SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES UNITED STATES,) Petitioner,) v.) No. 21-588 TEXAS, ET AL.,) (21A85) Respondents.)

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1 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES 2 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ 3) UNITED STATES, 4 Petitioner,) 5) No. 21-588 v. б TEXAS, ET AL.,) (21A85) 7 Respondents.) 8 _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ 9 10 Washington, D.C. Monday, November 1, 2021 11 12 13 The above-entitled matter came on for 14 oral argument before the Supreme Court of the 15 United States at 11:28 a.m. 16 17 **APPEARANCES:** ELIZABETH B. PRELOGAR, Solicitor General, 18 19 Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on behalf 20 of the Petitioner. JUDD E. STONE, II, Solicitor General, Austin, Texas; 21 on behalf of the State Respondent. 22 23 JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, ESQUIRE, Austin, Texas; on 24 behalf of the Private Respondents. 25

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1 PROCEEDINGS 2 (11:28 a.m.) 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument next in Case 21-588, United States 4 versus Texas. 5 6 General Prelogar. 7 ORAL ARGUMENT OF ELIZABETH B. PRELOGAR ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER 8 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Mr. Chief Justice, 9 and may it please the Court: 10 11 Texas designed S.B. 8 to thwart the 12 supremacy of federal law in open defiance of our 13 constitutional structure. States are free to ask this Court to reconsider its constitutional 14 15 precedents, but they are not free to place 16 themselves above this Court, nullify the Court's 17 decisions in their borders, and block the 18 judicial review necessary to vindicate federal 19 rights. 20 As this case comes to the Court, there 21 are three principal questions: First, is Texas responsible for this law? Second, can the 2.2 United States sue to hold Texas to account? 23 And, third, is the injunctive relief available? 24 25 And the answer is yes down the line.

1 Texas is responsible for the constitutional 2 violation here. It enacted a law that clearly violates this Court's precedents. It designed 3 that law to thwart judicial review by offering 4 bounties to the general public to carry out the 5 state's enforcement function, and it structured 6 7 those enforcement proceedings to be so burdensome and to threaten such significant 8 9 liability that they chill the exercise of the constitutional right altogether. 10

11 The United States has a manifest 12 sovereign interest in suing to redress this violation. S.B. 8 is a brazen attack on the 13 coordinate branches of the federal government. 14 15 It's an attack on the authority of this Court to 16 say what the law is and to have that judgment 17 respected across the 50 states. And it's an 18 attack on Congress's determination that there 19 should be access to pre-enforcement review in 20 federal court to vindicate federal rights. The 21 United States may sue to protect the supremacy 2.2 of federal law against this attack. 23

Finally, the injunction is a proper
response to Texas's unprecedented law. If Texas
can nullify Roe and Casey in this manner, then

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1 other states could do the same with other 2 constitutional rights or other decisions of this Court that they disfavor. 3 Federal courts are not powerless to 4 craft relief to stop that intolerable threat to 5 6 our constitutional hierarchy. 7 JUSTICE THOMAS: General Prelogar, would you spend just a few minutes on the United 8 9 States' interest that gives you a basis for being involved in this suit? 10 11 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Of course, Justice 12 Thomas. The interest of the United States here 13 is the sovereign interest in ensuring that 14 states cannot flout the supremacy of federal law 15 by enacting a law that's clearly 16 unconstitutional and then, through this simple 17 mechanism of outsourcing enforcement authority 18 to the world at large, blocking the traditional 19 mechanisms for judicial review that -- that Congress in Section 1983 and that this Court in 20 21 Ex parte Young recognized would be vital to 2.2 securing federal constitutional rights against that kind of law. 23 24 JUSTICE THOMAS: Is there any 25 difference between legislation and precedents of

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1	this Court as far as the supremacy interests
2	that you have?
3	GENERAL PRELOGAR: I think that if a
4	state structured a law in exactly this manner to
5	try to flout this Court's precedents, for
6	example, interpreting statutes, that it would
7	raise that same kind of supremacy concern.
8	But, of course, here, I think that the
9	situation has additional urgency because what
10	Texas has done is taken a constitutional
11	precedent from this Court and legislated in
12	direct defiance of that precedent and then tried
13	to, in the words of the intervenors, box the
14	judiciary out of the equation and prevent the
15	courts from being able to provide any meaningful
16	form of redress.
17	JUSTICE THOMAS: You you
18	JUSTICE BREYER: Do go ahead.
19	JUSTICE THOMAS: You you based your
20	involvement quite a bit on Debs. Can you give
21	me a couple of examples where the United States
22	has taken a similar action based on Debs?
23	GENERAL PRELOGAR: I'd be happy to,
24	and I want to acknowledge at the outset that we
25	can't point to a case that looks exactly like

this one, and that's because there has never been a law exactly like this one. No state has ever sought to challenge the supremacy of federal law and keep the courts out of the equation in quite the same way. But I think that there are relevant

7 principles to distill from the Debs line of cases. And what the Court has said is that the 8 United States cannot come in and seek to 9 intervene in a merely private dispute. It needs 10 11 to be acting on the basis of the public interest 12 and the public at large and that, further, the subject matter of the suit has to be one that 13 14 concerns and is entrusted to the care of the 15 nation as a whole and for which the nation owes 16 a duty to her citizens.

17 And this Court, in various precedents 18 in the Debs line, has recognized that that kind 19 of sovereign interest can occur in -- in a variety of circumstances. For example, in the 20 21 American Bell case, the Court recognized that 2.2 the United States could sue in equity to seek to 23 void a patent that had been obtained by fraud even though the United States had no 24 25 reversionary interest or proprietary interest in

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1 that patent. It was acting on behalf of the 2 nation as a whole to ensure that there couldn't be an acquisition of a monopoly that was based 3 on fraud in that manner. 4 JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, actually, what 5 6 I'm more interested in is, have you done 7 something similar when a constitutional right has been involved? For example, there was much 8 discussion about tort actions that were allowed 9 10 in states involving Second Amendment rights. 11 I'm sure there were many opportunities in the 12 area of race, particularly during segregation, to do similar things. 13 14 Do you have any examples, not 15 precedents but examples, of the national 16 government taking part in or playing the exact 17 same role or doing exactly what you're doing in 18 other areas involving constitutional rights? 19 GENERAL PRELOGAR: I don't have 20 examples, but that's because I'm not aware of any circumstance where a state before has sought 21 2.2 to prevent access to the ordinary mechanisms for 23 judicial review that --24 JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, even if --25 GENERAL PRELOGAR: -- safeguard

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1 federal rights. 2 JUSTICE THOMAS: -- it's not exactly the same, when a constitutional right is being 3 frustrated by a state process, have you sought 4 to participate in the manner that you're 5 6 participating now because the supremacy of the 7 -- of a U.S. law or constitutional right is not 8 being respected? GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, I want to be 9 very clear, Justice Thomas, that we're not 10 11 asserting here an authority to sue just because 12 the state enacted an unconstitutional law. Ordinarily, that wouldn't present the same grave 13 14 threat to supremacy because, under Section 1983 15 or Ex parte Young, there would be a swift 16 pre-enforcement remedy in federal court. 17 And so the interest we're asserting 18 here isn't intrinsically tied to the underlying 19 substantive right at issue. It's tied to the fact that the state has structured this scheme 20 21 in a deliberate attempt to prevent federal 2.2 courts from doing anything about the constitutional violation. 23 24 And because a state has never before 25 crafted an enforcement scheme like this, there

has not been the kind of situation that would
 prompt the United States to intervene in this
 manner.

JUSTICE KAGAN: General Prelogar, 4 could I take you to one of the other questions 5 6 that you started with? In these extremely 7 unusual, unprecedented circumstances, you said the Court is not powerless to craft relief. 8 9 Well, you heard the last argument, and 10 there were -- much of the last argument was all 11 about, like, what would relief look like and how 12 should we craft relief if -- if it were -- if 13 relief were appropriate? And there were -- you 14 know, is it a -- an injunction against the

15 clerks or is it an injunction against the state 16 AG or is it an injunction against -- fill in the 17 blank. How should we craft relief?

18 GENERAL PRELOGAR: I think the 19 appropriate relief here is the relief that the 20 district court entered. The court enjoined 21 Texas from implementing S.B. 8 and enforcing it 2.2 in any manner, and then the court went further 23 to identify all the various stages of the S.B. 8 24 enforcement proceedings where that injunction 25 would -- would operate to stop the threat of

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1 those enforcement actions that have chilled the 2 exercise of the right. And there were three relevant 3 features. First, the district court said that 4 the injunction would appropriately bind those 5 S.B. 8 plaintiffs who actually choose to 6 7 exercise the state's enforcement authority. And so those who actually file suit thereby act in 8 9 concert or active participation with the state. 10 Second, the district court recognized 11 that in these very unusual circumstances it was 12 also appropriate to bind the clerks and the 13 judges, who are being used as part of the 14 machinery of this apparatus to impose the 15 substantial chilling effect through the S.B. 8 16 enforcement actions. 17 And, finally, the district court 18 recognized that the injunction would reach on 19 the back end any effort by state officials to 20 enforce those judgments because that too would 21 perpetuate the constitutional violation. 2.2 So I think we have the model already. 23 It's the injunction the United States obtained in this case, and it's intended to provide full 24 25 and complete relief against the threat, the

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1 grave threat that S.B. 8 is posing to the 2 supremacy of federal law right now. JUSTICE KAGAN: And if there's some 3 fear that the law we make about how to craft 4 relief will apply in other cases where it's not 5 so necessary, what would you say, what would you 6 7 do to ensure that that did not take place, to essentially cabin this kind of relief to the 8 peculiar circumstances of this case? 9 10 GENERAL PRELOGAR: I think it would be 11 appropriate to cabin it in two ways. 12 First, in recognition that ordinarily 13 it is far more appropriate to enjoin the 14 upstream enforcement agents who would be 15 bringing cases to the court in the first 16 instance. That is the ordinary way that an Ex 17 parte Young action proceeds. And if the state 18 had not specifically sought to thwart that 19 mechanism here by outsourcing the enforcement 20 authority to the general public, that kind of 21 injunction would have been appropriate. 2.2 But the problem is that the state has 23 specifically, by delegating to members of the 24 general public this enforcement authority, it's 25 specifically made it impossible to determine in

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1 advance who was going to become an S.B. 8 2 plaintiff, who was going to actually choose to 3 file suit. And I think, in that circumstance, injunctive relief that prevents the state court 4 proceedings from going forward is appropriate. 5 And then the second limitation that I 6 think the Court could articulate is that this is 7 the rare case where the mere existence or threat 8 9 of the litigation is itself causing the 10 constitutional harm. It's the flood of S.B. 8 11 enforcement suits that could be filed that is 12 chilling the exercise of the constitutional right today. And it's not normally the case in 13 14 an ordinary suit that the mere prospect that 15 there could be a case filed would create this 16 kind of profound harm and chilling effect on 17 constitutional rights. 18 But that was Texas's intent here. 19 That was its clear purpose. And it's the actual 20 effect because right now in Texas that 21 constitutionally protected care is not 2.2 available. 23 JUSTICE ALITO: You know, General, I 24 -- I appreciate your point. Texas says, you say, has done everything it possibly can to try 25

