1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
2	x
3	MAETTA VANCE, :
4	Petitioner : No. 11-556
5	v. :
6	BALL STATE UNIVERSITY, ET AL. :
7	x
8	Washington, D.C.
9	Monday, November 26, 2012
10	
11	The above-entitled matter came on for ora
12	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
13	at 11:06 a.m.
14	APPEARANCES:
15	DANIEL R. ORTIZ, ESQ., Charlottesville, Virginia; on
16	behalf of Petitioner.
L7	SRI SRINIVASAN, ESQ., Deputy Solicitor General,
18	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; for United
19	States, as amicus curiae, in support of neither
20	party.
21	GREGORY G. GARRE, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of
22	Respondents.
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:06 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	next this morning in Case 11-556, Vance v. Ball State
5	University.
6	Mr. Ortiz.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF DANIEL R. ORTIZ
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. ORTIZ: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
10	please the Court:
11	This case concerns who counts and who does
12	not count as a supervisor under Title VII. The parties
13	and the United States agree that the Seventh Circuit
14	rule violates the holding of Faragher, the reasoning of
15	Faragher and this Court's other central Title VII
16	precedents, including Burlington Northern and Staub, and
17	the common-sense meaning of the word "supervisor."
18	The parties even agree as to the general
19	legal standard, although they style it a little bit
20	different differently, that those harassers whose
21	employer-conferred authority over their victims enables
22	or materially augments the harassment should count as
23	supervisors.
24	This is not a standard, Your Honor, that
25	imposes automatic liability on employers. Victims must

- 1 still prove actionable harassment, and employers can
- 2 still take advantage of the Ellerth/Faragher affirmative
- 3 defense.
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Let's say you have a
- 5 work room. There are five people who work there. And
- 6 the employer has a rule that the senior employee gets to
- 7 pick the music that's going to play all day long. And
- 8 the senior employee says to one of the other
- 9 employees -- you know, if you don't date me -- I know
- 10 you don't like country music; if you don't date me, it's
- 11 going to be country music all day long.
- 12 Now, that affects the daily activities of
- 13 that other employee. I would have thought, under your
- 14 theory, that means that that senior employee is a
- 15 supervisor.
- 16 MR. ORTIZ: No, Your Honor, because in that
- 17 circumstance the adverse action would not amount to --
- 18 would not be severe. Or, perhaps it would be
- 19 pervasive --
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that could
- 21 be -- that could be far more severe than, for example --
- 22 JUSTICE SCALIA: Hard rock instead of --
- 23 (Laughter.)
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It could be far more
- 25 severe than simply saying, all right -- you know, you're

- 1 going to -- as in this case -- you're going to be
- 2 cutting the celery rather than -- you know, baking the
- 3 bread, or whatever.
- 4 MR. ORTIZ: Well, no, Your Honor, this is
- 5 the -- the severity is an objective standard; it's not a
- 6 subjective. So in this case, someone's intense
- 7 dislike -- maybe it's debilitating, subjective --
- 8 dislike of rock music, some forms of country music --
- 9 might impair the performance of some in the workplace;
- 10 but, from an objective reasonable employee's standpoint,
- 11 I don't believe that that would be the case. Not all --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but, I mean,
- 13 there are places where the environment -- you know, an
- 14 assembly line or something like that -- where the task
- 15 may not be that different, but how you -- the
- 16 environment in which you have to perform them may be far
- 17 more significant than whether or not you're attaching
- 18 the door handles or the front fenders.
- 19 MR. ORTIZ: Oh, for sure, Your Honor, but
- 20 that has to be judged on a case-by-case basis.
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, exactly. And
- 22 I would have thought the benefit of the Seventh
- 23 Circuit's test was that you don't have to go through
- 24 those case-by-case basis. I think we can have a
- 25 reasonable debate about whether the music you have to

- 1 listen to for eight hours is objectively a significant
- 2 enough interference with the daily activities to qualify
- 3 under your test.
- But the Seventh Circuit test makes clear --
- 5 it doesn't give any kind of immunity; it just makes
- 6 clear what type of analysis is going to be applied to
- 7 the allegation.
- 8 MR. ORTIZ: Well, Your Honor, the Respondent
- 9 actually exaggerates the determinativeness of the
- 10 Seventh Circuit rule, and the indeterminativeness --
- 11 both indeterminativeness and unpredictability of the
- 12 Second Circuit rule.
- 13 The Seventh Circuit itself has recognized --
- 14 the judges in the Seventh Circuit itself have recognized
- 15 that the rule does not really well fit the realities of
- 16 the workplace. It also just moves uncertainty from one
- 17 category to another.
- 18 The category of supervisor may be a little
- 19 bit tidier; but, under the Seventh Circuit's approach,
- 20 the category of co-worker is very unpredictable.
- 21 The Seventh Circuit itself, in
- Doe v. Oberweis Dairy, recognized that once you move
- 23 people who can take -- have this kind of power over
- 24 their victims but can't actually take tangible employment
- 25 actions against them into the category of co-workers,

- 1 all of a sudden you have to apply a sliding scale of
- 2 negligence. Not only that, but the jury is the one who
- 3 applies it.
- 4 So for those categories -- this exact
- 5 category of employee, Your Honor, the employee --
- 6 employer going forward has very little idea of
- 7 whether -- what standard of care is that a particular
- 8 jury would apply in that case and whether the jury would
- 9 decide it is met or not.
- 10 The Seventh Second -- Seventh Circuit rule,
- in the overall, is no more determinative than the Second
- 12 Circuit rule.
- 13 Also, Respondent points to no cases in the
- 14 Second Circuit or the other circuits that have adopted
- 15 this rule where courts have identified problems with its
- 16 application. And that --
- 17 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, could you explain
- 18 what the materially augments rule means? Could you
- 19 provide a definition of that? The authority to assign
- 20 daily tasks has to be sufficient to do what?
- 21 MR. ORTIZ: It has to be sufficient to
- 22 enable the harasser to instill either fear in the victim
- 23 that the victim should not turn the harasser in, or that
- 24 it may have to do with the harasser's ability to control
- 25 the physical location of the victim. That can augment

- 1 harassment.
- 2 If an harasser can steer a victim to a
- 3 location where the harasser has an opportunity to
- 4 harass, and, indeed, may have an opportunity to harass
- 5 without other employees or other people in the company
- 6 seeing in, that would materially augment --
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: There are situations where
- 8 the -- the assignment of responsibilities is extremely
- 9 unpleasant, and so it's easy to see how the testimony
- 10 would apply in that situation.
- 11 But there are also a lot of situations, like
- 12 the Chief Justice's example, where it's really very
- 13 unclear. I don't know how courts are going to -- how
- 14 courts can grapple with that.
- 15 MR. ORTIZ: Well, Your Honor, this --
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: You said that being
- 17 subjected to country music or hard rock or Wagner -- you
- 18 know, every single day in the workplace would not be
- 19 sufficient. I don't know. Some people might think that
- 20 it was -- that that is.
- 21 MR. ORTIZ: Justice Alito, this part of the
- 22 standard, particularly the materiality requirement, is
- 23 meant to track this Court's standard in Burlington
- 24 Northern, where it said that only actions that are
- 25 materially adverse to the employee would count.

