## SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE	UNITED STATES
	_
TRUCK INSURANCE EXCHANGE,	)
Petitioner,	)
V.	) No. 22-1079
KAISER GYPSUM COMPANY, INC.,	)
ET AL.,	)
Respondents.	)

Pages: 1 through 84

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: March 19, 2024

## HERITAGE REPORTING CORPORATION

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3	TRUCK INSURANCE EXCHANGE,	)
4	Petitioner,	)
5	v.	) No. 22-1079
6	KAISER GYPSUM COMPANY, INC.,	)
7	ET AL.,	)
8	Respondents.	)
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10		
11	Washington, D.C.	
12	Tuesday, March 19, 2	2024
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14	The above-entitled matter	came on for
15	oral argument before the Supreme	e Court of the
16	United States at 11:37 a.m.	
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1	APPEARANCES:
2	ALLYSON N. HO, ESQUIRE, Dallas, Texas; on behalf of
3	the Petitioner.
4	ANTHONY A. YANG, Assistant to the Solicitor General,
5	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; for the
6	United States, as amicus curiae, supporting the
7	Petitioner.
8	C. KEVIN MARSHALL, ESQUIRE, Washington, D.C.; on
9	behalf of the Debtor Respondents.
10	DAVID C. FREDERICK, ESQUIRE, Washington, D.C.; on
11	behalf of the Claimant Respondents.
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7	For the United States, as amicus	
8	curiae, supporting the Petitioner	25
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:37 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument next in Case 22-1079, Truck Insurance
5	Exchange versus Kaiser Gypsum Company.
6	Ms. Ho.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF ALLYSON N. HO
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MS. HO: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,
10	and may it please the Court:
11	If anyone is a party in interest
12	entitled to be heard in this Chapter 11 case,
13	it's the insurer, Truck, who will pay virtually
14	every dollar the debtors owe the asbestos
15	claimants.
16	Yet, the Fourth Circuit's rule denies
17	that insurer a voice. That rule, which my
18	friends barely defend, violates the text,
19	context, and history of 1109(b).
20	It also defies the practical reality
21	that Chapter 11 cases are, as this Court has
22	recognized, collaborative, working best when all
23	stakeholders come together at the outset to hash
24	things out.
25	Congress recognized that reality and

- 1 spoke expansively in 1109(b) to extend the right
- 2 to be heard to any issue. Congress also gave
- 3 courts a duty to ensure compliance with the code
- 4 and invited broad participation to help
- 5 discharge that duty. 1109(b)'s breadth is a
- 6 feature, not a bug.
- 7 It's now common ground that a party in
- 8 interest is one who could be directly and
- 9 adversely affected by the case. That's Truck in
- 10 at least two ways.
- 11 First, it's the insurer paying the
- 12 vast bulk of claims against the debtors. In the
- government's terms, it's a contracting party.
- 14 From the start then, Truck's rights could have
- been directly and adversely affected by this
- 16 case. The proof of that pudding is in the plan
- 17 finding, which resolved key -- a key coverage
- 18 dispute against Truck.
- 19 Second, Truck's a creditor for
- 20 millions in insurance deductibles.
- 21 For both reasons, 1109(b)'s plain
- terms entitle Truck to be heard on any issue.
- 23 In silencing Truck, the Fourth Circuit
- violated those terms by limiting who a party in
- interest is and what issues they can raise.

1 I welcome the Court's questions. 2 JUSTICE THOMAS: Ms. Ho, at what point 3 do you determine the status of party in interest? 4 MS. HO: Thank you, Justice Thomas. 5 6 At the -- at the outset. Section 1109(b)'s text 7 refers to be heard under any issue in this case. So we think that has to be an ex ante inquiry, 8 9 in part because there are other provisions of the code apart from 1109(b) that affect parties 10 11 in interest that don't depend on a specific plan 12 or any plan. JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, the -- in this 13 14 case, the -- the determination at the end or --15 or in -- was that Truck was not negatively 16 affected. How could you determine that at the 17 -- at the beginning of the proceedings? MS. HO: Yes, Your Honor, because I 18 19 think the question should be "could," could --20 could the entity be affected by the Chapter 11 21 case. And as the insurer, there are any number 2.2 of ways that Truck could have been affected. It 23 could have been affected by a plan that -- that 24 resulted in one, as we were seeking, with fraud 25 prevention measures, or it could have resulted,

- 1 as had happened, in a plan that didn't include 2 those. 3 We -- we came into this Chapter 11 proceeding as a creditor. The proceeding could 4 have resulted in our claims being impaired or 5 6 unimpaired. And you don't know that until the 7 end, but that doesn't -- the -- the language of 1109(b) speaks to a creditor. So, if you're a 8 9 party in interest in the beginning with a right 10 to be heard under 1109(b), then you're a party 11 in interest all the way through --12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What if --MS. HO: -- Justice Thomas. 13 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERT: I -- I -- I 15 know there's -- we could have some back and 16 forth about the facts, but in a hypothetical, 17 let's assume that your client, whichever plan --
- 21 makes no difference to him which particular
- 22 creditors are going to get what. He's -- just
- given the factual situation, he's going to walk

you know, there's three different plans on the

table, and under every one, your client gets --

you know, his exposure is exactly the same.

- 24 away with exactly what he has or what he doesn't
- 25 have when it's all done.

18

19

1 In what sense does he have an interest 2 in how his assets are distributed or -- or what 3 the liabilities are? In other words, although he is -- you could identify where he is going 4 to, you know, be on the hook or not on the hook, 5 6 but at the end of the day, everybody agrees it's 7 not going to make any difference. Now does he get -- still get to 8 9 participate because his assets are going to be used in some form or another? 10 11 MS. HO: Yes, Your Honor. And this 12 goes -- Mr. Chief Justice, this goes to, I 13 think, the colloquy I was having with Justice 14 Thomas about the importance of the ex ante 15 determination of who a party in interest is, 16 right? It's somebody who could be directly and 17 adversely affected. And I think one may --18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, under my 19 hypothetical, he -- he's going -- I guess my 20 hypothetical, he's going to be adversely affected to exactly the same extent or not 21 2.2 affected at all. 23 MS. HO: I think, as long as -- as -as -- as -- as in the course of the case that --24 25 that entity is directly and adversely affected,

- 1 and I think one -- one way that we know that,
- 2 Mr. Chief Justice, is because, if you look at
- 3 1109(b), one of the entities that's expressly
- 4 listed is a creditor.
- 5 And we also know that different
- 6 provisions of the code, it matters whether you
- 7 are impaired or unimpaired, right? So, in other
- 8 words, you don't get a vote on a plan if your
- 9 interests are not impaired.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yeah, and we
- 11 also know --
- MS. HO: But that is different than
- 13 being heard, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yeah. We also
- know that in these proceedings, there are some
- 16 creditors that are just not going to get
- anything because of their particular status and
- 18 all that. Now I suppose you want to say these
- 19 -- technically, under the rule, he can go in,
- 20 and maybe that's a difference in this case. But
- 21 is -- is a party in interest, is the same test
- 22 for that Article III?
- MS. HO: That's our position. Our --
- 24 our position, which is the position adopted by
- 25 the Third Circuit, is that the test for that is

- 1 Article III, which -- which --
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, under
- 3 Article III, if you're not going to be injured
- 4 at all because the proceedings -- you know
- 5 you're not going to get any money or you know
- 6 you're not going to have any left or whatever it
- 7 is, I don't know that that would satisfy Article
- 8 III just because people are going to be fighting
- 9 about who gets your money. But the one thing
- 10 that's clear, it's not going to be you.
- 11 MS. HO: Well, I think, though, you
- don't know that. You don't know that at the
- outset of -- of -- of -- of the
- 14 proceeding, right? So a creditor does not know,
- a party in interest or an equity holder does not
- 16 know, and even the debtor doesn't know --
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. Well,
- 18 that, I think, is --
- MS. HO: -- until the very end.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- is fighting
- 21 my hypothetical. And, you know, maybe it's not
- 22 a good hypothetical, but assume that that is the
- fact, that -- that they're not going to be
- affected one way or another. They're just so
- far down the line of, you know, people who can

- 1 recover or so far down the line of people who
- 2 are responsible that they're really not going to
- 3 get anything else.
- 4 MS. HO: I do hate to fight your
- 5 hypothetical, Mr. Chief Justice, but I -- I -- I
- 6 do think such a person -- I think it's -- I
- 7 guess maybe I'm fighting it because it's hard to
- 8 know, it's maybe impossible to know at the
- 9 outset of any proceeding whose ox is going to be
- 10 gored and -- and how much. That is very much an
- 11 open question.
- 12 That -- that is why Congress, in
- 13 1109(b), spread -- spread a -- set a big table
- so that all parties in interest can come and
- 15 participate and be heard and work -- work out
- the negotiation among the parties who have a
- 17 stake, who could be directly --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: I guess I'm --
- MS. HO: -- affected by the --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: -- I'm not sure, Ms.
- 21 Ho, how your "at the outset" rule fits with your
- 22 Article III rule --
- MS. HO: Mm-hmm.
- 24 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- because, as -- as
- 25 you just suggested, at the outset, there's going

- 1 to be a lot of things you don't know. You don't
- 2 know what the plan is going to be. You don't
- 3 know whether the plan is going to affect you,
- 4 injure you or not. You don't know -- you know,
- 5 all the things that we think of in the standing
- 6 context: Is there imminent injury? Is there
- 7 some traceability? At the outset, many people
- 8 won't have the answers to those questions.
- 9 So I guess I can understand an "at the
- 10 outset" rule, and I can understand an Article
- 11 III rule, but I'm not sure I can understand both
- 12 of them together.
- MS. HO: Sure. Two points to that,
- 14 Justice Kagan.
- To start, you know, we -- we do think
- 16 that party in interest is coextensive with
- 17 Article III, but you -- you wouldn't -- you
- wouldn't have to agree with me on that to agree
- in terms of what -- who a party in interest is
- 20 under -- under the statute.
- 21 But, secondly, I -- I do think there
- is a good fit --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: So your first answer
- is you're willing to give up the Article III?
- MS. HO: Well, I don't think my -- I