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1 to make it difficult for abortion providers to 2 vindicate their rights under our precedents. I -- I get it. I think it's a 3 forceful argument. But I think we have to be 4 concerned about the implications of the 5 6 mechanisms that you propose for providing some 7 kind of relief. A lot of your brief and all the other briefs that have been -- that have been 8 9 filed against Texas in both of these cases suggest that we should issue a rule that applies 10 11 just to this case. 12 But that's inconsistent with the rule We -- if we decide a -- when we decide 13 of law. 14 a case, the rule that we establish should apply 15 to everybody who's similarly situated. 16 And if you look at the particulars of 17 the enforcement mechanisms, they are 18 unprecedented and they provide cause for 19 concern. And so I -- I'd really like to hear 20 your explanation about why they're appropriate 21 and how they can be limited to this case. 2.2 Start with the judges. It's 23 unprecedented and it is contrary to our system 24 of federalism to enjoin a state judge even from 25 hearing a case. When has that been done and how

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can that be justified? 1 2 The judge is a neutral arbiter. The 3 judge is -- is bound to apply the Constitution. How can you say -- how can you enjoin a judge 4 5 from performing a lawful act, which is the adjudication of a case that is filed before the 6 7 judge? GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, I want to be 8 9 perfectly precise that in our case, the district court enjoined Texas and found that that 10 11 injunction could properly reach the state court 12 personnel who would be then exercising the 13 state's authority. 14 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, Texas is an 15 abstract entity, and any -- an injunction has to 16 apply to people. Yes, there are instances where 17 a state has been enjoined, and what that means is that everybody under the control of, let's 18 say, the state who has -- everybody who has to 19 20 follow what the state attorney general says has 21 to comply. And the state can pick -- you know, 2.2 can -- can work out the -- the -- the way 23 that would work. But that doesn't apply to 24 state court judges.

25 GENERAL PRELOGAR: While I certainly

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1 acknowledge, Justice Alito, that an injunction 2 that would bind state court judges is extremely rare, it's not unheard of, and I think, in the 3 unprecedented facts of this case, it's 4 appropriate relief. And --5 6 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, judges have been 7 enjoined --8 GENERAL PRELOGAR: -- and the reason for that is --9 10 JUSTICE ALITO: -- let me just 11 interrupt you -- judges have been enjoined from 12 performing unlawful acts. But, here, the act 13 that they are enjoined from performing is a 14 lawful act. How can that be justified? 15 Let me give you this example. Suppose 16 a -- an action is brought under S.B. 8 in 17 federal court pursuant to diversity jurisdiction. Let's say a -- a -- a woman sues 18 19 a doctor who has flown in from another state to 20 perform the abortion. 21 Would the district judge in this case 22 have the authority to enjoin another district 23 judge from even hearing that case? GENERAL PRELOGAR: No, I don't think 24 25 that the injunction could properly reach the

1 federal system. I -- I don't think that there 2 is any realistic possibility that any of these 3 suits could possibly proceed in federal court because the distinct feature of S.B. 8 is that 4 the plaintiffs who are authorized to sue need 5 6 not have any injury or suffer any harm from the 7 prohibited abortions. And so I think the idea that there 8 9 would be a proper basis for Article III 10 jurisdiction is lacking. JUSTICE ALITO: Well, it's certainly 11 12 possible to think of -- think of cases where there would be federal jurisdiction. A woman 13 sues an out-of-state doctor in diversity under 14 15 S.B. 8 for physical or emotional harm suffered 16 as a result of the abortion. There's injury in 17 fact, and the amount in controversy could be 18 met. 19 So your answer is one federal judge 20 can't enjoin another federal judge, but a federal judge can enjoin state judges because 21 2.2 they're -- they're lower creatures. That's the

23 answer?

24 GENERAL PRELOGAR: That -- that is not 25 what I mean to suggest. Here, the injunction

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1 runs against Texas, and the state court judges 2 in Texas are being utilized by Texas to effectively create an apparatus that is so 3 lopsided, so procedurally anomalous, and so 4 hostile to constitutionally protected conduct 5 that the mere existence of the suits, no matter 6 7 how the judges adjudicate them, create the constitutional harm by chilling the conduct. 8 9 And so we are not suggesting that --10 that the judges would do anything other than 11 actually follow federal law here. We think each 12 and every one of these S.B. 8 suits would 13 inevitably be dismissed because the statute is 14 so clearly unconstitutional, but that doesn't 15 remedy the constitutional --16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So -- so --17 GENERAL PRELOGAR: -- harm because the constitutionally protected care isn't being 18 19 provided in the first place. 20 JUSTICE GORSUCH: General, to -- to 21 achieve this injunction against state courts, do 2.2 we also have to overrule Ex parte Young, where 23 we said -- and I'll just quote the relevant bit I've got before me -- it's: "An injunction 24 25 against a state court would be a violation of

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1 the whole scheme of our government. The 2 difference between a power to enjoin an 3 individual from doing certain things and the power to enjoin courts from proceeding in their 4 own way to exercise jurisdiction is plain, and 5 6 no power to do the latter exists because of the 7 power to do the former." So do -- do we have to overrule at 8 9 least that aspect of -- of Ex parte Young? 10 GENERAL PRELOGAR: No, Justice 11 Gorsuch. I think that that aspect of Ex parte 12 Young has to be read in the context of the Court's recognition there and the whole thrust 13 14 of the opinion that the appropriate relief would 15 run --16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: No, I --17 GENERAL PRELOGAR: -- against the 18 enforcement agents themselves. 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- I understand 20 that, and that was Justice Breyer's point 21 earlier. But -- but Ex parte Young also said 2.2 this. And -- and I think that's just -- am I 23 wrong? How do you reconcile saying you can 24 never enjoin a court with saying you can here? 25 Isn't -- something has to give, doesn't it?

1 GENERAL PRELOGAR: While I certainly 2 think that it is not uncommon in equity to have relief that is targeted to prevent a suit in law 3 from proceeding, I acknowledge it's unusual to 4 have that relief run against the judges 5 themselves, and if this Court has concerns with 6 7 that approach, I think that the Court could rightly recognize that the remedy here could 8 9 focus on the clerks engaged in the ministerial 10 task of docketing the cases and, as our 11 injunction does, against the -- the S.B. 8 12 plaintiffs, who are actually exercising the court's enforcement authority. 13 14 But I do think that the Court's 15 statement in Ex parte Young has to be read 16 against the backdrop of this Court's recognition 17 that there would be otherwise effective relief 18 available. And what we're confronting here is a 19 situation where it's very difficult to find that 20 effective relief by design because the Texas --21 because Texas designed the law specifically to 2.2 thwart it. 23 JUSTICE GORSUCH: General, do you 24 agree that there are instances in which no 25 federal forum is available to adjudicate a

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1 federal right? 2 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes, I do agree 3 that that is sometimes the case, and --JUSTICE GORSUCH: Do you also agree 4 that it's sometimes the case that a federal 5 right can only be enforced defensively and not 6 7 in a pre-enforcement challenge? GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes, that can be 8 9 the case. 10 JUSTICE ALITO: Can you tell us what 11 are the elements that must be necessary for you 12 to have -- to seek the kind of equitable relief that you are seeking here? 13 It -- would it be limited to cases 14 15 where every single one of the characteristics of 16 S.B. 8 that you mentioned are present? Must 17 they all be present? And if that is the case, 18 is this really what you're seeking, a rule for 19 one case? 20 GENERAL PRELOGAR: I don't want to 21 suggest that every single feature of S.B. 8 22 would necessarily have to be replicated, but I 23 think that the overall inquiry would have to focus on whether the state has deliberately 24 25 sought to prevent any effective means of

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1 judicial review.

2	And, here, we have it both with
3	respect to federal court of course, the state
4	has sought to supplant the traditional 1983
5	action, Ex parte Young action but we have it
6	on the back end as well, where the state is
7	trying to purposefully make these S.B. 8
8	enforcement proceedings so anomalous,
9	procedurally anomalous, and feature rules that
10	are so stacked in favor of plaintiffs and
11	defendants that that the clear purpose and
12	actual effect has been to chill the right.
13	And I think that this is a response to
14	Justice Gorsuch's questions as well because,
15	although it is true that sometimes there's not a
16	federal forum to raise a federal claim, for
17	example, with defamation, it's not the case that
18	in those circumstances the state court
19	proceedings are heavily weighted in favor of the
20	plaintiffs with the evident intent to chill the
21	speech from occurring.
22	And and the proof is in how this
23	has actually worked in practice, because
24	defamation actions haven't meant that no speech
25	occurs.

1	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, counsel, but
2	we we we we've created a whole
3	substantive law of defamation out of concern for
4	chilling effects. And why why, on that
5	theory, wouldn't we go one step further? For
6	all the reasons you've provided they're good
7	reasons, and I think Justice Alito said they're
8	strong arguments why wouldn't we do the same
9	thing for that other very vital and important
10	right or or the Second Amendment right or the
11	right to free exercise of religion?
12	They're all we don't get to pick
13	and choose among our rights. We're supposed to
14	enforce them all equally. Why does this one get
15	special treatment?
16	GENERAL PRELOGAR: This law is
17	different because it has taken the ordinary
18	state court mechanism that might be an
19	appropriate way to vindicate the rights,
20	whatever they are, and it's purposefully sought
21	to
22	JUSTICE GORSUCH: But you'd agree
23	GENERAL PRELOGAR: obstruct that.
24	JUSTICE GORSUCH: you'd agree that
25	tort laws for defamation have a chilling effect?

