sorry, but I think
15
     you need to -- let's move on from that point
16
     because obviously we don't agree with your position
     saying that he couldn't do anything because --
17
18
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: He could have.
```

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: -- he could have.

MS. HARTER: But he didn't have to.

19

20

21

2.2

23

24

25

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Well, it doesn't matter. He could have. Protect your interests as a lawyer. So let's just move on from that.

I still don't see how we can get around the Indiana Supreme Court. Previously, when I was

talking about with the Trump challenge and
everything, there was no direction from the U.S.
Supreme Court. Still hasn't happened. Indiana

Supreme Court has spoken to us, and they've told us to enforce the law as it was originally written.

2.2

And, Mr. Rust, I'm serious when I say I would love to see you on the ballot. But as far as I'm concerned, our hands are tied, so you tell me how we untie them.

MS. HARTER: The practical reality is the Indiana Supreme Court is the last word on the Indiana constitutional issues that we've raised, and we did raise those. But we also raised several federal constitution issues, and for those issues, not only is the Indiana Supreme Court not the last word, SCOTUS is, but we have -- we're not running on a clean slate. We have lots of case law that has never upheld a ballot access restriction for longer than 12 months. This statute is up to four years, maybe more, depending on --

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: But you made that argument to the Indiana Supreme Court.

MS. HARTER: I did, and I'm just trying to answer a question here. We do have some guidance from SCOTUS regardless of what our Indiana Supreme

Court does. We hope they follow that guidance, but if they don't, they're not the last word. A 7th Circuit case doesn't overrule U.S. Supreme Court precedent. And that's really what the other side kind of hinges their whole argument on is that case from the 7th Circuit, Hero. Sorry. Slipped my mind for a minute.

2.2

So we do have, we do have case law that supports our position from the U.S. Supreme Court regardless of what our Indiana Supreme Court does. I mean, they haven't issued a ruling yet, but if they don't, we're obviously going to take it up. So we do have some guidance. The guidance is pretty clear. There's never been a ballot access restriction for as long as what we have presented by this statute here.

And the parties of voters -- or the parties. The rights of voters and the rights of candidates are corollary to each other. So here we have a situation where John Rust has tendered over 11,000 petitions and has a lot of support in Indiana. We're going to disenfranchise all of those voters if he can't be on the ballot, and we're going to have a U.S. Senate race with one candidate. And it's fine that the party leadership has endorsed

him, but the party is made of not just the leadership, but all of the party members. So the party leadership has some rights, but they don't supersede the rights of the individuals that comprise the entire party.

(Background noise.)

Is that me?

2.

2.2

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I don't know what that was.

MS. HARTER: So there's that issue as well. There's a great voter disenfranchisement issue.

It's very unfortunate that they issued the stay 23 hours. He's already campaigned. He already has a following. If this challenge is upheld, we have no choices on the ballot. We have to just adopt Jim Banks, who, interestingly, was endorsed by the party even before Mr. Rust entered the race, which is sort of an unprecedented move and it's sort of scary. It moves us towards sort of Soviet-style elections where here's a candidate, take him or leave him. Right? We have no choices.

So this is a big deal, and I understand that we don't have a final ruling from the Indiana

Supreme Court, but they haven't spoken. It seems like they're split, if I had to guess, based on

their behavior because they didn't put in an order. They could have and they do often if you follow them. They will put we're ordering -- we're going to do it this way with reasons to follow. They did grant the stay, but they didn't ultimately indicate an outcome. And we know it was a split ruling because it says the majority of the court, which

could be three-two or four-one.

So I don't think we can assume what the Indiana Supreme Court is going to do. And I understand and appreciate that they lifted the stay, and they might have done so for any number of reasons, perhaps to not tip their hand about what way they were going to come out because, if they had denied it, then it would seem to be a pretty strong signal that they would go for Mr. Rust. I think they're still figuring it out. They seemed very split in oral arguments.

So I don't think we have clear guidance from the Indiana Supreme Court. We do have some U.S. Supreme Court guidance on this issue. There's lots of things at play. I attached the trial court's order, which I'm sure you're familiar with, as well as some briefing. I don't know if there's any other questions you have.

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1
          MS. WARYCHA: You have 37 seconds left.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, we did use some of it
 2.
 3
     with some of the engagement.
 4
          MR. KOCHEVAR:
                              I've been pausing it.
                         No.
 5
          MS. WARYCHA: I have too.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you like to
 6
     cross-examine?
 7
 8
          MR. SHOUSE:
                       No.
 9
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Does that apply to you,
10
     Mr. Babcock? Would you like to cross-examine?
11
                        No.
                             I'm fine.
          MR. BABCOCK:
12
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Is there a motion?
13
          MS. PYLE:
                     Just as a comment, I quess, I know
14
     we're talking about all these federal cases here,
15
     and you seem to think that they're very clear to
16
     establish things and that they take precedence over
     the Indiana Supreme Court. And I guess my opinion
17
18
     there is, if it was that clear, they would have
19
     made a final opinion for you. So I guess that's
20
     where I stand on that.
21
          I'm going to move to uphold the challenge.
2.2
                            Is there a second?
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
23
          I'll second it.
24
          So we have a motion to uphold the challenges
     in the six consolidated causes and a second.
25
```

1 Any further discussion? Any questions, 2 comments? 3 Hearing none, moving to a vote. All those in 4 favor signify by saying "Aye." 5 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 6 7 MS. PYLE: Aye. CHAIRMAN OKESON: 8 Aye. 9 The "ayes" have it. The motions carry. 10 MR. SHOUSE: Thank you. 11 The challenges are upheld. CHAIRMAN OKESON: 12 The Election Division is directed not to include 13 John Rust in the certified list of primary 14 candidates sent to county election boards and to indicate the name of this candidate not be printed 15 16 on the ballot. 17 Thank you. The next matter -- Bieniek, is that 18 19 correct? -- Bieniek v. Lester, Cause 2024-20, in 20 the matter of the challenge to Trent A. Lester, 21 candidate for the Republican Party nomination for 22 United States Representative, District 4. 23 Valerie. 24 MS. WARYCHA: Yes. In your binder you have 25 the CAN-1 challenge, and the challenge is also

```
1
    based off the two most recent primary votes are not
    Republican and there's no chairman certification
 2.
 3
     for Indiana Code 3-8-2-7(a)(4). You also, on that
 4
     second page, have the vote record as well as the
 5
     candidate's declaration of candidacy and the notice
     that was served on both parties.
 6
 7
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Thank you.
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        Thank you. And then I've just
 8
 9
    been given copies for each member of, we'll call
10
     it, Exhibit A. Did you give one to them?
11
         MR. BIENIEK:
                        I did.
12
         MS. WARYCHA: Okay. Thank you.
13
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: Am I pronouncing it right,
    Mr. Bieniek?
14
15
         MR. BIENIEK: With my name, I'm never offended
16
    when folks try, and I've been called far worse.
    Bieniek.
17
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Bieniek. Okay. And if you
18
19
    would, please spell that.
20
         MR. BIENIEK: Absolutely. Thank you,
21
    Chairman, members of the Commission. Scott
2.2
    Bieniek.
               That's Bravo, India, Echo, November,
23
     India, Echo, Kilo. I'm a registered voter in
24
    Greencastle North, Putnam County, which is in the
```

25

4th Congressional District.

I filed a challenge against Mr. Lester, as was indicated, because he does not have the chairman certification nor does he have a primary vote record showing he's cast a Republican ballot in the two most recent primaries that he has voted in.

2.2

In support of that, I think I attached to my candidate challenge, which should be in your packet today; a copy of the vote record that I acquired from the Tippecanoe County clerk wherein Mr. Lester resides showing his vote history back to 2000. In fact, I don't think there's a single primary ballot cast by Mr. Lester.

As one of the able Commissioners noted, the First Amendment right to speech and association applies not only to a candidate and his supporters, but also to other members of a party, a political party, I myself being one of those. And I have a right to not associate with individuals that have not expressed an affiliation with the party to which I subscribe. And that's why I stand before you today.

The Exhibit A that was handed to you today was something that was posted on his Facebook page basically confirming that the earliest that he could comply with the statute would be 2028,

essentially saying that, look, I haven't voted in a primary. Again, I heard somebody earlier today, one of the hardest things in the law -- and,

Ms. Horseman, I'm honored as well, as somebody else said, to appear before you today -- but it's almost impossible to prove a negative. That's about as close as we can get, an admission by a candidate saying, look, I'm aware of this law, there was a law change, and the earliest I can comply with it is 2028.

So without the candidate -- or the chairman's certificate, I just don't think he can comply with the statute. And to address -- because depending on what happens with SCOTUS, I may seek to intervene in that case as a registered voter. I want to make it very clear that the trial court's decision was an injunction. It was not a ruling on the merits. And if you want to rely on an injunction, you do so at your own risk knowing full well that it is not a ruling on the merits and that the court may ultimately rule against you.

In this case, our state Supreme Court has said we're going to stay that injunction. They may seek emergency relief to the court, but I intend to -- I will intervene on that case if it happens because I

1 think I have a right as a voter as well, and I want to make sure it's in the record today so that I 2 3 have something to show my interest in that case. 4 Thank you. 5 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Mr. Lester, would you like to cross-examine? 6 7 MR. LESTER: No. There's no point. I do want to point out --8 9 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Go ahead and take the 10 podium. 11 MR. LESTER: Trent Lester, T-r-e-n-t, 12 L-e-s-t-e-r. 13 I do want to point out he was nice enough to 14 put the date. That's when I went back and looked 15 at the way that this whole ballot primary selection 16 is used. I do -- I have concerns basically because 17 I don't think I'm the only one that didn't check 18 the check box that's not in here today. Maybe we 19 pick and choose who we bring in here because we 20 don't fit their narrative. Maybe we don't fit --21 or we're running against somebody that they 22 particularly like. I don't know. I don't know 23 why, but I don't think I'm the only one that doesn't have the two check box, two primaries or 24

the backing of the Republican chair.

```
1
          With that being said, I know the law is the
     law, and I accept whatever you guys obviously say.
 2
 3
     So thank you.
 4
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you like any
     cross-examination?
 5
 6
          MR. BIENIEK: No. Thank you.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Anyone want to provide a
 7
     motion? Any questions?
 8
 9
          MS. PYLE: Motion to uphold the challenge.
10
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: I have a motion to uphold
11
     the challenge.
12
          Is there a second?
13
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second.
14
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a second.
15
          Any further discussion?
16
          Given your statements of admission, I think we
     kind of are where we are.
17
          So we have a motion to uphold the challenge
18
     and a second in Cause 2024-20. All those in favor
19
20
     signify by saying "Aye."
21
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
2.2
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.
23
          MS. PYLE:
                    Aye.
24
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
25
          The "ayes" have it. The motion to uphold is
```

```
The Division is directed not to include
 1
     approved.
     Trent A. Lester in its certified list of primary
 2.
 3
     candidates sent to the county election boards and
 4
     to indicate the name of this candidate not be
 5
     printed on the ballot.
 6
                      Thank you very much.
          MR. LESTER:
 7
          MR. BIENIEK:
                        Thank you.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Mr. Chair, I would
 8
 9
     move for a stay for five minutes so we can discuss
     the recent -- recess so we can discuss a recent
10
11
     court opinion that just came down.
12
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Do we need to -- did you
13
     move for it?
14
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Yes. I'm asking for
15
     a recess.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Is there a second?
17
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: All those in favor signify
18
19
     by saying "Aye."
20
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
21
                                   Aye.
2.2
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We'll recess for ten minutes
23
     and come back here at 2:10.
24
          (Recess taken.)
25
```

1 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Let's resume here. Back in 2 session. Moving on, the next case I have is Dole 3 v. Fox, Cause 2024-21, in the matter of the 4 challenge to Brent Fox, candidate for Republican 5 Party nomination for State Representative, 6 District 68. Valerie. 7 I believe we just got an 8 MS. WARYCHA: Yes. appearance for this one this morning. I'm looking 9 10 to see if it's in your binder yet. I think it 11 might be. So that would be in there as well as 12 notice to the candidate. And the reason for the 13 challenge here on the CAN-1 is that he is not a 14 Republican in good standing and did not check a 15 two-primary box or have a letter from the chairman. 16 And the appearance is already in there. Thank you. There is an appearance in the back for an attorney 17

MR. YOUNG: Will Young.

by the name -- oh, it's Paul Mullin.

18

19

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21

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25

MS. WARYCHA: Yes. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Young is appearing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. So recognize Mr. Dole or any representatives.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Will Young, with Lewis and Wilkins, along with

- 1 Paul Mullin, the managing partner of our firm,
- 2 | representing Mark Dole, who is the GOP for Dearborn
- 3 | County. As I mentioned, he is challenging
- 4 Mr. Brent Fox's candidacy on the basis of the
- 5 | affiliation statute, specifically the two-primary
- 6 rule.
- 7 And with that, I will turn things over to
- 8 | Chairman Dole for his testimony as to the actual
- 9 allegations.
- MR. DOLE: Thank you, Mr. Young. I also have
- 11 | Lisa Fisher here with me today.
- 12 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Please state your name.
- MR. DOLE: Mark Dole, M-a-r-k, D-o-l-e.
- 14 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you. Go ahead.
- 15 MR. DOLE: And I have Lisa Fisher, who is the
- 16 | Switzerland County chair, here supporting this
- 17 | motion as well, as Switzerland County falls
- 18 | entirely -- the entire county falls within the
- 19 68th District there.
- 20 So she read the challenge. The only thing
- 21 | that she stated incorrectly there was that -- he
- 22 | did check the two-vote challenge on there.
- 23 MS. WARYCHA: I apologize.
- MR. DOLE: And you stated that he did not
- 25 check it, but he did check it. And I think that he

```
1
     was given some bad advice. And I had never met the
     young man until after the challenge was filed, and
 2.
 3
     I explained it to him, and he understands it.
 4
          So I think that that being said, he was also
 5
     challenged as precinct committeeman along with
     eleven other people from our county.
 6
     challenges were all upheld at the county level.
 7
     And prior to the February 9th filing deadline, none
 8
     of the challenges that were upheld had contacted
 9
     the county chair for certification, and that also
10
11
     holds true for Mr. Fox on the precinct committee
12
     level and also the state rep.
13
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Is Mr. Fox here?
                                               I probably
14
     should have started with that.
15
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Yeah.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Does anyone want to make a
17
     motion?
          MS. PYLE: I would move to uphold the
18
19
     challenge.
20
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a second?
          I'll second it.
21
22
          So we have a motion to uphold the challenge in
23
     Cause 2024-21 and a second.
24
          Any further discussion?
25
          Hearing none, all those in favor signify by
```

saying "Aye."VICE CHAMS. CELE

2.2

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.

MS. PYLE: Aye.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.

The "ayes" have it. The motion carries. The challenge is upheld. The Election Division is directed not to include Brent Fox in the certified list of primary candidates sent to the county election boards and to indicate the name of this candidate not be printed on the ballot.

Thank you.

MR. DOLE: Thank you all for your time and effort.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Baker v. Thompson, Cause 2024-22, in the matter of the challenge to Deandra M. Thompson, candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for State Representative, District 96.

Mr. Kochevar.

MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes. Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, in your meeting binder for this cause, you will find the CAN-1 candidate challenge filed by the challenger along with attached documents, as well as a copy of the candidate's declaration of candidacy, the CAN-2, that was filed

1 with the State with attached receipts showing the statement of economic interest has been filed, and 2. 3 notice of hearing that was sent to both the challenger and challenged candidate as well as 4 documentation showing the Election Division did 5 send that notice of hearing. 6 7 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you. MR. KOCHEVAR: And there's also -- just so I'm 8 9 clear, there has been an appearance notice filed on 10 behalf of the challenged candidate that's also part 11 of your record. And I think we just got it, which 12 is why it's not three-hole punched in my binder, 13 but that has also been made part of the record. 14 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. With that, I 15 recognize Mr. Baker. 16 Thank you. Thank you for being MR. BAKER: It's been a long day. My name is Raymond 17 Baker, R-a-y-m-o-n-d, B-a-k-e-r. I filed the 18 19 challenge on February the 16th at 9:47. I believe 20 the document speaks for itself. 21 Any cross-examination? CHAIRMAN OKESON: 2.2 No. MS. HARTER: 23 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. You have the floor.

MS. HARTER: So I want to move to dismiss this

challenge. My client, Deandra Thompson, just

24

1 received late yesterday a copy. I believe she told me it was thrown on her yard. Right? I'll have 2. 3 her testify here in a minute. It was thrown on her 4 yard, so she didn't have time to even look into -neither did I; I got this last night -- didn't have time to look into the allegations against her or pull up contrary voting records that would 7 contradict the assertions here because she did, in fact, vote in two Democratic primaries, and she used to be under a different last name.

5

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So those aren't present, but we object to her not receiving proper notice. So that's, I guess, the threshold matter.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Are you saying that she didn't receive the notice regarding the hearing today?

She received it less than MS. HARTER: 24 hours from the start of this hearing, and that's not appropriate time for her to be able to pull up any of her voting records and obtain meaningful legal advice. I just found out about this late yesterday.

MR. KOCHEVAR: I can provide some information in this regard. The notice of the challenge was sent by our office to the candidate. It was

```
1
     shipped to the address that we had on her
     declaration of candidacy. That was 3233 Broadway,
 2.
 3
     Indianapolis, Indiana 46205.
 4
          In your record, you will find that UPS
     indicated that they delivered that notice of
 5
     hearing on Saturday, February 17th. The delivery
 6
     time was 3:47 p.m. That's what it provides for in
 7
 8
     the record and what has been given to us by UPS,
 9
     which we used.
10
          MS. HARTER: That's not what my client is
11
     saying happened with the receipt of the document.
12
     Let's have her speak to that.
13
          MS. THOMPSON: My stepdad is also here.
14
     brought it to me after picking it up from my yard
15
     on Sunday -- or excuse me -- Monday.
16
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: On Monday?
17
          MS. THOMPSON: Correct.
18
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: That's yesterday.
19
          MS. THOMPSON: Correct.
20
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And so how were you
21
     able to find an attorney so fast?
2.2
          MS. THOMPSON: Well, Michelle and I have
23
     already talked before about other things.
```

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Was it about this particular challenge?

24

```
1
          MS. THOMPSON: No, about someone had called
 2
     me --
 3
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I don't need to know
     that.
 4
          MS. HARTER: You don't want to violate
 5
     attorney-client stuff.
 6
 7
          She was acquainted with me and asked me late
     last night if I would jump in and help.
 8
 9
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. Well, I'm sure
10
     you can understand that we have a document from UPS
11
     saying that it was delivered to 3233 Broadway and
12
     the date and time that Mr. Kochevar stated. And
13
     you're saying it didn't appear until, what, a week
14
     later?
15
          MS. THOMPSON:
                        Yes. And I have the Ring
16
     doorbell, so if anything -- I would have been able
17
     to receive it in my hand, if nothing else.
                                                 I work
     from home quite a bit.
18
19
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So are you at 3233
20
     Broadway?
21
                               That is my address.
          MS. THOMPSON: Yes.
2.2
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And -- well, it says
     "Other-Release." What's that mean?
23
24
          MR. KOCHEVAR:
                         I don't know. I'd have to ask
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my colleague, Kimmy Hollowell-Williams, who sent

```
1
     this out.
 2
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. Where is that
 3
     person?
 4
          MR. KOCHEVAR: Kimmy?
          MS. NUSSMEYER: She's in our office.
 5
          MR. KOCHEVAR: She's in our office.
 6
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: I see two different UPS
 7
 8
     stamps.
 9
          MS. WARYCHA: Can I jump in here,
     Mr. Chairman?
10
11
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Yeah.
12
          MS. WARYCHA: One of them is to the
13
     challenger, one is to the challenged.
14
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Oh, okay.
15
          MS. WARYCHA: But to go back to Commissioner
16
     Karen Celestino-Horseman's question, I believe,
17
     because I did some of the notices on the Republican
18
     side of the house, when you mark that, it means
19
     that they can leave it in the person's mailbox or
20
     on their door, is my understanding, instead of
21
     having to be there to accept it.
22
          MR. KOCHEVAR: I do have one more matter.
23
     This has to do with statute. The statute is
24
     Indiana Code 3-8-2-18, subsection (b). If you
25
     don't mind, I'm going to read the entire subsection
```

to you all just so that it can be understood.

2.2

This particular subsection states: "The notice requirements set forth in IC 4-21.5 do not apply to the meeting conducted by the commission under subsection (a)." This has to do with candidate challenge hearings. "The election division is required to give the best possible notice of the meeting to a person that the election division identifies as an interested party. Unless a written objection is filed with the election division before the end of the meeting, appearance in person or by counsel at the commission's meeting to act under subsection (a) constitutes an admission that adequate notice of the meeting has been given."

I just provide that to you for reference in regards to this particular part of the hearing.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: What's this assertion about voting in two previous primaries?

MS. HARTER: So if we're not going to address the notice issue, we can move on to that. And so Deandra has, and she'll testify in a minute, she has voted in prior Democratic primaries, and it's my understanding that she did so under a different last name, maybe in a different county than what

```
1
     she currently lives in. And she didn't have time
     to hunt down records. It's hard as a candidate to
 2
 3
     get records when you don't have access to the same
     system as party chairs and other folks do.
 4
 5
          So, Deandra, do you want to talk about your
     primary voting record in the past.
 6
                               I definitely voted in the
 7
          MS. THOMPSON:
                         Yes.
     2008 election under my former last name, Grady.
 8
 9
     And I have asked --
10
          MS. HARTER: In the Democratic primary,
11
     correct?
12
          MS. THOMPSON:
                         Correct.
13
          MS. HARTER: Do you know who you voted for?
14
          MS. THOMPSON:
                         Yes.
15
          MS. HARTER: Who did you vote for?
16
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: She doesn't have to
17
     answer that.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: She doesn't have to disclose
18
19
     that.
20
          MS. THOMPSON: So, yes, the other thing is I
21
     have asked the Commission for those records, and
2.2
     for some reason they only stop at 2016, and I've
23
     been voting since I've -- definitely since I've
24
     been 21 and I'm 40.
```

MS. HARTER: And that was one of your primary.

```
1
     Do you remember voting in another primary besides
     the 20 -- whatever one you said?
 2.
 3
          MS. THOMPSON: Yeah, 2008 and definitely 2010.
 4
          MS. HARTER: And both Democrat?
 5
          MS. THOMPSON: Correct.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: What county were you
 6
     living in?
 7
          MS. THOMPSON: I was living in Johnson County
 8
 9
     and then Marion County.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And which clerk did
10
11
     you go to to get that information?
12
          MS. THOMPSON: For both of them -- I didn't
13
     have time to go to the Johnson County clerk, but I
14
     definitely had asked at the Marion County clerk.
     didn't know if they -- I thought they were all
15
16
     digitized, so I thought they would have it as well.
17
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Did you call them?
18
          MS. THOMPSON: Yes, I called them.
19
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Johnson County?
20
          MS. THOMPSON:
                         Yes.
21
          MS. HARTER: I mean, she had limited time.
2.2
     She did what she could and was trying to chase it
23
     down and still got no response.
24
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Can I make a
25
     suggestion that we --
```

```
1
          Ms. Harter, he can access the voting record of
     your client. However, he can't share that with us.
 2
 3
     He can only share it with her and you as her
     attorney. And then if she decides she wants to
 4
 5
     share it with us and authorizes him to, then he can
     share it with the rest of us.
 6
 7
          MS. THOMPSON: I would appreciate that.
          MS. WARYCHA: Mr. Kochevar, do you have it up
 8
 9
     already?
10
          MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes.
11
          MS. WARYCHA: Okay. Just making sure.
12
          MS. HARTER: I wish I had access to this.
                                                      It.
13
     would make things easier.
14
          MS. NUSSMEYER: Ms. Thompson, do you mind
15
     coming over and talking.
16
          (Discussion held off the record.)
17
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there any new evidence to
18
     bring to light?
19
          MS. HARTER:
                       No.
                            It doesn't appear that her
20
     records prior to 2016 are available on the system,
21
     but, yeah, I'll take -- 2013. I'm going to take my
2.2
     client's word for it when she tells me she voted
23
     and in what years and what primary, but we don't
24
     have any evidence of the same because it's not
```

25

available on the system.

```
1
                            Is there any other evidence
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
     that you have to contradict Mr. Baker's testimony?
 2
 3
          MS. THOMPSON:
                        Well, I would say the evidence
     I got from Marion County -- well, the stuff -- when
 4
     I got the voter records, it didn't even show the
 5
            That was the first time I've actually seen
 6
     the 2013. So I know it's got to be somewhere.
 7
                                                      Ι
     just need to find it and get it.
 8
 9
          MS. PYLE: Did you get your county chair's,
10
     any certification from them?
11
          MS. THOMPSON: When you're saying county
     chair --
12
13
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            The county chair.
14
          MS. HARTER: If you had the county chair
15
     sign-off.
16
          MS. THOMPSON:
                         Oh, no.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: How far back does the
17
18
     system go?
19
          MR. KOCHEVAR: The system was implemented in
20
     2005-2006. Depending on which county, there could
21
     be voter registration records going back into most
2.2
     of the 20th century. As an example, my
23
     great-grandmother, who died in 2005, her voter
24
     registration information in Lake County going back
25
     into, like, the '40s was entered into that voter
```

1 registration system. But the counties, they can 2 MS. HARTER: 3 destroy it after ten years, right? The statute 4 says that after ten years they do not have to retain the records. 5 MS. NUSSMEYER: That's not accurate. 6 7 MS. WARYCHA: That would be the paper copy, I think, what you're thinking about, not the 8 9 electronic record. 10 MS. NUSSMEYER: There's no statute that says 11 ten years, though. 12 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. You admit there's no 13 additional information to be provided. 14 Does anybody want to make a motion? 15 MS. HARTER: Well, remember, it's the 16 challenger's burden, and I don't know that he even 17 looked into her other last names or other counties. 18 CHAIRMAN OKESON: The challenger has filled 19 out the required paperwork and stated his case. 20 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I move to uphold the 21 challenge. 2.2 Is there a second? CHAIRMAN OKESON: 23 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I'll second. 24 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Any discussion? 25 We have a motion to uphold the challenge on

1 Cause 2024-22 and a second. Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying "Aye." 2 3 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 4 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 5 MS. PYLE: Aye. 6 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. The "ayes" have it. The challenge is upheld. 7 The Election Division is directed not to include 8 9 Deandra M. Thompson in the certified list of 10 primary candidates sent to the county election 11 boards and to indicate the name of this candidate 12 not be printed on the ballot. 13 Next we have Boyce v. Mahant. 14 MS. WARYCHA: And just since we last recessed, 15 I got a notice of appearance for Sid Mahant for a 16 Mitchell V. Harper. It won't be in your binder. 17 Counsel Kochevar has one as well, but I do have one here for our record. 18 19 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. 20 MS. WARYCHA: And then in the binder you will have the CAN-1 and the --21 22 CHAIRMAN OKESON: And this is Cause 2024-23 in 23 the challenge to Sid Mahant, candidate for 24 Republican Party nomination for United States 25 Representative, District 6. Sorry. Go ahead.

1 Yes. No problem. And on here MS. WARYCHA: we have the CAN-1 from Beth Boyce, and she is 2 3 challenging his candidacy for the 6th District. 4 did not answer Question No. 3, which is the 5 two-primary rule that we have been discussing, or have a letter from the party chairman. And there 6 is a copy of the vote history as well as the 7 service to both the challenger and the challenged 8 9 and an appearance for Mr. Young again, who is 10 appearing on behalf of Ms. Boyce.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, Will Young, W-i-l-l, Y-o-u-n-g, with Lewis and Wilkins appearing on behalf of Chair Beth Boyce, who is the GOP chair for Johnson County.

Again, she is, as mentioned, filing an affiliation statute challenge to the candidacy of Mr. Sid Mahant. And with that, I will turn things over to Chair Boyce for the factual allegations in the case.

MS. BOYCE: Thank you very much. Good afternoon. Thanks to each of you for your work and for having us here today.

Mr. Sid Mahant has --

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12

13

14

15

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17

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20

21

2.2

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24

25

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Can you please state your name.

MS. BOYCE: Oh, I'm sorry. I am Beth Boyce, B-e-t-h, last name B-o-y-c-e. Sorry about that.

2.2

Mr. Sid Mahant has filed a declaration of candidacy seeking to be the Republican nominee for the office of 6th District Representative, U.S. House of Representatives. The CAN-2 he filed, a copy of which, as Valerie mentioned, is in your packet, is incomplete. Specifically, he did not answer Question No. 3. It is not only the failure to check one of the two boxes under Question 3 by which he claims affiliation with the Republican Party, however, that matters. It is his substantive failure to qualify under either of the affiliation options presented in those two boxes.

I am the Johnson County Republican Party chair. Under Indiana Code Section 3-8-2-7(a)(4), to claim affiliation as a Republican to be eligible to run for office in a Republican primary, a candidate must either have cast a Republican ballot in the last two primary elections in which the candidate has voted or receive the certification of the county Republican chairman in the county in which the candidate claims residence. Mr. Mahant fails on both counts.

His attached voting record, which is in your

packet, demonstrates that he has only voted in one Indiana primary election, not the requisite two primary elections.

2.2

Second, he claims residence in Johnson County, where I serve as the Republican Party chair.

Neither Mr. Mahant nor anyone acting on his behalf has ever asked me to certify that Mr. Mahant is a member of the Republican Party, and I have never made any such certification.

Indeed, as Mr. Mahant's attached voter registration record demonstrates, he was a registered voter in Steuben County until February 1, 2024, the same day upon which he filed his CAN-2 claiming residency in Johnson County, and has therefore only had a brief period of time in which he could have even sought my certification.

Therefore, for these reasons, Mr. Mahant is ineligible to run in the 2024 Republican primary to seek the office of 6th District Representative.

Indiana's 6th Congressional District includes all or portions of eleven Indiana counties. In addition to my representation of Johnson County, the Republican Party county chairs in each of the other ten counties have joined me in this challenge. So on the paperwork included, you'll

```
1
     see their names and counties that they represent.
 2
          So thank you.
 3
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Thank you.
 4
          Would you like two minutes to cross-examine
 5
     any of the statements made by Ms. Boyce?
          MR. HARPER: Yes, I would.
 6
 7
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Please state your name for
     the record.
                  Thanks.
 8
 9
          MR. HARPER: Mitch Harper, Fort Wayne,
10
     Indiana.
11
          Chairman Boyce, had you had a chance to talk
12
     with Mr. Mahant anytime during January?
13
          MS. BOYCE: We had one phone conversation.
14
          MR. HARPER: All right. Thank you. And I'd
15
     like -- well, never mind. I'll save that for
16
     later.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. If you'd like your
17
     five minutes for presentation, you may begin.
18
19
                      Thank you, Mr. Chairman and
          MR. HARPER:
20
     Commission members. I've served with Chairman
21
     Boyce on the state committee in the district
2.2
     myself. I've had a long record of involvement in
23
     the Republican Party. I was elected precinct
24
     committeeman when I was 18, something that would be
25
     prevented by the statute that we're talking about
```

today.

I'm going to give you something novel. It's been a long day. It's all wonderful you've been here. But a little bit of a novel thing to think about, Mr. Mahant was indeed a resident of Steuben County until January 31st. He was appointed as a vice precinct committeeman in Steuben County by the Steuben County Republican chairman, Rick Michael, and I have that appointment documentation here to present to you. Thank you for recognizing everything. I'll let you distribute those.

MS. WARYCHA: All right.

MR. HARPER: So he was appointed by Rick Michael as the vice precinct committeeman, and Mr. Michael, in preparation for appointment as precinct committeeman, also indicated that he was accepting of Mr. Mahant as a Republican.

So the question for this Commission, which is not really contemplated in the statute, is when did Mr. Mahant stop being Republican? When did his Republican-ness go away? Once he's appointed a vice precinct committeeman, which requires you to be a Republican and requires the appointment of vice precinct committee's certificate to go to the state committee, when did he cease being a

```
1
     Republican? Does someone go in and out?
                                               Is
     someone fish one day and fowl the next?
 2.
 3
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Counselor, you know,
     I watched the arguments on this regarding Mr. Rust,
 4
 5
     and --
          MR. HARPER: This has nothing to do with
 6
 7
     Mr. Rust's case.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: No, but one of the
 8
 9
     questions -- it does very much have to do with it
10
     because of the chairman certification. And one of
11
     the questions and the point that came up was that
12
     the chairman has discretion to refuse to certify
13
     anybody for whatever reason, and that was one of
14
     the things that was being argued and discussed.
     There is no framework -- and I am sure Ms. Harter
15
16
     can tell you that. There is no framework that says
17
     to them here's what you need to look at to make the
18
     determination whether you want to certify somebody.
19
     It's not there.
                       Correct. It's their discretion.
20
          MR. HARPER:
21
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: It's at their
2.2
     discretion, so --
23
          MR. HARPER: It's at Chairman Michael's
24
     discretion.
                                   Sir. So if Steuben
25
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
```

- 1 | County decided that they found him to be a
- 2 | Republican in good standing, this chair, for
- 3 | whatever reason, declined to make the same finding.
- 4 | So it's kind of like apples to oranges because
- 5 | she's in the different county and she has the same
- 6 discretion.

- 7 MR. HARPER: But you're saying he gets thrown
- 8 | out of the Republican Party somehow?
  - MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I'm not saying that.
- 10 MR. HARPER: He ended his Republican Party
- 11 | status, that's what you're saying. It has nothing
- 12 to do with Mr. Rust. Perhaps if Mr. Rust had been
- 13 | a county auditor or county coroner or held a
- 14 | precinct committee slot, it might have something to
- do with it. But this really does not have anything
- 16 | factually to do with Mr. Rust at all and, frankly,
- 17 | should not be raised in comparison.
- 18 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Well, regardless,
- 19 what the statute says is it's the county chair for
- 20 | the political party with which the candidate claims
- 21 | affiliation and the county in which the candidate
- 22 | resides. And on his CAN-2 his residency he gives
- 23 | as Greenwood. He doesn't give his residency as
- 24 | Fremont. It's Greenwood.
- 25 So, I mean, he -- so the fact that the county

- chair, the Steuben County chair, certified him,
  because he changed his residency to Greenwood means
  that he had to get the Johnson County chair's
  approval. That's what the statute says.
  - CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, and I would offer that what I'm reading is the county chair only certified him for vice precinct committeeman during 2023 only, not for purposes of any other contest.
  - MR. HARPER: Well, once you're precinct committeeman, you retain being precinct committeeman until the end of term. Precinct committeemen aren't up for election this year.
  - CHAIRMAN OKESON: I understand. What I'm saying is this same certification would have to be executed by -- Johnson County, is that where he is?

    VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Right.
  - CHAIRMAN OKESON: -- Johnson County in order for him to have ballot access.
    - MS. BOYCE: Yes.

2.2

MR. HARPER: He's running for Congress. He's not running for trustee. He's not running for county office. You know, the British standard was that you could run from anywhere. Winston Churchill was appointed to run in writing, so he did not decide it. Similarly, running for

- 1 | Congress, you have residency in the state, you run
- 2 | for Congress. There's no residency requirement for
- 3 | a year as there is for the General Assembly.
- 4 | That's noted on the candidate declaration form.
- 5 CHAIRMAN OKESON: But there is no letter from
- 6 any county GOP chair who's authorized his access to
- 7 | the ballot or previous voting records for two
- 8 | previous primaries, correct?
- 9 MR. HARPER: No. It authorized him to be
- 10 | precinct committeeman. He's a Republican.
- MS. PYLE: I'm not sure, Counsel, that anybody
- 12 | is arguing that, even, you know, our challenger
- 13 here.
- 14 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Right.
- 15 MS. BOYCE: I'm not arguing his status of him
- 16 as a member of the party. It's about his ability
- 17 | to run.
- 18 MR. HARPER: It's about the mechanical process
- 19 of the code.
- 20 MS. PYLE: It's about the code. We can agree
- 21 on that.
- 22 MR. HARPER: That can cause all sorts of odd
- 23 | situations for people who move across county lines.
- 24 | For example, I was a State Representative for
- 25 | 12 years, and so you're telling me, if that was my

1 status today and I moved to -- I don't know --Grant County, I would have to get the Grant County 2. 3 chair to declare that I'm a Republican? 4 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Unless you had voted in the 5 previous primaries, yes. MR. HARPER: Well, I'm going to end my 6 discussion here because I think the Commission is 7 not entertaining what is clearly obvious to me. 8 9 You're saying people can be a Republican one day 10 and somehow change that status. 11 CHAIRMAN OKESON: No. I don't think we're 12 saying that at all. We're looking at the elements 13 of what qualifies someone for ballot access under 14 the two standards, which, unless you're offering something different, haven't been met here. 15 16 MR. HARPER: Entirely mechanical. All right. Then close. 17 18 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Do you have any 19 cross-examination or questions? 20 I just want to say thank you MS. BOYCE: No. 21 for the consistency and the comments. 2.2 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yes. 23 MS. PYLE: I would move to uphold the 24 challenge.

We have a motion to uphold

25

CHAIRMAN OKESON:

1 the challenge. Is there a second? 2 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: 3 CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a second. 4 Any further discussion? We have a motion to uphold the challenge in 5 Cause 2024-23 and a second. All those in favor 6 signify by saying "Aye." 7 8 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 9 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 10 MS. PYLE: Aye. 11 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. 12 The "ayes" have it. The motion carries. 13 challenge is upheld. The Election Division is 14 directed not to include Sid Mahant in the certified list of primary candidates sent to county election 15 16 boards and to indicate that the name of this 17 candidate not be printed on the ballot. 18 Thank you. 19 MS. BOYCE: Thank you. 20 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Next I have Anderson v. 21 Graves, Cause 2024-24, in the matter of challenge 2.2 to Chunia L. Graves, candidate for the Democratic 23 Party nomination for State Senate, District 34. 24 Mr. Kochevar. 25 MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

```
1
    members of the Commission. In your meeting binders
    under this cause you'll find a copy of the CAN-1
 2
 3
     candidate challenge that was filed by the
 4
     challenger; a copy of the candidate's declaration
     of candidacy, their CAN-2, with accompanying
 5
    receipts showing the statement of economic interest
 6
    was filed; the notice of hearing that was sent to
 7
    both the challenger and challenged candidate;
 8
    documentation showing that the Election Division
 9
10
    sent those notices; and an appearance form filed on
11
    behalf of the challenged candidate. I've also been
12
    handed other documents that are getting passed down
13
    your way to be entered into the record.
14
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Has the other side
15
     seen the record? They have.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: I will recognize
    Ms. Anderson. You have five minutes.
17
          MS. ANDERSON:
18
                        Hello, everyone. My name is
19
     Stella Anderson, S-t-e-l-l-a, Anderson,
20
    A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n. And I am a long-time constituent
21
    of Senator Jean Breaux, Senator, District 34,
2.2
     Senate District 34. I am here to challenge
23
    Ms. Graves. Senator Breaux has been in the
24
    district since 2008, I want to say. I love her
25
    work. She fights for the community. She's a great
```

constituent for the community, and I want to see her to continue as our Senator.

2.

2.2

I am challenging Ms. Graves, who has registered to run against Senator Breaux in the upcoming primary election as a Democrat. But according to Graves' voting record -- I would like to submit this to the Committee, Exhibit A.

Okay. According to Ms. Graves' voting record I submitted and provided by the Marion County Board of Voters Registration, she has not voted in two primary elections as a Democrat. She has voted once, as you will notice, in the primary election in her whole life. So I feel a candidate for a Democratic State Senator representing over 120,000 voters should have a long history of voting and voting as a Democrat.

So I request you to rule her nomination for Democrat candidate for State Senate, District 34, invalid because there is no supporting document showing Ms. Graves has voted in two primary elections or a letter of certification so due to the noncompliance of a party affiliation requirement on the CAN-2 declaration of candidacy for primary nomination form. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: You have two minutes to

cross-examine. Anything?

MR. JOHN: No.

2.

2.2

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Five minutes.

MR. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice Chairman, Commissioners, thank you for the time. Tommy John with Ice Miller here on behalf of Chunia Graves, who most assuredly is a Democrat, and we'll have a brief bit of testimony I would like to have from both Ms. Graves and her father, who is an elected Democrat city-county councilor in Indianapolis.

But before we do that, I want to get through just the base of this. I would raise many of the same challenges that you saw in the Rust v. Morales case with regard to the statute at large, but you don't have to get that data. The fact is you could argue over whether this is an extra requirement with respect to the two-year residency with respect to running for the Indiana House. You could argue about virtually anything in there except the 17th amendment arguments. You could argue about full faith and credit.

We don't need to do that. We just need to look at the actual statute. And if you look at the statute, it says -- and I have included it for you in the documents. IC 3-8-2-7(4)(a), the two most

recent -- or "A statement of the candidate's party affiliation. For purposes of this subdivision, a candidate is considered to be affiliated with a political party only if the following applies: The two most recent primary elections in Indiana in which the candidate voted were primary elections held by the party with which the candidate claims affiliation."

2.

That does not require the last two, as in somebody had to vote in '23 and '22. It doesn't even include any temporal element other than you didn't vote Republican in between there.

And so in the case of Ms. Graves, you'll find in your packet a document from SmartVAN, which is a Democrat Party voter registration system. And the fact is that you'll also get testimony that Ms. Graves did, in fact, testify -- or did, in fact, vote in Democratic primaries.

So the problem we have here is, frankly, SVRS, one way or another, this isn't the issue, but does not apparently reflect the accurate voting record. And nothing in the statute says that it has to be validated by SVRS. It simply needs the factual support in order for the person to be proven as having voted in the primaries.

```
1
          So in this case, we have somebody that we also
 2
     included in our materials. She is a sitting
     official in the Democrat Club. She is somebody who
 3
     has been appointed by a Democrat mayor to the
 4
     Community Corrections Board as a Democrat. She has
 5
     a variety of bona fides as a Democrat.
 6
 7
          And now I'd like just briefly, Mr. Graves, can
     you introduce yourself.
 8
 9
          MR. GRAVES: Good afternoon, Chairman and
10
     Commissioners. Thank you for this opportunity to
11
     speak.
12
                    Have you been aware of your
          MR. JOHN:
13
     daughter's involvement in politics?
14
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Can you state your
15
     name for the record.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah. State your name real
17
     quick.
          MR. GRAVES: Thank you so much. Keith Graves,
18
19
     K-e-i-t-h, G-r-a-v-e-s.
20
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you. Sorry.
21
          MR. JOHN: And what is your role in the
2.2
     Democrat Party?
23
          MR. GRAVES: I'm an elected official
24
     originally elected in 2019 to serve District 9 of
25
     Indianapolis City-County Council for eastern Marion
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1 County. And has your daughter been involved 2. MR. JOHN: 3 in politics at all? 4 MR. GRAVES: Absolutely. She's been right in lockstep with me. We've had one of the more 5 transformative communities in the entire city on 6 the east side, and largely it's because of my 7 8 relationships across the county, across our 9 district, and working with my team. And she is an 10 absolute important member of my team. She's been 11 there with me the entire way. 12 MR. JOHN: To your knowledge, has she voted in 13 Democrat primaries in the past? 14 MR. GRAVES: She has. 15 MR. JOHN: Do you specifically have evidence 16 or are you able -- or specifically of your own awareness, are you able to say which ones she has 17 18 voted in? MR. GRAVES: '16, '18, '20 primaries. 19 20 are the three primaries that I'm very familiar with. 21 2.2 MR. JOHN: Okay. Thank you. 23 Ms. Graves, would you introduce yourself. 24 MS. GRAVES: My name is Chunia Graves. First

of all, thank you so much for your presence today.

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: Your name, could you spell
 1
 2.
     it.
          MS. GRAVES: Chunia, C-h-u-n-i-a, Graves,
 3
 4
     G-r-a-v-e-s.
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you.
          MR. JOHN: So initially, let's just start and
 6
     get to the point, which is, have you voted in
 7
     Democrat primaries in Indiana?
 8
 9
          MS. GRAVES: Yes.
10
          MR. JOHN: And what years did you vote in
11
     those?
12
          MS. GRAVES: Most recent or dating back?
13
          MR. JOHN: You can go back or forwards,
14
     whichever way.
15
          MS. GRAVES: 2012, 2016, 2018, 2023.
16
          MR. JOHN: And so we saw the record that was
17
     placed into evidence that only showed one Democrat
18
     primary.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we're at our five-minute
20
     limit. Does anyone want to give them two minutes?
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I would.
2.2
          MR. JOHN: I can get it done.
23
          MS. PYLE: I'd move for two minutes.
24
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I'll second.
25
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Second. All those in favor
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1 signify by saying "Aye." VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 2. 3 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. MS. PYLE: Aye. 4 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Please continue. 5 MR. JOHN: So why might your voting record 6 only show one vote when SVRS comes up? Could this 7 be your college career? Tell us a little bit about 8 9 what was happening there. 10 MS. GRAVES: Yes, sir. I was a Division I 11 athlete. I went to Jacksonville University in 12 Jacksonville, Florida, to study. I continued my 13 education on to Pepperdine University out in 14 California and then returned to Indiana back home. 15 CHAIRMAN OKESON: The primaries -- I'm sorry. 16 This won't take away from your time. The primaries 17 that you're discussing, those are all Indiana 18 primaries? 19 MR. JOHN: Yeah, they are. Yes, but she was 20 voting absentee at different times, and she did 21 then, in your materials you'll find, register as a Democrat in California --2.2 23 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. 24 MR. JOHN: -- and then moved back to Indiana. 25 That is more than likely, we think, why maybe it

didn't get picked up in SVRS. It's a data system, and data systems don't always pick things up correctly.

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But the fact is that you have testimony from two people she did vote in primaries. You have materials that show she is, without a doubt, a Democrat. And a likely scenario why she's not showing up on SVRS is simply the fact that she did move her registration as she was a student at Pepperdine and then it moved back, so it's only picking up what she did after she came back.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: And, again, this doesn't -I'm asking a question, so this doesn't take away
from your time. This SmartVAN system, can you
explain that.

MR. JOHN: That's a system utilized. I imagine the Democrat members of the Commission might know it.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Are you familiar with it?

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Yes, I am familiar

with it. I'm kind of surprised to see it here, but

I am familiar with it.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Do you know when these -- so in the general election under these years, it has different letters for the primary. Does anybody

know what that means?

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MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Well, that's the problem. We don't know. I mean, I don't know what this report was printed off of.

MR. JOHN: There's an email right behind it that discusses what the history of that report is and how it's...

MS. PYLE: As they're looking, who maintains SmartVAN? Who keeps these records? Is it the party?

MR. JOHN: It's the Democrat Party or their data vendor. It's similar to, on the Republican side, the GOP data vendor.

And so the reality is, when we're looking at this, SVRS is not dispositive. I mean, at one point, you know, I've seen my own voting record problematic inside of it. The fact is we have testimony that supports it. Yes, the challenger may have met the burden of at least supporting the idea of the challenge, but obviously the challenged has the ability to provide evidence, which we've provided evidence that I would argue outweighs the simple fact that a data set that could be flawed claims that she isn't when she said she's voted multiple times. When you look at SVRS, it would

suggest to you that she's only voted the last three years.

2.

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MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. So could I ask staff if they are aware of whether her tenure and changing her residency and such would have caused them to somehow get rid of her voting record?

MR. KOCHEVAR: That's not how I understand SVRS. My knowledge is that, once you get registered in SVRS, your record is there forever. Even if you move out of state, you cancel that registration, you register somewhere else, it stays there. That's just my general knowledge of the system, what I understand from voter registration officials in the county and how we maintain that particular system.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: So I would have a follow-up to that. So let's presume for a minute there's some level of fallibility right now, which is not what I had contemplated until he brought it up. Is SVRS, when we look at whether someone has voted in two primaries, is that the standard? Is that the record that the law or the statute --

MS. WARYCHA: SVRS is the state system of record, and the co-directors administer it with the direction of the secretary of state. And if there

was an error in the system with a voter
registration --

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: But I guess what I'm asking is, when the statute says you have to have voted in two primaries or have a letter, SVRS, is it layered into that statute as this is what you refer to? That's what I'm asking.

MS. WARYCHA: SVRS, I would say, is the system of record, yes.

MR. JOHN: The statute doesn't say that,
Mr. Chairman. The statute doesn't say that at all.

MS. WARYCHA: It calls it the computer list.

MR. JOHN: Where does it say --

MS. WARYCHA: Hang on. Let me go to 3-7.

MR. JOHN: In this statute it doesn't say that that's where the proof has to come from.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I guess while you're looking at that, the thing is, though, I think what SmartVAN, it's showing that she voted in those years. I then look at what you've provided, but I think this is from the California voter registration, and it seems like she was registered to vote in California for two of the years where she just said she voted in primaries. So I could see that maybe she voted -- and I don't think --

well, you're not supposed to vote in two places at once.

I mean, it seems to me, it looks like it's possible perhaps that, Ms. Graves, you voted perhaps in California when you were out there at least in 2018 and 2020, it looks like.

MR. JOHN: She has unequivocally said she voted for Obama in 2012 in Indiana, and she voted, nobody disputes, in 2023 in the primary. That is two primary votes. It hasn't been interrupted by any vote in between, and the statute clearly says just the last two votes of this person --

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: But we don't have a record.

MR. JOHN: -- so they could be separated by decades.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: But her record doesn't show that 2012 vote.

MR. JOHN: I understand. It also doesn't show any of the previous votes in SVRS.

MS. WARYCHA: Mr. Chairman, if I might, if you go to Indiana Code 3-7-26.3-35, purposes of the list, and it references the federal code that requires us to have a statewide voter registration, and it specifically says that the computerized list

is the official voter registration list for the conduction of all elections. So to me, that's definitive that SVRS, not any other system, is the system of record.

2.

MR. JOHN: That's definitive as to who gets to come vote, I would argue, but that's quite different than the level of proof that it takes as to whether or not somebody is a Democrat, which is whether they voted in a primary.

I'll give you an example. Back when Doris
Anne Sadler was the clerk in Marion County, there
was an election -- and this is no besmirching of
Doris Anne. She's a good friend. But there was an
election where they forgot, the staffing at many of
the election places forgot to actually mark down
partisan pull. And so if you look back on many of
us that voted in that election, there is not a
partisan vote indicated for the primary even though
people did vote in the primary.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: So how do you reconcile that?

MS. WARYCHA: Well, there's a statute that says if there's a mistake by -- I don't know it off the top of my head; I can find it here -- that says if there was a mistake by staff, that that wouldn't

count against the voter, but I don't know of any mistake --

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MR. JOHN: So in this case, you need evidence.

MS. NUSSMEYER: But beyond what the co-general counsel is stating, the counties are the official record keeper, and they use the Statewide Voter Registration System not only to update and merge voter registration records in the voter registration offices, identifying vote history, but if a person voted absentee, we have an absentee module that's been part of the system, and Mr. King can confirm, I think since the beginning, 2005-2006, that would show if an absentee ballot was sent to an individual and if it was returned, if you requested an absentee in a primary election, what political party, and all of that would be captured in a person's entire playbook, if you will, within the registration system.

So anytime your registration is canceled or updated, that information is stored within the system, and you can go through that hierarchy and look at that level of registration detail, if necessary.

MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, I can confirm the statement that my counterpart has made regarding

the absentee module and its presence in SVRS since it was established in December 2005.

MS. PYLE: I guess I have a question for staff. Haven't, in previous years, we have found evidence that there's been not listed things on the SVRS and we've ruled in that manner? I'm just asking for a precedent here.

MS. WARYCHA: I personally can't comment, but I see Matthew Kochevar raising his hand as well.

MR. KOCHEVAR: I know it has been alleged. I believe it was alleged in the challenge hearing in 2022, but I don't know -- I do not recall, on just my memory here, if the Commission ever got to the bottom of that, the person who made that allegation as part of their defense, what happened with that. But it's come up before. It's come up before in these challenge settings. It's come up before, voters complaining to their county voter registration officials, which is why we have the section that Valerie is referring to. I forget the section myself as well.

MS. WARYCHA: I found it. It's 3-8-1. Hang on. I think it's, like, 3-8-1-2.

MS. NUSSMEYER: While Valerie is looking that up, my recollection to that case too was that I

think it was a female candidate who went to the county and looked at the old paper poll books that the county still had maintained even though they could have destroyed them. We have electronic poll books now that create reports and information that you could pull to gather that information, and I think she actually went and found one vote history or one election where it was improperly recorded but didn't have a second.

2.

2.2

But I could be misremembering, but I do distinctly remember her talking about going to the Hendricks or Hancock County, one of the H counties, and looking through the whole list to see if she could identify whether or not she had voted in those past elections.

MS. WARYCHA: Matthew, the code I was looking for earlier was 3-8-1-1.1. That's the filing errors, but I think that's really more -- I don't know that that really covers VR now that I look at it again.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, what's unique, at least amongst what we've heard thus far today, is there's competing information here. Right? So you have -- and, again, I don't know anything about SmartVAN. I don't know what it is. But at least

there's some documentation that -- and what I wonder is what level of -- in full disclosure, I worked at the secretary of state's office during the implementation of SVRS, so I'm curious about the fallibility, the vulnerability of data in, data out. I'm just curious if there's any other type of search criteria, anything that could be entered that might produce different results. We haven't had anyone produce anything, to my knowledge that we've heard these cases, where some other system says, oh, yeah, they voted.

2.

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MS. WARYCHA: In recent years, the counties have been using electronic poll books, and an electronic poll book, they just do a data pull straight into SVRS. So you're really, since we've moved away from paper, I think, less likely to have mistakes with the electronic poll book.

So I think you could go back and ask the county to pull electronic poll book records that they used to put into the Statewide Voter Registration System, would be the only thing I could think of.

MS. PYLE: I just want to clarify. This says "P" here on the primary. Does that just mean she pulled a Democrat ballot?

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         CHAIRMAN OKESON: That's what I was asking
    her. I don't know what the --
 2.
 3
         MS. GRAVES: At least to my understanding,
     that P signifies primary.
 4
         MS. PYLE: Okay. So it doesn't indicate
 5
    Democrat or Republican. Or is this only reporting
 6
 7
    Democrat stats?
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So this ledger over here,
 8
    what I think the A means is this precinct
 9
10
    designation over here, if I'm guessing.
11
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I don't think there's
12
    a relationship.
13
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: Between this and this?
14
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I was just looking at
15
    that. I don't think that's a ledger. I was trying
16
    to make this mean something over here.
17
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Because there's a P up in
    the general category.
18
19
         MS. PYLE: Could it be in person, an in-person
20
    vote versus absentee?
21
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: Oh, okay.
2.2
         MR. JOHN: Yeah. That's probably right, in
23
    person, correct.
24
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah. What would the E
    stand for?
25
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MS. NUSSMEYER: So you wouldn't know necessarily what the political party was.

2.2

MR. JOHN: Yeah. E would be early, P would be in person on Election Day, and A would be absentee. That would make sense. I'll be honest, I haven't been tinkering with that.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there anything -- well, that's a good question, whoever just said that. Is there anything on here that discerns party affiliation?

MS. NUSSMEYER: I think this speaks to co-counsel's point, and that is Marion County has been using e-poll books for a number of years now, as I understand, when they moved to vote centers.

Yeah.

CHAIRMAN OKESON:

MS. NUSSMEYER: And so you could go back to the county and ask them perhaps to pull the report to identify if that's what the P means. I'll be honest with you, I'm about 13, 14 years removed from the VAN. The last time I used it it was an access database, so it looks a lot different than when I would have used it a million moons ago.

But that would be a place to start with, the Marion County clerk's office, to see if they have anything on these e-poll book reports that would

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     show that Ms. Graves voted in the primary election
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     in person and what party ballot she pulled, at
 3
     least for those -- I don't know about 2016, but at
 4
     least for 2020 and 2018. I don't remember the year
 5
     they went to vote centers.
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So you're saying that
 6
     she voted Democrat in the municipal primary in
 7
     2023. And when did she vote in another Indiana --
 8
 9
     pull a Democratic ballot in an Indiana primary?
10
     What year was it?
11
          MR. JOHN: For sure, 2012. And you said you
12
     voted in person in that one?
13
          MS. GRAVES: Absentee.
          MR. JOHN: Absentee. She's tried to
14
     reconstruct the others. She thinks that she had
15
16
     voted absentee in --
17
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. Because on the
18
     report you gave us, the VAN report, it doesn't
19
     reflect anything in 2012.
20
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah, that's right.
21
          MR. JOHN: So 2016 and 2018.
2.2
          MS. GRAVES: The other years that I voted
23
     absentee were 2016 and then again in 2018.
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MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Well, what we're

looking for, though, is where you voted in an

24

25

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1
     Indiana primary.
 2
         MS. GRAVES: Those were for Indiana.
 3
         MR. JOHN: And if you look at --
 4
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: You were registered
     to vote in California in 2018.
 5
         MR. JOHN: Correct. But if you look in the
 6
    packet --
 7
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I don't dispute that
 8
 9
    you're a Democrat. That's not really --
10
         CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            That's not an issue, yeah.
11
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: But as you've been
12
     sitting here most of the day, you've heard that
13
     it's either the two most recent primaries in
14
     Indiana or the certification.
15
         MR. JOHN: Well, no, it's not the two most
16
    recent primaries. It's the two --
17
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Sorry. I was
18
    paraphrasing. I know what it is.
19
          MR. JOHN: But some people misinterpret that.
20
     That's why -- sorry.
21
         MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: It's been a long day.
2.2
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: It's been a long day.
23
    Let's not start talking about what the statute
24
     says. Anyway, so, yes, the two most recent primary
25
    votes in which -- two most recent primaries in
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- which you voted in Indiana, so other states
  wouldn't count, or the certification from the party
  chair. I mean, that's the -- so I'm not disputing
  your being a loyal Democrat at all. I'm looking at
  what the statute --
  - MR. JOHN: I'm sorry. I hadn't page numbered these, but if you look, there are three cancellations there.
  - VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I see that.

- MR. JOHN: And the only things that are really reflective --
- VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: You need to go to the microphone.
- MR. JOHN: If you look at the SVRS printout, it reflects three cancellations of her voting record. And I would suggest that potentially that, in the course of it -- so it shows 2012. It would be -- she says that she voted in 2012, yet there's no evidence of 2012. So is she -- I mean, is she lying right now that she voted in 2012? I really doubt that.
- And so the question is, if it wasn't there, I might suggest that if, in fact, it really -- if you can't take the -- if we're going to engraft that it has to -- well, I don't think we should engraft

- 1 | into the system that SVRS is the sole and final
- 2 | arbiter because data systems are fallible. And the
- 3 | idea is to make sure that somebody is truly a
- 4 | Democrat, not that they're switching parties to run
- 5 | as a Democrat or switching parties to run as a
- 6 Republican.
- 7 But I would suggest that, if you can't rule
- 8 | for her now, perhaps you table this and we seek
- 9 | from the Marion County Voter Registration Board,
- 10 | Election Board the actual 2012 records.
- 11 CHAIRMAN OKESON: We've got a deadline
- 12 tomorrow.
- MS. PYLE: No, two days.
- 14 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Two days.
- 15 MR. JOHN: But I would argue we've given
- 16 | plenty of evidence to support a ruling on behalf of
- 17 Ms. Graves.
- 18 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Counselor,
- 19 Ms. Graves, I have done some reading about you
- 20 online on some things. I find you to be a very
- 21 | impressive young lady. And I hope no matter what
- 22 | happens here today that you will go forward because
- 23 | our community needs more young women like you to
- 24 | serve as role models and leaders.
- 25 Unfortunately, we have been saddled with this

1 | law that changed recently, and as a result of it,

2 | I'd be home already right now if it weren't for

3 | this law. You have a most capable counselor who

has done the best that he can, but the evidence

| that we have here today is just -- it's incomplete.

We're going back to 2012 for a primary, and we have

a deadline. In two days, by noon, we have to

decide all these challenges. So it gets to be a

real challenge to try and do all of this.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Let me delve into that a little further. You made a comment about going to the Marion County clerk's office.

MR. JOHN: I mean, if, in fact -- I mean, we haven't checked. I don't know whether those -- because that would have been paper poll books, by the way, that you would have been dealing with, although she said she voted absentee, so I'm not sure where that record -- maybe the co-director would remember. Were you there back then, 2012?

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: If you look in this packet you gave us, the California voter registration form, there is an Indiana voter registration for 2012. And I think maybe you were confused or something here because it says you registered to vote in Indiana on June 19 of 2012,

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which would have been after the primary. You want to take a look at it and see what I'm talking about?

I mean, it's a long time ago. Memory is not always best. So I'm not in any way saying you're intentionally. Maybe you got things confused.
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Yeah, you voted in November of 2012, and maybe that's what you're thinking about.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, so take 2012 and throw it in the corner for a second. You're saying '16, '18, and '20 as well, correct?

MS. GRAVES: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: What SVRS shows is '23, right, just the one?

MS. GRAVES: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So the two of those others, piecing this together, I mean, it just seems like those '18 and '20 votes were California votes because she was registered in California in 2018 and 2020.

I think the problem here is -- I mean, I know what you're saying about the system because otherwise we could be looking at all kinds of stuff. And the VAN system, my understanding is, that's something the Democratic Party pulls

together to figure out who they should really try to get out to vote, but it's used for get out the vote efforts, in part, I believe. And so the SVRS is what, you know, we look at. Or, you know, if people go to the county, they think there's been an error, they go to the county clerk's office, get their -- don't trust the system, go to that system and see what it shows, and we don't have that.

2.

So it really -- you know, what we've got before us is one clear Indiana primary. The other one you've talked about, 2012, isn't even reflected on this VAN thing. And then we've got voter registrations for California for two of the years you're talking about, and in 2016 you might have been in college in Florida. I mean, I don't know, but I think the issue we've got here is that there's not really anything supporting that we've got a vote in two Indiana primaries.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: If they would have arrived with information from the Marion County clerk's office that contradicted SVRS, what we do then?

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Then I think we would definitely consider that.

MS. GRAVES: I'd like to point out that during 2020, though I was technically in school, I was

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     living back -- I was displaced living back in
 2.
               So that might be -- due to the pandemic.
     Indiana.
 3
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Oh, that lovely
 4
     primary.
 5
          MS. GRAVES:
                       Yeah.
                              So I was, you know,
 6
     displaced at that time and want to highlight that.
 7
                     So did you ever vote in California
          MS. PYLE:
     in a primary?
 8
 9
          MS. GRAVES:
                       Yes.
10
          MS. PYLE: So which one of these was that
11
     vote?
12
          MS. GRAVES:
                       2018.
13
          MS. PYLE: 2018.
                            Okay.
14
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                    Okav.
15
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is the clerk's office still
16
     open?
17
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        Probably for another 30 minutes.
                          Well, the voter registration
18
          MS. NUSSMEYER:
19
     office records vote history, unless you wanted to
20
     look at the absentee information. Then the
21
     Election Board would be able to identify if
2.2
     anything were entered into the system for an
23
     absentee.
24
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So let me ask this
25
     question. And I don't know the answer, so I'm
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looking to our staff for advice. Let's say we gave them additional time to go and get what they --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: That's kind of what I'm curious.

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MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Yeah, to go and see what there is. And if they -- because they seem to think that it's there. So if they go and get it, if we take -- how would we handle that? Would we --

MS. WARYCHA: Under AOPA, we could recess, if that's what you're asking, and we just would have to announce the time and the date that we're coming back. And the other thing that Brad was just pointing out is we also could do a motion to reconsider at a later date and time. Obviously it's only 30 minutes so not a lot of time.

MS. PYLE: Or maybe table it if we're doing that and not make any sort of judgment on it. That way it's not of record precedent-wise.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I mean, I would be very curious if they did come back with stuff from Marion County. That opens a lot of stuff. This is the only case we've heard, even including the last time we went through this, where someone had some competing data that said they did vote in

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     primaries. If they go to the clerk's office and
     they said, no, this is what we've got, it's the
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 3
     same as SVRS, that's what we have, then we have to
     go on that, I think is what the consensus is.
 4
                                                    But.
 5
     if there is something, the clerk says, oh, there it
     is, that would create an interesting --
 6
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   So if we don't vote
 7
     on this, take no action, the challenge fails,
 8
 9
     right? So if we get evidence that you
10
     distribute --
11
          MS. PYLE: Couldn't we table it and recess?
12
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Yeah. If we table it
13
     and we don't reconvene by noon on the 29th, then
     the challenge is denied -- dead. I'm sorry. Dead.
14
15
     So we could give them a date, a time, whatever,
16
     deadline to get us that information, which they
     could send in to staff. Staff could disseminate it
17
     to us via email.
18
19
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: But we have to meet
20
     to take action.
21
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: That's just it.
2.2
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        And be careful about ex parte.
23
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Let me ask you this:
24
     there were record at the Marion County clerk's
```

office that these primary votes did occur, could

25

1 you do any type of contingent motion that says should those records be produced prior to the 29th 2 3 at noon... MS. WARYCHA: I didn't see anything about that 4 in AOPA. 5 CHAIRMAN OKESON: So we would have to come 6 7 back and vote on it at some point. 8 MS. WARYCHA: I believe that's correct, yes. CHAIRMAN OKESON: Reconsider the matter. 9 MS. PYLE: I'm going to move that we table 10 11 this, that -- I guess this is a guestion for staff. 12 Can we order that evidence be served upon the 13 parties and that, if there's no evidence, that they 14 let us know so that we don't have to come back? MS. WARYCHA: I don't think that's under AOPA. 15 16 And I'll be honest with you, this is pretty much 17 the only time that we're doing AOPA here, but I 18 haven't seen anything that would authorize that, so

I would say that we still have a couple more matters and they're down the street, so if you wanted to give them the grace to go down there and see what they can find out and come back within the hour, that would be another option.

19

20

21

2.2

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24

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to speak, in AOPA.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: We have a member of

```
1
     the Marion County Board of Voter Registration in
     attendance -- a staffer in attendance today.
 2.
 3
     time -- and I'm looking over here at Rick Sutton.
 4
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Can you go over and
     facilitate this?
 5
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: What time --
 6
          MR. SUTTON: 4 o'clock.
 7
          MS. NUSSMEYER: The office closes at 4:00.
 8
 9
          MS. PYLE: Can we vote to table this matter
10
     for right now?
11
          MS. NUSSMEYER: Could someone call over there
12
     to see what they could pull together so that the
13
     parties could get what they need and bring it back
14
     to the office?
15
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: That would be appreciated.
16
     All right. So how do we do this, a motion to table
     for 30 minutes?
17
          MS. WARYCHA: I think that would be
18
19
     appropriate if you want to say to move this to the
20
     end of the business of the day.
21
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Just move it to the end?
2.2
                              That's how I would --
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        Yes.
23
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Final agenda item.
24
          MS. PYLE: I move to table this until -- or
25
     move it to the end of the agenda.
```

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1
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second.
 2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: All those in favor signify
 3
     by saying "Aye."
 4
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
                                   Aye.
 5
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
 6
          MS. PYLE:
                    Aye.
 7
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.
          Okay. You've got 30 minutes.
 8
 9
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Can they email the
10
     records over?
11
                          That's actually my question
          MS. NUSSMEYER:
12
     for the Commission and, I guess, for the attorneys
13
     and both parties.
14
          MS. WARYCHA: I'm sorry. I didn't hear the
15
     question.
16
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Hold one moment.
17
          MS. NUSSMEYER: Are you comfortable with
     receiving email from the office to print and
18
19
     consider?
20
          MS. WARYCHA:
                        Yes.
                              There's nothing in AOPA
21
     that would prevent us from doing that.
2.2
          MS. NUSSMEYER: And I think, I mean, besides
23
     Mr. Sutton, Mr. John, or Ms. Anderson could call
24
     over to the Marion County Voter Registration office
25
     and speak to the Democratic and Republican
```

1 co-directors to pull together the records. MR. JOHN: So are you thinking taking the 2. 3 testimony of --4 MS. NUSSMEYER: No. They could make a copy out of SVRS and email it to us. 5 MS. WARYCHA: I would say that Mr. Kochevar 6 and I both have our computers, so if they do find 7 something, if they could email it to Matthew and I 8 both, that way we could share it with our 9 10 respective members. 11 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. 12 MR. JOHN: Thank you. 13 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Next we have Camp v. 14 Bonahoom, Cause 2024-27, in the matter of the 15 challenge to Zachary Otto Bonahoom, candidate for 16 Republican Party nomination for State Representative, District 82. 17 MS. WARYCHA: And just for matter of the 18 19 record, during our last recess, we got a notice of 20 appearance on behalf of Mr. Bonahoom from Mitchell 21 Harper. He is here in the audience, and this won't 2.2 appear in your binders, but both Counsel Kochevar 23 and I both have a copy of it for the record.

Okay.