- 1 just wanted to make clear, Your Honor, I don't
- 2 think -- you don't have to agree with me --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Yeah. That's --
- 4 that's a fine answer.
- 5 MS. HO: -- on -- on -- on
- 6 Article III. We do think it's -- it is -- it is
- 7 coextensive, as the Third Circuit has held for a
- 8 dozen years, and I don't -- I don't think
- 9 there's any tension between that and ex-ante.
- I think the way to think about it is
- 11 it's -- it's -- it's basically do you have
- 12 standing and does disaggregating that from the
- merits, right, what a plan will actually do or
- 14 how the proceeding will actually unfold.
- In the same way that this Court, you
- 16 know, doesn't let the standing inquiry determine
- 17 the merits, I think this -- it operates the same
- way in 1109(b) in the party in interest
- 19 discussion and analysis, is that you're looking
- 20 to see could -- could these proceedings directly
- 21 and adversely affect it.
- I think, as to traceability and
- 23 redressability, I think those -- those
- 24 requirements of Article III will virtually
- 25 always be satisfied in -- in every case where

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1
      there's a party in interest, right?
 2
                JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Can we -- can I --
 3
                MS. HO: Yes, Justice Sotomayor.
                JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- break this
 4
 5
     down?
 6
                There are various points at which you
 7
     decide standing. One is at the beginning of the
      suit. And I think this is not an Article III
 8
      court. This is an Article II court. And it's
 9
      not even a full court because it can't do
10
11
      everything an Article III court can do.
12
                It's closer, not quite, to an
     administrative proceeding. But it's an Article
13
14
     II court. And, generally, a party in interest
15
      is anyone that could be affected by a plan.
     plan hasn't come into effect, but you could
16
17
     posit a thousand different ways that a plan
18
      could directly financially injure someone.
19
                The Chief is positing a case where
      there's just not enough money, they're never
20
21
     going to reach down here, but you don't know
2.2
      that because you don't know what claims are
23
      going to be disallowed, whether some priority
24
      claims are not going to be accepted.
25
      just too -- that's what you're saying about the
```

1	unknown?
2	MS. HO: Yes.
3	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Now the question
4	becomes when you get to the point that a plan
5	and this is the point we're at when we get to
6	the point that a plan is in place, now the
7	question is who can object to that plan,
8	correct? And now the question becomes what are
9	the reasons you can object?
10	And you're saying, because this plan
11	as structured not only violates the terms of our
12	contract, it also violates the terms of the
13	bankruptcy court. You're saying that there's a
14	separate good faith and fair dealing, an equal
15	treatment requirement under the Bankruptcy Code
16	and that this plan violated that, correct?
17	MS. HO: Correct, Your Honor.
18	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Now the net the
19	net neutrality test doesn't answer that second
20	question, correct?
21	MS. HO: Correct.
22	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Because whether or
23	not, if this plan in some way has treated you
24	differently from the Debtors' other debts with
25	no reasonable basis to do so, that could breach

- 1 the Bankruptcy Code, good faith and fair
- 2 dealing, correct?
- 3 MS. HO: Correct.
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right. So now
- 5 it's possible after we go through all of this
- 6 that the court below will say: No, it doesn't
- 7 breach it, but you have a right to be heard on
- 8 that. That's what you're saying. That's the
- 9 standing, correct?
- MS. HO: Yes, yes.
- 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So that's the
- 12 difference between you can't flip things and get
- to the merits in that way, you have to look at
- 14 that standing issue on the basis of the moment
- the plan is there, I am being affected by the
- 16 plan.
- 17 It's possible that that effect won't
- 18 rise to the level of something that I will be
- 19 given something to, but I have a right for them
- 20 to hear me out on this, correct?
- MS. HO: Correct.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Can I ask you about
- 23 the difference between your view and the
- 24 government's view? I understood the
- government's view to be narrower but that you

- 1 would also be covered by it.
- 2 So do you reject their sort of
- 3 contract-based determination here?
- 4 MS. HO: No, not at all, Justice
- 5 Jackson. And I -- I -- I don't see the
- 6 government's position as -- as a different -- as
- 7 a different test. I --
- 8 JUSTICE JACKSON: Do you agree it's
- 9 narrower than yours?
- 10 MS. HO: I think I -- I think I would.
- I think I would agree that it's -- that it's
- 12 narrower.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So why is yours
- 14 better?
- MS. HO: I actually don't know that --
- 16 that one is -- is -- is better or the
- 17 other. I think what the government is saying is
- we -- we both agree that 1109(b), that the text
- 19 is broad and expansive.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Right.
- MS. HO: We -- we both agree
- 22 that we are -- we are a creditor --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Right.
- 24 MS. HO: -- and that we were entitled
- 25 to be heard that way.

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1
                JUSTICE JACKSON: But setting aside
 2
      the --
                MS. HO: And I think -- I think the
 3
      government's position is they're focusing on the
 4
      -- anyone who holds an executory contract.
 5
     And -- and we do.
 6
 7
                JUSTICE JACKSON: Right.
                MS. HO: So that -- that -- that
 8
 9
     brings us -- that brings us in. So I don't -- I
     don't see that as --
10
11
                JUSTICE JACKSON: I quess what I'm
12
     worried about a little bit --
13
                MS. HO: Yes.
14
                JUSTICE JACKSON: -- is that if we go
15
     beyond people who hold a contract and just to
16
     anyone who's adversely affected, I guess you
17
      could imagine that a competitor in this
18
      environment would say, I'm adversely affected,
19
     you know, by what is happening with the
20
     bankruptcy of this other business.
21
                Would -- would we be opening the door
2.2
      to allowing in the kinds of entities on the
23
     basis of your broad test that you would
24
      otherwise think Congress would not have wanted
25
      to be a party in interest?
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1 MS. HO: No, Your Honor. And --2 and -- and to be clear, we are -- we are more 3 than happy to embrace a holding of this Court that we are a party in interest who can be heard 4 on any issue because of the insurance contract 5 6 that we hold. So I want to be clear on that. 7 But I think, to your point about 8 the -- the floodgates argument that my friends raise, I don't think so, because I think the 9 10 direct and adverse test which we believe is coextensive with Article III, it -- it has 11 12 teeth. Again, it has been the rule in the Twelfth Circuit for over a dozen years. And I 13 14 -- I -- my friends on the other side really 15 can't point to any sort of chaos that has 16 resulted from it. 17 So I -- I think our -- our test has 18 teeth. And I -- and I also think that Congress, 19 again, as I started by saying, I think the breadth is -- is a feature and not a bug here, 20 21 that Congress wanted to bring stakeholders to 2.2 the table, parties in interest who had a stake. 23 And if anyone -- if anyone has a stake in this 24 Chapter 11 proceeding, it is the insurer who will be paying the vast bulk of claims --25

```
1
                JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Isn't that --
 2
               MS. HO: -- against the Debtors.
 3
                JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: This doesn't hurt
      your argument, but isn't it true that the
 4
 5
      insurer will, who's responsible for the claims,
 6
     will always or almost always be a party in
7
      interest then in bankruptcies --
               MS. HO: I -- I --
8
9
                JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- mass tort
10
     bankruptcies?
11
                MS. HO: I -- I -- I think that's -- I
12
     think that's right. And when -- when I sort of
13
      think through my -- to myself, you know, what --
14
     who -- who else could be brought in under our
15
      test, I -- I -- I do think the -- the single
16
      largest group are the -- are -- are insurers and
17
      who will also often come in as creditors as
18
      well, as -- as we do -- as we do too.
19
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: Counsel, just on the
20
     Article III point, I wonder whether we need to
21
      tangle or should tangle with it because I think
22
      of Article III as the -- the plaintiff coming to
23
      court has to establish an injury.
24
               And -- and who the plaintiff is in a
25
     bankruptcy case, I don't know, maybe the
```

- 1 petitioner, right, but normally we say someone
- 2 objecting to relief under Bond, under Clapper,
- 3 doesn't have to establish Article III standing.
- 4 And that would seem to be a closer fit to a
- 5 party or a group like yours seeking to object to
- 6 a plan.
- 7 MS. HO: I certainly don't disagree
- 8 that in -- in -- in the context where what you
- 9 have is someone who is only objecting, right, to
- 10 the relief being sought, and -- and that is us
- 11 to a T, right? We are -- we are objecting to
- 12 the plan.
- I think there may be a different issue
- raised when you get to, say, appellate standing,
- 15 but -- but in terms of 1109(b) party in
- interest, we -- we do -- we do agree that as we
- are -- we are opposing through -- yes, thank
- 18 you.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 20 counsel.
- 21 Justice Thomas?
- Justice Sotomayor?
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm assuming if we
- reach it on the government's theory or in your
- theory, that directly and adversely means an