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1 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes, but they 2 haven't chilled speech --3 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And you'd agree that 4 _ _ GENERAL PRELOGAR: -- out of 5 6 existence. 7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- that gun control laws also have a chilling effect? 8 9 GENERAL PRELOGAR: They can, but not 10 _ _ 11 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And -- and you'd 12 agree --GENERAL PRELOGAR: -- in the same way 13 14 that S.B. 8 operates. 15 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- as well that laws 16 restricting the exercise of religion can have a 17 chilling effect? 18 GENERAL PRELOGAR: I'm not denying, 19 Justice Gorsuch, that -- that those kinds of 20 laws can have some measure of chilling effect on the margins, but they look nothing like this 21 2.2 law. 23 JUSTICE KAGAN: You're not suggesting, General Prelogar, that this right is different, 24 25 are you? If this exact law were promulgated --

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were -- were -- were issued by a state that 1 2 wanted to be hostile to gun rights, your argument would be the same, would it not? 3 GENERAL PRELOGAR: It would be exactly 4 the same because the threat here is to the 5 6 supremacy of federal law that's accomplished by 7 trying to cut off the channels of judicial review that Congress recognized in Section 1983 8 9 would be vital to vindicating federal rights, 10 whether that's Second Amendment rights or rights 11 to religious liberty or, here, the right to 12 abortion. JUSTICE ALITO: Well, does it -- does 13 14 it matter that it's the abortion right? How 15 about the issue of severability? You want to 16 enjoin every action that's brought under S.B. 8 17 even though some of them would not violate Roe 18 or Casey. 19 And I quess the justification for that 20 is that in the abortion context, as we held in 21 the prior Whole Woman's Health case, 2.2 severability doesn't count. Normally, we pay 23 attention to severability clauses, but I guess, when it's abortion, if there's one provision of 24 25 a statute that's unconstitutional, the whole

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1 thing sinks. Is that your position? 2 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, our position 3 is that the district court rightly applied this Court's decision in Whole Woman's Health versus 4 Hellerstedt and concluded that it would 5 6 effectively amount to legislative work to walk 7 through S.B. 8 and try to parse it provision by provision and application by application to 8 9 determine which applications would be constitutionally permissible, but --10 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, is that -- is 11 12 that what you want us to do? If we find one provision of some massive federal statute 13 14 unconstitutional down the road, well, it's too 15 much work to go through them all; we're just 16 going to strike down the whole thing. Do you 17 want us to do that? 18 GENERAL PRELOGAR: The difference 19 here, I think, that the district court recognized is that it would actually require 20 21 rewriting the statute to try to reach those 2.2 lawful applications. And I think, in 23 particular, in this preliminary injunction 24 posture, where the court was acting on an 25 emergency basis, that kind of parsing wasn't

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1 necessary. 2 But, if this Court disagreed, I think all that would show is that the court should 3 confine the injunction to the applications that 4 are unlawful under Casey and Roe and make clear 5 that the only acceptable implementation of this 6 7 would be with respect to post-viability abortions. 8 And, of course, Texas already 9 separately prohibits post-viability abortions. 10 11 The providers don't provide them. So I don't 12 think that that would have any actual real-world 13 effect. 14 JUSTICE BREYER: Can you go back to 15 Justice Thomas's question? Imagine those 16 columns there are filled with the California 17 Civil Code, and let's take out those parts that 18 don't deal with private people, so what we have 19 are property and torts and so forth. And someone in your office says: I've been reading 20 21 that, don't ask me why, but I found 19 provisions here that I think are 2.2 23 unconstitutional, let's go bring a case. 24 Now, if we accept your argument, I 25 guess that person has a good point. I'm a

1 little nervous. So far, what you've said to 2 distinguish this one is you've said but, here, 3 Texas purposefully did this. Boy, that raises a whole other set of issues, as you well know, 4 when you say the legislative history counts, da, 5 6 da, da, da, da, okay? 7 Ah, but you say, but they're not giving a good -- a good forum in the state to 8 test out the constitutionality. And now I think 9 about the California Civil Code or the Procedure 10 11 Code or 15 other things, I don't know. You 12 know? Is that the test? 13 Have you sat down and thought through 14 what are the implications of the test, or is it 15 that the federal government, no matter who's in 16 charge, without a statute, whatever party, 17 whatever president, can just go and intervene in any case, can bring a federal case whenever they 18 19 think a state law affecting private people is unconstitutional? And if not, what's the test? 20 21 GENERAL PRELOGAR: No, Justice Breyer, 2.2 we are not urging a broad authority to bring a 23 suit like this in the circumstances that you identified. And I think that there are two 24 25 critical distinctions here that separate those

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1 circumstances from the ones we confront with S.B. 8. 2 3 First, here, it is perfectly clear that Congress intended to have a federal court 4 forum for the vindication of this type of claim 5 through Section 1983, and the state is 6 7 purposefully trying to manipulate it through the delegated enforcement authority and avoid that 8 federal court forum. 9 10 And, second, with respect to the state 11 court proceedings, it's not just that these 12 proceedings, in my estimation, deny a fair 13 forum. It's that by their very design, with 14 respect to each and every procedural and 15 substantive rule, they -- they display open 16 hostility to federal rights and try to prevent 17 any effective forum to get statewide relief, 18 declaring this law in violation of this Court's 19 precedents. 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, 21 counsel. 2.2 I share some of the concerns that have 23 been voiced by my colleagues. You say this case 24 is very narrow, it's rare, it's -- it's -- it's 25 particularly problematic. But the authority you

assert to respond to it is as broad as can be.
 It's equity, you say. We have the authority to
 sue states under equity, which is a limitless
 ill-defined authority.
 And I just wonder -- I know you've
 been asked this question before, but if you

7 could repeat your answer -- what is the limiting principle? When we get another case down the 8 road where it's a different solicitor general 9 10 who's making this argument in a different case, 11 what are we going to be able to point to that 12 says no, no, you can't invoke that broad equity 13 power, or you can't say just because there's a 14 state statute that is enforced by private 15 parties, which is a very common phenomenon, that 16 you then get to sue -- sue the states? GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, Mr. Chief 17 18 Justice, the equitable remedy that we're seeking here is not limitless. It is the traditional 19 remedy of enjoining implementation of an 20 21 unconstitutional law. And the limiting 2.2 principle that will govern --23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, it's hardly traditional to get injunctions against 24 25 judges, injunctions against clerks, injunctions

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1 against everybody, right? That's part of the relief you seek, isn't it? People -- anybody 2 3 can bring one of these suits, so you're seeking an injunction against the world, right? 4 GENERAL PRELOGAR: No, we're seeking 5 6 an injunction against those who actually choose 7 to involve themselves in the constitutional violation by filing suit. So it's not the --8 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, anybody 10 -- anybody can -- can do that. But anyway --11 I'm sorry. 12 GENERAL PRELOGAR: It's true. I -- I 13 just wanted to be very clear that the injunction 14 doesn't apply to the potential plaintiffs, only 15 to the actual plaintiffs. 16 But, to try to address the concern 17 you've raised, I think that, here, the limiting principle arises from the way this statute 18 19 operates to try to deprive any meaningful review anywhere, whether in -- in federal court at the 20 21 outset, whether in state court on the back end 2.2 through the enforcement proceedings. 23 And I recognize that this seems like a 24 novel case, and that's because it's a novel law. 25 But we do not think that a recognition

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1	here that the United States can can intervene
2	to try to protect the supremacy of federal law
3	would open the floodgates in the mine-run
4	situations where a state is simply applying a
5	private right of action through ordinary and
6	fair state court proceedings.
7	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
8	Thomas?
9	JUSTICE THOMAS: No questions, Chief.
10	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
11	Breyer?
12	Justice Alito?
13	JUSTICE ALITO: As to the potential
14	private plaintiffs, how can they be bound under
15	Rule 65 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure?
16	With what party are they acting in concert?
17	GENERAL PRELOGAR: They're acting in
18	concert with the State of Texas, which has
19	created the bounty that incentivizes their
20	conduct and has created the apparatus through
21	the enforcement proceedings that allow them to
22	to perpetuate
23	JUSTICE ALITO: With the
24	GENERAL PRELOGAR: this
25	constitutional violation.

1 JUSTICE ALITO: -- with the state, not 2 -- with the state, not with any individual who 3 is a party? GENERAL PRELOGAR: That's right. 4 We believe that they act in concert with the state, 5 which is the named defendant here, and bound by 6 7 the injunction. JUSTICE ALITO: So would any private 8 9 plaintiff bringing any common law tort suit be acting in concert with the state under the laws 10 11 of which that -- that claim is asserted? 12 GENERAL PRELOGAR: No, but there's a world of difference between an ordinary private 13 right of action and the exercise of that kind of 14 15 private enforcement and what S.B. 8 16 contemplates. 17 JUSTICE ALITO: No, I understand that. 18 GENERAL PRELOGAR: And I think the 19 best example --JUSTICE ALITO: But why -- but why is 20 21 the question whether they're acting in concert 2.2 with the state any different? Here, they're 23 acting in concert with Texas, you say, because 24 they are bringing suit under a Texas law. 25 So, if somebody brings suit in

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1	Maryland under Maryland defamation law, they're
2	acting in concert with Maryland, is that right?
3	GENERAL PRELOGAR: No. And and
4	we're not suggesting that every private right of
5	action is governed by these same principles, but
6	the key difference here is that the individuals
7	who are S.B. 8 plaintiffs are actually
8	exercising the state's own enforcement
9	authority.
10	This is not meant to remedy some
11	private harm that those individuals suffered.
12	And I think that the best example or
13	illustration of that is that the \$10,000-plus
14	bounty that the state has created is only
15	available to the first comer.
16	And so the suggestion that was made
17	earlier by Texas that this could be some redress
18	for personnel outrage, I think, is inconsistent
19	with how the scheme is structured. This is
20	meant to simply function as a method of
21	encouraging the suits to be filed on the state's
22	behalf, and in that circumstance, we think it
23	can qualify as active concert
24	JUSTICE ALITO: Well
25	GENERAL PRELOGAR: or

1 participation.

2	JUSTICE ALITO: the the Texas
3	constitution requires injury in fact, and this
4	statute, as I understand it, permits an award of
5	actual damages in addition to the liquidated
6	damages, and there's nothing particularly
7	unusual about a statute that provides for
8	liquidated damages. So I don't understand your
9	answer at all.
10	GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, Justice
11	Alito, if that's what the statute was attempting
12	to accomplish, then, presumably, it would apply
13	those liquidated damages to every single S.B. 8
14	plaintiff. It wouldn't limit it to just the
15	first person who is able to effectively bring to
16	bear the coercive force of the state's
17	enforcement authority.
18	And so the suggestion here that the
19	\$10,000 is meant to provide a presumptive dollar
20	amount on personal injury, I think, is
21	inconsistent with how the statute operates.
22	JUSTICE ALITO: All right. So one
23	final question. The the federal rules do
24	provide a mechanism for you to do what I gather
25	you're trying to do with respect to these

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1 potential private plaintiffs, and that is to 2 certify a defendant class. 3 Did you try to do that? Have you satisfied the requirements of Rule 23 to do 4 that? 5 6 GENERAL PRELOGAR: We did not try to 7 do that. And, again, I think this relates to my answer to the Chief Justice that the injunction 8 9 doesn't reach the world at large or every 10 possible person, the anyone anywhere who is 11 authorized under this law to bring suit. 12 Instead, it's narrowly focused on those individuals who choose affirmatively to 13 14 exercise the enforcement authority by filing 15 suit. 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice 17 Sotomayor? 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What -- what 19 happens to your lawsuit if we were to find that 20 Whole Woman's Health is justiciable? 21 GENERAL PRELOGAR: I think that that 22 wouldn't retroactively operate to -- to 23 extinguish the sovereign injury that the United 24 States experienced when Texas passed this law 25 and clearly attempted to thwart judicial review