MS. BOHM: And I believe you also have a

CHAIRMAN OKESON:

24

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notice of appearance for Christine Bohm for Derek
 1
 2.
    Camp.
 3
          MS. WARYCHA: Yeah. I'll get to that in just
 4
     a second. Sorry. This one wasn't in the binder,
     so I'm kind of out of order here.
 5
          And so what we -- Matthew, is this a you
 6
     challenge?
 7
          MR. KOCHEVAR: No. This is a Republican
 8
 9
     candidate.
10
         MS. WARYCHA: Oh, okay.
11
         CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            This is us.
12
         MS. WARYCHA: Yes, it is. Okay. Here we go.
13
     Sorry. The challenge is right here. It's in the
14
              It's a CAN-1 challenge that he does not
15
    have the two-primary vote history as his most
16
    recent primary was Democratic. He also doesn't
17
    have his county chair certification to run. You
18
    have printouts from the Statewide Voter
19
    Registration System with his voter history, and
20
    then let me see here, and then an appearance from
21
    Mrs. Bohm as well, and then notice to both of the
2.2
    representatives and the CAN-2.
23
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. On behalf of
24
    Mr. Camp, Ms. Bohm, go ahead.
```

MS. BOHM: Christine Bohm, C-h-r-i-s-t-i-n-e,

 $1 \mid B-o-h-m$ .

2.2

Mr. Camp originally filed a challenge against Zachary Bonahoom for State Rep, District 82, two-primary rule, and he voted in 2020 as a Democrat and no county certification. I think this one is really easy.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Do you have any cross-examination of anything she had?

MR. HARPER: I do not.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Please proceed.

MR. HARPER: We just had a friendly conversation. We would both like to get back to Fort Wayne before central Indiana gets pummeled because I think it's supposed to --

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: State your name for the court reporter.

MR. HARPER: Mitchell Harper, Fort Wayne, Indiana, representing Zachary Bonahoom, who can be available telephonically, but I don't think that's necessary.

As I can see from the Commission, it's pretty strictly ministerial when it comes to these complaints. Mr. Bonahoom's entire voting record prior to this, except, I think, in 2008 where there was a hot Democrat primary, is all Republican. And

in 2011, he was the Republican candidate for city clerk. I ran on the same ticket with him. He and his family did yeoman's work doing telephone calls.

2.

His dad is currently the Republican city council attorney and himself a former candidate for city council. And Zachary Otto Bonahoom's grandfather, Otto Bonahoom, well-respected attorney in Fort Wayne, was Republican State Representative elected in 1962. His oral history is available online through the State History museum and is very interesting for anyone to listen to, and Otto is very, very sharp.

The Bonahooms are a well-known and long-time Republican family, well-known because they're from the Middle East, from Lebanon, along with Syrian immigrant families that came to Fort Wayne shortly after the turn of the last century and part of a large number of contributors to our community.

I would just say, I wanted to refer to -- and this may be an empiric victory for the challenge too, but I want to refer back to something that was said during Martin v. Nicholson where it was said that it's instructed that challenges have to be filed, that it is not the election boards or the clerks who automatically check voting records on

primaries and throw out people trying to file for election.

2.

That certainly was not true in Allen County in 2014 when Joe Kelsey, the current Republican mayor of Woodburn, attempted to run for delegate, and his candidacy for delegate was thrown out because he didn't meet the two-primary rule. Two years later, I understand, the county clerks of Indiana were instructed at their annual meeting that that wasn't to occur. Challenges needed to happen.

The whole process of election law changes since the mid 1980s, from two-year to four-year precinct committeeman staggered elections, two-year to four-year elections for county chairs, free appointment across the county for anyone to be a precinct committeeman when it used to be restricted to the precinct and then was expanded to the ward or township, it's been a long, long course to where we are today where all sorts of folks are not being listened to.

And I think the young lady that came before, she should be taken at her word or you're going to end up disenfranchising not only young people who are 18 or 19 and it's a legal impossibility to vote, or young persons like her who follow their

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1
     athletic pursuits out of the state.
 2
          Having said that, I'll close and let the
 3
     Commission make their motion.
 4
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Do you have any
     cross-examination?
 5
 6
          MS. BOHM:
                     No.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So, Mr. Harper, one quick
 7
     question. You don't dispute that the 2020 primary
 8
 9
     election he voted Democrat?
10
          MR. HARPER: He voted Democrat. I think we
11
     probably know why, because it was a little more
12
     interesting at that time.
13
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay.
14
          MS. PYLE: No county chair certificate?
15
          MR. HARPER:
                       No.
16
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Does anyone want to make a
     motion?
17
          MS. PYLE: I would move to uphold the
18
19
     challenge.
20
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a second?
21
          Hearing none, I'll offer a second to that
2.2
     motion.
23
          We have a motion and a second to uphold the
24
     challenge in Cause 2024-27.
25
          Any questions, discussion?
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1 Hearing none, all those in favor signify by 2 saying "Aye." 3 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 4 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 5 MS. PYLE: Aye. 6 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. The "ayes" have it. The motion carries to 7 uphold the challenge. The Election Division is 8 9 directed not to include Zachary Otto Bonahoom in 10 the certified list of primary candidates sent to 11 county election boards and to indicate the name of 12 this candidate not be printed on the ballot. 13 Thank you. 14 Hathaway v. Breaux, Cause 2024-28, in the 15 matter of the challenge to Jean Breaux, candidate 16 for Democratic Party nomination for State Senate, District 34. 17 18 Mr. Breaux here? 19 Matthew. 20 MR. KOCHEVAR: Yes. I'm sorry. The hours are 21 getting to me. 2.2 Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, 23 you will find in your meeting binder under this 24 cause a CAN-1 candidate challenge filed by the

challenger. In addition, it's just part of the

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record, but we did receive an email from the
 1
 2.
     challenger asking to essentially dismiss their
 3
     challenge. But then hours after receiving that
 4
     email, we received another email from the
 5
     challenger saying that they were rescinding -- I'll
     just use the word "rescinding" -- rescinding that
 6
     request. Beyond that is the other standard items
 7
     that have been in this binder, a copy of the
 8
 9
     candidate's declaration of candidacy and the
10
     receipt showing he filed a statement of economic
11
     interest, notice of hearing, and the documents from
12
     the Division showing that the notice of hearing was
13
     sent to the parties.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. Are all the parties
14
15
     here?
          MS. McSPADDEN: I'm here on behalf of
16
17
     Ms. Breaux.
18
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: And is the challenger
19
     Ping-Ponging back and forth on email here?
20
          Mr. Hathaway?
21
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I move to dismiss the
2.2
     challenge.
23
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Second.
24
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: I have a motion to dismiss
25
     and a second on Cause 2024-28.
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Any discussion? Any questions?

Hearing none, all those in favor

Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying "Aye."

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.

MS. PYLE: Aye.

2.2

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.

The "ayes" have it. The motion to challenge is dismissed. The Election Division is directed to include the name of Jean Breaux on the certified list of candidates to be printed on the ballot.

Roy v. Dossett, Cause 2024-29, in the matter of the challenge to B. Nicholas Dossett, candidate for Republican Party nomination for Warrick County Superior Court 2.

MS. WARYCHA: In your binder you will find the CAN-1 challenge. The challenge to Mr. Dossett's candidacy says that he does not meet the requirements to run for the Republican Party. It says see attached. They're challenging off of primary vote history or lack of chairman certification. There is a printout of his SVRS record. We've got the CAN-2 statement of economic interest, notice served to the parties as well.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. I recognize Mr. Roy,

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1
     the challenger, for your five-minute presentation.
          MR. ROY:
                    Thank you, Chair, Commission. My
 2
 3
     name is Brett Roy, B-r-e-t-t, last name is Roy,
 4
     R-o-v.
          As indicated in my filing to challenge
 5
     Mr. Dossett, he has not voted in the last two
 6
     primaries as a Republican, nor has he ever voted as
 7
     a Republican according to his SVRS, and I don't
 8
     believe he has the qualifications -- the
 9
10
     certificate from the Republican chairman, Mike
11
     Griffin.
12
          So with that, I would ask that you remove him
13
     from the ballot.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you like to
14
15
     cross-examine any statements?
16
          MR. DOSSETT:
                        No cross. Thank you.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: You have five minutes.
17
18
          MR. DOSSETT:
                        I appreciate it, Chairman,
19
     Commissioners.
20
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Do you dispute any of the
     evidence?
21
2.2
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: He needs to state his
23
     name.
24
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Sorry.
25
          MR. DOSSETT: Bronson Nicholas Dossett,
```

1 B-r-o-n-s-o-n, N-i-c-h-o-l-a-s, D-o-s-s-e-t-t. I do not dispute what was put in front of the 2. 3 Commission, though I do have an argument as to 3 --4 the election code that's been at issue in the Rust 5 case and I think most of the cases put forward in front of the Commission today. I did actually vote 6 7 as a Republican, contrary to what was just said. I actually voted in the '22 primary as a Republican. 8 9 I pulled the Republican ticket. 10 CHAIRMAN OKESON: That's not reflected in 11 this --12 MR. DOLE: I -- I didn't mean to interrupt. I 13 apologize. I do have evidence as to that vote that 14 I would like to present. 15 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Sure. We'd like to see it. 16 MR. DOLE: I'm marking first as Exhibit 1 the 17 certificate of error. 18 CHAIRMAN OKESON: But even that being the 19 case, it's only one, right? 20 MR. DOSSETT: Yes. 21 CHAIRMAN OKESON: In the previous primary, you 2.2 would agree with the State Voter System? 23 MR. DOSSETT: Correct. I agree and I do not contest the fact that, even if this vote is 24

counted, it still is only one. I do not meet that

prong of the code.

2.

2.2

But what I would like to do is, if I can, address that vote specifically because, when I originally spoke to the party chairperson in Warrick County, what I was told was, as long as my most recent vote was on the Republican ticket, then he would write me in. That's what I was told.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Did he write you in?

MR. DOSSETT: He did not because it's not reflected in my voting history. And so first thing I would like to do is see if I can address that first. That is a certificate of error that I have provided showing that there was an issue with my vote on that day. That is Exhibit 1.

Secondarily, what I'm marking as Exhibit 2 -- CHAIRMAN OKESON: All Exhibit 1 says is you were not on the poll list.

MR. DOSSETT: Correct. So Exhibit 2 shows why
I was not on the poll list, as their reason for me
not being there. And, in fact, at the time I lived
in Vanderburgh County, and about halfway down the
page, it says "Pulled in error by Warrick County,"
meaning that, when I went to vote at the place that
I had voted for the previous four probably
elections, Warrick County had erroneously pulled me

as a registered Warrick County voter when I had not lived there for six years or longer.

2.

Nextly, what I'm marking as Exhibit 3 is the acknowledgment notice given to me of my registration in Vanderburgh County, which, again, just shows that Warrick County pulled my status as a voter in error.

And the last exhibit that I will provide, marking as Exhibit 4, is a copy of the certified minutes from the Vanderburgh County Election Board where they addressed my vote. And I would point you to page 4. And I apologize for clearing my throat. I'm still getting over an illness. Page No. 4, I've highlighted where they actually specifically addressed my vote at the election meeting, and it says in that paragraph that the two counties essentially talked to each other, that they had fixed the issue with my vote, and that, quote/unquote, I was able to vote normally.

Now, I cast that vote. I went to the same poll I always did. I pulled the Republican ticket because on that ticket was a primary race between two prosecutors, and at the time I was a major felony public defender in Vanderburgh County. It directly affected my decision. So I voted in that

1 primary because it directly affected me. Now, I never knew until I met with the party 2. chair and until he pulled my voting record that 3 4 that vote was never counted. And I have given you 5 everything to show that I went. I was there. cast my vote. I was registered to vote. They 6 pulled my -- Warrick County pulled me in error. 7 cast my vote on the Republican ticket, and you have 8 9 the minutes in front of you where they talk about 10 it and say that I was able to vote normally and 11 they did not count it. If that vote was counted, I 12 would have been written in by the chair. 13 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Okay. So that's the end of 14 your time. 15 Does anybody want to vote to afford more? 16 I would appreciate it, just a MR. DOSSETT: 17 couple of minutes. 18 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I'd move for 19 two minutes. 20 MS. PYLE: Second. 21 CHAIRMAN OKESON: All those in favor. 22 Aye.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.

> MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye.

MS. PYLE: Aye.

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: Two more minutes.

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MR. DOSSETT: Couple things. I would like to incorporate the arguments made earlier on behalf of John Rust, and obviously there's been a lot of discussion about that. I would also move to incorporate the pleadings from the underlying case if the Commission would do that.

I do think that my position is a little bit different. I filed for candidacy to run for judge in Warrick County. I'm not afforded the opportunity to move to a different county and try to get some other party chair to write me in or otherwise.

Also, I do think that the statute, as it pertains to somebody running for judge, the statute requires two votes, as we know, on a particular primary. Except for judges, the judicial canons control and the judicial code of ethics control that you are not to be political, and, in fact, it is unethical for you to do so. So the statute is directly contrary to the nature of the position itself.

And so when I have a party chair that tells me that he'll write me in as long as my vote was there, I know I cast the vote. You have in front

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1
     of you everything that says I cast the vote, and I
     was put under oath earlier. I have an affidavit
 2
 3
     that I can sign in open court saying it was on the
 4
     Republican ticket. I would have been written in if
 5
     that vote was counted. It was not. That error is
     not my fault.
 6
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Did you go back to the
 7
     county chair and ask him to write you in?
 8
 9
          MR. DOSSETT: I did. I provided all this
10
     information to him.
11
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: What did the county chair
12
     do?
```

MR. DOSSETT: He did not write me in. sequence of events is I went -- when he ran my record --

13

14

15

16

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2.2

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: You don't deny that that's his prerogative, though, in that position to decide whether to write you in or not?

MR. DOSSETT: He decided not to write me in when it got closer to the time for the final. when we had this conversation, this was back in September. What I was told was it's not a no, but let's see how you do over the next few months. So what I did was I went to all the events. I went to the breakfast with the Republican Party.

I would really like another 60 seconds or so to finish this up.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: He's answering your question.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Fair enough. You can answer the question. You've got 30 more seconds.

MR. DOSSETT: Sure. I can wrap it up.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Go.

2.2

MR. DOSSETT: I went to every single event. I walked in the parade with the party. I did everything, and then at the end I was still told no, even though I provided the documents.

Now, all I'm asking for is for the Commission to take a look at this and actually count that vote or at least find that I voted, and I, under oath, am telling you I voted on the Republican ticket.

And if that is the case and if that vote -- if the Commission can make a finding that I did actually cast a Republican vote, then I know that there's a deadline in two days, but I would ask for at least some time to talk to the chair and say I have a finding from the Indiana Election Commission.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I don't think that there's anything here that states that you voted in the Republican primary, just that there was a voter

- 1 registration error that was rectified. according to the meeting minutes, it stated "The 2 3 voter should be able to vote. Mark Toone informed the board the issue had been addressed and the 4 5 voter was able to vote normally on Election Day. A certificate of error has been generated to address 6 the registration issue." 7 I don't see anything that suggests which party 8 9 in that primary vote that you voted for. 10 MR. DOSSETT: Correct. And that's why I am 11 here, and I have provided -- or I have an affidavit 12 that I can sign in open court today, and I am under 13 oath right now, and I am telling you that is what I 14 voted on. 15 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Even considering that to be 16 the case, it's the previous two primary votes --17 MR. DOSSETT: I understand. 18 CHAIRMAN OKESON: -- which the previous one 19 was Democrat. 20 MR. DOSSETT: Correct.

21

22

23

24

25

And the county chair, for CHAIRMAN OKESON: whatever reason -- that's up to the county chair -failed to write you in as a candidate.

MR. DOSSETT: Right. And I think --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: So I'm not sure what would

be left for us to do.

2.

2.2

MR. DOSSETT: What I'm asking is, I can have that rectified if the Commission is willing to make a determination as to my vote in '22 that was not counted.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I don't know that we can do that, though. I mean --

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: What you're asking is that you be allowed to amend your filing, which, as I've been told, the deadline was February 9th.

MR. DOSSETT: Right.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: So we can't -- I don't think we have the authority to go back and say, okay, you can come in and amend now that you have this. So, you know, we just don't have the authority to be able to do that for you.

MR. DOSSETT: And I understand. And so I guess my only question then, if the Commission can't or is unwilling to do that, is to make a finding as to my '22 vote because it will affect me come the next election in two years.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: You've introduced all this information into the record which is available for public consumption, but what's before us is a challenge. We're hearing a challenge as to your

1 ability or qualification to be on the ballot, and that's what we're voting on. So there's nothing 2. 3 really more we can do to make the record than what 4 we've done. 5 MR. DOSSETT: I understand. I just had -this is the only avenue which I can take to have 6 that vote counted in some way or at least make a 7 record as to the vote. 8 9 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Can you go back to 10 the election board and ask? They gave you the 11 error. They said your vote should be cast that 12 way. 13 MR. DOSSETT: I did ask them. 14 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. And you can go 15 back to the poll book. The poll book should indicate --16 17 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: But he's still only 18 got one primary. 19 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I know, but for his 20 future. 21 MS. NUSSMEYER: Because the counties use 2.2 e-poll book, there is no way to push certificate of

errors to the poll books, which is why it likely

documentation other than the poll list because it's

did not record or forward it on to other

23

24

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1
     all electronic. There's no way to push that
     information.
 2.
 3
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I mean, you raise a
     very interesting issue, an as-applied challenge.
 4
 5
     If I were doing con law on this one...
          MR. DOSSETT: Well, and when I went to vote,
 6
     obviously I was there, and I did vote that day.
 7
     But I pulled the Republican ticket, but even on the
 8
 9
     log -- because they went back and looked at the
10
     log, and there was nothing written because I was
11
     pulled in error by Warrick County, so there's
12
     nothing showing --
13
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            No, I understand that.
14
     Unfortunately, the burden is on you to secure that
15
     letter from the county chair, and you did not do
16
     that.
17
          MR. DOSSETT:
                        I understand.
18
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So anyone want to make a
19
     motion?
20
          MS. PYLE: I would move to uphold the
21
     challenge.
2.2
                            Second it.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
23
          Any further conversation? Any questions?
24
          All those in favor signify by saying "Aye."
25
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
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1 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 2 MS. PYLE: Aye. 3 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. The "ayes" have it. The motion to challenge 4 is upheld. The Election Division is directed not 5 to include B. Nicholas Dossett on the certified 6 list of primary candidates sent to the county 7 election boards and to indicate the name of this 8 9 candidate is not to be printed on the ballot. 10 Thank you. 11 MR. ROY: Thank you. 12 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Weingarten v. Banks, Cause 13 2024-31, in the matter of the challenge to Jim 14 Banks, candidate for Republican Party nomination 15 for United States Senator. 16 MS. WARYCHA: And in your binder you will see 17 the very first document on this is a wish to 18 withdraw the complaint by Mr. Weingarten, and I do not believe he is here today. So between that, I 19 20 think, based off previous precedent --CHAIRMAN OKESON: Motion to dismiss it? 21 22 MS. WARYCHA: Uh-huh. 23 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a motion to 24 dismiss? Litany, you want to make a motion?

MS. PYLE: I would move to dismiss.

1 Is there a second? CHAIRMAN OKESON: 2 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second. 3 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Having a motion and a second 4 to dismiss, all those in favor signify by saying "Aye." 5 6 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 7 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 8 MS. PYLE: Aye. 9 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. 10 The motion is dismissed. Cause 2024-31 has been dismissed. The Election Division is directed 11 12 to include the name of Jim Banks on the certified 13 list of candidates to be printed on the ballot. 14 Do we want to go to the advisory opinion or do 15 we want to pick back up on that cause first? 16 MS. WARYCHA: So I would go ahead and do the 17 advisory opinion and then bring them back in 18 because it looks to me that they're still doing 19 some work. 20 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Next on the agenda is the 21 advisory opinion request from the Honorable 2.2 Victoria Garcia Williams, Indiana State Representative, and the Honorable Andrea Hunley, 23 24 Indiana State Senator.

Commission members have received a request for

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     an advisory opinion to be issued by this body
     regarding a campaign finance matter, which is
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     described further in the material in our binders.
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          MS. GARCIA-WILBURN: Can I correct the name,
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     please.
              It's the Victoria Garcia-Wilburn, not
 6
     Williams.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: My apologies.
          MS. GARCIA-WILBURN:
                               Thank you.
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          MS. HUNLEY: All right. Well, thank you.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Hold on just a second.
     don't think this is a matter that follows hearing
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     procedures, so there's no testimony to be given.
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: But they can make an
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     opening statement.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: I'll make a motion to afford
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     each of you two minutes to make a presentation.
          Is there a second?
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          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
                                   Second.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: All those in favor.
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          Aye.
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          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
                                   Aye.
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
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          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
                       Thank you so much. I know that
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          MS. HUNLEY:
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     you all have been doing a lot of really important
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work today, and we really appreciate it.

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: Will you, for the record, please state your name.

MS. HUNLEY: Yes. I'm Andrea Hunley, State
Senator for District 46, and I'm in my second term,
second session here.

And we have brought before you today a request for an advisory opinion. We know that advisory opinions are granted by this Commission from time to time, and we are looking for an advisory opinion on whether or not we can use campaign finances to provide childcare support or dependent care support.

We know that in the past that the Federal Election Commission has approved for federal candidates to use their campaign finances in this way on a unanimous bipartisan vote, and so we are hoping we can get an advisory opinion in this way. We have talked with the secretary of state's office. They recommended that this is the route that we take. We don't think that it needs to be done legislatively since you all have the power.

And right now our election campaign finance laws are written purposely ambiguously to ensure that candidates have opportunities to spend funds

as needed. We know that in 2001 it was determined to allow reimbursement here in Indiana for lost wages and salaries of a candidate or their household member resulting directly from campaign activity, so we feel like this kind of falls in that same vein. And that was done through an advisory opinion at that time, so we're hoping that this will follow the same suit.

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We know that having diverse candidates on the ballot is really important. It helps represent our entire state. And we think that caregivers are especially worthy of being on the ballot, and we wouldn't want to do anything to preclude them. And so having this access to campaign finance funds in this way will help make candidacy a little bit easier, so we would appreciate your consideration of this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you, Senator.

MS. GARCIA-WILBURN: Thank you. Again,
Victoria Garcia-Wilburn. Thank you for your time
today and the ability to give some brief remarks.

I just want to state I really appreciate the work
done by this committee. I appreciate how broad our
election finance laws are so that we can capture
anyone that has a desire to run for state office.

1 We're finding ourselves in a bit of a There's a sandwich generation rising. 2 quandary. 3 Many of us are still rearing children while taking 4 care of older adult parents. And so because of 5 that, we feel like it would be necessary to, at this time, join over 30 other states in explicitly 6 7 allowing dependent care expenses to be used through our campaign finance funds. 8

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We know that people that come to Indiana come to this great Hoosier state, many of them might not have family to assist with childcare expenses.

Many of them might be first-generation Hoosiers forming a pathway for others. And so we believe, because we have such a strong commitment to freedoms and constitutional abilities and rights, that this falls right in line with that part of our democracy allowing more people to get on the ballot.

So we thank you for your time and your consideration, and thank you again for allowing for some remarks.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you. And apologies for mispronouncing your name.

MS. GARCIA-WILBURN: No worries.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: What was included?

MS. WARYCHA: In the binder you have the email from the Representative and the Senator requesting to be put on the agenda today, as well as a letter from them explaining what they just summarized and what they're asking the commission to do, as well as a draft advisory opinion that my Democratic counterparts have worked on and put in the binder as well.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I don't know that I have that.

MS. WARYCHA: Go to the very back of your advisory opinion. It should have been the very last tab.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Sorry. Yeah, I got it.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: If I might make
comments.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Sure.

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VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So after this request came through, I looked at the -- I thought this was a really interesting question and a really important question, and I looked at the opinions from the Federal Election Commission and found them quite interesting as well. And I support issuing an opinion.

I think it is -- I can see how childcare,

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     being a mom myself, not running for office, I can
     only imagine how difficult that would have been.
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     But anyway, I think it would be -- in looking at
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     our statutes, I think it is supportable definitely,
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     without any kind of change in the law or anything
     like that, to conclude that the statute would
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     support allowing campaign funds to be used for
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     child and other, I guess, caregiving, dependent
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     care expenditures. So I would encourage the
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     Commission to consider this.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: I'm curious as to why this
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     wouldn't have taken the form of an amendment or a
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     bill over in the General Assembly during this
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     recent legislative session. Would either of you
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     care to comment on that?
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          MS. HUNLEY: Are we permitted to respond?
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            I'm asking you a question.
          MS. GARCIA-WILBURN: Yeah. I mean, I
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     believe --
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Will you come up to
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     the microphone.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah, please.
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          MS. GARCIA-WILBURN: Oh, sure. I believe that
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     pursuing this administrative route is, quite
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frankly, the best route to go. This is a short

1 This is something that does not need to session. be done legislatively. These are changes within 2. 3 your authority and your power that you're able to grant, and not every single issue that comes up 4 5 needs to be before the legislature. We can be a litigious society, and we know that not everything 6 requires legislation in order to be enacted. 7 so we believe this is well within your purview to 8 9 create this report and opinion. 10

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I mean, to me, it feels like lawmaking, and we're an appointed body and not lawmakers. In fact, I would defer to co-counsel, but I believe the last advisory opinion we issued had the caveat that it be considered by the General Assembly for affirmation. Is that not correct?

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MS. WARYCHA: Yes. The last advisory opinion did, yes.

MS. NUSSMEYER: But the General Assembly, to my knowledge, has not affirmed any Commission's request on any of the advisory opinions, quite frankly, that we, as a body, have adopted.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: That's up to them.

MS. NUSSMEYER: I appreciate that. The question was --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: And for the record, I'm

sympathetic to the request. It just doesn't feel like it's parked in the right parking spot.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: You know, I am -we've done advisory opinions before, and this one
is particularly worthwhile because this deals with
families. And why we would hesitate to give an
advisory opinion on an issue like this one?

When I was sitting on the city council working full-time, doing my council job, I had no children. But I sat there and I thought, oh, my God, what if I had to come home, clean house, get dinner ready, take care of the kids, come do my council meetings, all of that, and particularly if I was a single mother and I didn't have that disposable income to be able to do all of that. Now, this doesn't cover them once they get into the job but during campaigning, which most oftentimes is at night and on the weekends and all of that when the children are home.

So I don't think it's unreasonable to do this. We have some of the worst and broadest campaign finance laws in the country, and the legislature still hasn't done anything to change those. So if we can provide clarification and if the federal government can do it and if 30 other states can do

it, then I think that we should step into the fray.

2.

Now, if you're concerned -- I know that Suzannah has done a great draft here, and she has looked at the federal campaign, and that was an advisory opinion. So I think that, if we really want to do something for families, then I think that we need to step up and provide this assistance.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I want to give credit to Matthew. Matthew did the actual heavy revisions. I shouldn't say heavy revisions, but...

MS. PYLE: Just as far as this goes, I have major support of the concept here. I do a lot of guardianships. I have a six-month-old. I mean, I'm here with you on this.

You're sitting here as two members of our legislature, and I don't know that adding the caveat that the legislature should consider this is going to be an issue. One of you can bring it next -- we can pass this. One of you can bring it next session. I mean, I don't think that that's an issue to amend it in that way if that's what we want to do.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, the only other thing too, I think, if I read this right, this goes a

little bit beyond what the Federal Election

Commission did. I think the FEC -- correct me if

I'm wrong in my brief Google search -- was limited

to childcare, and I believe this is caregiver,

which goes beyond that.

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So to Litany's point, I suppose I could get comfortable given that we include that -- amend that language to have this affirmed at the General Assembly. But I would also want to more strictly or closely model what the FEC has done in that light. I suppose any of it could be changed around once over on the third floor, but those are just my thoughts.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Having thought that you might have that thought, behind Door No. 2 -- oh, wait, which Version 2?

MS. NUSSMEYER: Version 2.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Yes, Version No. 2 is Door No. 2. Yeah, it's like a cooking show. Let me get it out of the oven because it's already done. We've got copies for everyone. So this is an alternative version of the advisory opinion that would limit it to childcare.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: This looks like it's written the same.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: You have to keep going.

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: Care or supervision of a child or other person with a disability.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Page 2, Section 1.
Well, it's actually Section 2. It would be limited then to childcare, and then in Section 3 it limits it to childcare. So the first is the intro talking about what they request and what the FEC did, so that's the same. But then when you get to what we actually do, Section 2 and 3 limit it to childcare.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: And then Section 6, Commission respectfully recommends reading...

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Which is what we did with prior advisory opinions.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And I would just note the Advisory Opinion 2001-1 does state that we want to issue this advisory opinion to clarify campaign finance expenditures pending legislative action to address Indiana Code. And that pending means that here we provide you with guidance until such time as the legislature decides to take action, and we have precedent that that is what we have done. I'm not aware of any other advisory opinion that says here's an advisory opinion and, by the way, it

doesn't take effect until the legislature ratifies it.

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MS. WARYCHA: I believe that our last advisory opinion about the voting machines and tabulation said that, that we wouldn't take any action on voting machines until the General Assembly did.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: That we wouldn't take any action. But that's different than saying that setting forth an advisory opinion that says, oh, but this doesn't take effect.

MS. WARYCHA: So we just basically said that we weren't going to certify those equipment.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Legally, from your interpretation, what does Section 6 do? This looks like a respectfully recommend. It doesn't --

MS. NUSSMEYER: It's consistent, if you look at Advisory Opinion 2001-01, when we, as a Commission, interpreted 3-9-3-4, the very statute that's at question here about whether or not it's appropriate to use campaign contributions towards salary. That's not been codified, and the Commission gave candidates the ability to collect a salary because the Commission interpreted the statute.

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And so the language in Section 6 is commiserate with the language in 2001-01 where the Commission interpreted the statute to allow for salaries and then asked that the legislature consider this in the future.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And if the legislature doesn't like our advisory opinion, that may spur them to take action faster.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Well, so now that I read this, this looks like this wouldn't be saying that they could use campaign funds for expenses.

That's what I'm trying to CHAIRMAN OKESON: figure out.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Now I'm confused.

MS. WARYCHA: Mr. Chairman, Mr. King and I were discussing, and I believe our interpretation is that this would allow the Election Division to send out to the counties that we interpret that using campaign contributions for childcare expenses is permissible and respectfully ask that if the General Assembly go forward and make a policy.

So I wouldn't say it's making a policy. I'd say it's -- or rulemaking either. It's not rulemaking or policymaking as much as saying that, as we read the statute, that's our understanding.

MS. PYLE: So if somebody challenged it, they can say here's this opinion, it's persuasive, right?

MS. WARYCHA: Yes.

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MS. NUSSMEYER: Correct. It gives the candidates -- from my understanding, it would give the candidates that, if they needed childcare to attend a campaign event and they did not have access -- or they did not have someone to watch their child and had to pay for a babysitter, that they could use campaign finance funds or contributions to pay for that caregiving expense. And it provides those candidates some cover that the Commission has said that's an appropriate way to spend dollars that have been contributed to your campaign.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I mean, the FEC opinion and the way this is written to, it's your own campaign activities for your own campaign, other -- participating in other campaigns, and then also related to service in an elected office. So it's not just --

MS. NUSSMEYER: Correct. Well, that also -- I'm sorry, Commissioner. So Section 3 walks through how 3-9-3-4 is written. So 3-9-3-4 -- do

you have it pulled up, Matthew? 3-9-3-4 tells you how a candidate can use their money, and it can be in furtherance of political activity and for service in elected office.

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So 1, 2, and 3 mirror subsection (a), which says "Money received by a candidate or committee as a contribution may be used only to defray any expense reasonably related to the person's or committee's campaign for federal, state, legislative, or local office; continuing political activity; or activity related to service in an elected office."

And so Section 3 just mirrors that language to say that, for those types of activities, you could use your campaign contributions for childcare expenses in furtherance of those events that are permitted under state law.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I'm still hung up on Section 6.

MR. KOCHEVAR: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yes.

MR. KOCHEVAR: Section 6 is -- really that section was pulled when I was updating these drafts. I pulled that from the advisory opinion in 2022.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah, I saw that.

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MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Section 8 from that same advisory opinion, 2001-1.

MR. KOCHEVAR: My best guess, and obviously I will defer to any other staff, that has been in parts some advisory opinions where it's like we essentially are providing interpretation, read this law in this particular subject matter, we find this. We advise folks who have a question about this that this is how the law reads, but, of course, the Indiana General Assembly is the one that crafted this law. It is a statute.

And so this section usually just compels -well, the Election Division, since we serve you
all, to send a copy of this advisory opinion to the
General Assembly for them to consider.

I would just go back to what happened in 2022 in regards to the voting systems since that's the last advisory opinion where this particular section was located. As I recall, because the General Assembly had already turned aside, the co-directors had sent a copy of this advisory opinion and this matter to legislative counsel, both to the party leaderships as well because they sit on the legislative counsel. And to my knowledge, I know

they have it, and their vote, since it's a separate branch of government, they wait for them to see what they want to do on that particular matter.

Conceivably, if this advisory opinion was adopted today, the co-directors would do the same thing, send this over to party leadership, the speaker, the president pro tem, and minority leaders of the House and Senate, for them to consider, probably in the future, a future legislative session, if they want to amend the campaign finance at all in regards to this advisory opinion or possibly do nothing, which I would assume has been the case from that 2001 about salaries since we have nothing about using campaign finance dollars to cover salary or lost wages written into the actual code itself. We still use the advisory opinion.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And as far as this being rulemaking or anything, it's not because it clearly states it's an advisory opinion. So we send it out to the counties and we say here for your consideration is how we would interpret this provision if a challenge was made to us regarding this language. Now, it's not part of the law, so we're inviting the legislature to address it.

1 But it's an advisory opinion. That's all it is, providing some guidance. And it lets these 2 3 folks here sitting in front of us go ahead and make 4 that expenditure for childcare, and they've got a 5 little bit of cover because they can say they acted in good faith. They weren't --6 CHAIRMAN OKESON: No, I understand that. 7 But the point you're making is that lawmakers 8 9 ultimately should deal with it, and that's where 10 I'm starting with it. 11 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: No, no, I'm not 12 saying that. I'm saying that --13 CHAIRMAN OKESON: How many different doors 14 will that open for advisory opinions on campaign 15 finance where they're perfectly suited and capable. 16 They're the ones that made the laws in the first 17 place. 18 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: But we interpret the 19 laws all the time. The ones we've been 20 interpreting today, they're black and white, and so it's a lot of --21 2.2 I don't know that this is CHAIRMAN OKESON: 23 necessarily interpretation other than a judgment as

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: But that's the exact

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to what is allowed.

authority that we have been given. We have been given the authority to issue advisory opinions. If we were setting forth the law and we were telling the candidates --

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CHAIRMAN OKESON: I don't debate the authority to issue an advisory opinion. I'm talking about what's in this advisory opinion.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Okay. Well, but this is an advisory opinion. What about this is not an advisory opinion?

CHAIRMAN OKESON: My point is it feels like this should be a legislative matter codified by lawmakers.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Well, if you could identify what part of this do you think exceeds our authority to issue an advisory opinion.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Can I take a crack at it?

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah, sure.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So I think this -- so when it comes to election law or the administrative law judges who have the authority to deal with election law, we are -- in other types of statutory interpretation, if you have a question about a statute, that goes to the courts. But we're the

ones tasked with election law, and right now, so the way the code is written, it says that -- right now it says that the money received by a candidate, and this is talking about 3-9-3-4(a), and it says they can use the money to defray any expense reasonably related to the person's or committee's campaign, the language that Angie read before.

2.

Well, I mean, what's being asked of us is to interpret what any expense is, and that's what a court would be asked to do. In court, you wouldn't -- so it's not adding language. It's being asked -- we're being asked to interpret what that language, as written, means, which is what a court would be asked to do and is often asked to do about any other statute. So we are being asked to determine whether any expense -- whether a childcare expense can count as any expense that is reasonably related.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: That's reasonably related.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: So this is asking us to provide an interpretation of what the existing statute says, which is what courts do all the time.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Right. And I guess my point today is it doesn't say that you can't. We're issuing an advisory opinion to create some level of

cover. To me, that is ripe for legislative clarity.

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Section 6.

VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Which they could then do, because like with the court, if the -- well, I don't want to talk about the Rust decision again. But, I mean, if a court decision came out, so if someone challenged -- let's say someone were to challenge the two-primary rule. Let's say one of us were to challenge it because we decided that it makes our lives too difficult. So they go to court, get a court to issue an opinion about, you know, saying, well, that two-primary rule really means X, Y, and Z. It doesn't mean A, B, and C; it means X, Y, and Z. Well, then it's up to -- the legislature can then say, no, court, we don't like what you said, we're going to change our statutes to make it more clear. Just like the attorney general issues advisory opinions about --CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, and I guess that's where I keep going back to how we've worded

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Would you be more comfortable if we struck it?

CHAIRMAN OKESON: No, no, I would not. How did we write it in the voting system? What was our

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     caveat to the General Assembly there?
                        Just a second. Let me find it.
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          MS. WARYCHA:
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Something along those lines
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     would make me far more comfortable.
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          MS. WARYCHA: I've got it.
          MR. KOCHEVAR: I have that one pulled up, so I
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     can read you Section 8 of Advisory Opinion 2022-8.
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     It's the voting system one.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah.
                                   What was that?
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          MR. KOCHEVAR: And I'm pretty sure I copied
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     this verbatim, Section 8 in the voting system one,
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     it says "Section 8: The Commission respectfully
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     recommends to the Indiana General Assembly that the
     policy set forth in this Advisory Opinion be
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     codified by enacting appropriate remedial
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     legislation."
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: So that is how it's worded.
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Thank you.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Does this require a
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     unanimous vote or majority?
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                     Majority.
          MR. KING:
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, I've raised my
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     concerns. If somebody wants to put together a
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     motion, I'll entertain it.
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Well, do we need
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     to -- should I move it and see how it goes and then
     we read it in if it's approved or do we have to
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     read the advisory opinion?
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Can we do a consent
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     to just submit the written copy?
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Brad, what do you think
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     about that?
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          MR. KING: I'm sorry?
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                        If we could do a consent to
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          MS. WARYCHA:
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     adopt.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Does this opinion need to be
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     read into the record?
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          MR. KING:
                     No.
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          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Okay. So I don't
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     have to read it. So I would move to adopt or issue
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     Proposed Advisory Opinion 2024-1 that I distributed
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     to the Commission members during the meeting. It's
     in one of the binders. It's 2024-1.
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I second.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a second.
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     We have a motion to approve Advisory Opinion 2024-1
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     from the Election Commission. We have a second.
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          All those in favor signify by saying "Aye."
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          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye.
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
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          MS. PYLE:
                    Aye.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Aye.
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          The motion for the advisory opinion passes.
     It will be in the record.
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I move that we -- I
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     would move that we consent to allowing the hard
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     copy be put into the record rather than sitting
     here reading it.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Second?
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON: All those in favor.
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          Aye.
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          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
                                  Aye.
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
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          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
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          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            It's in the record.
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          MR. KING: Mr. Chairman, earlier the
     Commission voted to authorize the use of their
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     signature stamps, and we assume that applies in
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     this case as well.
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                                  All in agreement,
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yes.
2.2
     consent.
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          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Yes.
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          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Yes.
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          MS. PYLE: Consent.
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         CHAIRMAN OKESON: Thank you, both. Appreciate
 2
    your time.
         Almost went there. Mr. John, are you ready?
 3
 4
         What was our move? Did we table it?
 5
         MS. PYLE: Yes.
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: How do you pick it up off
 6
    the table?
 7
         MS. WARYCHA: Make a motion.
 8
 9
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Lift it up.
10
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: I don't even remember what
11
    the cause was.
12
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I think it's 2024-24.
         MS. WARYCHA: I believe that's correct.
13
14
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Anderson v. Graves,
15
    right?
16
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: Graves.
17
         MR. JOHN: So, Mr. Graves --
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: Hold on one second. Give us
18
19
    a second.
20
          Is there a motion to pick up Cause 2024-24 off
    the table?
21
2.2
         MS. PYLE: So moved.
23
         CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Second?
24
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second.
25
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: All those in favor signify
```

```
1
     by saying "Aye."
 2.
          VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT:
                                  Aye.
 3
          MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN:
                                   Aye.
 4
          MS. PYLE:
                     Aye.
 5
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                           Aye.
          The "ayes" have it. We're back in business.
 6
 7
          MR. JOHN:
                     So --
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: What did you learn?
 8
          MR. JOHN: Councilor Graves went over to the
 9
10
     Election Board, and I'll have him report back.
11
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
                            Sure. Just one more time
12
     for the record.
13
          MR. GRAVES: Keith Graves, Indianapolis City
14
     Council, K-e-i-t-h, G-r-a-v-e-s.
          Mr. Commissioner, I want to say thank you for
15
16
     being gracious today. We really appreciate this
17
     opportunity.
                            Yeah.
                                   We're anxious.
18
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
          MR. GRAVES: We did find some things out that
19
20
     were more alarming than were additional proof.
21
     Primarily we understand that what we saw on that
2.2
     June date in 2012, that is -- in today's world,
23
     there is about a seven-day delay from getting
     things registered. So when we see something that
24
25
     says June of 2012, back in 2012, there was an
```

influx, a huge influx, of new voters because of the Obama time frame.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Lot of registrations.

2.2

MR. GRAVES: That delay -- because today we're more technologically enhanced, so we may be at a seven-day delay, but then it could be 30 to 60 days to get registrations. So what you see is absolutely not giving us a clear path to proof, and so that was one of the more alarming things.

So we said, hey, can we find the paper documentation and where is that held. And they said, yeah, we do not destroy anything, but we don't know where things are, so we really can't help you.

So I stand here just to say that we have more than proven that she's voted many times, possibly in Indiana many times in primaries. We do see the '16, the '18, and the '20. The question is where those were. We do know that '12, per her testimony. So we did do the effort. They were unable to give us a paper document. So unfortunately --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: So you didn't find anything that would contradict what was on the SVRS?

MR. GRAVES: Right, absolutely. And SVRS is

2018 future item. Prior to that it was something that, in 2012, we were looking for the paperwork. So what I understand is that 2018 is when the reliance on SVRS. Well, it goes back to, I think, '05, but it was the 2018 date that was kind of a stamp in time.

So I think what we really learned, Mr. Chair, is there's a lot of conflicting information and we really can't pinpoint. I want to say that there was, you know, a delay in getting registrations registered for documentation and time stamp purposes.

There is also the COVID year where she did have two residences. I'm her dad and she came home. I definitely was happy about that. We saved a lot of money. She was pursuing her master's degree in Pepperdine in California, so we wanted her home where we could make sure she was safe from the pandemic. So that threw a little monkey wrench in her registration because our family votes Democrat. I am an elected Democratic leader in this city. I've been voting Democrat since the '80s.

So I'm extremely proud of my record. I know where my family's record is. There's no question.

```
1
    We have demonstrated proof that she's voted
    Democrat. She's voted, voted, voted. That's all
 2
 3
     on the documentation that we provided.
          Thank you guys. We really appreciate
 4
 5
     everybody.
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: Would you like to
 6
     cross-examine based on that testimony? You have
 7
     two minutes.
 8
 9
         MS. SHACKLEFORD: I think she just wanted a
10
     statement, not cross.
         MS. ANDERSON: I just wanted a statement.
11
12
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: I think you've already had
13
    your opening allotment of five minutes.
14
         MS. WARYCHA: Yeah.
                               I think --
15
         MS. SHACKLEFORD: Does she get a two-minute
16
    close?
17
         MS. WARYCHA:
                        She gets two minutes to cross.
18
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We've only been doing two
19
    minutes for cross-examination.
20
         MS. SHACKLEFORD: You said she gets a
21
     two-minute rebuttal, right?
2.2
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: There was cross-examination
23
    which was limited to her comments and questions
24
    relative to the testimony provided by Ms. Graves.
25
         MS. SHACKLEFORD: Yes. You get a two-minute
```

1 rebuttal. CHAIRMAN OKESON: It would be a 2. 3 cross-examination, so you have two minutes to ask any questions to Mr. Graves or Ms. Graves relative 4 5 to their testimony. MS. SHACKLEFORD: When you went over the 6 instructions earlier, I wrote them down. You said 7 8 you get a two-minute cross and you get a two-minute 9 rebuttal. 10 CHAIRMAN OKESON: No, they get the rebuttal. 11 MS. SHACKLEFORD: So we don't get a rebuttal? 12 CHAIRMAN OKESON: It's a rebuttal to anything 13 you raise in your cross-examination. 14 MS. ANDERSON: Okay. So I have a question. 15 You said that --16 CHAIRMAN OKESON: I'm just trying to be 17 consistent. 18 MS. SHACKLEFORD: Sure. 19 MS. ANDERSON: -- you have no documentation of 20 her registration in 2012? 21 MR. GRAVES: They could not provide us with 2.2 that paper documentation which indicates -- what 23 you see in your hands is an admission of when it 24 was time stamped, but there is a date that it was

received and there is a delay. Even today there is

25

```
1 | a delay, seven days. But back then it was an
```

- 2 | influx of registrations, and then there was also
- 3 | we're not as advanced as we are now in the
- 4 | technology, so there could have been a 30- or
- 5 | 60-day delay.
- 6 MS. ANDERSON: What I have here in my hand is
- 7 dated 6/19/2012.
- 8 THE REPORTER: Ma'am, I can barely hear you
- 9 back here.
- 10 MS. ANDERSON: So what I have here,
- 11 documentation showing that it was dated with her
- 12 | signature on 6/19/2012.
- MS. GRAVES: Yes, ma'am.
- 14 MS. ANDERSON: Okay. And evidently it was
- posted on 6/27, which is approximately seven days
- 16 after.
- MS. GRAVES: But does it say the date on there
- 18 received?
- MS. ANDERSON: It doesn't say the date
- 20 | received.
- 21 MS. GRAVES: That's all. That's the problem,
- 22 because the date received is not on there, and
- 23 | that's the issue that -- that's purpose of the
- 24 argument.
- 25 CHAIRMAN OKESON: So let me interrupt here.

So I think the two standards we're trying to get to is do we have proof that you voted in two primary elections as a Democrat here in Indiana --

MS. GRAVES: Yes.

2.2

CHAIRMAN OKESON: -- and/or did you secure written permission to qualify you on the ballot from the county chair. And we don't have the latter, correct?

MR. GRAVES: Correct.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: And I think what we did was afford you time to go over to the Marion County clerk's office and see if we could produce any evidence contrary to what we see on the Statewide Voter System, and what I've heard you say is you were unable to do that, for whatever reason.

Correct?

MR. GRAVES: Yes, because they could not produce a document.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: I would like to explain something too. The June 19, which is my birthday, 2012, registration was done online, so that's the date that you actually submitted. This is an online registration form.

And the seven-day period that they were telling you about is a period of pending. So

anybody who files a new voter registration, it pends for seven days, but that's not the day that you submitted it because that day you put on there what date it was. And the deadline to register to vote was actually in April, so they weren't running that far behind. But that's --

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Well, it's almost irrelevant because one's about registration and the other is about proof of voting in primaries.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Right. But I wanted them to understand because this is the whole problem with our whole -- it's so complicated now, and this is what we've come to. It's a hard thing to understand, as your attorney can tell you, I'm sure.

So, yeah, but Mr. Chair is right. Mr. Chair is right. You have to be able to show that you voted.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: For the record, I find absolutely no fault. I believe everything that you're saying, but we need to have some level of evidence that says, you know, hey, we made a mistake, you did vote in these two primaries, here's documentation. That would have been compelling.

1 MS. GRAVES: Sure. If I may.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: Yeah.

MS. GRAVES: I am uncertain as to why the documents there do not reflect my honest voting record, but if the premise of the law is to determine my party affiliation, then, as you can see and based on the numerous amount of boards I serve, community engagement activities I'm in, and just my civic duties alone, you'd be able to see which party I'm aligned with.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: That's absolutely correct, but that's not the premise of the law. The premise of the law is your ballot eligibility is predicated on one of two factors. One is that you can prove you voted in two primaries under the party affiliation of which you subscribe or you got a letter from the chair that says don't worry about it, you're good to go.

MS. GRAVES: And it seems as though the data itself as well as the paper records, it seems as though there hasn't been a good recordkeeping. So if we're relying on the recordkeeping and to show you all that evidence today, it seems as though there's been an issue there, as you can see.

CHAIRMAN OKESON: I'm not in a position to

disagree with you. That might be the case. But we have to go on what consistently we've applied all day long, which is the ability to prove one of those two factors. And your challenger has filled out the proper challenge form and stated that you did not vote in two prior primaries under party affiliation, and near as we can tell, that's a correct assertion.

2.

MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Ms. Graves, I think what gets confused in all of this -- and, again, I'd be home if it weren't for this law. But what gets confusing in all this is that people come in here and think that we get to determine if you are affiliated with a particular party, and that's not what we are allowed to do. All we can do is apply the law, which says you have to have voted in two -- the last two primaries you voted in you voted as -- you pulled a ballot for that party, or that you got a signature of the chair.

You could sit here and show us that you've given millions and millions of dollars to a party, that you've given your child, your life, your dog, everything else to the party, and we still can't say that you are a member of that party. The only thing that the law allows us to do is to make a

```
1
    determination as to whether you satisfy the party
     affiliation requirement by whether you voted in
 2
 3
     those two primaries or you have the signature of
 4
     the chair. That's all. You can show us all kinds
 5
     of things, and certainly the stuff you've shown us,
    you are very active, but we can't take that into
 6
     account. We're very limited. Our vision is like
 7
     this when it comes to that.
 8
 9
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: By no means do I dispute the
10
    party affiliation. That's not the issue.
11
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Right. Yeah, that's
12
    not at issue.
13
         MS. GRAVES: Thank you for your time.
                            Thank you. I appreciate you
14
          CHAIRMAN OKESON:
15
     taking the extra time to go see what you could
    find.
16
          With that in mind, does anyone want to make a
17
    motion?
18
19
         VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: I would move to
20
    uphold the challenge.
21
         CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a second?
22
         MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: And I will second it.
23
    And I hope that you will keep trying.
24
          CHAIRMAN OKESON: We have a motion and a
```

25

second on Cause 2024-24.