```
1
      insured, because they have a contract --
 2
                MS. HO: Yes.
 3
                JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- is a party in
 4
      interest --
 5
                MS. HO: Yes.
 6
                JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- that should be
7
     heard, that we don't have to reach the creditor
      issue or the Article III issue?
8
9
                MS. HO: That's correct, Your Honor.
10
                JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Okay.
11
                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice Kagan?
12
                Justice Gorsuch?
13
                Justice Kavanaugh?
14
                Justice Barrett?
15
                JUSTICE BARRETT: Well, let's see.
16
     It -- it seems to me that maybe we would have to
17
     at least say Article III doesn't apply because
     you're not -- because someone like the insurer
18
19
      is not the one invoking it.
20
                I guess I'm -- I would be a little bit
21
     worried, as you say, if Congress is setting the
22
      table broadly and parties in interest cut
23
     broadly, it's speculative, right? I mean, it --
24
      it's pretty speculative.
25
                You might be able to articulate a way
```

- 1 that the plan could adversely affect your
- 2 interests, but it would be speculative. And so
- 3 maybe we don't have to say whether Article III
- 4 applies in Article I courts, but if I think you
- 5 might have a problem satisfying Article III, I
- 6 think I would still have to say you have
- 7 statutory standing, right?
- 8 MS. HO: Yes. I -- I think there's no
- 9 -- there -- I don't believe there's any dispute
- 10 that we have Article III standing here and in
- 11 the court below because we weren't heard, and so
- we're challenging that we -- we were not -- were
- 13 not heard.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Yes.
- MS. HO: I do think, in terms of the
- 16 Article III issue, the Fourth Circuit did
- 17 address our creditor issue in Article III terms,
- 18 but I think what that court was really doing was
- 19 it was reading any issue out of the statute.
- 20 So I think from this Court's
- 21 perspective, I don't think there's any question
- 22 about our Article III status. I think the
- 23 question is, are we a party in interest? We --
- 24 we say --
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Right.

2.4

1 MS. HO: -- that's directly and 2 adversely affected. The government says it's 3 because we have an executory contract. Either way, I think we -- we satisfy the statutory 4 standing and we also satisfy Article III 5 6 standing here. 7 JUSTICE BARRETT: Oh, I see what you're -- I mean, I get what you're saying. I'm 8 9 just saying, if I don't want your test, if I 10 don't want to say that the statutory standard is 11 coextensive with Article III --12 MS. HO: Yes. 13 JUSTICE BARRETT: -- that's -- that's 14 the issue that I might have. 15 And then just very briefly, could you 16 describe for me for the uninsured claims what 17 exactly -- I mean, you know, the -- you know, 18 Kaiser and the -- the Claimants are fighting 19 pretty hard to keep the insured claimants out. 20 So what exactly are the fraud 21 protection measures that would apply to the 22 uninsured claims, the ones that you want to apply to the insured claims as well? 23 24 MS. HO: Sure. There are essentially 25 two, Justice Barrett. The first would require

1 all claimants to disclose all known exposures --2 JUSTICE BARRETT: Right. 3 MS. HO: -- right, to all defendants. And the second primary requirement or 4 measure would be a release that would allow the 5 trust to obtain information from the other 6 7 trusts on that. 8 JUSTICE BARRETT: Okay. Thank you. 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice 10 Jackson? 11 Thank you, counsel. 12 MS. HO: Thank you. 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Yang. 14 ORAL ARGUMENT OF ANTHONY A. YANG 15 FOR THE UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE, 16 SUPPORTING THE PETITIONER MR. YANG: Mr. Chief Just -- Mr. Chief 17 Justice, and may it please the Court: 18 19 Both counterparties to executory 20 contracts and creditors are parties in interest 21 that may be -- appear and be heard on any issue 22 in a Chapter 11 bankruptcy case. If a party is 23 a party in interest, they get a seat at the 24 reorganization table, and once they're at the 25 table, they can be heard on any issue in the

- 1 case. And that status must be determined ex
- ante, that is, before the court considers the
- 3 question, because the right is to be heard in
- 4 advance.
- 5 That doesn't depend on the merits of
- 6 the position, and it cannot be determined based
- 7 on what a plan proposes because a party in
- 8 interest under 1121(c) can itself propose a
- 9 plan. Moreover, the plan is never final until
- 10 all appellate proceedings have -- on the
- 11 confirmation are ended. And so they can
- 12 participate all the way through.
- 13 The code contemplates that every
- 14 executory contract must either be assumed or
- 15 rejected. Either way -- and I'd like to develop
- 16 that in our conversation -- but either way, a
- 17 party -- a counterparty is a party in interest.
- 18 I'd be happy to -- to follow up on
- 19 that.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Mr. Yang, what's the
- 21 difference between your view and -- or your
- approach to 1109 and Petitioner's?
- MR. YANG: Well, I think Petitioner's
- 24 view, while -- it appears to me that they are
- interpreting "party in interest" based on some

- 1 older Interstate Commerce Act cases that
- 2 borrowed some Article III concepts when
- 3 interpreting "party in interest."
- We just don't think that's a term of
- 5 art. It's not clear to me that they actually
- 6 say that you have to have Article III standing
- 7 to raise an objection. I think it's more based
- 8 on the term, and the -- the Article III ideas
- 9 were incorporated by reference to the cases.
- 10 So I'm not sure we disagree about
- 11 Article III. We just disagree about the
- 12 interpretive method. Our interpretive method
- just goes to the text. The text is broad. It's
- 14 not so broad as to get amici or, you know,
- people with very tangential views in the case.
- But, in this case, it certainly
- 17 applies expressly to creditors, and we say -- we
- 18 think it applies to parties with executory
- 19 contracts because, remember, executory contracts
- 20 under 365 are either going to be assumed
- 21 affirmatively or rejected, and if assumed,
- sometimes they're assigned to somebody else.
- Now, if the debtor seeks to assume a
- 24 contract, they have to satisfy Section 365's
- 25 standards that protect the counterparty. If

- 1 there has been some kind of breach, it has to be
- 2 cured. Certain contracts cannot be assumed.
- 3 And the counterparty can object. Among other
- 4 things, the counterparty has an interest in the
- 5 debtor's ability to fulfill that contract going
- 6 forward. And the debtor has to move to assume a
- 7 contract. It has to show that the business
- 8 judgment standard has been met. A counterparty
- 9 can object.
- Now, if the debtor wants to reject the
- 11 contract -- Justice Kagan, your -- your opinion
- in Mission Products Holdings addresses this --
- 13 that results in a breach of contract. It
- 14 results in a claim, and then the creditor is a
- 15 claimant and not in a real good position because
- it's usually a pre-petition plain -- claim, and
- 17 you get pennies on the dollar in most contexts.
- 18 Either way, assumed or rejected, they
- 19 have an interest. Now that's reflected not only
- 20 --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Yang, in an -- in
- 22 an old case of ours, we used the term "adversely
- 23 and directly affected." Do you accept that
- standard, or do you think we should not have a
- 25 standard like that?

1 MR. YANG: You know, I'm not really 2 sure where that standard comes from except 3 unless you are drawing from Article III. We 4 don't really object, I think, to the outcome of 5 having some direct effect. Whether you're adversely affected, though, you don't -- I think 6 7 it's the wrong question. 8 You have to have the potential to be 9 adversely affected in a bankruptcy because that's what the reorganization is. You bring 10 everybody in who has a potential to be affected 11 12 and you work it out. 13 So going back to the pre-code 14 Bankruptcy Act, and --15 JUSTICE KAGAN: And -- sorry. 16 MR. YANG: Sure. 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: If I could just follow up. You -- you too -- and this is just like Ms. 18 Ho -- said at the outset this is --19 20 MR. YANG: Yeah.

really know whether your -- you have any

interest in this until the middle of the thing?

I mean, I can imagine many -- many events taking

place, including there's now a plan on the table

JUSTICE KAGAN: What if you don't

21

22

23

24

- 1 and now you look at the plan on the table and
- 2 you think: Oh, my gosh, I could be affected.
- It just seems a strange thing in a
- 4 bankruptcy proceeding, which is fluid and has
- 5 many twists and turns, that you would say do
- 6 this at the outset and -- and apparently only at
- 7 the outset.
- 8 MR. YANG: Let me answer that, and I
- 9 think it's easiest to answer it in the context
- 10 of executory contracts and creditors, right?
- 11 Executory contracts, they're always going to
- 12 have potentially some effect. Maybe you just,
- 13 you know, don't know what the effect is going to
- be, and a lot of people who could be parties in
- interest, just because it doesn't fit into the
- 16 -- it doesn't make rational economic sense, they
- don't participate, right? They just don't
- 18 participate until -- they have a right to, but
- 19 they don't until it becomes relevant.
- 20 The pre-Bankruptcy Act -- Code Act
- 21 labels executory contractors as parties in
- 22 interest. Why? It's because they had to get
- 23 advance notice of rejection. And there's a case
- 24 called King versus Barrett in the Tenth Circuit,
- 25 1973, it explains that you give them notice in a

- 1 hearing so they can be heard.
- 2 Currently, the current code says that
- 3 the counterparty can seek an order to set a
- 4 period to assume or reject. That's 365(d)(2).
- 5 Other parties in interest may similarly set that
- 6 same period, but they can only do so in the
- 7 context of status conferences. That's
- 8 105(d)(2)(A). All of this is showing that
- 9 parties in interest -- that -- that executory
- 10 counter -- contract counterparties are parties
- 11 in interest.
- 12 Now there's a few things that I'd like
- 13 to address. One is there's a question about
- 14 having a voice and not a vote. I think that
- goes to the question of being impaired.
- 16 Impaired is what the plan under Section 1124
- 17 proposes. But there are other requirements for
- 18 a plan. For instance, a plan needs to be
- 19 feasible. So, if you're a creditor and the plan
- 20 proposes satisfying everything, but it satisfies
- it in a way that's not likely to end up being
- implemented, you can object under 1129(a), I
- think it's (a)(11), that the plan's not
- 24 feasible.
- 25 So the impairment just talks about the

- 1 separate requirement that the classes vote. It
- 2 doesn't address your right to be heard, which,
- 3 by the way, is not only a right to be heard to
- 4 object, but it's a right to be heard to support