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- 2 requirement there as actually working to make the
- 3 standard more objective, not --
- 4 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Ortiz, why isn't the
- 5 question that you're presenting academic in this case?
- 6 Because didn't the district judge say that there had
- 7 been no showing that Davis' conduct was sufficiently
- 8 severe or pervasive?
- 9 It wouldn't matter if the supervisor -- if
- 10 the conduct was not sufficiently severe or pervasive
- 11 harassment, and, equally, if the company responded every
- 12 time a complaint was lodged. The district court found
- both of those things, that it wasn't severe and
- 14 pervasive, and that every time she claimed -- complained
- 15 an investigation was made.
- 16 MR. ORTIZ: Justice Ginsburg, we actually
- 17 tried to bring those things up before the Seventh
- 18 Circuit, but the Seventh Circuit found it unnecessary to
- 19 reach them because of its holding as to supervisory
- 20 liability.
- 21 If this Court were to reverse the Seventh
- 22 Circuit's affirmance of summary judgment of the district
- 23 court, the case would then be remanded to the Seventh
- 24 Circuit, where it could either look at these
- 25 alternative -- these other holdings, or the thing would

- 1 be -- it could be remanded at that point and sent back
- 2 to the district court for another look.
- The district court's reasoning, the Seventh
- 4 Circuit noted, when it was talking about other incidents
- 5 of harassment was very unusual. What the district court
- 6 did was it divided all of the incidents into two
- 7 categories.
- 8 One category -- one category consisted of
- 9 events that by themselves were not overtly racial in
- 10 nature and the other category consisted of those events
- 11 that were overtly racial in nature, where a racial
- 12 epithet had been hurled at someone, for example, and
- 13 said with respect to the first category, the things --
- 14 the events that on their face did not announce racial
- 15 animosity, that there wasn't any racial nexus, so they
- 16 didn't count, and swept all those events out and then
- 17 looked at the remaining ones where the connection to
- 18 racial animus was overt. And it said, well, these,
- 19 there may be some, but they just don't count.
- 20 So the Seventh Circuit itself discredited
- 21 the reasoning of the district court in those very
- 22 holdings.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Ortiz, suppose I agree
- 24 with your standard, but I just can't find on the record
- 25 as it has been presented in this Court any evidence that

- 1 Davis actually served as Vance's supervisor. What -- I
- 2 mean, what's your best -- so if that's true, I would be
- 3 tempted to actually just decide the thing rather than to
- 4 remand it.
- 5 So as against that approach, what is your
- 6 best evidence that there was a supervisory relationship
- 7 under your standard here?
- 8 MR. ORTIZ: First, Justice Kagan, it is
- 9 important to keep in mind that the record was developed
- 10 under the wrong legal standard. But even considering
- 11 that --
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, is that the case? Is
- 13 there evidence that you did not present because the
- 14 Seventh Circuit applied a different standard?
- 15 MR. ORTIZ: There was evidence that was
- 16 probably not developed below because the Seventh
- 17 Circuit's standard was so absolute. But there is
- 18 actually evidence in the record, we believe plenty of
- 19 evidence, sufficient certainly to overcome summary
- 20 judgment, although perhaps not enough for partial
- 21 summary judgment on this question in our favor.
- 22 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What other than the job
- 23 description? The job description says that the catering
- 24 specialist has authority to direct or lead the part-time
- 25 employees. But what concrete instances of Davis

- 1 exercising supervisory authority over Vance is there in
- 2 this record?
- 3 MR. ORTIZ: Well, Justice -- there is two
- 4 separate questions, Justice Ginsburg. One is instances
- of it; others is whether she has the authority or not.
- 6 Because this Court has held in Faragher itself that it
- 7 is the authority that makes the difference, not the
- 8 actual exercising of it in a particular case.
- 9 But let me go through what is in the record
- 10 now, much of it which is in the Joint Appendix but not
- 11 all, because we were not aware that we would be opposing
- 12 a summary judgment motion before this Court.
- First, William Kimes, who is the director of
- 14 the university banquet and catering division, the sort of
- 15 head of this 60-some-person department. Two employees
- 16 testified that he told them that Davis was a supervisor.
- 17 One of them was Vance; that could be found on page 198
- 18 of the Joint Appendix. Another is an employee who was
- 19 in Vance's position named Dawn Knox, and that statement
- 20 can be found on page 386 of the Joint Appendix.
- 21 William Kimes himself testified in his
- 22 deposition that Davis, quote: "Directed and led other
- 23 employees in the kitchen." That can be found on page
- 24 367 of the Joint Appendix. In an internal investigation
- 25 by compliance officers at Ball State --

- 1 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What I mean is not the
- 2 statement, well, she's a supervisor. But comparable to
- 3 Faragher, where the lifeguard who didn't have authority
- 4 to hire her or fire her said, if you don't date me, you
- 5 are going to be cleaning the toilets. We don't have
- 6 anything like that in this record.
- 7 MR. ORTIZ: Well, there was no overt threat
- 8 like that in the record, but the person who was hurling
- 9 racial epithets at her was in a position of authority
- 10 over her, both according to the job description, also
- 11 according to her understanding, according --
- 12 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But that was also -- that
- 13 would be for a very confined period. It would only be
- 14 when the -- when Vance was a part-time employee. Once
- she is a full-time employee there isn't that.
- 16 MR. ORTIZ: No, Your Honor. There is two
- 17 separate provisions in the job description which cover
- 18 the whole period of time here. The harassment started
- 19 around September 2005, went in through August -- went to
- 20 August 2007 with one incident, March 1st, I believe it
- 21 was, 2008. On January 1st, 2007, Ms. Vance received a
- 22 promotion from part-time to full-time.
- 23 Page 13 on the Joint Appendix has this item
- 24 that you pointed to, Justice, which specifically lists
- 25 among the duties and responsibilities of the catering

- 1 specialist leading and directing part-time employees.
- 2 However, page 12 of the Joint Appendix lists under
- 3 positions supervised by the catering specialist, exactly
- 4 Vance's position. So when she moved from full-time --
- 5 sorry, from part-time to full-time on -- in January
- 6 2007, the supervisory nexus in the job description
- 7 merely jumped from page 13 to page 12. But it was
- 8 covered for that whole period of time.
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: What was the most unpleasant
- 10 thing that Davis could have assigned the Petitioner to
- 11 do? Maybe chopping onions all day, every day?
- 12 MR. ORTIZ: Certainly within the -- within
- 13 the job duties that she traditionally did, the kind of
- 14 things she had to work with, what she had to do, things
- 15 like this, working with onions, chopping onions all day
- 16 might be punishment. Unfortunately again, though, the
- 17 record wasn't developed under an understanding that all
- 18 of this would be relevant.
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: But that would materially
- 20 augment? Chopping onions all day would be enough?
- MR. ORTIZ: Yes, Your Honor.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Chopping -- how about
- 23 chopping other things, just chopping? You are the
- 24 sous-chef, you are going to be chopping all day every
- 25 day. Would that be enough?

1	MR.	ORTIZ:	Possibly,	Your	Honor.	Ιt

- 2 depends, again, on questions which would depend upon how
- 3 you had to chop, how heavy the knives were, whether you
- 4 would get repetitive injuries.
- 5 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Ortiz, did she ever
- 6 have that authority, because the record as far as we
- 7 have it says that the work assignments, what Vance was
- 8 doing, came from the chef or from Kimes, and the most
- 9 that Davis did was transmit the chef's orders of where
- 10 people would be stationed.
- 11 MR. ORTIZ: Your Honor, it is not quite
- 12 clear at this point. Vance, in an internal
- investigation at Ball State University, Ms. Vance told
- 14 the compliance officer who was conducting the
- 15 investigation that Davis delegated jobs to her in the
- 16 kitchen. That appears in Document 59-16 on page 2.
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, may I interrupt
- 18 a moment on --
- MR. ORTIZ: Yes, Your Honor.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- following up on an
- 21 issue raised in part by the Chief and by Justice
- 22 Ginsburg. Assuming that Davis was a direct supervisor,
- 23 would there be an affirmative defense available to the
- 24 employer?
- MR. ORTIZ: For sure, Your -- for sure, Your