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1 at a time when the law was unsettled. But I do think that if this Court 2 clarified in Whole Woman's Health that the 3 providers can move forward with their suit and 4 if it forcefully rejected Texas's effort here to 5 stymie that kind of federal court review, then 6 7 we wouldn't have the same sovereign interest in a future case because, at that point, the law 8 would be settled and this attempt at 9 10 circumvention would clearly not work, and so it 11 wouldn't --12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: They can't sue the 13 state the way you can because of sovereign immunity. So one of the big issues for them --14 15 and I'm not asking you to litigate their case, 16 but I'm asking for your views of how it affects 17 yours -- is who do they sue? 18 They haven't sued, like you have, all 19 S.B. 8 plaintiffs who file suit. They've sued a clerk of the court, a judge, and a attorney 20 general and other state officials. 21 2.2 So how do they get the relief that 23 you're seeking? You've heard Justice Thomas --24 Justice Alito say not everybody has been named 25 because the S.B. 8 plaintiffs have not been

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1 named. So how can they be bound? 2 GENERAL PRELOGAR: That's right, 3 Justice Sotomayor. And I think that that reflects that the relief that we're seeking is 4 in some respects different than the relief that 5 the providers could obtain in their suit because 6 7 they don't have a mechanism to identify or sue the S.B. 8 plaintiffs. Here, our injunction can 8 9 rightly reach those plaintiffs because the State of Texas is subject to our suit and then the 10 11 plaintiffs can be bound under Rule 65. 12 I think that the providers, therefore, 13 have rightly focused on trying to target the 14 aspect of the enforcement proceedings that 15 create the harm through the filing of the cases 16 in the first place, and I understand that to be 17 the basis of their request that the Court 18 recognize their claim as against the clerk 19 class. 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Thank you. 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice Kagan? JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, is it also 2.2 23 possible that in this Whole -- in the Whole Woman's Health suit that the AG could stand in 24 25 for the individual plaintiffs in the way that in

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1 your suit the state essentially stands in for 2 the individual plaintiffs? GENERAL PRELOGAR: I think that is 3 possible, Justice Kagan. And so, if this Court 4 concluded that the AG of Texas could properly be 5 6 enjoined here in the provider suit, then that 7 effectively, I think, would pierce the fiction here that the state has tried to create by 8 9 delegating the AG's enforcement authority to the 10 world at large and could rightly try to target 11 that aspect of the enforcement scheme. 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice 13 Gorsuch? 14 JUSTICE GORSUCH: General, are you 15 aware of a -- of a precedent that permits an 16 injunction against all persons in -- in -- in 17 the country or the world, the cosmos, who bring 18 suit? 19 GENERAL PRELOGAR: No, Justice 20 Gorsuch. 21 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So this --2.2 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Our injunction doesn't do that either. 23 JUSTICE GORSUCH: But you said it --24 25 against anyone who brings suit, right? So I did

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1 include that in my limitation. Am I missing 2 something? GENERAL PRELOGAR: Just to be clear --3 4 and I -- I'm sorry if I wasn't clear about this 5 before -- we understand the injunction only to bind those individuals who choose to file suit. 6 7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Who bring suit. GENERAL PRELOGAR: And so that --8 9 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah, that's my 10 question. 11 GENERAL PRELOGAR: -- at that point, 12 they would be identifiable. 13 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And I'm asking you, 14 counsel, are you aware of any other example of 15 such a -- such an injunction? 16 GENERAL PRELOGAR: With that specific 17 term, I -- I can't cite one to you. Again --18 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Not in the --19 GENERAL PRELOGAR: -- that's because 20 this --21 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- history of the 22 United States, you can't -- you can't identify 23 one for us, right? 24 GENERAL PRELOGAR: In the history of 25 the United States, no state has done what Texas

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1 has done here. 2 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And then, with 3 respect to those individuals who would be bound, could they -- could they, for filing a -- a 4 lawsuit and in -- in defiance of it and then 5 maybe filing a discovery request or taking some 6 other action, be held in -- in -- in criminal 7 8 contempt? 9 GENERAL PRELOGAR: They couldn't be 10 held in contempt without receiving notice and an 11 opportunity to be heard. And so I think that 12 they would have an opportunity --13 JUSTICE GORSUCH: There's always that 14 opportunity to be heard before criminal contempt 15 proceedings. But could they then be held in 16 criminal contempt, consistent with procedural 17 due process? 18 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes. So long as 19 they had notice of the injunction, they could 20 be. 21 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Oh, so, if they 22 didn't have notice of an injunction, then you're 23 saying contempt is not possible? 24 GENERAL PRELOGAR: That's correct. 25 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. Are you aware

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1 of another circumstance where an injunction's 2 been issued where contempt's not possible? 3 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, Justice Gorsuch, I think, in any circumstance where 4 someone didn't have notice of an injunction, 5 6 contempt wouldn't be possible. That's where the 7 measurable --8 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Is the answer no, 9 counsel, you're not aware of one? 10 GENERAL PRELOGAR: I think that it's 11 actually every injunction operates that way. 12 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Because every other 13 injunction provides notice in advance, and this 14 one doesn't, so this one uniquely alone wouldn't 15 allow for contempt proceedings. Is that your 16 argument? 17 GENERAL PRELOGAR: No. The district 18 court specifically tried to facilitate notice by 19 providing that --JUSTICE GORSUCH: Counsel, if you 20 21 could answer my question, please. Are you 22 saying that it can be entered without notice, an 23 injunction could be entered without notice, 24 you're not aware of one prior to that, and I'd 25 just like a straight answer as to whether those

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1 individuals in these circumstances could be held 2 in criminal contempt or not. 3 GENERAL PRELOGAR: If they did not have notice of the injunction, then, no, they 4 cannot be. 5 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. Then is this 7 an advisory opinion saying don't file these things, we will throw them away, but we -- we 8 9 have no contempt power to enforce the 10 injunction? GENERAL PRELOGAR: No, because the 11 12 injunction does appropriately bind Texas and it does appropriately bind all of those individuals 13 who exercise the state's enforcement 14 15 authority --16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: What is an --17 GENERAL PRELOGAR: -- would be under 18 the state judge. 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- injunction without enforcement power? 20 21 GENERAL PRELOGAR: There would be 22 enforcement power here both with respect to the 23 state, with respect to the individuals who have 24 actual notice and filed these suits, with 25 respect to the court personnel who would violate

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1 the terms of the injunction, and with respect to 2 the enforcement agents at the end of the day who would be enforcing these judgments. 3 JUSTICE GORSUCH: On -- on -- on the 4 Debs question that the Chief Justice raised, 5 just to press that a little bit further, an 6 7 assertion of an equity right here, and I think Justice Thomas alluded to this too, has the 8 United States Government ever before asserted 9 this equity right to protect individual rights 10 11 in any other state ever? 12 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, I want to be 13 clear that the right that we're asserting here 14 is to protect the supremacy of federal law. So 15 we're not asserting --16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And I'm asking have 17 you ever done that in -- in -- to -- to defend the supremacy of individual rights in any other 18 19 situation anywhere in the country in our 20 history? 21 GENERAL PRELOGAR: We have brought 2.2 suit before. It -- it was a series of cases in, 23 I believe, the 1970s that did not work their way 24 up to this Court. The United States urged a 25 broader theory there to be able to sue to

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vindicate constitutional rights generally. 1 2 But that's not the argument that we're 3 making here. Instead, we are arguing --4 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. GENERAL PRELOGAR: -- a specific thing 5 6 that gives us --7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Besides that one 8 suit, are you aware of any others? 9 GENERAL PRELOGAR: No. I believe there were three suits in that line. 10 11 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you. 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice 13 Kavanauqh? 14 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: General, in the 15 prior case, the plaintiffs would be the same 16 plaintiffs. If it were an ordinary Ex parte 17 Young situation, General Stone would be 18 representing a state DA or a state executive 19 official. We'd have arguments about the merits, 20 which we're obviously not dealing with today, 21 but it would be the same basic situation. There 2.2 is an extension of Ex parte Young to get to the 23 prior case, as we talked about, and that's an 24 important step that we have to analyze. 25 Your case, by contrast, though, seems

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1 -- and I'm probably repeating others' questions -- just different and irregular and unusual, and 2 we don't know where it goes. 3 And I just -- if you could fill in --4 and maybe this will be repetitive -- but you 5 think the U.S. has authority to bring a suit 6 7 like this against any state law that? GENERAL PRELOGAR: That violates this 8 Court's precedents and tries to shield that 9 violation from any effective judicial review in 10 11 federal or state court. 12 And I recognize, Justice Kavanaugh, that this is an unusual suit. The United States 13 14 does not lightly invoke an authority like this 15 to sue a state. The reason we've done it here 16 is because S.B. 8 is so unprecedented, 17 extraordinary, and extraordinarily dangerous for 18 our constitutional structure. 19 If Texas is correct that it can 20 nullify this Court's precedents and it can 21 successfully evade the mechanisms that this 2.2 Court recognized in Ex parte Young and Congress 23 recognized in Section 1983, then no constitutional right is safe. 24 25 And we think that in this

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1 extraordinary circumstance, the United States 2 has a sovereign interest in intervening to protect the supremacy of federal law. 3 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: What if our 4 precedent on something in a different area of 5 6 law altogether was just uncertain, there was an 7 open question about something, and a state wanted to kind of cabin, draw a line with 8 9 respect to the precedent? Would the U.S. have 10 the authority there? Is there something about 11 what you think is the clarity of the violation 12 here that triggers your authority? GENERAL PRELOGAR: If the state 13 14 structured that hypothetical law in this same 15 way, then we would have the same concern that 16 the state is effectively seeking to take the 17 issue away from the courts. 18 And so you can imagine a circumstance 19 where a right is more unsettled. Imagine, for 20 example, in a pre-Heller circumstance, the right 21 to possess handguns in the home. If D.C. had 2.2 enacted a law that deputized members of the 23 general public to seek these kinds of suits against that conduct, even before the Court had 24 25 clarified the right, I think that that would

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1 have raised the same concern that effectively 2 the -- the state is seeking to box the judiciary out of being the final arbiter of constitutional 3 rights. 4 Now I will say that I think that a 5 6 state is far less likely to engage in this kind 7 of mechanism with an unsettled right because it would think that its law is constitutional, and 8 I would assume that it would want to 9 10 forthrightly defend it and get a -- a court 11 ruling that confirms that point. 12 But, if a state instead sought to 13 shield the law through this mechanism, it would 14 raise a supremacy clause concern. 15 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Thank you. 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice 17 Barrett? 18 JUSTICE BARRETT: I just want to 19 follow up briefly on the questions that Justice 20 Kagan and Justice Sotomayor were asking you 21 about what happens to your suit if the 22 plaintiffs in the Whole Woman's Health suit 23 prevail. Let's imagine that they do prevail on 24 25 a theory that the attorney general has this

residuum of authority and that the private
 parties can be bound as state actors pursuant to
 Rule 65.