- 5 the plan, right? If you're not impaired, you
- 6 may well want to come in and support the plan.
- 7 The floodgates question, it largely
- 8 turns, I think, on the question of any issue,
- 9 not the problem of party in interest. Like
- 10 take, for instance, the vending contractor that
- 11 -- that everyone's talking about. The problem
- is not that a vending contractor gets to come in
- and be a party in interest and participate with
- 14 respect to the vending contract, whether it's
- assumed or rejected or interpreted in a way it
- 16 doesn't like. The concern is that it's also
- 17 heard on any issue.
- But the text of 1109(b) and its
- 19 history, the evolution of expanding those groups
- that can speak on any issue, foreclose any real
- 21 textual ability to say, oh, you can only
- 22 participate on certain issues. "Any issue"
- 23 means what it says.
- Secondly, the concerns about
- 25 floodgates, I think, are totally overstated.

- 1 Litigants make rational economic choices where
- 2 they have a stake in reasonable arguments. The
- 3 right to be heard doesn't impose on the court
- 4 any burden to -- to speak at length if it
- 5 doesn't think there's much to say about the
- 6 issue.
- 7 And the court has to decide the
- 8 question anyway in terms of confirmation because
- 9 this Court, in United Student Aid Funds,
- 10 determined that the court has to decide whether
- 11 the plan complies with the code even if no one
- 12 objects.
- 13 And, finally, sanctions deters any
- 14 kind of bad-faith conduct. Ultimately, this is
- a balancing question, does it make sense to
- bring everybody in, we're going to weigh it
- 17 against maybe some burden of having their voices
- heard, we're going to balance it against the
- 19 waste of resources of trying to decide who gets
- to be heard, and Congress struck that choice in
- 21 1109(b).
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Does your position
- just boil down to the common-sense point that an
- insurer is on the hook for the claims in a mass
- 25 tort bankruptcy as a party in interest?

- 1 MR. YANG: I think that's a subset of 2 our point, and our -- our -- our primary point 3 is --JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, all -- all 4 we need is that subset. I mean, isn't that just 5 6 kind of common -- I just thought that is the 7 common-sense point. 8 MR. YANG: I agree. But I actually 9 don't think it's that much different than saying 10 that a counterparty to an executory contract is 11 always going to have an interest. 12 JUSTICE JACKSON: Mr. Yang? 13 MR. YANG: I just don't think that 14 that's different. And the idea was that 15 Congress --- the legislative history reflects 16 that the idea here is to hear all sides of an issue and then let the court decide. 17 18 JUSTICE JACKSON: Mr. Yang --19 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: And the insurer is 20 kind of obvious, right? That's your point. 21 MR. YANG: Insurer's an obvious one. 22 I mean, it -- it -- but it would have included
- even the vending contractor. Now the vending
- 24 contractor might not have participated? Why?
- 25 Because, you know what, it didn't matter. It's

- 1 like small steaks, potatoes. The vending
- 2 contractor is just not going to participate.
- 3 There's a lot of people in the
- 4 periphery that just don't participate. The 10
- 5 cent creditor, unimpaired, unsecured 10 cent
- 6 creditor is expressly a party in interest,
- 7 right?
- 8 JUSTICE JACKSON: What about an
- 9 employee? You know, if we're going with your
- 10 definition, which has to do with contracts --
- MR. YANG: Yep.
- 12 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- I suppose an
- employee has a contract, so are you saying that
- they would be a party in interest?
- MR. YANG: An -- an employee can be a
- party in interest as a party to an executory
- 17 contract. Now there are certain code provisions
- that deal with employees and unions and things
- 19 like that, but as a general matter, yes.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Okay.
- MR. YANG: That's true.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: And just in response
- 23 to Justice Kagan, I -- I guess I didn't
- 24 understand you to be making a statement that the
- 25 parties couldn't be recognized on a rolling

- 1 basis, right? Like, if someone determines or
- 2 decides in the middle of it that they have an
- 3 interest, they can ask to come in?
- 4 MR. YANG: Yes. But --
- 5 JUSTICE JACKSON: Is that right?
- 6 MR. YANG: Yes, I think that's true.
- 7 The -- the -- the reality is is they've always
- 8 had the interest to be potentially affected.
- 9 They might not have realized it --
- 10 JUSTICE JACKSON: Right.
- 11 MR. YANG: -- until later --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank -- thank
- 13 --
- MR. YANG: -- but, when they realize
- it, they come in and, you know, they are given a
- 16 right to be heard.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 18 counsel.
- 19 MR. YANG: Thank you.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 21 Thomas?
- Justice Sotomayor?
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Your -- in your
- 24 brief, you say this case presents no occasion
- 25 for the Court to determine the phrase -- the

- phrase's outermost -- party in interest's
- 2 outermost boundaries. And you repeat that
- 3 today, that we should just say clearly insurers
- 4 or people with executory contracts, et cetera.
- 5 But don't we have to say a little bit
- 6 more? Don't -- don't we have to say something
- 7 like directly and adversely affected to -- to
- 8 quantify --
- 9 MR. YANG: I'm not sure --
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- to take away
- 11 the employee who doesn't -- who doesn't have a
- 12 contract with the Debtor, but the employee who
- has a contract with the Petitioner, Truck?
- 14 Could he sue and say my salaries and
- benefits are going to go down because this
- doesn't have an anti-fraud provision and the
- 17 company's going to lose more money?
- MR. YANG: Well, I don't --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So I'm going to
- 20 make less?
- 21 MR. YANG: The Court might well want
- 22 to say more. The Court -- but the Court
- certainly doesn't have to to resolve the issue
- 24 with respect to whether Truck is a party in
- 25 interest.

1 Now, if the Court wanted to explore 2 the text of party in interest more, I think what 3 I would suggest is that the Court can explain that a party is a participant on one or -- one 4 of the sides of an action or an affair. 5 6 It's not a person in interest. 7 party in interest. And context matters here. Bankruptcies are aggregations of individual 8 9 controversies, and the participants there have an interest in the proceedings' exercise of 10 11 jurisdiction over the debtor's property and the 12 distribution. 13 If the proceeding has a potential to 14 affect their interests, and it's not necessarily 15 an interest in the entitlement to specific 16 debtor properties, if the proceeding has the 17 potential to affect their interests, that is 18 enough to be a party in interest. 19 Now things that I think you're talking about kind of two orders of steps out have never 20 been thought to be people who can come in with 21 an interest. And -- and you --2.2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But -- but how do 23 T --24

MR. YANG: Right.

- 1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I love asking this 2 question. How do I write this so that there is a difference between that employee and the truck 3 company? I can write it to say the truck 4 company because it's affected, but what -- but I 5 6 have to say something more to take care of those 7 two and three down. MR. YANG: The employee of Truck? 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Yeah. 9 MR. YANG: Well, certainly, the Court 10 11 would have to decide how far it wants to go. 12 don't think you have to decide employees of Truck since the question before the Court is not 13 14 employees of Truck. 15 But, if you wanted to, we don't object 16 to the idea that the participants that have an 17 interest in the proceeding have always been 18 those that have a direct kind of not attenuated 19 effect. It's not amici. It's not some law 20 professor. It's not employees of somebody else. It's someone with a more direct effect. 21 2.2 I don't think that derives from
- 25 bankruptcy practice.

24

Article III, but I think you can derive it from

kind of looking more generally at -- at

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice Kagan?
2	Justice Gorsuch?
3	Justice Kavanaugh?
4	Justice Barrett?
5	Justice Jackson?
6	Okay. Thank you, counsel.
7	MR. YANG: Thank you, Your Honor.
8	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Marshall.
9	ORAL ARGUMENT OF C. KEVIN MARSHALL
10	FOR THE DEBTOR RESPONDENTS
11	MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chief Justice, and
12	may it please the Court:
13	A party in interest is someone who has
14	a legal interest in a debtor's bankruptcy
15	estate, its property, not someone who is merely
16	concerned about the debtor's bankruptcy more
17	generally.
18	The list of parties in interest in
19	Section 1109(b) shows this. Settled usage of
20	the term in bankruptcy confirms it. And the
21	government, at least in its brief, agrees with
22	it.
23	At the outset of the case, the parties
24	in interest will ordinarily be the debtor with
25	its creditors and shareholders, those whom

- 1 Section 1109(b) lists.
- Others, as Justice Thomas was asking
- 3 about, may come to have an interest in the
- 4 estate and, thus, can show that the bankruptcy
- 5 will directly affect their rights or
- 6 obligations. For example, if a plan would
- 7 breach an insurer's policy, altering its
- 8 contract rights or obligations, then it would
- 9 become a party in interest.
- But, if a plan preserves the insurer's
- 11 status quo, it is insurance neutral, in that
- 12 case, the insurer is not a party in interest and
- it has no right to object to plan confirmation.
- 14 Here, the plan does not alter Truck's
- 15 contract rights or obligations. It breaches
- 16 nothing. It does not do anything to put Truck
- 17 on the hook. That is what the lower courts
- 18 uniformly found, and Truck here does not
- 19 challenge that finding. Truck, therefore, has
- 20 no right to challenge plan confirmation.
- 21 Truck invokes policy concerns that
- 22 would supplant this settled clear rule with a
- 23 novel expansive framework that would give
- insurers greater rights to challenge plan
- 25 confirmation than even a creditor has. But

- 1 bankruptcy law already addresses these concerns
- 2 by allowing interested entities that are not
- 3 parties in interest to pursue permissive
- 4 intervention. Truck simply ignores that tool.
- I welcome the Court's questions.
- 6 JUSTICE THOMAS: Mr. Marshall, at the
- 7 beginning, at the outset of these proceedings,
- 8 bankruptcy proceedings, Truck was a creditor and
- 9 Truck certainly from its vantage point was a
- 10 party in interest because of the -- being the
- one insurer for all the claims or many of the
- 12 claims here.
- So do you think we should look at the
- filing period as the point to determine party of
- interest, or should we do it at a later point?
- It would seem that you can't do
- insurance neutrality at the beginning. I don't
- 18 know how you would do that.