- 1 Honor.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That would be your
- 3 position?
- 4 MR. ORTIZ: Yes.
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That this could not be
- 6 grounds that someone who directs an employee's
- 7 day-to-day activity should be treated like someone who
- 8 hasn't actually undertaken the threat because the
- 9 situations are different.
- 10 MR. ORTIZ: Yes, Your Honor. This is --
- 11 this falls out of the structure of the affirmative
- 12 defense as laid out in Ellerth and Faragher.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Is that what this fight
- 14 is about? What if we were to say that the EEOC's test
- 15 governed or the Second Circuit test governed, but
- 16 because of the nature of the difference between formal
- 17 supervisors who take tangible work activities and
- 18 informal supervisors who the employer would have less
- 19 control over and less knowledge about their activities,
- 20 that we would require an employee to complain. Would
- 21 that be a crazy rule, and why?
- MR. ORTIZ: That this Court would require
- 23 under those circumstances?
- 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Would require, would
- 25 permit the affirmative defense to be raised by an

- 1 employer.
- 2 MR. ORTIZ: It doesn't actually map on well
- 3 to the structure of the affirmative defenses laid out in
- 4 Ellerth and Faragher.
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, but there is a
- 6 difference between those supervisors who take direct
- 7 activity, tangible direct actions, who are in power to
- 8 do that, and supervisors who don't have that power,
- 9 because supervisors who don't have that power are
- 10 supervised -- their actions are supervised in a way that
- 11 non-tangible employment supervisors are not.
- MR. ORTIZ: But under the existing
- 13 affirmative -- affirmative defense, as I understand it,
- 14 Your Honor, an employee who doesn't complain, unless
- 15 they are reasonable in not complaining, in most cases
- 16 would make the affirmative defense unavailable to the
- 17 employer. Is it the question concerning the difference
- 18 between unreasonably failing to complain --
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, it's whether,
- 20 whether or not this whole fight is over that issue.
- 21 MR. ORTIZ: That -- this whole -- the fight
- 22 is in -- in part about that issue. That is certainly
- 23 not the only --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, because it's also
- about the burden of proof.

1	MR.	ORTIZ:	Yes.
<u>L</u>	IVIIC .	ORITZ.	ies.

- 2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So if we keep the burden
- 3 of proof with respect to -- to the employer raising the
- 4 affirmative defense, does that solve half your problem?
- 5 MR. ORTIZ: Yes, Your Honor. It makes it
- 6 better.
- 7 And this Court has recognized the
- 8 affirmative defense appropriately allocates the burdens
- 9 between the employee and the employer going forward.
- 10 Your Honor, the Seventh Circuit rule,
- 11 although unsupported by Respondent, is supported by
- 12 several of the Respondents' amici. As I said, they tend
- 13 to oversell the determinativeness of the Seventh Circuit
- 14 rule. They exaggerate the -- the uncertainty that
- 15 they predict will happen under the --
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Would you tell me what
- 17 you see as the major difference between the EEOC and the
- 18 Second Circuit rule, and why one is compelled over the
- 19 other?
- It's the regulatory agency charged with
- 21 oversight of -- of the implementation of the statute.
- 22 Why shouldn't we give deference to it on --
- MR. ORTIZ: Your Honor --
- 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- the standard it sets
- 25 forth?

- 1 MR. ORTIZ: -- it is -- it is entitled to
- 2 deference under Skidmore, no more. And it is our
- 3 understanding, although the government --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Excuse me. Why -- why --
- 5 why no more? Why just Skidmore?
- 6 MR. ORTIZ: Because it's -- it's only
- 7 informal guidance, Your Honor. It hasn't gone through
- 8 rulemaking, formal adjudication and those processes
- 9 which elevate the amount of deference --
- 10 JUSTICE SCALIA: That's an absolute rule?
- 11 MR. ORTIZ: Well, Your Honor, it's a little
- 12 bit contentious on this Court. No, Your Honor, it's a
- 13 little bit contentious on this Court; but, following
- 14 Mead Products, for example, it wouldn't be entitled to
- 15 more than Skidmore -- deference.
- 16 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Have you answered the
- 17 argument it shouldn't get any deference because what --
- 18 what the EEOC guidance does is it is -- it is
- 19 interpreting two decisions of this Court, and this
- 20 Court, not the EEOC, is in the best position to
- 21 determine what those two cases mean?
- 22 MR. ORTIZ: Well, what it is, Your Honor, is
- 23 it represents an interpretation of the word "agent" in
- 24 Title VII.
- Now, where -- where the statute -- the

- 1 statutory term gives off and this Court's interpretation
- 2 begins is, in some cases, a tough question.
- But in this case, the EEOC -- the EEOC is
- 4 really giving definition to the word "agent" in Title
- 5 VII, not so much this Court's interpretations in
- 6 Faragher and Ellerth.
- 7 If there are no further questions, Your
- 8 Honor, I would like to reserve my remaining time for
- 9 rebuttal.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 11 Mr. Srinivasan?
- 12 ORAL ARGUMENT OF SRI SRINIVASAN,
- for united states, as amicus curiae,
- 14 IN SUPPORT OF NEITHER PARTY
- 15 MR. SRINIVASAN: Thank you,
- 16 Mr. Chief Justice, and may it please the Court:
- When a person controls a subordinate's daily
- 18 work activities and subjects her to harassment, that
- 19 person qualifies as a supervisor for purposes of the
- 20 Faragher-Ellerth vicarious liability affirmative defense
- 21 framework.
- When it controls daily work activities and,
- therefore, for example, can compel the cleaning of
- 24 toilets for a year, the principle that the agency
- 25 relationship augments the ability to carry out the

- 1 harassment is implicated in that the victim will lack
- 2 the same ability to resist the harassment or to report
- 3 it as would be the case if the harassment were conducted
- 4 by a coworker that --
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What about -- what
- 6 about the music hypothetical?
- 7 MR. SRINIVASAN: Well --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Where -- where do
- 9 you think your test comes out on that?
- 10 MR. SRINIVASAN: I think it comes out, most
- 11 likely, against concluding that the person is a
- 12 supervisor. And the reason is that, under the EEOC
- 13 enforcement guidance, that accounts for situations in
- 14 which the authority is exercised over a limited field, a
- 15 limited number of tasks or assignments. And this is at
- 16 page 92(a) of the petition appendix.
- 17 And I think that would qualify under that
- 18 provision because it's limited.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why -- it doesn't
- 20 really have to do with the number of tasks. It isn't an
- 21 assignment of tasks. It's something that clearly
- 22 affects the daily activities of the employee in a way
- 23 that could be used to implement or facilitate
- 24 harassment.
- 25 MR. SRINIVASAN: It could, Your Honor. I

- 1 don't disagree with that, and I don't disagree that
- 2 there are going to be cases that raise issues at the
- 3 margins.
- 4 But one way to think about the spectrum of
- 5 options available to the Court today is to envision that
- 6 on one end, you have harassment that's perpetrated by a
- 7 coworker, and you consider the types of harassment that
- 8 that might entail. And on the other end, you have
- 9 harassment that's perpetrated by a supervisor with
- 10 authority over tangible employment actions.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And -- and your
- 12 tests sort of use that, just as you've posed it, as some
- 13 broad continuum in which we're going to have countless
- 14 cases trying to figure out whether music falls closer to
- 15 this end or -- you know, what -- the senior employee
- 16 controls the thermostat, is that closer to this end or
- 17 that end? Or cutting onions?
- 18 It seems to me that every single case has
- 19 its own peculiar facts, and courts are going to be --
- 20 have to figure out where on the continuum it resides.
- 21 MR. SRINIVASAN: Well -- well, I guess, Your
- 22 Honor, as Your Honor put it to -- to Petitioner's
- 23 counsel, the competing approach would be the approach
- 24 adopted by the Seventh Circuit; but, that approach has
- 25 some serious flaws.