You told Justice Sotomayor that then 4 the United States' interests would not dissipate 5 even in that scenario. And I quess I didn't 6 7 understand that. You -- you phrased it, I think, in the past tense, that that wouldn't 8 9 cure the affront to sovereignty that was already 10 there. But, you know, the -- the force of your 11 argument for equity here is the inadequacy of a 12 remedy at law because of the way that Texas has 13 cut off access to the Ex parte Young remedy. 14 So could you just explain to me why 15 your suit would continue to be alive or why

16 there would be an argument in favor of it if 17 Justice Sotomayor's hypothetical were in play? 18 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes. Of course, 19 Justice Barrett. And I appreciate the chance to 20 clarify.

I don't mean to suggest that the suits wouldn't interact with each other with respect to what kind of equitable relief would be appropriate. I understood Justice Sotomayor to be asking me whether our suit is effectively

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1 contingent on the Whole Woman's Health

2 litigation.

3 And my response was that you have to measure the sovereign injury here at the time 4 the statute was enacted. And when the statute 5 6 was enacted, it was clear that Texas was seeking 7 to deprive others of having an opportunity to -to go to federal court for a remedy. The law 8 9 was unsettled. And it was apparent and, in 10 fact, has been the effect that Texas has 11 succeeded in being able to nullify the right 12 currently while these cases are working their 13 way through the courts.

But I do think that if this Court provided guidance in Whole Woman's Health and made clear that a state cannot succeed with what Texas has attempted to do here, then we wouldn't have that same circumvention concern in the future.

But, in all candor, the concern is that then a state might treat -- seek to legislate around whatever the Whole Woman's Health decision says. It might try to tweak its enforcement mechanism in some way to get around that ruling. And I think that what that shows

is that when a state attempts to thwart judicial
 review and creates that possibility, that the
 supremacy of this Court's decisions will not be
 respected, the United States may sue in equity
 to redress that harm.

6 JUSTICE BARRETT: So it would be kind 7 of a pile-on injunction? Like they would have 8 an injunction against the attorney general and 9 the private plaintiffs acting, you know, as 10 state actors, and then we would also enjoin --11 let's say that we didn't want to enjoin the 12 clerks and the entire apparatus of the state. 13 Let's say that we thought you too, in getting an 14 injunction against the State of Texas, could 15 really only obtain one against the executive 16 officials who had enforced the law.

You're asking just for the same
injunction in your suit but just acknowledging
that the United States has the ability to bring
this kind of In re Debs suit?

21 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, I think that 22 it's important to separate out the question of 23 authority to sue with what kind of relief might 24 be appropriate. So we do think that when we 25 filed this suit -- and at that point, of course,

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1	there was no relief being provided on the ground
2	in Texas, this law had taken effect and it had
3	chilled a constitutionally protected right out
4	of existence that at that point we were
5	authorized to bring suit.
6	The question of what the appropriate
7	remedy would be, I think, is a separate one, and
8	I think it very well could be the case that
9	there would not be a need for duplicative
10	injunctive remedies in both of these cases, but
11	that's a separate and distinct question from
12	whether we could sue in the first place.
13	JUSTICE BARRETT: Thank you.
14	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you.
15	General Stone, welcome back.
16	ORAL ARGUMENT OF JUDD E. STONE, II,
17	ON BEHALF OF THE STATE RESPONDENT
18	MR. STONE: It's been a long time.
19	(Laughter.)
20	MR. STONE: Thank you again, Mr. Chief
21	Justice, and may it please the Court:
22	The Department of Justice's suit
23	offends the separation of powers by usurping for
24	the executive branch the role Congress plays in
25	determining what cases may be heard and what

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1 remedies may be provided in the federal courts. 2 As discussed earlier this morning, no Texas official is a proper defendant in a 3 pre-enforcement challenge to S.B. 8. The United 4 States cannot cure that problem by naming the 5 State of Texas as a nominal defendant and then 6 7 asking for relief that runs against the same 8 Texas officials that are inappropriate targets 9 for an injunction under bedrock Article III and 10 equitable principles. 11 Moreover, the United States is not a 12 proper plaintiff. It cannot claim a sovereign interest in suing to enforce individual rights 13 14 under Casey, and the remedy it seeks would be 15 completely foreign to traditional equity. 16 Congress must create such novel remedies if they 17 are to exist at all. And Congress has impliedly 18 rejected giving the United States such relief by 19 providing other avenues to vindicate Fourteenth 20 Amendment rights. 21 Like the petitioners in Whole Woman's 2.2 Health, the United States asks this Court to 23 disregard all of this because it deems S.B. 8 a novel solution for which this -- a novel problem 24 25 for which this Court must concoct a novel

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1 solution. Even if it were, and it is not, such 2 a request must be directed to Congress. 3 The United States cannot seriously assert that the Constitution requires 4 pre-enforcement federal judicial review. 5 Ιt 6 opposes that result in virtually every other 7 case. This Court should reject its request for a specific -- a special forum, remedy, and cause 8 of action for this case alone. 9 10 I welcome the Court's questions. 11 JUSTICE THOMAS: Is there any instance 12 in which the United States can do what it's doing now that would be acceptable to you? That 13 14 is, that -- let's say there is no question 15 whatsoever that a state is defying a national 16 law or a federal law or a constitutional 17 provision, such as, for example, the Second 18 Amendment. Is there any instance in which the 19 United States can step in? 20 MR. STONE: So, Your Honor, I have to 21 first clarify, are you saying with a cause of 2.2 action provided by Congress or only in this In 23 re Debs self-styled --24 JUSTICE THOMAS: In re Debs. 25 MR. STONE: Your Honor, if the -- to

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1 the extent that Congress had provided either a 2 proprietary right or had recognized a public 3 harm in the form of a statute, for example, the Interstate Commerce Act, and then also the 4 United States was seeking a traditional form of 5 6 equitable relief, such as in Debs to evade a 7 public nuisance, then it could proceed. 8 JUSTICE THOMAS: So a very narrow set 9 of cases? MR. STONE: Yes, Your Honor, but some. 10 11 JUSTICE THOMAS: A separate question. 12 What -- I'm interested in the cases that are proceeding in state court -- and this is a 13 14 carry-over from the first case -- what remedies 15 could be provided in those cases if they were 16 allowed to proceed? 17 MR. STONE: Well, an individual could 18 -- could receive, for example, an injunction preventing the -- the bringing of an enforcement 19 action or by bringing a lawsuit by a plaintiff 20 21 who seeks to do so. 2.2 Now, of course, as discussed earlier 23 to Justice Barrett, that would only provide 24 relief as against that one individual. But the 25 more important part here is that eventually

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1 those sorts of cases would be decided on stare 2 decisis grounds by appellate courts, which would 3 prevent follow-on cases to some extent. But, in terms of relief, you get 4 declarations basically out of the Texas state 5 6 system, a declaration that S. -- that an 7 application of S.B. 8 against an individual -- I misspoke earlier with an injunction, I'm 8 9 sorry -- that a declaration that -- that a -- an S.B. 8 claim by that individual against the 10 11 protected conduct that someone was raising would 12 violate state law, federal law, whatever the 13 claim might be. 14 JUSTICE THOMAS: And one final point. 15 The -- why wouldn't -- and -- and I think I --16 you know, I've alluded to this before, I'd asked 17 this before -- why wouldn't these private 18 individuals be considered private attorneys 19 generals? The -- because so much seems to be --20 one thing that seems rather implicit on the 21 other side is that they are in effect, if not in 2.2 designation by law, attorneys generals because they are enforcing a statewide policy. 23 24 So your argument, again, would be that 25 they are not private attorneys general because,

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1 or they are not acting in concert, they're not 2 deputized, they're not agents because? 3 MR. STONE: Because they're not subject to the state's control. They don't have 4 access to the state's investigatory resources. 5 6 The state can't at some point, for example, or 7 take the case over, like in a qui tam action, those sorts of answers that I was providing 8 earlier, Justice Thomas. 9 10 But my answer would run specifically 11 to the lack of control between the state with 12 regards to an S.B. 8 private plaintiff suit. 13 JUSTICE BREYER: Let me think of -- of 14 just a specific example which was the worst one 15 I could think of for you, the -- the -- I mean, 16 suppose a governor filed this, you know, had 17 this model law and said anyone who brings a 18 black child to a white school is subject to, you 19 know, and then we copy the law. Here we are. 20 Now, if you were in that situation, 21 which I'm sure you're glad you're not, what? 2.2 What would you do? I mean, if we uphold this, 23 are we retroactively upholding that? 24 MR. STONE: No, Your Honor. As a 25 matter of fact, for that very specific case,

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Congress has specifically provided DOJ --1 2 JUSTICE BREYER: Oh. No, no, this is 3 before Congress -- I mean, '57, Congress was no help. I mean, believe me, they did nothing, or, 4 if they did something, I'm unaware of it, and, 5 if they did something, I assume it out of the 6 7 hypothetical. 8 MR. STONE: Fair enough. 9 (Laughter.) 10 MR. STONE: Fair enough, Your Honor. 11 The answer would be that -- that there would 12 have to be recourse, again, to the state court. 13 I'm assuming this is a state legislature because 14 we're talking about federal court actions. 15 JUSTICE BREYER: This was Arkansas in 16 1957. 17 MR. STONE: Sure, Your Honor. And --18 and that, in fact, that that court would be 19 obligated to apply this Court's decisions, it's 20 a transparent violation of the Fourteenth 21 Amendment, of course, Your Honor. We have to 2.2 assume that state court judges take away --JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah, but they 23 24 didn't. I mean, we have some experience. And 25 -- and -- and most of those cases that came up

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1 in that period to this Court, the judges were 2 aware of that experience and they tried to shape the law to avoid it. 3 4 So is there anything you can think of? My -- I'm getting your answer is no, you cannot 5 6 think of anything. 7 The only thing we would have to have said then is -- is, well, it's up to the State 8 9 of Arkansas's judges? 10 MR. STONE: The problem, Your Honor, 11 is that the number one -- the number one answer 12 to your question is the thing you've asked me to 13 assume away, which is the thing Congress has 14 actually done, which is, in 42 U.S.C. 15 2000(c)(6), specifically provided a cause of 16 action for the United States --17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So can I --18 MR. STONE: -- to maintain a cause of action --19 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- give you 21 examples --2.2 MR. STONE: -- under the equal 23 protection clause. JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- can I give you 24 25 examples where Congress hasn't? Somebody -- a

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1 state dissatisfied with Heller says anyone who 2 possesses a firearm anywhere is subject to 3 litigation by any private citizen anywhere in the country and gets a million dollar bounty. 4 No stare decisis. No nothing. 5 How about in Obergefell, imposes S.B. 6 7 8 style liability on anyone who officiates, 8 aids, or abets a same sex wedding? How about, dissatisfied with Lawrence versus Texas, 9 10 subjects private consensual sexual conduct of 11 which it disapproved to the exact same law as 12 S.B. 8? How about Griswold, the use and sale of contraception is subject to S.B. 8 style 13 14 liability? 15 So this is not limited to abortion. 16 That's the point that's been raised. It's 17 limited to any law that a state thinks it's 18 dissatisfied with. 19 MR. STONE: Your Honor, I have at no 20 point in the earlier argument or this one 21 asserted that the extent of federal courts or 2.2 federal court availability turns on the 23 underlying right here. Quite the opposite. I 24 agree with you it doesn't. 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So your point is