- 19 MR. MARSHALL: If one is in the list
- of entities in Section 1109(b), it's possible to
- answer that question at the outset.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: So they would be a
- 23 creditor?
- 24 MR. MARSHALL: They were -- they were
- a creditor, yes, but as to their status as an

- insurer, the question is, do they have an interest in the debtor's bankruptcy estate?
- 3 at the outset of the case, it was obviously a
- 4 no, but then, when a plan is submitted and they
- 5 want to claim that that would breach their
- 6 policy rights and give them interest in the
- 7 estate, then that would be the point at which --
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, let me --
- 9 MR. MARSHALL: -- the threshold
- 10 question would need to be decided.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, let me -- let's
- 12 go back a second.
- As a creditor, at the beginning, if
- 14 they are considered a party in interest, can
- they raise any issue in the proceedings?
- MR. MARSHALL: Under 1109(b), they
- 17 generally can. In the context of a plan
- 18 confirmation, if they're unimpaired, they don't
- 19 have the right to object.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Isn't it just
- 21 common sense that an insurer at the outset is
- 22 going to have an interest in this because how
- 23 much the insurer will have to pay will be
- 24 affected by how the plan is structured?
- 25 MR. MARSHALL: Justice Kavanaugh, they

- 1 could be interested in the general sense of
- 2 being concerned, which is the phrase Truck
- 3 tended to use.
- 4 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: No, not just
- 5 concerned but how much they owe -- how much
- 6 they're going to have to pay. It's not just I'm
- 7 concerned about things. How much I'm going to
- 8 have to pay.
- 9 MR. MARSHALL: And so then the
- 10 question is, at what point do they come to have
- an interest in the estate? And if a plan is
- 12 proposed that would -- that in their view would
- breach their policy, they certainly have the
- 14 right to be heard on whether it would, in fact,
- breach their policy rights, and they were heard
- 16 here.
- 17 And the courts, all the courts, all
- 18 three lower courts held their policy rights were
- 19 not breached. And so there's nothing about the
- 20 bankruptcy case that puts the insurer on the
- 21 hook. That can happen in cases. It happened in
- 22 a Ninth Circuit case that's in the briefs.
- 23 And if -- if the plan actually --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But -- you're
- 25 saying put them on the hook, but for how much

- 1 they're going to be on the hook, that will be
- 2 affected, right?
- 3 MR. MARSHALL: I'm not sure I followed
- 4 that. Nothing about the bankruptcy case changes
- 5 Truck's position. If the bankruptcy case were
- 6 to -- to change an insurer's position, it would
- 7 be a party in interest and have a right to
- 8 object to the plan.
- 9 JUSTICE JACKSON: But isn't --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But they want the
- 11 fraud prevention provisions. What's your
- 12 response to that as -- as, you know, their
- interest in having those established?
- 14 MR. MARSHALL: There's a threshold
- 15 question whether they are a party in interest or
- 16 not, and that depends on whether they have an
- interest in the bankruptcy estate. If they are
- 18 a party in interest, then they would have the
- 19 right to come in and raise the issues of
- 20 concern, including the fraud prevention
- 21 measures.
- 22 But it's a threshold question.
- 23 Perhaps it's helpful to think of an analogy. A
- 24 creditor, as we were discussing with Justice
- 25 Thomas, has a right to raise any issue under

- 1 1109(b), but there's a threshold question
- whether you actually are a creditor. So you can
- 3 come in and you can say you're a creditor. You
- 4 don't actually have to move to intervene. And a
- 5 court -- if somebody challenges that, then the
- 6 court has to decide, are you a creditor or not?
- 7 That's --
- 8 JUSTICE BARRETT: Why are you --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well --
- 10 JUSTICE BARRETT: -- fighting this so
- 11 hard? Why -- why do you want Truck to not even
- 12 be heard? Just what is your motivation to be
- 13 fighting this so hard?
- MR. MARSHALL: We have a deal with the
- 15 creditors. We think it's a valid deal and a
- 16 good deal, and we want to be done with
- 17 bankruptcy. And we don't -- Truck has -- Truck
- is coming in to try to blow up the deal that we
- 19 have.
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Can I stop you a
- 21 moment? I am looking at the brief of amici
- 22 American Prosperity Casualty Insurance, and on
- 23 page 15, they explain that once the plan is
- 24 approved, this plan, under your terms, it
- obtains a discharge, the Debtor, and the

- 1 protection of a channeling injunction, now all
- 2 the claims are going to go through the trust and
- 3 not to you.
- 4 The Debtor has no ongoing incentive
- 5 after the plan is approved to limit the cost of
- 6 defending, paying claims, and any liability on
- 7 those claims. You lose it. That's the benefit
- 8 bankruptcy is giving you. And the Claimants,
- 9 their incentive for this plan is that they don't
- 10 want the anti-fraud provisions.
- 11 So who's protecting the insured? If
- 12 -- if the -- the insured can't protect itself
- because you say it can't go to the bankruptcy
- 14 court, how is it being heard?
- MR. MARSHALL: Nothing --
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Because what
- you're suggesting to us is that they don't have
- 18 a right to say the plan is violating a bunch of
- other provisions of the code, 1129(a), or
- 20 permitting the differential treatment of -- of
- 21 -- of people who are owed money or of Claimants.
- 22 I mean, I -- I just don't understand your
- 23 argument.
- MR. MARSHALL: They have --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I can argue that

- 1 the plan is breached, and once they say the
- 2 plan's not reached -- breached, I can't argue
- 3 that the plan violates the code? I've just
- 4 never heard of --
- 5 MR. MARSHALL: If --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- parsing
- 7 standing in that way.
- 8 MR. MARSHALL: Justice Sotomayor, if
- 9 one is not a party in interest, there's no right
- 10 to raise issues. Party-in-interest status is a
- 11 threshold question.
- 12 And, here, as to Truck as an insurer,
- they need to show they have an interest in the
- 14 bankruptcy estate to get in, to answer the
- 15 threshold question.
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But they do.
- MR. MARSHALL: And -- and to --
- 18 JUSTICE KAGAN: But I guess the
- 19 question --
- MR. MARSHALL: -- to do that --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: -- Mr. Marshall, is I
- think what everybody is saying to you is, well,
- 23 they do have an interest in these anti-fraud
- 24 provisions. Not just a concern, they have an
- interest, a material interest. If they get the

- 1 anti-fraud provisions, they're better off. If
- they don't get the anti-fraud provisions,
- 3 they're worse off.
- 4 Now what I hear you saying back is
- 5 they had no preexisting entitlement to the
- 6 anti-fraud provisions, and your test is one that
- 7 says, if they're not being made worse off by the
- 8 plan, then they're not an interested party.
- 9 But I -- I don't know why that should
- 10 be the test. If I look at the language, that's
- 11 not the test. If I think about what the
- ordinary meaning of being a party who's
- interested is, that's not the test.
- 14 Why -- why is your test so long as
- they're not being made worse off, they're not an
- 16 interested party?
- 17 MR. MARSHALL: Well, the test of
- 18 whether I -- there is a benefit I would like to
- 19 get out of the bankruptcy case, which is Truck's
- 20 test, is unlimited. Anytime you can imagine a
- 21 hypothetical plan that would be better off for
- 22 you --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, that's a
- 24 practical concern.
- MR. MARSHALL: Well, it -- it --

1 JUSTICE KAGAN: And I think, you know, 2 the practical argument against it is it's pretty 3 costly to enter into these proceedings, and nobody really does it unless they have a serious 4 interest, and, anyway, bankruptcy courts have 5 6 docket management techniques. 7 And, anyway, just putting aside the practical concerns, is this a floodgates problem 8 9 or is it not a floodgates problem, I don't really see why your test, which is are you being 10 11 made worse off or are you being made -- or is 12 it -- you know, are you just being held to the 13 bargain that you initially had, I don't see why 14 anybody would think that that's the way to 15 answer a question of whether you're interested 16 in a proceeding. 17 MR. MARSHALL: "Party in interest" is a term of art that means you have an interest in 18 the debtor's bankruptcy estate. That's been the 19 20 meaning for a hundred years. And so that's the 21 way to start. 2.2 But, if we're going to think in terms 23 of seeking to obtain a benefit, in the context of causes of action, Lexmark zone of interests, 24 25 the question is always, have you suffered a

- loss? If you've suffered a loss, you come in
- 2 and you try to get a remedy.
- What Truck is saying here is, I can
- 4 come in, even though I'm suffering no loss at
- 5 all to my legal rights, and just seek to obtain
- 6 a benefit because it's very nice that this
- 7 bankruptcy is here and maybe I can get something
- 8 out of it.
- 9 But even if they don't have the right
- 10 to come in, there's always permissive
- 11 intervention. So there's the right to -- to
- 12 come in as an interested entity that's not a
- party in interest. The benefit of that is it's
- in the discretion of the bankruptcy court. You
- 15 have to show cause. The bankruptcy court can
- decide whether you come in for all issues or
- 17 just some.
- The question is, who has the right to
- 19 intervene in the case? And it --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So --
- 21 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Would you object
- 22 to permissive intervention in a situation like
- 23 this where the insurer is seeking fraud
- 24 prevention?
- MR. MARSHALL: We would have objected

- 1 to their attempt to come in and object to the
- 2 merits of the plan, but they certainly have the
- 3 right --
- 4 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: That wasn't the
- 5 question.
- 6 MR. MARSHALL: Yeah.
- 7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: The question
- 8 was --
- 9 MR. MARSHALL: They -- they could have
- 10 sought to pursue inter- -- permissive
- intervention under 2018 to get to the merits of
- 12 the plan.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: And would you have
- 14 objected to that?
- MR. MARSHALL: We probably would have
- 16 opposed that.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Why?
- MR. MARSHALL: For all the reasons
- 19 that we're otherwise opposing.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You just don't
- 21 want them to be heard.
- MR. MARSHALL: We want -- they have
- 23 the right to be heard, to make a showing they
- 24 are --
- 25 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You don't want the

- 1 fraud prevention provisions, but you don't want
- 2 them to be heard on that. Is that -- I mean,
- 3 that's okay.
- 4 MR. MARSHALL: Well, the -- all the