1 Any comments, discussion? 2 Hearing none, all those in favor signify by 3 saying "Aye." 4 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 5 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. MS. PYLE: 6 Aye. CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye. 7 The "ayes" have it. The motion carries. 8 The 9 challenge is upheld. The Election Division is 10 directed not to include Chunia L. Graves in the 11 certified list of primary candidates sent to the 12 county election boards and to indicate that the 13 name of this candidate not be put on the ballot. 14 Thank you all for your time. I think with 15 that, I can safely say we've completed our business 16 for the day, and I will accept a motion to adjourn. 17 MS. PYLE: Motion to adjourn. 18 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Is there a second? 19 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Second. 20 CHAIRMAN OKESON: All those in favor signify 21 by saying "Aye." 2.2 VICE CHAIRMAN OVERHOLT: Aye. 23 MS. CELESTINO-HORSEMAN: Aye. 24 MS. PYLE: Aye. 25 CHAIRMAN OKESON: Aye.

```
The "ayes" have it. We are adjourned.
1
                                                     Thank
2
     you all for your time.
          (The Indiana Election Commission Public
3
     Session was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.)
4
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1	STATE OF INDIANA		
2	COUNTY OF HAMILTON		
3	I, Maria W. Collier, a Notary Public in and		
4	for said county and state, do hereby certify that the		
5	foregoing public session was taken at the time and		
6	place heretofore mentioned between 10:00 a.m. and		
7	4:38 p.m.;		
8	That said public session was taken down in		
9	stenograph notes and afterwards reduced to typewriting		
10	under my direction; and that the typewritten		
11	transcript is a true record of the public session.		
12	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my		
13	hand and affixed my notarial seal this 12th day of		
14	March, 2024.		
15			
16	Maria W. Collier NOTARY PUBLIC SEAL STATE OF INDIANA Commission No. NP0693933		
17			
18			
19	My Commission Expires Dec. 5, 2024		
20			
21	My Commission expires: December 5, 2024		
22			
23	Job No. 188366		
24			
25			

Index: \$17,000..2024

**2-2.2-7-7** 106:20 **12(b)(1)** 27:15 \$ **2.7** 32:19 **12(b)(6)** 27:16 **120,000** 218:14 **20** 122:12 171:9 201:2 222:19 **\$17,000** 91:8 242:11,18 299:18 **12:55** 143:17 2000 185:10 ( 12th 75:22 **2001** 275:1 289:13 **13** 38:11 40:4 41:23 42:5 236:19 **(1)** 41:18 **2001-01** 284:18 285:2 **13th** 31:17,23 75:25 168:13 **(2)** 41:21 **2001-1** 283:17 288:3 **14** 21:2,6 26:25 28:13,18 59:4 (a) 23:19,23 24:7 199:5,13 287:5 236:19 **2005** 203:23 232:2 **(b)** 21:5 23:5,19,22 24:5 159:25 **14th** 17:14 19:14,18 24:6 31:2 2005-2006 203:20 231:13 198:24 51:15 52:15 53:3,8,11,17 55:4,11, **2008** 162:23 163:3 200:8 201:3 22 58:24 59:5 74:12 217:24 252:24 **15** 72:11 2010 201:3 **150** 53:20 -a 72:1,7 161:13 2011 253:1 15th 139:1 **-b** 72:1,7 161:13 **2012** 223:15 229:8,18 237:11,19 **16** 222:19 242:10 299:18 -c-o-c-k 161:13 239:17.18.19.20 240:10 241:6.19. 23,25 242:7,9 243:11 298:22,25 **16th** 194:19 -i-e-m 71:25 72:7 300:2 302:20 304:21 **174** 32:15 2013 202:21 203:6,7 0 **17th** 103:19 196:6 219:19 **2014** 254:4 **18** 165:22 209:24 222:19 242:11. **05** 300:5 **2015** 121:23 18 254:24 299:18 **2016** 67:1 200:22 202:20 223:15 **187** 73:5 1 237:3,21,23 243:14 **19** 241:25 254:24 304:20 **2018** 163:8.10 223:15 229:6 **1** 19:22 20:25 21:19,20 23:4 42:21 **1962** 253:9 237:4,21,23 238:5 242:20 244:12, 76:21 78:18 85:14,17 86:7 87:11, 13 300:1,3,5 22 88:7 96:22 168:13 208:13 **197** 31:20 260:16 261:14,16 283:5 287:5 2019 121:23 221:24 1980s 254:12 **1,896** 73:7 **2020** 61:5 146:15 229:6 237:4 **1982** 84:7 242:20 243:25 252:4 255:8 **10** 78:18 169:17 **1993** 23:18.20 24:5 **2021** 57:23 10:00 5:3 1st 73:1 139:5 **2022** 83:4 121:13 122:8 123:12 **10th** 75:3,4 168:15 151:21 170:16 232:12 287:25 **11** 38:10 41:22 42:5 2 288:17 **2022-8** 294:7 **11,000** 179:20 **2** 19:22 20:25 21:19 23:4 86:9 **2023** 6:8,12 9:7 39:13 40:2 **114** 32:16 107:3,14,25 109:10 258:15 134:10,16 213:7 223:15 229:9 261:15,18 282:15,16,17,18,19 117th 31:19 237:8 283:5,6,11 287:5 **11:20** 70:7.8 2023-422 9:5 2,000 32:11 **11th** 85:21 86:3 139:7 140:22 **2023-431** 9:5 **2-2.2-1-16** 107:5 110:23 142:2 **2024** 5:3 40:4 68:15 101:14,17 **2-2.2-2-1** 106:16 **12** 38:10 39:2,10 40:21 41:23 42:5 134:11 135:3 159:19 208:13,18 178:19 214:25 299:19 **2-2.2-2-2** 106:17

Index: 2024-01..4

<b>2024-01</b> 14:2	<b>21</b> 200:24	<b>3-8-1-33</b> 109:2
<b>2024-02</b> 15:6	<b>22</b> 6:7,12 9:7 220:10 260:8 268:4,	<b>3-8-1-6</b> 20:15,16,17 64:8
<b>2024-03</b> 67:16	20	<b>3-8-1-6(a)</b> 19:13
<b>2024-04</b> 70:13	<b>22nd</b> 139:5	<b>3-8-2-11</b> 109:3
<b>2024-05</b> 100:10	<b>23</b> 168:11 172:25 173:11 180:13 220:10 242:13	<b>3-8-2-18</b> 198:24
<b>2024-06</b> 118:2	<b>232</b> 31:20	<b>3-8-2-7</b> 114:7 145:23
<b>2024-07</b> 120:17	<b>24</b> 31:18 195:18	<b>3-8-2-7(4)(a)</b> 219:25
<b>2024-08</b> 127:8 128:1,14 130:4 131:3	<b>25</b> 73:4	<b>3-8-2-7(a)(4)</b> 148:8 157:18 164:16 168:14 184:3 207:16
<b>2024-09</b> 143:23 145:7	<b>27</b> 5:3 73:6	<b>3-8-2-8</b> 72:19
<b>2024-1</b> 295:16,18,21	<b>28</b> 38:9 40:1 41:21 42:8,23 43:20, 25 87:17	<b>3-8-6-1-6(a)</b> 20:2
<b>2024-10</b> 149:24 152:13	<b>29</b> 43:21	<b>3-8-6-6</b> 20:15
<b>2024-11</b> 153:23 155:1	<b>29th</b> 166:17 246:13 247:2	<b>3-9</b> 123:4
<b>2024-12</b> 155:13 156:12	<b>2:10</b> 189:24	<b>3-9-3-4</b> 284:19 286:25 287:1
<b>2024-13</b> 144:5 145:7	2nd 73:3	<b>3-9-3-4(a)</b> 292:4
<b>2024-14</b> 150:11 152:14		<b>30</b> 43:21 77:7 87:18 128:22
<b>2024-15</b> 156:25	3	140:19,25 244:17 245:16 248:17 249:8 266:6 276:6 280:25 299:6
<b>2024-16</b> 157:1	<b>3</b> 17:14 19:14,18 20:12 21:2,6	<b>30-</b> 303:4
<b>2024-17</b> 157:1	23:5,22 24:6,11 26:25 28:13,17 31:2 51:15 52:14 53:3,8 54:15,16,	<b>30-day</b> 140:8
<b>2024-18</b> 157:2 <b>2024-19</b> 157:3	24 55:4,11,21 59:4 120:20 168:22 206:4 207:9,10 260:3 262:3	<b>300-something-thousand</b> 90:5
<b>2024-20</b> 183:19 188:19	283:7,11 286:24 287:5,13	<b>30th</b> 85:19 86:1
<b>2024-21</b> 190:3 192:23	<b>3's</b> 53:20	<b>31</b> 38:9 41:21 42:8,23
<b>2024-22</b> 193:16 205:1	<b>3,200</b> 81:10 94:13,14	<b>31st</b> 210:6
<b>2024-23</b> 205:22 216:6	<b>3,700</b> 81:8 94:12	<b>32</b> 100:13 101:20
<b>2024-24</b> 216:21 297:12,20	<b>3-1-2-10</b> 93:9	<b>3233</b> 196:2 197:11,19
<b>2024-25</b> 153:24 155:1	<b>3-2-7</b> 125:14	<b>34</b> 216:23 217:21,22 218:18
<b>2024-26</b> 157:3	<b>3-5-5-10</b> 137:13	256:17
<b>2024-27</b> 250:14 255:24	<b>3-5-5-6</b> 141:19	<b>356</b> 73:3
<b>2024-28</b> 256:14 257:25	<b>3-6-1-6(a)</b> 19:15	<b>36</b> 39:3,8 40:25
<b>2024-29</b> 258:12	<b>3-7</b> 228:14	<b>37</b> 182:1
<b>2024-30</b> 127:9,13 128:1 129:8	<b>3-7-26.3-35</b> 229:22	<b>38</b> 42:19
131:20	<b>3-8-1</b> 232:22	<b>394</b> 78:2,4,24
<b>2024-31</b> 271:13 272:10	<b>3-8-1-1.1</b> 233:17	<b>3:47</b> 196:7
<b>2026</b> 83:10	<b>3-8-1-1.7</b> 137:10	<b>3rd</b> 73:3
<b>2028</b> 185:25 186:10	<b>3-8-1-14-2</b> 133:25 137:7	4
<b>20th</b> 103:20 104:10 110:4 203:22	<b>3-8-1-2</b> 30:19 232:23	

12.14

**4,500** 72:20 73:8 74:24 75:12 81:10 84:3,4

**4-11-21.5-3-36** 41:17

**4-21.5** 19:4 199:3

**4-21.5-3-12** 38:15 40:22 44:19

**4-21.5-3-6** 38:6

**4-21.5-3-9** 43:4

**4-21.5-3-9(d)** 34:22

40 89:22 200:24

**40s** 203:25

43 31:25

**45** 86:8 87:23

**450** 88:2

**46** 274:5

**46205** 196:3

**463** 73:5

**4:00** 248:8

4th 73:4 184:25

5

**5** 76:13 135:3 144:3,6 150:2 151:7

50 80:23

**500** 72:21 74:24 76:13 87:11,14, 21 96:21 113:10

**57** 31:24

5th 73:4,12 142:19

6

**6** 57:22 68:11 126:11 137:14 205:25 283:12 284:15 285:1 287:19,22 293:21

**6/19/2012** 303:7,12

**6/27** 303:15

**60** 32:16 266:1 299:6

**60-day** 303:5

**67** 33:1

**68** 190:6

**68th** 191:19

**6th** 32:4,12,23,25 46:12 52:16 53:23 60:6 61:17 62:19 64:3 73:5 206:3 207:5 208:19,20

7

**7** 101:14 134:10,16

7,000 84:4

**71** 81:10

749 73:4,12

**7th** 73:5 140:23 142:1,19 167:7 168:12 176:4 179:2,6

8

**8** 39:13 118:5 288:2 294:7,11,12

80s 300:23

**82** 84:7 250:17 252:3

88 73:6

8th 73:6 103:7 167:6

9

**9** 169:17 221:24

**92** 75:7

**95** 14:5

**96** 193:18

**97** 127:13,15 133:4 134:9

**99** 37:1

**9:47** 194:19

9th 73:6 168:16 192:8 268:10

P

**A(7)** 114:8

**A-L-I** 34:13

**A-N-D-E-R-S-O-N** 217:20

**a.m.** 5:3

abeyance 27:22

abide 11:1

abilities 276:15

**ability** 44:10 82:4 214:16 226:21 269:1 275:21 284:23 307:3

**able** 47:19 61:8 91:7 92:10 94:7 170:10,24 185:13 195:19 196:21 197:16 222:16,17 244:21 262:19 263:10 267:3,5 268:16 279:3 280:15 305:17 306:9

**about** 7:13 11:9 19:9 20:9 25:4 27:6 29:3 32:8,10,19 36:10 37:19 38:17,19 39:11 42:20,25 44:1 46:9,17 52:17 57:14 58:25 64:3, 20,25 70:3 80:17 81:7,19 82:13, 24 83:1,8 84:1 85:14 87:17 88:2 92:8 94:12 96:1,20 98:14 106:14, 21 110:15 114:3,19 124:12 125:25 147:19,21 148:19 163:1 166:6 168:4 169:10 173:6,21,23 174:5 175:25 176:5 178:1 181:13 182:14 186:6 195:21 196:23,24 197:1 199:18 200:5 204:8 207:2 209:25 210:5 214:16,18,20 219:19,20 224:8 233:11,24 234:4 236:19 237:3 238:23 240:19 241:11 242:3,8,22 243:11,14 246:22 247:4 261:21 263:9 264:5 283:9 284:4,20 288:9 289:13,14 291:6,9,24 292:4,15 293:5,11,18 295:7 298:23 300:15 304:25 305:8,9 306:17

**above** 124:17

absence 119:4

**absentee** 224:20 231:10,13,15 232:1 235:20 236:4 237:13,14,16, 23 241:17 244:20,23

absolute 222:10

**absolutely** 18:22 21:15 72:6 78:11 184:20 222:4 299:8,25 305:20 306:11

abundantly 148:22

**accept** 48:9 110:16,19 114:23 115:2 116:6 154:19 188:2 198:21

acceptable 114:15

**accepted** 60:13 72:25 73:11 92:25 105:17 111:23 114:20 115:6,24 142:10

accepting 115:16 116:4 210:17

**access** 63:20 99:19 135:16 140:10 178:18 179:14 200:3

202:1,12 213:18 214:6 215:13 236:21 275:14 286:9

accompanying 217:5

**according** 137:9 218:6,8 259:8 267:2

account 33:23

Accountability 32:5

**accurate** 79:8 147:6 204:6 220:21

accurately 108:2 125:19

achieve 94:7

acknowledge 119:7

acknowledged 94:11

acknowledgment 262:4

acquainted 197:7

acquired 185:8

acquitted 52:20

**across** 86:23 87:3 97:1,20 214:23 222:8 254:15

act 19:4 42:11 173:7 199:13

acted 173:8,9,10 290:5

acting 208:6

**action** 43:13 47:12 61:16 62:8,10 67:6 246:8,20 283:19,22 284:5,8 285:8

actions 9:6 60:6 64:2

activities 286:19 287:14 306:8

activity 39:18 275:5 287:3,11

acts 38:16

**actual** 26:25 94:1,4 191:8 219:23 240:10 281:10 289:16

actuality 37:8

actually 55:2 60:9 66:7 77:21 78:5 93:4 95:19 122:4 125:23 135:12 138:4,23 147:18 153:16, 20 165:2,21 167:19 203:6 230:15 233:7 249:11 260:6,8 262:14 266:14,18 283:6,11 304:22 305:5

**add** 17:20,21 23:5,22 24:4,5 46:3 68:21 108:11 115:10 162:3

added 71:12

adding 24:24 281:17 292:11

**addition** 71:9 100:18 108:11 146:2 208:22 256:25

**additional** 11:23 12:4,14,22 34:18 52:6 77:6,9 133:1 204:13 245:2 298:20

address 34:17 39:25 56:8 94:20 95:12 134:8,17,21 135:9,12,14 136:12 139:25 140:3 141:12 171:5 186:13 196:1 197:21 199:20 261:3,11 267:6 283:20 289:25

**addressed** 27:2,13 34:16 55:10 262:11.15 267:4

addresses 51:16

adequate 114:3 199:14

administer 227:24

administration 7:4

administrative 19:3 22:1 35:3 38:15,17 40:15,19 41:14,19 42:7, 11 43:5,11 66:4 106:20,22,23 107:4,12,20 108:15 278:24 291:21

**admission** 171:21 186:7 188:16 199:14 302:23

admit 204:12

**adopt** 13:13 161:3 162:1 180:16 295:10,15

adopted 14:25 279:21 289:5

adopting 53:17

adoption 9:1,8 25:4

adult 276:4

advanced 303:3

advantage 177:6

**advice** 162:4,7 192:1 195:21 245:1

advise 67:6 288:9

advisory 272:14,17,21 273:1 274:8,10,18 275:7 277:6,12 279:13,16,20 280:4,7 281:5 282:22 283:15,17,18,24,25 284:3, 9,18 285:7 287:24 288:3,6,15,19, 22 289:4,11,17,20 290:1,14 291:2,6,7,9,10,16 292:25 293:18 294:7,14 295:3,16,21 296:3

advocate 33:14

advocated 33:24

**AES** 139:24

affect 268:20

affected 262:25 263:1

affecting 32:13

**affidavit** 74:22 78:13 79:4 172:17 265:2 267:11

**affiliated** 39:20 148:11 176:20 220:3 307:14

**affiliation** 17:3 145:22 148:9 159:15,17 160:12 168:21 185:19 191:5 206:16 207:11,14,17 212:21 218:22 220:2,8 236:10 306:6,16 307:7

affiliations 39:23

affirm 7:11 57:21 119:11

affirmation 279:15

**affirmed** 57:21 149:17 279:19 282:8

affirming 142:21

**afford** 83:19 263:15 273:15 304:11

**afforded** 56:5 97:23,25 164:7 177:2 264:10

**African-american** 83:5,11 91:14 93:6 94:24 95:1,16 96:5,17 97:4 98:13

**after** 7:10 11:16 14:5 26:24 27:3 31:23 33:13,16 37:19 53:11,20,23 61:4 62:3 84:17 101:12 110:1,5,8, 18 133:23 172:14 192:2 196:14 204:3,4 225:11 242:1 253:17 257:3 277:18 303:16

afternoon 147:11 206:21 221:9

afterwards 62:5

again 5:12,15 10:4 19:25 28:19 31:24 41:13 54:21,23,25 61:2 70:16 72:1,8 73:9 78:22 79:10 83:10 86:10,13,18 87:2 89:20 90:1,4 91:10,11 96:25 97:14 99:1 104:16 115:13 142:21 148:21 150:12 151:25 169:21 171:6 186:2 206:9,11,15 225:12 233:20, 24 237:23 262:5 275:19 276:20 293:5 307:10

Index: against..an

**against** 12:1 13:7 31:12,21 35:4 45:25 52:12 53:9 57:24 68:4 74:9 121:14 151:6 167:14 185:1 186:21 187:21 195:6 218:4 231:1 252:2

age 142:9

agencies 42:16

agency 43:24 138:21,22

**agenda** 11:1 14:1 15:5 70:11 248:23,25 272:20 277:3

**ago** 38:24 42:13,14 72:11 81:1 96:6 236:22 242:4

**agree** 24:13 45:10 63:15 67:9,10 108:10 110:11 123:1 142:17,20, 24 154:13 171:13 175:11 176:24 177:16 214:20 260:22,23

agreed 8:8 112:3

agreeing 30:16

agreement 8:9 141:7 296:21

agreements 7:25

**Ah** 147:10

**ahead** 10:9 28:1 30:15 34:21 35:22 36:2 104:4 106:25 165:7 187:9 191:14 205:25 251:24 272:16 290:3

aid 31:13 32:20

aimed 62:17

**AI** 172:18

alarming 298:20 299:9

albeit 165:14 177:4

Alexandra 132:18

**Ali** 18:8 34:12 133:21

alias 122:8

aligned 306:10

all 6:20 7:16 8:17 9:15 10:17 12:20 13:18 14:19 16:1,11 20:15, 20 21:13 22:16,18 26:9,19 27:1 29:22 33:24 34:4 35:16 37:2,6,9 39:16,17 41:16 43:1,5,23 44:1,12 46:8,13 47:24 48:7,22 54:7 55:7 57:2,8 60:20,23 61:24 62:13 63:15 64:9 65:12,24 67:13 68:1 69:19 70:10 72:16 73:15 75:1 77:14,25 80:10 81:6,22 82:11

84:16 85:3.6 86:13 87:14.15 90:13 91:17 92:5.13 94:10 99:21 101:12 105:3 106:2 108:23 115:10 118:19 119:24 123:10,18 126:19 128:3 130:18 131:8.22 133:2,23 135:15,24 136:1 138:24 139:3 140:1 143:1 144:7 145:10 149:10 150:21 151:22 152:16 154:4 155:3 156:14 157:15 158:13 159:6 160:13 161:8 162:24 164:8 167:9 170:10,13,23 173:4 174:12,17,18,19 175:4,20 179:22 180:2 182:14 183:3 188:19 189:18 192:7.25 193:13 199:1 201:15 205:1 208:20 209:14 210:3,12 212:16 214:22 215:12,16 216:6 222:3,25 223:25 224:17 228:11 230:2 231:16 239:4 241:8,9 242:23 248:16 249:2 252:25 254:19 256:1 257:14 258:2 261:16 263:21 265:9,24 266:13 268:22 270:1,24 272:4 273:9,19,25 274:22 280:13, 15,18 288:15 289:11 290:1,19 292:22 295:23 296:11,21 297:25 301:2 303:21 306:23 307:2,10,12,

allegation 232:14

allegations 191:9 195:6 206:18

**alleged** 52:15 167:12,19,20 232:10,11

Allen 121:22 165:23 254:3

allotment 301:13

**allow** 11:23 12:14,21 54:4 56:22 104:3 275:2 285:3,17

**allowed** 57:17 104:13 268:9 290:24 307:15

**allowing** 276:7,17,20 278:7 296:6

allows 109:23 307:25

almost 186:5 297:3 305:7

alone 41:19 63:14 115:21 306:9

**along** 58:3 71:4 91:15 97:6 100:17,20 118:10 121:1 128:15, 23 155:23 157:16 160:8 190:25 192:5 193:23 253:15 294:3

**already** 30:18 52:10,23 131:16 180:13,14 190:16 196:23 202:9 241:2 282:20 288:21 301:12

also 5:9 23:12 26:18 28:11 33:3, 12 34:13 61:13 64:22 68:12 70:25 71:13 78:3 83:19 84:3 86:9 87:16 89:6,16,17 90:8,15 91:8 92:6 94:20 109:12 114:14 119:15 121:1,25 123:19 124:6,7,16,17,19 125:8 127:8,13 129:4,8 132:19 139:23 144:4,5 153:6 172:1 173:5,13 178:13 183:25 184:3 185:16 191:10 192:4,10,12 194:8, 10,13 196:13 210:16 217:11 220:16 221:1 229:19 245:14 250:25 251:16 264:5,14 282:9 286:21,23 300:13 303:2

alternative 282:22

alternatively 29:6

although 117:17 142:2 241:17

**always** 47:6 147:20 174:15 225:2 242:5 262:21

**am** 24:23 25:8 61:2 62:23 63:2,7 70:3 72:16 74:4,6 89:5,23 90:13 91:14 102:1 113:24 121:13 122:10 143:16 146:25 147:13 184:13 207:1,15 211:15 217:20, 22 218:3 225:20,22 266:16 267:10,12,13 280:3 300:21 306:3

ambiguously 274:24

**amend** 23:23 110:2 268:9,14 281:22 282:7 289:10

amended 23:18,21 24:3

**amendment** 17:14 19:15,18 24:6,7 31:2 51:15 52:15 53:3,8, 11,17 55:4,11,22 58:24 59:5 185:14 219:20 278:12

amendments 25:5 110:16

America 63:5

American 60:11 63:5

amongst 92:2 233:22

amount 13:9 306:7

an 13:7 15:22 17:4 24:14,15,19 26:18 31:7,9,21 35:6,16 36:8 37:3 38:7,17 39:8 40:15 41:18,19,25 43:11 44:10 45:3 55:4 57:23 60:4, 10,14,17 63:5 68:12 70:24,25 72:10,13 75:5,17 77:6,9 80:24 82:15 83:21 84:17 91:14 92:21 93:15 98:23 100:17 103:9 104:19 105:12 107:16 110:14 116:10

Index: and..announce

122:8 127:15 128:23 129:5 134:5 141:19 142:8 144:19.24 155:19. 23 160:5 161:9 163:3,17 164:17, 25 165:3,9,25 167:16 168:21 173:18 177:1,9 180:18 181:1,6 185:19 186:7,17,18 190:8,17 194:9 196:21 199:9,13 203:22 206:9,15 217:10 219:9,16 221:23 222:9 226:5 228:1 230:10,12,13 231:10,13,14,15 234:13 235:19 236:20 237:9,25 238:10 241:22 243:5 244:22 246:6 251:20 253:20 257:1 260:3 261:13 262:13 265:2 267:11 270:4 273:1. 13 274:8,10,18 275:6 277:24 278:12 279:11 280:6,7 281:4,19, 21 282:22 283:25 284:9 286:14, 21 287:11 289:20 290:1 291:6,9, 16 292:21,25 293:11 298:25 300:21 302:23 303:1 304:23 306:24

and 5:8,11,12,16,20 6:2,11,13 7:10,14,24 8:2,9,14 9:7 10:5,9,23, 25 11:1,5,11,12,20 12:7 13:10,24 14:11,25 15:12,22 16:18,19 17:12,16 18:2,23 19:3,4,10,15,19, 20 20:1,6,11,14 21:4,6,10 22:12, 16,17,21,24 23:4,9,11,19,21 24:1, 22,23 25:2,5,9,11,17,24 26:6,8, 17,22,25 27:1,5,16 28:1,2,3,21 29:4,6,8,13 30:7 31:4,24 32:3,13, 14,16,18,21 33:1,8,13,15,17,19, 20,21,23 34:11,13,20 35:1,3,8,14, 16,22 36:7,10,11,20,22,25 37:3,4, 5,6,9,10,12,13,17,20,21 38:9,13, 16 39:5,9 40:7,16,24 41:16,17,21 42:1,5,11 43:4,6,14,16,20,21 44:1,8,11,19,21 45:7 46:5,8,11, 13,15,20 47:3,14,18 48:6,16 49:23,25 50:6,9,11,15,17 51:3,11, 13,22 52:14,17,20,22 53:1,15 54:21 55:2,13 56:7,14,15 57:13, 20,21,24 58:25 59:7 60:1,3,8,9, 14,15,19,24 61:1,7,9,12,15,18,22, 24 62:3,5,8,10,14,17,19,20,24 63:5,6,10,11,18,22 64:15,17,22, 24 65:7,11,21 66:10,15 67:22 68:17 70:18 71:11,12,19 72:9,15, 16,20 73:6,10,20,23 74:13,22 75:2,14,16,24,25 76:2,8,12,18 77:22 78:3,6,22 79:10,15,18,19, 22,23 80:16,19,23 81:3,15,17,22 82:10,14,15,23 83:4,7,10,16,23, 24 84:14,16 85:18,21,24 86:1,2,3, 4,15,18,19,21 87:5,16 88:11 89:1, 5,6,7,9,12,14,16,17,18,23 90:6,7,

8,9,12,13,23 91:8,13,14,16 92:3, 5,7,10,13,20,25 93:1,8,11,12,18, 24,25 94:5,16,20,22,25 95:4,15 96:3,7,13,21 97:16,17 98:11,15, 17,22,23,24 99:16 100:5,22,24 101:13,23 102:4,7,16 103:9,10, 16,24,25 104:2,4,7,13,15,19,20, 22,23 105:3,13,20,21,22,25 106:1,2,20 107:5 108:6,8,11,13, 17 109:2,6,12,14,17,19,22 110:2, 6 112:12,16,24 113:1,5,8,18,20, 21 114:2,6 115:2,17,20,25 116:2, 18 117:22 118:12,21,22,23 119:15,24 120:9 121:1,15,18,23, 25 122:22 123:4,8,9,12 124:4,20 125:3,13,18,19,20,21 126:7,17 127:4,13,25 128:1,17,19,22,24 129:1 130:9,16 131:5,20 132:17, 19,21,23 133:3,5,12,14,15 134:6, 11,14,17,20,24 135:6,9,17,24 136:14,17,20,23 137:13,19,25 139:6,8,14,24,25 140:7,13,23,24 141:15 142:1,7,9,11,19 143:1,15 144:9,12,22,23 145:7 146:7 147:1,13,22,25 148:3,12 149:20 150:6,11 151:5,12,14,19,22 152:4,12 153:1,6,7,23 154:4,12 155:1 156:12 157:3,20 158:12,21, 23,24,25 159:3,22,25 160:5,6,10, 14,15,17 161:3,11,14,20 162:1, 10,14,19,21,25 163:7,15,20 164:3,18 165:1,7,8,12,15,18,24 166:2,4,8,18,20,22,25 167:3 168:4,5,6,10,19,24 169:2,6,8,21, 22,25 170:13,20 171:4,8,15,22 172:7,11,24 173:3,7,13,19,20,25 174:4,5,8 175:4,10,18,19,24 176:6,14,16,21,25 177:3 178:1,4, 6,13,14,23 179:4,17,18,21,23,24 180:19,22 181:2,6,10,11,12 182:15,16,17,25 183:14,25 184:2, 5,8,16,18 185:14,15,17,20 186:3, 9,13,18,20 187:1,9,14,19 188:2, 19 189:3,24 190:12,14,16,25 191:7,15,24,25 192:1,2,3,8,10,12, 23 193:10,13 194:2,4,8,11 195:9, 18,20 196:8,20,22 197:7,8,11,12, 15,22 199:21,22,23 200:1,4,9,21, 22,24,25 201:3,4,9,10,22,23 202:3,4,5,15,23 203:8 204:16,19 205:1,11,14,20,21,22 206:1,2,6,8, 9,12,17,21 208:8,14 209:1,14,19 210:9,14,23 211:1,2,5,10,11,13, 14,15 212:5,16,21,22 213:5 214:25 215:1,10,21 216:6,16 217:8,10,20 218:1,9,15 219:7,9,

21,23,24 220:10,13,15,22 221:7, 9,21 222:2,7,9 223:6,10,16 224:14,20,24 225:2,7,10,12 226:7,14 227:4,5,14,24,25 228:22,25 229:6,8,11,23,25 230:12,16 231:6,7,11,14,16,21 232:1,6 233:2,5,6,7,13,24 234:1, 13,18 235:13 236:4,12,16,17 237:2,4,8,11,21,23 238:3 239:10, 16,22 240:1,2,8,21,24 241:1,6,9, 23 242:2,7,9,11,18,20,24 243:3,8, 12,14 244:6,25 245:2,5,6,7,11,12, 13,15,18 246:1,11,13,22 247:7, 13,16,21,22,23 248:3,4,13 249:12,13,18,22,25 250:5,7,8,18, 21,23,25 251:6,19,20,21,22 252:4,5,25 253:2,5,6,10,11,13,17, 19 254:1,5,17,21,24 255:2,23 256:11,22 257:9,11,18,19,25 259:8 260:5,23 261:10,20,21 262:8,11,12,16,18,23 263:3,4,8, 10 264:4,11,18,19,23 265:1,8 266:11,14,15,17,21 267:1,4,10, 11,12,13,21,24 268:13,14,17 269:1,10,14 270:6,7,9,10,15 271:8,16,18 272:3,16,17,23 274:1,5,7,10,17,23 275:3,6,11,12, 13,21 276:4,13,15,19,20,22 277:2,4,7,20,21,22,23 278:8 279:3,4,6,7,9,11,25 280:4,6,10, 13,14,17,18,21,22,24,25 281:3,4, 7,17 282:4 283:7,9,11,12,16,20, 22,25 284:4,22 285:1,4,6,15,16, 20,21 286:8,10,13,18,20 287:2,3, 5,13 288:4,13,22,25 289:1,7,8,18, 21 290:2,3,4,9,15,20 291:3 292:1, 4,9,14,23 293:13,14,19 294:10 295:1 296:19 298:10 299:8,11,18, 25 300:8,11,14 301:23 302:8,25 303:2,14,22 304:7,10,12,14,24 305:4,8,13 306:7,8,19,22 307:4,5, 7,10,13,14,20,21,23

and/or 304:5

**Anderson** 86:25 216:20 217:17, 18,19 249:23 297:14 301:11 302:14,19 303:6,10,14,19

Andrea 272:23 274:4

**anger** 61:15

Angie 5:11 292:7

**Anne** 230:11,13

announce 245:12

Index: annual..are

annual 254:9

annually 168:24

another 46:20 83:11 121:4 123:16 137:15 143:16 168:3 201:1 220:20 237:8 244:17 247:24 257:4 266:1

**answer** 50:21 96:21 123:16 133:15 134:14 178:24 200:17 206:4 207:9 244:25 266:5

answering 11:25 266:3

anticipate 173:5

anticipated 107:1 172:25 173:4

anxious 298:18

any 5:18 6:19 7:3 8:15 9:14 10:11,16 13:3,16 14:17,18 15:23 20:23 22:12 23:14,25 25:5,18,20 31:5,6,8,10 34:7 35:4 38:23 39:14 40:17 41:3 44:7,9 52:4 53:25 54:6 55:19 56:11,25 57:1,17 59:19 63:20 65:7 69:16 76:17 77:13 79:1 89:15 94:25 96:14 97:17 98:5 99:20 110:19 112:13 116:9 119:21 122:12,23 123:3 126:6,9 128:2 130:17 131:7,21 133:10,15 134:14 139:18,19 140:1 142:16 145:9 148:12 149:9 150:20 151:24 152:7,15 155:2 156:13 161:1 162:15 163:1 164:18 167:15 168:8 169:16 170:18 172:6 175:13 181:12,24 183:1 188:4,8,15 190:23 192:24 194:21 195:20 202:17,24 203:1,10 204:24 208:9 209:5 213:8 214:6 215:18 216:4 220:11 229:11,20 230:3 231:1 234:6 242:5 245:18 247:1 252:7 255:4,25 258:1 259:15,20 270:23 278:5 279:19, 20 282:11 283:24 284:5,8 287:7 288:5 292:5,9,15,16,17 302:4 304:12

**anybody** 112:25 204:14 211:13 214:11 225:25 263:15 305:1

anymore 84:10

**anyone** 7:2 34:25 45:3 54:14,23, 25 59:11,13 88:15 119:4 122:15 141:9 149:2 188:7 192:16 208:6 223:20 234:9 253:11 254:15 255:16 270:18 275:25

**anything** 16:14 17:20 23:15 42:22 46:3,6,7 54:12 62:6,11 65:8

67:24 68:20,21 70:20 80:11 86:23 92:12 95:13,17 106:9 116:8 125:9 138:3,11 162:16 163:24 166:5 177:17 197:16 212:15 219:1,19 233:24 234:7,9 236:7,9,25 237:19 243:17 244:22 247:4,18 252:8 266:24 267:8 275:13 278:5 280:23 289:19 299:12,23 302:12

anytime 209:12 231:19

**anyway** 39:25 64:16,17 94:7 130:10 175:5 238:24 278:3

**anywhere** 21:2 106:23 171:23 213:23

**AOPA** 38:9 66:18 70:6 245:10 247:5,15,17,19 249:20

**AP** 162:14

apartment 138:22 139:15

apologies 135:23 273:7 276:22

**apologize** 20:7,17 25:6 40:12 47:18 66:10 143:20 153:7 166:25 191:23 260:13 262:12

apparently 69:11 111:8 220:21

appeal 44:10 167:5

**appear** 13:4 69:6 83:12 97:9 186:5 197:13 202:19 250:22

**appearance** 68:12 71:1,10,20 129:5,21 155:19 190:9,16,17 194:9 199:11 205:15 206:9 217:10 250:20 251:1,20

appearances 157:22

appeared 129:15,19

**appearing** 55:6 190:21 206:10, 13

appears 91:9 101:24 119:8

appellate 167:9 170:12

applaud 25:24 26:18

apple 72:1,8 161:13

apples 212:4

applicable 30:22 140:17

application 95:8 113:4 159:15

**applied** 94:24 170:15,21,22 307:2

applies 20:20 22:18 39:5 94:2

148:12 160:12,13 185:15 220:4 296:19

**apply** 20:13 24:10 28:15,18,20 44:1 54:16,21 55:22 59:6 97:1 113:5 165:16 182:9 199:4 307:15

applying 94:23 97:15

appoint 47:19 48:1

**appointed** 51:11 210:6,13,21 213:24 221:4 279:11

appointees 36:13

**appointment** 60:13 210:9,15,23 254:15

**appreciate** 9:20 25:23 49:17 57:18 63:10 67:12 73:22 120:15 149:22 162:4,6 181:11 202:7 259:18 263:16 274:1 275:16,22, 23 279:23 297:1 298:16 301:4

appreciated 248:15

approached 159:11

**appropriate** 172:12 195:19 248:19 284:21 286:14 294:15

**appropriately** 16:12 26:24 27:2 71:23 105:7

appropriateness 41:12

approval 6:7,14 7:23 213:4

**approve** 9:10 64:2 295:21

**approved** 7:1 189:1 274:15 295:2

approximately 81:8 122:11 168:13 303:15

April 305:5

arbiter 240:2

are 5:5,18 7:1,12 8:7,23 9:7 13:24 18:24 19:3 21:13 25:7 26:18 27:6 32:2 33:17 36:13,17,22 37:13 41:16 42:6,18,22 43:21 44:23 45:8,14,15 49:13 50:2,5 51:10,11, 22 53:1 55:19 58:11,19 60:21 61:1,4,18 63:13 65:1 68:8 72:15 74:2,5,20,22 75:14 76:6 77:21 78:6,17,20 80:20 87:2,18 89:3,6 90:11 92:5,7 93:21 94:7,8 95:2,15 97:10,15 105:12 107:13,16 109:14 110:16 111:4,6,14 114:3 115:1,2,19 118:19,23 121:20 122:3 123:23,24 127:16,17 128:9

130:23 132:17 135:20 141:6 144:13 145:16 148:3 150:4.6 151:2 154:10,11 157:15 158:18 159:6 160:11 161:19 163:6 164:8, 11 165:15 166:19.21 171:9 173:13 174:1 175:22,25 176:16 178:8 179:19 183:11 184:1 188:17 195:14 197:19 202:20 217:12 222:16,17,20 224:17,19 225:19 227:4 231:5 239:7,10 240:2 249:17 250:2 253:13 254:19,24 256:20 257:14 264:19 274:9,10,17,24 275:11,24 276:3 278:16 279:2 280:19 282:12 287:16 288:7 291:23 292:15 297:3 299:13 303:3 307:13,15,24

area 25:7 86:10

**aren't** 36:6 58:15 84:9 111:4 132:4 195:11 213:12

**argue** 219:16,18,20 226:22 230:6 240:15

**argued** 211:14

arguing 44:19 214:12,15

argument 20:11 26:25 27:1,15, 23 28:12,16 34:17,21 49:21,24 54:18,22 56:5 59:1 165:24 166:13 169:6 171:3 178:22 179:5 260:3 303:24

**arguments** 24:9 35:11 55:1 81:25 170:12 171:9 173:6 176:22 181:18 211:4 219:20 264:3

**around** 38:14 49:23 163:2 165:14 177:24 282:11

**arrived** 243:19

**article** 19:22 20:25 21:19 23:4 26:25 28:13,18 36:4,8 38:20 39:11,13 40:1,6 46:11 59:4 60:5

articles 52:12

**as** 8:11 10:23 12:13 18:9 19:13 21:7,25 23:24 24:17 31:7,8,9 33:4 34:25 35:3,6 38:4,6,7,14 39:5,7 40:14 41:3,9,19,20 42:2,11,25 44:7 46:19 47:6 50:19,24 51:4,8 53:4,21 59:6 60:10,13,18,21 61:1, 8,15,25 62:4,15 63:5,16 64:10,11, 24 68:8,14,16 71:25 72:1,6,7,9, 22,25 74:18 75:1,7 76:5,21 78:21 84:15 89:23 90:19,24 91:16,17 92:3,8 94:23 96:18 102:10,12 105:14 107:21 108:19 109:9,12,

16 110:18,19 112:16,20 114:15 115:14 116:6 117:16 118:12.13 120:25 121:6,21 122:7 123:7,8,9, 21 124:14,21,24 125:16 128:18, 19 131:16 132:25 133:16.23 134:1,11 137:7,10,13,19 138:21 141:25 142:20 144:11 145:23,25 146:1,10,12,19 147:8 148:8 150:4,7,15 151:11,13,19 152:6 155:19 156:1 157:19,22,25 159:18,20 160:4 161:9,12,13 162:18 163:3 164:13,25 165:10, 12,16,19 166:19,21,22 170:15,20 173:15,24,25 175:14,22,24 176:10 177:22 178:5,7 179:15 180:10 181:23,24 182:13 184:4 185:1,13 186:4,6,7,15 187:1 190:11 191:3,8,17 192:5 193:24 194:4 199:9 200:2,4 201:16 202:3 203:22 205:17 206:7,15 207:7,17 208:5,10 210:6,14,15,17 212:23 214:3,16 218:2,5,11,12,16 220:9, 24 221:5,6 224:21 225:9 226:8 228:6 230:5,7 232:9,15,21 236:14 238:11 240:5,24 241:1 242:11 246:3 251:15,21 252:4,21 258:24 259:5,7 260:3,7,8,13,16 261:5,15, 19 262:1,3,6,9 264:14,16,24 267:23 268:4,9,20,25 269:8 275:1 277:3,5,6,8,23 278:11 279:21 281:12,16 283:22 284:18 285:24, 25 287:6 288:20,24 289:18 290:23 292:13,17 296:20 303:3 304:3 305:14 306:3,6,19,20,23,24 307:7,18

## as-applied 270:4

**aside** 124:16 125:8 138:16 170:8 288:21

**ask** 11:24 22:13,14 37:15 58:2 62:10 64:15 79:24 89:7 98:5 111:22 140:21 147:22 160:14 197:24 227:3 234:18 236:17 244:24 246:23 259:12 265:8 266:20 269:10,13 285:20 302:3

**asked** 33:10 52:18 57:12 85:24 96:20 104:20 111:19 125:20 134:16 135:7 153:11 169:21 172:7 197:7 200:9,21 201:14 208:7 285:4 292:8,10,12,14,15

**asking** 45:4 52:9 83:21 91:17 92:4 111:15 113:10 122:10 189:14 225:13 228:3,7 232:7 235:1 245:11 257:2 266:13 268:2,

8 277:5 278:17 292:20

asks 52:21 53:5

**aspects** 133:15

assaulted 33:5,14

assaults 32:15

**Assembly** 21:5 23:1 28:14 64:15 101:21 107:19 134:2 214:3 278:13 279:15,18 282:9 284:6 285:21 288:11,16,21 294:1,13

asserted 171:14

**assertion** 79:24 169:24 199:18 307:8

assertions 195:8

assigns 50:16

assist 276:11

assistance 281:8

associate 72:10 176:3 185:18

association 185:14

**assume** 47:23 48:2 73:16 181:9 289:13 296:19

**assumed** 103:16 104:23 105:6

**assuming** 40:3 167:20

assuredly 219:7

**at** 5:3,4 9:6 16:1,2 19:6 21:4 23:21 24:21 28:1 32:2,15,18 35:18 37:8 38:6 39:7 40:6 41:15, 17 42:12,13 43:23 44:12,18 45:9 48:3 49:24 52:2 53:13 56:1 60:10, 11 61:9,21 63:20 64:7,18 66:12 70:7,8 72:5 73:13,18 76:23 78:12, 15 79:2 81:17 82:21,23 91:25 94:3,16 95:19 96:12,21,23 103:7, 11,18 104:11,21,24 105:3,21 106:4,8,16,17 107:24 108:22 113:10 115:20 116:3 118:20 119:9 128:13,22 133:8 134:4 135:21 138:17 139:1,8,21 141:12, 22,24 142:19 143:17 144:20 162:13,14 163:7,8 168:13,16,24 169:16 173:15,17 177:13 181:22 186:19 187:15 189:24 192:7 194:19 197:19 199:12 200:22 201:14 211:17,21,23 212:16 215:12 219:14,23 222:3 223:19 224:20 225:9 226:14,15,19,25 227:20 228:11,18,20 229:1,5 230:14 231:22 233:2,19,21,25

Index: athlete..Barack

234:3 235:3,14 237:2,3 238:3 239:4,14 242:2,23 243:4 244:6,20 245:15 246:24 247:3,7 248:3,8 254:9,22 255:12 260:4 261:20,23 262:15,23 266:11,14,15,20 269:7 270:9 275:7 276:5 277:19,21 278:3 280:17 281:4 282:8 284:18, 20 289:11 291:17 299:5

athlete 224:11 athletic 255:1 attach 60:7

**attached** 36:4 114:10 120:25 128:16,17,24 181:22 185:6 193:23 194:1 207:25 208:10 258:20

**attachment** 70:24 71:4 100:18 128:23 155:23

attachments 15:12 67:22 70:18

attack 32:14,25 attempted 254:5 attempts 25:24

attend 286:8

attendance 144:8 248:2

attended 162:24 attention 111:13

**attorney** 124:15 158:22 164:25 168:2 170:5 190:17 196:21 202:4 253:5,7 293:17 305:14

attorney-client 197:6

**attorneys** 21:14 45:5 61:12 132:5 157:22 174:1 249:12

audience 36:5 250:21

**auditor** 212:13

**authority** 43:21,22,23 50:10,22 268:13,16 279:3 291:1,2,5,16,22

authorization 11:19

**authorize** 54:13 247:18 296:18

authorized 11:19 214:6.9

authorizes 202:5

automatically 253:25

Autumn 14:3

available 133:2,24 135:14

202:20,25 252:19 253:9 268:23

avenue 148:5 269:6

**aware** 36:14,16 38:25 61:13 73:17 89:3,5,7,15,17 90:13 186:8 221:12 227:4 283:24

awareness 222:17

**away** 33:19 210:21 224:16 225:13 234:16

**Aye** 6:21,22,23,24,25 8:18,19,20, 21,22 9:15,16,17,18,19 10:18,19, 20,21 13:19,20,21,22,23 14:20, 21,22,23,24 26:10,11,12,13,14 29:23,24,25 30:1 48:23,24,25 54:8,9,10 57:3,4,5,6,7,9,10 65:13, 14,15,16 69:20,21,22,23,24 77:14,15,16,17,18 85:7,8,9,10,11 99:21,22,23,24,25 119:25 120:1, 2,3,4 126:20,21,22,23,24 128:4,5, 6,7,8 130:18,19,20,21,22 131:9, 10,11,12,13,23,24,25 132:1,2 143:2,3,4,5,6 145:11,12,13,14,15 149:11,12,13,14,15 150:22,23,24, 25 151:1 152:17,18,19,20,21 154:5,6,7,8,9 155:4,5,6,7,8 156:14,15,16,17,18 158:13,14,15, 16,17 183:4,5,6,7,8 188:20,21,22, 23,24 189:19,20,21,22 193:1,2,3, 4,5 205:2,3,4,5,6 216:7,8,9,10,11 224:1,2,3,4 249:3,4,5,6,7 256:2,3, 4,5,6 258:3,4,5,6,7 263:22,23,24, 25 270:24,25 271:1,2,3 272:5,6,7, 8,9 273:20,21,22,23 295:23,24,25 296:1,2,12,13,14,15 298:1,2,3,4,5

**ayes** 7:1 8:23 9:20 13:24 14:25 26:15 69:25 100:1 120:5 126:25 128:9 130:23 131:14 132:3 143:8 145:16 149:16 151:2 152:22 154:10 155:9 156:19 158:18 183:9 188:25 193:6 205:7 216:12 256:7 258:8 271:4 298:6

В

**B-A-K-E-R** 194:18

**B-A-R-T-L-E-T-T** 34:13 133:21

**B-E-N-J-A-M-I-N** 30:9

**B-E-T-H** 207:2

**B-O-H-M** 121:12 252:1

**B-O-S-E** 132:14

**B-O-Y-C-E** 207:2

**B-R-E-T-T** 259:3

B-R-O-N-S-O-N 260:1

**Babcock** 157:3 159:5,9,10 160:23,25 161:4,8,12,19,21,22,24 162:4,9 163:24 182:10,11

babysitter 286:10

back 16:17 30:3 45:24 47:23 56:4 67:1 70:6,7 76:2 84:14 86:16 94:15 103:15 104:15 113:22 115:18 124:18 143:17,19 149:23 153:18 157:6 163:7 165:12 169:20 172:7 185:10 187:14 189:24 190:1,17 198:15 203:17, 21,24 223:12,13 224:14,24 225:10,11 230:10,16 234:18 236:16 241:6,19 244:1 245:13,21 247:7,14,23 248:13 252:12 253:21 257:19 265:7,21 268:13 269:9,15 270:9 272:15,17 277:11 288:17 293:20 298:6,10,25 300:4 303:1,9

background 16:9 26:22 180:6

backing 81:15 82:7 187:25

bad 192:1

badly 33:20 175:1

Baker 193:15 194:15,16,18

**Baker's** 203:2

ballot 20:21 55:6 58:9,11,14,25 59:6,13 63:21 64:6,12 68:15 74:19 81:4,12,22 82:17 83:6 90:21 91:1 93:17 95:2 97:10 99:6, 18 100:7 101:18 117:23 120:10 122:11 126:19 127:5 134:6,13 143:12 146:14 149:21 153:2 160:19 165:4 167:1 178:7,18 179:14,23 180:15 183:16 185:4, 11 187:15 189:5 193:11 205:12 207:19 213:18 214:7 215:13 216:17 231:13 234:25 237:2,9 256:12 258:11 259:13 269:1 271:9 272:13 275:10,12 276:18 304:6 306:13 307:18

**ballots** 101:13

**Banks** 180:16 271:12,14 272:12

**bar** 32:1 54:23,24 55:2 80:25

Barack 50:15

Index: bare..believe

bare 141:24

barely 93:21 303:8

**barred** 55:19

Bartlett 14:2,7 18:9 28:25 34:11, 13 35:13 36:14,16,19 44:25 46:1, 5 49:16 52:5,9 54:2,11 55:21 58:23 59:2,4 60:19 129:21 132:18 133:14,18,21 134:18,23 135:2,8, 13,19,22 136:1 140:4,17 141:2

base 20:3 92:17 219:12

**based** 9:24 14:14 16:19 18:15 19:12,14 27:21 69:5,13 76:8 108:5 110:3 117:11 119:4,17 123:2 133:2 134:19 142:6 180:25 184:1 271:20 301:7 306:7

basic 21:1 64:19

**basically** 24:8 52:1 121:15 124:24 185:24 187:16 284:11

**basing** 135:5

**basis** 16:24 21:21 22:8 46:6,16 49:21 97:17 111:11 125:24 191:4

**basket** 174:20

**be** 11:15,17 12:1,7,11,20,22 15:2 20:21 21:18 22:8 24:15,19,20,22 27:12,18 31:3 36:9,14 37:8 39:2, 19 42:20 43:10,18,23 45:11 46:5 47:19 51:14 52:24 53:4,14,18 55:18,24 58:6,14 59:12 61:23 62:4,25 63:3 64:5,11,13,16,20 65:1 67:7 69:9 70:7 71:5 72:10,14 74:19 75:17 78:7,19 83:10 85:22 86:15 87:5,19 92:20 93:20 94:5 95:2,16,25 96:15 99:6 100:6 102:4 104:13 105:12 106:3 108:9 109:10,19,24 110:8 114:7 116:1 117:23 120:10 121:17 122:6,10, 17 124:11,23 125:6,15,17 127:5 129:7 131:2 132:21 133:8,25 134:12,14 135:7 137:20 140:5 143:12,17 144:20,22 146:4 147:6 148:3,11 149:21 153:2 157:6,13 160:18,24 162:5 164:7 165:8,22 166:16 168:4 169:24 170:24 171:6 173:1,4,6 174:8 175:5,17 176:12,19 177:13 179:23 181:8, 15 183:15 185:7,25 189:4 190:11 193:11 195:10,19 198:21 199:1 203:7,21 204:7,13 205:12,16 207:4,17 209:24 210:23 212:1,17 213:14 214:9 215:9 216:17

217:13 220:3,22,24 224:8 226:23 229:15 231:16 233:10 234:7,21 235:19 236:3,4,5,18,23 239:18 240:20 241:2,8 242:23 244:2,21 245:20 246:22 247:2,12,16,24 248:15,18 252:18 253:20,23 254:15,16,22 256:12 258:11 264:19 267:3,15 268:1,9,16 269:1,11 271:9 272:13 273:1,12 274:21 276:5,7,12 277:3 278:3,7 279:2,5,7,14 280:15 281:19 282:11 283:6 285:10 287:2,7 291:12 292:10,14 293:22 294:14 295:11 296:4,7 299:5,6 302:2,16 305:17 306:9 307:1,11

**Bear** 38:14

became 96:13 139:9

because 23:5 24:13 26:24 28:12, 19 35:18,20 37:12,17,22 39:22 40:22 42:9 44:3,12 45:5,6 47:7 51:23 62:21 64:1 74:17 77:19 78:5,6,20 82:1 83:6 84:22 85:22 86:11 87:16 88:10 89:14 90:1,10 91:10 92:19 94:2 96:22,25 97:5 111:2,3 112:15 113:9,18 117:3 122:11 135:20 140:5,8 142:18 151:9 152:3 157:5 164:2,3 166:9 167:13 168:2,12,23 169:1,10,14 170:14,19 172:14 174:23 175:25 177:8,16,17 181:1,7,14 185:2 186:13,25 187:16,19 195:8 198:17 202:24 211:10 212:4 213:2 215:7 218:19 222:7 235:17 237:17 240:2,22 241:15,24 242:19.22 245:6 252:14 253:14 254:6 255:11 261:3,9 262:22 263:1 268:20 269:21,25 270:9,10 272:18 276:4,14 280:5 282:20 284:24 288:20,24 289:19 290:5 293:4,9 299:1,4 300:20 303:22 304:17 305:3,8,11

become 107:17,22

becomes 106:9,10

been 9:6 13:6 16:8,12,21 20:19 24:9,25 28:2 30:12 33:7,20 35:21 43:4,11 59:23 60:23 63:19 65:9 67:2 72:24 81:23 83:1 88:16,22 89:14 92:25 95:3,8 96:17 97:9,15 100:22 109:13 111:12 115:12,14 116:11 118:9,25 119:1 121:24 123:21 132:24 133:7 146:21 162:22 163:2,17 168:25 169:7,15 171:18 172:3,13 175:15,18 177:5

179:14 182:4 184:9,16 194:2,9, 13,17 196:8 197:16 199:15 200:23,24 206:5 210:3 212:12 215:15 217:11,23 221:4,12 222:2, 4,10 229:10 231:11 232:5,10 234:13 236:6,13 238:11,21,22 240:25 241:15,16 242:1 243:5,15 254:18 257:8 260:4 263:12 264:4 265:4 267:4,6 268:10 272:11 273:25 277:12 278:2 284:22 286:15 288:5 289:13 290:19 291:1 300:22 301:18 303:4 305:24 306:21,24

before 5:16 7:8,20 10:8 13:5
15:17 16:15 17:19 18:23 22:1,12
23:18 28:4 34:17 39:14 40:2,10,
21 42:12 46:3 52:17 53:5 54:13
55:8 63:16 64:6,23 67:24 68:12
71:13 72:22 73:21 102:13 106:4,9
108:5 110:3,13 112:1 115:16
116:9,12 123:11,23 136:25
137:10 138:5,13,17,20 142:6
153:21 159:22 164:14 165:5,13,
21 168:11 172:25 173:11 177:2
180:17 185:20 186:5 196:23
199:11 219:11 232:16,17 243:10
252:13 254:21 268:24 274:7
279:5 280:4 292:7

beforehand 74:14

began 61:5,6

begin 9:23 10:4,8 11:8 209:18

beginning 231:12

**behalf** 6:2,10 39:18 129:6,16,19 158:23 194:10 206:10,13 208:6 217:11 219:6 240:16 250:20 251:23 257:16 264:3

behavior 37:25 181:1

**behind** 8:6 20:3 226:5 282:15 305:6

being 55:6 58:25 59:6,13 75:8 83:11 84:10 94:4,24 95:15 100:1 104:14 105:7 107:3 110:6 117:18 122:4 124:21 148:13 161:9 176:20,25 185:17 188:1 192:4 194:16 210:20,25 211:14 213:10 239:4 254:19 260:18 261:20 275:12 278:1 289:19 292:8,12,15 298:16

belabor 160:6

believe 15:18,23 17:16 19:7

30:24 35:7 42:7,21 46:23 47:18 56:2,3 57:20 75:13,14 79:22 87:13 93:9 107:2 108:16 112:2 121:17 124:3,6 137:19 139:6 141:17 144:18 147:6 157:25 190:8 194:19 195:1 198:16 232:11 243:3 247:8 250:25 259:9 271:19 276:13 278:19,23 279:8, 13 282:4 284:3 285:16 297:13 305:20

belong 53:2

belongings 138:24

**below** 73:8

Bend 86:10.12 87:1

benefit 136:25

Benjamin 17:10 30:8

besides 138:5 201:1 249:22

besmirching 230:12

**best** 82:4 89:18 90:13 112:20 199:7 241:4 242:5 278:25 288:4

Beth 206:2,13 207:1

**between** 220:12 229:11 235:13 262:22 271:19

**beyond** 50:5,6 231:4 257:7 282:1.5

bias 34:24 46:10,16

**bible** 106:11

Biden 67:15,17 68:13,16

**Bieniek** 183:18,19 184:11,14,15, 17,18,20,22 188:6 189:7

bifurcate 130:12

**big** 106:2 172:21 174:25 175:2 180:22

**bigger** 94:19

bill 278:13

**billion** 32:19

**bills** 139:19,24

binder 70:22 71:12 120:23 123:25 145:24 151:8,12 153:16 155:17 183:24 190:10 193:21 194:12 205:16,20 251:4,14 256:23 257:8 258:16 271:16 277:1,7 **binders** 8:7 14:12 15:13 67:23 68:8 70:19 100:15 118:8 129:10 217:1 250:22 273:3 295:18

bipartisan 31:19 274:17

bipartisanism 133:20

birthday 304:21

**bit** 44:5 72:5 89:21 112:18 113:9 162:5 197:18 210:4 219:8 224:8 264:8 275:15 276:1 282:1 290:5

black 290:20

blank 78:2,10,21,25

**blind** 110:23

**board** 54:13 97:1,20 112:2 121:23 144:24 218:9 221:5 240:9, 10 244:21 248:1 262:10 267:4 269:10 298:10

**boards** 15:4 50:7 65:24 100:5 117:22 120:9 127:4 149:20 153:1 160:17 183:14 189:3 193:10 205:11 216:16 253:24 256:11 271:8 306:7

**body** 63:13 273:1 279:11,21

**Bohm** 120:16 121:10,11,12 126:10,13 127:6 250:25 251:1,21, 24,25 255:6

bona 221:6

**Bonahoom** 250:14,15,20 252:3, 18 253:7 256:9

Bonahoom's 252:23 253:6

Bonahooms 253:13

**book** 42:17 44:2 110:24 153:18 234:14,17,19 236:25 269:15,22

**booked** 104:6

**books** 111:6 233:2,5 234:13 236:13 241:15 269:23

**Bose** 16:3 18:8 34:14 132:9,14, 19 133:21

both 16:16,22 23:18 29:1 68:18 71:8 100:23 102:6 109:3,6 118:12,14 121:6,8 127:16 128:21 150:7 151:12 154:13 155:25 156:2 158:1 160:11 168:19 184:6 194:3 201:4,12 206:8 207:24 217:8 219:9 249:13 250:7,9,22,23 251:21 252:12 288:23 297:1 bottom 79:2 94:10 232:14

**box** 76:6,20 77:19,20,23 169:1,3, 7 187:18,24 190:15

boxes 160:11 207:10,14

**boy** 72:1,7 161:13

**Boyce** 205:13 206:2,10,13,18,20 207:1 209:5,11,13,21 213:19 214:15 215:20 216:19

Brad 5:10 116:14 245:13 295:6

branch 289:2 branches 52:25

brand-new 24:24 25:7

Braun 143:23 163:12

**Bravo** 184:22 **breakfast** 265:25

breath 52:7

**Breaux** 217:21,23 218:4 256:14, 15,18 257:17 258:10

Brent 190:4 191:4 193:8

**Brett** 259:3

**brevity** 120:13

**brief** 23:14 103:1,6 169:23 173:22 208:15 219:8 275:21 282:3

briefed 171:8 briefing 181:24

briefly 171:3 221:7

**briefs** 170:12

**bring** 20:23,24 38:13,25 57:16,18 76:4 137:1 139:18,23 150:8 187:19 202:18 248:13 272:17 281:19.20

bringing 46:18

**brings** 46:9 175:4

**British** 213:22

broad 275:23

broadest 280:21

Broadway 196:2 197:11,20

**Bronson** 259:25

brought 22:20 36:10 43:4,11

46:17 52:12,17 103:15 123:11,17, 21 151:6 196:14 227:19 274:7

**Brown** 143:25 144:1,4,5,18 145:21 146:3,10 147:3,14 149:18

**buffer** 157:6

building 113:17 168:4

**burden** 83:23 204:16 226:19 270:14

**business** 36:7 40:16 44:20,22 46:14 49:7 248:20 298:6

**but** 7:14 11:25 13:8 15:23,24 16:1.21 18:17 19:2 20:15 22:6 23:25 24:12 25:6,24 26:1 27:11, 21 28:9,11 29:2 31:13 32:7 36:15 37:2,12 38:5,7 39:10,21,25 40:14, 18 41:4,16 42:16 44:5 47:24 51:17 53:11 54:19 55:9,17,18 58:6 59:7 60:6,18,21,22 62:4 63:1,13,16,22 64:15,17 67:4 71:12 78:17 80:4 81:8,21 82:1,25 83:9 84:9 85:20 86:5,13,14 87:3, 14 89:21 90:14 91:13,25 92:9 93:10,20 94:7,10 95:5,20 104:3 105:9,22 107:17 110:17,23,25 112:7,15 113:7,14 115:13,19,22 117:10 122:7 123:19 124:5,16 125:7,8,22 126:7,14 129:10,15,18 130:8 134:9 138:20 139:22 140:21 142:19 143:15 147:24 148:18,21,24 159:5 160:7 162:4, 18 163:19 164:20 166:14 168:6, 24 169:5,7 170:8 171:2,7,11 172:1 173:12,24 174:17 175:5,9 176:16 177:5,8,14,20 178:7,13, 16,21 179:1,11 180:1,2,3,24 181:5 185:16 186:5,24 187:23 191:25 194:13 195:11 198:15 201:13 202:21,23 204:2 205:17 210:4 211:8 212:7,15 214:5 218:5 219:11,14 220:20 224:19 225:4, 21 226:20 228:3,20 229:13,17 230:6,13 231:1,4,9 232:8,12,16 233:9,10,18,25 236:23 237:3 238:6,11,19 239:7 240:7,15 241:4 243:2,16 246:4,19 247:17 250:22 252:19 253:21 257:1,3 260:18 261:2 265:22 266:20 268:24 269:17,19 270:8 273:13 278:3 279:13,18 280:10,16 281:11 282:9,12 283:10 284:8,10 288:10 290:1,7,18,25 291:8,25 293:6 299:6,12 300:5 302:24 303:1,17 305:2,6,10,16,21 306:5,12 307:1,

11

**by** 6:21 7:4 8:17 9:15 10:22 11:1, 8,14 12:6,12,16,18,23,25 13:18 14:19 15:19 17:10 19:3 24:25 26:9 29:23 31:14 32:21 33:4 34:16 35:7 36:9,18,22 41:25 47:12 48:23 49:2 51:25 52:11,13, 23 53:4,8,15,18,21 55:1,3 57:3 60:23 65:2,13 67:6 68:9,12,16 69:20 70:23 71:5 72:25 75:10 76:1,6 77:14 78:3 85:7,17 94:5 98:3,4,9 99:21 100:17 105:13 107:19 109:14,17,20,23 110:20 111:23 112:19 114:4,12 116:22 118:9 119:24,25 120:24 121:3,8 123:21 124:20.21.25 125:8 126:19 128:3,15,21 129:3,7 130:15,18 131:8,22 135:4 141:22 143:2 145:10,23 146:12 148:20 149:10 150:21 151:14 152:16 154:5 155:3,19 156:14 157:20 158:13 166:17,18 170:5 174:13 175:19 179:16 180:17 183:4 185:12 186:7 188:20 189:19 190:18 192:25 193:23 195:25 196:8 199:4,12 205:2 207:10 209:5,25 210:7,13 213:15 216:7 217:3 218:9 220:7,23 221:4 224:1 229:10,15 230:23,25 241:7,15 246:13 249:3 256:1,24 258:2 261:22 263:12 270:11,24 271:18 272:4 273:1 274:9 275:23 279:14 283:25 287:6 291:12 292:3 294:15 295:23 298:1 301:24

С

**C-H-R-I-S-T-I-N-E** 121:12 251:25

C-H-U-N-I-A 223:3

C-R-O-O-K-S 118:25

**California** 224:14,22 228:21,23 229:5 238:5 241:21 242:18,19 243:13 244:7 300:17

**call** 5:1 61:16 65:9 70:3 72:22 73:13 89:7 116:22 126:16 184:9 201:17 248:11 249:23

**called** 11:7 85:17 88:6,15,23 144:21 146:3 184:16 197:1 201:18

calling 85:20

calls 88:12 89:2 228:12 253:3

**came** 75:25 76:2 80:25 103:20 110:3 115:17 120:25 121:14 189:11 211:11 225:11 253:16 254:21 277:19 293:6 300:14

Cameron 159:2

Camp 250:13 251:2,24 252:2

**campaign** 7:19,22,23,25 8:3,6, 11 15:19 18:10 44:23 45:7,8 60:22 74:18 123:3,6 125:21,23 126:1,3 273:2 274:11,16,23 275:4,14 276:8 278:7 280:21 281:4 283:18 284:21 285:11,19 286:8,11,16,19 287:9,15 289:11, 14 290:14 292:7

campaigned 180:13 campaigning 280:17 campaigns 286:20

can 10:8 18:20 19:24 21:18 22:8, 13,14 23:25 24:3,19 28:2,3 29:8 30:15 37:8 39:23 41:9 44:13 53:4, 14 54:2 55:18 58:21 64:11 66:6 73:19 77:6 80:9 82:24 83:16,20, 22 89:7,12 91:12 93:21 105:11 109:19 110:25 111:9,22 112:20, 21 122:3 123:5,16 124:7,17,19,23 125:6,11,19 136:10 138:11 154:16 162:1 163:20 166:20,22 174:3,15 176:8,14 177:11,24 181:9 186:7,9,12 189:9,10 195:23 197:10 198:9.19 199:1.21 201:24 202:1,3,5 204:2 206:24 211:16 214:20,22 215:9 221:7,14 223:13, 22 225:14 230:24 231:12,21,24 241:4 247:12,23 248:4,9 249:9 252:18,21 261:2,11 265:3 266:5, 7,18 267:12 268:2,6,14 269:3,6,9, 14 273:4,13 274:11,18 275:24 277:25 278:1 279:5 280:24,25 281:19,20 286:2 287:2 290:5 291:17 292:5,17 293:15 294:7 295:4 299:10 303:8 305:14 306:6, 14.24 307:7.15

**can't** 24:19 52:1 82:6 83:12,19 86:5 93:3 112:15 130:2,3 163:13 166:22 170:18 179:23 202:2 232:8 239:24 240:7 268:12,19 292:24 299:13 300:9 307:23

**CAN-1** 118:9 120:24 126:11 128:14,23 145:25 151:7 155:18 183:25 190:13 193:22 205:21

206:2 217:2 251:14 256:24 258:17

**CAN-2** 71:4,6 78:22 79:3 100:20 118:10 119:9 121:4 122:8 124:18 125:16 128:24 145:25 155:22 160:11 168:22 193:25 207:6 208:14 212:22 217:5 218:23 251:22 258:23

**CAN-7** 68:14

cancel 227:10

canceled 231:19

cancellations 239:8,15

**candidacies** 93:19 110:2

**candidacy** 17:11 71:3 72:18 74:21 92:18 100:20 110:6 111:23 114:9 118:11 121:5 125:3,16 128:17 134:22 146:23 155:22 160:10 168:15 169:4,16 184:5 191:4 193:25 196:2 206:3,16 207:4 217:5 218:23 254:6 257:9 258:18 264:9 275:15

candidate 7:19 9:22,24 11:4,7, 10,12 12:10,12,17,18,19,25 13:7, 11 14:3,10 15:7,11 16:19 17:3,13 19:19,20 20:3 21:21 24:17 30:21, 22 34:2 50:15,19 51:13 59:7 64:6 66:24 67:17,21 68:16 70:14,17, 22,23,25 71:6,11 80:7 81:4 90:20, 22 92:7 93:13,15 99:6 100:6,11, 16,24 101:10 102:6 104:14 106:3, 8.19 107:17.22 108:13.14 110:13. 14,18 112:23 113:11 114:4,10 115:15,20 116:11 117:23 118:3,9, 12 120:10,18,24 123:13,20,22 127:5,11,14 128:15,23 134:2 144:1,18 145:20 148:1,10 149:21, 25 150:7 151:6,9 153:2 155:14, 18,20,21 168:17 171:18 172:11, 23 173:11 175:22 177:1,8 179:24 180:20 183:15,21 185:7,15 186:7, 11 189:4 190:4,12 193:11,17,22 194:4,10 195:25 199:6 200:2 205:11,23 207:19,21,23 212:20, 21 214:4 216:17,22 217:3,8,11 218:13,18 220:3,6,7 233:1 250:15 251:9 253:1,5 256:12,15,24 258:13 267:23 271:9,14 275:3 287:2,6 292:3

**candidate's** 12:10 71:3 100:19 121:4 128:16,24 145:25 148:9 184:5 193:24 217:4 220:1 257:9

candidates 15:3 20:20 22:19 36:9,11 45:7 51:6 65:24 75:1 79:23 81:2 83:5 90:11 92:6 93:7, 23 94:24 95:2 96:5,17 97:5 98:13 100:4 101:13 102:7 109:5,6 115:21 117:21 120:8 125:17 127:3 143:12 149:19 151:13 152:25 160:13,17 179:18 183:14 189:3 193:9 205:10 216:15 256:10 258:11 271:7 272:13 274:16,25 275:9 284:23 286:6,7, 13 291:4

candidates' 50:13

**cannot** 20:23 24:13,14 35:4 52:23 60:18 110:2 174:7

canons 264:17

capable 241:3 290:15

capably 60:19

**Capital** 162:14

**Capitol** 32:11,16 33:1,5,15 61:21 62:2,17

capture 275:24

captured 231:17

**care** 7:21 274:12 276:4,7 278:9, 15 280:12 283:3

career 224:8

**careful** 246:22

carefully 64:4 147:20,21

caregiver 282:4

caregivers 275:11

caregiving 278:8 286:12

**Carlin** 18:9

carpetbaggers 175:4

**carries** 65:20 120:5 126:25 193:6 216:12 256:7

carrot 62:1

carry 152:22 183:9

Carter 14:2.3 15:2