- 1 For example, it wouldn't cover the
- 2 supervisor's conduct that was at issue in Faragher
- 3 itself, where the supervisor threatened that he would
- 4 make the harassment victim clean the toilets for a year
- 5 if she didn't succumb to the harassment. And I think
- 6 that's a pretty significant cost.
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, isn't cleaning the
- 8 toilets a limited -- isn't the authority to decide who
- 9 cleans the toilets the same as the authority to decide
- 10 what the music is going to be? It's one thing.
- I thought -- and your answer on the music
- 12 was, well, that probably wouldn't count because it's the
- 13 authority to decide just one thing.
- MR. SRINIVASAN: Well, we don't -- I guess,
- 15 we don't know enough about the threat to force her to
- 16 clean the toilets for a year to know whether it's only
- one thing. But it could be, for example, that if
- 18 there -- in the scope of a particular day, you have
- 19 three particular options as to what you might do,
- 20 monitor the beach, clean the facilities, including the
- 21 toilets, or prepare meals, then it's something that
- 22 covers the entire day.
- JUSTICE ALITO: But your argument is if the
- 24 only authority was to decide who cleans the toilets,
- 25 then -- then that would not -- that wouldn't count,

- 1 because that's just one thing.
- 2 MR. SRINIVASAN: No, I think that -- I don't
- 3 think we have an answer to that until we know how much
- 4 of the day's work is encompassed by cleaning the
- 5 toilets.
- 6 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought in Faragher it
- 7 was that -- that the lifeguard gave her her daily work
- 8 assignments. He controlled what she would do on the
- 9 job.
- 10 MR. SRINIVASAN: He -- he controlled every
- 11 aspect of her -- of her day's work, and cleaning the
- 12 toilets was one aspect of it. So that was a
- 13 particularly poignant example that he visited on her as
- 14 a way to perpetuate the harassment.
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, that can't possibly be
- 16 what the case means. Suppose that it's -- it's the
- 17 assignment of offices, and all of the offices except one
- 18 have heating and air conditioning, but one has no
- 19 heating and no air conditioning.
- 20 And so -- and that's the only authority that
- 21 this person has is to assign desks. That person says,
- if you don't do whatever it is that I want you to do,
- 23 I'm putting you in the office where there's no heating,
- 24 and there's no air conditioning. And you would say that
- 25 doesn't count because it's just one thing. It's not a

- 1 broad range of authorities -- of authorities.
- 2 MR. SRINIVASAN: It doesn't constitute
- 3 authority over daily work activities. And I guess
- 4 that's what the EEOC guidance authorities --
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: Have you --
- 6 MR. SRINIVASAN: We haven't encountered it
- 7 in real cases.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, you've looked this
- 9 up. And apparently, for about a dozen years, the EEOC
- 10 has had, as -- as an alternative basis for qualifying as
- 11 a supervisor, the individual has authority to direct the
- 12 employee's daily work activities.
- And in addition, we have three circuits that
- 14 for some period of years have been following roughly the
- 15 same kind of rule.
- 16 Now, has this problem of the country music
- or the other problems raised, have they turned out to be
- 18 a significant problem in those circuits or for the EEOC?
- MR. SRINIVASAN: They haven't,
- 20 Justice Breyer.
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: They have, or they have
- 22 not?
- MR. SRINIVASAN: They have not. I'm sorry.
- 24 They have not turned out to be an issue, and
- 25 that's what --

1 CHIEF	JUSTICE	ROBERTS:	How	do	you	know
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- 2 that? Are you just saying they have not generated
- 3 actual Federal -- Federal court reported cases?
- 4 Do you have any idea how this works on the
- 5 ground when people complain about the exercise of
- 6 authority by a coworker who has specific
- 7 responsibilities that might be reviewed as supervisory?
- 8 MR. SRINIVASAN: Well, they haven't -- I
- 9 guess that's two components to the answer,
- 10 Mr. Chief Justice -- they haven't generated reported or
- 11 underreported decisions, as far as we've seen. And this
- 12 is not scientific, and it's just based on our
- 13 conversations with the EEOC lawyers who are charged with
- 14 dealing with right to sue letters and the like. They
- 15 haven't encountered these sorts of situations.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The EEOC lawyers
- 17 think the EEOC plan is working just fine.
- 18 MR. SRINIVASAN: Well, that -- I -- I
- 19 understand that that's not entirely surprising, but --
- JUSTICE BREYER: But I guess they'd tell
- 21 you. There are three who signed the brief, or four.
- 22 And I guess they'd tell you, wouldn't they --
- MR. SRINIVASAN: Right.
- JUSTICE BREYER: -- what the problems are,
- 25 if they have problems.

- 1 MR. SRINIVASAN: Right. In our
- 2 conversations with them about the way in which these
- 3 issues arise --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: I mean, we can ask the
- 5 other side the same question. They've seen the cases in
- 6 the circuits. Have they seen instances in the EEOC or
- 7 before the circuits where it's turned out to be a
- 8 serious problem, like the country music or any of the
- 9 other hypotheticals raised?
- 10 MR. SRINIVASAN: And I don't think it has,
- 11 Justice Breyer.
- 12 And I think it's important to bear in mind
- 13 that the nature of this inquiry is such that there's
- 14 going to be cases at the margins that raise difficult
- 15 questions; but, in Ellerth, the Court recognized that.
- 16 JUSTICE KAGAN: Could I ask you how the
- 17 Seventh Circuit test works in operation?
- We're in a university setting here, so let
- 19 me give you a university hypo. There's a professor, and
- 20 the professor has a secretary. And the professor
- 21 subjects that secretary to living hell, complete hostile
- 22 work environment on the basis of sex, all right? But
- 23 the professor has absolutely no authority to fire the
- 24 secretary. What would the Seventh Circuit say about
- 25 that situation?

1	MR.	SRINIVASAN:	That	if	there's	no
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- 2 authority over -- to -- to direct annual
- 3 employment actions, then --
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: No, no, the secretary is
- 5 fired by the head of secretarial services. Professors
- 6 don't have the ability to fire secretaries; but,
- 7 professors do have the ability to make secretarial lives
- 8 living hells. So what does the Seventh Circuit say
- 9 about that?
- 10 MR. SRINIVASAN: The professor would not
- 11 qualify as a supervisor for purposes of Ellerth-Faragher
- 12 framework.
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: Under the Seventh Circuit
- 14 test.
- 15 MR. SRINIVASAN: And so you'd look at it as
- 16 a -- you'd look at the professor as a coworker, and
- 17 you'd apply the same standards that applied to
- 18 harassment conducted by the coworker.
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: Even though, of course, it's
- 20 actually more difficult for the secretary to complain
- 21 about the professor than it would be for the secretary
- 22 to complain about the head of secretarial services.
- MR. SRINIVASAN: Yes. And I think that's a
- 24 useful frame of reference that I was trying to
- 25 articulate earlier, which is that we can envision the

- 1 cases as falling on a spectrum between ability to
- 2 complain when the harassment is perpetrated by a
- 3 coworker on the one hand, and ability to complain when
- 4 harassment is perpetrated by a supervisor with tangible
- 5 employment authority --
- 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: And Mr. Srinivasan, if I can
- 7 just continue on about this, because I just don't even
- 8 understand the Seventh Circuit test. Would the Seventh
- 9 Circuit test also say that -- that that person is not a
- 10 supervisor even if the professor evaluates the secretary
- 11 on a yearly basis?
- 12 MR. SRINIVASAN: The Seventh Circuit would
- 13 say that as far as we can tell. They don't appear to
- 14 have a proviso for circumstances in which the harasser
- 15 has a role in determining tangible employment actions,
- 16 because that is one thing that the EEOC guidance takes
- 17 account of.
- 18 It's that -- not just that somebody counts
- 19 as a supervisor when they themselves undertake tangible
- 20 employment action, but if they have a substantial role
- 21 in making recommendations that in turn trigger tangible
- 22 employment actions, the EEOC would take the position
- 23 that that qualifies. Now, that's not an issue in this
- 24 case, but that's --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You've -- you've