- 5 lower courts --
- 6 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I just want --
- 7 MR. MARSHALL: I mean, they were heard
- 8 on that. All the lower courts ruled against
- 9 them on the merits as well, both the bankruptcy
- 10 and the district court, although the Fourth
- 11 Circuit didn't get to it.
- 12 It's good to keep in mind if we're
- going to be talking about the policy concerns
- 14 that bankruptcy is just not about get everybody
- 15 to the table. It's also about having an
- 16 efficient and expeditious proceeding that makes
- it possible to resolve what is ultimately a
- 18 question about the debtor and its creditors or,
- in some cases, its shareholders.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Can I --
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- it may not
- 23 be about getting everybody at the table, but you
- 24 do want all the creditors there, don't you?
- MR. MARSHALL: Yes, you do want all

- 1 the creditors there.
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, they're
- 3 a creditor.
- 4 MR. MARSHALL: As to the plan that's
- 5 at issue here, they were an unimpaired creditor,
- 6 and an unimpaired creditor does not have the
- 7 right to object to a plan. That's Section
- 8 1126(f).
- 9 JUSTICE BARRETT: Mr. Marshall --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: But at the time --
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Mr. Marshall, the --
- 12 the language -- you agree that they had an
- interest in the plan finding, right, about the
- 14 good faith and about whether this was going to
- be collusive? Everybody said below that they
- 16 had an interest in the plan finding.
- 17 MR. MARSHALL: The plan finding was a
- 18 threshold question that they certainly had the
- 19 right to litigate.
- 20 JUSTICE BARRETT: Right. And they did
- 21 have an interest as a creditor because of the
- 22 deductibles that were due, right?
- MR. MARSHALL: They were a creditor.
- 24 As to the plan at issue here, they were
- 25 unimpaired --

1 JUSTICE BARRETT: Okay. But --2 MR. MARSHALL: -- and didn't have the 3 right to object. JUSTICE BARRETT: -- that's looking 4 5 ahead to the plan. I quess what I want to say 6 is that 1109(b) says that "a party in interest," 7 including our list, "may be heard on any issue" in a case under this chapter. So, if they can 8 9 be heard on the plan finding or if they're a 10 creditor, I guess I don't understand why, on the 11 text of that provision, they could be so limited 12 and say, well, you can't bring up anything else, even though the text says "any issue." It 13 14 doesn't limit it in that way. 15 MR. MARSHALL: I'll address that in two respects. So the plan finding, again, is 16 17 the question of whether they are a party in 18 interest in the first place. It's a threshold 19 question. It's like deciding jurisdiction or statutory standing. And you have to get through 20 21 that to get to the merits. 2.2 So, as an insurer, nothing about the 23 plan finding changes whether or not Truck is a 24 party in interest. They're not. As to a 25 creditor, we're talking about the right to

- 1 object to a particular plan that leaves them
- 2 unimpaired. And although 1109(b) has that
- 3 general language, 1126(f) more specifically says
- 4 that an unimpaired creditor is presumptively --
- 5 is conclusively presumed to --
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Well, Mr. Marshall,
- 7 maybe I'm not understanding about the plan
- 8 finding. I mean, it's true that, at the end,
- 9 the court said that Truck wasn't harmed. But,
- 10 you know, what if the -- what if the court had
- 11 decided otherwise? In the beginning, they don't
- 12 know whether it's going to be collusive or
- violate Kaiser's duty of good faith, right?
- Maybe I'm just misunderstanding. I
- 15 mean, it went in your favor, but --
- MR. MARSHALL: Party-in-interest
- 17 status is a threshold question. You have the
- 18 right to come in and litigate whether you're a
- 19 party in interest or not. And that's all the
- 20 plan finding did. It determined that their
- 21 rights were not abridged and, therefore, they
- 22 were not a party in interest.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So -- but, Mr. --
- 24 Mr. Marshall --
- MR. MARSHALL: If that had gone

- differently, then, yes, they could have objected
- 2 --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. Marshall --
- 4 MR. MARSHALL: -- to the rest of the
- 5 plan, to the merits.
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. Marshall, you've
- 7 agreed that they're -- they were a party in
- 8 interest to the extent they were a creditor,
- 9 right?
- MR. MARSHALL: Yes.
- 11 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And normally a
- creditor or a party in interest can be heard on
- any issue. You agree with that?
- MR. MARSHALL: That's the text of
- 15 1109(b).
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. And you've
- been citing 1124 and 1126 to us, I understand
- 18 and appreciate that, but that -- that governs
- 19 who can vote, right?
- 20 MR. MARSHALL: That is what it
- 21 explicitly says, yes.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: It doesn't talk
- about what they can argue about or be heard on,
- 24 right?
- MR. MARSHALL: It says they're

1 conclusively presumed to have accepted the plan. 2 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Right. MR. MARSHALL: And an inference from 3 4 that is that it would be absurd to vote to -- in 5 favor --6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So, if you can't 7 vote, you can't be heard? Is that -- is that 8 your argument then? MR. MARSHALL: You can't be heard on 9 the merits of the plan. And that's what the 10 circuit courts have said. We cited cases and 11 12 Truck cited some cases allegedly to the 13 contrary, but they're actually not, because all 14 they do is determine where -- whether the 15 creditor that wants to object to the merits of 16 the plan is actually impaired. 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, 18 counsel. 19 Justice Thomas? 20 JUSTICE THOMAS: No. 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice 22 Sotomayor? 23 Justice Kagan? Justice Gorsuch? 24 25 JUSTICE GORSUCH: No.

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
2	Kavanaugh?
3	Justice Jackson?
4	JUSTICE JACKSON: Can I just ask one
5	question? At the threshold, you keep saying at
6	the threshold they have no interest in the
7	estate property.
8	Do you dispute that they have a
9	potential to have an interest in the estate
10	property, that insurers do? Because the plan
11	isn't in existence yet. Do you do you
12	dispute that they have the potential?
13	MR. MARSHALL: Borrowing from
14	intervention law, the question would be when is
15	their interest put at issue. And it's somewhat
16	like the which would be is a plan proposed
17	that would breach your contract and give you an
18	interest in the estate. And it's analogous to
19	what the actual history is with executory
20	contracts.
21	So the the the tax the
22	statutory history that the government invokes
23	actually says suggests you're a party in
24	interest when there is a motion to reject an
25	executory contract because that would create a

- 1 claim, a breach, and make you a creditor.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: I guess I don't
- 3 understand your answer, and I --
- 4 MR. MARSHALL: So when -- when it's
- 5 put at issue.
- 6 JUSTICE JACKSON: When it is put --
- 7 why isn't it put --
- 8 MR. MARSHALL: If you're an insurer,
- 9 you're not on the list. Nothing makes you --
- 10 JUSTICE JACKSON: Right --
- 11 MR. MARSHALL: -- a party in interest.
- 12 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- but the list says
- 13 "including," so we know there are things that
- 14 are -- that are -- there are entities that may
- 15 not be in the list, right?
- MR. MARSHALL: Correct.
- 17 JUSTICE JACKSON: Okay. So the
- 18 question is they come to the table at the
- 19 beginning and they say: We think we should be
- in the list because we have a potential through
- 21 the reorganization plan that will be adopted to
- 22 be affected.
- 23 And you say not party in interest
- 24 because you're not already affected or it's not
- 25 clear to us right now that you're affected. Is

- 1 that your position?
- 2 MR. MARSHALL: If we're talking about
- 3 Truck as insurer --
- 4 JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes.
- 5 MR. MARSHALL: -- yes.
- 6 JUSTICE JACKSON: All right. So --
- 7 MR. MARSHALL: But once a plan is
- 8 proposed --
- 9 JUSTICE JACKSON: Right.
- 10 MR. MARSHALL: -- that would breach
- 11 your contract --
- 12 JUSTICE JACKSON: So can I ask you, if
- people who are not potentially affected are not
- parties in interest, I guess I don't understand
- Congress's suggestion that parties in interest
- should be a part of the reorganization.
- In other words, the context in which
- 18 their -- what -- what's valuable to them about
- being a party in interest is the fact that they
- then get to talk with everybody about how this
- 21 is going to go.
- 22 And the problem I'm having with your
- argument is it suggests that it's only after we
- 24 know or after they know that they're definitely
- 25 affected that they get a seat at the table, but

- 1 the whole point of it is that the parties in
- 2 interest get to talk about it.
- 3 So it seems to me it would have to
- 4 include people who have a clear potential for
- 5 being affected by the plan that we're all
- 6 hammering out in this discussion.
- 7 MR. MARSHALL: There's nothing in
- 8 1109(b) itself that says that has to be
- 9 determined once and for all at the outset. And
- if we're talking about someone who's not in the
- list, the only way to know if you're a party in
- 12 interest is do you have an interest in the
- 13 bankruptcy estate.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Thank you.
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 16 counsel.
- 17 Mr. Frederick.
- 18 ORAL ARGUMENT DAVID C. FREDERICK
- 19 ON BEHALF OF THE CLAIMANT RESPONDENTS
- MR. FREDERICK: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 21 Justice, and may it please the Court:
- There are a number of questions I'd
- like to address that you posed this morning, but
- I want to start with one principle, which is
- 25 that the Bankruptcy Code was not intended to

- 1 protect insurers, except in a couple of places
- 2 where asbestos-related trusts are created, those
- 3 are in Section 524(g) principally, but in 109,
- 4 Congress said an insurer can't invoke bankruptcy
- 5 for protections under the code.
- 6 So, Justice Kavanaugh, to your
- 7 question about the text and practicalities,
- 8 Congress answered the question of whether an
- 9 insurer should be permitted to butt into a
- debtor's bankruptcy and try to use it to protect
- its own financial interests. The bankruptcy
- 12 process is designed to ensure that the debtor
- 13 can maximize its assets for the benefit of
- 14 creditors.
- 15 And so what the insurer as insurer is
- doing here is seeking to co-opt the debtor's
- 17 bankruptcy for the purpose of protecting its own
- 18 interests.
- Justice Thomas, I can start with the
- 20 timing question if you like.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, let -- well,
- 22 you can start with that, but also I think that
- 23 the -- their interest isn't so much in
- feathering their own nest per se but, rather,