**case** 11:21 12:13 15:1 23:15 51:6 56:7 66:4 67:15 72:12 94:19 108:2,9 123:20 147:7 148:24 150:8 154:12 157:12 164:15,18 165:20,23,24 166:1,5 168:3,8 176:4 178:17 179:3,5,8 186:15,

22,25 187:3 190:2 204:19 206:19 211:7 219:14 220:13 221:1 231:3 232:25 245:23 260:5,19 264:6 266:17 267:16 289:13 296:20 307:1

**cases** 11:1 12:20 37:11 94:8 152:6 175:25 182:14 234:10 260:5

**cast** 24:15 51:11 135:18 146:15 185:4,12 207:19 262:20 263:6,8 264:25 265:1 266:19 269:11

catches 113:23 category 235:18

caught 115:14,18

cause 13:3 14:14 67:16 70:12 100:10,16 118:2 120:17 127:8,9 128:13 129:8 130:4 131:3,20 143:22 144:4 145:7 149:24 150:11 152:13 153:23,24 155:13, 18 156:12,25 157:1,2,3 183:19 188:19 190:3 192:23 193:15,22 205:1,22 214:22 216:6,21 217:2 250:14 255:24 256:14,24 257:25 258:12 271:12 272:10,15 297:11, 20

caused 32:18 227:5

**causes** 151:2 154:11 155:1 156:23 158:7,12,18 182:25

**caveat** 77:2,19 279:14 281:18 294:1

cease 210:25

Celestino-horseman 5:8 6:23 8:20 9:17 10:6,8,20 13:21 14:22 18:16,20 19:24 22:3,13 23:7 24:12 26:3,7,12,17 27:6,11,24 28:7,9 29:14,25 30:11 35:10,17, 25 36:3,17,20 38:22 41:2,8 44:14 45:13 47:14 48:6,15,25 49:10 54:9 56:13,20 57:5 59:20,22 63:14 65:18 66:11,14,19 69:3,15, 22 76:22 77:1,3,8,17 78:9 84:20, 24 85:3,9 88:4,6,14,19 89:1,6 90:16 91:19,23 94:9,14 98:11,19, 21 99:16,23 104:15,25 105:3,8,22 106:6 108:12 112:6,14 114:17 116:20,23 117:3,7 119:20 120:2, 12 122:16 125:18 126:22 128:6 129:14,18,23 130:1,5,8,13,20,25 131:11,25 132:4 133:6,11 134:15, 20,24 135:11,17,20,24 136:10,16,

20,22,25 128:5,8,12 129:11,13,25

20,24 137:3 139:4,8,12 140:1,21 141:3,11,15,18 142:15 143:4 145:5,13 149:7,13 150:24 152:19 154:7 155:6 156:16 158:15 159:8, 13 160:23 161:2,22,25 164:22,25 166:14,25 169:5 170:2,8,20 171:2,25 177:14,19,21 178:21 183:6 188:22 189:8,14,21 193:3 195:14 196:16,18,20,24 197:3,9, 19,22 198:2 200:16 201:6,10,17, 19,24 203:17 204:23 205:4 211:3, 8,21,25 212:9 216:9 217:14 223:21,24 224:3 225:20 226:2 227:3 237:6,17,24 238:21 240:18 241:20 244:14,24 245:5 246:7,12, 21 247:25 248:6 249:5,9,16 252:15 256:4 257:23 258:5 263:24 266:3 268:8,12 269:9,14, 19 270:3 271:1 272:7 273:13,22 278:20 280:3 283:16 284:7,13 285:6 288:2 289:18 290:11,25 291:8,14 293:22 294:18 295:4,19, 25 296:5,14,24 298:3 304:19 305:10 307:9

#### Celestino-horseman's 198:16

Center 5:4

centered 49:23

centers 236:14 237:5

**central** 252:13

century 203:22 253:17

**certain** 11:4 36:10 39:17 45:14, 15 83:14 176:19

**certainly** 25:24 90:19 168:1 170:14 254:3

**certificate** 186:12 210:24 255:14 259:10 260:17 261:12 267:6 269:22

**certification** 78:3 148:5,14,21 160:1 169:21 171:14 172:7 173:19 184:2 185:3 192:10 203:10 207:21 208:9,16 211:10 213:14 218:21 238:14 239:2 251:17 252:5 258:22

**certified** 15:3 65:23 72:25 73:2, 10 80:16 82:15 92:25 100:4 117:21 120:8 127:3 143:11 149:19 152:24 160:16 169:24 172:19 175:3 183:13 189:2 193:8 205:9 213:1,6 216:14 256:10 258:10 262:9 271:6 272:12

**certify** 6:3 33:9,11 78:23 115:22 125:2 171:20 208:7 211:12,18 284:12

#### **cetera** 46:13

chair 5:6 7:7 12:3 35:25 39:6,7
47:19 66:1 92:3 98:11 129:14
132:4 144:17 148:6,14,21 151:11
169:21 171:15 172:18 176:9,12
187:25 189:8 191:16 192:10
203:12,13,14 206:13,14,18
207:16 208:5 212:2,19 213:1,6
214:6 215:3 239:3 251:17 255:14
259:2 263:3,12 264:12,23 265:8,
11 266:21 267:21,22 270:15
300:7 304:7 305:16 306:17
307:19

# chair's 203:9 213:3

**chairman** 5:1,6 6:1,6,10,15,16, 19,22,25 7:17 8:5,10,12,14,19,22, 25 9:3,4,9,11,12,14,16,19 10:6,7, 11,13,16,19,22 13:15,16,20,23 14:16,17,21,24 15:16,21,22 16:4, 7,11,13,14,23,25 17:6,9,19,24 18:1,3,10,23 19:1,5,8 20:4,8,14 22:11 25:13,15,16,20 26:5,8,11, 14,20 27:4,8,17,25 28:5,23,24 29:6,10,16,17,20,22,24 30:2,6,10, 15 34:4,10,11 35:12 36:2,18,23 38:1,6 39:5,12 40:10,25 41:6,11 43:7,16,19 44:14,16,17,18 45:1,3, 4,9,14,21,22,24 46:2,20,25 47:4, 6,10 48:3,12,13,16,19,20,24 49:1, 5,9,12,15,16 52:4,7,8 53:24 54:5, 8 55:12 56:2,10,23,24,25 57:2,4, 7,10 58:2,5,17,22 59:11,16,20,21 63:9,23,24,25 65:3,10,11,15,17, 19 66:2,7,10,12,17,23 67:9,13 68:6,19,23 69:5,9,11,12,16,18,21, 24 70:3,8,10 71:15,18,22 72:3,15 73:15 76:17 77:5,10,11,13,16 79:2,5,9,15 80:11 84:23 85:1,5,6, 8,11 87:7,9,10,15,20,25 88:3,5 90:18 91:5 94:13 95:7 96:2 97:12, 14,23 98:7,10 99:3,5,9,14,17,22, 25 100:9,14,25 101:3,5 102:15, 20.25 103:3 104:8 106:13.25 107:10 108:1,20 109:22 110:9,11, 21,22 111:2,8,10,12,16,21 112:1, 4,9,11 113:2,8 114:2 115:5 116:2, 7,15,18,22,25 117:2,6,8,9,12,18 118:1,7,15,20 119:2,6,11,14,17, 19,21 120:1,4,15,22 121:9 122:14,18,20,21,25 123:1 124:1,8 125:1 126:3,5,16,21,24 127:7,19,

130:3,7,11,14,19,22 131:2,4,5,10, 13,18,19,24 132:2,6,11,16,20 133:17,18 135:4,5 136:3,5,8,23 137:5 139:14,18 141:5,9 142:4, 13,16,21 143:3,6,15,19 144:10, 12,15,25 145:2,4,6,12,15 146:5, 16,17,19,21,25 147:2,9,16,18 148:16,17,24 149:1,2,6,8,12,15 150:3,4,10,14,17,18,19,23 151:1, 14,23 152:5,10,11,12,18,21 153:5,9,14,15,22,25 154:3,6,9,16, 18,21,23,25 155:5,8,12,16 156:3, 6,9,11,15,18,22 157:7,8,9,15,20 158:2,6,9,10,11,14,17,21 159:11 160:20,25 161:7,18 162:8 163:23 164:1,5,12 174:10 175:9 176:24 177:12,18 180:8 182:2,6,9,12,22 183:5,8,11 184:2,7,13,18,21 185:2 187:5,9 188:4,7,10,13,14, 21,24 189:12,16,17,18,20,23 190:1,15,22,24 191:8,12,14 192:13,15,16,20 193:2,5,15,20 194:7,14,21,23 198:7,10,11,14 199:18 200:18 202:17 203:1,13 204:12,18,20,22,24 205:3,6,19,22 206:6,11,24 207:22 209:3,7,11, 17,19,20 210:8 211:10,12,23 212:18 213:5,13,16,17 214:5,14 215:4,11,18,22,25 216:2,3,8,11, 20,25 217:16 218:25 219:3,4 221:9,14,16,20 223:1,5,19,25 224:2,5,15,23 225:12,19,23 227:16 228:3,11,17 229:13,17,21 230:20 231:24 233:21 235:1,8,11, 13,14,17,21,24 236:7,15 237:20 238:4,8,10,11,17,22 239:9,12 240:11,14 241:10 242:9,13,16 243:19,22 244:3,15 245:3,20 246:19,23 247:6,9 248:4,15,21,23 249:1,2,4,7 250:11,13,24 251:11, 23 252:7,10 255:4,7,13,16,20 256:3,6,22 257:14,18,21,24 258:4,7,21,25 259:10,14,17,18, 20,22,24 260:10,15,18,21 261:8, 16 263:13,18,21,23 264:1 265:7, 11,16 266:5,8,23 267:15,18,21,25 268:6,22 269:17 270:13,18,22,25 271:3,12,21,23 272:1,2,3,6,9,20 273:7,10,15,18,19,21 274:2 275:18 276:22,25 277:9,14,15,17, 18 278:11,17,22 279:10,22,25 281:9,24 282:14,18,24 283:1,3,5, 12,14 284:14 285:9,12,14,15 286:17 287:18,20,21 288:1 290:7, 13,18,22 291:5,11,17,19,20

Index: chairman's..clear

292:19,20,23 293:3,19,24 294:3, 9,17,19,22,25 295:6,11,14,20,24 296:2,9,10,11,13,16,17,21,23 297:1,6,9,10,12,14,16,18,23,24, 25 298:2,5,8,11,18 299:3,23 301:6,12,18,22 302:2,10,12,16 303:25 304:5,10 305:7,19 306:2, 11,25

**chairman's** 186:11

chairperson 160:3 261:4

**chairs** 39:19 200:4 208:23 254:14

challenge 7:19 9:22 11:5,7,11 13:6 14:2,3,6,8,10,15 15:6,7,11 19:14,18 20:3,18,24 21:17,21 22:2 23:3 24:22 25:10,12 26:6,16 27:13 28:1 29:4 30:17,18 34:15 39:14 40:2,5,6,7,24 46:24 47:7 49:20,25 59:13,15 63:7,8,10 65:12 66:15,25 67:1,3,4,5,16,17, 21 68:9,11 69:7,13 70:1,12,13,17, 23,25 73:22 74:9,12,16,17 81:17 99:5,10,11,14,18 100:2,11,16,18 101:9 102:14 103:18 112:5,8,12 115:3 116:19 117:1,2,5,11,16,19 118:3,9 119:18,23 120:6,18,24 121:1,14 122:17,22 123:10,12,22 124:2,4,11 126:8,12,18 127:1,9, 13 128:15,23 130:2,6 131:1 132:22,25 142:5,12 143:1,8,24,25 144:5 145:20,21,25 147:16 149:17,24 151:6,8 152:3 153:11 155:14,18 156:7 157:6,17 160:5 162:22 168:11 171:18 173:1,5 177:8 178:1 180:14 182:21 183:20,25 185:1,7 188:9,11,18 190:4,13 191:20,22 192:2,19,22 193:7,16,22 194:19,25 195:24 196:25 199:6 204:21,25 205:7,23 206:16 208:25 215:24 216:1,5,13, 21 217:3,22 226:20 232:11,17 241:9 246:8,14 250:15 251:7,13, 14 252:2 253:20 255:19,24 256:8, 15,24 257:3,22 258:8,13,17 259:5 268:25 270:4,21 271:4,13 289:23 293:8.9 307:5

**challenged** 22:8 71:3,10 95:3 100:24 118:12 144:18 150:7 153:6 155:20 192:5 194:4,10 198:13 206:8 217:8,11 226:20 286:1 293:7

**challenger** 11:12,17,18 12:12, 16,17,19 13:1,4,10 14:6 15:14

27:3,22 34:16 56:12 68:9,24 69:2, 4,14 70:24 71:1,17 100:17,24 101:1 118:10,12,16 120:25 121:3 128:15 129:6 137:7 155:19 156:7 193:23 194:4 198:13 204:18 206:8 214:12 217:4,8 226:18 256:25 257:2,5,18 259:1 307:4

**challenger's** 11:18 14:14 69:6 204:16

**challenges** 9:24,25 10:2 13:8 19:19 20:25 21:6 23:4 35:2 50:9 57:16,18 58:11 89:25 95:15 123:18 127:23 130:12 142:5 145:3 149:5 152:9,13 154:19,23 157:12 160:15 166:17 173:23 182:24 183:11 192:7,9 219:13 241:8 253:23 254:10

**challenging** 17:11 72:18 147:13 162:20 164:15 191:3 206:3 218:3 258:20

chamber 101:16,22 107:6,8

**chance** 33:8 58:8 102:20 110:17 209:11

**change** 29:17 45:20 81:21 82:24 97:16 134:7,9 135:14 170:1 186:9 215:10 278:5 280:23 293:16

**changed** 134:17,20 135:7,10 141:12 171:16 213:2 241:1 282:11

changes 64:15 254:11 279:2

changing 227:5

chants 33:4

chaos 92:20

**chapter** 38:9,11 41:21,23 42:24 107:3 137:10,14

chase 201:22

**check** 88:15 89:3 126:13 169:1,3 187:17,18,24 190:14 191:22,25 207:10 253:25

checked 103:16 241:14

checking 167:23

**chief** 53:12

**child** 278:8 283:4 286:10 307:22

**childcare** 274:12 276:11 277:25 282:4,23 283:7,8,11 285:19 286:7 287:15 290:4 292:17

children 276:3 280:9,18

choice 82:20,24

choices 83:3 180:15,21

choose 51:14 102:5 187:19

choosing 174:8

**chose** 24:6

**chosen** 58:13

Christine 121:11 251:1,25

Chronicle 162:14

chronology 103:2,6

**Chunia** 216:22 219:6 222:24 223:3

Churchill 213:24

Circuit 176:4 179:3,6

**circumstance** 23:3 96:16 97:2 170:22

**circumstances** 83:9 89:19 90:23 152:6 167:12,13

citation 19:25

cite 124:4

**city** 170:19 222:6 253:1,4,6 280:8 298:13 300:22

city-county 219:10 221:25

**civic** 306:9

**civil** 31:5

claim 17:12 55:17 97:17 207:17

claiming 208:14

**claims** 61:6 207:11,23 208:4 212:20 220:7 226:24

**clarification** 36:5 46:21 47:17 95:5 280:24

**clarify** 16:6 28:5 29:10 41:2 59:3 87:21 234:23 283:18

clarity 293:2

Class 38:11 41:23

clause 19:23 21:19 22:6 42:1

clean 178:17 280:11

**clear** 20:23 21:11,12,15 22:25 28:14,17 44:6 46:5 54:20 80:2 83:13 87:5 96:1 109:7 110:1

117:17 148:22 179:14 181:19 182:15,18 186:16 194:9 243:10 293:17 299:8

clearing 262:12

**clearly** 5:20 105:19 141:5 177:12,13 215:8 229:11 289:20

**clerk** 107:6 108:16,17 113:20 185:9 201:10,13,14 230:11 246:5 253:2

**clerk's** 78:1,4 88:7 89:7 109:17 236:24 241:12 243:6,20 244:15 246:1,24 304:12

clerks 72:25 73:10 253:25 254:8

clerks' 75:7 78:19 89:3

**client** 96:19 174:11 194:25 196:10 202:2

client's 202:22

**clock** 49:8,14

**close** 87:14 173:1,11 186:7 215:17 255:2 301:16

**closed** 69:25

closely 282:10

closer 129:4 265:20

**closes** 248:8

closing 56:5

**Club** 163:20 221:3

**co-counsel** 41:11 42:4 123:17 279:12

**co-counsel's** 236:12

Co-counsels 5:11

**co-director** 5:10 6:2,11 123:8 241:18

**co-directors** 5:23 6:9 16:17,22 67:24 227:24 250:1 288:21 289:5

co-division 16:15 143:9

co-general 231:4

**code** 19:4 30:19 34:22 38:15 40:21 42:10 43:2 44:2 72:19 107:5 109:2,3 111:6 112:16 114:7 133:24,25 137:9,13 145:23 146:12,20 148:8 157:18 164:16 168:14 184:3 198:24 207:16 214:19,20 229:22,23 233:16 260:4 261:1 264:18 283:20 289:16 292:2

codified 284:22 291:12 294:15

**colleague** 54:18,22 55:1 175:11 197:25

colleagues 142:24

collect 82:6 84:4 90:6 284:23

collections 80:8

Collectively 73:7

college 50:23 224:8 243:15

Collier 5:13

column 36:6 40:17 41:7

columns 36:8

**come** 38:4 61:17 70:5 79:12 91:15 116:9 148:23 162:25 166:12 172:6 177:2 181:14 189:24 228:16 230:6 232:16,17 245:21 247:6,14,23 268:14,21 276:9 278:20 280:11,12 305:13 307:12

**comes** 50:24 224:7 252:22 279:4 291:21

comfort 31:13 33:3

**comfortable** 24:20,24 25:8 249:17 282:7 293:23 294:4

coming 202:15 245:12

**comment** 43:20 63:23 64:1 114:3 175:13 182:13 232:8 241:11 278:15

commenting 40:7,8

**comments** 38:18 46:12 63:11,13 69:16 119:22 126:9 131:21 161:1 183:2 215:21 277:16 301:23

commiserate 285:2

**commission** 5:2,5,19 6:2,8,12 7:3,9,13,22 8:3,6 9:5 10:3 11:3,5, 10,14,22,24 12:6,14,21 13:3,5,7, 13 14:13 18:12,18 19:2,6 21:23, 25 24:21 27:10 29:13 30:20 34:12 35:2,8 36:14 40:11 41:15 42:13 43:12 47:13 49:17 51:19 52:3,10, 21 53:6 55:8 56:9 67:6 68:7 75:24 81:11,24 83:7,22 94:17 95:13,22, 23,25 96:3,4 98:4 100:15 111:19 118:8 120:23 123:11,12 124:7,23 128:13 129:5 132:21 133:19

155:17 158:22 159:5 160:14 164:13 169:22 170:4 171:12 184:21 193:21 199:4 200:21 209:20 210:18 215:7 217:1 225:17 232:13 249:12 252:21 255:3 256:22 259:2 260:3,6 264:7 266:13,18,22 268:3,18 272:25 274:9,15 277:5,22 278:10 282:2 283:13 284:19,23,24 285:3 286:14 294:12 295:17,22 296:18

**commission's** 46:18 199:12 279:19

**commissioner** 34:23 35:9,17 45:13 108:12 198:15 286:24 298:15

**commissioners** 37:16 45:11 71:19 164:9 185:13 219:5 221:10 259:19

commitment 143:21 276:14

commits 38:11 41:23 50:11

committed 60:17

**committee** 32:24 162:23 192:11 209:21 210:25 212:14 218:7 275:23 287:6

committee's 210:24 287:9 292:6

**committeeman** 192:5 209:24 210:7,14,16,22 213:7,10,11 214:10 254:13.16

committeemen 213:12

committees 8:7

common 67:2

communications 43:1 138:18

communities 222:6

**community** 217:25 218:1 221:5 240:23 253:18 306:8

company 36:9

comparison 101:14 212:17

compelling 305:25

**compels** 288:13

compensation 41:9 46:7

competing 233:23 245:25

complaining 232:18

complaint 162:11 271:18

complaints 252:23

**complete** 75:20 125:3,19

completed 76:3 124:21,24

125:17

completely 82:16 176:24

completes 11:16

completing 123:20

**compliance** 6:4 92:24

compliant 81:16 108:24

complicated 305:12

complied 30:21 82:3 170:25

comply 83:6 185:25 186:9,12

comprise 180:5

computer 228:12

computerized 229:25

computers 250:7

con 270:5

Conceivably 289:4

concept 176:6 281:13

concern 10:11 77:13 163:1

concerned 62:15 178:8 281:2

concerning 102:3

**concerns** 38:5 39:11 40:25 69:18 113:18 131:21 156:13

187:16 294:23

conclude 37:23 56:16 278:6

**concluded** 67:8 111:13

concludes 83:25 84:19

conclusion 22:4

conclusions 61:4

concurrently 127:18

conducted 31:16 199:4

conducting 11:4

conduction 230:2

Conference 5:4

confines 95:24

confirm 76:9 231:12,24

confirmed 168:20 169:2

confirming 185:24

conflict 16:8

conflicting 300:8

confused 241:24 242:6 285:14

307:10

confusing 307:12

Congress 31:3,7,14,16,19 32:14 50:11,17,23 51:13 53:2,5,15,19, 22 54:12 57:21 61:23 213:20

214:1.2

congressional 72:21 73:9 74:24

75:11 76:13 184:25 208:20

consecutive 145:22 151:9

consensus 10:9 246:4

consent 10:13,22 295:4,9 296:6,

22.25

consider 7:23 46:4 90:14 91:17

112:2 131:20 138:9 157:14 243:23 249:19 278:10 281:18

285:5 288:16 289:9

consideration 9:24 49:18

114:16 125:12 275:16 276:20

289:22

considered 21:6 78:7 90:21 148:11 220:3 279:14

considering 267:15 consistency 215:21

consistent 82:20,22 83:1 95:8

284:17 302:17

**consistently** 93:6 307:2

consolidate 13:8 127:23 128:1 144:11 145:3.7 150:15 153:24

154:1,4 157:10 158:5,7,12

**consolidated** 128:10 130:7

145:17 147:5 151:3 152:14 154:11,12 158:19 161:6 182:25

consolidating 10:1

consolidation 157:14

**constant** 162:20

constituent 217:20 218:1

constitutes 27:4 62:14 199:13

constitution 17:15 19:15 20:24

21:9,20 22:6,20,21 28:21 30:23

31:1.10 33:8 50:3.4.11.16 51:4.9. 16 54:20 57:15.16 60:16 63:4

178:14

constitutional 21:8 50:22 60:1

64:7 81:25 176:2,18 178:12

276:15

constitutionality 164:16

constitutionally 57:25

constitutions 25:5 37:4 60:15

construction 42:1

consumption 268:24

contacted 192:9

contains 51:9

contemplate 23:5

contemplated 210:19 227:19

contemplation 112:13

contemporaneously 167:5

contest 84:15 154:13 213:8

260:24

contested 163:11

context 47:11

contingent 247:1

continually 51:8

continue 104:14 218:2 224:5

continued 33:13 224:12

continuing 287:10

contradict 195:8 203:2 299:24

contradicted 243:21

contrary 59:22 60:3 195:7 260:7

264:21 304:13

contributed 286:15

contribution 287:7

contributions 44:24 45:7

284:21 285:19 286:12 287:15

contributors 253:18

control 82:16 84:18 86:19

176:19 264:18

controls 21:16

convenience 29:2

convention 163:3

**conversation** 156:13 209:13 252:12 265:21 270:23

conveyance 66:13

cooking 282:19

coordinate 52:25

copied 294:10

**copies** 14:9 15:10 18:17 30:12, 13 67:20 70:17 121:20,25 137:2 161:17 184:9 282:21

**copy** 14:10,11 15:12 67:22 68:9, 14,16 70:18,23 71:2 76:4 100:16, 19,22 104:7 114:11 118:8 120:23 121:4 128:14,16,24 155:18,21,25 161:20,21 167:7 185:8 193:24 195:1 204:7 206:7 207:7 217:2,4 250:4,23 257:8 262:9 288:15,22 295:5 296:7

core 49:24

corner 242:10

corollary 179:19

**coroner** 212:13

**correct** 17:1 28:6 33:9 34:5 59:2 71:24 78:12 88:25 102:5 105:23 109:1 110:17 119:14 129:16,17 130:2,3 134:23 139:10 141:1,4,13 150:12 169:6 183:19 196:17,19 200:11,12 201:5 211:20 214:8 235:23 238:6 242:11 247:8 260:23 261:18 267:10,20 273:4 279:15 282:2 286:5,23 297:13 304:8,9,16 306:11 307:8

corrected 66:14 109:24

Corrections 221:5

**correctly** 26:21 127:11 153:8 225:3

cost 82:10,11 92:20

costs 32:19

**could** 18:5 29:4,5 39:2 64:25 72:4 77:23 83:6 84:20 89:19 92:19 96:2 102:12 103:21 104:3, 12 114:6 136:16,20 146:23 168:9 169:18,20 170:16,25 171:6,14,16, 20,23,24 172:1,6,16 173:8,9,10 174:11,13,22 175:5,6 177:18,19, 22 181:2,8 185:25 201:22 203:20 208:16 213:23 219:15,18,20

223:1 224:7 226:23 227:3 228:24 229:15 233:4,6,10,14 234:7,18,22 235:19 236:16 242:23 245:10,14 246:15,17,25 248:11,12,13 249:23 250:4,8,9 282:6,11 285:11 286:11 287:14 291:14 293:3 295:9 299:6 300:18 302:21 303:4 304:12,17 307:20

**couldn't** 29:7 86:15 172:25 177:17 246:11

**council** 221:25 253:5,6 280:8,9, 12 298:14

councilor 219:10 298:9

**counsel** 19:2 45:10 71:1,9 76:22 79:19 84:22 106:14 129:7 136:21 155:20 169:22 171:12,13 199:12 205:17 214:11 231:5 250:22 288:23,25

**counselor** 133:6 166:14 169:5 171:25 211:3 240:18 241:3

**count** 45:25 75:10 76:3 86:5 231:1 239:2 263:11 266:14 292:17

**counted** 12:1 51:12 78:4 85:22 86:15 96:15 260:25 263:4,11 265:5 268:5 269:7

counterpart 231:25

**counterparts** 142:24 277:7

**counties** 80:21 115:22 204:2,17 208:21,24 209:1 231:5 233:12 234:12 262:17 269:21 285:18 289:21

country 33:7 63:6 280:22

counts 76:9 207:24

county 15:4 44:11 65:24 72:25 73:10 78:4,19 81:9 84:14 100:5 117:21 120:8 121:23 127:3 140:18 146:25 147:1 149:19 151:11 152:25 159:1,2,3,4 160:2, 17 172:18,20 176:13 183:14 184:24 185:9 189:3 191:3,16,17, 18 192:6,7,10 193:9 199:25 201:6,8,9,13,14,19 203:4,9,11,13, 14,20,24 205:10 206:14 207:15, 22 208:4,12,14,22,23 210:6,7,8 212:1,5,13,19,21,25 213:1,3,6,15, 17,22 214:6,23 215:2 216:15 218:9 222:1,8 227:14 230:11 232:18 233:2,3,12 234:19 236:12,

17,24 240:9 241:12 243:5,6,20 245:22 246:24 248:1 249:24 251:17 252:5 254:3,8,14,15 255:14 256:11 258:14 261:5,21, 22,25 262:1,5,6,10,24 263:7 264:10,11 265:8,11 267:21,22 270:11,15 271:7 304:7,11

**couple** 7:21 25:23 52:5 79:13 87:7 101:5 247:20 263:17 264:2

courage 33:6

**course** 32:10 53:19 137:6 139:23 239:17 254:18 288:11

**court** 5:13,21 10:5 20:12 21:14 24:1,10 25:1 27:1 30:7 44:11 50:21 51:1,7 53:13 61:1 64:24 66:5 72:13 160:15 164:15,17,19 165:5,10,14,25 166:9,15,22 167:6,11,14,16,25 168:6,9 170:9 171:4 172:12 173:3,20,24 174:3, 16 175:12,16,25 177:25 178:3,4, 11,15,22 179:1,3,9,10 180:24 181:7,10,20,21 182:17 186:21,22, 24 189:11 252:16 258:15 265:3 267:12 292:10,14 293:4,6,11,15

court's 50:5 181:22 186:16

**courts** 50:9,17 51:8 60:19,23 176:17 291:25 292:22

**cover** 280:15 286:13 289:15 290:5 293:1

covered 42:22 43:3 98:4

covers 157:25 233:19

**COVID** 300:13

crack 291:17

**crafted** 288:12

**create** 53:17 91:2 233:5 246:6 279:9 292:25

created 107:14,19 115:12

creates 15:23

creativity 26:18

credit 219:21 281:9

criminal 124:15

criteria 234:7

criticizing 95:25

**Crooks** 118:2,16,18,22,25 119:24 120:11,13,14

cross 259:16 301:10,17 302:8

**cross-examination** 12:20,22 55:13 56:3,7,16 79:9 80:12 97:24 98:3 188:5 194:21 215:19 252:8 255:5 301:19,22 302:3,13

**cross-examine** 12:17,19 102:16,22 111:17,20 136:6 147:4 160:21 163:24 182:7,10 187:6 209:4 219:1 259:15 301:7

crowd 32:7 159:7

**Crown** 87:1

**Cruz** 50:15

**curious** 111:3 126:10 234:4,6 245:4,21 278:11

current 134:8 138:17 254:4

**currently** 64:23 164:14 165:16 200:1 253:4

cut-off 142:11

**cycle** 171:1

cycles 97:3

D

**D-A-V-I-D** 71:25 103:5

**D-O-L-E** 191:13

**D-O-S-S-E-T-T** 260:1

**D.C.** 32:16 61:17

dad 253:4 300:14

daily 16:23 61:15

**Damien** 159:3

dangled 61:25

**Danny** 159:2

**data** 219:15 225:1,2 226:12,13,23 234:5,14 240:2 245:25 306:19

database 236:21

**date** 5:3 40:3 86:14 110:4 133:13 134:10 135:6,8,12 139:17 187:14 197:12 245:12,15 246:15 298:22 300:5 302:24 303:17,19,22 304:22 305:4

dated 39:13 40:1 303:7,11

**dates** 84:6

**dating** 223:12

daughter 62:9 222:2

daughter's 221:13

**Dave** 103:4

David 68:13 71:19 100:11 117:20

118:22

**day** 33:22 60:6 76:2 142:9 165:24 172:6 175:18 194:17 208:13 210:3 211:2 215:9 236:4 238:12, 21,22 248:20 261:14 267:5 270:7 305:2,3 307:3

**days** 84:17 86:14,22,25 135:4 140:19,25 240:13,14 241:7 266:20 299:6 303:1,15 305:2

de 174:4

dead 246:14

**deadline** 110:1,5,8,13,17,18 166:16 168:11 192:8 240:11 241:7 246:16 266:20 268:10 305:4

deadlock 45:19

**deal** 22:1,23 172:21 174:25 180:22 290:9 291:22

dealing 24:7 42:22 96:4 241:16

dealings 40:16 44:20,22

deals 20:22 22:24 280:5

dealt 16:12 25:22 26:24 116:11

**Deandra** 193:16 194:25 199:22 200:5 205:9

Dearborn 191:2

deaths 32:18

debate 291:5

**decades** 229:16

**December** 39:13 167:6,7 168:12

173:8 232:2

**decide** 28:4 43:13 60:9 62:23 63:17 175:1 213:25 241:8 265:17

**decided** 51:22 172:4 212:1 265:19 293:9

decides 202:4 283:22

**decision** 52:10,22 60:12,23 61:3 165:6 166:11 172:3 175:2 176:4 177:4 186:17 262:25 293:5,6

decisions 50:14

**declaration** 71:2,3 74:21 100:19 110:2,6 114:9,11 118:10 121:5 125:3,15 128:17 146:23 155:22 160:10 184:5 193:25 196:2 207:3 214:4 217:4 218:23 257:9

declare 215:3

declined 212:3

deemed 134:12

**default** 148:20

defective 50:1

defend 65:6

defendant's 101:19

defendants 167:4

defender 262:24

**defense** 232:15

**defer** 16:21 19:1 107:25 116:14

123:4 279:12 288:5

deferential 174:1

deferred 174:8

**define** 44:22

defined 106:23 107:4

**definitely** 125:11 200:7,23 201:3,14 243:23 278:4 300:15

definitive 230:3,5

defray 287:7 292:5

**degree** 300:17

**delay** 298:23 299:4,6 300:10 302:25 303:1,5

delayed 62:19

delegate 163:3 254:5,6

deliberately 61:6

delivered 196:5 197:11

delivery 196:6

**Delphi** 165:23

delve 241:10

demands 33:11

democracy 276:17

**democrat** 68:4 82:19,21 122:5 201:4 218:5,11,16,18 219:7,10

Index: democratic..discussion

220:15 221:3,4,5,6,22 222:13 223:8,17 224:22 225:7,17 226:11 230:8 234:25 235:6,7 237:7 238:9 239:4 240:4,5 252:5,25 255:9,10 267:19 300:21,22 301:2 304:3

democratic 14:4 36:18 67:18 70:14,21 81:5 83:2 93:11 99:7 100:12 118:4 120:19 123:13 127:11,14 155:15 159:23,24 193:17 195:9 199:23 200:10 216:22 218:14 220:18 237:9 242:25 249:25 251:16 256:16 277:6 300:21

demonstrated 39:23 301:1

demonstrates 208:1,11

demoralizing 82:16

denied 143:8 181:15 246:14

**deny** 25:11 26:2,3,5 30:20 37:16 48:10,17,21 49:5 58:7 59:15,16 63:10,20 65:12,20 67:5 69:7,9 142:5,12,25 265:16

Department 32:17

departments 51:25

**dependent** 274:12 276:7 278:8

**depending** 17:2 39:10 178:20 186:13 203:20

**depends** 138:9

Deposition 5:14

depositions 157:24

**Derek** 251:1

described 273:3

designates 51:4

designation 235:10

desire 275:25

desk 139:21

despite 39:23 62:9

destroy 204:3 299:12

destroyed 233:4

**detail** 106:5 231:22

detailed 32:9.22

details 40:18 46:11

determination 52:2 53:14 116:3

211:18 268:4

determinative 142:3

**determine** 30:20 43:6 51:5 53:6 176:3 292:16 306:6 307:13

determined 97:15 275:1

determining 50:12,18

did 20:16 23:22 26:1 31:25 35:18 36:8 45:25 52:20 55:17 60:6,13, 14 62:4 66:8,13 68:17 72:3 74:9, 11,16 75:12,19 76:4,9 79:25 80:9 82:9 84:15 87:11,21 89:18 90:13 91:8 95:6,13,17,18 96:19,20 97:7 98:14,19,21 101:15 104:3,17,25 105:14 106:3 113:10,15 114:18 115:1 119:8 133:4,12 136:11,24 137:4,7,21 138:24 140:25 146:24 147:1 153:21 156:1 159:19,25 160:7 165:7 169:3 173:12,18 178:13,23 181:4 182:2 184:10,11 189:12 190:14 191:22,24,25 194:5 195:5,8 198:17 199:24 200:15 201:10,17,22 203:9 206:4 207:8 210:19,20,25 213:25 220:17 223:10 224:20 225:5,8,11 230:19 237:8 244:7 245:21,25 246:25 253:3 257:1 260:6 261:8,9 262:21 263:11 265:7,9,11,13,24 266:10,18 269:13,24 270:7,15 279:17 281:10 282:2 283:9,14 284:6 286:8,9 293:25 297:4 298:8,19 299:20 300:13 304:5,10 305:23 307:6

didn't 23:10 33:6 35:23 37:23 40:4 49:10 60:4 61:19 62:10,11, 16 66:8,19,21 80:3 83:8 84:3,8 85:22 86:20 88:10,14,20,21 91:20 92:23 93:24 97:5 114:20 115:1 137:1 139:18,22 140:6,13 148:18 164:3 166:5,7 168:10 171:2,8 173:7 175:10 177:20 181:1,5 187:17 195:4,5,15 197:13 200:1 201:12,15 203:5 220:12 225:1 233:9 247:4 249:14 254:7 260:12 280:14 299:23

died 203:23

Dietrick 165:2

Dietrick's 165:13 170:13 175:12

difference 62:24 133:10

**different** 84:13 89:21 96:22,23 109:15 113:6,9 142:6 162:6

195:10 198:7 199:24,25 212:5 215:15 224:20 225:25 230:7 234:8 236:21 264:9,11 284:8 290:13

**difficult** 117:10 121:22 278:2 293:10

digital 76:4

digitally 75:24

digitized 201:16

dinner 280:11

**direct** 12:8 65:22 143:9 152:23 160:15

**directed** 15:2 100:3 103:11,22, 24 105:7 113:12 117:20 120:7 127:2 143:10 149:18 183:12 189:1 193:8 205:8 216:14 256:9 258:9 271:5 272:11

direction 61:2 178:2 227:25

**directly** 34:16 262:25 263:1 264:21 275:4

disability 31:15 53:18 283:4

disadvantages 90:24

**disagree** 15:25 63:15 75:15 307:1

disagreement 44:10

disappearing 25:4

discerns 236:9

disclose 15:18 200:18

disclosure 234:2

**discretion** 46:18 211:12,20,22, 24 212:6

discrimination 92:11 93:2

discriminatory 94:2 97:18

discuss 189:9,10

discussed 28:3 131:16 211:14

discusses 226:6

**discussing** 45:2 96:18 206:5 224:17 285:16

**discussion** 6:19 8:15 9:14 10:16 13:16 14:18 25:20 54:6 58:21 59:19 90:17 96:10 99:20 112:13 122:23 128:2 131:7 142:16 149:9 150:20 152:15 155:2 183:1

Index: disenfranchise..doing

188:15 192:24 202:16 204:24 215:7 216:4 255:25 258:1 264:5

disenfranchise 179:22

disenfranchised 58:12

disenfranchisement 180:11

disenfranchising 254:23

dismiss 13:3 14:13 26:4 29:19 37:20 43:8 44:8 48:18 49:23 67:3 69:7,8,9,11,13 99:10 130:6,25 131:3 154:17,19,20,21,22 155:1 156:7,12 194:24 257:2,21,24 271:21,24,25 272:4

dismissal 153:17

**dismissed** 15:1 70:1 155:9 156:19 258:9 272:10,11

disparate 93:3

disparately 83:14 95:21

displaced 244:1,6

disposable 280:14

dispositive 226:15

**dispute** 238:8 255:8 259:20 260:2

disputes 50:2 51:22 53:1 229:9

disputing 239:3

disqualification 43:1 55:3 65:21

disqualifications 38:16

**disqualified** 17:13 43:13 51:15 53:7 54:14 97:5

**disqualify** 34:20,23 35:9,20 43:14 45:13 48:5,9,11,19,20 52:18 123:5

disregard 169:9

disrupting 32:12

disseminate 246:17

distinctly 109:15 233:11

distribute 210:11 246:10

distributed 20:5 71:13 295:16

**district** 14:5 72:21 73:2,10,12 75:11 76:13 85:14,17 86:7,9 87:11,22 88:7 96:22 100:13 101:20 115:3 118:5 120:20 122:7 127:13,15 133:4,13 134:3,9 137:8

138:12 144:3,6 150:2 151:7 183:22 184:25 190:6 191:19 193:18 205:25 206:3 207:5 208:19,20 209:21 216:23 217:21, 22,24 218:18 221:24 222:9 250:17 252:3 256:17 274:5

districts 72:24 74:25 81:7

diverse 275:9

division 5:10 10:1 11:8,14,16,21 12:2,6,7 14:9 15:1,10 17:4 42:14 65:22 67:20 70:16 100:2 103:23, 24 106:1 110:7 114:4 115:11 117:19 120:6 121:8 127:1 128:21 129:3 143:10 149:17 152:23 183:12 189:1 193:7 194:5 199:7, 9,11 205:8 216:13 217:9 224:10 256:8 257:12 258:9 271:5 272:11 285:17 288:14

**Dixon-tatum** 70:12,14 72:18,23 74:10 75:12,21 76:2,7 78:15 84:21 85:16 87:13,16,23 88:2,9, 17,24 89:5,16 91:3,6,22 98:17,20 99:4,6,12,19 100:3 155:12 156:3

**do** 7:10,11,15,16 10:22 15:23 16:21 17:20 18:1 22:3,11 23:14 29:3 33:6 34:7,17 36:6 37:3,9,13 38:5 39:11 41:4 42:15,20 43:16, 25 44:19 46:6 47:24 48:8 52:1 54:1 56:1,11,15,18 57:13 61:2 62:11,23 64:9,17,25 73:21 81:19 83:17 89:18,25 90:2,4 91:13 92:5, 6,10,21 95:5,16,23,24 98:1,17,25 99:7 103:22 104:3,12,22 106:3,9 108:14 110:9,11,16,22 111:18 112:24 116:9,22,24 119:3 121:22 123:18,19 126:7 127:20 130:16 135:11 138:1 139:14,23 140:1,9 143:15 144:7 146:22 147:4 148:1 153:12 157:9 158:4 159:5 161:2, 17,25 162:1 165:13 166:1 169:12 172:15,22 173:12 174:24 176:8 177:11,17 178:24 179:8,13 181:2, 4,10,20 186:19 187:7,13,16 189:12 198:22,23 199:3,5 200:4, 5,13 201:1 202:8,14 204:4 205:17 211:6,9 212:12,15,16 215:18 219:11,22 222:15 225:23 230:20 232:12 233:10 234:14 241:9 243:21 245:14 247:1 248:16 250:7 252:7,9 255:4 259:20 260:2,3,13,23,25 261:2,11 264:7, 8,14,20 265:12,23 268:1,6,16,19 269:3 270:15 271:18 272:14,16

275:13 277:5 280:12,15,20,25 281:6,13,23 283:11 284:15 286:25 289:3,5,12 291:15 292:10, 14,22 293:4 294:25 295:2,4,6,9 297:6 299:12,17,19,20 304:2,15 306:4 307:15,25

doctrine 51:1

**document** 101:24 164:8 194:20 196:11 197:10 218:19 220:14 271:17 299:21 304:18

documentation 5:22 71:7 102:3 109:8 118:13 121:3,7 128:19 129:2 139:19 146:1 156:1 194:5 210:9 217:9 234:1 269:25 299:11 300:11 301:3 302:19,22 303:11 305:24

documented 144:23

documents 11:9,13 12:4,9 17:18 20:5 30:5,12 103:16 120:25 128:16 151:20 161:17 164:10,11 193:24 217:12 219:25 257:11 266:12 306:4

does 19:5,7 22:6,7,15 23:4,5 28:15,18 35:7 36:4 43:8 45:3,16 46:6 49:5,6 54:16,21,23,24 55:2, 8,22 59:5 66:4 76:22 82:6 85:24 90:25 102:5 110:19 111:5,24 119:3 126:11 144:10 145:21 146:10 147:14 151:9,10,19 153:16 157:19 165:10 179:1,10 182:9 185:2,3 192:16 203:17 204:14 211:1,9 212:15 220:9,20 223:20 225:25 228:13 234:24 251:14 255:16 258:18 263:15 279:1 283:17 284:15 294:19 295:11 301:15 303:17

doesn't 20:13 23:24 24:10,18 28:19 38:22 44:22 47:7 64:19 69:4 80:20 93:14 133:9 147:25 148:17,19 163:19 167:16 177:21 179:3 187:24 200:16,18 202:19 212:23 220:10 225:12,13 228:10, 11,15 229:18,19 235:5 237:18 251:16 280:1,15 284:1,10,16 285:7 292:24 293:13 303:19

dog 307:22

**doing** 41:4 88:12 95:20 115:12 245:17 247:17 249:21 253:3 270:5 272:18 273:25 280:9 301:18

Index: Dole..election

**Dole** 190:2,22 191:2,8,10,13,15, 24 193:13 260:12.16

dollar 168:3

**dollars** 90:6 286:15 289:15 307:21

don't 16:16,23 25:2,19 36:21 37:17 39:3 40:3,17 41:3,14 42:6, 17,19,21 43:17 44:2,3 45:5 47:4 48:4 49:19 55:16 56:2,4 57:1 64:25 65:7 68:21 69:3 83:9,25 84:11 86:5,24 87:13 91:23,24 97:17,20,21 110:23 111:3 112:2, 24 113:7 116:15 123:7 129:9 135:19,22,23 138:19 142:17 161:20 164:2,6 166:11 168:23 169:10 171:5,9 172:21,22 176:6, 9,22 177:16,24 179:2,12 180:3,8, 23 181:9,19,24 185:11 186:12 187:17,20,22,23 197:3,5,24 198:25 200:3 202:23 204:16 215:1,11 219:15,22 225:2 226:3 228:25 229:13 230:23 231:1 232:12 233:18,24,25 235:2,11,15 237:3,4 238:8 239:25 241:14 243:7,8,15 244:25 246:7,13 247:14,15 252:19 255:8 259:8 265:16 266:23 267:8 268:6,13,15 273:11 274:21 277:9 280:20 281:17,21 290:22 291:5 293:5,15 295:14 297:10 299:13 302:11 304:7 306:17

**Donald** 15:7 17:11 36:12 58:9 60:4 61:5,13,21 62:6,16 63:20 64:2 65:21,23

done 24:1 33:7 52:24 90:7 102:13 111:14 113:3 137:23 162:15 169:18 172:13 174:11 175:6 181:12 223:22 240:19 241:4 269:4 274:22 275:6,23 279:2 280:4,23 281:3 282:10,21 283:23 304:21

door 5:23 6:4 198:20 282:15,19

doorbell 197:16

doors 290:13

**Doris** 230:10,13

**Dossett** 258:12,13 259:6,16,18, 25 260:20,23 261:9,18 263:16 264:2 265:9,13,19 266:7,9 267:10,17,20,24 268:2,11,17 269:5,13 270:6,17 271:6

**Dossett's** 258:17

doubt 225:6 239:21

down 48:4 61:22 62:2 81:23 83:22 103:15 105:18 115:22 175:15 189:11 200:2 201:23 217:12 230:15 247:21,22 261:21 302:7

draft 160:7 277:6 281:3

drafts 287:24

draw 174:20

drifting 143:20

drive 86:20

driver's 137:22 140:7

**due** 35:16 46:8,13 52:24 218:21

**during** 11:24 12:24 32:20 66:24 79:21 168:16 169:16 171:18 209:12 213:7 234:3 243:24 250:19 253:22 278:13 280:16 295:17

duties 106:21 306:9

duty 65:6

Ε

**e-poll** 236:13,25 269:22

E-V-A-N-S 132:15

each 11:7 13:10 24:3 26:22 31:14 56:7 72:21,24 74:24 75:7 81:7 102:6 154:12 157:21,22 179:19 184:9 206:21 208:23 262:17 273:16

earlier 60:14 129:4 146:3 159:12 186:2 233:17 264:3 265:2 296:17 302:7

earliest 185:24 186:9

**early** 236:3

**easier** 62:25 88:21 202:13 275:16

easily 53:4

east 222:7 253:15

eastern 221:25

easy 136:11 252:6

echo 95:7 184:22,23

echoing 58:17

economic 71:5 100:21 101:15, 21 102:8 103:9,14 104:4,19 105:11 106:15 107:15,18,23 108:3,7,21 109:4,9 113:13,16 114:12,14 116:10 128:18,25 155:24 194:2 217:6 257:10 258:23

education 224:13

**effect** 94:22 124:19 127:21 139:5,6,20 169:16 284:1,10

efficiently 10:25

effort 193:14 299:20

efforts 73:23 243:3

eggs 174:19

either 37:25 43:14 69:10 114:10 166:8 176:7 207:13,19 238:13 278:14 285:23

**Eldridge** 127:8 129:7,16,22 132:7

**elected** 55:6 75:17 105:12 162:19 163:3 209:23 219:9 221:23,24 253:9 286:21 287:4,12 300:21

**election** 5:2,9 6:12 7:9,13 8:3 10:1 11:8,14,16,21 12:2,7 14:9 15:1,4,10 17:3 24:4 27:9 30:19 33:18 42:10 50:7 51:19 52:3 59:25 61:5,20 64:12 65:22,24 67:20 70:16 72:13 73:23 75:13.23 78:1 79:22 92:21 93:8,12,15 94:17 97:3 100:2,5 101:14 102:11,13 103:23,24 106:1 110:7 112:16 114:4 115:11 117:19,22 120:6,9 121:8,23 127:1,4 128:21 133:13 134:1,4,11 135:1,2 137:9, 12,20 138:5,14 140:23 143:10 146:14 149:17,20 152:23,25 160:17 170:19 171:1 183:12,14 189:3 193:7,10 194:5 199:6,8,10 200:8 205:8,10 208:2 213:12 216:13,15 217:9 218:5,12 225:24 230:12,14,15,17 231:15 233:8 236:4 237:1 240:10 244:21 253:24 254:2,11 255:9 256:8,11 258:9 260:4 262:10,15 266:22 267:5 268:21 269:10 271:5,8 272:11 274:15,23 275:24 277:22 282:1 285:17 288:14 291:21,23

292:1 295:22 298:10 endorsed 179:25 180:17 261:12.22 262:7 263:7 265:5 267:1.6 269:11 270:11 election' 137:11 endorsement 36:12 errors 233:18 269:23 **elections** 28:13 90:20 92:20 **enemies** 31:13 170:17,24 180:20 207:20 208:3 especially 275:12 enforce 178:5 218:11,21 220:5,6 230:2 233:15 espousing 90:24 254:13,14 261:25 304:3 **enforced** 53:4.21 essentially 10:2 27:14,16 92:14, elector 24:14 31:4 enforcement 32:21 15 107:5 124:23 186:1 257:2 electoral 24:16 50:23 51:11 61:8 262:17 288:7 **engage** 39:17 **electors** 21:7,10 22:25 23:6,8,9 establish 8:25 182:16 engaged 31:11 53:9 24:5 50:12 51:10 64:9.11 established 163:15 232:2 engagement 22:12 182:3 306:8 electric 139:24 establishment 162:22 engages 40:16 electronic 204:9 233:4 234:13, engraft 239:24,25 estimated 32:19 14,17,19 270:1 et 46:13 enhanced 299:5 electronically 142:8 ethics 264:18 **enioined** 168:14.18 169:2 **elects** 63:18 enough 64:11 124:5 137:2 **Evans** 16:3 18:8 34:14 132:9,15 element 142:22 220:11 187:13 266:5 133:22 **elements** 91:17 215:12 ensure 63:12 274:24 even 21:24 29:5 42:12 64:19 eleven 192:6 208:21 84:10 94:15 96:19 115:17,25 enter 72:11 76:18 163:7,13 168:21,22,25 176:9 eligibility 51:5 306:13 180:17 195:4 203:5 204:16 entered 11:15 32:11 33:15 71:20 **eligible** 134:1 159:17 207:17 109:13 180:17 203:25 217:13 208:16 214:12 220:11 227:10 234:7 244:22 230:18 233:3 243:11 245:23 **else** 21:3 59:11 65:8 83:23 92:12 260:18,24 266:12 267:15 270:8 94:20 104:12 112:25 138:3 175:3 entertain 83:20 294:24 297:10 302:25 186:4 197:17 227:11 307:23 entertaining 215:8 event 266:9 286:8 email 144:19.24 153:20 226:5 entire 11:1 92:13 169:4 172:11 246:18 249:9,18 250:5,8 257:1,4, events 32:18 33:16,17 265:14,24 177:8 180:5 191:18 198:25 222:6, 19 277:1 287:16 11 231:17 252:23 275:11 **embarrassing** 80:24 81:15 eventually 86:15 entirely 191:18 215:16 embarrassment 51:24 ever 40:2 208:7 232:13 244:7 **entirety** 168:16 259:7 emergency 167:25 186:24 entities 51:4 65:2 every 75:25 90:20 163:2 266:9 **empiric** 253:20 279:4 **entitled** 135:21 employed 15:20 everybody 40:20,23 92:19 161:9 envelope 85:24 enacted 23:1 53:12 279:7 301:5 equal 13:9,10 **everyone** 5:17 10:3 94:3 217:18 enacting 294:15 equipment 284:12 282:21 enactment 53:20 equitable 81:25 173:6

equity 91:2

169:12

encourage 37:24 40:20 98:25

**end** 16:2 28:1 56:1 66:12 72:5

95:15 115:18 199:11 213:11

215:6 248:20,21,25 254:23

278:9

263:13 266:11

ended 212:10

everything 103:17 106:1 112:23 121:2 171:10 178:2 210:11 263:5 265:1 266:11 279:6 305:20 **equivalent** 108:22 142:10 307:23 evidence 12:5 28:2 76:18 83:13 erroneous 109:24 116:10 94:4 109:11 123:2 130:9 140:2,10 142:10 202:17,24 203:1,3 222:15 erroneously 261:25 223:17 226:21,22 231:3 232:5 error 110:14 228:1 243:6 260:17 239:19 240:16 241:4 246:9

247:12,13 259:21 260:13 304:13 305:22 306:23

evidently 303:14

**ex** 43:1 246:22

**exact** 121:14 123:10 152:5 290:25

exactly 53:21 84:3 116:16

examining 77:25

**example** 44:23 203:22 214:24 230:10

exceeded 98:16

**exceeds** 291:15

excellent 26:18

**except** 38:18 41:15 76:12 219:19 252:24 264:17

exception 94:8

exclude 42:9

**excluded** 94:4 95:15

excludes 19:17

excluding 93:6 126:18

**excuse** 13:9 143:9 159:8 196:15

executed 213:15 executive 31:9

exhaust 66:3

**exhausted** 66:6 67:12

**exhibit** 35:6,12,13 76:21 160:5 184:10 185:22 218:7 260:16 261:14,15,16,18 262:3,8,9

exhibits 157:21,23 160:9

existence 174:13

existing 292:21

expanded 254:17

expenditure 290:4

**expenditures** 278:9 283:19

**expense** 286:12 287:8 292:5,9, 16.17

**expenses** 276:7,11 285:11,19 287:16

expensive 82:10 83:21

experienced 80:18

**experts** 115:11

**expire** 137:24

expired 84:23,25

**explain** 104:15 165:9,19 167:2

225:15 304:20

explained 192:3

explaining 277:4

explicitly 42:9,14 276:6

express 35:4 162:25

**expressed** 34:24 170:4 185:19

expressing 52:24

expressly 52:11

extend 85:2,4

extended 56:14

**extent** 176:19

extra 81:9 219:16

extraordinary 167:11,13,15

168:6

extremely 165:2 300:24

F

face 50:1 90:1 93:2 94:1 114:24

Facebook 185:23

faced 89:24 113:5

facilitate 248:5

fact 15:18 20:12 23:9 31:16 45:6 79:24 126:5 140:2 147:14 165:14 169:9 170:10 173:25 176:1 185:11 195:9 212:25 219:15 220:16,17,18 225:4,8 226:17,23 239:23 241:13 260:24 261:20 264:19 279:12

factors 306:14 307:4

**facts** 30:18,24 32:2 33:9 37:11 116:16 132:23

**factual** 125:10 173:25 174:5 206:18 220:23

factually 125:19 173:21 212:16

**faded** 72:5

**failed** 13:4 30:25 31:25 72:20 90:7 163:10 177:6 267:23

fails 207:24 246:8

failure 69:6 207:9,13

fair 95:24 266:5

**fairly** 10:25

faith 61:7 219:21 290:6

fall 44:24 45:17

fallibility 227:18 234:5

fallible 240:2

**falls** 73:8 74:13 134:25 135:4 191:17,18 275:5 276:16

familiar 36:6 165:22 181:23 222:20 225:19,20,22

families 253:16 280:6 281:6

family 253:3,14 276:11 300:20

family's 300:25

Famously 33:16

**far** 48:4 62:15 92:8 94:14 105:14 124:14 133:16 142:20 151:11 178:7 184:16 203:17 233:22 281:12 289:18 294:4 305:6

fashion 87:4

fast 196:21

faster 285:8

**father** 219:9

fault 265:6 305:20

favor 6:21 8:17 9:15 10:17 13:18 14:19 26:9 29:22 48:22 49:1 54:7 57:2,8 65:12 69:20 77:14 85:6 99:21 116:23 119:25 126:19 128:3 130:18 131:8,22 143:2 145:10 149:10 150:21 152:16 154:4 155:3 156:14 158:13 166:8 183:4 188:19 189:18 192:25 205:2 216:6 223:25 249:2 256:1 258:2 263:21 270:24 272:4 273:19 295:23 296:11 297:25

favorite 90:2

**February** 5:3 31:23 40:4 74:12 75:22 85:20 103:7,19,20 104:10 110:4 168:13,16 169:17 192:8 194:19 196:6 208:13 268:10

Index: FEC..for

FEC 122:1 282:2,10 283:9 286:17

federal 20:10,21 28:16,17 32:21 51:3 52:19 121:17 122:6,12 123:14 178:14 182:14 229:23 274:14,15 277:22 280:24 281:4 282:1 287:9

**feel** 34:15 35:20 42:19 49:19 58:12 61:23 113:5 117:4,10 218:13 275:5 276:5 280:1

feels 279:10 291:11

fellow 37:15 felony 262:24 felt 64:24 170:6

101 04.24 170.0

female 96:4,17 97:4 233:1

**few** 17:18 30:5,24 54:2 81:1,9,12 86:17 143:20 148:23 265:23

fides 221:6 fifth 121:18 fight 83:21

**fights** 217:25

figure 243:1 285:13

figuring 181:17

file 40:4 71:6 74:9,16,21,22 75:20 92:12 101:10 103:8,9 104:4,18,19 105:10,23 106:18,19 107:18,22 113:13,15 114:12 115:21,24 119:10,16 122:8 163:20 167:10 254:1

filed 9:25 11:20 13:6 14:7 17:10 18:12 40:5 43:8 68:9,12,15 70:23 71:5,10,22 72:17 74:11,17 75:23 100:17,22 103:13,16 104:9 105:16,21 106:4 107:11 108:2,3,8 109:10,16 110:4 115:6 118:9 120:24 121:3,16,24 123:3 125:20 128:15,18 129:1,6,21 134:6,9,21 152:2 155:18,22 160:10 167:4 168:5 185:1 192:2 193:23,25 194:2,9,18 199:10 207:3,6 208:13 217:3,7,10 252:2 253:24 256:24 257:10 264:9

files 305:1

filing 14:5,10 15:5,11 18:14 19:5 27:9 30:20 67:21 70:17,25 105:13 108:6,21,22 110:5,16,18 114:20 115:16,23 116:4,6,10 125:25 132:25 146:13 155:24 168:15,17

169:16 172:11,23 173:11 177:9 192:8 206:15 233:17 259:5 268:9

**filings** 109:24 110:3,19 114:5 123:6 157:21 167:21

fill 78:16,22

filled 204:18 307:4

filling 105:1 113:25

fills 113:22

**final** 32:24 43:21 44:3 67:6 166:10 180:23 182:19 240:1 248:23 265:20

**Finally** 54:16

finance 7:22,23,25 8:3,6,11 122:13 123:3,6 125:21,24 126:1,4 273:2 274:23 275:14,24 276:8 280:22 283:19 286:11 289:11,15 290:15

**finances** 274:11,16

**financial** 40:16 44:20,22 46:7,14 74:22 121:16,25

find 37:18 60:8 63:18 64:3 93:21 95:6 100:15,19 118:8 123:5 124:22 125:9 128:14 155:17 157:21 174:16 176:13,14 193:22 196:4,21 203:8 217:2 220:13 224:21 230:24 240:20 247:23 250:7 256:23 258:16 266:15 288:8 294:2 298:19 299:10,23 305:19

**finding** 212:3 266:18,22 268:20 276:1

findings 173:25 174:4

fine 20:8 98:8 170:11 179:25 182:11

finish 36:21 40:13 266:2

**firm** 15:19 16:2,3 18:8 132:9 191:1

first 11:18 18:1,14,21 19:11 20:9 22:19 25:13,21 29:3 38:3 41:16 44:8 49:25 55:17 93:5 132:23 135:8 139:7 157:10 158:2 161:8 165:20 167:9 169:20 170:2 185:14 203:6 222:24 260:16 261:10,12 271:17 272:15 283:8 290:16

first-generation 276:12

fish 211:2

**Fisher** 191:11,15

**fit** 187:20

**five** 11:22 12:13,24 17:22 21:8 34:3 45:25 49:22 84:23,24 118:16 136:8 137:5 159:23 164:1,3 189:9 209:18 217:17 219:3 259:17 301:13

**five-minute** 70:4,7 73:16 143:16 223:19 259:1

fix 83:17 115:16

fixed 262:18

flawed 226:23

flip 38:14

flipped 78:6

flooded 93:23

floor 194:23 282:12

Florida 224:12 243:15

fly 38:5

**folks** 62:1 84:11 95:14 112:25 175:20 184:16 200:4 254:19 288:9 290:3

**follow** 37:12 43:8 65:3 75:17 79:20 88:18 112:21 117:4 175:23 179:1 181:2,4 254:25 275:8

follow-up 88:12 227:16

followed 11:3 113:12

**following** 5:5 11:6 12:11,16,18, 25 18:24 72:23 114:8,11 148:12 180:14 220:4

follows 68:8 273:11

for 5:17,20 6:13 9:8 10:5,10 11:4, 6,20,21,23 12:13,14 13:1,9,12,13 14:4 15:7,8,15 16:11 17:4,12 19:20 21:1,21 23:6,11 24:13,16, 18 25:6 26:22 27:1,8,18 30:2,7, 13,16,22 32:1 33:14,20 34:25 35:17,22 36:5,6,11,25 37:16 38:1, 5,13 39:3,4 40:17,25 41:4,6,15 42:19,25 43:22 44:23 45:11 46:6 47:12 49:13 50:20,24 51:10 53:20 55:2,7,25 56:6,12,14 57:17 58:1, 15 59:25 62:3,5 63:12 64:6 65:10 66:17 67:18 68:14,24 70:3,14,15, 21 71:1,10,17 73:20,22 75:21,23 76:5,12,21 78:7,15,17 79:9 80:7,

Index: forego..fully

20,24 81:4 82:9,11 84:5,17 85:4 86:25 87:18.22 89:24 90:12 91:24 92:19 96:3,22 97:17 98:5 99:1,6, 7,19 100:11,12 101:1,11,13,14, 18,21 102:1,8 103:8 104:7,18 105:23,25 106:10,13 107:14,22 109:23 110:1,5,17 113:1,25 114:1,4,16 115:11,13,16,19 116:2,7,11 117:6 118:3,4,16 119:7 120:12,18,19 121:13,17,18 122:1 123:14 124:4,10,14 125:7 126:10 127:11,12,14 128:13 129:22,23 132:11,19 133:13 134:1,4,13,21 135:7,21 137:8,21, 24 138:22 140:12 141:13,21,25 143:20 144:1,2,5,7 145:23 146:7, 20 147:15,22 148:10 149:25 150:1 151:7,21,25 155:14,15,17, 19,20 156:23 157:22 159:4,18 160:8 161:9,14 162:7,20 163:9,22 164:9,22 165:23 166:16 167:4 168:1,25 169:21 170:14 171:6,20, 22 172:4,5,7,12 173:2,14 174:7, 24 176:8,21 178:14,18 179:7,15 181:12,16 182:19 183:21 184:3,9 189:9,13,14,23 190:4,5,9,12,17 191:2,8 192:10,11 193:13,17,18, 21 194:16,20 195:19 196:7 199:16 200:13,15,21,22 201:12 202:22 205:15,18,23,24 206:3,9, 14,18,21,22 207:4,18 208:17 209:7,15,18 210:10,15,18 211:13 212:2,19 213:7,8,12,18,20,21,25 214:2,3,7,23,24 215:13,21 216:22,23 217:25 218:1,13,17,18, 24 219:5,18,24 220:2,24 221:10, 15,25 222:25 223:23 225:25 227:17 228:23 229:8 230:1,18 232:3,7 233:17 235:25 236:13 237:3,4,11,25 238:2 240:8 241:2, 6,23 242:10 243:2,13 244:17,22 245:1 247:11 248:10,17 249:12 250:15,16,18,23 251:1 252:3,15 253:1,5,11,20 254:1,5,6,14,15 256:16 258:14,19 259:1 261:19, 24 262:2,12 263:18 264:9,15,17, 20 265:20 266:13,20 267:9,21 268:1,16,23 269:19 271:14,15 272:25 274:2,5,8,10,15 275:2,20, 25 276:13,19,20,23 278:1,7 279:15,25 281:6 282:21 285:3,11, 19 286:10,12,19 287:3,9,14,15 288:16 289:2,8,21 290:4,14 293:1 296:3 298:12,15 300:2,11 301:19 304:15 305:2,19 307:11,18

forego 98:2

foregoing 55:7

foremost 41:16 49:25 132:23

forever 33:22 227:9

forget 16:20 232:20

forgot 16:5,9 230:14,15

**form** 14:10 15:11 58:18 67:21 68:12 70:17 71:1 105:17,18 107:18 113:14 115:6 121:5,16 123:21 124:20 141:13 168:21,25 214:4 217:10 218:24 241:22 278:12 304:23 307:5

former 200:8 253:5

forming 276:13

**forms** 11:11 78:2,21 105:1 115:12 122:9 168:24

Fort 209:9 252:13,17 253:8,16

**forth** 16:18 30:22 46:19 54:18 106:2 199:3 257:19 284:9 291:3 294:14

**forum** 176:14

**forums** 51:5

**forward** 29:4 35:19 36:18,22 37:12,21 39:1 40:21 43:4,6,11 46:23 47:2 105:15 240:22 260:5 269:24 285:21

forwards 223:13

**found** 31:20,24 94:21 122:1 173:24 195:21 212:1 232:4,22 233:7 277:22

Foundation 81:1

**four** 20:2 45:11 47:5,8,22 94:18 96:6 159:23 161:19 162:5 178:19 261:24

four-one 181:8

four-year 84:6 254:12,14

**fowl** 211:2

Fox 190:3,4 192:11,13 193:8

Fox's 191:4

frame 299:2

framers 57:14

framework 211:15,16

**frankly** 212:16 220:19 278:25 279:21

**fraud** 61:6,9

fraudulent 33:9

fray 281:1

free 33:24 254:14

**freedoms** 276:15

**Fremont** 212:24

frequently 163:16

friend 5:13 230:13

friendlier 176:12

friendly 176:13,14 252:11

frivolous 93:19

from 5:13 7:24 8:2 9:6 16:14 17:13 32:3 33:19 42:9 44:8 46:2 48:7 51:2,6,17,24 52:19 53:7 54:23,25 55:5,6,19 61:11 62:1,6,9 67:24 69:14 74:23 75:20 76:9,16 83:5 86:25 89:2 98:20,22,25 103:25 110:8 121:22 122:1,10 126:18 138:16 146:17,19 147:4 148:5 153:12,17 157:20,22 159:1, 2,3,4 160:2 162:12 164:20 168:12,15 169:17 172:18 173:14 174:20 177:15,23 178:2,25 179:6, 9 180:23 181:19 185:9 190:15 192:6 195:18 196:14 197:10,18 203:4,10 206:2,6 213:23 214:5 219:8 220:14 224:16 225:4,14 227:13 228:16,21 234:16 236:20 239:2 240:9 243:20 245:21 249:18,21 250:20 251:18,20 252:21 253:14,15 254:12 257:1,4, 11 259:10,13 262:10 264:6 266:22 270:15 272:21 274:9 275:4 277:2,4,22 284:14 286:6 287:24 288:2 289:13 295:22 298:23 300:18 304:7 306:17

**front** 19:16 20:12 31:18 72:10,14 113:1 260:2,6 263:9 264:25 290:3

fulfill 93:14

full 32:23 91:13 136:17 146:7 160:8 165:25 186:19 219:20 234:2

full-time 90:8 280:9

fully 20:1 67:12 138:20

Index: function..grace

function 35:3

**funds** 274:25 275:14 276:8 278:7 285:11 286:11

**further** 50:22 53:25 56:12 76:15 80:11 88:3 112:13 149:9 162:3 183:1 188:15 192:24 216:4 241:11 270:23 273:3

furtherance 287:3,16

furthermore 169:2

**future** 52:19 106:6 171:6 269:20 285:5 289:9 300:1

# G

**G-R-A-V-E-S** 221:19 223:4 298:14

**Gabriel** 68:10

game 18:2

Garcia 272:22

**Garcia-wilburn** 273:4,5,8 275:19,20 276:24 278:18,23

gather 61:18 233:6

gathered 32:7 61:21 80:15 133:1

gatherers 83:20

gathering 82:8 91:16

**gave** 32:20 33:3 105:18 237:18 241:21 245:1 269:10 284:23

gender 83:8

general 20:19 21:5,16 22:16,17, 18 23:1 28:14 51:20 55:3 59:9 64:12,15 91:6 101:21 107:19 134:2,11 137:11 146:14 170:5 214:3 225:24 227:12 235:18 278:13 279:14,18 282:8 284:6 285:21 288:11,16,20 293:18 294:1,13

general's 168:2

generally 54:12 80:23 91:5

generated 267:6

generation 276:2

gentleman 103:10 104:20

gentlemen 162:2

get 7:20 10:9,25 15:17 18:20