1 that no matter how much a state intends to chill 2 the exercise of a constitutional right, as the Chief said, imposing a million dollar liability 3 for an act which I think almost any same person 4 except a couple of billionaires might choose to 5 6 resist, that that does not give anyone a right 7 to a federal forum when the state has deputized every citizen to act on its behalf? 8 9 MR. STONE: No, Your Honor, it does not create federal jurisdiction as a 10 11 consequence. 12 I -- I do want, however, in the spirit 13 of the hypotheticals you're delivering, want to 14 return to a point that Justice Barris made --15 Barrett made at the end of my friend's previous 16 argument. 17 At a very minimum, to the extent that 18 this Court believes it has to somehow alter the 19 Ex parte Young fiction or et cetera to find a 20 way to allow the plaintiffs in Whole Woman's Health to proceed, at a minimum, the United 21 2.2 States' case must thereby fail. 23 The United States just conceded up 24 here that -- that whatever interest they had 25 would be purely retrospective as of there being

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1 some sort of ability to vindicate the -- the 2 rights that Whole Woman's Health and other petitioners are trying to provide. 3 They only seek a preliminary 4 injunction, which is by definition exclusively 5 prospective relief, and they cannot possibly 6 7 maintain their action any further. It goes 8 exactly one way. If Whole -- if the petitioners in 9 10 Whole Woman's Health have some sort of avenue of 11 relief, then the United States must not, which 12 makes sense given for the extraordinary cause of 13 action that they're trying to bring here. 14 Congress has provided the United 15 States certainly at times sometimes with truly extraordinary powers, such as the power of 16 17 preclearance, you know, under the Voting Rights 18 Act to give one extraordinary example. 19 The United States here would want 20 effectively a follow-on injunction for, in their 21 words, in the event that the State of Texas 2.2 changed its law or otherwise tried to, in a way 23 of uncharitably putting it, if the State of 24 Texas changed its law to comply with this case 25 -- this state -- with this Court's law and yet,

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1 nonetheless, have something like S.B. 8. 2 We have a term for when a state is put into a state where they have to get the federal 3 government's approval before it makes a relevant 4 legal change, and that's called preclearance. 5 6 It's precisely the kind of injunction my friend 7 on the other side was speaking of. 8 So it can't possibly be the case 9 they'd be entitled to that sort of remedy just as a matter of course in the event that Whole 10 11 Woman's Health succeeds or prevails to any 12 extent. 13 That's just one component of the 14 extraordinary expansion -- I'm sorry, I thought 15 you were -- sorry, Justice Kavanaugh, I thought 16 you were asking a question -- just one component 17 of the extraordinary expansion of federal power 18 that the United States is asking for here. 19 Not only are they claiming a brand new 20 sovereign interest, which can be synthesized one of two ways, either in ensuring the vindication 21 2.2 of individual rights underneath this Court's --23 underneath this Court's pronouncements in Casey 24 in substantive due process, or, apparently, a 25 sovereign right to ensure the expansion of

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1 access to the federal courts because, after all, 2 Section 1983 and Congress's various statutes that compose the federal courts, they stand as 3 they stand. Texas understands them, as does 4 this Court. They stand for what they are. 5 The 6 United States can't possibly have a sovereign 7 interest in extending the application of those 8 doctrines to apply to cases to which they don't 9 just because they deem this a very important 10 case. JUSTICE KAGAN: General, if -- if I 11 12 understand your answer to Justice Sotomayor, it 13 was, well, even if that's a really good question 14 that I don't have an answer to in the other 15 case, I do have an answer to it in this case. 16 And that's fine. That's -- you know, 17 here you are. We're in this case now. But I guess I just would like to take you back to the 18 19 other case and to ask you to answer the question 20 that you said you wanted to avoid for Justice 21 Sotomayor. 2.2 I'm sorry, Your Honor. MR. STONE: Ι 23 thought I -- I thought I'd agreed that it 24 doesn't depend on -- that it doesn't depend on

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the nature of the right being asserted and that

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1 also none of the -- we could sort of raise the 2 potential sanction as high as possible and that 3 wouldn't -- and that wouldn't affect federal court availability. I'm sorry, I thought I'd 4 answered that, but to make my answer --5 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: Okay. Thank you. 7 MR. STONE: -- expressly clear. 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: Okay. MR. STONE: The other dimension in 9 which the United States is -- is asking for an 10 11 extraordinary power is the nature of the remedy 12 they're seeking. 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: I quess I -- I do want 14 to ask a question about that, though. 15 (Laughter.) 16 JUSTICE KAGAN: I mean, if that's 17 right, you know, and we say that, we would live 18 in a very different world from the world we live 19 in today. Essentially, we would be inviting states, all 50 of them, with respect to their 20 21 un-preferred constitutional rights, to try to 2.2 nullify the law of -- that this Court has laid 23 down as to the content of those rights. 24 I mean, that was something that until 25 this law came along no state dreamed of doing.

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1 And, essentially, we would be like, you know, 2 we're open for business -- you're open for business. There's -- there's -- there's --3 there's nothing the Supreme Court can do about 4 it. Guns, same sex marriage, religious rights, 5 6 whatever you don't like, go ahead. 7 MR. STONE: Respectfully, Your Honor, I have to disagree with you on two points, the 8 9 first one being the State of Texas hasn't 10 nullified anything. The State of Texas 11 specifically set up in state law a recognition 12 of this Court's holdings in Casey, providing an undue burden defense, particularly to recognize 13 14 that this Court's holdings bind state courts in 15 their adjudication. And, of course, the federal 16 constitutional right can and must be made 17 available in those state courts regardless. 18 The second point being to the extent 19 that we're talking about sort of the extremis hypothetical where it's a \$5 billion sanction, 20 and, by the way, court is on the moon --21 2.2 JUSTICE KAGAN: By the way, this seems 23 a pretty extremis hypothetical actual, you know, 24 I mean, because the actual provisions in this 25 law have prevented every woman in Texas from

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1 exercising a constitutional right as declared by 2 this Court. 3 MR. STONE: That -- that's just --JUSTICE KAGAN: That's not a 4 hypothetical. That's an actual. 5 MR. STONE: That's just not true, Your 6 7 Honor. There's evidence in the record that estimates that the number of abortions occurring 8 right now in Texas is between 50 and 63 percent 9 10 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm sorry. You're 12 exactly right. I should have said every woman 13 in Texas who has not learned and has not made a decision before six weeks. 14 15 MR. STONE: Respectfully, Your Honor, 16 there's a big difference between asserting that 17 a state has structured its courts to defy 18 federal law to completely extinguish a right and 19 saying that a state has codified specifically this Court's holdings in the applicable case and 20 21 then also to that extent the deterrent effect 2.2 has caused some diminution of the exercise of 23 that right. That's a very substantial difference and it's certainly a substantial 24 25 difference for purposes of the judges of the

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1 courts of the State of Texas. 2 So, again, just -- just, if I may, to go back to the extraordinary nature of the kind 3 of remedy that the federal government is seeking 4 in this instance --5 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Just on the 6 7 question of -- of the kind of law, H.B. 1280, which was passed around the same time as I 8 9 understand it, which is the law that -- the 10 trigger law, so to speak, that has ordinary 11 enforcement mechanisms, as I understand it, 12 criminal sanctions enforced by the state, civil. 13 And if you pair that with this law, it looks 14 like this law was designed to avoid the review 15 that that law kind of openly would be available 16 under our --17 MR. STONE: No doubt, Texas, just like 18 every other state when passing its laws, is well 19 aware of the limits of federal jurisdiction in federal courts. And, no doubt, Texas crafted 20 21 its law in part because it wanted to avoid 2.2 federal pre-enforcement challenges, as opposed 23 to having those challenges in state court. It's 24 -- I agree that's an obvious purpose of this law or one of the obvious ways that this law 25

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1 functions. That having been said, Texas doesn't 2 3 commit a constitutional wrong by channeling its state court challenges into state court. 4 That is not an independent Texas -- that's not an 5 independent constitutional obligation that Texas 6 7 is under. It's not -- it doesn't have to sort of fly blind as far as -- as far as the 8 collateral effects of what kinds of challenges 9 10 it will receive when it decides how to structure 11 a law. 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But it does have 13 an obligation to follow, to respect people's 14 federal constitutional rights? 15 MR. STONE: Absolutely, Your Honor. 16 And, again --17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So, if it's 18 attempting to stifle those rights, chill their 19 exercise, and keep plaintiffs away from a 1983 20 action and Ex parte Young liability, you say 21 there's nothing wrong with that? 2.2 MR. STONE: Your Honor, the limits of 23 19 -- Section 1983 and Ex parte Young's 24 availability, specifically 1983, though, 25 Congress could extend Ex parte Young, are a

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1	matter of Congress. The idea that Texas would
2	design a tort statute or design a form of
3	liability that takes that in mind and then says
4	these claims have to go through the state tort
5	system, the state court system, Texas judges are
6	presumed by this Court and by, for that matter,
7	appellate judges in Texas to follow this Court's
8	precedents fully and faithfully.
9	Texas does not suppress any
10	substantive right by saying that it wants
11	that it prefers to see certain kinds of
12	challenges brought through the state court
13	system.
14	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But the but the
15	the
16	MR. STONE: And to the extent that it
17	that one or more Texas state court judges
18	fail to fully apply and faithfully apply this
19	Court's precedents regarding Casey or any other
20	constitutional right, this Court is and always
21	is the supreme arbiter of properly presented
22	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But the problem
23	they
24	MR. STONE: questions of federal
25	law.

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1 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- the problem 2 they raise -- and I'll just have you answer it 3 -- is they say this law is designed to avoid all judicial review because the penalties that are 4 imposed for a violation are so substantial, and 5 6 then you combine that with the retroactivity 7 provision, that people aren't going to be willing to engage in activity that's prohibited 8 by this law. 9 10 So there will be no federal court 11 review up front, no state court review on the 12 back end, which is the exact -- exact Ex parte Young situation, you know, put aside the named 13 party, but that's the exact situation. Can --14 15 can you respond to that? 16 MR. STONE: Of course, Your Honor. 17 Two points, the first one being that the -- the 18 procedural mechanisms, the attorney's 19 fees-shifting provision and the preferential 20 venue provision, to the extent that those things 21 would be sufficient to effectively deny someone 2.2 access to the courts standing on their own, then 23 there are an awful lot of statutes and tort 24 actions that deny access to the courts on their 25 own.