- 25 that they be treated with the anti-fraud

- 1 provisions the same way that the claims under
- 2 the trust are being treated.
- 3 MR. FREDERICK: Yes. And let me start
- 4 with -- I'm going to call these pretrial
- 5 disclosure requirements because Truck had six
- 6 months of discovery to try to prove any fraud
- 7 with the Kaiser claimants and came up with
- 8 crickets.
- 9 What they are calling anti-fraud
- 10 prevention measures are really requirements to
- impose on state courts that before a claimant
- can file a claim, a claimant has to comply with
- 13 what Truck wants for information that a state
- 14 court might or might not require under state
- 15 court rules of procedure.
- So, if you were to accept the idea
- 17 that their nomenclature drives the outcome here,
- 18 you're essentially saying bankruptcy courts have
- 19 the authority to tell state courts how to do
- 20 their discovery process.
- 21 And, Justice Barrett, that's why we're
- 22 fighting this, because the claimants shouldn't
- 23 be required to impose on themselves and their
- families a lot of information that if Truck
- 25 really wanted it, it could ask for it in state

1 court discovery proceedings and state court 2 judges could decide --3 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Mr. Frederick --MR. FREDERICK: -- is that relevant or 4 burdensome or not. 5 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- why do all 7 these other circuits and other bankruptcy courts impose it? If they felt the same way that 8 9 you're arguing, are they violating the 10 Bankruptcy Code by -- or -- or disrespecting 11 state courts because that's what they require? 12 MR. FREDERICK: No. The requirements 13 here are only for a very small class of claims 14 that are called extraordinary claims. And they 15 are extraordinary claims, it's defined at JA 16 427, under the plan. These are not insured 17 claims where the claimant is seeking to say that 18 Kaiser was responsible for the vast bulk of its 19 exposure to asbestos. 20 And in that very unusual circumstance, 21 which actually in the implementation of this 2.2 plan hasn't arisen yet, the requirement is for 23 that claimant to come forward with proof of a 24 negative, that it hadn't been exposed to

asbestos by any other potential tortfeasor.

- 1 so we're talking about a very narrow class with
- 2 a description for a very particularized purpose
- 3 that Truck wants to appropriate and force so
- 4 that claimants will have less of an opportunity
- 5 to invoke their jury trial rights in state
- 6 court, which are protected under the U.S. Code.
- 7 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But why -- why
- 8 should you as the debtor trust have that
- 9 advantage and not give it to them?
- 10 MR. FREDERICK: Because --
- 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's -- that's
- 12 the difference in treatment that they're
- 13 claiming is contrary to the plan.
- MR. FREDERICK: It's not for this
- 15 reason. The -- the treatment by Kaiser of Truck
- is exactly the same before bankruptcy as it was
- 17 now. Truck agreed contractually --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But bankruptcy
- 19 changes everyone. It changes who the debtor is
- 20 to the trust. It -- by its own terms, it's
- 21 extinguishing the debtor's obligation --
- 22 obligations to anyone, except under the extant
- 23 contract, but the incentives are different.
- 24 There is inherent change.
- MR. FREDERICK: That's why the

- 1 principle of insurance neutrality, which was
- 2 developed 30 years ago in the courts of appeals
- 3 and has actually followed in every single court
- 4 of appeals that has addressed this question, has
- 5 looked at whether the insurers' legal
- 6 obligations are altered, and if they are not --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You're still --
- 8 then circle back to my initial question. Other
- 9 bankruptcy courts have imposed these same
- 10 requirements and they've done it. Are they
- 11 breaching bankruptcy law? Are they stepping on
- state courts in an improper way? What are they
- doing? And why are you fighting something that
- 14 you admit your claimants in discovery might well
- 15 have to give up?
- 16 MR. FREDERICK: Because it's up to the
- 17 state court to decide that.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Why?
- MR. FREDERICK: Because they are the
- ones that will be superintending discovery.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But what -- what
- 22 does that have to do with the --
- MR. FREDERICK: Because the --
- JUST SOTOMAYOR: What does that have
- 25 to do with anything? Meaning, you know, if --

- 1 if -- you eventually in -- in most jurisdictions
- will have to give up something like that because
- 3 there is very few jurisdictions who would say
- 4 they have to pay the entire cost if there's
- 5 multiple exposures or they have to pay the
- 6 entire cost if other people have paid you.
- 7 That's all that's being sought.
- 8 MR. FREDERICK: It's more than that,
- 9 Justice Sotomayor, which is why they're fighting
- 10 so hard for it. And -- and I want to make this
- 11 very clear, that the point of the extraordinary
- 12 procedure is because the trust itself is having
- to pay the claims. They are not insured by
- 14 definition. And to protect --
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's the whole
- 16 point.
- 17 MR. FREDERICK: No.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You're trying to
- 19 give yourself something more than you're giving
- 20 someone else, and you want to reach into their
- 21 pocket and say I'll give myself more than you.
- MR. FREDERICK: Because the contract
- of insurance, which they litigated for 19 years
- in California state courts, definitively
- determined they will have to pay the claimants

- 1 who are insured --
- 2 JUSTICE KAGAN: So I think I'm getting
- 3 the equities of this, Mr. Frederick, as you
- 4 describe it, is that they had a contract and
- 5 they've been protected as to that contract, and
- 6 they're just looking to get a better deal now
- 7 and to kind of take advantage of the bankruptcy.
- 8 So I'm getting the equities here.
- 9 I'm not getting where you derive from
- 10 the text the idea that they're not parties in
- interest because they have a material interest
- in what comes out of the bankruptcy proceeding,
- and they can improve their position materially
- in the bankruptcy proceeding.
- 15 MR. FREDERICK: The cases that we cite
- 16 historically under the Transportation Act of
- 17 1920 make very clear that if you're just seeking
- 18 a benefit, you don't get party-in-interest
- 19 status. You have to show aggrievement and harm
- 20 to your pre-position.
- 21 JUSTICE KAGAN: So those are some
- 22 1920s cases. Do you have anything in the text
- that can suggest that the text has incorporated
- 24 that view?
- 25 MR. FREDERICK: We don't have anything

- 1 like that, although I would point to the history
- 2 that the Debtors' brief very helpfully lays out,
- 3 which explains how the original -- origination
- 4 of the Bankruptcy Code went through these
- 5 iterations and accepted those principles for
- 6 party in interest.
- 7 And I think that it makes sense from
- 8 an Article III perspective too because the other
- 9 side is essentially saying Article III has no
- 10 role to play here, where a bankruptcy process is
- 11 a multifaceted fight over a res. What is the
- debtor's estate? Who gets that property?
- 13 And so those claims are going to be
- 14 somewhat flowing in and out. And it is
- imperative in the 524(g) context that you
- 16 recognize Article III has a role to play. Why?
- 17 Because the district court has to enter the
- 18 final injunction. The bankruptcy court does not
- 19 have the authority to do that under the statute.
- 20 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. Frederick, I
- 21 certainly get your arguments and why they might
- 22 persuade a bankruptcy court to rule for you and
- 23 not require these anti-fraud provisions.
- 24 But I think you've admitted that a
- 25 court can do those provisions and they have done

- them in other cases lawfully, right?
- 2 MR. FREDERICK: For the trust's
- 3 benefit, but not where there's an insurance
- 4 neutrality --
- 5 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.
- 6 MR. FREDERICK: -- clause.
- 7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So -- so -- so the
- 8 question becomes, can they be heard? That's the
- 9 only question before us. Can they be heard at
- 10 all? And I guess I'm struggling on that one.
- 11 We're not discussing the power of the
- 12 court. We're not discussing what it might rule.
- We're only discussing who can be heard. And I
- 14 think you -- you have to acknowledge that there
- are creditors who can be heard, even if it's a
- 16 virtual certainty that they will get nothing or
- 17 a virtual certainty they will get a hundred
- 18 cents on the dollar.
- 19 MR. FREDERICK: Right.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: They still can be
- 21 heard.
- MR. FREDERICK: They can be heard
- 23 until the point where their impairment is
- 24 determined.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, they -- they

- 1 may not have a vote, but they can be heard on
- 2 any issue. No?
- 3 MR. FREDERICK: Until their impairment
- 4 has been determined, Justice Gorsuch. That's
- 5 the key point. That's --
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Where do you get
- 7 that from?
- 8 MR. FREDERICK: 1126(f).
- 9 JUSTICE GORSUCH: That's -- that's who
- 10 votes.
- MR. FREDERICK: But the point of
- voting is who can hear, and the whole point of
- 13 the chart which you can see the bankruptcy
- 14 court's determination, is who's impaired or not
- 15 because the bankruptcy court has to get to an
- 16 end place. There were a dozen insurers here,
- and under their position, there is no limiting
- 18 principle to any of those insurers who could
- 19 continue to fight because they want to get
- 20 benefits out of a bankruptcy process that
- 21 Congress foreclosed to them.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Do you agree on
- 23 Article III that that's with respect to a
- 24 plaintiff coming to court and not with respect
- 25 to those who object under Bond and Clapper?

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1
               MR. FREDERICK: No, I don't agree with
 2
      that.
 3
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: You disagree with
     Bond and Clapper on that?
 4
               MR. FREDERICK: I think that -- I
 5
 6
      think Clapper is actually more helpful for our
7
      side, Justice --
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: What about Bond?
 8
               MR. FREDERICK: Bond, I think that the
 9
     point is where the effort by the objector in
10
11
     this situation is seeking to get a benefit and
12
     must show under Article III that it has injury
     in fact that is redressable and traceable to the
13
14
     plan.
15
               Here, Truck can't satisfy either
16
     because its redressability problem is really
17
     because they think state courts are not going to
18
     be adequate to police fraud, and they don't --
19
      they are not able to trace their harm as insurer
20
      to the plan because of the insurance neutrality
21
     provision.
2.2
                And so I think there's a very serious