25:25 27:13 41:3.4 44:13 56:1 62:1 64:11 72:3 74:19.23 75:4 80:4 82:11 83:9 84:3 85:23 90:7 91:1,25 92:3 93:19 95:4 96:24 97:21 102:20 105:23 112:22 113:13 114:24,25 116:6 120:14 121:2 129:10 138:24 139:23 143:19 148:5 164:2 165:13 170:24 171:10 175:3 177:24 186:7 200:3 201:11 203:8,9 213:3 215:2 219:11,15 220:16 223:7,22 225:1 227:6,8 243:2,6 245:2,7 246:9,16 248:13 251:3 252:12 264:12 274:18 276:17 280:11,16 282:6,20 283:10 293:11 299:7 301:15,25 302:8,10,11 304:1 307:13

**gets** 90:20 115:24 142:18 164:19 170:21 176:3,19 212:7 230:5 241:8 252:13 301:17,20 307:10, 12

**getting** 5:17 20:4 166:24 217:12 256:21 262:13 298:23 300:10

give 7:13 19:24 35:14 41:8 56:17, 21 68:1 76:19 85:12 103:1 104:8 110:25 114:15 136:16 147:7 161:17 184:10 199:7 210:2 212:23 223:20 230:10 246:15 247:22 275:21 280:6 281:9 286:6 297:18 299:21

**given** 5:24 6:4 11:11,20 14:11 15:12 30:12 31:13 33:12 67:22 70:18 102:17 115:4 147:3 184:9 188:16 192:1 196:8 199:15 240:15 262:4 263:4 273:12 282:7 291:1,2 307:21,22

gives 138:1 212:22 286:5

**giving** 25:8,23 33:8 40:22 113:15 166:18 299:8

glad 132:5 156:23

**go** 5:16 10:9 16:17 17:19 18:23 27:25 28:1 30:15 32:3 33:21 36:2 37:12,21 39:3 40:21 44:8 45:18 46:23 47:23 48:7 56:4 64:14 66:5 84:14 86:25 89:12 92:5 94:15 103:23,25 104:3,15,22 106:25 113:19 114:2 116:24 124:13,14 133:14 163:20 165:7,12 170:10 175:15 176:11 181:16 187:9 191:14 198:15 201:11,13 203:18 205:25 210:21,24 211:1 223:13 228:14 229:22 231:21 234:18

236:16 239:12 240:22 243:5,6,7 245:2,5,7 246:1,4 247:22 248:4 251:12,24 265:7 266:8 268:13 269:9,14 272:14,16 277:11 278:25 285:21 288:17 290:3 293:10 304:11 306:18 307:2

God 280:10

**goes** 28:9 73:15 133:16 142:20 281:12,25 282:5 291:25 295:1 300:4

going 36:24 38:7,21 40:9,14,15 58:14,15 60:9 61:18,19 62:21 63:7 64:14 68:24,25 70:3,5 75:17 80:13,17 82:1 85:22 93:16 95:2 96:15 117:5 125:10 130:14 133:14 137:6 143:1,16,19 147:22 153:7 157:5,11 161:16 165:11,19 166:1,3,7 167:2 168:1 172:24 173:13 174:16 175:15,16 179:12, 22,23 181:3,10,14 182:21 186:23 198:25 199:20 202:21 203:21,24 210:2 215:6 233:11 239:24 241:6, 11 247:10 254:22 281:19 283:2 284:12 293:16,20

gone 172:6

**good** 5:12 101:2,3 121:11 139:12 146:8 147:11 176:11 190:14 206:20 212:2 221:9 230:13 236:8 290:6 306:18,21

Google 282:3

GOP 191:2 206:14 214:6 226:13

got 23:13 47:23 56:15 57:13 65:3 79:12 84:16 89:10 91:25 94:12 101:5 103:14 113:1,3,11 118:19 119:10 140:15 157:24 161:16 172:23 175:20 190:8 194:11 195:5 201:23 203:4,5,7 205:15 232:13 240:11 242:6 243:9,12,16, 18 246:2 249:8 250:19 258:23 265:20 266:6 269:18 277:14 282:21 290:4 294:5 306:16 307:19

gotten 126:1 171:15

governed 19:3

**government** 5:4 31:22 32:5 51:3 52:25 57:24 280:25 289:2

**governor** 70:15 78:15 80:7 81:5 89:24 92:19 99:7 155:15

grace 247:22

Index: gracious..has

gracious 298:16

graciously 57:17

**Grady** 200:8

grandfather 253:7

**grant** 53:24 63:6,7 66:15 99:10, 11,14,18 112:8 117:5 166:7 168:10 181:5 215:2 279:4

**granted** 97:9 113:24 165:3 168:10 274:9

granting 37:20 51:17

**Graves** 216:21,22 217:23 218:3, 20 219:6,9 220:13,17 221:7,9,18, 23 222:4,14,19,23,24 223:3,9,12, 15 224:10 229:4 235:3 237:1,13, 22 238:2 240:17,19 242:12,15 243:24 244:5,9,12 297:14,16,17 298:9,13,19 299:4,25 301:24 302:4,21 303:13,17,21 304:4,9,17 306:1,3,19 307:9

Graves' 218:6,8

**great** 33:19 106:2 112:7 129:12 165:18 177:3 180:11 217:25 276:10 281:3

great-grandmother 203:23

Greencastle 184:24

Greenwood 212:23,24 213:2

Greg 132:8 133:20,23

grew 61:15 172:21

**Griffin** 259:11

grounds 123:11,23 124:6,10

groundswell 92:18

group 98:24

groups 83:14

**Guard** 32:22

guardianships 281:14

guess 15:24 27:5 39:12,14,16 40:3 44:20 64:14 69:1 84:19 87:21 91:19 105:8 108:20 113:24 119:6 126:16 131:15 133:20 140:4 148:17 158:2 180:25 182:13,17,19 195:12 228:3,17 232:3 247:11 249:12 268:18 278:8 288:4 292:23 293:19 guessing 235:10

**guidance** 115:4 178:24 179:1,13 181:19,21 283:21 290:2

guidelines 43:9

guides 108:13,14,19

**guilty** 31:25

**guys** 21:13 111:4 160:8 171:12 188:2 301:4

gymnastics 25:25

Н

H-A-H-N 132:13

H-A-R-T-E-R 79:18

H-E-U-E-R 147:12 152:1

had 23:20 29:13 47:14 62:25 65:7 78:2,3,14 81:14,18 82:8 83:4 88:8,9,11,15,16,22 89:17,20,22 90:2,7 91:9 92:8,9,23 96:8,9,11 97:4 98:17,23 103:9 104:19 105:18 121:24 125:20 138:12.18 140:10 141:13 142:5 146:3 148:22 162:24 163:24 164:2,3 165:1,3,5 168:3,8,21 169:8,15,17 171:17,19 172:7,19 173:5 175:21 177:3,9 180:25 181:15 192:1,9 196:1 197:1 201:14,21 202:12 203:14 208:15 209:11,13,22 212:12 213:3 215:4 220:10 222:5 227:19 233:3,14 234:9 237:15 245:24 252:8,11 261:24,25 262:1, 18 265:21 267:4 269:5 279:14 280:9.11 286:10 288:21.22 301:12

hadn't 172:3 239:6

**Hahn** 129:15,17,20 132:8,13,17 133:9,12 143:14

**halfway** 261:21

Hamilton 159:1

**Hancock** 233:12

**hand** 7:10 10:9 12:9 181:13 197:17 232:9 303:6

handbook 106:2,9 112:23

**handed** 28:25 29:1 185:22 217:12

handle 16:19 44:6.7 45:12 245:8

**hands** 57:15 58:7 178:8 302:23

handwriting 84:9,10

Hang 228:14 232:22

happen 33:17 175:10 254:10

**happened** 84:2 85:14,16 86:4,7, 9 87:4 88:12 104:17 105:9 173:22 178:3 196:11 232:15 288:17

happening 62:8 86:18 224:9

**happens** 36:15 46:22 51:12,17 84:15 95:19 106:7 174:19 186:14, 25 240:22

happy 134:14 300:15

**hard** 75:15 79:23,25 80:9 109:19 200:2 296:6 305:13

hardest 186:3

harmonize 24:2

harmony 54:19

**Harper** 205:16 209:6,9,14,19 210:13 211:6,20,23 212:7,10 213:9,20 214:9,18,22 215:6,16 250:21 252:9,11,17 255:7,10,15

**Harris** 50:16

Harrison 159:1

Harter 76:24 79:13,17,18 80:2, 10,13 85:13 92:22 95:11 157:4 160:22 161:20 163:25 164:2,10, 13,24 165:18 166:24 167:2,21,24 169:14 170:7,18,25 171:8 172:9 174:10 175:8 177:7,20 178:10,23 180:10 194:22,24 195:17 196:10 197:5 199:20 200:10,13,15,25 201:4,21 202:1,12,19 203:14 204:2,15 211:15

has 11:3 13:4,6 14:9 15:10 16:12 20:18 21:14 22:1 24:1,25 27:8 28:2,14 30:11,21,25 31:16 33:13, 24 34:23 42:5 43:4,10 44:19 50:10 54:12 57:16 60:17,22 64:9 65:9 67:20 70:16 72:19,23 73:2,3, 4,5,6,11 81:7 82:5,25 84:18,21 97:2,15,18,19 100:21 101:18 102:12 106:19 108:12 114:10 116:8 121:15,16,18 122:12 123:9, 17 129:15 133:7 146:15 151:21 152:3 153:11 162:11 163:21 164:17 165:15 166:10 172:14

Index: hasn't..hearing

173:22 175:18 178:4,18 179:20, 21,25 180:3,14 185:5 186:22 194:2,9,13 196:8 198:23 199:5, 14,22,23 204:18 205:17 206:23 207:3,21 208:1,7,15 211:6,12 212:5,11 217:14,23 218:3,10,11, 20 220:22 221:4,5 222:2,12,14,17 225:24 226:21 227:20 228:16 229:7 231:25 232:10 236:12 239:25 241:4 259:6,7,9 267:6 272:10 274:15 275:25 279:19 281:3 282:10 286:14 288:5 289:13 307:4

**hasn't** 81:23 123:3 148:1 178:3 229:10 280:23 306:21

hate 143:15

Hathaway 256:14 257:20

have 5:23 6:7 7:1,18 8:8,23 9:1,5, 20 13:24 14:1,25 15:5 16:8 17:18, 20,21,24 18:17,19 19:16,21 22:5, 9,11,12,16,17 23:14,25 24:9 25:2, 3,16 26:1,8,15 28:21 29:7 30:5 31:11,18 32:5 33:6,7,20 34:5,7,8, 18,23 35:23 36:24 37:3,10,19 38:5,22 39:2,11 40:25 42:2,14,15, 17 43:13 44:2,4,12,16 45:3 46:2,6 47:3,4,5,9,22 48:13,16,21,22 50:9 51:8 52:1,5 54:1 55:9,16,25 56:11 57:1,20 58:21 59:12,16,24,25 60:12,20 61:2 63:22 65:8,11,19 66:5,18 67:2,15 68:21 69:12,25 70:11 71:11 72:24 73:10 74:18, 20,21 75:5,12,14 76:17 77:6,8 78:9 79:13 80:13,21 81:2,4 82:7, 9,17,23 83:2,12,13,17 86:11 87:7, 15 88:10 89:13,14,18,20,25 90:4, 17,18 91:8,11,12,20,24 92:1,4,16, 23,25 93:13,17,24,25 94:3,20 95:1,3 97:4,8,9,20 98:4 99:5,17, 18,19 100:1,9 102:23,24 104:6 106:3,13,18 108:2,6,9 109:8,11 110:9,22 111:12,13,16 112:4,11, 12,15,24,25 114:20 115:14,17,20 116:9,18 117:4 118:1 119:23 120:5 121:20,22,24,25 122:6,18, 21 123:15.18.19.21 125:18 126:7. 17,25 127:7,20,25 128:9 129:18, 20 130:15,23 131:5,14,19 132:3, 24 133:3 134:19 135:16,23 136:5, 7,8,13,25 137:5,8 138:19 139:16, 21 140:1,13,20 141:25 142:13,25 143:8,22 144:4,7,17 145:6,16,22, 24,25 146:11,19,24 147:14,18 148:20,21,24 149:16 150:7 151:2,

9,10,19 152:22 153:6,11,12,14, 16,22 154:10,12,25 155:9,12 156:11,12,19,22,24 157:5,12,19 158:3,11,18 160:4 161:20,23,25 162:15,22,23 163:5,14,21 164:1, 6,22 166:11 167:7 168:9,25 169:1,3,7,10,18,20 170:14,16,23, 25 171:14,16,19,20,24 172:1,6, 12,13,16,17,19,22,25 173:3,8,9, 10,18,20 174:11,13,22 175:6,7, 15,21,23 176:1,2,6,7,9,17,18 177:2,5,18,19,20,22 178:16,17,24 179:8,13,15,19,24 180:15,21,23 181:2,12,19,20,25 182:1,5,18,24 183:9,24 184:4 185:2,3,17,18 187:1,3,16,24 188:10,14,18,25 190:2,15 191:10,15 192:14,22 193:6 194:23 195:2,4,5 196:12,22 197:10,15,16,24 198:22 200:1,3, 9,16,18,21 201:13,16 202:8,24 203:2 204:4,25 205:7,13,17,21 206:2,5,6 207:19 208:8,16,24 210:9 211:9 212:14,15 213:14,18 214:1 215:2,18,25 216:3,5,12,20 217:15,17 218:15,25 219:7,8,15, 24 220:19 221:1,12 222:15 223:7 225:4,5 226:17,19 227:5,16 228:4,5 229:13,24 231:10 232:3, 4,19 233:4,9,24 234:13,16 236:22,24 240:19,25 241:3,5,6,7, 15,16 242:1 243:8,14,19 245:11 246:3,19 247:6,14,20,25 250:7, 13,23,25 251:15,17,18 252:7 253:23 255:4,23 256:7 257:8,24 258:8 259:17 260:3,13 261:12 263:4,8,12 264:23,25 265:2,4 266:21 267:11 268:2,13,15 269:6 271:4 272:25 273:25 274:7,19,22, 25 276:11,14 277:1,7,9,12 278:2, 12 279:21 280:14,21 281:12,14 282:8,15 283:1,23 286:8,9,15 287:1 288:9 289:1,14 291:1,22,24 294:6 295:2,15,20,21,22 298:6,10 299:15 300:14 301:1,7 302:3,14, 19 303:4,6,10 304:2,7 305:17,21, 24 307:2,16

**haven't** 38:20 97:11 137:23 148:2 173:15 179:11 180:24 186:1 215:15 232:4 234:8 236:5 241:14 247:18

having 8:14 14:17 15:23 23:8 31:6 53:9 60:8 61:14 80:19 119:21 136:25 152:12 154:3 166:16 198:21 206:22 220:25 255:2 272:3 275:9,14 282:14

**he** 15:22 17:11 27:8,9 28:1,3 30:18 33:3,5,13,16,25 40:5 56:15 61:6,8,9,10,15,24,25 62:3,4,6,8,9, 10,11,12,13,17,20,21 77:8 81:12, 14,16,21 90:6,7,8 96:8,11 102:11, 12 104:22 113:12,15,19,20,22 114:18,20 121:15,16,18,24 122:7, 8,10,12 125:20,21 130:2,3 144:19,21,22 146:4,15 147:14 151:19,21 152:3 159:11,21,22 160:1 162:21 163:4,9,10,13,16 164:2,3 167:16 169:15,17,18,20, 24 170:16,18,19,21,25 171:14,19, 23,24 172:1,2,4,5,6,7,8,14,16,19 173:17 174:13,22 175:6,8 177:7, 17,18,19,20,22 179:23 180:13 185:2,3,5,24 186:12 187:13 190:13 191:3,21,24,25 192:3,4 202:1,2,3,5 204:16 206:3 207:6,8, 11 208:1,4,11,13,16 210:6,13,16, 25 212:7,10,22,23,25 213:2,3,15, 24 227:19 241:4 250:21 251:14, 16 252:4 253:1,2 254:6 255:9,10 257:10 258:18 259:6,7,9,22 261:7,8,9 263:3 265:13,14,19 271:19

he'll 157:6 264:24

he's 27:25 113:19 116:14 122:4 130:1,8 141:24 159:24 162:21 163:18 171:22 180:13 185:4 210:21 213:20,21 214:10 266:3 269:17

head 60:10 230:24

heading 7:20

hear 21:24 24:22 25:10 28:22 30:16 49:11 58:10 66:17 81:25 84:1 108:1 147:4 171:2 249:14 303:8

**heard** 29:2 50:8 61:11 62:6 186:2 233:22 234:10 238:12 245:23 304:14

hearing 6:20 8:9,17 9:23 10:17 11:8 13:18 14:19 22:2 35:2,22 38:18 42:8 47:3 54:7 68:17,18 71:7,8,14 73:22 100:22,23 113:3 118:11,14 121:6 128:3,19,20 129:1,2,5 131:8,22 144:20 145:10 149:10 150:21 152:16 155:3,25 156:2 166:16 171:19 173:1,4 183:3 192:25 194:3,6 195:15,18 196:6 199:17 205:1 217:7 232:11 255:21 256:1 257:11,12 258:2

Index: hearings..house

268:25 273:11

**hearings** 7:19 11:5 13:14 66:25 123:22 162:24 199:6

**heart** 60:11

heavy 7:18 281:10,11

heck 92:9

**hectic** 140:12

**held** 50:10 53:14 169:9 202:16 212:13 220:7 299:11

**Hello** 217:18

**help** 24:15 30:2 90:6 118:18 136:1 197:8 275:15 299:14

**helpful** 124:10 **helping** 88:11

helps 83:18 132:6 275:10

Hendricks 233:12

her 29:2 63:6 72:12,14 78:14,21 80:19 82:4,6,7,9,14,16,24 84:2, 16,22 85:24 91:10 92:10,24 98:24 104:2,8 119:8 134:7,17,20,21 135:9,18 140:24 147:7 170:1 171:16,20 195:2,3,6,11,19,20 196:1,12 202:3,19 203:23 204:17 217:24 218:2,13,17 219:9 225:9 227:4,5,6 229:17 233:11 235:2 239:15 240:8 254:22,25 299:19 300:14,16,18,20 301:23 302:20 303:11

here 5:4 17:16 18:9,25 19:11 21:14 22:12 23:9 24:21 30:18,24 32:6 36:25 37:14 38:4,7,14 39:22 40:14,23 44:10 45:2 47:11 51:19 52:3,6 55:16 57:14 58:10 60:8 61:1,4 64:4,25 65:4,6,9 68:13 69:2 72:15.16 74:3 80:15 81:6.25 83:10 84:21 91:20 94:6 95:10 101:12 106:7 111:1,11 115:11 116:13 119:1,10 121:1,13 123:5 124:5 126:6,17 129:11,24 130:1, 9,15 132:9,17,18,21,24 133:19 136:13,21 139:22 141:6 144:13 147:13 156:23 157:23 159:6,9,10 161:9,14,16,19 162:9 166:2 167:3,8 168:15 169:14,19 173:17 175:20 178:24 179:16,19 182:14 187:18,19 189:24 190:1,13 191:11.16 192:13 194:17 195:3.8 196:13 198:9 205:18 206:1,22 210:4,9 214:13 215:7,15 217:22

219:6 220:19 225:21 230:24 232:7,13 233:23 234:24 235:8,10, 16 236:9 238:12 240:22 241:5,24 242:21 243:16 247:17 248:3 250:21 251:5,12,13,20 256:18 257:15,16,19 266:24 267:11 271:19 274:6 275:2 281:3,13,15, 16 283:21 284:20 289:21 290:3 296:8 299:15 303:6,9,10,25 304:3 307:13,20

**here's** 166:15 180:20 211:17 283:25 286:2 305:24

**Hero** 179:6

herself 35:18

hesitate 280:6

**Heuer** 144:4,9,12 147:4,7,9,11,12 150:7,11,13 151:5,23,25 152:1 153:6,13,17,23 154:15

hey 81:18 299:10 305:22

hierarchy 231:21

high 161:15

highlight 244:6

highlighted 50:24 262:14

**him** 31:24 56:17,21,22 90:6 126:1 130:10 160:16 163:4,16 170:14, 15,21 171:20 180:1,21 192:3 202:5 212:1 213:1,7,18 214:9,15 253:2 259:12 265:8,10 298:10

himself 53:14 61:25 253:5

hinges 179:5

hire 83:20

his 17:17 27:22 33:23 49:21 56:16,22 60:5 61:11,12,14,16 62:9 68:10,11 81:17 90:7 101:22 114:20 121:18,24 122:8 123:2 125:21,23,25 126:1 146:14 153:7 162:16,20,25 163:8,19 169:20 173:18 174:12,19 175:14 185:10, 15,23 191:8 204:19 206:3 207:12, 25 208:6,14 210:20 212:10,22,23 213:2 214:6,15,16 232:9 251:15, 17,19 253:3,4,9 254:5 258:22 259:8,22 265:17 269:19

historian 116:14 historical 83:13

histories 25:4

**history** 23:14,25 25:3 90:19 146:24 157:19,24 160:4 163:12 185:10 206:7 218:15 226:6 231:9 233:7 244:19 251:15,19 253:9,10 258:21 261:10

hit 110:13

hits 49:20

**hold** 27:22 31:4 55:7 93:12 249:16 273:10 297:18

**holding** 17:13 52:19 53:7 55:5 58:25 59:7

**holds** 192:11

**hollow** 93:13

Hollowell-williams 197:25

**home** 33:21 120:14 197:18 224:14 241:2 280:11,19 300:15, 18 307:11

honest 236:5,19 247:16 306:4

honor 72:10,13

Honorable 14:7 272:21.23

honored 186:4

**Hoosier** 276:10

**Hoosiers** 57:22 174:6 276:12

**hope** 118:23 120:16 127:10 164:19 174:14,16 179:1 240:21

hoped 35:22

**hoping** 62:12 174:14 274:18 275:7

horizontal 77:22

Horseman 72:10 186:4

host 51:9

**hot** 252:25

hotly 163:11

hour 247:24

**hours** 32:10 62:3,5 89:22 168:11 172:25 173:11 180:13 195:18 256:20 257:3

house 21:10 31:14,17,18 52:13, 17 62:7 101:11,23 102:2 103:12, 13 104:23 105:4,14,20 107:6,7 108:8,16,17 109:14,15,17 113:20, 25 115:6 133:4 134:3,8 198:18 207:6 219:18 280:11 289:8

Index: household..implying

# household 275:4

# housekeeping 7:21

how 16:16,20,22 17:6 22:3 26:1 33:25 37:24 41:17 45:12 51:10, 11,13 53:21 54:1 56:18 57:13 61:23 63:18 84:11,21 91:1 102:1 104:16 107:24 116:24 125:17 147:22 148:7,14 165:13 166:3,20, 22 167:2 173:12 174:5 177:24 178:8 196:20 203:17 226:7 227:7, 14 230:20 245:8 248:16,22 265:23 275:23 277:25 278:2 286:25 287:2 288:10 289:22 290:13 293:20,24 294:17 295:1 297:6

**however** 101:20 133:1 202:2 207:12

huge 66:25 299:1

hundreds 115:21

hung 287:18

**Hunley** 272:23 273:9,24 274:4 278:16

hunt 200:2

hurdles 90:24 91:15

husband 15:20

ı

I'D 5:16 37:1 44:4,12 58:2 63:23 102:18 131:18 145:2 167:1 197:24 209:14 221:7 223:23 241:2 243:24 263:18 285:22 307:11

I'LL 17:22 19:1,10 29:17 30:17 44:9 49:8 59:18 68:5 69:19 76:24 85:3 90:16 99:16 100:25 107:25 109:2 114:6 123:4 130:13 145:19 146:6 150:10 157:8 160:6 164:11 182:23 192:21 195:2 202:21 204:23 209:15 210:11 223:24 230:10 236:5,18 247:16 251:3 255:2,21 257:5 273:15 294:24 298:10

**I'M** 16:2 18:7,22 20:14 23:24 24:12 25:21 30:14 34:8,13 36:16, 21 37:7,9 38:4,6,20 39:7,16 40:3, 9,14 44:21,23 45:4,5 49:10 60:9 62:15 64:14 66:25 71:19 72:2,6,8 75:3 79:17,19 80:13 82:1 83:21

88:12 89:16,17 90:1,15 91:5,16 93:9,10 94:9 95:13,16,17,18,22, 24 106:16,17 110:23 111:2 113:18 114:1 117:5 120:16 123:4 124:15,22 125:10,13 127:10 129:14 132:9,18 136:22 137:1,24 141:4 143:24 147:9,22 153:7 156:23 159:10 161:16 162:9.19 163:17 165:18 166:24 167:2 169:12 171:17,25 178:6,7,23 181:23 182:11,21 184:15,23 186:4,8 187:17,23 189:14 190:9 194:8 197:9 198:25 200:24 202:21 207:1 210:2 212:9 213:6. 13 214:11,15 215:3,6 221:23 222:20 224:15 225:13,21 228:3,7 232:6 234:4.6 235:10 236:19 239:3,4,6 241:17 242:2,5 244:25 245:3 246:14 247:10 248:3 249:14 251:5 256:20 257:16 260:16 261:15 262:3,13 264:10 266:13 267:25 268:2 274:4,5 278:11,17 279:25 281:15 282:3 283:23 285:12,14 286:24 287:18 290:10,11,12 291:6 294:10 295:8 300:14,24 302:16 305:14 306:8, 10,25

I'VE 25:22 33:1,12 38:4 118:19 119:1 161:16 162:10 163:2,3,17 170:11,12 182:4 184:8,16 200:22, 23 203:6 209:20,22 217:11 226:16 262:14 268:10 294:5,22 300:22 304:14

IAC 22:21

**IBJ** 41:5

**IC** 19:13,15 20:2 141:19 146:12 199:3 219:25

Ice 219:6

idea 226:20 240:3

identical 10:2 127:15

identifies 199:9

identify 10:4 233:14 236:18 244:21 291:15

identifying 231:9

if 5:18 7:8 11:2,19 12:4 13:6 15:17 16:17,18 21:4 23:17 26:20 28:19 29:6,10 30:20 39:1,10 40:14,17 44:9,23 45:18 46:21 47:1,13,20 48:7 51:12,14 54:3 58:12 62:25 69:4 70:6 75:17 76:17 77:21,23

78:12 81:3 82:21 83:1 84:1.8 88:15 89:20 90:4 91:3 92:19.24 93:10,12 94:15 95:18 96:2,23 97:20 98:1 110:13,14 111:17 112:18 113:24 114:1.6.17.25 115:17,20 123:10 125:9,20 128:22 129:9,10 130:1,8 136:6 137:14 140:20,22 146:23 148:2, 12,18 153:5,15 157:13 163:12 164:21 166:10,12 167:7,21 169:5, 8,17 170:1 171:4,5,17 172:5,22 175:1,21 179:2,11,23 180:14,25 181:2,14,24 182:18 184:18 186:18.25 190:10 197:8.16.17 198:24 199:20 201:15 202:4 203:14 209:17 211:25 212:12 214:25 219:23 220:4 227:4.10.25 229:21 230:16,23,25 231:10,13, 14,15,17,22 232:13 233:13 234:6 235:10 236:18,24 238:3,6 239:7, 14,22,23,24 240:7 241:2,13,20 243:4,19 244:21 245:6,7,8,10,17, 21 246:1,5,7,9,12,23 247:13,21 248:19 250:7,8 260:24 261:2,11 263:11 264:7 265:4 266:17 268:3, 18 270:5 277:15 280:10,13,23,24, 25 281:2,5,22,25 282:2 284:17 285:6,20 286:1,7 289:4,10,23 291:2,14,24 293:4,6,23 294:23 295:2,9 304:12 306:1,5,22 307:11,13

ignore 93:3

illegally 33:15

**illness** 262:13

illustrate 35:7

imagine 225:17 278:2

**Immediately** 61:4

immigrant 253:16

**impact** 15:24 61:14 97:18,19

173:24

impartialities 40:19

impartiality 35:21

**impeachment** 32:1 52:12

impending 38:19

implementation 234:4

implemented 203:19

implying 80:4

Index: important..Indiana

**important** 82:2 161:9 166:9 168:18 169:19 222:10 273:25 275:10 277:21

impossibility 254:24

impossible 186:6

impressive 240:21

improperly 233:8

in 6:4,20 7:20 8:6,17 9:15,25 10:17 11:3 12:20 13:18 14:2,6,11, 12,19 15:5,6,12,13 16:20 17:1,7 18:10 19:16,22 20:1,11 21:5,8,12, 18,22 23:2,9,17,18,20,22 24:5,7 26:9 27:22 29:22 30:23 31:3,11, 16,18,19,20 32:4,6,15,19,22 33:12,21 36:5,7 37:8,19 38:8,18 39:8,17,19 40:5,16 41:6,12,20 42:5,10,17 43:3,22 44:2 46:11 47:18,23,25 48:22 49:1 50:8,23 51:20,22 53:2,9,15,17,19 54:7,19 55:2 57:2,8,15 58:5,6,18 59:8 60:2,5 61:7 62:7,11 63:4,19 64:1, 4,8,12 65:4,12 66:4 67:1,16,22,23 68:8,10,13,15 69:19 70:13,18,19, 22,25 71:9,25 72:1,6,7,8,10,12, 14,21,24 73:1,2,3,4,5,6,24 74:3,6, 7,17,20,24 75:8,25 76:2,5 77:14, 20,22 78:1,18 79:11,22 80:14 81:2,6,9,18 82:14 83:4 84:17 85:6,14,16,23 86:7,9,20 87:4 88:7 89:12 90:3,15,19,21 91:6 92:22 93:4,8,18,20 94:19,25 95:8 97:3, 12,24 99:21 100:10,15,18 101:14, 17 102:4,11,13,21 103:11,17,20 104:18,21,24 105:13,20 106:5,6, 18 107:2,4,6,7 108:2,11,13,18,21 109:4,10 110:24 112:25 113:1,2, 6,17,21 114:22 115:2,10,13,25 116:13,23 117:12,20 118:2,8 119:10,24 120:7,17,23 121:1,13, 23 122:8,11 123:11,13,20,22,24 125:2,6,9,15 126:2,19 127:2,9 128:3 129:8 130:18 131:8,16,22 132:9 133:4,12,25 136:14 137:7, 10,15,18,19,20,23 138:19 139:9, 14 140:3,5,18 141:7 142:2,8,10 143:2,11,17,23,25 144:7,24 145:10,20,24 146:1,11,13,15 148:1,24 149:10,18,24 150:4,8,21 151:8,12,20,21 152:13,16,24 153:15,17 154:4,12 155:3,13,17 156:14 157:12 158:13 159:7,19, 20,21,23,24 160:13 161:12,13 162:10,21 163:1,2,9,10,11,13

164:18 165:20 166:1,2,5,8,10 167:21 168:5,8 169:15,22,23 170:18 171:6,18,23 172:1,2,10, 13,17,21 173:7,8,9,13 174:13,17, 18,20 175:22 176:20 177:7,9 179:21 181:1,18 182:25 183:3,13, 19,24 184:23,24 185:4,5,6,7,10 186:1,3,15,22 187:2,3,18,19 188:19 189:2,18 190:1,3,10,11, 14,16,17 192:22,25 193:8,16,21 194:12 195:3,8,9,24 196:4,7 197:8,17 198:5,6,9,19 199:3,12, 16,19,22,23,25 200:1,6,7,10 201:1,7,8 202:23 203:19,23,24 205:2,9,16,20,22 206:18 207:7, 14,18,20,22,25 208:1,4,12,14,15, 18,21,23,24 209:21,22 210:7,15, 19 211:1 212:2,5,17,21 213:17,24 214:1 215:4 216:5,6,14,21 217:1, 23 218:4,10,12,13,20 219:10,13, 19,25 220:5,9,10,12,13,14,17,18, 22,24,25 221:1,2,3,13,21,24 222:3,4,6,12,13,18 223:7,8,10,25 224:11,13,21,22 225:1,5,24 227:9,14,20 228:1,4,15,19,23,24 229:1,5,6,8,9,11,20 230:9,11,17, 19 231:3,8,15,17 232:1,2,4,6,11, 16 233:14 234:2,5,12 235:17,19, 22 236:4 237:1,2,7,8,9,12,16,19, 23,25 238:5,6,13,25 239:1,17,18, 20,23 241:7,13,20,25 242:5,7,10, 19 243:3,14,15,18,25 244:1,7,8 245:25 246:17 247:5,19 248:1,2 249:2,20 250:14,21,22 251:3,4,13 252:4,24 253:1,8,9 254:3 255:24 256:1,9,14,23,25 257:8 258:2,12, 16 259:5,6 260:2,4,5,8,10,21 261:4,7,8,10,20,21,22 262:5,7,16, 24,25 263:7,9,12,21 264:10,12, 19,24,25 265:3,4,8,13,17,18,19, 21 266:10,20,24 267:9,12,23 268:4,14,21 269:7 270:11,24 271:13,16 272:4,17 273:3,19 274:5,14,16,18 275:1,2,5,14 276:1,6,16 277:1,7 278:3,5,13 279:7,12 280:2,22 281:22 282:3, 10 283:7 285:1,2,5 286:20,21 287:3,4,11,16,24 288:5,8,17,18 289:9,11 290:3,6,16 291:7,23 292:10 293:25 294:11,14 295:2, 18,23 296:4,11,16,19,21 297:25 298:6,22,25 299:17 300:2,6,10, 17,20,21 302:13,20,23 303:3,6 304:2,3 305:5,9,23 306:8,15,25 307:6,10,12,16,17

in-person 235:19 inaccurate 33:10

inappropriate 107:11

incentive 83:17

incited 31:21 57:23

incitement 52:16

inclined 81:24

include 15:2 65:22 100:3 117:20 120:7 127:2 143:10 149:18 152:24 157:23 160:16 183:12 189:1 193:8 205:8 216:14 220:11 256:9 258:10 271:6 272:12 282:7

included 146:13 151:20 160:4 208:25 219:24 221:2 276:25

includes 70:24 208:20

including 11:10 32:16 68:10

245:23

inclusive 24:22

income 280:14

incomplete 207:8 241:5

incorporate 64:19 161:3 162:1

264:3,6

incorrectly 191:21

incumbent 75:16 107:16

incumbents 83:18

indeed 119:9 208:10 210:5

independently 82:5

India 184:22.23

**Indiana** 5:1,9 6:4,12 7:8,13 18:11 19:4 21:14,18 22:9,20 23:1,24 24:1 25:1,5 28:13 30:19 34:22 37:4 38:15 40:21 60:15 63:17,18 64:10,19 65:4,6,9 72:19 73:24 74:3,18 75:10 80:23,25 81:2 86:25 87:1 89:24 90:11 92:13 93:18,21 101:20 107:5,7 109:2,3 114:7 127:12 133:24 134:2 137:9, 13,16,25 145:23 146:20 148:8 157:18 164:14,16,17,19 165:5 166:9 168:9,14 170:9 171:4,24 173:2 177:25 178:3,11,12,15,22, 25 179:10,21 180:23 181:10,20 182:17 184:3 196:3 198:24 207:16 208:2,21 209:10 219:18 220:5 223:8 224:14,17,24 229:8,

22 237:8,9 238:1,2,14 239:1 241:22,25 243:10,18 244:2 252:13,18 254:8 266:22 272:22, 24 275:2 276:9 283:20 288:11 294:13 299:17 304:3

Indiana's 57:16 64:5 208:20

**Indianapolis** 36:7 132:10 162:13 196:3 219:10 221:25 298:13

indicate 100:5 117:22 120:9 127:4 149:20 153:1 160:18 181:5 183:15 189:4 193:10 205:11 216:16 235:5 256:11 269:16 271:8

indicated 185:2 196:5 210:16 230:18 259:5

indicates 302:22

indifferent 95:9

indirectly 165:15

individual 13:7,10 38:7 39:8 41:18 55:5 141:19,21,23 231:14

individually 156:24

individuals 97:7,10 159:6,16 180:4 185:18

ineligible 57:25 134:13 208:18

influx 299:1 303:2

information 7:3 11:9 61:14 68:17 79:7 124:12 125:2 133:1,3, 7,24 135:13,23 195:23 201:11 203:24 204:13 231:20 233:5,6,23 243:20 244:20 246:16 265:10 268:23 270:2 300:8

informed 110:15 267:3

initial 17:4 49:22

initially 223:6

**injunction** 165:4 177:9 186:17, 19.23

input 126:9

insanity 140:13

inside 138:12 226:17

inspired 72:11

instances 86:17 87:3

**instead** 62:12 77:22 84:6 101:25 105:5 169:11 198:20

**instructed** 115:1 152:23 253:23 254:9

**instructions** 105:23,24 125:16 302:7

instructs 51:1

insurrection 31:12,21 32:8,20 33:13 46:13 52:16 53:9 57:23 62:15

insurrectionist 24:15,19 60:5,

insurrectionists 33:3 55:18,19

integrity 37:6 73:24 75:13 79:22

intend 10:24 37:17 186:24

**intended** 23:2 62:12 138:4,6,8, 10,20

intent 139:13 141:6 142:7,20,23

**intention** 53:16 137:16 138:12

intentionally 38:10 39:9 41:22 61:7 242:6

intents 27:1

interaction 5:19

interest 71:5 100:21 101:15,22 102:8 103:10,14 104:4,20 107:15, 18,23 108:4,7,21 109:4,9 113:13, 16 114:12,14 116:10 128:18,25 155:24 187:3 194:2 217:6 257:11 258:24

interested 199:9

**interesting** 147:21 168:2 246:6 253:11 255:12 270:4 277:20,23

interestingly 180:16

interests 46:14 105:12 106:16 174:12 177:22

**interim** 166:2

**interpret** 92:15 107:10 147:22 148:2,15 285:18 289:22 290:18 292:9.12

interpretation 23:16 24:13,24 284:15 285:16 288:7 290:23 291:24 292:21

**interpreted** 24:25 284:19,24 285:3

interpreting 290:20

**interrupt** 18:16 94:10 129:15 260:12 303:25

interrupted 229:10

intervene 186:15,25

intervention 164:20

into 7:20 11:15 14:1 27:13 44:11, 13,24 76:19 109:13 124:19 125:12 129:10 138:25 140:3,23 143:19 170:21 195:4,6 203:21,25 204:17 217:13 223:17 228:6 234:15,20 240:1 241:10 244:22 268:23 280:16 281:1 289:16 295:12 296:7

intro 283:8

introduce 221:8 222:23

introduced 268:22

invalid 126:12 218:19

investigate 32:25 54:14

inviting 289:25

invoke 52:14 involve 36:4

involved 17:3 162:21 222:2

involvement 209:22 221:13

involving 50:14

irregularities 80:18 82:13 84:13

irrelevant 305:7 irrespective 115:7

**is** 5:14 6:17 7:13 8:10,15 9:9 11:7, 13 12:3 13:12 14:15,25 15:1,19, 20,22,23 16:25 17:1,10,11,12,13, 16 18:9,10,13,15 19:11,14,16 20:10,19 21:1,12,16,20,23,24 22:7,19,22 23:11,13 24:8,10,14 25:13,21 26:23,24 27:16,17,25 28:5,8,11,12,19 30:8,13 32:22,23 33:18,25 34:12,19 35:12,13,20 36:15 37:3,8,13 38:1,3,16 39:13, 21,22 40:1,7 41:6,17 42:22 43:2, 3,7,9,12,21 44:6,10 46:3,8,15 47:13 48:8,10,13,17 49:23 50:1, 18.20.23 51:12 52:9 53:7.24 54:14,17 55:10,17 57:24 58:16 59:1,12,17 60:11,17,24,25 62:17, 19 63:10,15 64:4,9,22 65:6 67:5, 8,15 68:4,8,12 69:14,25 70:1,21,

22,25 71:13,19,24,25 72:17 73:7, 11,12,25 74:7,20 75:3,9 77:2,4, 10,20 79:7,18,24 80:23,24 81:2,3, 24 82:4,15,20,22 83:11 86:9 88:24 89:1,8 90:8,9,21 91:20 92:14,15 94:1,4,10,12,14,19,25 95:14,23 96:18,22,25 97:3,16,18, 19 100:2,6 101:4,9,12,22 102:3, 21 103:4 105:10 106:22 107:3,4, 6,8,15 108:2,18,20,21 109:1,7,11, 25 110:14,15 112:5,6,7,9,16,17 113:9,14,15 114:9,14,22 115:4, 15,23 116:5,25 117:4,9,16,19,23 119:2,9,10,14 120:6,23 121:4,5, 21 122:7,14,18 123:17 124:1,3, 17,21 125:3,11,14,25 126:1,6,7 127:1,5,15 129:8,24 132:8,18 133:5,7,14,21 134:8,10,25 135:2, 14 136:3 137:14 138:3 140:6,18 141:6,21,24 142:1,8,13 143:8,10 145:4,21 146:17,18 147:3,9,11, 23,25 148:5,7,10,14 149:6,17,23 150:3,11,14,17 151:8,14,22 152:6,7,10,23 153:2 155:9 156:3, 7,9,19 157:17 158:6,9,22 159:9, 14,17 160:1 162:1,2,10,12 163:9, 15,16 165:20 166:1,2,19 167:3, 18,19 168:1,7,11,18 169:6,8,18 170:22 171:12,17 172:21 173:14 174:14,15,16,25 175:5,13,15,16, 21 176:8,10,14 177:1 178:10,11, 15,16,19 179:5,13 180:1,7,14,18, 22 181:10 182:12,18,22 183:12, 18,25 184:24 186:10,20 187:16 188:1,12,25 189:1,16 190:2,13, 16,17,21,25 191:2,3,15 192:13,20 193:7 194:12,17 196:10,13 197:21 198:2,12,13,20,23 199:7, 10 200:20 202:17 203:1 204:22 205:7,8,22 206:2,4,7,9,14,15 207:7,8,9,12,25 208:7,17 210:18, 19 211:1,15,16 212:19 213:6,14, 15 214:3,5,12 215:7,8 216:1,13 217:18 218:19 219:7,9,15,16 220:3,14,16,19 221:2,3,21 222:9, 24 223:7 224:25 225:4,6,8 226:6, 9,14,15,17 227:8,9,18,19,21,23 228:4,5,6,8,18,21 229:9 230:1,3, 8,12,17 231:5,19,20 232:19,20,24 233:22,25 234:2 235:6,9 236:7,8, 12 237:25 238:18 239:19,22 240:1,3 241:5,22 242:4,13,21,24 243:4,10,16 244:15 245:6,14,22 246:2,4,5,6,14 247:11,16 250:21 251:6,8,11,12,13 252:6,25 253:4, 9,10,11,24 255:20 256:8 257:7,18 258:9,22 259:3 260:24,25 261:2, 11,12,14,16 262:3,9 264:8,20 265:5,14 266:13,17 267:13 268:2, 3,8,19,23,24 269:6,22,23 270:14 271:5,9,17,19,23 272:1,10,11,20 273:2,11,17 274:20 275:10 277:25 278:4,24,25 279:1,8,15 280:5,17 281:18 282:4,18,21 283:8,14,23 285:1,17,20 286:18, 25 287:22 288:10,11,12 289:22 290:2,8,22,24 291:9,11 292:2,4,8, 9,13,14,17,20,22,24 293:1 294:17 297:20 298:22,23 299:7,11,18,25 300:3,8,13,25 302:23,24,25 303:6,15,22 304:2,14,20,23,25 305:8,11,13,16,17 306:5,13,14 307:3,12,15,25

**isn't** 58:14 59:1 69:2 93:15 169:8, 12 220:20 226:24 243:11

issue 43:22 44:3 60:9 64:22 93:18 96:3,8 101:12 165:5 174:3 175:19,20 180:10,11 181:21 199:21 220:20 238:10 243:16 260:4 261:13 262:18 267:4,7 270:4 279:4 280:7 281:19,22 283:18 291:2,6,16 293:11 295:15 303:23 306:24

**issued** 61:16 164:17 165:25 179:11 180:12 273:1 279:13

**issues** 10:3 39:2 65:1 122:3 160:8 167:16 174:5 178:12,14 293:18

**issuing** 44:1 165:8 277:23 292:25

it 5:20 7:1 8:23 9:20,21 10:22,24 13:24 14:25 16:23 17:7 19:5,7,18 20:15,19,23,25 21:11,12,15,20 22:4,6,7,12,15,24,25 23:1,23 24:10,18 25:23 26:15,24 27:5,18, 20,21 28:8,9,11,14,17,19,22 30:7 33:2 34:3 35:23 36:3,6 37:9,18,22 38:4,17,22 39:1,14,21 40:18 41:17,18 42:2,9,23 43:4,10 44:2, 4,21 45:10,22 46:9,18 47:2 50:24 53:21 54:20,23 55:2,13 57:14,15 58:5,6,24 59:18 60:10,11 61:25 62:21 63:15 64:5,9,20,25 66:6 68:8 69:9,25 70:24 71:11,12 72:13 73:20 76:19 77:12,22 79:3, 10,16 80:25 81:13,15,21 83:17 84:7,8,15,22 86:1,9,13,22,24 87:14,19 88:21 89:9,14 90:10 91:8,10 92:10,20,24 93:4,5,10,13

94:2,7,18,19 96:8,10,13,22 97:15, 17,18,19 98:15,25 100:1 101:23 102:16 103:15 104:8,9 105:4,9, 13,15,19,21 106:2,9,10 108:14,22 110:4,8,15,17,23,25 111:5 112:6, 21,23,25 113:1,14,16,22,23,24 115:2,3,17,18,23,24 116:6,22 118:21,24 119:8 120:5,15 121:2 124:20,24 125:6 126:11,14,25 128:9 129:10 130:9,23 131:2,14, 16 132:3,6 133:9 135:7 136:3,17 137:2,24 138:9 139:5,6 140:12,25 142:3,11 143:8,20,22 144:10,23 145:16 146:7 147:23 148:8,15,17, 19 149:16,22 151:2 152:22 153:16 154:10,20 155:9 156:19 157:25 158:18 160:13 164:4,6,19 165:1,5,6,7,8,11,12,16 166:10,19 168:9,10,21,23,24 169:8,10,12 170:6,16 171:3,5,8,15 172:24 173:3,23 174:6 175:1,10,14 176:23 177:8,10,13,21 178:5 179:12 180:19,24 181:4,6,7,15,17 182:2,4,18,23 183:9 184:10,13 186:9,16,17,20,25 188:25 189:13 190:10 191:25 192:3,21 193:6 194:11 195:2,3,17,25 196:7,14,24 197:11,13,17,22 198:18,19,21 199:1 201:16,22 202:3,5,6,8,12, 19,22 203:5,8 204:3 205:7,16 207:9,12 211:9 212:11,14,15 213:25 214:9 216:12 219:24 220:10,22,23 223:2,22 224:25 225:10,18,19,21,22,24 226:5,9, 17,18,25 227:11,19,24 228:5,12, 13,15,22 229:3,6,10,19,23,25 230:7,23,24 231:14 232:2,10,11, 22 233:1,8,20,25 235:5,19 236:20,21,22 237:10,18 238:18 239:15,17,22,23,24 241:1,2,8,24 242:2,10,17 243:8,9 245:7,17,18 246:5,11,12,17,21 247:7 248:13, 21,25 250:5,8,9,23 251:12 252:22 253:22,24 254:16 255:11 256:7 258:8,19 259:18 260:15,25 261:22 262:16,24 263:1,10,11,16 264:14,19 265:3,5,20 266:7 267:2 268:20 269:23,24 270:22 271:4, 21 272:18 274:1,21 275:1,10 276:5 277:12,14,25 278:3,4 279:10,14 280:1,25 281:1,19,20, 22 282:11,20,23 283:6,7,8,11,25 284:2,16 286:1,5,6,13 287:1,2 288:12 289:1,19,21,25 290:1,2,9, 10 291:11,18,21 292:2,3,4,24 293:9,13,17,23,25 294:2,5,12,24

Index: it's..keep

295:1,2,15 296:4,8 297:4,6,9 298:6 299:6 300:1,4,5 302:2,23, 24 303:1,11,14,17,19 305:1,3,4 306:18,19,20,23 307:11

it's 15:18 16:21 20:1,2,11,15 21:9 22:8,19 24:17 26:25 27:2,14 38:8 40:8 43:4 44:1 47:13 54:25 63:17 64:18 72:10,13 75:9,16 76:20 77:20,22 81:21 82:1,2,10 83:12, 16,18 87:25 91:23 92:11,12,22 93:3,9,13,17,20,23,24,25 94:3,8, 23 95:3 102:7 105:8 106:25 108:24 109:13.20 110:25 112:14 114:24 115:2,24,25 116:2 126:13, 14 129:11 133:9 136:18 140:17 142:2.7 148:22 153:17 165:21 167:21 168:22,23 169:14,22 173:21 174:23 179:25 180:12,19 186:5 187:2 190:10,18 194:12,17 199:23 200:2 202:24 203:7 204:15 210:2,3 211:19,20,21,23 212:4,19,24 214:16,18,20 222:7 225:1,10 226:7,11,12 228:19 229:3 232:16,17,22,23 238:13,15, 16,21,22 241:5 242:4 243:2 245:7,16,19 246:2 251:13,14 252:14,21 253:23 254:18,24 256:25 260:19 261:9 265:22 267:16 269:25 273:5 280:2,20 282:19,20,24 283:6 284:17,20 285:22,23 286:2,18,22 288:6 289:1,19,20,24 290:1,21 292:11 293:14 294:8,17 295:2,17,18 296:16 297:12 302:12 305:7,12, 13

item 42:4 248:23 300:1

items 7:22 42:3 257:7

its 11:17 43:6 49:24 50:1 55:3 63:18 92:13 94:1 166:10 169:22 189:2 232:1

itself 27:13 53:12 55:10 95:20 194:20 264:22 289:16 306:20

J

**J6** 33:24

Jackson 160:2

Jacksonville 224:11,12

**Jamie** 91:4,7

**January** 31:17 32:4,12,23,25 46:12 52:16 53:23 57:22 60:6

61:17 62:19 64:3 75:3,4 85:19 86:1 103:19 165:22 168:15 169:17 173:9 209:12 210:6

Jean 217:21 256:15 258:10

Jennifer 155:14,20

**Jim** 180:16 271:13 272:12

**job** 82:5,6 90:8 91:13 280:9,16

Joe 254:4

John 14:7 50:15 179:20 183:13 219:2,4,5 221:12,21 222:2,12,15, 22 223:6,10,13,16,22 224:6,19,24 225:16 226:5,11 228:10,13,15 229:7,15,19 230:5 231:3 235:22 236:3 237:11,14,21 238:3,6,15,19 239:6,10,14 240:15 241:13 249:23 250:2,12 264:4 297:3,17 298:7,9

**Johnson** 201:8,13,19 206:14 207:15 208:4,14,22 213:3,15,17

**join** 276:6

joined 208:24

joining 5:14

**Jonathan** 143:24,25 144:5,18 145:20 147:13 149:18

**Joseph** 67:17 68:13

Journal 36:7

**Jr** 67:17

**judge** 38:15,17 39:1 40:15 41:19 43:12 165:2,13 167:14,16,25 170:13 175:12 264:9,15

judge's 40:18 46:10

judged 36:9

judges 22:1 35:3 43:5 264:17 291:22

judgment 15:24 245:18 290:23

judgments 51:2

judicial 31:9 51:19 65:7 171:21

264:17,18

jump 92:22 197:8 198:9

**June** 241:25 298:22,25 304:20

jurisdiction 21:24 28:22 50:6 51:18 52:2 55:9

jurisdictional 18:13 19:12 28:6, 8.11.19 49:24

just 15:17 16:6 18:12 19:10 20:23 22:4,8 23:13,19 24:12 25:9 27:12 34:3 37:20,22,23 38:21,24,25 39:25 40:9,20 43:20,25 44:2,5,9 45:1,2,8 46:5,18,20 47:17 48:4 52:7 53:11 58:5,17 59:3 62:25 63:25 64:18,24 66:3 67:11 68:1 70:22 72:4,9 73:16 79:13,20,23 80:2,14 81:1,12 85:13 86:20 87:5, 7,10 90:6 92:16 94:3 95:11,13,18 96:18 98:5 102:18 103:1.6 109:1 110:12 112:17,18 113:3 114:6,15 115:10 120:14 123:16 124:13 129:21,23 130:5 136:11 138:5,16 141:3 144:16,23 147:22 152:2 154:16 157:4 159:15 160:12 161:3,22 162:2 163:5,18 164:3 167:18,23 170:2,25 173:3 176:16, 22 177:10,23 178:23 180:1,16 182:13 184:8 186:12 189:11 190:8 194:8,11,25 195:21 199:1, 16 202:11 203:8 205:14 215:20 219:12,22 221:7 223:6 227:12 228:24 229:12 232:6,12 234:6,14, 23,24 235:14 236:8 241:5 242:14, 17 245:11,13 246:21 248:21 250:18 251:3 252:11 253:19 256:25 257:6 260:7 262:6 263:16 266:25 268:15 269:5 273:10 275:22 277:4 280:1 281:12 282:12 283:16 284:11 286:22 287:13 288:13,17 293:17 294:2 295:5 298:11 299:15 301:9,11 302:16 306:9

justice 53:12 justices 166:11

# Κ

**K-E-I-T-H** 221:19 298:14

K-E-L-L-I 147:12 152:1

**K-E-L-LY** 73:25

K-E-S-T-E-R 30:9

**K-Y-L-E** 161:12

**Kamala** 50:16

**Karen** 5:7 48:5 63:14 66:8 108:12 116:23 198:16

keep 10:24 27:21 36:10 40:15

55:13 79:10 83:18 91:20 283:1 293:20

**keeper** 231:6

keeps 63:2 226:9

**Keith** 221:18 298:13

**Kelli** 147:12 152:1

Kellie 118:3 120:7

Kelly 73:25

**Kelsey** 254:4

kept 63:1

**Kester** 15:6,14 17:11,16,18 30:4, 5,8,11,13,16 40:4 55:16,24 56:8, 19 57:12 58:4,10

Kester's 19:13 49:19

key 70:6

kicking 83:22

**kids** 57:12 280:12

Kilo 184:23

**Kimmy** 197:25 198:4

**kind** 37:24 48:7 92:17 94:21 113:5,15 114:18,24 167:3 175:4 179:5 188:17 212:4 225:21 245:3 251:5 275:5 278:5 300:5

kinds 174:12 242:23

**King** 5:10,25 6:1,10 16:25 19:1 49:7 116:15 145:18 149:23,25 150:11 151:6,15,21 152:2,6,24 231:11,24 285:15 294:21 295:8, 13 296:17

**knew** 61:9 103:9 104:19 165:11 166:15,18 170:9 172:2,4,5 263:2

knocked 89:11,13,15

knocks 90:10

know 16:16 18:2 21:7,13 23:24 24:22,23 26:19 37:7,10 40:3,17 43:25 45:5 46:15 61:8,19,23 62:4, 6 63:1 64:22 79:22 80:20 81:24 82:11 83:4,7 84:1,2,3,11,21 86:5 88:20,22 92:8,16,23 93:5 94:2,4 104:11 105:14 113:7 114:18 121:21 122:5 125:22 129:9 130:8 135:11,19,22 137:25 144:17 147:23 161:14 166:11 169:25 170:9 173:12,21 174:1,14,18

175:9,21,24 176:9 180:8 181:6,24 182:13 187:22 188:1 197:3,24 200:13 201:15 203:7 204:16 211:3 213:22 214:12 215:1 225:18,23 226:1,3,16 230:23 231:1 232:10,12 233:19,24,25 235:2 236:1 237:3 238:18 241:14 242:21 243:4,9,15 244:5,25 247:14 255:11 264:16,25 266:19 268:6,15 269:19 273:24 274:8,14 275:1,9 276:9 277:9 279:6 280:3 281:2,17 288:25 290:22 293:12 299:13,19 300:10,24 305:22

knowing 102:11 186:19

**knowingly** 38:10 39:9 41:22 78:24 79:5

**knowledge** 222:12 227:8,12 234:9 279:19 288:25

known 169:15,18

knows 16:8 110:14 164:13

Kochevar 5:11 7:5,6,7,17 16:16 17:1,20,21 41:11,13 43:10 44:4 45:10 47:11 66:22,24 68:2,4,7 70:21 71:15 100:14 106:24 107:1, 13 108:5,10 109:1 110:12 115:9 116:8 118:6,7 119:15 120:21,22 123:7 124:3,9,13 125:6 128:11,12 129:12 155:16 182:4 193:19,20 194:8 195:23 197:12,24 198:4,6, 22 202:8,10 203:19 205:17 216:24,25 227:7 232:9,10 250:6, 22 251:8 256:20 287:20,22 288:4 294:6.10

**kudos** 91:10

**Kyle** 159:5 161:12

L

L-E-S-T-E-R 187:12

label 60:4.7

lack 52:24 69:13 258:21

lacks 21:23

lady 103:15 240:21 254:21

Lake 203:24

landslide 33:18

**language** 29:18 55:3 110:10 282:8 285:1,2 287:13 289:24

292:7,11,13

Laporte 172:18,19

**laptop** 44:13

large 219:14 253:18

largely 49:22 54:17 222:7

**Larry** 159:1

last 12:11 54:2 57:12 71:21,25 86:11 97:13 98:15,20 113:9 116:7 122:11 147:12 152:1 159:20,23 178:11,15 179:2 195:5,10 197:8 199:25 200:8 204:17 205:14 207:2,20 220:9 227:1 229:12 236:20 245:23 250:19 253:17 259:3,6 262:8 277:13 279:13,16 284:3 288:19 307:17

late 195:1,21 197:7

later 62:21 86:14 171:15 197:14 209:16 245:15 254:7

latest 139:2

latter 304:8

law 5:23 6:5 18:8 22:1 23:15
24:25 25:8 28:16,17 32:21 35:1,3
37:9,12 38:15,17 40:15 41:15,19
42:7 43:5,11 46:9 59:25 60:1,20
63:6 64:10,19 65:3,7,9 71:5 72:11
75:17 94:23 97:15,16 107:15,17
108:25 110:20 111:25 112:7
117:4,11,16 123:21 124:21,25
132:9 136:1 138:7 140:18 142:22
147:19 148:2 165:12,16 166:19,
21 168:3 178:5,17 179:8 186:3,8,
9 188:1,2 227:22 241:1,3 254:11
270:5 278:5 287:17 288:8,10,12
289:24 291:3,21,22,23 292:1
306:5,12,13 307:11,16,25

**lawmakers** 81:18 95:9 279:12 290:8 291:13

lawmaking 279:11

**laws** 64:5 274:24 275:24 280:22 290:16,19

lawsuit 83:21

lawyer 26:19 37:9,10 60:10 177:23

layered 228:5

leader 300:21

leaders 61:19 75:9 240:24 289:8

**leadership** 81:14 82:7,8 179:25 180:2,3 289:6

leadership's 82:20

leaderships 288:24

leads 37:22

**lean** 113:2

learn 298:8

learned 98:22.24 300:7

learns 110:15

**lease** 136:13,14,21 138:5,17,18, 23 139:4,17 140:5 142:8

leasing 138:19,21,22

least 32:15,18 82:23 91:25 96:12, 21,24 107:24 113:10 118:20 119:9 134:4 138:17 173:15 226:19 229:6 233:22,25 235:3 237:3,4 266:15,20 269:7

leave 49:6 180:21 198:19

**Lebanon** 253:15

led 32:18

ledger 235:8,15

**left** 16:1,4 54:1 61:3 62:23 101:6 116:24 137:18 182:1 268:1

**legal** 25:24 116:5 133:15 174:4, 18 195:21 254:24

legally 50:1 284:14

legislation 53:19 279:7 294:16

**legislative** 23:14,25 25:2 109:5 278:14 283:19 287:10 288:23,25 289:10 291:12 293:1

**legislatively** 274:22 279:2

legislature 23:21 31:9 83:16 163:14 279:5 280:22 281:17,18 283:22 284:1 285:4,7 289:25 293:15

legislature's 21:11

**legitimately** 50:20 108:3

less 94:15 195:17 234:16

**Lester** 183:19,20 185:1,9,12 187:5,7,11 189:2,6

244:24 246:23 247:14 251:20 255:2 282:19 294:2 303:25 let's 55:24 61:22 88:21 116:22 157:23 169:6 177:15,23 190:1

**let** 36:21 38:13 40:12 56:4 61:19, 22 81:12.22 84:20 103:1 112:19

140:21 210:11 228:14 241:10

16t's 55:24 61:22 88:21 116:22 157:23 169:6 177:15,23 190:1 196:12 223:6 227:17 238:23 245:1 265:23 293:7,8

lets 290:2

**letter** 146:16,19 147:1 157:20 190:15 206:6 214:5 218:21 228:5 270:15 277:3 306:17

letters 139:21 225:25

letting 37:21 39:3

**level** 35:21 39:17 43:24 52:3 192:7,12 227:18 230:7 231:22 234:2 292:25 305:21

**Lewis** 190:25 206:12

license 137:22 140:8

**life** 62:25 163:18,19 218:13 307:22

lifelong 82:21

Lift 297:9

lifted 181:11

light 97:24 135:25 202:18 282:11

lightly 177:5

like 5:16 7:3 19:18 20:15 24:23 34:19,20 35:15,23 37:23 39:1 40:24 41:3,12 44:7 46:3 47:25 54:3 58:2 61:19 63:23 64:24 83:2 84:4,6 85:1 86:10,18,20 89:10 93:17 98:1,12 99:1 102:15,18 105:6 111:18 113:5 114:24 116:8 117:4,10 119:3,7 123:2 133:20 136:1,6 141:9 142:6 143:22 151:23 156:22 157:13 160:13,20, 25 161:4 162:16 163:18.23 165:11 172:24 173:3 174:12,24 180:25 182:6,10 187:5,22 188:4 203:25 209:4,15,17 212:4 218:6 219:8 221:7 228:22 229:3,6 232:23 240:23 242:18 243:24 252:12 254:25 259:14 260:14,15 261:2,11 264:2 266:1 275:5 276:5 278:6 279:10 280:2.7 282:19.24 284:16 285:7,10 288:6 291:11 293:4,15,17 301:6 304:19

like-minded 61:18

**likely** 62:24 174:8 224:25 225:7 234:16 269:23

likewise 50:6

**limit** 23:2 102:16 138:1 223:20 282:23 283:11

**limited** 12:20,23 21:6 201:21 282:3 283:6 301:23

**limits** 19:19 21:20 170:19,23 283:7

line 94:10 276:16

**lines** 58:3 78:18 81:7 157:16 214:23 294:3

**Lisa** 191:11,15

list 8:7 11:1 15:3 65:23 100:4 115:20 117:21 118:1 120:8 127:3 143:11 149:19 152:24 160:16 183:13 189:2 193:9 205:9 216:15 228:12 229:23,25 230:1 233:13 256:10 258:11 261:17,19 269:25 271:7 272:13

**listed** 17:6 101:16,19 102:6,11 146:13 232:5

listen 253:11

listened 170:11 254:20

**listing** 101:18

**Litany** 5:8 25:18 65:5 117:14 122:23 271:24

Litany's 282:6

litigious 279:6

little 44:4 72:5 89:21 112:18 113:9 162:5 174:21 210:4 224:8 241:11 255:11 264:8 275:15 282:1 290:5 300:19

live 57:22 133:12 138:12,17 170:22 171:23

lived 141:25 261:20 262:2

lives 170:19 200:1 293:10

living 201:7,8 244:1

local 51:23 121:18 287:10

located 288:20

location 70:8 141:22 143:17

Index: lockstep..matter

lockstep 222:5

log 270:9,10

long 33:21 64:11 90:19 115:13 176:10 179:15 194:17 209:22 210:3 218:15 238:21,22 242:4 254:18 261:5 264:24 307:3

long-time 162:18 217:20 253:13

longer 178:19 262:2

look 21:4 23:17 28:16 44:12 76:23 78:12 92:16 94:3,16 95:19 106:4,8 115:20 128:22 163:7 186:1,8 195:4,6 211:17 219:23 226:25 227:20 228:20 230:16 231:22 233:19 238:3,6 239:7,14 241:20 242:2 243:4 244:20 266:14 284:17

looked 23:21 105:21 162:13,14 171:20 187:14 204:17 233:2 270:9 277:19,21 281:4

looking 37:8 38:6 39:7 41:17 44:18 48:4 60:10,11 64:7,18 82:21 106:16,17 128:13 133:8 137:3 142:19 163:8 190:9 215:12 226:8,14 228:18 232:24 233:13, 16 235:14 237:25 239:4 242:23 245:1 248:3 274:10 278:3 300:2

**looks** 20:15 39:1 89:10 123:2 143:22 156:22 229:3,6 236:21 272:18 282:24 284:15 285:10

lose 164:19 loses 137:17

lost 275:2 289:15

**lot** 44:3 58:11 64:13 80:21 81:2 91:25 132:6 173:17 179:21 236:21 245:16,22 264:4 273:25 281:13 290:21 299:3 300:8,16

lots 178:17 181:21

**love** 33:21 167:1 178:7 217:24

lovely 244:3

loves 63:5

loyal 239:4

**Luke** 163:12

**luxury** 82:10

lying 239:20

М

**M-A-R-K** 191:13

M-A-R-T-I-N 101:8

M-C-K-I-N-N-E-Y 132:14

M-I-C-H-E-L-L-E 79:18

M-U-L-I-N 158:24

M-Y-R-N-A 101:7

**ma'am** 87:13 88:24 89:16 90:13 91:22 161:24 303:8,13

**machines** 284:4,6

Madam 219:4

made 12:23 20:11,19 21:11,14,18 24:9 27:9,15 28:14 32:7 45:7 46:8,15 52:11,22 53:15,18 54:22 55:1 60:23 66:5 67:4,7 91:10 161:17,21 166:10 171:3 176:25 177:5 178:21 180:1 182:19 194:13 208:9 209:5 231:25 232:14 241:11 264:3 289:23 290:16 305:22

Madison 147:1

**Mahant** 205:13,15,23 206:17,23 207:3,23 208:6,7,17 209:12 210:5,17,20 216:14

Mahant's 208:10

mail 86:21,22 103:18

mailbox 198:19

mailed 86:12

maintain 73:23 227:14

maintained 233:3

maintains 226:8

major 87:2 148:3 262:23 281:13

**majority** 31:20,24 45:15,19,23 47:13 65:20 174:6 181:7 294:20, 21

make 17:4,17 24:7 28:3 44:24 45:20 52:2 56:22 58:20 60:12 61:3 62:24 64:15 66:8,19 67:11 73:16 75:16 78:6 80:14 82:1 85:3 87:5 88:21 95:5 102:18 112:8 116:3 119:4 127:20 133:10 136:11 137:4 141:3,10 144:10 147:7 149:2 151:24 161:1,4

165:12 175:1 186:16 187:2 192:16 201:24 202:13 204:14 211:17 212:3 235:16 236:5 240:3 245:18 250:4 255:3,16 266:18 268:3,19 269:3,7 270:18 271:24 273:13,15,16 275:15 277:15 285:21 290:3 293:17 294:4 297:8 300:18 307:25

**makes** 20:23 22:25 27:22 28:17 54:20 125:10 141:19 174:6 293:10

**making** 61:6,10 89:2 137:16 173:6 202:11 285:22 290:8

**man** 192:2

manager 52:18

managing 191:1

manifestation 139:13

manner 113:6 232:6

**many** 37:10 57:21 80:15 84:5,13 89:25 95:1 123:22 219:12 230:14, 16 276:3,10,12 290:13 299:16,17

march 61:22

**Maria** 5:13

Marion 44:11 81:9 140:18 159:2 201:9,14 203:4 218:9 221:25 230:11 236:12,24 240:9 241:12 243:20 245:22 246:24 248:1 249:24 304:11

**mark** 85:19 115:1 191:2,13 198:18 230:15 267:3

marking 260:16 261:15 262:3,9

**Martin** 100:9 101:1,2,4,7 102:22, 24 111:19 117:25 253:22

**Mary** 72:1,7

master's 300:16

material 55:14 79:11 273:3

materials 114:3 134:19 169:23 172:17 173:14 221:2 224:21 225:6

**Matt** 119:14

matter 14:3,6,11 15:6,13 16:15 42:12 43:23 55:9,10 58:21 67:8, 16,23 68:11,14 69:19,25 70:13,19 72:9,13 83:8 92:11,12 93:16 94:17 96:8 100:10 106:7 112:1 113:3 118:2 120:17 127:9,15

Index: matters..minutes

131:14,17 143:23,25 145:20 149:24 155:9,13 156:19,23 164:18 173:25 177:22 183:18,20 190:3 193:16 195:13 198:22 216:21 240:21 247:9 248:9 250:14,18 256:15 258:12 271:13 273:2,11 288:8,23 289:3 291:12

**matters** 7:22 8:4,15,23 39:24 42:25 44:11 50:12 75:13 126:14 128:9 130:15,23 145:16 207:12 247:21

**Matthew** 5:11 7:4 43:25 67:10 68:3 123:4 232:9 233:16 250:8 251:6 256:19 281:10 287:1

may 11:21,24 12:2,12,17,19 13:1, 3,7 20:24 31:14 35:25 36:14 42:5 44:25 50:19,21 51:13,14 56:8 58:12 66:22 93:19 101:14 115:15 116:1 153:15 162:5 186:14,21,23 209:18 226:19 253:20 285:8 287:7 299:5 306:1

**maybe** 47:24 82:25 163:18 171:15 178:20 187:18,20 199:25 224:25 228:25 241:18,23 242:6,7 245:17

mayor 221:4 254:4

Mccain 50:15

**Mccormick** 82:18,24 83:1 155:13,14,21

Mccormick's 155:21

**Mccray** 98:12

**Mckinney** 16:3 18:8 34:14 132:9, 14 133:22

Mcspadden 257:16

me 13:9 25:23 28:25 29:1 36:4,21 37:16,22 38:1,13,14 39:5 41:9 45:14 47:6 49:13 56:4 57:12 58:6 63:1 64:10,18 72:11 76:16 85:20 86:3 88:11 98:9 103:1,11,15,16, 22,24 104:3,16,21,22 105:18,21 113:9,15,18,24 116:8 123:8 124:4 139:13,24 140:13,21 142:9 143:10 159:8 161:4 163:14 177:3 178:8 180:7 191:11 195:2 196:14, 15 197:2,7 202:22 208:7,24 214:25 215:8 222:5,11 228:14 229:3 230:2 241:10 244:24 246:23 251:20 256:21 261:7,19, 25 262:4 263:1,7 264:12,23,24 265:13,19 268:20 272:18 279:10

282:2,20 293:1 294:2,4 303:25

mean 22:4 23:11 24:20 39:16,20, 21 44:9 45:8 78:10 95:6 97:19,21 105:8 111:24 113:3,12 119:8 126:11 131:14 142:5 148:2,4 163:19 164:4 166:20 170:11 172:2,10 174:11 175:11,18 176:16,21 179:11 197:23 201:21 212:25 226:3,15 229:3 234:24 235:16 239:3,19 241:13 242:4,17, 21 243:15 245:20 249:22 260:12 268:7 270:3 278:18 279:10 281:14,21 286:17 292:8 293:6,13

meaning 114:23 261:23

meaningful 195:20

means 42:2 107:6,20 171:24 198:18 213:2 226:1 235:9 236:18 283:20 292:13 293:13,14

meant 56:15

mechanical 214:18 215:16

mechanism 39:4 57:17

**meet** 22:9 23:11 30:25 32:1 42:2 90:25 96:19 97:5,7,21 98:14 125:4 246:19 254:7 258:18 260:25

meeting 5:2 6:3,8 9:7 11:15 41:15 42:21 70:11 71:13 118:18 120:23 123:25 193:21 199:4,8,11, 12,14 217:1 254:9 256:23 262:16 267:2 295:17

meetings 7:24 280:12

**member** 5:7,8 31:7,8 34:25 43:12,15 48:5 63:14 107:16 160:1 184:9 208:8 214:16 222:10 247:25 275:4 307:24

members 5:5 6:1 8:5 9:4 11:10, 24 18:12 32:14 34:12 35:1,8 46:25 47:3,22 49:17 61:12 68:7 100:14 102:7 118:7 120:22 128:12 132:20 133:19 155:16 158:21 170:3 180:2 184:21 185:16 193:20 209:20 217:1 225:17 250:10 256:22 272:25 281:16 295:17

memorandum 160:6,7,8

memory 232:13 242:4

mentioned 81:23 133:23 191:3 206:15 207:7

merge 231:7