- 1 talked several times about this going along the
- 2 spectrum. Where -- where are we supposed to cut off
- 3 the -- where's the cutting line in the spectrum?
- 4 MR. SRINIVASAN: Well, I think that the --
- 5 control over daily work activities is where we would
- 6 draw the line. And that's what has come up the most in
- 7 the cases. The reported decisions have conflicts on --
- 8 have a conflict on that issue, and that is where the
- 9 EEOC guidance draws the line.
- 10 Now, I think it would be helpful, if the
- 11 Court were going to issue an opinion that adopts that
- 12 line, to elaborate on -- on that line a little bit in
- 13 the following sense: That relaying instructions that
- 14 are -- that are disseminated by one person wouldn't
- 15 count for those purposes. That's in the EEOC guidance.
- 16 And -- and it's the functions of a job that actually
- 17 matter, not the job title. That is also in the EEOC
- 18 guidance.
- 19 So I think there are some aspects of the
- 20 EEOC guidance that elaborate on that line about control
- 21 over daily activities that I think I would commend to
- 22 the Court, that it might well --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Do we have a developed
- 24 record enough to do that in this case?
- 25 MR. SRINIVASAN: I'm sorry? I didn't hear

- 1 you.
- 2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Do -- do we have a
- 3 developed record enough? Petitioner's counsel says we
- 4 don't, that the Seventh Circuit test didn't permit them
- 5 to develop the record sufficiently to clarify all of
- 6 these issues. We certainly have snippets or -- or lack
- 7 snippets, as the case may be. But is the record
- 8 sufficiently developed for the Court to even
- 9 pronounce -- make pronouncements of that nature?
- 10 MR. SRINIVASAN: I think -- I think the real
- 11 question, Justice Sotomayor, is whether the parties had
- 12 a sufficient opportunity to develop the record. Because
- 13 if you take the record in the case as a given, we think
- 14 that the record would support the grant of summary
- 15 judgment for Ball State University, because there isn't
- 16 a sufficient showing in the record if you take it as a
- 17 given that the relevant supervisory -- the relevant
- 18 putative supervisory employee, Davis, had control over
- 19 day-to-day work activities.
- The question that remains is whether the
- 21 record should be allowed to be expanded.
- 22 JUSTICE ALITO: The conclusion in your brief
- 23 is that the judgment of the court of appeals should be
- 24 vacated and the case remanded for further proceedings,
- 25 and now -- now you are telling us that we should -- we

- 1 should basically write an opinion on summary judgment.
- 2 MR. SRINIVASAN: No. I think if you take
- 3 the record as a given, that a grant of summary judgment
- 4 in favor of the employer would be in order. But in the
- 5 normal course what this Court does when it announces a
- 6 new standard is it remands for the lower courts to deal
- 7 with the application of the standard to the facts. And
- 8 the conclusion in our brief is just, I think, a
- 9 parroting of that normal conclusion.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- Mr. Garre.
- ORAL ARGUMENT OF GREGORY G. GARRE
- ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS
- 14 MR. GARRE: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,
- 15 and may it please the Court:
- 16 The judgment of the court of appeals should
- 17 be affirmed because the record establishes that the only
- 18 employees whose status is at issue lacked the
- 19 supervisory authority necessary to trigger vicarious
- 20 liability under Title VII.
- 21 JUSTICE ALITO: We took this case to decide
- 22 whether the Faragher and Ellerth -- and Ellerth
- 23 supervisory liability rule is limited to those harassers
- 24 who have the power to hire, fire, demote, promote,
- 25 transfer, or discipline their victim. And your answer

- 1 to that is no; is that right?
- MR. GARRE: That's right. We don't think
- 3 the Seventh Circuit test is the complete answer to the
- 4 question of who may qualify as a supervisor. But we
- 5 think it's clear that the -- the person whose status is
- 6 at issue did not qualify and therefore, the judgment
- 7 should be affirmed. This Court --
- 8 JUSTICE ALITO: All right. Well, if we --
- 9 if we agree with that without having any party defending
- 10 the rule that was adopted by three circuits, then
- 11 surely -- well, then, why shouldn't we just remand this
- 12 case for the lower courts to decide this, this summary
- 13 judgment issue, and -- and permit further development of
- 14 the record if the record isn't fully developed?
- 15 MR. GARRE: Well, most importantly, Justice
- 16 Alito, because the courts need guidance on how to apply
- 17 the EEOC and the Second Circuit standard. The best way
- 18 to provide that guidance is to do what this Court often
- 19 does, which is to apply the facts to the standard.
- In this case, applying the record facts to
- 21 the standard that we think applies, the "materially
- 22 enables the harassment" standard, it's clear that Ms.
- 23 Davis, the person who is at issue, does not qualify as a
- 24 supervisor. And the reason why it's clear is the record
- 25 is uncontradicted that either the chef or Mr. Kimes made

- 1 the daily assignments through the prep sheets. The prep
- 2 sheets are what every employee in the kitchen got each
- 3 day and they would tell you: Dice vegetables for 60
- 4 people; prepare boxed lunches for 20; prepare six
- 5 vegetable trays.
- 6 That's -- that was their daily assignments,
- 7 and the record is absolutely clear, JA 2 277 to 278, JA
- 8 424 -- that all the employees got the prep sheets from
- 9 the chef or Mr. Kimes.
- 10 It's also absolutely clear that Mr. Kimes
- 11 was the one who controlled the schedule in the kitchen.
- 12 He is the one that told employees what times of days
- 13 that they could work. He controlled the schedule.
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: I understand Mr. Ortiz to
- 15 say that there's at least a dispute of fact about
- 16 whether Davis could have controlled what Petitioner did
- 17 on a daily basis.
- 18 MR. GARRE: There is -- there is neither a
- 19 material nor genuine dispute on that, Your Honor. It at
- 20 the very --
- 21 JUSTICE ALITO: Doesn't her job description
- 22 say that she can assign tasks in the kitchen?
- MR. GARRE: But they -- they omit the -- the
- 24 clause that follows, which is critical, which is "via
- 25 demonstration, coaching, or overseeing to ensure

- 1 efficiency." That is on page Joint Appendix 13. And
- 2 that job description has to be read in light of the
- 3 record that makes crystal clear that it was the chef who
- 4 did the daily assignments for the prep sheets.
- 5 And there -- and there are examples of the
- 6 prep sheets as an exhibit to Ms. Fultz's affidavit, the
- 7 affidavits at 424 of the Joint Appendix. The -- the
- 8 exhibits are LLL and JJJ --
- 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: We didn't take this case
- 10 to -- to decide those factual questions.
- MR. GARRE: Your Honor, you --
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: We really didn't. We took
- 13 it principally to decide whether the Seventh Circuit
- 14 rule was -- was right or not. And you don't even defend
- 15 that. So there is nobody here defending the Seventh
- 16 Circuit.
- 17 MR. GARRE: Well, Your Honor has excellent
- 18 briefing defending the Seventh Circuit. The Chamber of
- 19 Commerce and other amici have defended it. We certainly
- 20 think that it -- that -- that it's a superior --
- 21 JUSTICE SCALIA: They are not talking to us
- 22 here, are they?
- MR. GARRE: No, Your Honor. We think it's a
- 24 superior bright line, but, as we say in our brief, we
- 25 think that ultimately this Court's precedents compel

- 1 that the Court reject that. And I think most -- most
- 2 squarely we look at the Faragher decision. We look at
- 3 lifeguard Silverman in Faragher, who had the authority
- 4 to control all aspects of the victim's schedule and
- 5 daily activities in a virtually unchecked manner.
- 6 So if the Court is looking for an example
- 7 that it wants to point to of someone who could qualify
- 8 under the non-Seventh Circuit category, we think that
- 9 lifeguard Silverman, from this Court's precedents, would
- 10 be the example that this Court would hold out.
- 11 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Was that -- that question
- 12 wasn't presented. It was -- it was just assumed that --
- 13 that Silverman would qualify as a -- as a supervisor.
- MR. GARRE: That -- that's absolutely right,
- 15 Justice Ginsburg. And I think, for some of the reasons
- 16 that Justice Kagan brought up in her colloquy with --
- 17 with Mr. Srinivasan, I think the logic of the Court's
- 18 precedents, agency principles adopted, would lead to the
- 19 conclusion that someone who does control virtually all
- 20 aspects of one's schedule but yet lacks the authority to
- 21 hire, fire, or demote, nevertheless still would be
- 22 qualified as someone who --
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Every -- every
- 24 time -- every time you adopt a rule rather than a
- 25 multifactor analysis, there are going to be particular