1	I mean, another complaint of my
2	friends on the other side in Whole Woman's
3	Health was regarding the lack of non-mutual
4	collateral estoppel. Well, this Court has held
5	that there are certain applications of
6	non-mutual collateral estoppel that violate due
7	process. It's never been a violation of due
8	process to not import that doctrine into a
9	state's adjudication system.
10	So I think what we're left with here
11	is the \$10,000 the \$10,000 potential damages
12	award or actual damages that's doing the
13	that's doing the chilling. And to the extent
14	that we're talking
15	JUSTICE KAGAN: But, General Stone, I
16	think it's the combination of everything, you
17	know? It's the \$10,000 and it's everything that
18	Justice Kavanaugh said and it's other provisions
19	behind. And we've had a little experiment here,
20	and we've seen what the chilling effect is.
21	You know, usually, in these chilling
22	effect cases, we're kind of guessing. Well, I
23	this would sort of chill me. But, here,
24	we're not guessing. We know exactly what has
25	happened as a result of this law. It has

1 chilled everybody on the ground. 2 MR. STONE: Your Honor, to the extent 3 that we're talking about whether one or more of these procedural mechanisms might itself end up 4 being a burden in the undue -- in the undue 5 burden sense, an individual -- may I? 6 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Please finish 8 your answer. MR. STONE: Thank you. An individual 9 could itself -- could themselves raise one of 10 11 these procedural mechanisms or compliance with 12 them in the state court action and say this particular fees provision defending this action 13 14 actually is an undue burden on me because it 15 prevents me from raising my undue burden right 16 itself, or perhaps, for example, a petition 17 clause or due process clause, there might be 18 other constitutional clauses that would protect 19 an individual who's placed into a situation where the rules of a court itself prevent them 20 21 from exercising an undue burden right, but still 2.2 wouldn't -- what that wouldn't get you is access 23 to pre-enforcement federal review of the 24 substantive due process right that an action --25 an action under S.B. 8 may or may not implicate.

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
2	counsel.
3	Justice Thomas, anything further?
4	JUSTICE THOMAS: No, Chief.
5	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
6	Breyer?
7	Justice Alito?
8	JUSTICE ALITO: If some abortions have
9	been chilled, is there any way to determine the
10	degree to which that is the result of the
11	potential for S.B. 8 suits from the degree to
12	which it is attributable to the fear of
13	liability if Roe or Casey is altered?
14	MR. STONE: I don't think there's a
15	way of being able to disaggregate those, Justice
16	Alito. And, undoubtedly, individuals engaging
17	in protected conduct that believe the protection
18	might be removed or reasonably believe that,
19	undoubtedly, there's an extra kind of chill.
20	They feel that's not attributable to the state
21	or to anyone else for that matter.
22	JUSTICE ALITO: Would the issuance of
23	the injunction sought by the United States have
24	any effect on liability for abortions performed
25	after the effective date of this act?

1	MR. STONE: So it would prevent it
2	wouldn't have prevention of liability. It might
3	stop anyone from filing a lawsuit. But, of
4	course, an injunction preventing someone from
5	filing a lawsuit doesn't prevent a state law
6	from being effective in the event they could
7	file in another forum or in some way they're not
8	covered by the injunction, Your Honor.
9	JUSTICE ALITO: Well, if the
10	injunction were entered and abortions were
11	performed, would that immunize the abortion
12	providers subsequently from liability?
13	MR. STONE: No, Your Honor, all that
14	would do is would be preventing the
15	individuals who had notice of the injunction
16	first, they'd have to have an opportunity to
17	respond before they were enjoined, but let's
18	skip over all of those injunctive problems.
19	They'd those individuals would merely not be
20	able to bring S.B. 8 suits. It wouldn't somehow
21	dissolve in the abstract liability under S.B. 8
22	for performing the abortions.
23	JUSTICE ALITO: Thank you.
24	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
25	Sotomayor?

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1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Nothing. 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice Kagan? Justice Gorsuch? 3 Justice Kavanaugh? 4 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Can I just get 5 6 more clarity about how you think that 7 retroactivity provision works? Are you saying that if an injunction were entered and someone 8 9 -- some clinic performed abortions now that were 10 then legal under current law, but the law 11 changes in the future such that the state could, 12 going forward, restrict abortions at an earlier 13 time, are you saying that the state could then 14 reach back and retroactively -- or allow suits 15 that would reach back and retroactively impose 16 liability on entities that were committing 17 lawful acts as of the time? 18 MR. STONE: It would be private 19 plaintiffs, again, Your Honor, but -- but, of 20 course --21 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Is that a yes? 2.2 MR. STONE: Yes, Your Honor. Yes. 23 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: And is there any 24 limit on that retroactive liability? 25 MR. STONE: There might be. Again,

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1 I'd have to hypothesize, perhaps a due process 2 claim if it were -- in some extreme 3 circumstance. But, no, there's nothing on the face of S.B. 8 that would provide it. 4 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Doesn't that play 5 6 into the chilling effect argument that was being 7 raised that, presumably, one of the concerns is 8 even though you would challenge it today and 9 think -- you would engage in the activity today 10 because you would be confident, you're chilled 11 by the prospect of future changes and then 12 someone reaching back and imposing millions and millions of dollars of -- right? 13 14 MR. STONE: Perhaps so, Your Honor, 15 but I think that's a --16 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Almost certainly 17 so, right? Millions and millions retroactively 18 imposed --19 MR. STONE: Undoubtedly. 20 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- even though the 21 activity was perfectly lawful under all court 22 orders and precedent at the time it was 23 undertaken, right? 24 MR. STONE: Undoubtedly, Your Honor. 25 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Okay.

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
2	Barrett?
3	JUSTICE BARRETT: I just have one
4	question. So we were talking about
5	pre-enforcement review and the chilling effect.
6	So, if not available your position is it's
7	not available in federal court, and you pointed
8	out when you were talking to me before in the
9	last case that in state court, it's not
10	available in the Ex parte Young sense, in which
11	you could obtain an injunction that would
12	altogether protect you from enforcement
13	activity, but you could on a case-by-case basis
14	obtain an injunction against individual
15	plaintiffs. You pointed out that that might
16	ultimately give you more protection because it
17	would go up the chain and there would be stare
18	decisis effect.
19	What if, in addition to the other
20	procedural obstacles that the law contains here,
21	the legislature also added a provision saying
22	there would be no stare decisis effect of any
23	decision reached by the Texas Supreme Court?
24	MR. STONE: Then, Your Honor, I would
25	assume it would make it even more imperative for

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1	one of those cases to be taken up by this Court
2	to resolve any questions that were that were
3	presented there. But that would mean that would
4	be the only final way that you could have
5	binding stare stare decisis effect.
б	JUSTICE BARRETT: Thank you.
7	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
8	counsel.
9	Mr. Mitchell.
10	ORAL ARGUMENT OF JONATHAN F. MITCHELL
11	ON BEHALF OF THE PRIVATE RESPONDENTS
12	MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Chief Justice, and
13	may it please the Court:
14	The intervenors intend to sue those
15	who violate Senate Bill 8 but only in response
16	to conduct that falls outside the protections of
17	Roe and Casey. The United States cannot seek or
18	obtain relief that thwarts the enforcement of
19	S.B. 8 in those situations. The statute
20	contains emphatic severability and saving
21	construction requirements, and courts are
22	obligated to preserve the constitutional
23	applications of statutes to the maximum possible
24	extent.
25	The United States also cannot seek or

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1 obtain relief that would prevent private 2 individuals from suing under S.B. 8 because any 3 such relief would be a flagrant violation of the due process clause. A federal court cannot ban 4 private individuals from petitioning the courts 5 6 in a case to which they have not been made a 7 party. And a federal court cannot foreclose those individuals from suing under S.B. 8 when 8 9 they have been given no opportunity to defend the merits of the lawsuit that they intend to 10 11 bring. 12 I welcome the Court's questions. 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I quess one 14 would be you -- you've heard the exchanges with 15 General Prelogar about the breadth of the 16 asserted federal right. 17 MR. MITCHELL: Yes. 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And she 19 offered some answers to those questions about 20 the limited nature, and I wanted to get your 21 reaction to that. 2.2 MR. MITCHELL: Yes. And, Chief 23 Justice Roberts, as I understand the United 24 States' argument as they've spelled it out on 25 pages 10 and 20 of their brief, the -- the

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1 asserted sovereign interest that they're making 2 under In re Debs depends entirely on the existence of a congressional enactment, 3 Section 1983, that does not go far enough in the 4 views of the United States. 5 What they're saying with respect to 6 7 their sovereign interest is that Texas is thwarting Section 1983 and Ex parte Young by 8 9 enacting a statute that is not subject to pre-enforcement challenge under either of those 10 sources of law. 11 12 That to us is not in any way a 13 sovereign interest under Debs. That's a 14 grievance with Congress, that Congress enacted a 15 law, but Congress's law doesn't go far enough 16 for the United States because Texas has found a 17 gap in this congressionally created remedial 18 scheme that allows its law to escape 19 pre-enforcement judicial review. 20 The proper response in that situation 21 is to go to Congress and ask Congress to amend 2.2 the remedies that they have set forth, either by 23 abrogating state sovereign immunity or perhaps 24 by enacting the Women's Health Protection Act, 25 which would preempt S.B. 8 and also abrogate

state immunity and give the attorney general the
 explicit cause of action. But in no way can
 equity be invoked to patch up the holes or the
 perceived holes in a statute that Congress has
 enacted.

6 The second issue with respect to the 7 sovereign interests that the United States 8 asserts surrounds Ex parte Young because they 9 claim in their brief that Ex parte Young does 10 not go far enough in authorizing a 11 pre-enforcement challenge.

12 And that too runs into the problem of Grupo Mexicano. There is clearly a traditional 13 14 cause of action in equity for an individual to 15 sue an individual officer that is violating his 16 federally protected rights, but there is no 17 traditional cause of action or remedy in equity 18 that would ever allow a court to enjoin the 19 state judiciary from even hearing a case that 20 has yet to be filed.

21 And Ex parte Young explicitly 22 disclaims any such remedy on page 163 when it 23 says that an injunction against a state court 24 would be a violation of our whole scheme of 25 government. So what the --

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1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but, at 2 the same time, subsequent cases suggest that 3 that language can't be read as broadly as you suggest, Shelley against Kraemer, Terry against 4 Adams, some of the others where they've 5 6 recognized that courts can be viewed as part of 7 a mechanism of enforcing particular rights. MR. MITCHELL: That's true, but in 8 neither of these cases that Your Honor cited was 9 there an injunction directed at the state 10 11 judiciary itself. And under Grupo Mexicano, 12 equitable remedies must be limited to those that were traditionally available in equity. And Ex 13 14 parte Young makes clear that a remedy that would 15 enjoin or restrain a state court or a state 16 judge from even considering a case is not a 17 remedy that was traditionally available in 18 equity. 19 So it's impossible to escape the 20 conclusion that this relief requested by the 21 United States is barred --2.2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I mean 23 _ _ 24 MR. MITCHELL: -- by Grupo Mexicano. 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, Grupo

1 Mexicano is notoriously cryptic. And -- but 2 Shelley against Kraemer, Terry against Adams, 3 they aren't really -- I mean, if you look at Justice Frankfurter's opinion in -- in Terry, he 4 says, you know, somewhere, somehow, to some 5 6 extent, you have to have some participation. 7 That seems like pretty flexible standard. MR. MITCHELL: Well, again, in Terry 8 against Adams, their cause of action was 9 undisputed. The existence of an Article III 10

11 case or controversy was undisputed. And those 12 are the two obstacles here that the United 13 States must confront.