merits 27:14 28:10 34:15,17 43:6 186:18,20

**Messer** 163:12

**met** 78:23 96:11 97:11 98:15 162:11 192:1 215:15 226:19 263:2

Metropolitan 32:17

Michael 158:25 210:8,14,15

Michael's 211:23

Michelle 79:17 196:22

microphone 239:13 278:21

mid 254:12

middle 173:10 253:15

might 15:17,25 41:3 55:24 153:5 165:22 171:13 173:3 174:25 175:3,14 181:12 190:11 212:14 224:6 225:18 229:21 234:8 239:23 243:14 244:2 276:10,12 277:15 282:15 307:1

Mike 33:6 163:12 259:10

military 31:5

Miller 219:6

million 236:22

millions 307:21

**mind** 16:9 82:24 98:8 126:4 170:1 171:16 175:4 179:7 198:25 202:14 209:15

**minimal** 94:18

minimum 96:13,24 141:24

ministerial 114:22 115:2 116:5 252:22

minor 122:3 126:13

minority 289:7

**minute** 56:19 77:3,9 80:14 89:13 179:7 195:3 199:22 227:17

minutes 6:8,9,13,20 7:1 11:22 12:13,21,24 13:2 17:22 25:23 45:25 56:1,3,6,18,21 73:18 79:10 84:23,24 85:4,12 101:5 118:17 136:5,8 137:5 143:20 162:5 164:1,7 171:9 189:9,23 209:4,18 217:17 218:25 219:3 223:20,23

244:17 245:16 248:17 249:8 259:17 262:10 263:9,17,19 264:1 267:2 273:16 301:8,13,17,19 302:3

mirror 49:22 287:5 mirrors 287:13

misdemeanor 38:12 41:24

misinterpret 238:19

mispronouncing 276:23

misremembering 233:10

misrepresentations 61:10 125:25

missing 64:13 116:1

misspeak 20:16

misstatement 25:6

misstating 93:10

mistake 230:23,25 231:2 305:23

mistaken 25:21

mistakenly 105:16

mistakes 234:17

Mitch 209:9

Mitchell 205:16 250:20 252:17

model 282:10

models 240:24

module 231:11 232:1

mom 278:1

**moment** 7:20 102:21 159:8 249:16

Monday 75:22 196:15,16

**money** 41:3 91:12,25 139:9 287:2,6 292:3,5 300:16

monitored 75:7

monkey 300:19

Monroe 159:3

monthly 36:6

**months** 53:11 138:22 168:8 173:2 178:19 265:23

moons 236:22

Moore 118:2,3 119:2,3,5 120:7

**Morales** 219:13

more 11:22 12:13 13:1,6 21:12 24:20 26:21 27:2 32:10 33:23 44:5 56:1 58:21 80:16 85:12 110:19 134:10 147:20 178:20 198:22 222:5 224:25 233:18 240:23 247:20 255:11 263:15 264:1 266:6 269:3 276:17 282:9 293:17,22 294:4 298:11,20 299:5, 9,15

**morning** 101:2,3,6 121:11 144:19.22 146:8 190:9

**most** 36:25 67:2 78:14 81:20 90:3 148:13,19 151:10 159:21 163:11 175:13 176:11 184:1 185:5 203:21 219:7,25 220:5 223:12 238:12,13,15,24,25 241:3 251:15 260:5 261:6 280:17

**Mostly** 124:4

mother 280:14

motion 8:10.14 9:9 10:13 13:12 14:11,25 18:15 19:11,12,16 20:2, 9,10 21:23 22:11 25:11,13,16,22 26:1,3,5,21,23 27:5,7,16,17 28:3 29:1,5,7,8,16,18 34:18,19 35:14, 20,24 36:1 37:16,20 43:3,8,10,14 44:7,8 45:12 46:2,4,6,8,15,17,21 48:5,8,9,10,13,16,17,21,23 49:5, 23 53:24 56:23 57:11 58:20 59:12,14,16 63:9,22 65:11,20 66:5,8,18,20 67:3,4,5,7 69:12 81:18 85:2,4 99:8,18 112:5,8,11 116:18,25 117:6,13 119:4,23 120:5 122:18,21 126:7,17,25 127:20,25 130:15 131:2,5,19 141:10 142:13,25 145:6 149:3,16 150:14 152:12 154:3,16,25 156:11 158:7,11 167:4,10 173:14, 20 182:12,24 188:8,9,10,18,25 191:17 192:17,22 193:6 204:14, 25 215:25 216:5,12 245:14 247:1 248:16 255:3,17,22,23 256:7 257:24 258:8 270:19 271:4,21,23, 24 272:3,10 273:15 294:24 295:21 296:3 297:8,20

**motions** 18:14 19:11 47:16 49:18 67:2 152:7,22 154:10,19 183:9

mouth 63:1,2

**move** 5:22 9:22 11:5 14:13 25:11 29:4,5,18 35:9 43:6 47:2 49:7

54:4 56:13,17,21 59:15 66:13 69:6 77:8 97:25 99:9 119:18 122:16 127:22 130:11,25 131:15 136:11 138:4 142:4,12 145:2 149:4 152:8 153:24,25 154:18,20, 21 156:6 158:4 175:2 177:15,23 180:18 182:21 189:9,13 192:18 194:24 199:21 204:20 214:23 215:23 223:23 225:9 227:10 247:10 248:19,21,24,25 255:18 257:21 263:18 264:5,11 270:20 271:25 295:1,15 296:5,6 297:4

move-in 139:16

**moved** 6:15 8:12 9:11 48:12 135:12 136:14 137:19 138:4 140:2 142:2 150:16 158:8 172:19 215:1 224:24 225:10 234:16 236:14 297:22

moves 39:1 180:19

**moving** 14:1 35:19 45:24 67:13 140:13 143:22 153:4 172:20 183:3 190:2

**Mr** 5:25 6:1,10 7:6,7,17 8:5 9:4 10:6 15:14,16,24 16:1,6,8,16,25 17:1,16,18,20,21,24 18:3,7,19,22, 24 19:1,10,13 20:1,6,10,16 22:3, 15 23:17 26:17,20,23 27:11,14, 20,25 28:8,11,23 29:12 30:4,5,8, 11,13,16,24 31:23 32:1,7,20 34:7, 8,11 35:25 38:6 40:4,25 41:13 43:10 44:4,14 45:9 47:11,17,22 49:7,9,16,19 55:16,24 56:8,19 57:12,23 58:4,10 59:20 65:10,23 66:1,22,24 68:2,4,7,23,25 70:2,21 71:15,18,24 72:6,16 73:19 74:2,5, 9,13,16 75:19 76:8,12,15,20,25 77:6,19 79:1,12 90:5 98:2,8,11 100:8,14 101:16,19,24 102:18,23 103:1,4 104:11,18 105:2,6,17 106:5,12,24 107:1,13 108:5,10 109:1 110:12 111:17,22 115:9 116:8,15 118:6,7,16,18,22,25 119:15,24 120:11,13,14,21,22 121:15 122:2,14,15 123:1,2,7 124:3,9,13 125:6 126:6,18 128:11,12 129:12,14,15,17,19,20, 24,25 132:4,8,13,17,20 133:9,12, 18 143:14 144:9,14,17 145:18,21 146:3,6,8,10,25 147:3,13 150:3,6 151:5,15,16,17,21 152:2,6 153:5, 6,8,11,15,21 154:14 155:11,16 156:21 157:4,8,12,18 158:3,20, 21,23 159:9,10,14,17,19,25

Index: Mrs..my

160:4,10,12,15,18,23,25 161:4,8, 12,19,21,22,24 162:4,9,11,20,24 163:24 165:4 167:1 169:3,24 170:10 173:15,23 178:6 180:17 181:16 182:4,8,10,11 183:10 184:11,14,15,20 185:1,9,12 187:5,7,11 188:6 189:6,7,8 190:19,21,22,24 191:4,10,13,15, 24 192:11,13 193:13,19,20 194:8, 15,16 195:23 197:12,24 198:4,6, 10,22 202:8,10 203:2,19 206:9, 11,17,23 207:3,23 208:6,7,10,17 209:6,9,12,14,19 210:5,13,15,17, 20 211:4,6,7,20,23 212:7,10,12, 16 213:9,20 214:9,18,22 215:6,16 216:24,25 219:2,4 221:7,9,12,18, 21,23 222:2,4,12,14,15,19,22 223:6,10,13,16,22 224:6,19,24 225:16 226:5,11 227:7 228:10,11, 13,15 229:7,15,19,21 230:5 231:3,11,24 232:10 235:22 236:3 237:11,14,21 238:3,6,15,19 239:6,10,14 240:15 241:13 248:7 249:23 250:2,6,12,20 251:8,24 252:2,9,11,17,23 255:7,10,15 256:18,20,22 257:20 258:17,25 259:2,6,16,18,25 260:12,16,20,23 261:9,18 263:16 264:2 265:9,13, 19 266:7,9 267:10,17,20,24 268:2,11,17 269:5,13 270:6,17 271:11,18 285:15 287:20,22 288:4 294:6,10,21 295:8,13 296:17 297:3,17 298:7,9,13,15,19 299:4,25 300:7 302:4,21 304:9,17 305:16

**Mrs** 251:21

**Ms** 6:18,23,24 8:2,5,13,20,21 9:2, 4,13,17,18 10:6,8,12,15,20,21 13:21,22 14:22,23 15:2 17:8,10, 22 18:16,20 19:7,24 22:3,13,14 23:7 24:12 25:19 26:3,7,12,13,17 27:6,11,24 28:7,9,23,25 29:9,14, 21,25 30:1,11 34:3,11 35:13,25 36:3,14,16,17,19,20 38:3,22,24 39:7 40:9,12 41:2,8 43:17,20 44:14,25 45:9,18 46:1,5,23 47:1, 9,14,21 48:15,25 49:4,8,10,13,16 52:5,9 54:2,4,9,10,11 55:21 56:13,20 57:1,5,6,9 58:20,23 59:2,3,4,10,15,20,22 60:19 65:6, 16,18 66:1,3,9,11,14,19,21 67:10 68:1,3,21 69:3,15,17,22,23 70:5 71:16,20 72:2,8,17,18,22,23 73:13,18,19,21 74:2,4,6,10,11,15, 17 75:12,19,21,22 76:2,7,11,14,

16,22,24 77:1,3,8,17,18,23,25 78:9,12 79:4,7,13,17 80:1,2,6,10, 13 84:20,21,24 85:3,9,10,13,16 87:13,16,23 88:2,4,6,9,14,17,19, 24 89:1,5,6,16 90:16 91:3,4,6,7, 19,22,23 92:22 94:9,11,14 95:11 98:11,17,19,20,21 99:4,12,16,23, 24 101:1,2,4,7 102:22,24 104:9, 10,15,25 105:3,8,22 106:6 108:10,24 109:25 110:25 111:6,9, 14,19 112:3,6,10,14 114:6,17,21 115:8 116:5,13,20 117:3,7,15,25 118:24 119:2,3,5,13,20 120:2,3, 12 121:10,11 122:16,24 123:1 124:9 125:18 126:10,13,15,22,23 127:6,24 128:6,7 129:14,16,18, 21,23 130:1,5,8,13,20,21,25 131:11,12,15,25 132:1,4 133:4,6, 11,14,18 134:6,12,15,18,20,23,24 135:2,8,11,13,17,19,20,22,24 136:1,4,7,10,13,16,18,20,22,23, 24 137:1,3,6,21,23,25 138:2,3,6, 7,9,11,13,15,16,24 139:1,3,4,6,8, 11,12,16,21 140:1,4,12,17,21 141:2,3,8,11,14,15,17,18 142:15, 17 143:4,5 144:16,19,21 145:1,5, 13,14,19 146:2,18,22 147:6,7,9, 11 148:7 149:4,7,13,14 150:3,6,7, 13,16,24,25 151:5,23,25 152:8, 19,20 153:5,6,10,13,15,17,19,20 154:2,7,8,15,24 155:6,7 156:3,10, 16,17 157:4,8,11,17 158:4,8,15, 16 159:8,13 160:22,23 161:2,6, 11,20,22,25 163:25 164:2,8,10, 13,22,24,25 165:18 166:14,24,25 167:2,18,21,23,24 169:5,14 170:2,7,8,18,20,25 171:2,8,25 172:9 174:10 175:8 177:7,14,19, 20,21 178:10,21,23 180:10 182:1, 5,13 183:6,7,24 184:8,12 186:4 188:9,22,23 189:8,14,21,22 190:8,20 191:23 192:18 193:3,4 194:22,24 195:14,17 196:10,13, 16,17,18,19,20,22,24 197:1,3,5,9, 15,19,21,22 198:2,5,9,12,15 199:20 200:7,10,12,13,14,15,16, 20,25 201:3,4,5,6,8,10,12,17,18, 19,20,21,24 202:1,7,8,11,12,14, 19 203:3,9,11,14,16,17 204:2,6,7, 10,15,23 205:4,5,14,20 206:1,10, 20 207:1 209:5,13 210:12 211:3, 8,15,21,25 212:9 213:19 214:11, 15,20 215:20,23 216:9,10,19 217:14,17,18,23 218:3,8,20 219:9 220:13,17 222:23,24 223:3,9,12, 15,21,23,24 224:3,4,10 225:20

226:2,8 227:3,23 228:8,12,14 229:4,21 230:22 231:4 232:3,8, 22,24 233:16 234:12,23 235:3,5, 19 236:1,11,16 237:1,6,13,17,22, 24 238:2,21 240:13,17,18,19 241:20 242:12,15 243:24 244:5,7, 9,10,12,13,14,17,18,24 245:5,10, 17 246:7,11,12,21,22 247:4,8,10, 15,25 248:6,8,9,11,18,22,24 249:5,6,9,11,14,16,17,20,22,23 250:4,6,18,25 251:3,10,12,24,25 252:15 255:6,14,18 256:4,5 257:16,17,23 258:5,6,16 263:20, 24,25 266:3 268:8,12 269:9,14, 19,21 270:3,20 271:1,2,16,22,25 272:7,8,16 273:4,8,9,13,22,23,24 274:4 275:19 276:24 277:1,11 278:16,18,20,23 279:16,18,23 280:3 281:12 282:17 283:16 284:3,7,11,13,17 285:6,15 286:1, 4,5,23 288:2 289:18 290:11,25 291:8,14 293:22 294:2,5,18 295:4,9,19,25 296:1,5,14,15,24, 25 297:5,8,13,22 298:3,4 301:9, 11,14,15,17,20,24,25 302:4,6,11, 14,18,19 303:6,10,13,14,17,19,21 304:4,19 305:10 306:1,3,19 307:9

much 24:20 41:3 54:1 55:16 56:18 60:20 62:25 63:15 64:24 70:2 71:18 73:22 76:20 84:21 89:23 91:24 92:21 94:19 100:8 110:12 111:9 138:19 189:6 206:20 211:9 221:18 222:25 247:16 273:24 285:24

Mullin 158:24 190:18 191:1

multifarious 51:24

multiple 226:25

municipal 137:11 170:16,18 237:7

murders 165:23

museum 253:10

**must** 12:7,22 19:21 23:11 101:10 107:18,22 109:7,10,11 134:2 207:19

my 5:8,12 12:8 13:12 15:20,24 16:8,25 18:9 23:13 25:6 28:13 30:8 34:12 36:7 37:15 39:14 41:9 42:4 44:13,20 54:18,21 55:1 56:4 57:12 59:23 60:1,5,10,11 61:3,4 62:23,25 63:1,2 70:11 71:19,20 73:25 84:19 86:19 87:20 88:18,

Index: Myla..none

19.20 90:13 91:19 96:20 101:4 102:13 103:4.14 104:6 105:17.18 108:20 111:23 116:13 123:17 125:8 132:8,18 133:20,21 136:1, 13 138:17 139:21.23.25 140:4.14 142:24 143:20 146:13 147:11 151:20,25 157:13 158:22 161:4 162:5,10,12 163:15,18 165:19 166:15 175:11 179:6 182:17 184:15 185:6 187:3 190:24 194:12,17,25 196:10,13,14 197:17,21,25 198:20 199:24 200:8 202:21 203:22 208:16,22 214:25 215:6 217:18 222:7,9,10, 24 224:12 226:16 227:8,12 230:24 231:25 232:13,25 234:9 235:3 242:24 249:11 259:2.5 261:5,10,13 262:4,6,11,12,15,18, 25 263:3,6,7,8 264:8,24 265:6,14 268:4,18,20 273:7 274:5 277:6 279:19 280:9,10,12 282:3,12 286:6 288:4,25 291:11 292:23 294:22 300:24,25 303:6 304:20 306:4,6,9

Myla 129:6,22,23

Myrna 101:4

**myself** 5:6 6:2,10 37:17 44:13 60:8 66:14 102:10 115:19 124:14 158:24 185:17 209:22 232:21 278:1

# Ν

# N-I-C-H-O-L-A-S 260:1 N-I-C-H-O-L-S-O-N 103:5

name 5:20 10:5 15:2 18:2,5 30:7, 8 34:12 65:23 71:19,25 73:20,25 78:14 79:15 100:6 101:4,19 103:3,4 117:22 118:21 120:9 121:24 122:5 124:11,12 127:4 132:8 133:21 136:17 143:11 146:7 147:11,12 149:20 151:25 152:1 153:1,8 158:22 160:18 161:11 183:15 184:15 189:4 190:18,24 191:12 193:10 194:17 195:10 199:25 200:8 205:11 206:25 207:2 209:7 216:16 217:18 221:15,16 222:24 223:1 252:15 256:11 258:10 259:3,23 271:8 272:12 273:4 274:3 276:23

**names** 36:17,20,22 84:12 97:9 101:13 204:17 209:1

narrative 187:20

narrow 25:9

nation's 51:3

National 32:22

**nature** 46:8 264:21

**nay** 65:18,19

**Neal** 156:24 158:3,20,23,25

near 307:7

necessarily 172:9 236:2 290:23

**necessary** 72:20 177:10,13 231:23 252:20 276:5

need 27:5 29:7,10 42:20 45:19 47:15 48:8 56:18 65:1 66:5,18 76:23 79:23 81:19 83:25 84:4 93:19 99:8 112:24 117:10 125:17 147:4 157:10 176:12 177:15 189:12 197:3 203:8 211:17 219:22 231:3 239:12 248:13 279:1 281:7 294:25 295:11 305:21

need-to-know 111:11

**needed** 104:22 105:24 254:10 275:1 286:7

**needs** 40:23 45:22 63:3 113:4 125:15 220:23 240:23 259:22 274:21 279:5

negative 121:21 186:6

neither 148:25 195:5 208:6

network 92:9

**never** 16:7,9 61:8 88:6 98:8 121:16 126:4 163:4 178:18 179:14 184:15 192:1 208:8 209:15 263:2.4

**new** 38:1 41:16 51:7 101:12 135:12 136:12 138:16 202:17 299:1 305:1

next 6:7 8:25 15:5 44:6 46:22 63:18 67:15 70:12 76:2 100:9 112:22 118:1 127:7 149:23 155:12 183:18 190:2 205:13 211:2 216:20 250:13 265:23 268:21 272:20 281:20,21

**Nextly** 262:3

nice 187:13

Nicholas 258:13 259:25 271:6

**Nicholson** 100:10,11 101:16,19, 24 102:18,23 103:1,4 104:11,18 105:2,6,17 106:5,12 111:17,22 117:20 253:22

**night** 57:13 195:5 197:8 280:17

nine 72:24

**no** 10:12 11:22 12:13 13:1 20:6 28:7,20 30:13 31:2 34:8 40:6 43:17 45:1 46:1 47:9 48:19 49:2, 3,4 55:21 56:6 60:18,23 62:5,8,9 64:1,14 67:7,16 68:11,25 69:17 70:13 76:15 78:2,3,17,20 80:1,13 83:3,12,17 84:14,18 87:13 88:19 92:8 93:16 96:21 98:7,19 99:10 102:23 104:13 106:5,7,17,24 109:25 113:21,23 115:15 116:5, 15 120:17 122:1,24 126:11 128:14 129:8,11,20 133:9 135:13 136:7 138:2 146:22 160:22 163:25 169:25 170:4 172:9 178:2 180:15,21 182:4,8,11 184:2 187:7 188:6 194:22 197:1 201:23 202:19 203:16 204:10,12 206:1,4 207:9 211:8,15,16 214:2,5,9 215:11,20 218:19 219:2 230:12 238:15 239:19 240:13,21 246:2,8 247:13 250:4 251:8 252:5 255:6, 14,15 259:16 262:14 265:22 266:12 269:22 270:1,13 273:12 276:24 280:9 282:15,18,19 290:7, 11 293:15,24 295:13 300:25 302:10,19 305:20

nobody 229:9

**noise** 180:6

nomination 14:4 15:8 67:18 70:15 99:7 100:12 118:4 120:19 127:12 144:2 150:1 155:15 183:21 190:5 193:18 205:24 216:23 218:17,24 250:16 256:16 258:14 271:14

nominee 176:20 207:4

nominees 148:3

noncompliance 218:22

**none** 6:20 8:17 10:17 13:18 14:19 54:7 128:3 131:8,22 145:10 149:10 150:21 152:16 155:3 176:21 183:3 192:8,25 205:1 255:21 256:1 258:2 nonelected 162:19

nonetheless 42:25 44:5

nonjudicial 50:2

**noon** 166:17 168:16 241:7 246:13 247:3

nor 122:12 185:3 208:6 259:7

normally 262:19 263:10 267:5

North 184:24

not 12:1,5 15:23 16:1 18:19 21:2 22:7 23:4,8,22 24:6,17,23,25 25:8 26:22 28:5,15,18 30:21 31:25 33:9 34:16 35:18 36:14 37:7,20, 24 39:19 40:7,8 41:13 42:6,22 45:25 46:6,14 47:13,24 49:1,6 50:17,21 51:22 52:1,20 54:12,16, 21,23,24 55:2,6,8,9,10,22 57:8 58:25 59:5,8 60:6 61:2 62:4,21,24 63:2,13,16 64:14 75:12,16 78:7 79:25 81:3,16,24 82:4,7,9 83:6, 16,19 84:6 85:22 87:14,25 88:12, 22 89:17,25 90:1,4,20 92:11,22 93:1,5,17,20,23,24,25 94:8,16,25 95:3,9,12,16,17,19,22,24 96:8,15, 19 97:7,8,9,16 98:14,19,21 100:3, 6 101:15,22 102:5,12 104:13 106:5 107:16 108:2,8,14,22,24 110:19,25 111:12 112:1 115:19, 23 116:2,13 117:20,23 119:9,10 120:7,10 122:4,12 123:10,13 124:13,14,15,20,24 125:10,22,23 126:6 127:2,5 129:18 130:1,9 133:4,12 134:25 136:25 138:21 140:17 142:2 144:20,22 145:21 146:4,10,21,22,24 147:1,3,14 148:22 149:18,21 151:9,10,19 152:4,6,23 153:2,7,12 156:7 157:19 159:5,17,20,25 160:15,18 161:5,14 162:11,15 164:17 165:25 167:15 168:1 169:3,24 170:6,16,22 171:13,17 172:2,9 173:12,18 174:14,15 175:16 177:1,4,12 178:15,16 179:2 180:1 181:13 183:12,15 184:1 185:2,15, 18,19 186:17,20 187:18 189:1,4 190:13,14 191:24 193:8,11 194:12 195:12,19 196:10 199:3, 20 202:24 204:4,6,8 205:8,12 206:4 207:8,9 208:2 210:19 211:19 212:9,15,17 213:8,21,25 214:11,15 215:8 216:14,17 218:10 220:9,21 225:7 226:15 227:7,18 229:1 230:3,8,17 231:7

232:5,12 233:14 238:9,10,15,23 239:3 240:4 241:17 242:4,5 243:17 245:16,18,19 251:14 252:9 253:24 254:3,19,23 256:9, 12 258:18 259:6 260:2,10,23,25 261:9,17,19,20 262:1 263:11 264:10,19 265:5,6,13,18,19,22 267:25 268:4 269:24 270:15 271:5,9,19 273:5 274:11 276:10 278:1 279:1,4,6,11,15,19 283:24 284:20,22 285:23 286:8,9,22 289:19,24 290:11 291:9 292:11 293:24 299:8,12 301:10 302:21 303:3,22 304:17 305:2 306:4,12, 25 307:6,14

**notarized** 119:9,10 124:19

**note** 35:15 71:9 82:2 98:12 132:23 141:18 150:10 159:4 160:7 283:16

noted 19:13,16 185:13 214:4

**nothing** 7:14 17:21 63:19 78:11 88:3 89:2 104:12 109:22 172:15 177:10 197:17 211:6 212:11 220:22 249:20 269:2 270:10,12 289:12,14

notice 5:24 6:3 11:11 14:10 15:12 67:22 70:18 71:7,8,10 100:22,23 103:17 118:11,13 121:5,7 128:19,20 129:1,2,6 146:1 151:13 153:12 155:25 156:2 157:25 167:5 184:5 190:12 194:3,6,9 195:12,15,24 196:5 199:3,8,14,21 205:15 217:7 218:12 250:19 251:1,21 257:11, 12 258:24 262:4

**noticed** 78:2 144:17 147:23 148:18

notices 198:17 217:10

novel 210:2,4

**November** 61:5 134:10,16 135:3 140:23 142:1,19 184:22 242:7

novo 174:4

**now** 9:22,23 15:14 16:2 18:13 20:8 23:13,24 25:7 36:13 37:21, 22 44:21 53:23 60:8,21 61:13 62:3,16,23 67:8 75:19 82:19 83:24 86:2 94:19 97:3 109:12 113:23 123:24 130:12,23,25 139:15 145:16 151:2 158:18 161:5 163:9 165:10 173:13 175:3

221:7 227:18 233:5,19 236:13 239:20 240:8 241:2 248:10 262:20 263:2 266:13 267:13 268:14 274:23 280:15 281:2 285:9,14 289:24 292:1,3 303:3 305:12

**number** 39:19 53:3 88:1 89:10, 25 96:11,13,24 123:10,23 150:11 174:11 181:12 236:13 253:18

numbered 239:6

numerous 306:7

Nussmeyer 5:11 6:3,11 104:9 123:8 144:19,21 146:2 153:15,20 198:5 202:14 204:6,10 231:4 232:24 236:1,11,16 244:18 248:8, 11 249:11,17,22 250:4 269:21 279:18,23 282:17 284:17 286:5, 23

## 0

o'clock 168:13 248:7

oath 7:4,10 31:7 37:3 60:14 265:2 266:15 267:13

Obama 50:15 229:8 299:2

**object** 195:11

**objection** 11:13 17:25 18:4,13 199:10

obligated 139:9

**observed** 50:9 51:8 57:22

obtain 72:20 195:20

**obvious** 215:8

**obviously** 46:17 77:2 87:17 133:19 135:15 140:9 171:9 177:16 179:12 188:2 226:20 245:15 264:4 270:7 288:4

occur 246:25 254:10

occurred 62:18 97:3 140:11

**October** 136:15 137:19 139:1,5,7 140:3,22 142:2

odd 47:7 64:3,10 154:20 214:22

of 5:5,17,22 6:1,2,3,7,10 7:4,10, 12,21,23,24 8:5,7 9:1,4,24 11:1, 15 13:3,9 14:3,9,10,11,14 15:2,3, 7,8,10,12 16:2,3 17:1,3,5,11,14 18:8,9,10,11,17 19:2,6,14,15,16,

Index: off..okay

20,21 20:12 21:13,20 22:5,6,16 23:16 24:6,8,16,18,25 25:5,7,22 27:15,18 28:12,20 29:1 30:12,13 31:1,2,4,7,8,10,11,14,17,18,20, 22,23 32:2,10,12,13,14,23,24 33:9 34:12,15,17,21,25 35:1,5,8, 21,22 36:7,10,12,15 37:1,4,6,11, 24 38:9,11,21 39:16,17,18 40:5, 17,21 41:11,21,23 42:10,12,23 43:5,12 44:3 45:6,19 46:7,10,16, 19 47:8,17 48:3,7,23 49:17,18,20, 21 50:3,7,10,12,13,18,22,25 51:2, 5,6,9,15,21,23,24 52:2,12,13,14, 16,24,25 53:3,8,12,13,16,19 54:17,19 55:1,4,7,11,21,22,23 57:14,15 58:7,11,18 59:4,8 60:6, 20,23 61:6,9,13 62:13,14,17,20 63:4,5,13,14,15,17 64:2,13 65:21, 23,24 66:12,13 67:16,18,20,22 68:7,9,11,14,16 69:13 70:13,17, 18,23 71:2,3,4,5,7,8,14 72:9,10, 14,18,24 73:1,11,24 74:7,21,24 75:7,21 76:1,4,10,13,15 77:20,22, 25 78:8,14,21 79:2,13,24 80:14, 17,21,23 81:1,2,6,10,11,20,22 82:4,16 83:14 84:7,16 85:17 86:13,19 87:2,18,19 88:1 89:3,5, 8,15,24,25 90:13 91:3,9,11,12,17, 25 92:9,11,12,13,17 93:2,8,19 94:4,17,21 95:1,24 96:10,12,13, 14,24 97:24 98:13,24 100:4,6,10, 14,16,19,21,22 101:6,15,16,21,23 102:2,8 103:6,7,18,21,25 104:1,5, 6,10,16,23 105:4,5,9,14,19,20,25 106:15,21 107:7,8,14,15,18,23,24 108:3,7,16,17,18,21,22 109:4,7,9, 17,18,20 110:2,6,7 111:23,25 112:18,20 113:1,4,5,15,16,23,25 114:7,9,10,11,12,13,19,22,24 115:3,5,7,21,23 116:3,4,10,16 117:3,13,21,22 118:2,7,8,10,11, 13,17 119:5 120:8,9,17,22,23 121:2,4,5,6,20 122:4,6 123:6,10, 18,22,23 124:11,18 125:3,4,16 126:6 127:3,4,9,16,18 128:12,14, 16,17,19,20,24,25 129:1,2,6,9,16, 19 131:16,20 132:20,25 133:13, 15,19 136:1,25 137:2,6,14,16 138:24 139:13,23 140:13 141:16, 20,25 142:22 143:11,23,25 145:20 146:2,13,23,25 148:3,9, 10,12,14,23 149:19,20,24 151:12 152:24 153:1,18 155:13,16,18,21, 22,23,24,25 156:2 157:15,21 158:21,23 159:15,23 160:1,10,16 161:8,9,25 162:9,21,25 163:11

164:16 165:6,19 166:8 167:3,5,7, 9,24 168:16,19 169:11,15,18 170:3,10,13,23 173:1,10,11,17, 24,25 174:6,7,12,17,18,23 175:4, 13,18,24 176:6,13,20,21 177:2,6, 7 178:17,25 179:5,10,17,18,21,22 180:1,2,4,18,19,20 181:7,12,22 182:2,3 183:13,15,20 184:5,9,21 185:6,8,13,16,17 186:3,8 187:25 188:16,17 189:2,4 190:3 191:1,4 192:9 193:9,10,16,20,24,25 194:2,3,6,10,11,13 195:18,20,24 196:2,5,11 198:12,17,18,20 199:8,11,14,17 200:25 201:12 202:1,6,24 203:22 205:9,11,15 206:7,10,13,16,21 207:3,5,6,7,10, 13,21 208:8,15,19,21,22,23 209:5,22 210:4,5,17,23 211:8,10, 13 212:4,8 213:8,11 214:15,16, 19,22 215:13 216:15,16,21 217:1, 2,4,5,6,7,11,21 218:10,15,21,22, 23 219:6,8,12 220:1,2,13 221:6, 12,24 222:5,7,10,16,25 225:17,21 226:4,6,17,19,20 227:4,6,10,12, 18,23,25 228:9,23 229:12,20,22 230:2,4,7,12,14,16,24 231:1,11, 16,22 232:14,15 233:12 234:2,3, 4,5,6,22 236:13 238:12 239:15, 17,19 240:16 241:1,9,25 242:7, 16,23 243:13 244:10 245:3,16,18, 19,22 247:1,25 248:1,20,25 250:3,5,14,18,19,20,23 251:1,5, 21,23 252:8 253:17,18 254:5,8, 11,19 255:1 256:10,11,15,22,25 257:8,9,10,11,12,16 258:10,11, 13,20,21,22,23 259:20 260:2,5,6, 17 261:1,12 262:4,9 263:9,13,17 264:3,4,18,21 265:1,14 267:6 269:22 271:7,8,13 272:12,13 273:16,25 274:19 275:3,5,12,17 276:1,3,4,10,12,16 277:11 278:5, 12,14 279:20 280:12,13,15,18,21 281:13,16,19,20 282:11,20,22 283:3,24 287:3,14,16 288:10,15, 22 289:2,8,24 290:3,5,21 291:15, 23 292:8,21,25 293:8 294:7 295:18 296:18 298:25 299:1,3,9 300:5,8,16,24 301:13 302:19,23 303:2,23 304:25 305:9,21 306:5, 7,12,13,14,16 307:3,10,19,21,24

off 10:23 38:21 123:2,6 156:24 184:1 202:16 226:4 230:23 258:20 271:20 297:6,20

offended 184:15

offense 162:19

offensive 94:21 95:6

offer 59:14 85:2 163:24 213:5 255:21

offered 59:12 63:11,19 79:11

offering 215:14

offers 12:4

office 17:14 19:20 31:5,24 32:2 50:20,25 52:19 53:7 55:2,5,19,22 58:25 59:7,8 73:1,11 75:21,24 76:10 78:1,4,16 82:15 84:17 85:18 88:7 89:7 99:1 102:4 103:8, 12,13,21,23,24,25 104:2,6,16 105:14,19,21,23 106:10 109:6,7, 18 110:19 111:24,25 113:13,14, 17,23 114:13,22 115:17,25 121:17,18 122:6 123:14 125:5 126:12 133:14 134:5 138:19 144:21 146:3 147:15 168:2,20 174:7 195:25 198:5,6 207:5,18 208:19 213:22 234:3 236:24 241:12 243:6,21 244:15,19 246:1, 25 248:8,14 249:18,24 274:20 275:25 278:1 286:21 287:4,10,12 304:12

officeholder 105:13

**officer** 31:8,10 106:20,22,23 107:4,20 108:15

officers 21:8 32:16,17 33:15

**offices** 36:11 75:7 78:19 89:3 231:9

official 75:18 221:3,23 230:1 231:5

officials 227:14 232:19

often 181:2 292:14

oftentimes 280:17

**oh** 9:1 16:1,4 57:10 68:2 77:11 79:17 84:24 89:12 93:18 98:8 103:4 105:16 111:5 124:13 126:15 158:6 190:18 198:14 203:16 207:1 234:11 235:21 244:3 246:5 251:10 278:23 280:10 282:16 284:9

**okay** 15:21 16:9 19:8 26:9 27:15 30:3 34:4 43:19 44:15 45:21,24 47:10 48:10 55:24 56:8 58:19 59:10 66:9 69:1 80:2,10 88:14 89:1,9 91:6,24 93:15 98:10

Index: Okeson..one

102:23 103:17 105:21 110:21 111:5,21 112:4,6 116:7,18 117:12 118:15 119:19 126:15 129:12,23 133:11 136:16 139:8 141:4,9,11 144:25 146:5 147:2.16 148:16 149:6 151:14,16 152:5 153:14 156:5,11,22 158:2 159:13,14 161:8 165:23 167:23 168:8,18 169:9 182:12 184:12,18 189:16 190:20,22 194:14,23 197:9 198:2, 14 202:11 204:12 205:19 209:17 218:8 222:22 224:23 227:3 235:5, 21 237:17 244:13,14 249:8 250:11,24 251:10,12,23 252:10 255:13 257:14 258:25 263:13 268:14 269:14 291:8 295:14 302:14 303:14

**Okeson** 5:1,6 6:6,16,19,25 7:17 8:10,14,22,25 9:3,9,12,14,19 10:7,11,13,16,22 13:16,23 14:17, 24 15:21 16:11,14,23 17:6,9,19 18:1,23 19:5,8 20:4,8 22:11 25:13,16,20 26:5,8,14,20 27:4,8, 17 28:5,24 29:16,20,22 30:2,6,10, 15 34:4,10 35:12 36:2 38:1 39:5 41:6,11 43:7,16,19 44:17 45:3,14, 21,24 46:2,20,25 47:6,10 48:3,13, 16,20 49:1,5,12,15 52:4,8 53:24 54:5 55:12 56:2,10,23,25 57:2,7, 10 58:2,5,17,22 59:11,16,21 63:9, 24 65:3,11,17,19 66:2,7,10,12,17, 23 67:9,13 68:6,19,23 69:9,12,16, 18,24 70:3,8,10 71:15,22 72:3,15 73:15 76:17 77:5,10,13 79:2,5,9, 15 80:11 84:23 85:1,6,11 87:9 88:5 90:18 91:5 94:13 95:7 97:12, 23 98:7,10 99:3,5,17,25 100:9,25 101:3,5 102:15,20,25 103:3 104:8 107:10 108:1,20 109:22 110:11, 21 111:12,16,21 112:1,4,9,11 113:2 114:2 115:5 116:2,7,18,22 117:2,6,8,12,18 118:1,15,20 119:2,11,14,19,21 120:4,15 121:9 122:14,18,21,25 124:1,8 125:1 126:5,16,24 127:7,20,25 128:8 129:11,13,25 130:3,7,14,22 131:2,5,13,19 132:2,6,11,16 133:17 135:4 136:3,5,8,23 137:5 139:18 141:5,9 142:13,16,21 143:6,15,19 144:10,15,25 145:4, 6,15 146:5,16,21 147:2,9,16 148:16,24 149:2,6,8,15 150:4,10, 14,17,19 151:1,14,23 152:5,10, 12,21 153:9,14,22 154:3,9,16,21, 25 155:8,12 156:3,9,11,18,22 157:7,9,15 158:2,6,9,11,17

159:11 160:20,25 161:7,18 162:8 163:23 164:1,5,12 176:24 177:12, 18 182:2,6,9,12,22 183:8,11 184:7,13,18 187:5,9 188:4,7,10, 14,24 189:12,16,18,23 190:1,22 191:12,14 192:13,16,20 193:5,15 194:7,14,21,23 198:7,11,14 199:18 200:18 202:17 203:1,13 204:12,18,22,24 205:6,19,22 206:24 209:3,7,17 213:5,13,17 214:5,14 215:4,11,18,22,25 216:3,11,20 217:16 218:25 219:3 221:16,20 223:1,5,19,25 224:5, 15,23 225:12,19,23 227:16 228:3 230:20 233:21 235:1,8,13,17,21, 24 236:7,15 237:20 238:10 240:11,14 241:10 242:9,13 243:19 244:15 245:3,20 246:23 247:6,9 248:4,15,21,23 249:2,7 250:11,13,24 251:11,23 252:7,10 255:4,7,13,16,20 256:6 257:14, 18,24 258:7,25 259:14,17,20,24 260:10,15,18,21 261:8,16 263:13, 21 264:1 265:7,11,16 266:5,8,23 267:15,18,21,25 268:6,22 270:13, 18,22 271:3,12,21,23 272:1,3,9, 20 273:7,10,15,19 274:2 275:18 276:22,25 277:9,14,17 278:11,17, 22 279:10,22,25 281:24 282:24 283:3,12 284:14 285:12 287:18, 21 288:1 290:7,13,22 291:5,11,19 292:19,23 293:19,24 294:3,9,17, 19,22 295:6,11,20 296:2,9,11,16, 21 297:1,6,10,16,18,23,25 298:5, 8,11,18 299:3,23 301:6,12,18,22 302:2,10,12,16 303:25 304:5,10 305:7,19 306:2,11,25

**old** 135:18,21 233:2

### older 276:4

on 5:16,22 6:2,10,20 7:8 8:15
9:22,24 10:9 14:14 15:2,5,17,24
16:15,18,19,22,23 17:19 18:15,23
19:12,14 20:12,21 25:22 27:5,21
29:15 30:3 31:16,17 32:3,11,15,
25 33:1,5 36:24 38:5 39:3,10,18,
24 40:7,8,18 42:6 43:20 45:12
46:12,15 47:15 48:6 49:7,20 50:1
51:21,25 52:16 55:6 56:7 57:22
58:8,9,14,21,25 59:6,13 60:6,20
61:17,22,25 62:18 64:2,6,11
65:23 67:13 69:5,13 70:11 72:19
74:12,18,19 75:1,22,25 76:2,8
78:11,20 79:21 80:4,11,21 81:3,
12,22 82:17 85:20,23 86:13 87:5

89:8 90:20 91:1 93:2 94:1,16 95:2 96:3.4 97:9 99:6 100:3.6 101:13. 18,19,20,22 102:6 103:6,11,15,19 104:21 108:5 109:5 110:3 111:6, 10,13 112:19,24 114:24 115:18 116:10 117:11,23 118:1 119:4,16, 17 120:10 122:3 123:10 124:4,5, 6,7,18 125:17 126:11 127:5 129:6,15,19 130:4,9 134:9,13,16, 19,22 135:6,14 138:9 139:17,25 140:22 142:6 143:12,22 147:14 149:21 151:12 153:2,4 158:1,22 159:25 160:8,16,18 162:16,22 163:24 164:6,18 165:4,24 166:12, 17 167:1,5 168:22,25 169:7 170:11 173:3,16 177:15,23 178:7, 11,17,20 179:5,23 180:15,25 181:21 182:20 183:16 184:3,6 185:23 186:14,17,18,20,25 189:5 190:2,13 191:4,22 192:11 193:11 194:9,19 195:2,3 196:1,6,15,16 198:17,20 199:21 202:20,25 203:20 204:25 205:12 206:1,10, 13 207:24 208:6,25 209:21 211:4 212:22 214:4,21 216:17 217:10 218:23 219:6 222:6 224:13 225:8 226:12 228:14 230:16 232:5,12, 23 234:24 236:4,9,25 237:17 240:16,20 241:25 243:12 245:18 246:4,8,13 247:7 250:20 251:23 253:2,25 256:12 257:16,19,25 258:10,11 261:6,14,17,19 262:22 263:8 264:3,16 265:3 266:16 267:5,14 269:1,2,24 270:5,8,14 271:6,9,17 272:12,13,15,20 273:10 274:11,17 275:9,12 276:17 277:3,7 278:15 279:20 280:7,8,18 281:15 282:12 284:5 287:18 288:24 289:3 290:14 297:18 298:21 299:24 300:4 301:3,7 303:12,15,17,22 304:6,13 305:3 306:7,14,22 307:2

once 5:14 61:21 68:24 75:4 111:15 121:1 210:21 213:9 218:12 227:8 229:2 280:16 282:12

one 13:6 17:10 18:9 22:5 28:15 30:13 34:18 35:7 36:4,7 39:20 47:17 51:25 56:19 62:5,17,19 63:2 65:19 66:25 68:4 73:3 75:25 77:2,19 79:20 81:1,20 82:1 86:14, 19 91:8 93:13,14 96:11 98:12 111:22 113:10,21,23 114:25 116:7,17 119:9,16 122:4 125:15 131:16 134:4,10 137:8 145:19

Index: one's..our

148:3 150:4 151:21 152:3 157:5 159:8 161:19,25 162:9 163:5,10 164:8 169:11,18 174:11,20,23 179:24 184:10 185:13,17 186:3 187:17,23 190:9 198:12,13,22 200:25 201:2 205:17 207:10 208:1 209:13 211:2,8,10,13 215:9 220:20 222:5 223:17 224:7 226:15 233:7,8,12 237:12 242:14 243:10,11 244:10 249:16 251:4 252:6 255:7 260:19,25 267:18 269:18 270:5 280:4,7 281:19,20 288:11 293:8 294:6,8,11 295:18 297:18 298:11 299:9 306:14 307:3

one's 305:8

one-year 41:4 142:11

**ones** 33:10 44:7 97:8 222:17 290:16,19 292:1

**online** 111:11 240:20 253:10 304:21,23

only 21:17 22:7 23:3,10 29:2 42:8 53:4,14,21 55:5,8,13,18,25 62:20 73:9 86:22 94:12,23,24 97:8 111:9 122:6 135:13 140:4,9 146:14 148:4,12 152:3 178:15 185:15 187:17,23 191:20 200:22 202:3 207:9 208:1,15 213:6,8 220:4 223:17 224:7 225:10 227:1 231:7 234:21 235:6 239:10 245:16,23 247:17 254:23 260:19, 25 268:18 269:6,17 278:2 281:24 287:7 301:18 307:24

onto 83:23

**open** 5:23 6:4 75:6 112:19 244:16 265:3 267:12 290:14

opening 12:24 273:14 301:13

opens 245:22

operative 53:18

**opinion** 45:3 63:11 164:18 165:3, 9,13,25 170:4,13 182:17,19 189:11 272:14,17,21 273:1 274:8, 10,18 275:7 277:6,12,24 279:9, 13,16 280:7 281:5 282:22 283:17, 18,24,25 284:4,9,18 285:7 286:2, 18 287:24 288:3,15,19,22 289:4, 12,17,20 290:1 291:6,7,9,10,16 292:25 293:11 294:7,14 295:3,11, 16,21 296:3

**opinions** 37:11 274:9 277:21 279:20 280:4 283:15 288:6 290:14 291:2 293:18

opponent 82:8

opportunities 162:25 274:25

**opportunity** 35:16 57:19,20 102:21 111:17 132:20 140:14,20 146:18 147:7 170:24 172:14 173:18 221:10 264:11 298:17

opposed 65:17 143:7

opposing 76:22

optimist 163:17,18,20

**option** 172:16 176:25 177:1 247:24

options 171:19 207:14

or 5:18 7:2,11 11:18 12:5,6,10 16:18 20:20 21:2 24:11,19 25:5 31:3,4,5,6,7,8,9,12,13 33:10 34:1, 24 37:23 38:10,11,19 39:18 40:16,17 41:19,20,22,23 42:13 43:15 44:20,22 46:7,10,14,16 51:19 54:13 55:6 58:21 59:5 63:15,19 65:8 69:7,9 75:16 77:13 81:10,25 83:8 87:1 89:11 90:21, 24 91:6 92:11 93:9 94:18 95:9 96:6 99:10 101:11 103:8,19 104:5 108:16 109:23 110:7,15 113:20 114:14 115:1,16 116:8 119:3 124:11,15,20 126:9 128:2 137:11 138:4 139:19 140:14 143:9 148:13 151:11 153:16 154:11,19 157:9,20 161:2,5 162:5,16 164:18 165:6,21 167:19 173:19 176:12, 13,17 177:9 179:17 180:21 181:8 186:11 187:21,24 190:15,23 195:6 196:15 198:19 199:12 204:17 206:5 207:21 208:21 212:13 214:7 215:19 218:21 220:1,17,20 222:16 223:12,13 226:11 227:22 228:5 230:8 231:19 233:8,12,14 235:6 238:14 239:2 240:5 241:24 243:4 245:17 248:24 249:23 253:24 254:18,22, 24,25 258:21 262:2 264:12 265:18 266:1,15 267:11 268:19 269:1,7,24 272:14 274:11,12 275:3 278:5,12 282:10 283:3,4 284:20 285:23,24 286:9,11 287:6, 8,10,11 289:12,15,19 291:21 292:6 294:20 295:2,15 302:4 303:4 306:16 307:18

**oral** 165:24 166:12 171:9 181:18 253:9

oranges 212:4

order 5:1 9:25 15:5 131:16,20 133:25 165:25 166:2,4,6,8,10 167:6,16 173:20 175:12,14,17 181:1,23 213:17 220:24 247:12 251:5 279:7

ordering 181:3

**orders** 7:23 9:1,5,7 19:3 42:11 43:21 44:1,3

ordinary 53:19

organization 98:23

original 12:6 104:7 132:25

originally 178:5 221:24 252:2 261:4

other 12:5 24:3 25:22 30:12 34:24 37:21 39:22 42:25 44:7 50:8 55:19 56:14 63:20 65:2 66:6 67:7 79:1 80:7 86:17,20 87:3 88:9 93:20 96:16 97:6,10 112:20 122:3 123:23 124:6 125:7 126:9 139:19 146:16,17,19 150:10 160:13 162:15 172:16 173:22 175:20,25 179:4,19 181:25 185:16 192:6 196:23 200:4,20 203:1 204:17 208:24 213:8 217:12,14 220:11 230:3 234:6,10 237:22 239:1 243:10 245:13 257:7 262:17 264:12 269:24,25 276:6 278:8 280:25 281:24 283:4,24 286:20 288:5 290:23 291:23 292:15 305:8

Other-release 197:23

others 41:19 107:25 158:23 177:2 237:15 242:17 276:13

**otherwise** 50:9 110:15 165:17 242:23 264:13

Otto 250:15 253:6.7.11 256:9

our 5:12 6:7 18:3 21:22 22:16 26:25 33:7,8 34:17,21 36:11,17 37:11 39:18,21,23 42:9 44:2 45:7 49:18 57:15 60:23 61:7,19 63:4 64:3 65:6 80:25 81:18 90:17,19 92:3,20 106:14 109:6 110:18,24 111:6 112:15 115:17,20,25 116:14 123:14 129:21 132:21 134:18 147:19 160:5 166:2 173:14 178:8,25 179:9,10 186:22

Index: ourselves..party

191:1 192:6 195:25 198:5,6 205:18 214:12 218:2 221:2 222:8 223:19 240:23 245:1 250:7,9,19 253:18 273:3 274:23 275:10,23 276:8,16 278:4 281:16 284:3 285:7,16,25 291:15 293:10,16,25 297:4 300:20 305:12

### ourselves 45:6 276:1

out 20:1 29:1 31:23 32:1 39:13
40:1 41:11,18 47:15 51:6 62:21
65:1 68:18 75:9 78:16,22 80:23,
25 82:16 85:17 86:19 87:17,18
89:11,13,15 90:10 92:5 93:4
105:1 108:18 112:18 113:22,25
114:7 115:23 131:16,20 137:7
138:18 173:21 181:14,17 187:8,
13 195:21 198:1 204:19 211:1
212:8 224:13 227:10 229:5 234:6
243:1,2,24 245:14 247:23 250:5
251:5 254:1,6 255:1 282:20
285:13,18 289:21 293:6 298:19
307:5

outcome 133:2 181:6

outlined 60:19,21 146:10 151:19

**outset** 35:18 **outside** 170:19

outweighs 226:22

oven 282:20

over 21:16 32:10 39:6 51:18 55:9 81:9,10 90:5 96:10 105:15 109:2 125:13 136:21 137:4 143:20 162:24 179:20 182:16 191:7 202:15 206:18 218:14 219:16 235:8,10,16 248:3,4,11 249:10,24 262:13 265:23 276:6 278:13 282:12 289:6 298:9 302:6 304:11

overcome 176:22,23

overcrowding 93:18

Overholt 5:7 6:15,22 8:12,19 9:11,16 10:19 13:15,20 14:16,21 15:16,22 16:4,7,13 20:14 25:15 26:11 29:6,10,17,24 39:12 40:10 44:16,18 45:1,4,22 47:4 48:12,19, 24 52:7 54:8 56:24 57:4 63:23,25 65:15 69:5,11,21 77:11,16 85:5,8 87:7,10,15,20,25 88:3 96:2 97:14 99:9,14,22 106:13,25 110:9,22 111:2,8,10 113:8 116:25 117:8,9 119:6,17 120:1 122:20 126:3,21 127:19,22 128:5 130:11,19 131:4,

10,18,24 135:5 139:14 142:4 143:3 144:12 145:2.12 147:18 148:17 149:1,12 150:18,23 152:11,18 153:25 154:6,18,23 155:5 156:6,15 158:10,14 174:10 175:9 180:8 183:5 188:13,21 189:17,20 192:15 193:2 204:20 205:3 212:18 213:16 216:2.8 221:14 224:2 228:17 229:13,17 235:11,14 238:4,8,11,17,22 239:9,12 242:16 243:22 244:3 246:19 249:1,4 256:3 257:21 258:4 259:22 263:18,23 269:17 270:25 272:2,6 273:18,21 277:15, 18 281:9 282:14,18 283:1,5,14 285:9,14 286:17 290:18 291:17, 20 292:20 293:3 294:25 295:14, 24 296:10,13,23 297:9,12,14,24 298:2

overriding 36:24 37:2

overrule 179:3

overtime 95:23

own 41:9 61:3,12 62:9 123:14 177:3 186:19 222:16 226:16 286:19

owner 15:22

Ρ

**p.m.** 196:7

packet 185:7 207:8 208:1 220:14 238:7 241:21

**page** 29:15 33:1 81:7 105:25 184:4 185:23 239:6 261:22 262:12,13 283:5

pages 78:4,10,24 86:8 87:23,25

**paid** 40:17 41:3 88:10 89:20 90:5 91:8 139:7

pandemic 244:2 300:19

**paper** 109:19 204:7 233:2 234:16 241:15 299:10,21 302:22 306:20

**papers** 33:12

**paperwork** 101:11 102:6,12 121:25 204:19 208:25 300:2

**parade** 266:10

paragraph 21:4 68:11 262:16

paralleling 116:16

paraphrase 38:7

paraphrasing 238:18

parents 276:4

parked 280:2

parking 280:2

part 16:10 21:5 22:19 23:5,19,22 24:5,7 37:1 46:19 71:14 78:15,21 105:9 121:2 129:8 132:13 161:9 165:19 167:24 168:22 171:11 175:24 194:10,13 199:17 231:11 232:15 243:3 253:17 256:25 276:16 289:24 291:15

parte 43:1 246:22

participating 286:20

**particular** 22:6 42:7,24 107:2,21 196:25 199:2,17 227:15 264:16 288:8,19 289:3 307:14

particularly 187:22 280:5,13

**parties** 35:5 39:18,21 68:18 71:8 82:18 93:12 118:14 121:6,8 128:21 129:3 144:7 156:1,2 158:1 176:1,2,17 179:17 184:6 240:4,5 247:13 248:13 249:13 257:13,14 258:24

partisan 230:16,18

partner 132:18 191:1

partners 18:9 136:2

parts 42:10 123:18 288:6

party 14:4 15:8 17:2 36:18,23 67:18 70:15 75:9 81:14 82:7,8,20, 23,25 83:1 90:2 91:9,11 92:8 99:7 100:12 118:4 120:19 127:11,14 144:1 145:22 148:3,6,9,11,21 149:25 151:10 155:15 157:23 160:2 162:18 163:1,21 166:8 169:20 171:15 172:18 174:7 176:8,9,10,12 179:25 180:1,2,3,5, 17 183:21 185:16,17,19 190:5 193:17 199:9 200:4 205:24 206:6 207:12,15 208:5,8,23 209:23 212:8,10,20 214:16 216:23 218:22 220:1,4,7,15 221:22 226:10,11 231:16 236:2,9 237:2 239:2 242:25 250:16 256:16 258:14,19 261:4 263:2 264:12,23 265:25 266:10 267:8 271:14 288:23 289:6 306:6,10,15 307:6,

14,18,21,23,24

pass 45:23 49:6 281:20

passed 22:23 217:12

passes 57:11 296:3

**past** 11:3 97:3 116:9 142:11 171:1 200:6 222:13 233:15

274:14

path 299:8

**paths** 177:5

pathway 276:13

patriots 33:19

Paul 5:6 158:24 190:18 191:1

pause 113:15

pausing 182:4

pay 8:8 139:9 161:15 286:10,12

paying 111:12

peace 33:21

peaceful 32:12

peculiar 37:18

**peek** 76:24

penalties 7:12 141:16,21

**Pence** 33:6

**pending** 38:19 40:6,8 64:23 164:14 169:8 173:13,20 283:19, 20 304:25

pends 305:2

**people** 33:14 47:24 53:16 57:15 58:14 61:18 63:17 83:15 86:20 88:9 89:25 90:3,12 92:2,9,14 93:21 94:6 95:21 98:24 105:11,20 170:22 192:6 214:23 215:9 225:5 230:19 238:19 243:5 254:1,23 276:9,17 307:12

people's 61:7

Pepperdine 224:13 225:10

300:17

**per** 137:13 299:19

percent 37:1 81:10 87:18

perfect 66:9 115:10,13,19

perfectly 290:15

**perhaps** 181:13 212:12 229:4,5 236:17 240:8

**period** 74:14 75:2 148:1 168:15, 17,24 169:4,17 172:12,23 173:12 177:9 208:15 304:24,25

**perjury** 7:12 124:11,15,16 125:7 141:16,21

permissible 285:20 permission 304:6

permit 19:5

permitted 278:16 287:17

**person** 31:2 38:8 41:20 50:18 86:19 90:8 91:14 102:1,10 123:13 137:14,17,18 162:18 198:3 199:8, 12 220:24 229:12 231:10 232:14 235:19,23 236:4 237:2,12 283:4

**person's** 124:18 137:17 198:19 231:17 287:8 292:6

**personal** 34:24 37:11 46:10,16 72:9 76:8 83:9

personally 24:23 232:8

**persons** 254:25

persuasive 286:2

pertains 264:15

**petition** 48:17 75:10

petitioner 52:9,21 53:5

petitioner's 49:25

**petitions** 74:23 75:1,8 76:1,6 78:1,7 80:8,19 86:12 179:21

Pfenninger 153:9,10,23

**phone** 209:13

photocopy 114:14

**phrase** 174:15

phrases 54:19

physical 12:5

physically 137:15

**pick** 187:19 225:2 272:15 297:6, 20

picked 225:1

picking 196:14 225:11

piece 90:9 91:16 94:6

**piecing** 242:17

ping 16:17

Ping-ponging 257:19

pinpoint 300:9

**place** 35:19 108:22 113:21 134:17 138:17 140:24 141:12 171:18 172:1,2,10 177:10 236:23 261:23 290:17

placed 109:5 223:17

placement 68:15 134:13

places 93:20 229:1 230:15

**plain** 43:2 55:3

plan 7:8 174:15

planning 7:2

platform 162:23

**play** 173:17 181:22

playbook 231:17

played 174:13

**playing** 175:19

**plays** 93:4

pleadings 264:6

**pleas** 62:9

please 5:19 7:5,9,15 11:1 18:6,21 19:24 30:6 36:21 55:13 63:24 73:19 76:19 79:10,15 90:14 102:16 104:8 118:24 132:12 136:17,23 146:6 157:9 162:8 164:4 184:19 191:12 206:24 209:7 224:5 252:10 273:5 274:3 278:22

plenty 162:25 240:16

plus 89:22 161:19

**podium** 187:10

point 25:25 28:12 37:8,19 39:12, 25 40:1 45:10 47:17 72:9 75:4 87:1,5 103:11,18 104:11,21,24 137:6 139:9 141:5 148:22 163:15 165:20 169:16 176:25 177:13,15 187:7,8,13 211:11 223:7 226:16 236:12 243:24 247:7 262:11 282:6 290:8 291:11 292:23

pointed 96:20

pointing 245:14

**points** 49:22 52:6 54:3 60:24

98:3

police 32:15,16,17 33:14

**policy** 102:5 109:23 285:21,22

294:14

policymaking 285:24

**political** 33:24 36:13 39:18 50:2, 5,20 51:1 53:1 148:11 176:1,17 185:16 212:20 220:4 231:16 236:2 264:19 287:3,10

politician 58:13

politics 221:13 222:3

**poll** 233:2,4 234:13,14,17,19 241:15 261:17,19 262:21 269:15, 23,25

**polling** 134:17 140:24 141:12

**polls** 140:15

portion 77:20

**portions** 208:21

**position** 21:22 28:14 59:24 90:4, 14 170:5 173:19 177:16 179:9 264:8,21 265:17 306:25

positions 60:21

possibility 171:22

possible 199:7 229:4

**possibly** 166:23 171:5 289:12 299:16

postage 85:19

posted 33:5 185:23 303:15

postmarked 86:13

potentiality 51:24

potentially 177:4 239:16

power 32:13 62:14,20 274:22

279:3

practical 95:14 178:10

practice 41:14 42:12

practiced 59:25

practitioner 165:10

precedence 123:15 124:5

182:16

**precedent** 116:9 179:4 232:7 271:20 283:23

precedent-wise 245:19

**precinct** 74:6 135:18,21 137:15, 16,18 192:5,11 209:23 210:7,14, 16,22,24 212:14 213:7,9,10,11 214:10 235:9 254:13,16,17

preclude 275:13

predates 142:11

predicated 306:13

prefer 25:9

**prejudice** 34:24,25 35:4,7 46:10,

16

preliminary 17:25 18:4,13 19:12

21:25

**premise** 306:5,12

preparation 210:15

prepared 9:6

prerogative 265:17

prescribed 53:4,15,21

presence 69:13 222:25 232:1

**present** 5:6 6:9,11 8:4 10:2 11:21 12:12 13:1 16:22 119:2 122:14 127:16 130:2,4,9 132:21,24 136:9 137:15 144:20,22 146:4 147:3,10 151:15 152:7 156:4,8 195:11 210:10 260:14

**presentation** 11:17,25 12:11,16, 18,25 15:15 17:5,17 49:20 68:24 71:17 73:16 79:11 101:1 118:17 137:4 161:5 165:19 209:18 259:1 273:16

presentations 17:2 164:6

**presented** 8:11 28:3 59:23 112:5 119:24 162:2 179:15 207:14

presenter 11:23 12:4,15,24

presenter's 12:2,3

presenting 16:18

preserve 12:9

presidency 54:24,25 58:8 59:8

**president** 15:8 17:12 19:20,21 20:13,22 21:2,9,18 22:23,24 23:3, 11,12 24:8,11,16,18 28:18,20

31:4,21 32:14 50:19,25 51:10 52:13,15,19,20 53:7 54:17,21 55:23 60:18 63:18 64:6,21 67:18 289:7

**presidential** 21:7,10 22:25 23:6, 8,9,19 24:4 50:1,13,14 51:5,13, 18,21 52:25 68:15

presidents 55:18 64:8

presiding 38:8 39:6,8 41:20

press 162:10,12

**presume** 16:11 23:25 24:3 227:17

presumed 141:22,24,25

presuming 39:17

presumption 142:18

**pretty** 7:18 95:8 117:16 139:12 157:24 179:14 181:15 247:16 252:21 294:10

prevails 65:21

**prevent** 249:21

prevented 209:25

**previous** 7:24 102:11,13 138:18 199:19 214:7,8 215:5 229:20 232:4 260:21 261:24 267:16,18 271:20

**previously** 12:5 31:6 33:11 54:18,22 55:1 60:4 81:11 177:25

**primaries** 146:11,15 147:15 148:13,20 159:21,24 163:11 176:11 185:5 187:24 195:9 199:19,23 214:8 215:5 220:18,25 222:13,19,20 223:8 224:15,16,18 225:5 227:21 228:5,24 238:13,16, 25 243:18 246:1 254:1 259:7 299:17 305:9,23 306:15 307:6,17

primarily 72:19 298:21

primary 15:3 16:20 68:15 93:12 100:4 101:13,18 117:21 120:8 123:14 127:3 134:13 145:22 146:12 148:1 149:19 151:10,20, 21 152:3,25 157:19 159:19,23 160:16 163:8,10,13 169:11 176:7, 21 183:13 184:1 185:3,11 186:2 187:15 189:2 193:9 200:6,10,25 201:1 202:23 205:10 207:18,20 208:2,3,18 216:15 218:5,11,12, 20,24 220:5,6 223:18 225:25

Index: principal..put

229:9,10 230:9,18,19 231:15 234:24 235:4 237:1,7,9 238:1,24 241:6 242:1 243:10 244:4,8 246:25 251:16 252:25 255:8 256:10 258:21 260:8,21 262:22 263:1 264:17 266:25 267:9,16 269:18 271:7 304:2

**principal** 106:19,21,22 107:4,20 108:15,17

print 111:9 249:18

**printed** 100:6 117:23 120:10 127:5 143:12 149:21 153:2 160:18 183:15 189:5 193:11 205:12 216:17 226:4 256:12 258:11 271:9 272:13

printout 146:13 239:14 258:22

printouts 121:22 251:18

**prior** 35:10 56:11 75:3 81:11 125:21 133:13 134:4,11 137:9 138:13,23 142:23 152:6 192:8 199:23 202:20 247:2 252:24 283:15 300:1 307:6

prisoners 33:24 privilege 72:9

privileged 90:21

pro 289:7

**probably** 26:23 62:25 63:16 175:15,16 192:13 235:22 244:17 255:11 261:24 289:9

**problem** 83:24 91:19 163:14 206:1 220:19 226:3 242:21 303:21 305:12

problematic 126:7 226:17

procedural 34:18 49:18

procedure 18:24 46:19 104:24

**procedures** 9:23 10:24 11:4,6 13:13,25 19:4 42:11 56:4 273:12

**proceed** 25:10,12 26:6,15 34:19, 20 35:23 47:5 49:12 67:25 69:1 70:11 119:3 162:8 166:19,21 252:10

**proceeding** 27:19 35:10 38:8,19 39:6,8 40:8 41:20

**proceedings** 17:7 19:2 35:1 38:20 51:20,23 53:15

**process** 37:19 61:8 161:10 162:21 163:1,5 175:8 177:7 214:18 254:11

processed 115:25

produce 234:8,9 304:12,18

produced 247:2

productive 64:17

profession 174:18

prohibited 38:16 110:8

prohibits 55:4 89:2 prominently 52:14

prong 261:1

pronounced 136:3

pronouncements 51:25

**pronouncing** 120:16 127:10 184:13

**proof** 61:9 228:16 230:7 298:20 299:8 301:1 304:2 305:9

**proper** 5:24 18:24 45:11 51:4 101:10 102:12 109:8,9 170:6 195:12 307:5

properly 51:22

property 138:25

Proposed 295:16

prosecutors 262:23

**protect** 33:7 37:3 60:14 174:12 177:22

protecting 37:5

protesters 32:11

proud 300:24

prove 121:21 186:6 306:14 307:3

proven 142:23 220:24 299:16

proverbial 62:1

**provide** 7:2 11:9 13:8 47:11 69:4 115:9 146:23 147:1 188:7 195:23 199:16 226:21 262:8 274:12 280:24 281:7 283:21 292:21 302:21

**provided** 11:10,14 12:7 14:9 15:10 18:17 19:22 33:2 35:6 55:15 67:20 70:16 76:5 114:4 124:21 146:21 169:23 172:17

204:13 218:9 226:22 228:20 261:13 265:9 266:12 267:11 301:3.24

**provides** 107:16 196:7 286:13

providing 5:18 288:7 290:2

**provision** 22:18 25:8 44:21 64:7 125:14 289:23

provisional 134:6 135:18

**provisions** 22:17,18 51:9 64:20 112:17

proxies 47:23

proxy 47:20 48:1

**public** 5:2 17:13 33:4 45:8 102:5 262:24 268:24

publication 41:10

publications 162:15

publicized 35:21

publicly 38:18 135:14

**pull** 195:7,19 230:16 233:6 234:14,19 236:17 237:9 248:12 250:1

**pulled** 62:17 234:25 237:2 260:9 261:22,25 262:6,21 263:3,7 270:8,11 287:1,23,24 294:6 307:18

pulls 242:25

pummeled 252:13

punched 71:12 194:12

purpose 78:8 303:23

purposefully 95:18

purposely 274:24

**purposes** 5:17 27:2,18 66:18 148:10 213:8 220:2 229:22 300:12

pursuing 278:24 300:16

pursuits 255:1

purview 279:8

push 269:22 270:1

pushing 83:23

**put** 36:17,22 42:10 57:15 73:7 84:7 98:23 108:13 112:25 119:16 126:12 165:4 170:21 181:1,3

Index: Putnam..reasons

187:14 234:20 260:2,5 265:2 277:3,7 294:23 296:7 305:3

Putnam 184:24

**putting** 84:6,7 124:16 125:8 174:19

**Pyle** 5:9 6:18,24 8:13,21 9:13,18 10:15,21 13:22 14:23 25:19 26:13 29:21 30:1 49:4 54:4,10 57:1,6,9 58:23 59:3,10,15 65:6,16 69:17, 23 77:18 85:10 99:24 112:10 117:15 120:3 122:24 126:23 127:24 128:7 130:21 131:12.15 132:1 137:21,25 138:3,7,11,15,24 139:3 142:17 143:5 145:14 149:4, 14 150:16,25 152:8,20 154:2,8,24 155:7 156:10,17 158:8,16 167:18, 23 182:13 183:7 188:9,23 189:22 192:18 193:4 203:9 205:5 214:11, 20 215:23 216:10 223:23 224:4 226:8 232:3 234:23 235:5,19 240:13 244:7,10,13 245:17 246:11 247:10 248:9,24 249:6 255:14,18 256:5 258:6 263:20,25 270:20 271:2,25 272:8 273:23 281:12 286:1 296:1,15,25 297:5, 22 298:4

### Q

## quadruple 90:3

**qualification** 23:10 50:2 51:21 53:1 269:1

**qualifications** 19:22 21:1,19 22:5,10 23:20 30:25 50:13,24 51:18 123:19 259:9

qualified 89:23 115:6 124:1,3

qualifies 215:13

qualify 58:15 207:13 304:6

qualitied 50:18

quandary 276:2

quarter 109:15

**question** 23:13 34:5 36:10 44:16 46:10 50:20 51:1 52:1 55:25 58:3, 18,23 78:10 79:20 87:20 88:4,20 90:18 96:14,20 106:13 107:2 108:20 111:22 113:6 114:18 115:23 116:7 137:21 140:4 147:19 161:23 164:22 165:18 166:15 167:18 178:24 198:16

206:4 207:9,10 210:18 225:13 232:3 236:8 239:22 244:25 247:11 249:11,15 255:8 266:4,6 268:18 277:20,21 278:17 279:24 284:20 288:9 291:24 299:18 300:25 302:14

## questioned 60:5

questioning 96:10 102:1

questions 8:16 9:14 11:24 12:1, 23 13:17 14:18 22:13,14 25:18 34:1,7,8 50:3,5 52:4 53:1 55:14 56:12,25 57:1 69:16 76:15 77:13 79:1,14 87:8 98:4 99:20 102:16, 23 111:15,20 119:22 122:23 128:2 130:17 131:21 133:16 134:14 136:7 142:16 145:9 149:9 152:15 155:2 156:13 181:25 183:1 188:8 211:9,11 215:19 255:25 258:1 270:23 301:23 302:4

**quick** 56:9 58:23 76:24 78:9 79:14,20 81:23 90:18 167:18 221:17 255:7

quickly 54:3 146:10

quieted 81:22

quit 82:6 90:7

**quite** 37:7 54:20 110:1 197:18 230:6 277:23 278:24 279:20

**quote** 19:19 50:5,10,16 51:6,23

quote/unquote 55:5 262:19

**quoted** 33:12

## R

R-A-Y-M-O-N-D 194:18

R-O-Y 259:4

**R-U-S-S-E-L-L** 146:9 151:17

**R-Y-A-N** 158:23

race 83:8 94:5 179:24 180:18 262:22

raise 7:9 37:20 91:7 114:18 178:13 219:12 270:3 302:13

**raised** 55:14 60:24 171:6 178:12, 13 212:17 294:22

raising 37:22 232:9

ran 138:18 157:4 168:15 253:2 265:14

rare 94:8

rarely 174:19

rather 56:16 59:7 95:6 296:7

ratification 7:24

ratifies 284:1

ratify 8:8,10

Raymond 194:17

reach 22:4

read 10:23 24:2 32:3 38:20 40:20 41:9 44:21 60:20 104:25 107:21, 25 114:6 147:20 148:7 156:24 162:10 167:21 170:12,13 191:20 198:25 281:25 285:10,25 288:7 292:7 294:7 295:2,3,12,15

**reading** 25:9 38:4 40:14 54:19 64:4 147:19 148:4 213:6 240:19 283:13 296:8

reads 41:18 288:10

**ready** 8:8 9:8 47:23 49:9,13 58:20 70:10 106:14 164:11 280:11 297:3

real 56:9 136:11 221:16 241:9

reality 95:14 178:10 226:14

realize 136:24 165:1

really 29:2 64:10 80:21 81:23 84:14 90:10 93:14,15 94:21 95:25 111:3 172:22 174:25 179:4 210:19 212:15 233:18,19 234:15 238:9 239:10,20,23 243:1,9,17 252:6 266:1 269:3 273:25 274:1 275:10,22 277:20 281:5 287:22 293:12 298:16 299:13 300:7,9 301:4

rearing 276:3

**reason** 39:22 62:20 104:13 105:10 140:6 172:8 190:12 200:22 211:13 212:3 261:19 267:22 304:15

reasonable 64:17