- 1 cases that fall outside the rule that look like a harsh
- 2 result. Now, here it simply affects the nature. It
- 3 doesn't give any immunity for harassment, it just
- 4 affects the nature of the showing that might be made.
- 5 You have no difficulty, as representing an
- 6 employer, by saying that in every case an allegation of
- 7 this sort is made you have to go through a case-by-case
- 8 description of the particular responsibilities, whether
- 9 it's the thermostat, whether it's the music, whether
- 10 it's the assignment of everything -- that the employee
- 11 does, and decide on that basis whether or not you should
- 12 compensate the victim, or -- or whether or not you
- 13 should go to court?
- MR. GARRE: We do have great difficulty,
- 15 Your Honor. First of all, if we are wrong about what
- 16 this Court's precedents compel, then this Court should
- 17 adopt the Seventh Circuit principle, and we've -- we've
- 18 said that in our brief, if we're wrong in our
- 19 understanding of the Court's precedents.
- 20 Secondly, we think that the -- the Court can
- 21 and should establish meaningful limits on what this
- 22 broader category of supervisors would require, and I
- 23 think the case law illustrates that. If you look at the
- 24 leading circuits who apply the standard --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I think -- I

- 1 think your friend on the other side was -- made a good
- 2 point in his reply brief, which is the variety of
- 3 circumstances you think courts should look at just
- 4 happen to correspond with the factual issues that you
- 5 would have resolved in your favor.
- 6 MR. GARRE: Well, I -- I would take issue
- 7 with that. We -- we tried to provide guideposts that
- 8 would be helpful. But if you look at, for example, the
- 9 principle that the EEOC agrees with, which -- which is
- 10 just that limited or marginal occasion authority to lead
- 11 or oversee by virtue of a paper title, its grade, or
- 12 seniority is not sufficient.
- 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: What does that have to do
- 14 with agency? That's what I don't understand. Why --
- 15 why do any of these tests have to do with agency?
- MR. GARRE: Well, Your Honor --
- 17 JUSTICE SCALIA: I mean, I can understand
- 18 Congress writing a statute that says -- you know, any --
- 19 any person given -- given authority by the employer,
- 20 which authority is used to make it more difficult for a
- 21 person to complain about racial or sexual harassment, is
- 22 bad. But the statute doesn't say that. It says apply
- 23 agency principles.
- How does agency have anything to do with the
- line you're arguing that we take here?

Official

1	MR.	GARRE:	What	this	Court	said	in	Faraghe	ır

- 2 and Ellerth -- and I appreciate that you dissented in
- 3 the case, but what this Court said was it adopted
- 4 Section 219(2)(d) of the Restatement (Second) of Agency,
- 5 the notion that if -- if there was -- if the employee
- 6 was aided in the accomplishment of the harassment by
- 7 virtue of an agency relation, that that would be the
- 8 agency trigger for liability.
- 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: Then why not leave it
- 10 there? If that's what the agency is --
- MR. GARRE: And RMA then --
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: -- then you don't need it
- 13 at all. So the music -- the music would -- the
- 14 thermostat would qualify. It would all qualify.
- 15 MR. GARRE: I don't think it would, Your
- 16 Honor, because we agree, certainly, with the EEOC that
- 17 there are material limits to how far that principle
- 18 could be stretched.
- 19 The Court in Ellerth made clear that there
- 20 were limits to the vicarious liability of employers in
- 21 this context.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Why? Why? I mean, if
- 23 that's your principle, apply the principle.
- MR. GARRE: Well, for the very --
- 25 JUSTICE SCALIA: If you are aided -- you

- 1 know, you're going to work in a cold room unless you --
- 2 you know, comply with my sexual advances, apply the
- 3 principle. What's so hard about that? That's a clear
- 4 line.
- 5 MR. GARRE: This is the balance I think that
- 6 the Court struck in Ellerth, Your Honor, which was -- it
- 7 took into account that the statute was passed against
- 8 the backdrop of agency principles; but, yet, Congress
- 9 also was cognizant that imposing vicarious liability on
- 10 the employer for acts that the Court recognized were not
- 11 themselves authorized by the employer, that that was a
- 12 punitive aspect of that, and the Court would establish
- 13 limits.
- 14 And I think our position takes into account
- 15 that there have to be limits in this area, on the extent
- 16 of vicarious liability, in order to give effect to
- 17 Congress's intent; but, also recognizes, in the
- 18 situation like you had with the lifeguard in Faragher,
- 19 that that person did have authority that would assist in
- 20 the harassment date me or clean the toilets, as
- 21 the lifeguard in Faragher said.
- 22 And so the Court, I think, struck a
- 23 reasonable balance. And taking the balance and what
- 24 this Court said, we think the proper way to resolve this
- 25 case is to adopt something like the EEOC rule or the

- 1 Second Circuit rule, but to make clear there are limits.
- 2 And the best way to make clear that there are limits is
- 3 to make clear that on the record in this case Ms. Davis
- 4 did not qualify as a supervisor.
- Now, my friend said they didn't have the
- 6 opportunity to develop evidence to the contrary; but,
- 7 the fact is, from the outset, they litigated this case
- 8 as if the Seventh Circuit standard did not apply.
- 9 The reasons that they gave for why Ms. Davis
- 10 was a supervisor, in the lower court, was that, one,
- 11 they pointed to the job description, that she had this
- 12 other authority to "lead and direct," and they also
- 13 pointed to the fact that she didn't clock in.
- 14 Those are irrelevant under the Seventh
- 15 Circuit test. So all along, they had in their mind that
- 16 they wanted to try to show that Davis was different, and
- 17 it did have some marginal authority to lead --
- 18 JUSTICE ALITO: What guidance would your --
- 19 what quidance would the kind of opinion that you're
- 20 suggesting we write really provide? The -- the guidance
- 21 would be that if someone has no authority to assign
- 22 daily work, then that person isn't -- and also has no
- 23 authority to hire, fire, promote, et cetera, then that
- 24 person isn't a supervisor.
- How much guidance is that?

- 1 MR. GARRE: I think it's a lot of guidance,
- 2 Justice Alito. I think that the flip side of that is
- 3 the Court would make clear that merely having some
- 4 occasional or marginal authority to lead or direct by
- 5 virtue of one's better paper title or seniority is not
- 6 sufficient to trigger vicarious liability. I think
- 7 that's going to resolve the mine-run of the cases in
- 8 which this question has come up and been litigated, at
- 9 least to the courts of appeals.
- 10 If you look, for example, at the difference
- 11 between something like the Mack case out of the Second
- 12 Circuit and the Mikels case out of the Fourth Circuit,
- in Mikels, we had an example of two police officers, one
- 14 had a higher paper rank, corporal versus private, and it
- 15 was alleged that the corporal was a supervisor. And the
- 16 court said, no, no, no, he's not a supervisor, all there
- is, is some marginal occasional authority. That's not
- 18 sufficient.
- 19 It was clear that the victim in that case
- 20 wasn't shy about telling the harasser where to go, to
- 21 tell him off. And that's the kind of --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But why should that --
- 23 why should that matter? I know you said that in your
- 24 brief, Mr. Garre, if the -- if the alleged victim talked
- 25 back.