23
     Article III question here that Truck has
24
      essentially glided by in this argument this
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morning, but I want to urge you to take that

- 1 very seriously because it can't be the case that
- we have, like, a law school seminar or anybody
- 3 who wants to come and talk gets to talk. The
- 4 whole point of a bankruptcy proceeding is get to
- 5 a confirmed plan, and the only way to do that is
- 6 to weed out the people who have something that
- 7 they want to say and to have different threshold
- 8 provisions.
- 9 So, Justice Thomas, I wanted to get
- 10 back to your timing question. At the disclosure
- 11 statement, the -- the debtor has to present a
- 12 plan. That is where the issues of insurance
- 13 neutrality typically are going to be addressed.
- 14 And at confirmation, we are knowing then that
- 15 the creditor is impaired or not impaired.
- So those are the two key timing
- 17 mechanisms. It can't be at the outset of a
- 18 bankruptcy because there isn't enough known
- 19 about the nature of the estate --
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, if he's
- 21 not impaired, doesn't he have an interest in
- 22 making sure that doesn't change?
- MR. FREDERICK: He does, but that's
- 24 where the confirmation of the plan comes in.
- 25 And that's why, if you look at the chart, Mr.

- 1 Chief Justice, there's a -- this group is
- 2 unimpaired, this group is unimpaired because
- 3 they are paid in full.
- 4 And Truck was paid in full for its
- 5 premiums. So it is not an executory contract,
- 6 which, under the Vern Countryman definition, was
- 7 where there was un- -- lack of performance on
- 8 both sides of the contract. Here, the Debtor
- 9 performed on the contract. The Debtor paid all
- 10 the premiums.
- 11 And so it is a non-executory contract,
- 12 which I think helps give the lie to the
- government's position that calling something an
- 14 executory contract is somehow going to solve the
- problem here, where you've got performance that
- 16 is occurring at different levels and at
- 17 different stages.
- 18 And that's why the DOJ policy manual
- 19 itself says be very careful about invoking
- 20 executory contracts because they're not defined
- in the bankruptcy code and it's very difficult
- 22 to know how to administer them in practice.
- 23 And so for the government to be
- 24 suggesting that you have a test here that is so
- 25 malleable, where the interests of claimants and

- 1 creditors is critically important to
- 2 understanding how to weed out the various
- 3 muckrakers, where the United -- and I would
- 4 point you to the policyholders' brief, pages 12
- 5 to 14, which talks about just how long the
- 6 insurers have an interest. Why? Delay is
- 7 profit-maximizing. Every day insurers do not
- 8 have to pay on their claims is a good day for
- 9 the insurers, and so they have every incentive
- 10 to tell their lawyers: Go in and object to
- 11 everything because that will delay the process.
- We could have had this plan confirmed
- 13 five years ago. The only objector was Truck.
- 14 Every other insurance company agreed to the
- 15 plan. And so, by adopting some rule that
- 16 everybody gets to be heard and everybody gets to
- 17 participate --
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Truck -- isn't Truck
- on the hook for the majority of claims?
- 20 MR. FREDERICK: Truck and other
- 21 insurers.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: But doesn't -- isn't
- 23 Truck responsible for the lion's share?
- MR. FREDERICK: That's what they say,
- 25 and I have no reason to doubt it. But, Justice

- 1 Barrett, where do you draw the line there? Do
- 2 you say they're an insurer that's responsible
- 3 for two-thirds gets it? We heard the --
- 4 JUSTICE BARRETT: I was just saying
- 5 that it means less that other insurers didn't
- 6 object if they didn't have the same stake in the
- 7 claims.
- 8 MR. FREDERICK: We don't know what the
- 9 comparative issues are. The excess insurance
- 10 part is under a confidentiality standard that I
- 11 have not seen, and I can't tell you in court
- 12 what that entails.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Could you be a party
- 14 in interest at the --
- MR. FREDERICK: But what I can say,
- 16 Justice Barrett, is that it can't be a size
- 17 issue because there's no way to draw a line on a
- 18 size issue. What do you say? It's a quarter is
- 19 enough, or six insurance companies, that each
- 20 have an equal stake, is enough? How do you --
- 21 there's no --
- 22 JUSTICE BARRETT: Can I ask you a
- 23 timing question? Can you be a party in
- 24 interest -- I'm just trying to understand your
- 25 point about how things change as the -- as the

- plans develop.Chief
- 2 Chief, do you want me to --
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Sure. No.
- 4 JUSTICE BARRETT: -- stop?
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Go ahead.
- 6 JUSTICE BARRETT: Can you be a party
- 7 in interest at the beginning and then not be a
- 8 party in interest as it becomes clear your
- 9 interest isn't impaired? Is that what you're
- 10 saying?
- 11 MR. FREDERICK: I'm saying that
- 12 impairment is treated differently. So you can
- 13 be a creditor --
- 14 JUSTICE BARRETT: Yeah.
- MR. FREDERICK: -- and a party in
- interest, but you are not allowed then to vote
- on a plan and thereby exercise your voice
- 18 through your vote.
- 19 JUSTICE BARRETT: Okay.
- 20 MR. FREDERICK: The -- the code treats
- 21 that differently. And it's odd to suppose that
- an unenumerated party like an insurance company
- 23 is treated better than an insurance -- than a --
- 24 than a creditor.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,

- 1 counsel.
- 2 I just want to follow up. You were
- 3 just making the point that you can't draw that
- 4 line.
- I mean, the law does that all the
- 6 time, right? I don't care where it is and it
- 7 may be the majority or a significant part of it
- 8 or whatever.
- 9 MR. FREDERICK: And -- and that's why
- 10 I think looking to the guidance of the courts of
- 11 appeals is actually humbling at one level but
- 12 also instructive.
- For 30 years, courts of appeals have
- looked at this idea of insurance neutrality to
- determine whether a plan is materially altering
- 16 preexisting legal obligations.
- 17 In those cases where the court has
- 18 said yes, it is, insurance companies are allowed
- 19 to be parties in interest. That's the Thorpe
- 20 case out of the Ninth Circuit, the Global case
- 21 out of the Third Circuit.
- But, in those situations where there's
- 23 an insurance neutrality provision and the
- insurance company is not able to say with any
- 25 proof that its legal obligations are materially

- 1 altered, the courts of appeals have said:
- 2 You're not a party in interest.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, wouldn't
- 4 Truck want to have something to say about the
- 5 division that you've just cited?
- 6 MR. FREDERICK: And they do, Mr. Chief
- 7 Justice, because that issue is litigated. When
- 8 my friend was talking about this being at the
- 9 threshold, the whole question is, is the
- insurance company's legal obligations, are they
- impaired or not? And that fight is a very
- 12 vigorous fight in --
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But it's -- it
- 14 -- that fight continues beyond what you're
- 15 calling the threshold.
- 16 MR. FREDERICK: It -- it does
- 17 and it is. But, at a point where the plan is
- 18 confirmed and we know there will be insurance
- 19 neutrality, and we know that their rights as a
- 20 creditor are not giving them a right to vote, at
- 21 that point, it should stop and the four years
- that we spent doing appellate litigation here
- 23 ought not to be necessary.
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 25 Thomas?

1	Justice Sotomayor?			
2	Justice Kagan?			
3	Justice Gorsuch?			
4	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Can I just ask			
5	because you called them muckrakers?			
6	(Laughter.)			
7	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: The the amicus			
8	brief for the professors on the other side, and			
9	you can just respond to this, says, "Indeed,			
10	when an insurer faces millions of dollars in			
11	financial liability, like Petitioner does here,			
12	common sense and fundamental bankruptcy policy			
13	dictate that it be considered a party in			
14	interest in the bankruptcy proceeding."			
15	So you can just I mean, this is			
16	repeating what you've said probably, but that			
17	sounds different from muckrakers.			
18	MR. FREDERICK: Well, what I would			
19	say, Justice Kavanaugh, is that a party in			
20	interest has extraordinary rights. They have			
21	the right to contest the trustee, the			
22	appointment, the powers of the trustee. They			
23	can object to the lifting of the automatic stay			
24	They can ask for the elimination of a plan.			
25	They can ask for the transformation of it from a			

- 1 Chapter 11 to a Chapter 7.
- 2 And those powers are -- are -- are and
- 3 rights are very powerful and they take
- 4 bankruptcy courts an enormous amount of time to
- 5 thoughtfully and conscientiously work their way
- 6 through.
- 7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Thank you.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 9 Barrett?
- 10 JUSTICE BARRETT: No.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 12 Jackson?
- Thank you, counsel.
- MR. FREDERICK: Thank you.
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Ms. Ho, you
- 16 have rebuttal.
- 17 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF ALLYSON N. HO
- 18 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- 19 MS. HO: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 20 Three points. Two quick and one a little bit
- 21 longer.
- 22 One, just to really underscore
- 23 1126(f), that is about voting. That is not
- about what 1109(b) about, which is being heard,
- 25 two very different things.

1 Number two, on intervention, Congress 2 did away with the requirement that parties in 3 interest must intervene when it replaced 206 and 207 with 1109(b). 4 And three, my -- my friends have 5 talked a lot about the insurer in this case 6 7 trying to get something out of the bankruptcy or seek a benefit. 8 9 Trying to stem the tide of over inflated claims is not seeking a benefit. 10 11 just trying to make sure that the plan complies 12 with the code as bankruptcy judges have an 13 independent duty to ensure. 14 And even if you disagree with me on 15 that, it's -- it's undisputed that Truck is 16 going to pay the vast bulk of claims in this 17 case, that the plan finding adjudicates Truck's 18 insurance rights, that Truck is a creditor 19 because the insurance deductible, so it really 20 is a party in interest several times over. And I haven't heard from my friends on the other 21 2.2 side any justification for reading any issues 23 out of the text. 1109(b) gives stakeholders a voice, 24 25 not a vote and certainly not a veto. We would

1	respectfully ask the Court to reverse and
2	remand.
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
4	counsel.
5	MS. HO: Thank you.
6	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The case is
7	submitted.
8	(Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., the case
9	was submitted.)
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