reasonably 287:8 292:6,18,19

reasons 55:7 58:15 80:20 81:2

87:19 162:9 181:4.13 208:17

rebellion 31:12

rebut 140:2

**rebuttal** 13:1 98:6,7 301:21 302:1,9,10,11,12

recall 116:15 167:7 232:12 288:20

recalling 66:25

receipt 100:20 103:14 108:6,9 109:11,16 114:14 115:15 128:25 196:11 257:10

receipts 109:13 194:1 217:6

**receive** 114:13 160:1 195:15 197:17 207:21 257:1

received 12:5 72:23 88:8,16,22 103:17 115:24 129:10 195:1,17 257:4 272:25 287:6 292:3 302:25 303:18,20,22

receiving 195:12 249:18 257:3

**recent** 148:13,20 151:10 159:21 176:11 184:1 185:5 189:10 220:1, 5 223:12 234:12 238:13,16,24,25 251:16 261:6 278:14

recently 33:23 82:18 241:1

recess 70:4,7,9 143:16,18 189:10,15,23,25 245:10 246:11 250:19

recessed 205:14

recitation 7:10

recognition 24:8

**recognize** 5:9 6:8 8:2 15:14 31:25 43:2 68:23 71:16 100:25 118:16 132:7 146:6 190:22 194:15 217:16 258:25

recognized 11:17 12:11 176:18

recognizing 11:8 210:10

recollection 16:25 232:25

recommend 6:13 284:16

recommendation 157:13

recommended 274:20

recommends 283:13 294:13

reconcile 230:20

reconsider 245:15 247:9

reconstruct 237:15

reconvene 246:13

record 5:17,21 11:15 12:9 16:11, 18 17:5 30:7 63:12 76:4,19 77:20 78:22 80:4 108:5 109:13 119:8 123:9,24 124:6 125:9 129:9 145:24 146:2,7 151:25 162:16 163:8 165:21 184:4 185:4,8 187:2 194:11,13 196:4,8 200:6 202:1,16 204:9 205:18 207:25 208:11 209:8.22 217:13.15 218:6.8 220:21 221:15 223:16 224:6 226:16 227:6,9,22,24 228:9 229:14,17 230:4 231:6 239:16 241:18 245:19 246:24 250:19,23 252:23 257:1 258:23 263:3 265:15 268:23 269:3,8,24 274:2 279:25 295:12 296:4,7,16 298:12 300:24,25 305:19 306:5

recorded 233:8

recordkeeping 306:21,22

records 45:8 75:23 76:5 122:1, 13 195:7,20 200:2,3,21 202:20 203:5,21 204:5 214:7 226:9 231:8 234:19 240:10 244:19 247:2 249:10 250:1 253:25 306:20

recourse 80:21 83:12

rectified 267:1 268:3

rectify 103:22 104:12

recusal 35:18,23

recuse 35:17 37:16 45:6 48:1

recused 47:20

reevaluate 173:18

refer 109:2 160:6 228:6 253:19,

21

reference 164:11 199:16

referenced 30:18 32:4 64:8

references 229:23

referencing 38:9

referred 42:5 76:18 107:3

referring 125:1,13 232:20

refers 33:25 137:11

reflect 220:21 237:19 306:4

reflected 243:11 260:10 261:10

reflective 54:17,25 239:11

reflects 40:18 239:15

refrain 51:2

refrains 51:17

refuse 211:12

regard 60:2 62:11 138:20 195:24

219:14

regarding 7:25 12:23 25:4 37:11 59:23 64:5 106:15 141:20 170:4 195:15 211:4 231:25 273:2 289:23

regardless 178:25 179:10

212:18

regards 91:7 109:4 199:17 288:18 289:11

register 224:21 227:11 305:4

registered 74:2,5,6,23 122:5,7 184:23 186:15 208:12 218:4 227:9 228:22 238:4 241:25 242:19 262:1 263:6 298:24 300:11

registration 85:18 134:7,8 135:6,9,15 140:7,11,15,19,25 203:21,24 204:1 208:11 218:10 220:15 225:9 227:11,13 228:2,22 229:24 230:1 231:7,8,9,18,19,22 232:19 234:21 240:9 241:22,23 244:18 248:1 249:24 251:19 262:5 267:1,7 300:20 302:20 304:21,23 305:1,8

**registrations** 243:13 299:3,7 300:10 303:2

reimbursement 275:2

reiterate 152:2

reject 84:5,7,8

rejected 80:19 84:17

**related** 46:12,14 102:17 286:21 287:8,11 292:6,18,19

relationship 235:12

relationships 222:8

relative 301:24 302:4

relatively 41:16

relevant 63:16 reliance 300:4

relief 173:14 186:24

relocate 173:19 177:1

relocated 171:24 172:16 174:23

relocating 172:20 reluctance 112:7

rely 112:24 124:7 186:18

**relying** 306:22 **remain** 174:8

remained 172:10

**remains** 133:2

remarks 275:21 276:21

remedial 294:15 remedies 66:4

**remedy** 177:3

remember 33:21 42:18 123:8 201:1 204:15 233:11 237:4 241:19 297:10

remind 5:16 10:3 45:14

reminds 123:8

remove 31:15 259:12

**removed** 42:14 83:5 122:10 236:19

rent 139:7

rep 192:12 252:3

**report** 32:4,5,23,24 75:9 226:4,6 236:17 237:18 279:9 298:10

**reporter** 5:13 10:5 18:5 72:4 252:16 303:8

reporting 235:6

**reports** 123:3 125:21 126:1 162:13 233:5 236:25

represent 79:19 90:11 92:13 102:4 134:3 158:25 159:5,6 209:1 275:10

representation 208:22

representative 11:19,20 12:10 14:5 31:3 109:17,20 118:5 120:20 126:14 127:12 134:1 144:2 150:1 151:7 183:22 190:5 193:18

205:25 207:5 208:19 214:24 250:17 253:8 272:23 277:2

representatives 31:17 52:13 101:23 102:2 105:4,15 107:7 114:1 127:16 144:7 190:23 207:6 251:22

represented 15:19 60:3 129:7

representing 68:13 71:20 72:2,8 83:10 122:15 130:10 191:2 218:14 252:18

Republican 15:8 36:23 82:19 92:7 93:11 144:1 146:12 149:25 159:18,20,22 160:2 162:18 163:1, 11,17,19,21 183:21 184:2 185:4 187:25 190:4,14 198:17 205:24 207:4,11,15,17,18,19,22 208:5,8, 18,23 209:23 210:8,17,20,23 211:1 212:2,8,10 214:10 215:3,9 220:12 226:12 235:6 240:6 249:25 250:16 251:8 252:25 253:1,4,8,14 254:4 258:14,19 259:7,8,10 260:7,8,9 261:6 262:21 263:8 265:4,25 266:16,19, 25 270:8 271:14

## Republican-ness 210:21

**request** 5:23 14:7 48:11,22 68:14 75:19,23 76:5 134:7,12 172:4,5 218:17 257:7 272:21,25 274:7 277:18 279:20 280:1 283:9

requested 231:15

requesting 277:2

**require** 45:15,16 47:7 54:13 220:9 294:19

required 37:13 71:5 74:22 75:12 78:16 94:15 105:10 109:9 110:20 114:9,13 123:21 124:25 145:23 146:11,12 155:24 157:19 199:7 204:19

requirement 47:12 73:9 74:19 76:13 81:17,20 82:4 83:7,14 90:25 92:15 93:3 94:1 95:4,20 96:12 97:1,6,8,11 98:14,16 109:5 140:9 142:12 214:2 218:23 219:16

**requirements** 30:22 78:23 97:22 125:4 162:12 199:3 258:19

**requires** 125:15 133:25 210:22, 23 229:24 264:16 279:7

requisite 208:2

rescinding 257:5,6

research 162:16

reserve 98:5

**reside** 133:4 134:2 137:8 139:14 141:6,22 142:7,23

residence 137:17 140:22 141:20 142:6 172:20 207:23 208:4

residences 300:14

residency 137:17 208:14 212:22,23 213:2 214:1,2 219:17 227:5

resident 122:6 210:5

resides 185:10 212:22

Resolution 31:18 resolved 65:1

resonated 58:6

resources 81:14 91:21

**respect** 22:22 35:16 46:9,13 52:24 64:8 87:11 219:17

respectfully 37:15 283:13 284:16 285:20 294:12

respective 250:10

**respond** 36:1,21 49:21 51:14 126:6 278:16

respondent's 48:9

response 56:16 115:9 201:23

responsibilities 60:1

responsibility 50:12,17 114:23

rest 54:19 56:7 166:12 202:6

resting 60:25

restricted 254:16

restriction 178:18 179:15

restrictive 81:20

restroom 157:4

result 51:12 61:20 134:12 241:1

resulted 32:15 resulting 275:4

results 234:8

resume 190:1

Resuming 70:11

retain 204:5 213:10

returned 224:14 231:14

revealed 123:9

revert 165:12

**review** 35:14 40:23 76:9 89:8

174:4

reviewed 75:24 133:3 174:1

reviewing 133:23

revisions 281:11

revisit 52:10 167:17

Richard 165:22

Richardson 5:14

Rick 210:8,13 248:3

rid 93:19 227:6

right 5:8,12 7:9 12:8 14:1 16:4 20:8 33:16 34:5,23 39:20 47:24 55:17 58:13 67:13 68:1 70:10 72:16 80:10 82:22 84:4 85:3 93:14,18 95:9 101:7 111:1 113:1, 17 116:24 120:16 123:24 129:19 135:2,24 136:13 138:1 139:3 149:1 163:9 164:20 170:20 173:13 174:21 175:6,10,16 176:2, 13,18 177:12 180:21 184:13 185:14,18 187:1 195:2 204:3 209:14 210:12 213:16 214:14 215:16 222:4 226:5 227:18 233:23 235:22 237:20 239:20 241:2 242:14 246:9 248:10,16 251:13 260:19 267:13,24 268:11 273:9 274:23 276:16 280:2 281:25 286:3 292:1,2,23 297:15 299:25 301:21 305:10,16,17

rights 179:18 180:3,4 276:15

Ring 197:15

ripe 59:1 293:1

**rise** 7:9

rising 276:2

risk 48:3 186:19

risky 174:21

road 48:4 83:23

Robinette 67:17

**Rokita** 163:12

role 221:21 240:24

roll 116:22

**Room** 5:4

**round** 97:13

route 274:20 278:24,25

**Roy** 258:12,25 259:2,3 271:11

**rule** 39:24 58:16 109:23 114:25 140:18 147:24 166:3,17 167:14 168:1 173:13 186:21 191:6 206:5 218:17 240:7 252:4 254:7 293:8, 12

ruled 168:9 173:16 232:6

rulemaking 285:23,24 289:19

**rules** 22:21 69:3 75:14,15 118:19,22,23 163:6,14,21 167:9 174:13 175:19,22 176:16

ruling 179:11 180:23 181:6 186:17,20 240:16

rulings 65:8

run 10:24 50:20 81:3 89:24 92:19 93:22 99:1 112:22 121:15,17,18 133:5 137:20 146:11 159:18 163:20 174:7,24 175:22 207:18 208:18 213:23,24 214:1,17 218:4 240:4,5 251:17 254:5 258:19 264:9 275:25

**running** 16:20 36:11 48:3 55:2 78:17 102:1 106:10 114:1 163:9 171:22 178:16 187:21 213:20,21, 25 219:18 264:15 278:1 305:5

runs 83:2

Russell 146:8 151:17

Rust 90:5 156:23,25 157:1,2,3,4, 12,18 159:17,19,25 160:10,12,15, 18 162:11,20,24 164:20 165:4 166:5 167:1 168:19 169:3,14 170:10 172:19 173:15 178:6 179:20 180:17 181:16 183:13 211:4 212:12,16 219:13 260:4 264:4 293:5

**Rust's** 160:4 169:24 173:23 211:7

**Ryan** 158:22

S

S-A-R-A-H 136:18

S-H-O-U-S-E 158:24

S-H-Y-D-A-L-E 136:19

**S-T-E-L-L-A** 217:19

**sacred** 33:17

saddled 240:25

**Sadler** 230:11

safe 300:18

**safety** 32:13

said 11:20 20:15 25:3 33:16 37:23 38:24 40:24 54:12 55:21 57:9,10 58:5 61:24 63:3 66:15,16 83:2,8 86:1,2,4,5,12,19,21 94:11, 21,22 100:1 105:4,6,19,21 108:12 112:17 113:21,24 117:18 125:21 133:6,20 144:22 161:3 165:8 166:3,6 167:24 175:7 186:5,22 188:1 192:4 201:2 226:24 228:24 229:7 236:8 237:11 241:17 245:25 246:2 253:22 255:2 260:7 269:11 284:5,11 286:14 293:16 299:10,12 301:20 302:7,15

salaries 275:3 285:4 289:14

salary 284:22,24 289:15

same 13:9 15:19 24:7 29:15 31:12 35:15 37:14 43:15 48:7 70:8 87:4 99:1 121:14 123:10 128:22 133:2,9 143:17 145:22 147:16 151:10 152:5 153:12 157:16 159:16 165:24 169:12 175:20 200:3 202:24 208:13 212:3,5 213:14 219:13 246:3 253:2 262:20 275:6,8 282:25 283:10 288:3 289:5

sandwich 276:2

Sarah 127:10,14 136:18 143:11

sat 82:14 84:17 173:3 280:10

Saturday 103:19 196:6

**save** 209:15

**saved** 300:15

saw 62:21 72:12 159:15 219:13

223:16 288:1 298:21

Index: say..Senate

**say** 7:10,15 10:23 23:10 24:18 29:2 30:6 37:1 39:9 42:8 44:5.9. 12 64:1 70:5 78:10 80:6 83:16,25 85:20,25 89:12 90:22 91:24 96:7 104:17 105:16 106:16 108:16.24 109:25 110:12 111:5 112:14,18 114:21 115:22 117:5 118:19 124:10 125:10,24 139:1 144:16 146:3 147:25 148:18,19 153:7 157:11 161:11 166:5,7 169:6,9 178:6 188:2 203:3 215:20 217:24 222:17 228:8,10,11,13,15 245:1 247:20 248:19 250:6 253:19 263:10 266:21 268:14 281:11 285:22,23 286:2 287:14 289:21 290:5 292:24 293:7,8,15 298:15 299:15 300:9 303:17,19 304:14 307:24

saying 6:21 8:18 9:15 13:19 14:20 24:14,17 26:9 27:12,25 29:23 33:6 39:15 43:7,9 48:23 49:2 57:3 58:24 65:13 66:17 69:20 77:14 81:18 85:7,21 91:20 92:16 93:1,25 95:12,13,17,18,22 99:21 108:1 111:4,5 113:19 119:25 125:8,25 126:19 128:4 130:18 131:9,23 134:15,24 142:1 143:2 144:19 145:11 149:11 150:22 152:17 154:5 155:4 156:14 158:13 166:1 169:13 171:17 175:11 177:17 183:4 186:1,8 188:20 189:19 193:1 195:14 196:11 197:11,13 203:11 205:2 212:7,9,11 213:14 215:9,12 216:7 224:1 237:6 242:5,10,22 249:3 256:2 257:5 258:3 265:3 270:24 272:4 284:8 285:10,24 290:12 293:12 295:23 298:1 305:21

says 21:17 22:9,20,21 23:12 28:16 39:11 60:17 64:10 65:4 86:1 93:11 106:17,18 110:4 123:15 126:11 138:7 148:8 163:4 165:15 181:7 197:22 204:4,10 211:16 212:19 213:4 219:24 220:22 228:4 229:11,25 230:23, 24 234:11,23 238:24 239:18 241:24 246:5 247:1 258:18,20 261:16,22 262:16 265:1 283:24 284:9 287:6 292:2,3,4,22 294:12 298:25 305:22 306:17 307:16

scan 109:19 scanning 101:12 **scary** 180:19

scenario 225:7

schedule 7:18

scheduled 38:19

school 243:25

**Schrader** 120:17,18 121:15 122:2,14,15 123:2 126:6,18 127:2

**Scott** 149:25 151:6 152:2,24 184:21

**SCOTUS** 164:20 178:16,25 186:14

screenshot 78:14

search 234:7 282:3

seat 101:11 102:2,24 133:5

**seats** 83:18

**second** 6:17,18 8:13,15 9:12,13 10:14,15 13:12,15 14:15,16,17 20:10 21:4 22:12 25:14,15,16,17 26:8,21,23 27:8,9 29:5,8,18,20,21 35:14 38:24 42:4 48:8,14,15,17, 22 54:5 56:24,25 59:17,18 63:22 65:12 69:14,15 76:3 77:10,11,12 85:5 99:16,17,19 112:9,10,12 116:19,21 119:20,21,24 121:13 122:19,20,22 126:8,17 127:24 128:1 130:13,16 131:4,6,18,20 142:14,15 143:1 145:4,5,8 149:6, 7 150:17,18,19 152:10,11,12 154:2,4,24 155:1 156:9,10,12 158:9,10,12 171:11 182:22,23,25 184:4 188:12,13,14,19 189:16,17 192:20,21,23 204:22,23 205:1 208:4 216:1,2,3,6 223:24,25 233:9 242:10 249:1 251:4 255:20, 21,23 257:23,25 263:20 270:22 272:1,2,3 273:10,17,18 274:5,6 294:2 295:19,20,22 296:9,10 297:18,19,23,24

second-guess 52:22

Secondarily 261:15

Seconded 149:8

seconding 77:12

secondly 37:17 171:22

seconds 77:7 182:1 266:1,6

**secretary** 73:1,11 75:21 76:10 103:7,8,21,25 104:1,5,16,23

105:19,20,25 107:8,24 108:18 109:7,20 110:7 111:23,24 113:22 114:19,21 115:5 116:3 168:19 227:25 234:3 274:19

Secretary's 103:12,13

**section** 17:14 19:14,18,22 20:12, 25 21:2,6,19,20 23:4,5,19,20,22, 23 24:5,6,11 26:25 28:13,17 31:2 34:22 38:10 40:21 42:19 51:15 52:14 53:3,8,20 54:15,16,24 55:4, 11,21 59:4 107:15 109:10 137:14 168:22 207:16 232:20,21 283:5,6, 7,11,12 284:15 285:1 286:24 287:13,19,22,23 288:2,13,19 293:21 294:7,11,12

**sections** 19:17 20:2 41:21,22 42:5,8,15,17,23 44:13 78:17 107:13

secure 61:9 79:25 270:14 304:5

**see** 35:6 39:3 55:24 77:21 78:13 88:15 97:16,17 101:16 103:21 104:13 105:11 110:23 113:8 144:4 157:23 163:16 167:1 169:12 171:4 177:24 178:7 190:10 198:7 209:1 218:1 225:21 228:25 232:9 233:13 236:24 239:9 242:2 243:8 245:5 247:4,23 248:12 251:20 252:21 258:20 260:15 261:11 265:23 267:8 271:16 277:25 289:2 295:1 298:24 299:7,17 302:23 304:12, 13 306:7,9,24

**seek** 134:3 164:20 173:19 186:14,23 208:19 240:8

seeking 133:5 138:16 207:4

seem 181:15 182:15 245:6

seemed 172:24 181:17

**seems** 64:9,12 93:5 94:5 154:20 174:20 180:24 228:22 229:3 242:18 306:19,20,23

**seen** 38:4 109:12 163:4 203:6 217:15 226:16 247:18

**Select** 32:24

selected 57:13 112:17

selection 187:15

selective 111:6

**Senate** 21:10 31:23 52:11,17,18, 23 100:12 101:11,17,18,20 102:9

Index: Senate's..signature

103:9 104:14,19 105:5,16 107:8, 9,22,24 108:8,18 109:14,18,21 110:5 114:1 159:19 163:10 171:23 174:25 177:1 179:24 216:23 217:22 218:18 256:16 289:8

Senate's 104:1,6

**Senator** 31:3 217:21,23 218:2,4, 14 271:15 272:24 274:5 275:18 277:2

**send** 68:17 139:24 156:1 194:6 246:17 285:18 288:15 289:6,21

sense 95:1 144:10 236:5

sent 15:3 65:24 71:8 75:9 86:15 100:4,23 104:22 117:21 118:11, 14 120:8 121:6,7 127:3 128:20 129:2 144:19 149:19 152:25 153:20 155:25 160:17 183:14 189:3 193:9 194:3 195:25 197:25 205:10 216:15 217:7,10 231:14 256:10 257:13 271:7 288:22

separate 130:14 164:10 289:1

**separated** 41:25 77:21 130:24 229:15

**September** 6:7,12 9:7 40:1 136:14 138:20 139:5 140:6 265:22

sequence 265:14

**serious** 178:6

seriously 59:24 60:2,16

**serve** 24:15 30:25 50:19 57:25 60:18 90:12 208:5 221:24 240:24 288:14 306:8

**served** 146:1 158:1 184:6 209:20 247:12 258:24

service 206:8 286:21 287:4.11

Services 5:14

serving 41:18 55:20 102:4 132:5

**session** 5:2 98:22 190:2 274:6 278:14 279:1 281:21 289:10

**set** 20:1 30:22 33:9 41:18 54:18 89:21 199:3 226:23 294:14

**sets** 106:2

**setting** 284:9 291:3

**settings** 232:17

settled 8:23

**settlement** 7:25 8:9

settlements 8:11

**seven** 32:10,18 121:15 303:1,15 305:2

seven-day 298:23 299:6 304:24

**several** 62:3,5 97:12 137:23 156:23 178:13

Seymour 170:23 172:21

**SHACKLEFORD** 301:9,15,20, 25 302:6,11,18

**shake** 163:5

**shall** 30:20 31:3,11 93:12

**share** 30:15 202:2,3,5,6 250:9

**sharp** 253:12

**she** 29:1 47:20 55:15 60:21.24 66:8 72:11,19 73:2,3,4,5,6 80:18, 20 81:7 82:4,5,6,18 83:20 84:2, 16,18,21 85:20,21 86:1,3,5 91:7, 8,9,10 92:8,9,10,23 94:11 98:17, 19,21,22,23,24 104:2,3 112:17 119:8 129:7 133:5,12 134:9,16, 20,21 135:6,12,17,18 140:2,22, 23,25 141:24 142:1 146:12 147:10 153:20 164:6 170:1 191:20,21 195:1,4,8,9,15,17 197:7 199:22,24 200:1,16,18 201:21,22 202:4,22 206:2,15 212:5 217:25 218:10,11 221:2,3,5 222:9,12,14,17 224:19,20 225:5, 6,8,9,11 226:24 228:19,22,24,25 229:7,8 233:7,13,14 234:24 237:2,7,8,15 239:18,19,20 241:17 242:19 252:8 254:22 281:3 300:13,14,16,18 301:9,15,17,20

**she'll** 199:22

**she's** 79:12 82:19 93:1,5 198:5,6 212:5 217:25 222:4,10 225:7 226:24 227:1 230:13 237:14 299:16 301:1,2

**sheet** 109:16

**Shickles** 156:25 159:1

**Shields** 157:1 159:3

shipped 196:1

**shop** 176:14

short 76:12 81:13 135:4 278:25

**shortly** 165:9 253:16

**should** 25:3 27:12 33:7 36:9 58:6 64:20 75:5 82:23 86:10 97:25 99:1 102:24 104:13 114:19 121:24 130:5 133:8 137:19 160:23 164:7 165:6,7 185:7 192:14 212:17 218:15 239:25 243:1 247:2 254:22 267:3 269:11, 15 277:12 281:1,18 290:9 291:12 295:1

**shouldn't** 89:13,14 168:25 169:7 281:11

**Shouse** 158:21,22 159:14 182:8 183:10

**show** 62:5 66:6 69:4 89:14 92:1 122:1 133:19 136:20 187:3 203:5 224:7 225:6 229:18,19 231:13 237:1 263:5 282:19 305:17 306:22 307:20

showed 65:8 103:7 223:17

**showing** 32:6 100:21,23 108:7 109:8,16 118:13 121:7 128:20 146:14 185:4,10 194:1,5 217:6,9 218:20 225:8 228:19 257:10,12 261:13 270:12 303:11

**shows** 121:23 138:3 239:17 242:13 243:8 261:18 262:6

**shut** 63:1,2

Shydale 127:8,10,14 131:17 133:4 134:6,12 136:3,4,7,10,13, 18,22 137:1,6,23 138:2,6,9,13,16 139:1,6,11,16,21 140:12 141:14, 17 143:11

**Sid** 205:15,23 206:17,23 207:3 216:14

**side** 25:22 30:12 37:21 56:7,14 101:20,21,23 102:7 125:7 135:25 173:22 179:4 198:18 217:14 222:7 226:13

**sign** 79:3,5 84:8,11 141:13 265:3 267:12

**sign-off** 151:12 203:15

signal 12:2 175:14 181:16

**signature** 75:10 78:2 80:8 81:16, 19 82:3 83:7,20 84:9 90:9,25 91:16 92:15 93:2 98:14 124:18 296:19 303:12 307:19

Index: signatures..some

signatures 10:10 72:21 73:2,8, 12 75:5,6,20 77:21 78:20 79:25 80:16 81:6,8,13 82:6,9,11,14 84:2,16 85:15,21 86:14 87:12,18, 22 88:1,8,16,21,22 89:9 90:6 92:1,3,24 94:12 95:4 96:9,11,13, 14,21,24 97:21 113:11

**signed** 109:17,20 136:14 138:23 139:5 140:5 142:8

significant 81:14 167:3 168:12

signifies 235:4

signify 6:21 8:17 9:15 13:18
14:19 26:9 29:22 48:23 49:1 57:2
65:13 69:20 77:14 85:6 99:21
119:25 126:19 128:3 130:18
131:8,22 143:2 145:10 149:10
150:21 152:16 154:5 155:3
156:14 158:13 183:4 188:20
189:18 192:25 205:2 216:7 224:1
249:2 256:1 258:2 270:24 272:4
295:23 297:25

signing 122:7 124:20

**similar** 50:8,14 90:23 113:6 226:12

Similarly 213:25

simple 95:4 101:9 226:23

**simply** 22:9 122:11 123:5 220:23 225:8

since 23:13 25:7 36:3 42:16,20 56:14 67:4 81:23 105:12 111:22 114:20 118:25 132:24 139:16 147:5,19 156:7 161:6 162:23 163:3 164:5 200:23 205:14 217:24 231:12 232:1 234:15 254:12 274:22 288:14,18 289:1, 14 300:22

**single** 81:4 121:16 185:11 266:9 279:4 280:13

singly 43:16

**sir** 19:7 74:4,11,15 118:21 132:16 211:25 224:10 242:12,15

sit 60:8 166:22 288:24 307:20

**sitting** 21:25 39:19 47:18 57:14 61:1 62:7 221:2 238:12 280:8 281:16 290:3 296:7

**situation** 37:14 64:4 96:23 103:6,22 104:2,12 116:16 147:25 177:4 179:20

situations 47:25 214:23

**six** 157:12 158:7,12 182:25 262:2

six-month-old 281:14

**slate** 178:17

slated 101:14

slide 112:19

slightly 113:6

slip 109:18

Slipped 179:6

slot 212:14

**small** 109:18

**Smartvan** 220:14 225:14 226:9 228:19 233:25

so 6:15 7:5 8:12 9:11 10:22 11:1 16:2,6,24 17:10 20:8,18 21:11 24:20 25:6,11,19,23 27:2,4,8,15 28:5 29:3,16 30:17,24 31:16 32:2, 10 33:18,20 34:1 35:1,23 36:14 37:7,15,24 38:4,25 39:13 40:5 41:9,15,25 42:4,19 43:7,17,25 44:21 45:4,22,24 46:15 47:4,13, 22 48:1,8,10,12,13,17,21 49:5,6 50:19 51:16 54:11,23 55:7 56:2 57:18,25 58:7,15,19 59:1,12 60:20 61:2,4 62:23 63:4,9 64:9, 14,18 65:9,11 66:3,6,24 68:5,7 69:12 70:6,22 71:13 72:13,17 73:16 76:5 78:4,10,21,23 79:14 80:9,15 81:3,6,9 82:18 83:17 84:5,6,10,13,19 85:24 86:4,7,17, 24 87:2,4,10,11,21 88:6,10,14 89:18,23 90:2,9,12,18,22 91:3,11, 14,16 92:11,21,22 93:14,15,17,23 94:18 95:4,22 96:2,11 97:14 98:1, 18 99:5,17 102:1,11 104:11 105:10,22 106:11,15,16,25 107:2, 10,13 108:1,8,18,20 110:3,12,16 111:5,9,18 112:4,11,17,20,22 113:11,22 114:15,17,18 115:3 116:25 117:5 119:23 122:10,21 123:14 124:1,10,14 125:20,23 127:19 129:8,24 130:1,5,16 131:2,19 132:7 134:15 135:2,5,8, 11,15 139:4 140:9 141:5,11,17, 18,24 142:1,2,12,25 143:16 144:12,16 145:6,19 147:21 148:1, 14,20 150:8,16 152:5 153:14,22, 24 154:16,18,25 157:6,12 158:2, 8,11 161:15 162:6,9 163:4,7 164:13,25 165:13,20,21,23

166:18,20,22 167:2,3,8,9 168:8 169:4,15 170:20 171:11 172:5 173:17 174:3,6,9,11,19,22 175:18 176:6,9 177:23 178:8 179:8,13,19 180:2,10,22 181:9,12,19 182:19, 24 186:11,19 187:2 188:3,18 189:9,10 190:11,22 191:20 192:4, 22 194:8,24 195:4,11,12 196:20, 21 197:16,19 199:1,20,21,24 200:5,20 201:16 203:7 208:25 209:2 210:13,18 211:22,25 212:4, 25 213:24 214:25 218:13,17,21 220:13,19 221:1,18 222:25 223:6, 16,19 224:6 225:10,13,23 226:14 227:3,16,17 228:24 229:15 230:2, 16,20 231:3,19 233:23 234:4,15, 18 235:5,8 236:1,16,21 237:6,21 238:24 239:1,3,17,19,22 241:8,17 242:5,9,16 243:3,9 244:2,5,7,10, 24,25 245:7,16 246:7,9,15,23 247:6,14,18,21 248:12,16 250:2,7 251:5,6 255:7 259:12 261:10,18 262:25 263:13 264:20,23 265:20, 23 266:1 267:25 268:12,15,17 269:2 270:11,18 271:19 272:16 273:12,24 274:17 275:5,7,14,16, 24 276:4,13,19 277:18 278:9 279:8 280:20,23 281:5 282:6,21 283:8,9 284:11 285:1,9,22 286:1, 21,24,25 287:5,13 288:13 289:20, 24 290:20 291:20 292:1,11,15,20 293:6,10 294:6,17 295:14,15 297:17,22 298:7,24 299:5,7,9,10, 13,15,20,21,23 300:3,7,17,19,24 302:3,11,14 303:4,10,25 304:1, 21,25 305:5,12,16 306:21

**Social** 33:23

society 279:6

socioeconomic 94:6

**sold** 168:4

sole 240:1

solemnly 7:11

solution 83:16,19

solve 83:24

**some** 7:19 10:1 38:5 39:2,11 40:25 58:14 79:24 80:17 81:9 82:25 84:10 87:17 90:21 91:9,15 92:1,17 93:9 96:10 109:24 122:3 139:21 161:16 177:2 178:24 179:13 180:3 181:20,24 182:2,3 192:1 195:23 198:17 200:22

Index: somebody..statement

227:18 234:1,10 238:19 240:19, 20 245:24 247:7 264:12 266:21 269:7 272:19 275:21 276:21 280:21 286:13 288:6 290:2 292:25 298:19 305:21

**somebody** 66:4 144:23 186:2,4 187:21 211:18 220:10 221:1,3 230:8 240:3 264:15 286:1 294:23

**somehow** 62:13 212:8 215:10 227:6

**someone** 47:25 51:14 53:6 60:17 82:22,25 83:23 84:8 85:17 114:25 123:5 176:14 197:1 211:1, 2 215:13 227:20 245:24 248:11 286:9 293:7

**someone's** 113:12

something 23:12 29:3 32:3 43:3 63:3 64:25 81:19 86:25 94:20,22 95:12 116:1 124:22 125:11 133:8 147:23 162:3 165:11 171:6 172:13 174:24 175:5 176:8 185:23 187:3 209:24 210:2 212:14 215:15 235:16 241:24 242:25 246:5 250:8 253:21 279:1 281:6 294:3 298:24 300:1 304:20

sometimes 109:19

somewhere 175:2 203:7 227:11

sorry 9:3 18:7,16,22 19:8 20:4,14 24:12 30:14 34:9 42:13 48:20 49:10 52:5,8 55:15 59:5 63:25 72:6 75:3 77:11 79:17 93:10 94:9 99:15 110:21 118:22 126:4 129:14 136:22 137:1 143:24 147:9 154:11 158:6,20 159:11 171:25 177:14 179:6 205:25 207:1,2 221:20 224:15 238:17,20 239:6 246:14 249:14 251:4,13 256:20 259:24 277:14 286:24 295:8,20

**sort** 79:24 80:14 91:9 127:18 142:22 157:15 180:18,19 245:18

sorts 214:22 254:19

sought 126:12 171:14 208:16

South 5:4 86:10,12 87:1

Soviet-style 180:20

**speak** 5:19 32:8 72:4 80:9 106:11 109:3 196:12 221:11 247:19 249:25

speaker 289:7

**speaking** 10:4 91:3,5 115:11,19 124:14

speaks 27:3 194:20 236:11

special 91:15 137:12 170:21

**specific** 20:22 21:13,15,17 22:17,23 23:2 42:16 125:4

**specifically** 19:17 35:4 50:23 51:16,17 52:14,18 54:24 55:10,23 59:6 108:14 125:20 166:3 191:5 207:8 222:15,16 229:25 261:3 262:15

specified 141:22

specifying 51:10

speculative 169:25

**speech** 185:14

**speed** 118:18

Speedway 74:8

**spell** 5:20 10:5 30:7 73:20 79:16 118:21,24 132:11 136:17 146:7 161:11 184:19 223:1

**spelled** 108:18

**spelling** 71:24 126:13

spend 274:25 286:15

spent 11:25

split 81:13 180:25 181:6,18

**spoke** 62:20 86:11 87:19 146:2 261:4

**spoken** 37:19 165:15 178:4 180:24

spot 280:2

spur 285:8

**staff** 5:10 8:3 11:9,16 17:2,4 61:12 88:10 89:20 91:8 115:4,12 227:4 230:25 232:4 245:1 246:17 247:11 288:5

staffer 248:2

staffing 230:14

Stafford 157:2 159:3

staggered 254:13

**stamp** 10:10 85:19 119:16 300:6, 11

stamped 114:12 115:24 302:24

stamps 198:8 296:19

**stand** 7:5 73:14 182:20 185:20 235:25 299:15

**standard** 141:6 174:2 213:22 227:21 257:7

standards 113:4 215:14 304:1

standing 83:10 190:14 212:2

**stands** 165:16

**Star** 162:13

**start** 16:15 17:22 49:8,13 75:6 161:16 195:18 223:6 236:23 238:23

**started** 15:17 42:12 62:13 111:15 175:8 192:14

starting 290:10

state 5:20 14:4 18:2.5.11 20:20 22:7 26:1 27:9 31:6,9,10 36:11 50:7 51:22 73:19,24 79:15 86:10, 16,23 87:4 90:19 91:24 92:13,14 100:12 103:9 104:14,18 105:15, 25 107:8,9,22,24 109:4,18,21 110:7 114:19 115:5 116:3 118:20 122:12 127:12 128:18 129:1 140:18 146:6 155:23 160:14 162:23,24 163:2 167:4 171:23 174:17,18 175:22 186:22 190:5 191:12 192:12 193:18 194:1 206:24 209:7,21 210:25 214:1,24 216:23 218:14,18 221:14,16 227:10,23,25 250:16 252:3,15 253:8,10 255:1 256:16 259:22 260:22 272:22,24 274:3,4 275:11, 22,25 276:10 283:17 287:9,17

**state's** 73:1,11 75:21 76:10 103:8,21,25 104:5,16 105:19,20 109:7 111:24,25 113:23 114:22 168:20 234:3 274:19

**stated** 60:14 63:16 191:21,24 197:12 204:19 267:2 307:5

statement 33:4 56:22 58:18
68:10 71:4 80:15 100:21 101:22
102:8,19 103:10,14 104:4,20
106:15 107:14,18,23 108:3,7,21
109:4,9 113:16,25 114:8,10,12,13
116:11 124:17 125:2 128:17,25
141:20 148:9 155:24 194:2 217:6
220:1 231:25 257:10 258:23
273:14 301:10,11

Index: statements..supervise

**statements** 12:23 32:6 101:15, 21 151:24 188:16 209:5 259:15

**states** 15:9 19:21 22:4 24:17,18 31:1,6,8,11,22 33:1,8 37:5 50:4,8, 25 52:11,23 53:10,13,17 55:23 57:24 60:25 64:23 67:19 72:12 81:21 101:10 118:4 120:19 141:19 144:2 150:1 159:19 163:9 183:22 199:2 205:24 239:1 266:24 271:15 276:6 280:25 289:20

**statewide** 229:24 231:6 234:20 251:18 304:13

**stating** 22:9 231:5 **statistic** 80:25

statistics 173:23 174:5

stats 235:7

**status** 89:8 212:11 214:15 215:1, 10 262:6

**statute** 19:17 20:3,18,19,20,22 21:5,12,13,15,16,17 22:15,16,21, 22,23 23:18 24:4 35:15 74:20 93:10 101:9 106:14 107:21 108:11 109:25 114:15 137:25 147:24 148:4 157:20 159:15,16, 18 160:12 168:17 169:1,15 171:17 173:24 174:6,17 178:19 179:16 185:25 186:13 191:5 198:23 204:3,10 206:16 209:25 210:19 212:19 213:4 219:14,23, 24 220:22 227:22 228:4.6.10.11. 15 229:11 230:22 238:23 239:5 264:14,15,20 278:6 284:19,25 285:3,25 288:12 291:25 292:15, 22

**statutes** 22:16 24:2 106:15 111:3,7 147:20 163:15 278:4 293:16

**statutorily** 109:23 116:1 123:20

**statutory** 42:1 47:12 74:14 95:20 96:25 125:14 291:23

**stay** 165:6,8 166:7,19 167:4,10 168:10 169:8 172:1,2,3,4,5,10 173:2,15 180:13 181:5,12 186:23 189:9

**stayed** 175:12 **stays** 227:11 **Stella** 217:19

**step** 44:6 47:15 281:1,7

**stepdad** 196:13

**steps** 62:16 64:13

**Steuben** 208:12 210:5,7,8 211:25 213:1

**Stevens** 172:18

Stewart 5:13

stick 30:17 62:1

**still** 47:3,15 86:22 92:6 156:3 168:5 173:21 177:24 178:3 181:17 201:23 233:3 244:15 247:20 260:25 262:13 266:11 269:17 272:18 276:3 280:23 287:18 289:16 307:23

**stood** 61:24 94:22 165:12

**stop** 62:10,11,13 83:22 200:22 210:20

stopped 62:19 111:14

**stored** 231:20 **storm** 62:16

**story** 96:23

**straight** 5:18 234:15

straightforward 159:14

**strange** 64:18 84:5

strategy 174:14 street 247:21

strictly 252:22 282:9

stripped 33:19

strong 181:16 276:14

strongly 98:25 106:7

struck 46:11 47:6 159:16 293:23

struggling 123:4

student 225:9

students 84:9

**study** 44:4 224:12

**stuff** 125:24 175:5 197:6 203:4

242:24 245:21,22

subdivision 42:21 148:10 220:2

subdivisions 41:25

**subject** 10:1 95:15 137:13 288:8

submission 96:9

**submit** 72:20 76:21 87:11,21 96:20 102:12 113:10 218:7 295:5

**submitted** 75:5 76:1,6 78:13,19, 21,24 81:6,8 82:14 87:23 88:1 96:9,25 101:24 102:3,8 218:9 304:22 305:3

**submitting** 75:6 80:18 96:12

subscribe 185:20 306:16

subscription 41:5

**subsection** 106:18 114:8 159:25 198:24,25 199:2,5,13 287:5

substantial 92:24 substantially 82:3

**substantive** 34:21 35:11 49:21

207:13

substantively 123:17

succeed 62:22 success 177:6

successfully 91:1 98:15

**such** 12:9 19:5 25:6,9,22 31:15 61:9 92:20 134:5 139:25 208:9 227:5 276:14 283:21

**sudden** 81:22

sufficient 63:19 142:9

**suggest** 106:8 227:1 239:16,23

240:7

suggestion 201:25

suggests 267:8

suit 275:8

**suited** 290:15

**summarize** 19:10 54:2 70:22

72:22 157:8

summarized 277:4

**Sunday** 196:15

Superior 258:15

supersede 180:4

superseding 51:2

supervise 80:8

Index: supervision..testimony

supervision 283:3

**support** 31:10 37:4 63:4,5 91:9, 12 92:2,4,9,17,18,23 93:24,25 97:20 117:13 179:21 185:6 220:24 240:16 274:12,13 277:23 278:7 281:13

supportable 278:4

supported 92:10 98:24

supporters 61:15 185:15

**supporting** 139:19 191:16 218:19 226:19 243:17

supports 23:15 179:9 226:18

suppose 138:10 282:6,11

supposed 167:10 229:1 252:14

**Supreme** 20:12 21:14 24:1,9 27:1 51:7 53:13 61:1 64:23 72:12 164:15,17,19 165:5,14 166:9,15 168:9 170:9 171:4 173:2 174:3,16 175:12,16 177:25 178:3,4,11,15, 22,25 179:3,9,10 180:24 181:10, 20,21 182:17 186:22

sure 17:8 20:1 22:15 23:17,24 36:19 37:7 44:17 54:11 58:4,22 59:2 66:23 67:11 75:16 78:6 87:9 88:5,12 94:6 104:3 132:13 135:22 141:2,4 153:7 157:6,7 164:5 181:23 187:2 197:9 202:11 211:15 214:11 237:11 240:3 241:18 260:15 266:7 267:25 277:17 278:23 291:19 294:10 298:11 300:18 302:18 305:15 306:1

**surprised** 105:4 225:21

surprising 81:15

**Sutton** 248:3,7 249:23

**Suzannah** 5:7 117:8 281:3

**SVRS** 146:14 220:19,23 224:7 225:1,8 226:15,25 227:8,9,20,23 228:5,8 229:20 230:3 232:1,6 234:4,15 239:14 240:1 242:13 243:3,21 246:3 250:5 258:22 259:8 299:24,25 300:4

swear 7:11

switched 82:18

switching 240:4,5

**Switzerland** 191:16,17

sympathetic 280:1

sympathy 170:14

**Syrian** 253:15

**system** 83:18 93:9 200:4 202:20, 25 203:18,19 204:1 220:15 225:1, 14,16 227:13,15,23 228:1,8 230:3,4 231:7,11,18,21 234:10,21 240:1 242:22,24 243:7 244:22 251:19 260:22 293:25 294:8,11 304:14

**systems** 225:2 240:2 288:18

Т

T-R-E-N-T 187:11

tab 8:6 128:13,22 277:13

**table** 29:7,18 240:8 245:17 246:11,12 247:10 248:9,16,24 297:4,7,21

tabulation 284:4

tackle 48:5

take 7:4,21 18:1 21:22 22:11 27:7 34:1 35:19 37:3 45:11 47:16 56:20 59:24 60:1,14,16 64:20 69:19 72:12 76:23,24 86:24 105:18 106:4,8 124:17,19 125:11 127:18 131:15 143:16 145:19 154:16 162:19 174:3 177:6 179:12 180:21 182:16 187:9 202:21 224:16 225:13 239:24 242:2,9 245:8 246:8,20 266:14 269:6 274:21 280:12 283:22 284:1,5,7,10 285:8 291:17

**taken** 9:6 31:7 60:22 70:9 124:23 125:6 143:18 170:5 174:22 189:25 254:22 278:12

takes 64:5 86:22 113:22 230:7

taking 110:8 127:17 250:2 276:3

**talk** 80:17 175:25 200:5 209:11 263:9 266:21 293:5

**talked** 196:23 243:11 262:17 274:19

**talking** 20:9 27:6 36:22 92:8 98:13 138:21 163:16 178:1 182:14 202:15 209:25 233:11 238:23 242:2 243:14 283:8 291:6 292:4

talks 38:17 106:21 148:19 176:5

**Tamie** 70:14 76:7 78:14 79:19,25 80:13,15 81:3,6 82:2,9,13,17,20 83:19 84:16 85:13 92:23 93:24 99:6,19 100:3

**Tamie's** 84:1

tasked 292:1

taught 84:10

Taylor 8:2

team 222:9,10

technically 59:8 66:7,12 243:25

technologically 299:5

technology 303:4

**Ted** 50:15

telephone 253:3

telephonically 252:19

television 57:22

**tell** 38:13 60:9 77:23 82:13 83:19 85:13 88:23 89:9 105:24 109:12 112:23 119:15 138:11 144:23 165:17 166:10 170:3 178:8 211:16 224:8 305:14 307:7

**telling** 214:25 266:16 267:13 291:3 304:25

tells 202:22 264:23 287:1

tem 289:7

temporal 220:11

**ten** 42:13,14 81:7 84:17 86:14,24 164:2,7 189:23 204:3,4,11 208:24

**tend** 24:21 95:16 113:2

tendered 173:22 179:20

tenure 227:4

term 108:15 116:6 213:11 274:5

terms 17:1 40:5 93:8 176:20

terrible 60:12

testified 79:21

**testify** 7:2 13:4 73:14 80:14 195:3 199:22 220:17

testifying 7:8

**testimony** 5:18 7:12 79:21 84:1 102:17 123:9 191:8 203:2 219:8

220:16 225:4 226:18 250:3 273:12 299:20 301:7,24 302:5

than 11:22 12:13 13:1,6 32:11 56:16 65:2 80:16 94:15,19 134:10 162:6 178:19 195:17 199:25 220:11 224:25 230:7 236:21 269:3,25 284:8 290:23 296:7 298:20 299:16

thank 6:6,16 7:7,17 8:24 9:20 18:3 19:8 30:2,10,16 34:4,11 36:3 37:25 49:16 54:11 55:12 57:12,25 59:10.22 65:25 67:11.14 68:19.22 70:2 71:15,18 73:21 76:20,25 80:5 99:3,4,12 100:8 111:21 117:24,25 120:11,12 121:9 124:9 127:6 129:12 132:8,16,19 133:12, 17,18 143:13,14 145:1 146:5 147:2,17 149:22 153:3,10,19 155:10,11 156:20,21 160:19 161:8,14,15 162:7 163:22 183:10, 17 184:7,8,12,20 187:4 188:3,6 189:6,7 190:16,20,21,24 191:10, 14 193:12,13 194:7,16 206:11,20 209:2.3.14.19 210:10 215:20 216:18,19,25 218:24 219:5 221:10,18,20 222:22,25 223:5 250:12 256:13 259:2.16 271:10. 11 273:8,9,24 275:17,18,19,20 276:19,20,22 294:18 297:1 298:15 301:4

# **Thanks** 206:21 209:8

that 5:22 6:3 7:12,19,20 8:7,8 12:15 14:13 15:18,19,23 16:9 17:1,4,16,20,21 18:1 19:9,17 20:11,12,20,21,22,23 21:15,17, 22,23,25 22:4,5,7 23:1,2,6,10,15, 18 24:1,7,9,10,13,14,17,19,25 25:11 26:2,19 27:9,12,25 28:12, 15,17 29:3,9 30:19,21,24 31:2,19, 20,25 32:4,6,7,8,23 33:17 34:1, 15,18 36:8,15,24 37:2,6,10,13,18, 23,24 38:13,25 39:1,3,5,10,15,17, 23 40:3,17 41:6,8 42:7,9,19,20, 21,22 43:2,3,9,11,13,16,18 44:8, 21,24 45:6,10,15,16,20,24 46:4,7, 11 47:1,19 48:2,6,17,23 49:6,19, 22 50:10,11,21 51:21 52:12,22 53:6,13,14 54:4,18,20,22 55:8,15, 17,18,21,24,25 56:11,13,17,21 57:21,23 58:6,12,13,24 59:4 60:2, 7,16,17,22,24 61:2,10,11,19,24 62:11,14,18,21 63:2,12 64:3,10, 16,18,22 65:1,7,8 66:8,16,25 67:2,4,5,7,9,12 68:17 69:4,6 71:7,

9,13,16,22 72:3,19,24 73:7,10,21 74:13 75:2,4,8,9,11,14,24 76:1,4, 6,18,21,23 77:8,21 78:1,13,15,16, 23,24 79:2,7,11,21,22,24,25 80:2, 3,4,6,9,18,20,22 81:15,22,24 82:2,9 83:4,8,13,20,22,25 84:3,19 85:18 86:7,18,21 87:4,5,6,14,16, 19 88:1,8,15,19,23,24 89:2,4,5,7, 13,15,17,19,20,25 90:3,7,10,14, 20 91:9,11,12,15,20 92:1,5,7,10, 16,18,23 93:1,4,5,6,11,14,19,23, 24,25 94:10,11,17,19,20,23,25 95:5,6,7,12,14,17,18,22 96:1,5,7, 8,18,25 97:1,2,4,6,7,10,12,15,17, 18,25 98:1,12,14 100:1,5,16,18, 21,23,25 101:10,12,16,24 102:11, 20 103:11,18 104:21,22 105:1,4, 9,10,18,24 106:4,8,12,17,18,21 107:2,3,5,6,8,10,11,15,16,19,20, 21,23 108:6,7,8,9,18 109:1,7,8, 10,11,14,16,19,23 110:1,3,4,8,11, 12,18 111:5,20,24 112:7,8,14,19, 22,24 113:3,15 114:3,10,15,18, 23,25 115:2,4,21,23 116:3,6 117:5,18,22 118:11,13,15 119:8, 11,14,16,17,18 120:25 121:1,3,6, 7,23 122:1,4,5,7,10,16 123:1,12, 15,16,18,24 124:6,17,18,21,22, 23,24 125:4,8,9,10,11,14,25 126:5 127:4,10,21,22 128:18,20, 25 129:2,7,8,13 130:6,11,13 131:4,14,18 132:7,11,23 133:3,5, 16,25 134:9,10,12,15,21,25 135:6,8,23 136:21 137:4,7,16,18, 23,25 138:1,3,4,11,19 139:7,8,15, 19 140:2,6,10,18 141:5,15,18 142:1,10,21,23,25 144:4,16,17,22 145:21 146:1,2,3,6,17,23 147:3,6, 14,23 148:4,7,12,14 150:8 151:12,20,22 153:1,11,12 155:22, 25 156:1,2 157:5,11,13,18,24,25 158:20 159:22 160:1,7 162:1,3,7, 10,11,17 163:8,13,15,16,19 165:1,3,4,6,8,9,11,14,15,19,20,24 166:11,15,16,18,19,21 167:16,18, 19,24,25 168:6,9,20,24 169:2,6,7, 8,9,16,18,23,24,25 170:3,5,8,10, 13,22 171:3,14,15,18,21 172:2,5, 6,13,14,22,25 173:1,4,5,6,7 174:6,16,19 175:1,3,4,5,6,14,17, 20,21,23,25 176:1,4,5,10,18,22 177:2,4,15,17,23 178:12,17,21 179:1,5,8,25 180:4,7,9,10,12,22 181:11,16 182:9,15,16,18,20 183:18 184:3,6,19 185:5,6,8,18, 22,23,24 186:1,15,16,20,23,25

187:2.3.15.17.21.23 188:1 189:11 190:11,13 191:7,21,24,25 192:4, 9,10,14 193:25 194:3,6,13,14 195:7,14 196:1,2,4,5,12 197:4,10, 11,12,21,23 198:2,18,19 199:1,8, 14,16,21,24 200:17,19,25 201:11, 25 202:2,7,19 203:2,6,25 204:4,7, 10,16 206:5,17 207:2,12 208:1,7 209:1,15,24,25 210:9,16 211:11, 13,14,16 212:1,9,25 213:3,5,15, 23 214:11,12,21,22,25 215:3,10, 12 216:16 217:3,7,9,12 219:11, 13,15,22 220:9,16,22 221:1 222:20 223:16,17 224:17,25 225:4,6,8,15 226:1,6,18,22,23,24 227:1,8,10,14,17,21,22 228:6,10, 11,15,18,19,25 229:4,9,18,23,25 230:3,7,17,21,22,24,25 231:13, 16,20,21,22,25 232:5,6,14,15,20, 24,25 233:2,5,6,19 234:1,7,8,9, 19,24 235:4,15 236:5,6,8,9,12,23, 25 237:1,6,12,15,22 238:8,12,19 239:9,10,16,18,20,21,23,24 240:1,3,4,7,22 241:1,4,5,10,15, 16,18 243:7,8,16,17,21,23,24 244:2,3,6,10 245:7,8,12,13,18,22, 25 246:4,6,9,16,25 247:1,4,10,11, 12,13,14,17,18,20,24 248:12,15, 18 249:21 250:6,9 251:3,14 253:16,21,23,24 254:3,9,21 255:2,8,12,21 257:3,5,6,7,8,12 258:18 259:12 260:13,18,24,25 261:3,11,12,13,14,23 262:6,8,16, 17,18,20,22,25 263:3,4,5,10,11 264:5,7,8,14,19,23,24 265:1,3,5, 16,17 266:14,15,17,18,19,23,24, 25 267:1,8,9,12,13,15 268:3,4,6, 7,9,14,16,19 269:7,11 270:1,7,13, 14,16 271:19 272:15,18 273:11, 24 274:8,14,20,21,25 275:1,6,7,9, 11,24,25 276:5,9,16 277:6,9,10 278:2,6,15,23 279:1,3,4,6,14,15, 21,23 280:13,14,15,18 281:1,2,4, 5,7,17,18,21,22 282:5,7,8,10,14, 15,22 283:17,20,23,24 284:3,5,7, 8,9,11 285:4,7,9,11,17,18,20,24 286:7,10,12,13,15,23 287:13,14, 16,22,24 288:1,2,5,10,12 289:3, 13 290:4,7,8,12,14,16,22 291:1, 25 292:2,3,7,13,17,24 293:1,9,12 294:6,9,13,17 295:7,16 296:5,6, 19 298:19,21,22,24 299:4,9,11, 15,16,19,24 300:1,2,3,5,9,15,19 301:1,3,7 302:15,22,24 303:11,23 304:2,15,22,24 305:2,3,6,17,20, 22,24 306:14,17,23 307:1,5,12,

13,18,19,20,22,24,25

**that's** 17:6 20:25 23:7 24:2 29:12 33:1,12 35:21 37:13 39:21 40:22 41:25 44:11 46:16 48:7 51:6 52:10 53:20 58:12 64:7 70:6 71:24 77:23 80:3 87:15 96:19,22 102:13 104:23 107:24 110:5 112:1 113:14,18 116:11 118:9,19 124:9 125:7,8,9,13,22,24 129:8 130:3 133:5 134:18 135:14,15 138:7 139:12,17 142:9,18,22 146:21 148:18 150:11 158:23 163:13 165:18 166:9 167:15 169:11 170:11 175:19 176:21 177:12 179:4 182:19 184:22 185:20 186:6 187:14.18 194:10 195:12,18 196:7,10,18 204:6 212:11 213:4 214:4 225:16 226:2 227:7,12 228:7,16 230:2,5,6 231:11 233:17,18 235:1,15,22 236:8,18 237:20 238:9,10,20 239:3 242:8,25 245:3,11 246:3,21 247:8,15 248:22 249:11 252:19 260:4,10 261:7 263:13 265:16 267:10.22 269:2 279:22 281:21. 22 283:10 284:8,20,22 285:12,25 286:14 288:18 290:1,9,25 292:9, 19 293:19 297:13 301:2 303:21, 23 304:22 305:2,6 306:11,12 307:7,14

**the** 5:1,5,9,17,19,20,23 6:1,4,8,9, 11,20 7:1,3,4,8,10,11,12,13,14, 22,24 8:3,5,8,11,15,23,25 9:1,4,6, 20,24,25 10:3,5,9,25 11:3,5,6,7, 11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,21,22, 23,25 12:1,2,3,4,6,7,9,10,11,12, 14,16,17,18,19,21,22,24,25 13:3, 5,7,8,10,12,24 14:1,2,3,5,6,8,9, 10,11,13,14,15,25 15:1,2,3,5,6,7, 8,9,10,11,14,18,19 16:1,2,11,14, 18,19 17:2,3,5,7,11,12,14,22 18:2,5,8,10,12,14,17 19:2,3,6,11, 14,15,16,20,21,25 20:2,3,9,10,11, 12,13,18,19,21,22,24 21:1,4,5,8, 9,11,12,14,17,18,20,21,22,23,25 22:2,5,6,7,15,18,19,20,23,24 23:1,3,9,10,17,18,20 24:1,2,3,6,8, 9,10,11,16,18,21 25:3,4,5,10,11, 12,21,22,24 26:2,3,5,6,15,23 27:3,7,8,9,13,18,21,22,24 28:1,2, 9,12,14,17,18,20,25 29:3,4,5,7, 12,15,17,18 30:7,11,12,17,18,19, 21,22,23,25 31:1,2,5,8,10,11,12, 13,17,19,21,22 32:1,2,3,4,6,7,10, 11,12,13,14,21,22,23,24,25 33:3,

5,6,9,11,12,13,15,17,19 34:2,5, 12,15,16,17 35:1,2,5,8,10,12,13, 14,15,18,24 36:5,7,9,10,18,22,24, 25 37:1,2,4,5,8,9,11,12,13,19,21 38:3,5,20 39:6,7,11,21,22 40:3,5, 6,7,8,10,18 41:5,7 42:4,10,12,13, 25 43:2,5,7,14,22,23,24 44:6,7,12 45:4,6,11,22 46:5,6,9,11,12,14, 15,16,17,18,19,21,24 47:1,3,7,12, 23 48:3,4,7,9,10,22 49:5,8,14,17, 20,22,25 50:3,4,5,6,10,11,12,16, 17,21,22,24,25 51:1,2,4,5,6,8,11, 12,14,15,16,19,23 52:1,3,9,11,13, 15,17,18,21,23,24 53:3,5,6,8,9, 11,12,13,16,17,18,19 54:2,16,17, 19,20,21,23,25 55:1,4,7,8,9,11, 13,14,22,23,25 56:1,8,12,14 57:10,14,15,18,20,24 58:6,7,8,9, 11,12,14,16,18,21,24,25 59:1,5,6, 8,13,15 60:6,9,15,16,19,21,22,24, 25 61:5,9,13,15,21,25 62:1,2,7, 13,16,17,18,19,20 63:6,7,9,10,12, 13,17,21 64:2,3,6,7,12,14,19,23 65:3,12,19,20,22,23 66:5,12,15, 25 67:1,3,4,5,16,19,20,21,22,24 68:7,9,11,14,16,17,23 69:1,3,4,5, 7,13,14,19,25 70:1,6,11,13,14,16, 17,23 71:1,2,4,6,7,8,10,12,13,16, 24 72:4,5,11,12,18,20,23,24 73:1, 2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,14,15,24 74:7, 11,13,16,17,18,19,23,24 75:1,7, 10,12,14,15,17,20,23,25 76:1,2,4, 6,9,13,19 77:19,20,22,25 78:1,3, 8,12,15,16,19,23 79:2,4,7,10,11 80:4,6,17,21 81:1,3,7,12,16,17, 20,22 82:3,4,7,8,13,17,19,23 83:6,18,22,23,24 84:14,23,24 85:17,18,19,21,24 86:3,10,16,21, 23 87:2,4,18,23 88:1,7,16 89:7,8, 18,19,21 90:2,11,12,14,20,25 91:1,16,24 92:2,7,13,14,15 93:2, 3,4,5,8,11 94:1,4,7,8,10,16,22 95:1,2,4,8,14,20,24 96:3,4,7,10, 11,12,16,21,24,25 97:1,2,8,9,11, 15,16,18,19,20,21,24 98:3,4,13, 14,15,16,20,25 99:6,10,11,14,18 100:1,2,3,4,5,6,10,14,16,17,19, 22,24 101:6,9,10,12,13,16,20,22, 23 102:2,5,6,12,17 103:6,7,10,12, 13,16,17,18,21,22,23,25 104:1,2, 4,5,6,10,12,16,20,22,23,24,25 105:9,13,14,15,18,20,25 106:1,3, 6,14,15,17,19,21,22 107:2,3,6,7, 8,11,14,18,19,23,24 108:3,5,6,8, 9,11,15,16,17,18,19,22,25 109:5, 6,8,13,14,15,17,18,20,21,25

110:1,3,5,6,7,9,13,14,16,17 111:3,14,19,23,24,25 112:7,8,12, 16,17 113:4,9,10,13,14,16,17,20, 21,22,25 114:3,4,8,9,10,11,12,13, 19,21,24 115:3,4,5,6,11,12,15,18, 22,23 116:2,4,5,6,16,19,25 117:1, 2,3,4,5,6,11,13,15,16,18,19,20, 22,23 118:1,2,3,7,9,10,12,16 119:4,7,9,10,16,18,23 120:5,6,7, 9,10,17,18,23,24 121:2,3,4,5,8, 13,14,17,21,22 122:1,3,10,11,16, 22 123:6,9,13,20,22,24 124:5,10, 11,12,17,18,22 125:1,2,4,7,9,14, 17,24 126:3,5,8,11,13,16,18,25 127:1,2,4,5,9,11,13,16 128:9,13, 14,15,16,18,21,24 129:1,2,3,4,6,9 130:2,12,23 131:1,14,17 132:3, 20,23,24,25 133:1,2,5,7,9,13,15, 19 134:1,3,4,11,13,16,19,21 135:6,8,9,12,13,14,15,25 136:14, 25 137:7,8,9,10,16,17,18 138:7, 12,13,16,18,19,21,22,23 139:2, 16,17 140:2,5,9,10,13,14,15,20, 23,24,25 141:6,12,20,21,22 142:5,7,10,11,12,17,19,20,22,25 143:1,8,9,10,11,12,23,25 144:1, 17,21,24 145:3,16,20,21,24,25 146:2,3,7,11,12,13,16,17,18,19, 24,25 147:7,14,19,21,24,25 148:2,3,4,5,9,12,13,14,21 149:4, 16,17,18,20,21,24 150:10 151:2, 7,8,9,10,11,13,14,19,25 152:3,4, 6,8,13,22,24,25 153:1,2,15,16,17, 18,20 154:10,11,19,23 155:9,13, 14,16,18,19,20,22,23,25 156:7, 12,19,23 157:4,12,16,17,19,20,22 158:7,18,21 159:4,6,7,15,17,18, 19,20,22,23 160:1,2,5,6,11,12,13, 14,15,16,17,18 161:10,14 162:1, 9,10,11,13,14,21,22,24 163:1,2,5, 6,8,10,11,14,15,20,21 164:9,14, 15,17,18,19 165:3,4,5,12,14,16, 21,22,23,25 166:1,2,5,7,9,11,12, 15,16,17,19,21 167:1,2,4,6,9,11, 14,25 168:2,3,5,9,10,11,14,16,17, 19,21,22,23,25 169:1,3,4,9,11,15, 22 170:4,5,9,10,11,16,19,23 171:4,6,11,15,17,23 172:1,2,3,7, 10,11,12,14,16,17,23,25 173:1,2, 10,11,14,20,22,23,24 174:3,4,5,6, 7,13,15,16,18 175:2,8,12,15,16, 18,19,20,24 176:1,2,7,8,11,12,16, 17,21,25 177:7,8,24 178:1,2,5,7, 10,11,15,22 179:2,4,6,9,13,17,18, 23,25 180:1,2,4,5,12,15,17,18,23 181:5,7,9,11,20,22 182:3,17,21,

Index: their..there

24,25 183:9,11,12,13,15,16,18, 20,21,25 184:1,4,5,21,24 185:2,4, 8,9,13,19,22,24,25 186:3,9,11,13, 16,18,20,21,24 187:2,9,14,15,17, 18,23,24,25 188:1,9,11,18,25 189:1,3,4,5,10 190:2,3,12,13,15, 16,17,18 191:1,2,4,5,8,15,18,20, 22 192:1,2,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,18,22 193:6,7,8,9,10,11,16,17,21,22,23, 24,25 194:1,3,5,10,13,18,19,20, 23 195:6,8,13,15,18,24,25 196:1, 6,8,11 197:12,15 198:12,13,17, 18,19,23,25 199:2,4,6,7,8,10,11, 12,14,17,21 200:3,6,7,10,20,21 201:2,13,14 202:1,6,16,20,24,25 203:3,4,5,6,7,13,14,17,19,22,25 204:2,3,5,7,8,15,18,19,20,25 205:7,8,9,10,11,12,20,21,23 206:2,3,4,6,7,8,14,16,18,19 207:4,5,6,9,10,11,13,15,20,21,22, 23 208:2,5,8,13,18,19,23,25 209:5,8,21,23,25 210:7,14,18,19, 23,24 211:2,4,8,10,11,12,14,17 212:3,5,8,19,20,21,25 213:1,3,4, 6,11,22 214:1,3,4,7,16,18,19,20 215:2,4,7,12,14,21,23 216:1,5,12, 13,14,16,17,21,22 217:1,2,3,4,6, 7,8,9,11,13,14,15,23,25 218:1,4, 7,9,12,22,23 219:5,12,13,14,15, 17,18,19,23,25 220:1,4,6,7,9,13, 15,19,20,21,22,23,24,25 221:3,4, 15,21 222:5,6,7,8,11,13,20 223:7, 16 224:15,16 225:4,8,17,24,25 226:2,6,9,11,12,13,14,17,18,19, 20,21,22 227:1,12,14,21,22,23, 24,25 228:1,4,8,10,11,12,16,18, 21,23 229:9,11,12,20,22,23,25 230:1,3,7,11,14,15,18,19,24 231:1,4,5,6,8,11,12,18,20,24 232:1,5,11,13,14,19,20 233:1,2,3, 11,12,13,16,17 234:3,4,5,12,17, 18,20,21,24 235:2,9,18,24 236:2, 17,18,20,23 237:1,4,7,15,17,18, 22 238:6,12,13,14,15,16,23,24 239:2,3,5,10,12,14,17,22,24 240:1,2,9,10 241:4,12,16,18,21 242:1,10,14,16,21,22,24,25 243:2,3,5,6,7,10,13,16,20 244:2, 15,18,20,22,25 245:12,13,23 246:1,2,4,5,8,13,14,24 247:2,9, 12,17,21,22,23 248:1,8,12,14,19, 20,21,25 249:9,12,14,18,24,25 250:1,2,14,18,21,23 251:4,13,15, 18,21,22 252:16,21 253:1,2,4,10, 13,15,17,20,24 254:4,7,8,11,12, 15,17,21 255:1,2,8,18,23 256:7,8,

10,11,12,14,15,20,22,24,25 257:1,4,6,7,8,9,11,12,13,14,18,21 258:8,9,10,11,12,13,16,17,18,19, 23,24 259:1,6,9,10,13,20 260:2,4, 5,6,8,9,16,18,21,22,24 261:1,4,6, 17,19,20,21,23,24 262:3,8,9,10, 15,16,18,20,21,23 263:2,8,9,12, 13 264:3,6,7,10,14,15,17,18,20, 21,25 265:1,3,7,11,13,20,23,24, 25 266:6,10,11,12,13,16,17,21, 22,24 267:2,4,7,16,18,21,22 268:3,10,13,15,18,21,23 269:1,3, 6,8,10,15,21,23,25 270:8,9,14,15, 20 271:4,5,6,7,8,9,13,17,18 272:10,11,12,13,14,16,20,21,23 273:3,4,5 274:2,14,19,20,22 275:8,9,12,21,22 276:17 277:1,2, 3,5,7,11,12,19,21,22 278:5,6,9, 12,13,21,25 279:5,13,14,16,18, 20,23,25 280:1,2,8,12,16,18,21, 22,24 281:1,4,10,13,17,18,24 282:1,2,8,10,12,20,22,25 283:8,9, 10,17,22,25 284:1,4,6,19,22,23, 24 285:1,2,3,4,5,6,17,18,20,25 286:5,7,14,17,18 287:8,24 288:10,11,14,15,18,20,21,23,24 289:5,6,7,8,9,10,13,16,17,21,24, 25 290:8,16,18,19,25 291:2,3,4,5, 21,22,25 292:2,3,5,6,7,21,22 293:4,5,8,14,17,25 294:1,8,11,12, 13 295:3,5,12,17,18,22 296:3,4,6, 7,16,17,18 297:7,11,21 298:6,9, 12 299:1,9,10,17,18,20,24 300:2, 3,5,13,19,22 301:3,24 302:6,10 303:3,8,17,19,21,22,23 304:1,6,7, 11,13,20,22,24 305:2,4,8,11,19 306:3,5,7,12,13,15,17,19,20,22 307:1,3,5,16,17,19,23,24,25

their 11:21 12:12,24 33:4 36:11, 20,22 58:13 71:2,4,6 83:1,18 84:11 97:9 100:20 109:16 114:22 154:19 155:23 166:4,6,7 167:4,5, 10,21 174:7 179:5 181:1,13 187:20 198:20 209:1 211:20,21 217:5 226:11 232:15,18 243:7 254:9,25 255:3 257:2 261:19 274:16 275:3 286:10 287:2 289:1 296:18 302:5

#### theirs 162:6

**them** 6:13 10:24 11:2 16:19 30:14 33:25 61:22 62:4,10 64:15 78:11,14,20 80:19 84:5 86:6,20 89:8,14 105:11 122:4 139:23,25 141:13 147:20 151:13 156:24

161:17 167:14,22 168:1 173:24 176:3,20 178:9 181:3 184:10 198:12 201:12,17,18 203:10 211:17 223:20 227:6 233:4 236:17 245:2 246:15 247:22 269:13 272:17 275:13 276:10,12 277:4,22 279:22 280:16 285:8 288:16 289:2,8 302:7 305:11

### **theme** 175:18

### themselves 176:2

**then** 5:20 14:1 17:23 21:10 22:17, 24 28:2,3,20 29:4,8 40:24 75:25 78:6,17 79:18 80:19,23 81:21 83:4 86:14,15 89:20 91:14 92:19 98:8 106:20 112:19 121:25 124:10 125:11 128:22 133:14 134:25 140:6,25 148:5 157:20 159:25 171:5,19,22 172:6,7 181:15 184:8 201:9 202:4,5 205:20 215:17 224:14,21,24 225:10 228:20 237:23 241:19 243:12,21,22 244:20 246:3,13 251:20,21 254:17 257:3 261:6 266:11,19 268:18 272:17 281:1,6 283:7,10,12 285:4 286:20 293:3, 14,15 295:1 299:6 303:1,2 306:6

there 6:17 8:10,15 9:9 11:13 13:12 14:15 16:7 18:14 23:17,22 24:17 25:14 35:16,20 40:6 44:8, 10 45:14,15 46:3 48:7,8,10,14 53:24 56:5 58:11 59:1,12,17 60:22 61:22,23,24 62:2,4 65:1 66:13 69:14 70:25 71:11 77:2,10, 20 78:11,17,20 81:8 86:7 87:3,14 88:7,13 89:1 91:2 94:5,22 96:9 97:10,12 101:22 104:1,17 107:13, 15 110:13,16 111:5 112:5,9 113:20,21,23 116:20 121:4,5 122:3,18 123:23 129:4,5,9 133:7 138:3 140:6,18 141:7,25 142:13, 18,23 145:4 146:18 149:6 150:4, 6,14,17 152:7,10 156:9 158:6,9 161:19 162:2 163:4 164:5 165:23 166:24 168:3,4,23 169:7,25 170:3,15 172:3,4,5 173:1,21 175:22.25 177:5.6 178:2 182:12. 18,22 186:8 188:12 189:16 190:11,16,17 191:19,21,22 192:20 194:9 198:21 202:17 203:1,20 204:22 206:6 211:15,16, 19 214:3,5 216:1 218:19 219:19 220:12 222:11 224:9 227:9,12,25 229:5 230:11,13,17,25 236:7,9 239:7,8,22 241:19,22 245:6,7

Index: there's..this

246:5,24 247:22 248:11 252:24 255:20 258:22 261:13,20 262:2 263:5 264:25 266:25 269:22 270:7,10 271:23 272:1 273:17 280:10 294:1 297:3,20 298:23,25 300:9,13 301:22 302:24,25 303:2, 4,17,22 305:3 306:4,21,24