14 So the fact that there is case law out 15 there in which relief has been granted in 16 similar situations involving situations where 17 there was no question of the existence of an 18 Article III case or controversy and no question 19 of the existence of a cause of action does not 20 give any leverage to the United States' argument 21 here, when the very objection we're making is 2.2 that they can't bring suit because there's no 23 Article III case or controversy under Muskrat 24 and, on top of that, they can't bring suit 25 because there's no cause of action in equity

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1 because the relief they seek is not relief that 2 is traditionally available. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, there is 3 an Article III case or controversy with respect 4 to the clerks, right? It's a direct adversity. 5 The clerks want to file the action, and the 6 7 plaintiffs don't want them to. MR. MITCHELL: True. But the clerks 8 aren't the named defendants in this lawsuit; 9 only the State of Texas is. And under Muskrat, 10 11 you cannot sue the sovereign entity when your 12 complaint is that the sovereign is allowing its courts to adjudicate cases under a statute that 13 14 you believe to be unconstitutional. It would be 15 no different from the abortion providers suing 16 the United States Government because they're 17 allowing S.B. 8 enforcement lawsuits to be heard 18 under the diversity jurisdiction. 19 There wouldn't be a case or 20 controversy with the United States simply 21 because it's opening its courtroom doors to 2.2 these claims. What they would have to do is wait for the cases to be filed and then assert 23 their constitutional challenges to the statute 24 25 in that litigation between the private citizens.

JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Do you agree, to 1 2 follow up on the Chief Justice's questions, that 3 state clerks, court clerks, and state judges enforce state law when they entertain private 4 civil suits? 5 MR. MITCHELL: No, I don't believe 6 7 they can be said to be enforcing state law in those situations --8 9 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Then how do you deal with all the language in Shelley versus 10 11 Kraemer that says -- that uses the word 12 "enforce"? MR. MITCHELL: Because I think in that 13 14 context enforcement is coming after a judgment 15 has been entered by the court and then the 16 judgment is being enforced. 17 But simply adjudicating a case at the 18 outset and simply docketing a complaint, that is 19 not enforcement. 20 And this goes to another problem with the remedy that the United States is seeking 21 22 with respect to the private individuals. 23 They're asking the Court to restrain Texas from 24 adjudicating lawsuits. They want to stop the 25 clerks from docketing the complaints. They want

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1 to stop the judges from hearing or presiding 2 over the cases. 3 And then they say that injunction should extend to private individuals under Rule 4 65(d)(2)(C). The problem is the private 5 6 individuals aren't doing any of those things 7 that the state has been enjoined from doing. They're doing something entirely different. 8 9 They're the ones who are filing the lawsuits. 10 And the state can't file the lawsuit because 11 it's not allowed to file it under the statute. 12 And it, therefore, can't be enjoined from doing so because an injunction against the 13 state that tells it not to file a lawsuit is 14 15 enjoining the state from doing something that it 16 never would have done in the first place. 17 So there's another major problem with 18 trying to get private individuals covered by 19 this injunction that the district court laid 20 out. The only conduct the private individuals are engaged in is conduct that the State of 21 2.2 Texas is not. JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, a state 23 24 is an idealized entity. The whole fiction of Ex 25 parte Young had to be created because a state

1 qua state can't act. It can only designate 2 people to act for it. 3 And so, if the state is designating 4 whether its ordinary citizens or the attorney general or its attorney -- district attorneys, 5 6 if it's designating those people to act for it, 7 why aren't those people bound by any judgment that says, state, what you're doing is 8 unconstitutional? 9 10 MR. MITCHELL: They -- they wouldn't 11 _ _ 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And no agent of 13 yours can enforce this law, whether it's 14 ordinary citizens, the attorney general, state 15 licensing officials, clerks of court, or, as 16 Shelley recognized, a court system that would 17 enforce a restricted covenant demanding 18 segregation? Why aren't we in exactly that same 19 position? 20 MR. MITCHELL: They would be bound if 21 they can satisfy the test of Rule 65(d)(2)(C), 2.2 which says they have to be acting in active 23 concert --24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Why? They are. 25 MR. MITCHELL: No.

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                JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Each of them is
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      acting under the directives of the state law.
 3
      So why aren't they acting like the state when
 4
      they act?
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               MR. MITCHELL: No, Justice Sotomayor,
      I -- I respectfully disagree with that
 6
 7
      characterization.
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The --
 8
9
               MR. MITCHELL: The state --
10
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I know you
11
     disagree.
12
               MR. MITCHELL: Well, I'm --
13
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But I'm trying to
14
     get you --
15
               MR. MITCHELL: -- I'm going to explain
16
     why I disagree with it.
17
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Go ahead.
18
               MR. MITCHELL: The state is not in any
19
     way directing the activity -- may I answer?
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Please.
20
21
               MR. MITCHELL: The state is not
22
     directing the activity of these private
23
     individuals. The state has passed a law that
24
     gives them the option to sue and then it has
25
     washed its hands of the matter. So there is no
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1 joint participation with the state in their --2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How is --3 MR. MITCHELL: -- decision. JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- that any 4 different than there being state action when a 5 prosecutor exercises a discriminatory Batson 6 7 challenge? 8 MR. MITCHELL: May I? JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Or how is there 9 10 state action when state primary actors exclude 11 races or exclude people from primaries, and 12 we've called that state action, even though the 13 state has just given them the authority to act 14 with no control over what they're going to do? 15 MR. MITCHELL: Right. So --16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So we have 17 recognized that people -- that washing your 18 hands doesn't insulate a state. 19 MR. MITCHELL: With -- with your 20 example on the --21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Or insulate people 2.2 from acting on behalf of the state. MR. MITCHELL: Yes. The prosecutor in 23 24 your hypothetical is an employee of the state. 25 He's part of a state government. He's part of

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1 the machinery of the state. The white primary 2 example is a more difficult question because 3 they were formerly established as a private 4 entity, and --5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Are you suggesting 6 that states can hire agents to do 7 unconstitutional acts? MR. MITCHELL: No, they cannot hire 8 9 agents --10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So what's --11 MR. MITCHELL: -- no. 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- how can the 13 state designate a private individual --14 MR. MITCHELL: Because these --15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- to act on its -- under its laws to violate a person's 16 17 constitutional right? 18 MR. MITCHELL: There's not an agency 19 relationship here, Justice Sotomayor. These --JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It's -- it's 20 saying to it you, under this law, our law, you 21 2.2 can act. 23 MR. MITCHELL: I see my time has long 24 expired. May -- may I continue to answer or --25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Briefly in the

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1 rule. 2 MR. MITCHELL: Yes, I'm sorry. 3 Justice Sotomayor, if there were an 4 agency relationship, then Your Honor would be 5 correct, they would be bound by an injunction under the principles of Rule 65. 6 7 But there's no agency relationship here because the state is statutorily forbidden 8 9 to enforce the law or have any enforcement role 10 whatsoever. 11 That role is given to private 12 citizens. The state can't have any involvement. So there can't be joint conduct with the state 13 14 with respect to that particular activity. 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you. 16 Justice Thomas? 17 JUSTICE THOMAS: Nothing, Chief. 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice 19 Breyer? Justice Alito? 20 21 Justice Sotomayor? 2.2 Justice Kagan? 23 Justice Gorsuch? 24 Justice Barrett? 25 Okay. Thank you, counsel.

1 MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Your Honors. 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Rebuttal? 3 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF ELIZABETH B. PRELOGAR ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER 4 5 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Thank you, Mr. 6 Chief Justice. 7 I'd like to just make three points in rebuttal, and I'd like to begin with the point 8 9 that I understood General Stone to be making 10 that if this Court ultimately concludes in Whole 11 Woman's Health that the providers can sue, that 12 the authority we're claiming here to sue as well 13 is extraordinary or unprecedented. 14 And I think it is important to 15 recognize that when the United States of America 16 filed this suit to try to redress the harm to 17 the supremacy of federal law in Texas, the Whole 18 Woman's Health providers had not been able to 19 obtain any effective redress from the courts. 20 The law had been permitted to take 21 effect and it had immediately had its intended 2.2 operation of chilling the exercise of 23 constitutionally protected conduct altogether so 24 that abortions that are protected under Roe and 25 Casey after six weeks of pregnancy could not

occur at all. And I think that that shows the
 threat to the supremacy that comes from this
 attempted design of a law to block access to the
 judiciary.

It may well be and I hope that this 5 Court holds in Whole Woman's Health that the 6 7 providers can move forward, but that hasn't stopped the harm to the sovereign interests of 8 the United States in the meantime, as Texas has 9 10 succeeded, while these novel issues worked their 11 way through the courts, in blocking access to 12 care that is protected under this Court's 13 precedents.

14 And that leads me to my second point, 15 which is to emphasize the nature of the 16 sovereign interest here. It is in preventing a 17 state from being able to act in direct defiance 18 of this Court's precedents and block access to 19 the judicial review that Congress and this Court 20 have deemed necessary to vindicate federal 21 rights and to further make the state court 2.2 mechanism that might provide some alternative 23 basis for raising those constitutional claims wholly ineffective and unavailable. 24

25 The final point is to just step back

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1 for a moment and -- and think about the 2 startling implications of Texas's argument here. 3 Across the arguments this morning, Texas's position is that no one can sue, not the 4 women whose rights are most directly affected, 5 6 not the providers who have been chilled in being 7 able to provide those women with care, and not the United States in this suit. They say that 8 federal courts just have no authority under 9 10 existing law to provide any mechanism to redress 11 that harm. 12 And if that is true, if a state can 13 just take this simple mechanism of taking its 14 enforcement authority and giving it to the 15 general public backed up with a bounty of 16 \$10,000 or \$1 million, if they can do that, then 17 no constitutional right is safe. No 18 constitutional decision from this Court is safe. 19 That would be an intolerable state of affairs and it cannot be the law. Our 20 21 constitutional guarantees cannot be that 2.2 fragile, and the supremacy of federal law cannot 23 be that easily subject to manipulation. So we would ask this Court to hold 24 25 that the United States can proceed with this

1	action and affirm the preliminary injunction
2	entered by the district court and immediately
3	vacate the stay that the Fifth Circuit entered
4	in this case so that Texas cannot continue to
5	deny women in its borders a right protected by
б	this Court's precedents one day longer.
7	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
8	counsel. The case is submitted.
9	(Whereupon, at 12:55 p.m., the case
10	was submitted.)
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