- 1 But in one of the very first cases that we
- 2 had in this line, Harris v. Forklift, there was -- it
- 3 was the boss, so there was no question about supervisor,
- 4 and he was really making things hard for this employee;
- 5 but, she was very firm, and she talked back to him.
- But, still, that's not what we said that
- 7 counted. We said, is she being subjected to terms and
- 8 conditions of employment that she would not be subjected
- 9 to but for her sex.
- 10 MR. GARRE: Right. And we -- we don't think
- 11 that that's a dispositive criterion. We recognize the
- 12 point that the person gets to establish superior ability
- 13 to stand up to despicable treatment. But I think what
- 14 our point is, is that it's part of the equation that you
- 15 would look at.
- In essence, did the person treat the alleged
- 17 harasser like a co-employee, or did the person treat the
- 18 alleged harasser like a supervisor? And in this case,
- 19 the record is clear that she treated her like a
- 20 co-employee, someone who -- they obviously had
- 21 disagreements among them.
- 22 And I think that's what we take this piece
- 23 of evidence to assist the Court on the question
- 24 presented. I think -- but we think what was sufficient
- 25 to resolve the question presented is the clear and

- 1 unrefuted evidence that the prep sheets, the daily
- 2 activities were assigned by the chef or Mr. Kimes, that
- 3 Mr. Kimes had the authority to control the schedule.
- 4 And if you want to go further than that, the
- 5 record also shows that Mr. Kimes had the authority to
- 6 review -- to do annual reviews. Mr. Kimes had the
- 7 authority to evaluate. He had all the kind of authority
- 8 that one would expect in a supervisor.
- 9 And so you would ask the question, what's
- 10 left? Essentially nothing. And whatever is left, we
- 11 agree with the EEOC, is not, as a matter of law,
- 12 sufficient to trigger vicarious liability.
- 13 That doesn't mean she can't present her
- 14 claim. It -- it means that it's just simply analyzed
- 15 under the framework for co-workers, in which she bears
- 16 the burden of establishing that the employer was
- 17 negligent in not responding to it.
- 18 And as Judge Wood, for the court of appeals,
- 19 and Judge Barker made clear in their detailed opinions,
- 20 this was not a situation where the employer stuck its
- 21 head in the sand and ignored incidents of unpleasantries
- 22 or, in some cases, despicable racial epithets --
- JUSTICE ALITO: If you were willing to
- 24 concede that this would be a close case under the Second
- 25 Circuit standard or under the EEOC guidance, then there

- 1 might be an argument in favor of our applying those
- 2 tests -- or one of those tests to the facts of the case,
- 3 because then that might provide some guidance, even
- 4 though we are supposed to be a court of review, not a
- 5 court of first view.
- 6 But you're saying this is an extremely weak
- 7 case under those standards; and, therefore, what is --
- 8 what benefit is there in our applying this? Just send
- 9 it back and have it done in the normal course by the
- 10 court of appeals or by the district court.
- 11 MR. GARRE: Well, Your Honor, we don't think
- 12 it's a close case, but my friend does, and his amici do.
- 13 And I think the damaging signal that this Court would
- 14 send by remanding on this record would be that, whatever
- 15 it might say in its opinion, that would have virtually
- 16 no force in terms of establishing a standard that made
- 17 clear that this -- whatever else may be true about what
- 18 would qualify, something like this does not qualify.
- 19 And, again, like this Court did in the
- 20 Global Tech case, when the Court establishes a standard,
- 21 oftentimes, it applies the standard to the facts and
- 22 appreciates that that's the best way, the most judicial
- 23 way of providing guidance on what that standard means.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Mr. Garre, there is one
- 25 BSU internal document that -- a note to the file by a

- 1 compliance officer, who apparently investigated one of
- 2 the complaints, that says that -- Kimes is recorded as
- 3 saying -- he's the avowed supervisor -- that he, quote,
- 4 "knows Davis has given direction to Vance, and that he
- 5 just doesn't know what else to do."
- 6 Doesn't that defeat summary judgment on its
- 7 face?
- 8 MR. GARRE: It doesn't, Your Honor, if you
- 9 agree with our principle, that the EEOC also agrees
- 10 with, that having some limited or marginal authority to
- 11 lead or direct, as a matter of law, is not sufficient.
- 12 So that that piece of evidence, giving it its
- 13 reasonable inference, would not be sufficient to create
- 14 a material issue. It also wouldn't be sufficient
- 15 creating -- looking at the body of the evidence, which
- 16 makes crystal clear that the prep sheets are really what
- 17 was driving the daily activities in this workplace. And
- 18 it was Kimes or the chef that did the prep sheets, not
- 19 Ms. Davis at all.
- 20 And it -- and it was also not material in
- 21 light of the evidence that Mr. Kimes did the schedule.
- Ms. Davis was asked at her deposition on
- 23 page 135, quote, "Was there ever" -- "have you ever been
- 24 assigned to a less meaningful or fulfilling job
- 25 classification?" And her response was yes, and she

- 1 pointed to an example by Mr. Kimes, because it was
- 2 Mr. Kimes who had the authority to make those
- 3 assignments, not Ms. Davis.
- So the mere fact that you've got some
- 5 marginal evidence drawn from snippets, giving it a
- 6 reasonable inference that she at times had some ability
- 7 to lead or direct, as the job description says, "by
- 8 coaching, demonstration or overseeing, " is not
- 9 sufficient as a matter of law to entitle her to summary
- 10 judgment, nor do we think that this Court should take
- 11 the unusual step of remanding so that she can dig into
- 12 events six years old through new discovery.
- 13 Again --
- 14 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Garre, could I ask you
- 15 about that? You said before that there is no -- nothing
- 16 to suggest that she left anything on the table because
- 17 of the nature of the Seventh Circuit standard.
- 18 So what's the best place in the record for
- 19 us to look -- to decide that question as to whether she
- 20 at all didn't present or didn't develop evidence because
- 21 of the nature of the Seventh Circuit standard?
- 22 MR. GARRE: Well, first, I would look at her
- 23 summary judgment briefs, Your Honor, and in those briefs
- 24 she argued that Davis was a supervisor because, one,
- 25 under the job description she had the authority to lead

- 1 and direct, the same sorts of things that we are talking
- 2 now and would be talking about under the EEOC and Second
- 3 Circuit tests. And, two, she points to the fact that
- 4 they didn't clock in, again something that is irrelevant
- 5 under the Seventh Circuit test.
- 6 So this wasn't a case where the litigant
- 7 felt themselves bound by the legal standard and one
- 8 could surmise that they would have pursued it
- 9 differently. I think I would look at that first. And
- 10 then I would look at her deposition transcript which is
- 11 in the Joint Appendix and the three affidavits that she
- 12 put in, in this case, which are in the Joint Appendix.
- 13 At some point you would expect her to come
- 14 along and try to rebut the notion that Mr. Kimes and
- 15 Ms. Fultz assigned the daily activities through the prep
- 16 sheets. In fact, it's just the contrary. If anything,
- in her own affidavit she seems to accept that the prep
- 18 sheets were done by Kimes and the chef. That's at JA
- 19 430. You -- you would expect her to contest the notion
- 20 that Mr. Kimes was the one who did the scheduling, who
- 21 did her annual reviews, who disciplined her on occasion.
- 22 After all, she was claiming that Davis was the
- 23 supervisor, and she didn't feel bound by the Seventh
- 24 Circuit tests.
- So you would expect to see some indication