there's 8:7 10:13 18:14 19:11 21:8 44:9 56:23 63:9 67:7 84:13, 14 86:17 91:15 93:1,10 94:6 98:7 106:1,20 109:22 124:5,16 140:8 147:24 164:14 167:8,11,12 171:11,21 173:17 176:3 177:10 179:14 180:10,11 181:21,24 184:2 185:11 187:7 194:8 204:10, 12 214:2 226:5 227:17 230:22,23 232:5 233:23 234:1,6 235:11,17 239:18 243:5,17 247:13 249:20 264:4 266:19,23 269:2 270:1,11 273:12 276:2 300:8,25 306:24

**therefore** 14:13 21:22 28:21 35:3,8,19 78:3,18 101:11 143:9 208:15.17

#### thereof 31:13

these 8:4 9:7 10:23 11:25 13:13 22:9 32:17 33:16 34:25 35:2 39:19,24 41:15 44:11 51:8 57:18 82:11 84:15 89:3,10,11 91:20 92:1,6 94:5 97:3 105:10 109:3 111:7 112:25 123:11,21 127:17, 18,23 130:15 144:11 148:23 153:24 157:21 158:18 160:8 162:2 164:8 173:6 175:20 176:22 177:2 182:14 208:17 225:23,24 226:9 232:17 234:10 236:25 239:7 241:8 244:10 246:25 252:22 279:2 287:23 290:2 305:23

they 16:22 21:11 23:10,21,22 24:3,6 29:4 33:4,10 34:5 36:9 37:18,23 41:8 42:18 45:12 47:19 52:20 53:2 55:15 61:11,21 71:6 76:12 78:2,3,7,24 82:14,23 83:6, 17 84:5,11,17 85:22 86:12 88:8, 11,23 89:9 94:23 96:18 97:5 103:22,24 105:17 108:2 114:23, 25 115:1,2 116:6 123:18,19 124:7 125:17 134:3 139:24 148:2,18 157:15 163:20 165:7,8,11,16 166:2,3,5,6,7,18 167:13,19,20,24 168:5,23 169:2,9 171:5 173:3,5,7, 8,9,10,12,15 176:18,22 179:1,2, 11,12 180:3,12,24 181:1,2,3,4,5,

11,12,14,16,17 182:16,18 186:23 187:21 196:5,13 198:19 200:22 201:15,16 204:2,4 209:1 212:1 217:15 224:19 227:4 229:15 230:9,14 231:6 233:3 234:11,14, 20 236:14,24 237:5 243:1,5,6,19 245:2,6,7,21,25 246:1,2,16 247:13,23 248:12,13 249:9 250:4, 7,8 257:5 262:11,14,18 263:6,9, 11 269:10,11 270:9 273:13 274:20 277:4 280:16 283:9 285:11 286:1,7,8,9,11 288:24 289:1,2,3,10 290:5,6 292:5 293:3, 10 299:11,20 302:10,21 304:17, 24 305:5

### they'll 84:7,8

they're 16:20 44:19 85:22 90:4 93:16 97:8 109:16 111:4 130:9 137:3 147:5 164:10 167:10 179:2 180:25 181:17 182:15 226:8 240:4 247:21 253:14 258:20 272:18 277:5 290:15,16,20

**they've** 36:4 166:20 167:12 178:4 290:4

thing 21:25 36:24 37:2 64:3,17 123:16 128:22 147:21 163:5 191:20 200:20 210:4 228:18 234:21 243:12 245:13 261:10 281:24 289:6 305:13 307:25

things 29:11 33:17 42:6 43:2 45:15,16 74:19,20 84:6,15 86:17 90:14 91:13 94:5 106:3 142:7 162:1 167:8 169:18 172:24 173:17 174:12,23 181:22 182:16 186:3 191:7 196:23 202:13 206:17 211:14 225:2 232:5 239:10 240:20 242:6 264:2 298:19,24 299:9,13

think 17:6 25:19 26:20 27:12,15 29:1,3,9,14 39:15 40:23 42:15 43:17,25 44:2,6 45:9 56:4,6 63:3, 17 64:25 65:7 66:8 80:3 82:1 91:23 94:17 95:7,23 96:5,23 97:19,23,25 98:3 113:2 114:8 117:16 124:16,24 127:19 139:22 142:3,7,9,11,17 148:20 153:21 162:5 170:14 175:24 176:25 177:14 181:9,17,19 182:15 185:6, 11 186:12 187:1,17,23 188:16 190:10 191:25 192:4 194:11 204:8 210:4 215:7,11 224:25 228:18,21,25 231:12 232:23 233:1,7,18 234:16,18,22 235:9,

11,15 236:11 239:25 241:23 242:21 243:5,16,22 245:7 246:4 247:15 248:18 249:22 252:5,14, 19,24 254:21 255:10 260:5 264:8, 14 266:23 267:24 268:13 271:20 273:11 274:21 275:11 277:25 278:3,4 280:20 281:1,5,6,21,25 282:2 291:15,20 295:6 297:12 300:4,7 301:9,12,14 304:1,10 307:9,13

**thinking** 45:5 113:19 204:8 242:8 250:2

thinks 237:15

third 282:12

**this** 6:3 11:15 14:6,11,14 15:1,12, 17 16:15,21 17:10,16 18:17 19:16 21:5,12,16,24 22:7,22 23:11,16 24:21,23,25 25:8,21,25 27:4,12, 16,17,19 28:5,16 30:17 31:22,25 32:2,20 33:5,22 34:19,20 35:12, 13,20,22 36:1,13,15 37:16,18,21, 22 38:1,3,9,11,16 39:13,16 40:1, 2,6,7,14,24 41:4,21,23 42:7,17,23 43:3,12,22 44:6,9 45:9,12,16,18 46:8 47:12,25 48:5 52:2,23 53:14 54:13,20 56:11,17 57:13,17 58:16 59:1,24 60:11,13,20 61:11,14,20 62:10,13 63:13 64:22 67:6,7,22 68:4,13 70:8,18,21 71:14 72:8,17 73:13,15,22 81:11,19,24 82:12 83:7,13,17,21,22 84:15 89:10 90:3,9 93:2,17 94:10,19,23 95:2, 12,22,23,25 98:15,22 99:2 100:6, 16 101:9,24 102:3,10,21 103:18 104:11,24 105:16 107:1 108:2 112:2,16,17 113:9 114:7 115:13, 14,15,16,23 116:9,16 117:9,23 119:16 120:9,16 121:17 123:9,11, 12,13,20 124:1,3,7,18,20,23 125:2,4,10,15,16,19 126:6 127:5 131:15 132:19 133:14,15 135:1,2, 5 136:11,12 137:10,14,20 138:5, 25 139:4 140:3,22 142:6,8 143:15,17 144:19,21 145:19,24 147:15,25 148:10,24 149:20 150:3.4.7 152:3 153:1 155:17 159:14,16 163:7 164:13 166:1,12, 16,18 168:7,12,18 169:3,9,15,21 170:3,10,25 171:11 174:5,18 175:22 176:6 177:13 178:19 179:16 180:14,22 181:4,21 183:15 186:8,22 187:15 189:4 190:9 191:16 193:10,21 194:24 195:5,18,21,24 196:24 198:1,23

Index: Thomas..to

199:2,5,17,18 202:12 205:11,22 208:24 210:18 211:4.6 212:2.15 213:12,14 216:16 217:2 218:7 219:12,16 220:2,20 221:1,10 224:7,16 225:12,13,14 226:4,15 228:6,15,21 229:12 230:12 231:3 234:23 235:6,8,9,13,16 236:11 240:8,25 241:3,9,20 242:17 243:12 244:24 245:22,24 246:2,8, 23 247:11,16 248:5,9,16,19,24 250:21 251:4,6,8,11 252:5,24 253:20 256:12,23 257:8 260:11, 24 265:9,21 266:2,14 268:15,22 269:6 270:5 271:8,17 273:1,11 274:9,16,18,20 275:5,8,14,15,17, 23 276:6,10,16 277:18,19 278:10, 11,13,24,25 279:1,8,9 280:4,5,7, 15,20 281:7,12,15,18,20,25 282:4,8,21,24 283:18 284:10,15 285:5,10,17 286:2,18 288:7,8,9, 10,12,13,15,19,22 289:4,6,11,18, 22,24 290:22 291:7,8,9,12,15,20 292:4,20 294:11,14,19 295:11 296:20 298:16 300:22 304:22 305:11,13 307:10,11,12

**Thomas** 18:7 120:18 127:2

**Thompson** 8:2,5 9:2,4 193:15,17 194:25 196:13,17,19,22 197:1,15, 21 200:7,12,14,20 201:3,5,8,12, 18,20 202:7,14 203:3,11,16 205:9

those 6:20 8:17 9:15 10:17 13:18,24 14:19 18:20 21:7 23:21 26:9 29:22 30:13 32:2 33:14 36:5 40:18 42:2,6,15,17 43:2,8,21 48:22 49:1 51:3 54:7 56:3 57:2.8 58:3 60:21 61:10 62:1 63:1,13 65:12,17 69:19 74:20 77:14 78:6, 18 80:8 85:6 86:11,12,14,18 87:2 90:14 91:13,17 92:3 94:7,8 96:11, 14 99:21 108:13 116:23 119:24 126:19 128:3 130:18 131:8,22 136:25 143:2,7 145:10 149:10 150:15,21 152:16 154:4 155:3 156:14 158:13 164:11 173:25 174:4,8,23 176:16 178:13,14 179:22 183:3 185:17 188:19 189:18 192:25 195:11 200:21 205:2 207:14 210:11 216:6 217:10 222:19 223:11,25 224:17 228:19 233:15 237:3 238:2 241:14 242:16,18 247:2 249:2 256:1 258:2 263:21 270:24 272:4 273:19 280:23 282:12 284:12 286:13 287:14,16 294:3 295:23

296:11 297:25 299:19 307:4

though 29:5 115:25 121:2 168:21,22 204:11 228:18 230:18 233:3 237:25 243:25 260:3 265:17 266:12 268:7 306:19,21, 23

**thought** 29:12 56:15 57:13 64:16 77:12 86:21 102:10 157:5 165:1 167:13 201:15,16 277:19 280:10 282:14,15

thoughts 66:13 130:17 282:13

**three** 45:19 46:25 47:3,9,13,15 73:18 74:19,20 78:5 86:22 94:18 97:4 132:5 162:5,14 222:20 227:2 239:7,15

three-day 168:5

three-hole 71:12 194:12

three-two 181:8

threshold 80:15 96:12 97:6,7 195:13

threw 300:19

throat 262:13

through 9:5 10:25 28:1 38:9 41:21 42:8,23 75:8,25 78:18 80:25 121:2,14 133:15 139:24 168:13 169:22 171:12 172:23 219:11 231:21 233:13 245:24 253:10 275:6 276:7 277:19 286:25

throughout 75:2

throw 242:9 254:1

**thrown** 87:17,18 195:2,3 212:7 254:6

thus 233:22

**ticket** 253:2 260:9 261:6 262:21, 22 263:8 265:4 266:16 270:8

tied 178:8

till 134:25

time 11:23,25 12:2,3,14,22 13:9, 10 19:6 25:21 32:2 37:1,9 38:3 40:7 53:13,25 56:10,14,18 58:1 61:10 63:20 71:11 73:13,23 75:2 77:4 81:17,21 82:11 84:19,21 85:23 90:3 97:24 98:5,7,15,20 103:11 104:21,24 111:13,14 112:22 115:13 116:4,13 121:13

129:9 132:25 138:1 139:9 140:12, 14 159:22 163:22 172:12 193:13 195:4,6,19 196:7 197:12 200:1 201:13,21 203:6 208:15 219:5 224:16 225:14 236:20 242:4 244:6 245:2,12,15,16,24 246:15 247:17 248:3,6 255:12 261:20 262:23 263:14 265:20 266:21 274:9,10 275:7,20 276:6,19 283:21 290:19 292:22 297:2 298:11 299:2 300:6,11 302:24 304:11

timely 68:18 72:17

**times** 78:5 121:15 176:10 224:20 226:25 299:16,17

timing 167:3

tinkering 236:6

tip 181:13

Tippecanoe 185:9

title 32:23 107:3,14,25 109:10

titled 36:8 70:24

**to** 5:1,8,12,16,22 6:9,11,13 7:2,3, 13,20 8:3,8,10 9:9,22 10:1,3,13, 24 11:9,10,11,14,23 12:7,8,9,14, 20,21,23 13:4,10,12,13 14:3,7,11 15:2,3,7,18 16:6,17,18,22 17:17, 20.21 18:13.16.17 19:1.19 20:13. 20,21 21:7,18,24 22:1,5,9,11,18, 22,23 23:2,3,22,23 24:2,4,5,6,9, 10,15,21,22 25:10,12,25 26:1,3,5, 22 27:5,7,9,18,20,21 28:5,9,18, 20,22 29:5,7,10,16,18,19 30:16, 17,25 31:10,13,20,22 32:1,3,7,8, 18,24 33:3,6,7,8,10,13,24,25 34:2,5,19,20,23 35:9,10,14,15,17, 20,23 36:1,13 37:3,13,16,17,20, 22 38:7,25 39:5,25 40:1,9,12,20, 23 41:4,5,9,12 42:2,5,8,15,20 43:5,8,13,20,22 44:4,6,8,10,12,19 45:7,11,12,18,20,23 46:3,5,6,12, 14,18 47:4,5,9,11,14,15,19,23 48:5,8,9,10,11,17,19,20,21 49:5, 13,23 50:11,16,17,18,24 51:1,5, 18 52:2,10,18,21,25 53:6,17,18, 24 54:4,12,13,16,21 55:13,14,22 56:4,10,11,15,17,21,22 57:13,16, 17,21,25 58:2,7,8,10,11,13,14,15, 20 59:3,6,12,13,14,15,16,23 60:3, 8,9,12,14 61:3,6,9,16,17,18,19 62:1,2,10,13,22,23 63:3,6,7,10, 12,17,20,23 64:1,5,8,9,10,12,14,

15,17,18,20 65:1,3,6,12,20,22,24 66:5,15,18 67:1,3,5,7,11,17 68:1, 18,21 69:1,6,12,19 70:3,5,10,13, 22 71:5,8,11,12 72:10,11,14,20, 22 73:13,14,16,23 74:5,19,20,21, 23 75:3,4,6,9,15,16,17 76:18,19, 23 77:19 78:5,16,19 79:10,12,20, 23,25 80:2,4,9,13,14,17 81:19,21, 24 82:1,2,4,5,6,11 83:9,16,17,19, 20,21,25 84:1,3,4,11,14,16 85:1, 2,4,20,22 86:13,16,22,25 87:1,5, 10,11,17,21,24 88:7,15,18,23 89:2,3,17,22,24 90:1,2,4,6,7,11, 22 91:7,10,17,24,25 92:1,3,4,5,6, 10,12,16,21,22 93:16,19,22 94:2, 3,5,7,9,10,20,22,23,24 95:2,4,5, 11,15,16,21,23,25 96:15 97:9,16, 20 98:1,12,17,25 99:1,5,6,9,18 100:3,4,5,6,11,18,23 101:14 102:4,15,16,17,18,21 103:8,9,11, 13,20,21,22,23,24,25 104:1,3,8, 12,13,16,18,19,22 105:10,11,12, 15,18 106:3,11,18,19 107:3,17, 21,25 108:11 109:2,3,4,19,24 110:12,16,17,23,25 111:17,18,20 112:2,11,21,22,24 113:2,4,8,12, 13,19,22 114:2,11,13,15 115:2,3, 4,9,16,17,22 116:3,14,19,24,25 117:2,4,5,10,15,20,21,22,23 118:3,11,14,18,19 119:3,4,7,23 120:7,8,10,14,18 121:6,7,20,22 122:6,8,21 123:4,5,16,18,19 124:22 125:1,10,13,15,17,18,24 126:6,8,17 127:2,3,4,5,9,13,18, 20,21 128:1,20 129:3,4,9,15 130:9,14,15,25 131:2,15,19 132:21 133:5,13,14,19,25 134:1, 3,4,7,11,14,16,21 135:6,7,12,16, 18,21,25 136:1,5,6,8,11,21 137:4, 6,8,9,11,13,20,24 138:1,4,6,12, 13,17,20,21,23 139:1,9,13,19,22 140:9,10,14,15 141:3,5,6,9,13,22, 25 142:4,7,9,10,12,23,25 143:1, 10,12,15,16,19,24,25 144:5,10, 23,24 145:2,6 146:2,3,11,19 147:3,4,7,22 148:2,3,4,5,11,21 149:2,4,16,18,19,24 150:8,9,14 151:13,23 152:2,8,13,23,25 153:1,2,7,11,24,25 154:3,13,17, 18,20,21,22,25 155:14,25 156:2, 6,11,24 157:4,5,10,11,12,14 158:4,7,11 159:18 160:5,12,13, 14,15,17,20 161:1,2,4,16,17,18 162:3,21,25 163:4,10,14,20,23,24 164:6 165:8,9,11,12,15,19,20 166:1,3,7,12,17,19,21 167:1,2,10,

17 168:1,4,16,19,25 169:1,3,10, 17,20,25 170:10,11,15,21,22,24 171:10,11,20,24 172:8,12,15,19, 22 173:5,13,15,18 174:9,12,16, 20,24 175:2,4,13,15,16,21,23 176:2,3,7,9,11,12,14,18,19,25 177:1,3,6,11,15,20 178:4,5,7,19, 22,23 179:12,19,22,23 180:16,25 181:4,10,13,14,15 182:6,9,10,15, 21,24 183:3,12,14,20 184:10 185:6,10,14,15,16,18,19,22 186:5,6,13,14,16,18,23,24 187:2, 3,6,8,13 188:7,9,10,18,25 189:1, 3,4,12 190:4,10,12 191:7,8 192:3, 8,16,18,22 193:8,9,10,16 194:3, 24 195:4,6,10,11,19,25 196:1,8, 12,14,21 197:3,5,11,17,24 198:12,13,15,21,23,25 199:1,4,5, 7,8,13,16,17,20,21 200:2,3,5,16, 18 201:11,13,22 202:4,5,12,17, 18,20,21 203:2,7,8 204:4,13,14, 20,25 205:8,10,11,23 206:8,16, 18,21 207:4,10,13,17,18 208:7, 18,22 209:4,11 210:2,4,9,10,22, 24 211:6,9,12,17,18 212:1,3,4,12, 14,16 213:2,3,14,18,24 214:6,9, 17 215:1,2,3,6,8,20,23,25 216:5, 14,15,16,22 217:7,13,22,24 218:1,2,4,6,7,8,17,21,25 219:8, 11,14,15,17,18,22 220:3,10,22,24 221:4,10,24 222:12,17 223:7,20 224:11,12,13,14,24 225:21 226:12,21 227:1,6,17 228:4,6,14, 16,23 229:1,3,22,24 230:2,5,8,15 231:7,14 232:13,18,20,25 233:1, 6,11,13 234:9,16,19,20,23 235:3, 16 236:11,14,16,17,18,23,24 237:5,14 238:5 239:12,24,25 240:3,4,5,16,20,23 241:6,7,8,9, 11,25 242:2 243:1,2,5,6,7,24 244:2,6,19,21 245:1,2,5,6,12,14 246:1,3,16,17,18,19,20 247:2,6, 10,14,19,22 248:9,12,14,16,19, 21,24,25 249:18,24,25 250:1,5,8, 15 251:3,17,21 252:12,14,22,24 253:11,16,18,19,21,23 254:1,5, 10,12,14,15,16,17,18,20,22,24 255:16,18,21,23 256:7,9,10,11, 15,21 257:2,13,21,24 258:8,9,11, 13,17,19,24 259:5,8,14,22 260:3, 7,12,13,14,15 261:2,4,11,23 262:4,12,17,19,20 263:5,6,10,15 264:2,5,9,11,12,15,19,20,21 265:7,8,10,17,18,19,20,24 266:2, 9,14,21 267:2,3,5,6,15,22,23 268:1,3,4,9,13,16,19,20,25 269:1,

3,6,8,9,15,22,23,24 270:1,6,14, 18,20 271:4,6,7,8,9,13,17,21,23, 24,25 272:4,12,13,14,15,18 273:1,12,15,16 274:10,11,16,21, 24,25 275:2,13,14,21,22,25 276:5,7,9,10,11,14,17 277:3,5,11 278:6,7,10,11,15,16,20,25 279:1, 3,5,7,8,10,12,18,22 280:1,6,11, 14,15,20,23 281:6,7,9,10,19,22, 23 282:4,6,8,9,23 283:1,7,8,10, 11,18,19,22 284:12,21,23 285:3, 8,12,17,18 286:7,9,10,12,15,18, 21 287:7,8,11,13 288:5,15,16,17, 18,23,25 289:2,3,6,8,10,11,15,21, 23,25 290:24 291:2,6,16,21,22,25 292:5,6,8,10,12,14,15,21,25 293:1,5,7,9,10,11,14,16,17,20 294:1,13,23 295:1,2,5,9,11,15,17, 21 296:6,18 297:20 298:9,15 299:6,7,8,15,21 300:1,4,9 301:6, 17,23,24 302:3,4,5,12,16 304:1,6, 11,13,15,19 305:4,11,13,14,17,21 306:3,5,9,18,22,25 307:2,3,13,15, 16,21,23,25

today 5:19 7:2,18 11:6 19:3
30:17 51:19 52:3 53:5 54:13 55:8
57:20 58:10 59:23 60:8 61:1
62:24 63:19 86:2 106:7 110:3
129:5 132:24 133:20 146:4 159:6,
9 185:8,21,22 186:2,5 187:2,18
191:11 195:16 206:22 210:1
215:1 222:25 233:22 240:22
241:5 248:2 254:19 260:6 267:12
271:19 274:1,7 275:21 277:3
289:5 290:20 292:24 298:16
299:4 302:25 306:23

**today's** 5:2 13:13 144:20 298:22

**Todd** 67:1 81:12,13 94:16 96:3,7 163:12

together 36:25 37:2 73:7 98:23 108:13 127:17 164:9 168:20 242:17 243:1 248:12 250:1 294:23

**told** 61:22 62:3 83:11 85:18 86:3 104:2 113:19 166:18,20 178:4 195:1 261:5,7 265:22 266:11 268:10

Tommy 219:5

tomorrow 240:12

tone 89:21

too 38:14 48:4 91:24 97:10

117:12 125:19 147:4 163:21 175:24 182:5 232:25 253:21 281:25 293:10 304:20

took 52:7 62:8,9 84:22 98:22 139:4,6 140:22

Toone 267:3

top 51:21 78:15 230:24

totally 80:19 142:3

touch 42:6 171:10

**touched** 171:3 touches 42:8

towards 97:25 180:19 284:21

town 170:23

township 74:7 254:18

track 30:3

tracked 75:1.11

trade 41:6

transfer 32:12 62:14 transformative 222:6

transition 62:20 traveled 163:2

traversing 25:7

treat 95:21

treated 33:20

treatment 93:4

treats 83:14

**Trent** 183:20 187:11 189:2

**trial** 52:17 167:6,11,14,16,25 168:6 173:20 181:22 186:16

tried 237:14 trigger 62:18

triple 90:2

**trouble** 126:2

true 25:2 93:20 94:25 125:3,22 167:15 169:4 192:11 254:3

truly 240:3

**Trump** 15:6,7,19 17:12 18:10 30:24 31:21,23 32:1,7,20 36:12 52:13,19,20 57:23 58:9 59:13 60:4,22 61:5,13,22 62:6,16 63:20 64:2 65:21.23 178:1

**Trump's** 52:15

trust 243:7

trusted 162:15

trustee 213:21

truth 7:14,15 33:11,23

try 10:25 30:17 62:10 112:20 184:16 241:9 243:1 264:11

trying 120:14 121:20 124:22 178:23 201:22 235:15 254:1 285:12 302:16 304:1

tubes 175:15

Tuesday 5:3 103:20

tune 74:23

turn 121:18 191:7 206:17 253:17

turned 75:8 151:21 288:21

turnout 80:24

**TV** 61:25

twice 68:25 78:5 121:19

Twitter 33:5

two 12:21 13:2 16:21 18:14 19:11 23:21 41:25 42:3 53:3 56:1,3,6, 18,20,21 67:2 79:10 83:4 85:4,12 87:2 96:4,6,17 97:3 98:17 125:6 127:23 135:4 136:5 145:22 146:11 147:14 148:13,19 150:4 151:9,11,19 152:4 159:16,20,21 164:5 167:8 168:8 169:11,18 170:3 171:19 173:2 176:7,10,11 184:1 185:5 187:24 195:9 198:7 199:19 207:10.14.20 208:2 209:4 214:7 215:14 218:10,20,25 219:25 220:5,9 223:20,23 225:5 227:21 228:5,23 229:1,10,12 238:13,15,16,24,25 240:13,14 241:7 242:16 243:13.18 254:7 259:6 262:16,23 263:19 264:1,16 266:20 267:16 268:21 273:16 281:16 300:14 301:8,17,18 302:3 304:1,2 305:23 306:14,15 307:4, 6,17

two-minute 55:12 97:24 111:16 301:15.21.25 302:8

two-primary 114:25 146:24 147:24 190:15 191:5 206:5 251:15 252:4 254:7 293:8.12 two-thirds 31:14

two-two 45:18

two-vote 191:22

two-year 219:17 254:12,13

type 52:2 91:11,12 234:6 247:1

types 287:14 291:23

typically 47:25 140:8

typo 126:14

#### U

**U.S.** 17:12,15 21:8 32:11 60:15 63:4 86:24 151:7 174:25 177:1 178:2 179:3,9,24 181:20 207:5

**Uh-huh** 271:22

ultimate 43:22,23 166:6,8

ultimately 60:25 61:16 181:5

186:21 290:9

unable 299:21 304:15

unanimity 45:16

unanimous 47:8 274:17 294:20

unceremoniously 33:18

uncertain 306:3

unchecked 160:11

unconstitutional 90:10 174:17

under 7:11 17:14 20:18.24.25 21:2,18,19 22:24 28:12,16 30:19 31:1,5,6 34:22 35:1,15 38:8 39:3 40:25 41:20 42:1,22 46:9 50:3,4 51:15 53:8 54:14 55:4,10 70:6 73:15 89:19 90:23 100:15 101:16 107:17 109:10 122:5 123:3 126:11 133:24 140:17 141:15,21 157:18,21 159:16,17 166:19,21 167:9 195:10 199:5,13,24 200:8 207:10,13,16 215:13 217:2 225:24 245:10 247:15 256:23 265:2 266:15 267:12 287:17 306:15 307:6

underlying 264:6

undermine 61:7

understand 20:6 27:24 39:15 42:2 55:17 86:24 95:11 102:7 106:12 171:13 180:22 181:11

Index: understanding..verified

197:10 213:13 227:7,13 229:19 236:14 254:8 267:17 268:17 269:5 270:13,17 290:7 298:21 300:3 305:11,14

**understanding** 134:18 162:12 198:20 199:24 235:3 242:24 285:25 286:6

understands 192:3

understood 26:21 199:1

undo 52:22 177:11

unequivocally 229:7

unethical 264:20

unfair 90:9

unfairly 33:20

**unfortunate** 96:16 97:2 105:9 112:15 117:17 180:12

**unfortunately** 42:16 56:10 96:18 140:16 240:25 270:14 299:22

uniform 60:23

unique 167:3 169:14 233:21

**United** 15:9 19:21 24:16,18 31:1, 5,8,11,22 32:25 37:4 50:3,4,25 52:11,23 53:9,13,16 55:23 57:24 60:25 64:23 67:19 72:12 118:4 120:19 144:2 150:1 159:18 163:9 183:22 205:24 271:15

**University** 224:11,13

**unless** 11:13,22 12:13,21 15:15 25:21 56:11 110:23 167:11 199:9 215:4,14 244:19

unopposed 81:3 83:2

unprecedented 180:18

unqualified 51:12

unreasonable 280:20

untie 178:9

until 27:22 37:18 88:22 90:16 103:17 140:15 165:16 168:10 192:2 197:13 208:12 210:6 213:11 227:19 248:24 263:2,3 283:21 284:1,6

untoward 95:13

untrue 61:11

### unwilling 268:19

up 12:3 34:10 36:10 37:19 38:4, 13,25 43:5 45:2 56:15 61:24 62:5 63:17 72:4 73:13 77:4 78:6 79:12, 20 80:3 88:18 94:22 95:15 97:16 103:7 110:17 112:20 115:3 116:9 118:18 119:1 123:17,22 124:23 148:23 150:8 158:2 163:5 172:21 178:19 179:12 195:7,19 196:14 202:8 211:11 213:12 224:7 225:1, 2,8,11 227:19 232:16,17,25 235:17 254:23 266:2,7 267:22 272:15 278:20 279:4,22 281:7 287:1,18 293:14 294:6 297:6,9,20

upcoming 218:5

**update** 137:21 140:7,11,14,19 168:23 231:7

**updated** 132:24 133:7 135:9 140:24 231:20

updating 287:23

**upheld** 46:21 47:2 100:2 117:19 120:6 122:12,17 123:12 127:1 178:18 180:15 183:11 192:7,9 193:7 205:7 216:13 271:5

**uphold** 43:14 47:14 60:15 66:18 67:3 102:4 112:12 116:19 117:1, 2,10,15 119:18,23 122:22 126:8, 17 149:4,16 152:8,13 160:14 165:7 182:21,24 188:9,10,18,25 192:18,22 204:20,25 215:23,25 216:5 255:18,23 256:8 270:20

upholding 175:17

**upon** 17:2 22:8,19 27:21 48:21 61:14 75:16 77:25 109:6 133:2 171:4 208:13 247:12

**UPS** 196:4,8 197:10 198:7

**upstairs** 139:22

Urick 127:7 129:19,24,25 131:1

**us** 5:14 19:25 39:16,17 46:11 49:6 54:13 55:8 65:2,8 73:20 75:16 77:23 85:13 92:1,21 97:16 105:16 108:5 110:3 115:21 132:11 138:11 142:18 165:12,17 166:17,18,21 174:17,18 175:13 178:4 180:19 196:8 202:2,5,6 206:22 224:8 229:24 230:17 237:18 241:21 243:10 246:16,18 247:14 249:21 250:5 251:11 268:1,24 276:3 289:23 290:3

292:8,20 293:9 297:18 299:8,21 302:21 307:20,25

**USA** 33:11

**use** 11:5 16:23 58:13 92:6 108:14 164:3 182:2 231:6 257:6 269:21 274:11,16 284:21 285:11 286:11 287:2,15 289:16 292:5 296:18

**used** 109:14 122:8 137:10 187:16 195:10 196:9 234:20 236:20,22 243:2 254:16 276:7 278:7 287:7

uses 109:15,18

**using** 10:9 28:2 125:23 234:13 236:13 285:19 289:14

usually 16:21 66:24 288:13

utilities 139:23 utility 139:18 utilized 225:16

#### ٧

Valerie 5:12 10:11 12:8 17:9 38:2 68:2,20 76:19 98:12 114:17 116:8 119:12 122:25 124:8 151:4 161:18 183:23 190:7 207:7 232:20,24

Valerie's 114:2

valid 78:7 137:20

validated 220:23

validating 33:4

**value** 114:24

**VAN** 236:20 237:18 242:24 243:12

**Vanderburgh** 261:21 262:5,10, 24

variety 221:6

**various** 51:25 58:15 60:24 87:19 107:13

vast 50:10

vein 275:6

vendor 226:12,13

verbatim 294:11 verified 78:20

Index: verify..want

verify 88:7,15

version 81:11 282:16,17,18,22

versus 235:20

vertical 77:22,24

very 28:17 37:18 59:24 60:2,16 64:4,19 70:2 71:18 73:21 76:20 82:10,16 93:5,13 94:18 95:3 96:20 97:2 100:8 109:18,19 117:9 140:12 146:10 153:17 165:1 166:3 169:19 171:3 180:12 181:18 182:15 186:16 189:6 206:20 211:9 222:20 240:20 245:20 253:10,12 270:4 271:17 277:11,12 284:19

### via 246:18

**vice** 5:6 6:15,22 8:12,19 9:11,16 10:19 13:15,20 14:16,21 15:16,22 16:4,7,13 19:20 20:14 21:9 22:24 23:11 24:11 25:15 26:11 29:6,10, 17,24 31:4 32:13 39:12 40:10 44:16,18 45:1,4,22 47:4 48:12,19, 24 52:7 54:8 56:24 57:4 63:23,25 65:15 69:5,11,21 77:11,16 85:5,8 87:7,10,15,20,25 88:3 96:2 97:14 99:9,14,22 106:13,25 110:9,22 111:2,8,10 113:8 116:25 117:9 119:6,17 120:1 122:20 126:3,21 127:19,22 128:5 130:11,19 131:4, 10,18,24 135:5 139:14 142:4 143:3 144:12 145:2,12 147:18 148:17 149:1,12 150:18,23 152:11,18 153:25 154:6,18,23 155:5 156:6,15 158:10,14 174:10 175:9 180:8 183:5 188:13,21 189:17,20 192:15 193:2 204:20 205:3 210:7,14,22,24 212:18 213:7,16 216:2,8 219:4 221:14 224:2 228:17 229:13,17 235:11, 14 238:4,8,11,17,22 239:9,12 242:16 243:22 244:3 246:19 249:1,4 256:3 257:21 258:4 259:22 263:18,23 269:17 270:25 272:2,6 273:18,21 277:15,18 281:9 282:14,18 283:1,5,14 285:9,14 286:17 290:18 291:17, 20 292:20 293:3 294:25 295:14, 24 296:10,13,23 297:9,12,14,24 298:2

viciously 33:19

Victoria 272:22 273:5 275:20

victory 33:18 253:20

violate 197:5

violated 39:10 65:9 111:25

violates 38:10 41:22

violating 39:2

violation 28:20

violations 8:1

violence 62:7,18

virtually 219:19

virtue 53:8

volunteers 88:10,11,18 89:18

92:4,6

vote 27:5 31:14,16,20 43:18 45:11 47:8 48:6 58:8,21 62:24 63:6,7 65:10 66:15 69:19 74:5 81:13 116:24 117:6,10,12,15 124:7 126:17 130:15 135:21 143:1 146:24 148:18 157:19,24 159:20 163:10,13 164:6 170:18 176:10 183:3 184:4 185:3,8,10 195:9 200:15 206:7 220:10,12,18 223:10 224:7 225:5 228:23 229:1, 11,18 230:6,18,19 231:9 233:7 235:20 236:14 237:5,8 238:5 241:25 243:2,3,18 244:7,11,19 245:25 246:7 247:7 248:9 251:15 254:25 258:21 260:6,13,24 261:3, 6,14,23 262:11,15,18,19,20 263:4,6,8,10,11,15 264:24,25 265:1,5 266:14,17,19 267:3,5,9 268:4,20 269:7,8,11 270:6,7 274:17 289:1 294:20 305:5,23 307:6

voted 31:17 37:24 140:11 148:1, 2 159:21,22,24 169:11 170:16 185:5 186:1 199:23 200:7,13 202:22 207:21 208:1 215:4 218:10,11,20 220:6,25 222:12,18 223:7 226:24 227:1,20 228:4,19, 24,25 229:4,8 230:9,17 231:10 233:14 234:11 237:1,7,12,16,22, 25 239:1,18,20 241:17 242:7 252:4 255:9,10 259:6,7 260:8 261:24 262:25 266:15,16,24 267:9,14 296:18 299:16 301:1,2 304:2 305:18 306:15 307:16,17, 18

**voter** 37:5 57:17 74:3 80:24 85:18 102:10 115:3 122:8 134:7 135:6,9,15 140:7,10,14,19,24 141:12 180:11 184:23 186:15 187:1 203:5,21,23,25 208:10,12 220:15 227:13 228:1,21 229:24 230:1 231:1,6,8 232:18 234:20 240:9 241:21,22 243:12 244:18 248:1 249:24 251:18,19 260:22 262:1,7 266:25 267:3,5 304:14 305:1

**voters** 37:5 51:3,14 58:7,8,12 74:23 82:21,22,25 83:2 179:17, 18,22 218:10,15 232:18 299:1

votes 11:23 12:14,21 24:16 47:15 51:11 94:18 145:23 151:11,20 176:8 184:1 229:10,12,20 238:25 242:18,19 246:25 264:16 267:16 300:20

voting 160:4 162:16 163:8 195:7, 20 199:19 200:6,23 201:1 202:1 207:25 214:7 218:6,8,15,16 220:21 224:6,20 226:16 227:6 239:15 252:23 253:25 261:10 263:3 269:2 284:4,6 288:18 293:25 294:8,11 300:22 305:9 306:4

VR 233:19

vulnerability 234:5

### W

W-I-L-L 206:12

W-I-L-L-I-S 146:9 151:18

W-I-T-T-M-A-N 74:1

wages 275:3 289:15

**wait** 37:18 45:2 77:3 89:12 90:16 106:17 282:16 289:2

waited 103:15

waiting 103:11 104:21 137:24 172:11

waive 8:9

walked 266:10

walks 286:24

want 16:17,18,22 20:21 27:20 32:3,8 38:25 39:25 40:12 45:12 58:7 59:14 63:12 66:4 69:1 70:6 76:18 79:20,23 80:14 82:22,25 83:9 84:1 85:20 87:10 92:16,22 95:5,11,25 105:12 107:21 112:22 115:16 119:3,4 127:17 137:4

Index: wanted..we

139:1 141:3 148:3 149:2 158:4 161:2 162:3 165:20 167:17 172:21 175:1,21 186:16,18 187:1, 7,13 188:7 192:16 194:24 197:5 200:5 204:14 211:18 215:20 217:24 218:1 219:11 223:20 234:23 242:1 244:6 248:19 253:21 255:16 263:15 270:18 271:24 272:14,15 275:13,22 281:6,9,23 282:9 283:17 289:3,10 293:5 298:15 300:9

wanted 15:18 16:6 59:3 64:1 67:11 78:5 80:2,4 87:5 111:20 114:15 144:23 150:8 244:19 247:22 253:19 300:17 301:9,11 305:10

wanting 89:23 90:11 174:24

wants 162:21 163:4 202:4 294:23

ward 254:17

**Warrick** 258:14 261:5,22,25 262:1,6 263:7 264:10 270:11

Warycha 5:12 10:12 12:8 17:8, 10,22 19:7 22:14 28:23,25 29:9 34:3 38:3,24 39:7 40:9,12 43:17, 20 45:9,18 46:23 47:1,9,21 49:8, 13 58:20 66:1,3,9,21 67:10 68:1, 3,21 70:5 73:18 79:4,7 104:10 108:10,24 109:25 110:25 111:6,9, 14 112:3 114:6,21 115:8 116:5,13 118:24 119:13 123:1 124:9 126:10,15 136:23 141:8 144:16 145:1,19 146:18,22 147:6 148:7 150:3,6 151:5 153:5,10,19 157:8, 11,17 158:4 161:6,11 164:8 182:1,5 183:24 184:8,12 190:8,20 191:23 198:9,12,15 202:8,11 204:7 205:14,20 206:1 210:12 227:23 228:8,12,14 229:21 230:22 232:8,22 233:16 234:12 244:17 245:10 246:22 247:4,8,15 248:18,22 249:14,20 250:6,18 251:3,10,12 258:16 271:16,22 272:16 277:1,11 279:16 284:3,11 285:15 286:4 294:2,5 295:9 297:8,13 301:14,17

was 6:4 11:20 19:13 23:18 25:3 26:21 31:23 32:1,4,7 35:16 36:8 38:24 39:14 40:2,5,6 42:23 45:18 47:1,2,18 52:22 53:12,17,21 56:5, 11 57:14 58:17,24 60:3 61:8,10, 13,14,16 62:6,8,12,13,21 64:6 66:16 67:4,5 71:8,10,13,22 72:13,

17 76:5 78:11 79:11 81:12.13.15. 16,18,21 82:19 84:22 85:17,18, 19,20,21 86:8,13 87:14,16,20 88:17,20 89:10,24 91:7 92:3,10 94:15,16,17,18 95:12 96:2,4,5,8, 10,21 98:12 100:17,23 102:10 103:10,17,19 104:9,21,24 105:6, 16 107:11,19 108:7 110:4 111:23 113:10,12,14,16,19 116:20 118:11,14 119:16 121:2,3,6,7 123:11,13 124:19,24 125:20 126:10 128:18,20,25 129:2,4,5,9, 10,21 133:1 135:8,9,10 137:6 138:21 139:7 140:5,10,12,23 141:15 142:22,23 146:1 151:12 155:22,25 157:11,25 161:3 162:10 165:1,8,11,24 166:4,8,17 167:7,24,25 168:3,4,14,17,23 169:1,3,25 170:5,6,10,15,16 171:3,8,21 172:1,2,3,4,5,16 175:11 177:7,25 178:2,5 180:9,16 181:6 182:18 184:6 185:1,22,23 186:8,17 187:13 191:21 192:1,2,4 193:25 194:3 195:2,3,24,25 196:2,7,24 197:7,11 200:25 201:8,22 203:6,19,25 208:11 209:23,24 210:5,6,13,16 211:11, 13,14 213:22,24 214:24,25 217:3, 7 223:16 224:9,10,19 225:9 226:4 228:1,22 230:11,12,13,25 231:14 232:2,11,25 233:1,8,16,17 235:1, 14,15 236:2,20 237:10 238:17 242:19 243:25 244:1,5,10 245:13 251:16 252:25 253:1,8,21,22 254:3,6,17 255:11 257:12 260:2,7 261:5,6,7,13,19 262:19,22,23 263:4,5,6,10,11 264:24 265:2,3,5, 21,22,24 266:11,25 267:1,5,19 268:4,10 270:7,10 275:1,6 276:25 277:19 279:24 280:8,13 281:4 282:3 287:23 288:20 289:4,23 293:25 294:9 297:4,11 298:25 299:9,24 300:1,5,10,15,16,18 301:22,23 302:24 303:1,2,11,14 304:10,21 305:4,5

Washington 61:17

**wasn't** 71:11 88:19 104:2 168:6 177:10 239:22 251:4 254:9

watch 166:12 286:9

watched 61:15,25 211:4

watching 62:7,8 172:11

water 38:1

way 27:24 39:21 47:1 58:5 64:1 66:6 84:14 90:22 92:14 93:4 104:24 117:3 123:5 151:14 169:25 181:4,14 187:15 217:13 220:20 222:11 223:14 241:16 242:5 245:19 250:9 269:7,12,22 270:1 274:17,18 275:15 281:22 283:25 286:14,18 292:2

**Wayne** 74:7 209:9 252:13,17 253:8,16

ways 125:7

**we** 5:16 6:3,7,11 7:18,19,21 9:1, 23 10:8,9,24 14:1 15:5,17 16:15, 17,18,20 17:6,24 18:1,12,19,20, 24 20:11 21:22 22:11,12,13,16,17 23:13,25 24:3,21 25:2,7,11 26:1, 8,15,19 27:5,13 28:4 29:3,7,8,10 30:3,15 34:8,15,17,22 35:7,8,15, 20,22,23 36:13,24,25 37:1,2,3,10, 12,13 39:19,23 40:21 41:14 42:6, 9,10,11,20,21 44:2,3,8,24 45:5 46:2,3,17 47:4 48:4,8,13,16,21,22 49:12,19,21 52:1 55:7 56:14,17, 21 58:19 59:12,16 61:1,2,8,19,24 62:4,6 63:22 64:24 65:11,19 66:3, 5,6,18 67:11,24 68:17 69:1,7,12 73:13 75:16 76:21 81:2,4,18 82:11,17 83:4,13,22,24 84:2,3,20 89:18,19 90:17 92:16 93:3,5,17, 18,21 94:2,3 95:1,18 96:23 97:1, 4,14,25 98:2,5 99:5,7,17,19 100:9 108:6,9,12,14,16 109:10 110:2,6, 13,15,22 111:9,13,14,15 112:4,8, 11,12,15,18,19,20,21 113:3 115:12.17.19.20.22 116:9.18 119:18,23 120:15 121:20 122:18, 21 123:5,15 124:17,19 125:22 126:7,17 127:7,17,20,22,25 129:20 130:5,7,11,15 131:5,19 132:24 133:3,8 134:12,19 135:15 136:24 140:10,15 141:6 142:13, 25 143:22 144:4,7,17 145:6 146:22 147:4,23 148:2,4,24 153:14,22 154:12,16,25 155:12 156:1,11,12,22,24 157:5,9,11 158:3,11 159:5,15 160:4,7,14 163:14 164:6,19,21,25 165:15 166:11,15,19,20,21,22 168:8,20 171:8,9 172:10,17,23,24 173:12, 19 177:9,11,16,24 178:9,13,16, 17,24 179:1,8,13,15,19 180:15, 21,23 181:6,9,19,20 182:2,24 186:7 187:18,19,20 188:14,16,17, 18 189:9,10,12 190:8 192:22

Index: we'd..what

194:11 195:11 196:1.9 197:10 199:21 201:25 202:23 204:25 205:13,14 206:2,5 209:13 214:20 215:25 216:3,5 219:11,22 220:19 221:1 223:16 224:25 226:3,17 227:14,20 229:13 231:10 232:4, 19 233:4 234:8 239:25 240:8,25 241:5,6,7,13 242:23 243:4,8,21, 22 245:1,8,9,10,11,14,24 246:3,7, 9,11,12,13,15,19 247:6,10,12,14, 20,25 248:9,16 250:9,13,19 251:6,12 252:11,12 254:19 255:10,23 257:1,4 264:16 265:21 268:6,12,13,15 269:3 272:14,15 274:1,7,8,10,11,14,17,18,19,21 275:1,5,9,11,12,16,24 276:5,9,13, 14,19 278:16 279:5,6,8,13,21 280:6,21,24 281:1,5,7,20,22 282:7 283:10,14,17,21,22,23 284:5,7,11,12,18 285:18,25 288:6,8,9,14 289:14,16,20,21,22 290:18 291:1,3,23 292:15 293:9, 15,23,25 294:25 295:2,4,9,20,21, 22 296:5,6,19 297:4 298:16,19, 21,24 299:5,10,12,13,15,17,19,20 300:2,7,8,15,17,18 301:1,3,4 302:11 303:3 304:2,7,10,12,13 305:21,22 307:1,7,13,15,23

we'd 34:18,20 35:23 260:15

**we'll** 5:22 8:25 9:22 10:22 27:20, 25 35:14 48:6 70:7 85:12 112:19 116:23 126:16 132:7 134:14 143:17 171:4 184:9 189:23 219:7

we're 20:4,9 23:8 27:21 29:14
35:19 39:20,22 40:14 41:13 42:21
45:1 58:10 61:18 70:5,10 73:18
75:17 80:17 81:20 82:21 93:6,23,
25 95:9 106:14 111:10 113:5
115:10 125:23,24 130:14 132:17
142:19 143:19 147:19 166:1
178:16 179:12,22,23 181:3
182:14 186:23 187:21 199:20
209:25 215:11,12 223:19 226:14
237:24 239:24 241:6 245:12,17
247:17 268:25 269:2 275:7 276:1
279:11 289:25 291:25 292:12,24
293:16 298:6,18 299:4 303:3
304:1 306:22

**we've** 35:6 39:22 45:6 50:8 61:11 65:7 95:8 97:25 101:5 113:11 115:12 119:10 131:16 142:5,10 148:22 157:23 175:19 178:12 222:5 226:21 232:6 233:22 234:10,15 240:11,15 243:9,12,16,

17 245:23 246:2 258:23 269:4 280:4 282:21 290:19 293:20 301:18 305:13 307:2

wealthy 82:5 89:17 90:1,5,8,21

website 105:25 122:1

week 71:21 89:22 165:21 197:13

**weekends** 280:18

weeks 81:1

weigh 41:12

weight 50:10

Weingarten 271:12,18

welcome 132:17 135:25 149:23

well 12:13 23:7 36:25 37:1 38:4 39:16,20 40:2 48:3 58:10 61:13 64:10 68:14,16 72:25 73:8 86:4, 19,21 88:9 89:9 90:16 91:6,16,18 98:8 102:20 106:6 108:19 110:22 112:18 113:8,19 114:2,16,21 117:16 118:13 119:6,7 120:25 121:6 123:7 125:16 126:3,5,16 128:19 140:21 142:4 144:11 146:1 147:8,20 150:5,8,15 151:13 155:19 156:1 157:11,22,24,25 163:17 165:2 172:9,24 174:10 175:9,14 176:6,24 177:7,21 180:10 181:23 182:2 184:4 186:4, 20 187:1 190:11 191:17 193:24 194:4 196:22 197:9,22 201:16 203:3,4 204:15 205:17 206:7 209:15 212:18 213:5,9 215:6 226:2 229:1 230:22 232:9,21 233:21 236:7 237:24 238:15 239:25 242:9,11 244:18 251:21 258:24 270:6 273:9 277:3,5,8,23 279:8 281:24 283:6 285:9 286:23 288:14,24 291:8,14 292:8 293:4, 12,14,19 294:22,25 296:20 300:4 305:7 306:20

well-known 253:13,14

well-respected 253:7

went 31:22 34:3 75:25 98:22 103:13,20,23 104:1,18 113:20 134:16 135:6,18 140:23 168:19 169:20 187:14 224:11 233:1,7 237:5 245:24 261:23 262:20 263:5 265:14,24 266:9 270:6,9 297:3 298:9 302:6

**were** 9:25 27:12 30:3 33:10 34:16 46:11,21 47:14 52:12,16 56:3

58:24 61:11 67:11 75:8 76:1,6,12 77:12 78:1,21,24 80:3,16 81:9 82:14 83:5 86:15,18 87:3,14,17, 19 88:11 89:11,15,19 94:23 96:9, 14 97:12,23 98:13 105:1,3 112:18 113:24 157:5 159:24 164:5 166:3, 6 170:3 172:10,24 177:5 181:14 192:7,9 196:20 201:6,15 220:6 229:5 237:23 238:2,4 241:19,23 242:18 244:22 246:24 254:8 257:5 261:17 270:5 285:16 291:3 293:7,9 298:20 299:19,20 300:2 304:15,24

**weren't** 78:18 82:15 241:2 284:12 290:6 305:5 307:11

whack 112:19

what 18:12 24:14 25:3 27:25 28:2 29:12 32:8 33:7 36:15 37:7,13,23 38:21 39:10,15 40:23 42:18,23 43:7,9,20 44:19,22 46:21 51:12, 16 57:21 60:3,25 62:8,12,23 64:5, 20 65:3 66:11,16,17 68:8 79:6 80:3,16 82:21 83:25 84:2 85:14, 16,24 86:4 88:12 89:8 90:22 93:16 94:3,15,18 95:19,23,24 98:4 103:21 104:3,17 105:11 106:7 108:1 111:4 113:14,18 114:23 123:17 125:15,24 126:10 135:11 138:7,9 148:18,19 161:3 162:2 165:7 166:1,4 167:19 169:12 171:17 173:21 175:11 178:25 179:4,10,15 180:8 181:9, 13 186:14 196:7,8,10 197:13 199:25 201:6,22 202:23 204:8 211:17 212:11.19 213:4.6.13 215:8,13 221:21 223:10 224:9 225:11 226:1,3,6 227:13,19 228:3,6,7,18,20 231:4,16 232:15 233:22,25 234:1,2 235:1,2,9,24 236:2,18 237:2,10,24 238:18,23 239:5 240:21 242:2,8,13,22 243:4,8,9,21 245:2,3,6,11 246:2, 3,4 247:23 248:2,6,12,13 251:6 260:2,7 261:2,5,7,15 262:3 265:11,22,24 267:13,25 268:2,8 269:2,3 276:25 277:4,5 280:10 281:22 282:1.10 283:9.10.14.23 284:15 285:12 288:17 289:3 290:24 291:9,15 292:9,12,13,21, 22 293:16,25 294:9 295:6 297:4, 10 298:8,21 299:7,24 300:3,7 302:22 303:6,10 304:10,13,14 305:4,13 307:2,10,11,15

Index: what's..with

**what's** 59:23 63:19 79:2 86:2 88:1 105:24 126:1 146:16 197:23 199:18 233:21 268:24 291:7 292:8

**whatever** 47:15 69:8 113:20 174:15 188:2 201:2 211:13 212:3 246:15 267:22 304:15

**whatnot** 124:15

Wheeler 15:24 16:1,6,8 17:24 18:3,7,19,22,24 19:10 20:1,6,10, 16 22:3,15 23:17 26:17,20,23 27:11,14,20 28:8,11 29:12 34:7,8 47:17,22

when 10:4 11:7 12:3 23:1 24:3 27:13 28:25 33:17 35:2 40:5 44:13 47:18,24 49:8 60:13 62:12 63:2 71:6 72:11 78:10,22 79:3 81:17 83:12 84:15 86:11 91:11, 12,13 92:12 104:9 105:23 106:10, 14 107:16,21 124:7 126:11 135:17 136:11 138:23,24 139:7 140:11 141:11 163:4 165:10 167:15 172:9,20 173:2 174:24 177:25 178:6 184:16 187:14 198:18 200:3 202:22 203:4,11 209:24 210:19,20,25 224:7 225:23 226:14,24,25 227:20 228:4 229:5 230:10 236:14,22 237:8 252:22 254:4,16 261:3,23 262:1 264:23 265:14,20,21 270:6 280:8,18 283:10 284:18 287:23 291:21 298:24 300:3 302:6,23

# whenever 70:5

where 15:20 30:3 38:17 45:16 47:25 49:6,11 50:8 58:19 61:17 74:5 82:14 86:7,17 104:21 113:4 121:20,24 142:22 147:25 148:22 168:3,8,20 173:23 175:3 179:20 180:20 182:20 188:17 198:2 208:5 213:15 228:13,16,23 230:14 233:8 234:10 237:25 241:18 245:24 252:24 253:22 254:18,19 262:11,14 263:9 285:2 288:6,19 290:9,15 293:20 299:11, 13,18 300:13,18,25

whereas 82:7 wherein 185:9

**whether** 50:18,19 54:14 63:14 75:15 96:14 115:7 124:20 165:6 211:18 219:16 227:4,20 230:8,9 233:14 241:14 265:18 274:11

284:20 292:16

which 9:25 10:2 16:19 20:18 21:1,12,20,24 22:8,19,25 24:8,10 28:18 31:18 32:22 33:10 35:7 38:20 42:1,4 43:22 47:6 54:17 60:20 64:12 73:8,12 74:7 80:24 82:15 86:9 94:12,14,16,21 104:6 105:19 107:14,20 121:21 125:14 132:13 134:8 140:11 159:21 167:6 168:1 171:12,20,24 173:15 174:25 175:13,21 176:8 180:18 181:7,23 184:24 185:7,20 194:11 196:9 201:10 203:20 206:4 207:7. 11,20,23,25 208:13,16 210:18,22 212:20,21 215:14 220:6,7,14 222:17 223:7 226:21 227:18 230:8 232:19 238:25 239:1 242:1 244:10 246:16 262:5 267:8,18 268:9,23 269:6,23 273:2 280:17 282:5,16 283:14 287:5 289:12 292:13,22 293:3 301:23 302:22 303:15 304:20 306:10,16 307:3,

#### whichever 223:14

while 25:2 34:15 35:22 36:21 42:4 49:19 57:14 62:16 64:1 118:25 137:3 140:17 142:17 169:8 174:3 228:17 232:24 276:3

white 62:7 290:20

Whitley 67:15 68:10,23,25 159:4

**who** 13:4 18:10 31:6 33:14,20 34:23 36:5 38:18 39:1,8 40:15 41:18 51:14 60:17 62:17,19 63:1, 2,5 81:3 82:18,22,25 83:5,11,19 88:11 90:11,22,24,25 92:4 93:21, 24 94:4,6 95:2,3 97:7,8 98:12,24 102:3,5 103:10 104:20 113:11 115:21 119:16 132:18 141:19 159:6 170:4,6,22,23 172:18 176:3,9,14,19 180:16 187:19 191:2,15 197:25 200:13,15 203:23 206:9,14 214:23 218:3 219:7,9 221:3 226:8,9 230:5 232:14 233:1 241:3 243:1 252:18 253:25 254:23,25 288:9 291:22 305:1

who's 214:6

whoever 236:8

**whole** 7:14 64:13 90:9 106:2 112:20 163:18,19 179:5 187:15 218:13 233:13 254:11 305:11,12

whom 80:7

why 24:2 38:13 46:17 48:4 58:7 74:16 77:23 86:19,24 89:14 96:19 104:13 105:10 113:24 125:13 168:11 185:20 187:23 194:12 224:6,25 225:7 232:19 238:20 255:11 261:18 267:10 269:23 278:11 280:6 306:3

Wilkins 190:25 206:13

will 7:20,21,23 9:23 10:23,24
11:2,8,15,17 12:1,11,20 13:8 15:1
17:4 26:15 34:1 41:2 49:21 61:23
62:24,25 71:9 81:4 82:13 89:9
92:18 96:7 100:15 109:12 112:14,
23 115:22 117:12 118:8,20
119:15 121:17 124:13,14 128:14
157:21 158:25 159:4 160:7
164:20 166:10 174:8 181:3
186:25 190:19,25 191:7 193:22
196:4 205:20 206:12,17 217:16
218:12 231:18 240:22 256:23
258:16 262:8 268:20 271:16
274:2 275:8,15 278:20 288:5
290:14 296:4

**Williams** 157:1 159:2 272:22 273:6

willing 27:18,21 92:5 93:21 268:3

**Willis** 143:23,24 144:9,12,14 146:6,8,25 149:23 150:6 151:5, 16,17 153:6,11,21,22 154:14 155:11

Wilson 5:7 117:8

win 93:16 164:18

**window** 75:6 168:5 172:13,14 173:7,10

**Winston** 213:23

**wish** 64:16,24 99:1 107:17 202:12 271:17

with 5:19,22 6:4 7:18 9:25 11:20 15:11 16:2,12 18:7,12 20:22 22:1, 22,23,25 24:2,7,13,21,24 25:22 26:6,15,24 29:4 30:21 33:21 34:1, 13,19,20 35:10,16,19,24 36:6 38:14 39:20 40:23 41:19 42:16,22 44:19 45:10 46:7,8,13,24,25 47:2 49:7,22 54:19 58:6,9 60:10,11,25 61:23 63:15 64:8,9 67:1,9,10,21 70:17 71:4,16 75:15,23 78:16 80:18,21 81:16 82:3,23 83:6 84:2, 9 85:14 86:11 87:11 88:18 89:24

Index: withdraw..yeah

90:19 91:7,15 92:24 93:23 96:4,7, 16,19 97:6 100:17,20,25 102:2 104:4,5 105:16 106:19 107:11,19, 23 108:8,10,25 110:4,11 112:6 113:5,16 114:9 115:6,21 116:11 118:10,15 121:1,14 123:18,19 128:16,18,23 129:1,13 132:5,7,9, 14,18,19 133:21 137:16 138:19 139:24 140:13 142:24,25 146:5, 22 148:11 152:14 155:23 158:20 160:9 165:22 167:5,10 171:13 174:1,3 175:11 176:3,10,12,20 177:16 178:1 179:24 181:4,23 182:3 184:15 185:18,19,25 186:9, 12,14 188:1 190:25 191:7,11 192:5,14 193:23 194:1,14 196:11 197:7 198:23 199:5,10 202:2,3,5, 6 206:12,17 207:11 209:12,20 211:6,9 212:12,15,16,20 217:5 219:6,14,17 220:3,7 222:5,9,11, 21 225:19,21,22 227:24 228:1 232:15 234:17 236:6,19,23 240:25 241:16 243:20 245:21 247:16 249:17 250:9 251:19 253:2,15 259:12 260:22 261:13 262:18 263:2 265:25 266:10 274:19 276:11,16 280:5 281:15 283:4,15,21 285:2 290:9,10 291:22 292:1 293:4 302:21 303:11 305:12 306:10 307:1,14

withdraw 14:8,12 27:18,20 154:13 271:18

withdrawal 14:14 153:16

withdrawn 153:12

withholding 32:21

within 74:13 95:24 134:3,8 137:8,15 140:19,25 170:23 191:18 231:18,20 247:23 279:2,8

**without** 52:24 82:17 175:13 186:11 225:6 278:5

witness 72:23

Wittman 70:12 71:16,20 72:2,8, 17,22 73:13,19,21,25 74:1,2,4,6, 11,15,17 75:19,22 76:11,14,16 77:23,25 78:12 80:1,6 94:11

woman 83:11

women 95:16 240:23

**won't** 160:6 205:16 224:16 250:21

wonder 234:2

wondered 114:19

wonderful 210:3

wondering 44:21,23

Woodburn 254:5

**word** 58:13 95:1 178:11,16 179:2 202:22 254:22 257:6

worded 293:20 294:17

words 124:22

work 29:9 36:25 37:1 75:15 79:23,25 80:9 82:5 89:17,22 90:3 91:13 139:22 197:17 206:21 217:25 253:3 272:19 274:1 275:22

worked 74:18 234:3 277:7

working 88:17 222:9 280:8

works 86:22 95:20,23

world 115:10,14 298:22

worms 112:20

worried 42:20

worries 276:24

worry 169:10 306:17

worse 184:16

worst 280:21

worthwhile 280:5

worthy 275:12

would 7:3 12:8 16:7 24:20 25:9, 11 27:17 29:9 30:6 35:9,15 37:15, 24 39:2,12,19 40:20 41:12 43:10, 18,23 44:1,5,7 45:10,19 46:23 47:2,22 48:1 54:4 56:13,17,21 58:7 59:15 62:4 63:12,25 64:16 65:9,22 66:15 67:6,9 69:6,9 73:13 76:21 78:7 80:6 85:1,13 86:24 89:20,21 90:4,22 91:1 92:20,25 95:7 98:2,5,12,25 99:9 102:4,15 107:10 108:9,10,11,24 109:25 110:7 113:24 114:7,21 115:9,14, 17 116:13 117:15 119:2,7,11,18 122:16 124:4,10,11 127:19,22 129:7 130:11 131:2,15 132:11 140:2,5 141:9,18 142:4,12,24 144:16,20,22 146:4 147:6 148:7, 14 149:4 151:23 152:8 154:18 156:6 157:13 160:20,25 161:4

163:23 165:4.8 166:16 167:14 169:24 170:1.2 171:19 172:13.19 173:1,4,5 177:5,13 178:6 181:15, 16 182:6,10,18 184:19 185:25 187:5 188:4 189:8 190:11 192:18 195:7 197:8,16 201:16 202:7,13 203:3 204:7 209:4,6,24 213:5,14 215:2,23 218:6 219:8,12 222:23 223:21 226:22,25 227:5,16 228:8 230:6 231:13,16 234:21 235:24 236:3,4,5,22,23,25 239:16,17 240:7,15 241:15,16,19 242:1 243:19,22 244:21 245:8,11,20 246:6 247:6,18,20,24 248:15,18, 22 249:21 250:6 252:12 253:19 255:18 259:12,14 260:14,22 261:2,7,11 262:11 263:12,16 264:2,5,7 265:4 266:1,20 267:25 270:20 271:25 272:16 275:16 276:5 278:2,3,6,9,14 279:12 280:6 282:9,23 283:6,16 285:17 286:6 288:17 289:5,12,22 292:10, 14 293:22,24 294:4 295:15 296:6 299:24 301:6 302:2 304:19 305:24

**wouldn't** 28:21 39:9 47:19 172:8 230:25 236:1 239:2 275:13 278:12 284:5,7 285:10,22 292:11

wrap 266:7

wrench 300:19

**write** 261:7,8 264:12,24 265:8,13, 18,19 267:23 293:25

writing 41:7 112:25 213:24

written 11:19 78:11 105:24 117:4 124:6 165:2,3 166:20,21 175:14 178:5 199:10 263:12 265:4 270:10 274:24 282:24 286:18,25 289:16 292:2,13 295:5 304:6

**wrong** 95:9,17 105:13 108:9,22 113:14,17,21 115:15 282:3

wrote 169:23 302:7

WY045 74:7

# Υ

**Y-O-U-N-G** 158:25 206:12

yard 195:2,4 196:14

**yeah** 22:14 28:24 34:6 38:3 40:4 41:8 47:2 55:16 68:3,6 76:17

Index: year..you're

79:5,13 85:1 97:14 111:2,8 115:8 116:20 124:14 127:17 139:16 142:21 144:15 150:10 154:21 157:9,15 159:11 161:7 170:7 174:23 192:15 198:11 201:3 202:21 221:16 224:19 234:11 235:22,24 236:3,15 237:20 238:10 242:7 244:5 245:5 246:12 251:3 277:14 278:18,22 282:19 284:13 288:1 291:19 294:9 298:18 299:12 301:14 305:16 306:2

**year** 16:2 95:3 101:17 134:4,10, 25 135:21 137:8 138:4,13 213:12 214:3 237:4,10 300:13

years 16:21 42:13,14 53:20 59:25 72:11 96:6 98:17 122:12 137:24 178:20 202:23 204:3,4,11 214:25 223:10 225:24 227:2 228:20,23 232:4 234:12 236:13,19 237:22 243:13 254:7 262:2 268:21

#### **yeoman's** 253:3

yes 9:2,3 10:7 15:16 16:13 19:7 25:13 26:7 28:8 29:9,14,18 35:13 41:13 43:10 46:5 47:1,11,21 49:15 59:2,21 66:2 67:10 74:4,11, 15 75:22 76:11,14 77:5 85:16 88:17,24 89:16 90:12 91:22 101:4 102:25 105:2 106:12 107:1 109:1 110:12,13 115:10,14 117:7 119:13,15 120:22 123:7 125:6,22 128:12 134:18 135:22 136:22 138:7,15 139:11 141:8,14,17 144:14 146:18 147:11 148:7 150:6,13 151:5 154:14,15 157:17 159:10 161:24 164:12,24 183:24 189:14 190:8,20 193:20 197:15, 21 200:7,14,20 201:18,20 202:10 206:1 209:6 213:19 215:5,22 216:25 223:9 224:10,19 225:20 226:18 228:9 238:24 242:12,15 244:9 247:8 248:22 249:20 251:12 256:20 260:20 274:4 279:16,17 282:18 286:4 287:21 296:21,23,24 297:5 301:25 303:13 304:4.17

yesterday 195:1,22 196:18

**yet** 18:19 164:17,18 173:16 179:11 190:10 239:18

yield 34:2 46:17 Yoder 18:10

### York 51:7

**you** 5:18 6:6,11,13,16 7:7,8,11, 12,17 8:24 9:20 10:4 11:2 12:8 16:4,23 17:19,20 18:2,3,5,17,23 19:8,16,17,24 20:14,23,24 21:4,7, 13 22:4,5,8,9,14 23:10,14,17,24 24:2,14,19,22,23 25:23 26:1,18 27:6,11,12,18 28:21 30:2,6,10,16, 20 31:18,19 32:5 33:12 34:4,7,11 35:14 36:3,14 37:7,10,25 38:5,13, 14 39:2,10 40:12,15 41:1,6,12 42:2 43:5,13,14,23,25 44:7 45:5, 18,19 46:2,15,23 47:2,9,14,15,16, 22 48:1 49:13,16 53:5 54:1,11 55:12,25 56:11,18 57:10,12,20,25 58:2,5,7,21,23 59:10,22 60:10 61:23,24 64:11 65:25 66:13,17,21 67:9,11,14 68:12,19,22 70:2,6 71:15,18 72:3,4,5,15 73:17,19,21 74:2,5,9,16,20,21,22 75:4,5,14, 15,19 76:5,9,17,18,20,25 77:12, 21,23 78:10,12,22,23 79:3,5,21, 22,24 80:3,5,20 82:13 83:12 84:1, 4,7 85:1,12,13 86:13,20 87:11,21 88:1,6,14,20,21,23 89:2,3,6,7,9, 12,13,15 90:22 91:1,11,12,13,17, 20,24 92:1,4,7,12,16,23 93:12 94:11,15,21,22 95:17,18,24 96:20 97:20,21,23 98:13,25 99:1,3,4,12, 13 100:8,15 102:15 104:7,17,25 105:1,3,12,14,22,23,24 106:3,4,8, 9,18 107:10,16,17,21,22 108:1 109:2,7,12 110:9,11 111:1,4,16, 21 112:18,19,22,23,24 113:1,10 114:18 115:15,20 116:24 117:6, 24,25 118:8,20 119:3,11,15 120:11,12 121:9,20,21,22,25 122:6 123:16,23 124:9,10 125:9, 11,13,18 126:12 127:6 128:14,22 129:12,15,18 132:4,8,11,16,17,19 133:6,12,17,18 135:11,20 136:5, 8,11,16,20,24 137:4,5,21,25 138:1,4,9,11,12 139:5,9,14,18 140:1,6,11,19,20,22 141:11,13 143:13,14 144:16 145:1,24,25 146:5,23,24 147:2,17,22 148:20 149:22 150:8 151:23 153:3,10,19 154:12 155:10,11 156:20,21 157:13,21 158:4 160:8,19,20,25 161:2,4,6,8,14,15,17,25 162:1,3,7 163:22,23 164:1,23 165:1,3,13,22 166:12 167:1,6,7,21 168:25 169:6,10,11,12 170:3,8 171:12,13 172:20,21,22 173:4,21 174:1,14, 15,25 175:1,3,9,21,23,24 176:6,7, 8,9,10,12,13,15 177:6,15 178:7,8,

21 181:2,25 182:1,6,9,10,15,19 183:10,17,24 184:3,7,8,10,12,18, 20 185:21,22 186:5,18,19,21 187:4,5 188:2,3,4,6 189:6,7,12 190:16,20,21,24 191:10,14,24 193:12,13,22 194:7,16,23 195:14 196:4,20 197:5,10,19 198:18,24 199:1,16 200:3,5,13,15 201:1,2,6, 11,17 202:3,8,14 203:2,9,14 204:12 205:20 206:11,20,21,24 209:2,3,4,11,14,18,19 210:2,10, 11,22 211:3,16,17,18 213:10,22, 23 214:1,12 215:4,18,20 216:18, 19,25 217:17 218:12,17,24,25 219:5,13,14,15,18,20,23,24 220:11 221:8,10,12,14,18,20 222:15,16,17,22,23,25 223:1,5,7, 10,13 225:4,5,14,19,23 226:16,25 227:1,8,10,11 228:4,6 229:4,5,21 230:10,16,20 231:3,15,17,21 233:6,23 234:18 236:1,16,19 237:11,18,25 238:3,4,6 239:1,7, 12,14,23 240:7,8,19,20,22,23 241:3,11,16,19,20,21,23,24 242:1,6,7 243:4,9,14 244:5,7,19 246:9,23 247:1,16,21 248:4,19 249:17 250:2,12,25 251:6,17 252:7 255:4,8 256:13,23 258:16 259:2,12,14,16,17,20 260:21 261:8,16 262:12 263:4,8,9 264:19,20,25 265:1,7,8,16,18,23 266:5,16,24 267:9,13,23 268:9, 14,15,16 269:9,10,14 270:3,14,15 271:10,11,16,24 273:8,9,16,24,25 274:2,7,22 275:17,18,19,20 276:19,20,22 277:1 278:14,17,20 280:3 281:15,19,20 282:15 283:1, 10,21 284:17 287:1,14 288:14 291:14,15,24 292:10,24 293:11, 16,22 294:7,18 295:6 297:1,3,6 298:8,15 299:7,14,23 300:10 301:4,6,7,20,25 302:3,6,7,8,13, 15,19,23 303:8 304:2,5,6,11,14, 22,25 305:3,14,17,22,23 306:6, 14,15,16,23,24 307:1,5,13,16,17, 18,19,20,24

**you'd** 46:3 54:3 98:1 111:18 136:6 209:17 306:9

**you'll** 35:6 78:13 100:18 102:20 118:23 132:23 155:17 208:25 217:2 220:13,16 224:21

**you're** 20:8 24:14 34:10 37:10 38:25 39:15 40:17 43:7,9 49:8 58:20 78:16,17 90:24 91:3 95:19

Index: you've..Ziemba

105:10 106:10 113:21 125:1 132:5 134:15,24 135:5 161:14 167:19 174:24 176:11 181:23 197:13 203:11 204:8 212:7,11 213:9 214:25 215:9,14 224:17 228:17 229:1 234:15 237:6 238:9 242:5,8,10,22 243:14 245:11 254:22 268:8 279:3 281:2,16 290:8 305:21 306:18

you've 47:23 78:23 89:10 91:25 96:17 109:12 113:1 210:3 228:20 238:11,12 243:11 249:8 266:6 268:22 301:12 307:20.22

**young** 67:1 81:12,13 94:16 96:3, 7 103:15 158:25 190:19,21,24,25 191:10 192:2 206:9,11,12 240:21, 23 254:21,23,25

## younger 84:11

your 5:20 6:13 7:9 8:6,7 10:5 14:12 15:13 18:2,5 20:4 23:13,15 25:24 26:18,21 30:2,6 34:1 37:7, 20 39:25 43:13 45:25 48:17 49:17 55:14,17 56:6,7,10 58:1,17 63:10, 11 66:13 67:23 68:8,24 70:19,22 73:20,22,23 74:21,22 75:5,6 76:8 77:3 78:22 79:15,21 80:11 85:14, 21 88:8,20,22 89:8 92:18 96:19 100:15 101:1 102:21 103:3 105:11 106:10 108:21 118:8,16, 18,20 120:12,23 123:24 128:13 129:10 135:21 136:17 137:22 138:24 140:7,19 141:12 145:24 146:6,19,22 148:4 151:8,12 154:13 155:17 161:11 162:4,6 163:22 169:6 170:12 172:20 174:11,20 176:9,13 177:3,16,22 183:24 185:7 186:19 188:16 190:10 191:12 193:13,21 194:11 196:4 200:5,25 202:2 203:9 205:16 206:21,24 207:7,25 209:7, 17 217:1,13 220:14 221:12,14,16, 21 222:2,12,16,25 223:1 224:6,8, 16,21 225:14 227:9 231:19 239:4 250:22 252:15 256:23 258:16 259:1 263:14 266:3 268:9,25 269:11 271:16 274:3 275:16.20 276:19,23 277:11 279:3,8 284:14 286:15,18,19 287:15 289:22 297:2 301:13 302:13,23 305:14 306:13 307:4,22

yourself 10:4 221:8 222:23

### Ζ

**Zachary** 250:15 252:3,18 253:6 256:9

zebra 71:25 72:7

zero 73:2 146:15

**Ziemba** 68:13 70:2 71:18,19,24 72:6,16 73:19 74:2,5,9,13,16 75:19 76:8,12,15,20,25 77:6,19 79:1,12 98:2,8 100:8 156:21