- 1 of how Ms. Davis actually assigned her something to do,
- 2 changed her schedule, the like. Instead what you find
- 3 is all those sorts of allegations, she made them, but
- 4 all those sorts of allegations were directed to Mr.
- 5 Kimes. That was the basis for her retaliation claim,
- 6 which isn't before the Court. But there are all the
- 7 sorts of things that you might expect one to complain
- 8 about against a supervisor in this sort of vein: She
- 9 made me cut vegetables instead of doing the baking like
- 10 I like to do; she didn't assign me enough overtime so I
- 11 could make more money; she changed my hours.
- 12 Those allegations were made. They were directed
- 13 at Mr. Kimes and that's perfectly consistent with the
- 14 record evidence. There was Kimes and the chef who had
- 15 the authority to do her daily activities, and Kimes had
- 16 the authority to do the schedule.
- 17 It's not enough for her to come here today,
- 18 I don't think, and just speculate that having an
- 19 opportunity to go through greater discovery, which in
- 20 essence would amount to a fishing expedition, the Court
- 21 should take the unusual step of remanding to give her an
- 22 opportunity for discovery. This Court -- although we
- 23 acknowledge oftentimes this Court does remand for the
- lower courts to undertake that inquiry, it certainly
- 25 doesn't always do so. So Global-Tech is one example;

- 1 we've cited many more in our briefs.
- 2 And here, I think, again, the parties --
- 3 there is broad agreement on what the standard should be.
- 4 Something like the EEOC or Second Circuit test is, we
- 5 think, the best way to frame it. But given the debate
- 6 among the parties about what that test means and how it
- 7 applies to Davis here, I think it's absolutely critical
- 8 for the Court to apply the legal test to the record
- 9 facts and hold that Ms. Davis is not a supervisor and to
- 10 affirm the judgment below.
- 11 Although it's not before this Court, if one
- 12 wants to go to the next step and think about the
- 13 affirmative defenses and the like, this isn't a case
- 14 where the Court would be putting to rest a valid Title
- 15 VII claim.
- 16 But the claim was extensively looked at
- 17 below by Judge Barker in the district court, Judge Wood
- 18 and her colleagues on the court of appeal, and they
- 19 found an environment in which Ball State reacted
- 20 responsibly to the allegations that were made,
- 21 investigated them and took prompt action where the
- 22 investigation warranted it, particularly with respect to
- 23 the most despicable things that were uncovered, racial
- 24 epithets that were used by another employee,
- 25 Ms. McVicker, not Ms. Davis.

- 1 The only allegations against Ms. Davis that
- 2 we think are relevant here during the time period that
- 3 Ms. Davis was a part-time employee were: One, the
- 4 so-called elevator incident where Ms. Davis allegedly
- 5 blocked Ms. Vance as she got out of the elevator, which
- 6 isn't race-based at all, we don't think; and two, the
- 7 alleged use of words like "Sambo" or
- 8 "Buckwheat" to refer --
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Ortiz said it wasn't
- 10 just part-time. He called my attention to the page
- 11 before that says she also -- that Davis also directed --
- MR. GARRE: Well, we disagree with that,
- 13 Your Honor. If you look on page JA 12, the job
- 14 description position function, the last sentence says,
- 15 "Requires leadership of up to 20 part-time substitute
- 16 and student employees." So we think it's clear.
- We said -- this is in our red brief and
- 18 there wasn't any response to it in the yellow brief --
- 19 that any authority, any conceivable supervisory
- 20 authority, could have only existed when Ms. Vance was a
- 21 part-time employee.
- 22 But we don't think that that's relevant,
- 23 Your Honor, because putting -- putting aside whether she
- 24 had authority over catering assistants who were part
- 25 time or full time, the record is absolutely clear that

- 1 Ms. Davis just lacked the authority that would have been
- 2 sufficient to trigger vicarious liability. And again we
- 3 think the paradigm case where that authority is present
- 4 is something like the lifeguard in Silverman where they
- 5 control all aspects of the daily activities, one's
- 6 schedule, one's daily work assignments, and down the
- 7 line.
- 8 Here there is no evidence that any of that
- 9 authority that was possessed, and the record makes clear
- 10 beyond doubt that all that authority was possessed by
- 11 others, Ms. -- the chef and Mr. Kimes.
- 12 And I think, as the amicus brief makes
- 13 clear, this is consistent with workplaces across America
- 14 today, where jobs are less hierarchical, more
- 15 collaborative, and so where you have got more senior
- 16 employees by virtue of their experience or job title,
- 17 just a paper title, are in a broad sense team leaders of
- 18 the like in the workplace.
- 19 That doesn't mean they are supervisors in
- 20 any traditional sense, and it certainly doesn't mean
- 21 they are supervisors for purposes of triggering
- 22 vicarious liability under Title VII.
- So for those reasons, we would urge this
- 24 Court to affirm the judgment below, to make clear in
- 25 order to provide the needed guidance to the courts of

- 1 appeals and the assumption that something like the EEOC
- 2 or Second Circuit standard does apply to determine who
- 3 is a supervisor triggering vicarious liability. Ms.
- 4 Davis, the only employee who is at issue, does not meet
- 5 that standard.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 7 MR. GARRE: If you have no more questions,
- 8 thank you.
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Ortiz, you have
- 10 4 more minutes remaining.
- 11 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF DANIEL R. ORTIZ
- 12 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- MR. ORTIZ: Thank you, Your Honor.
- 14 The Seventh Circuit rule is not one that can
- 15 be justified in terms of its superior judicial
- 16 manageability, administrability, despite producing a few
- 17 odd results.
- 18 As Justice Kagan's question revealed, it
- 19 produces truly perverse results. Someone who can tell
- 20 you what to do in your job day-to-day, manage you during
- 21 the whole job period, what kind of tasks you have to do,
- 22 was not necessarily considered a supervisor, while the
- 23 person upstairs in human resources that you may never
- 24 see or even know would be considered your supervisor.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, if you adopted that

- 1 rule I suppose you could couple it with an increased
- 2 duty of care on the part of the employer to take
- 3 necessary steps to prevent forbidden harassment. In
- 4 other words, you up the duty of care on the part of the
- 5 employer generally.
- 6 MR. ORTIZ: Well, Justice Kennedy, that in
- 7 fact is one thing the Seventh Circuit has tried to do,
- 8 but it dispels any kind of certainty and predictability
- 9 in the rule, because the duty of care of course would be
- 10 determined by a jury only after hearing a particular
- 11 case.
- 12 Second, my friend tries to get out from
- 13 under the clear import of the job description here by
- 14 saying directing and leading somehow don't count because
- 15 that is accomplished through oversight. Oversight,
- 16 however, is a common synonym for supervision itself.
- 17 It's merely a dog chasing its own tail.
- 18 Third, it's no surprise that many of the
- 19 things that Ms. Vance referred to, the particular
- 20 instance she referred to went back to William Kimes. Of
- 21 course, is that related to the retaliation part of her
- 22 claim, which is not before this Court.
- 23 Also, Your Honor, Faragher in the end is not
- 24 a toilet cleaning case. The district court did not
- 25 find -- made no finding on that. The court of appeals

- 1 didn't mention it. This Court in its Faragher opinion
- 2 mentioned only that it was an allegation in the
- 3 complaint.
- 4 It is not clear -- the allegation of the
- 5 complainant was that he said that, not that Silverman
- 6 actually had that authority. And it was clear from the
- 7 case that he actually wasn't interested in even dating
- 8 Faragher, it was just a way of humiliating her in the
- 9 workplace. So just as Faragher's expressed, it was not
- 10 clear that was even something that Silverman had
- 11 authority to do.
- 12 And finally, if this Court is worried about
- 13 sending signals, think about what kind of signal it will
- 14 be sending to litigants in the future if it were to
- 15 affirm, simply affirm here. In the future, whenever
- 16 anyone is thinking that they may want to challenge a
- 17 rule, no matter how well-settled it is in a particular
- 18 circuit, they would have an incentive to, through
- 19 discovery, to produce information that might be relevant
- 20 to any future twist.
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, is there any? You
- 22 said he went through, you weren't preceding on the --
- 23 your client, originally in district court, not preceding
- 24 on the basis of this straight Seventh Circuit test. He
- 25 had the EEOC look into it; the Government itself says

- 1 that we should affirm and they have EEOC lawyers on it.
- 2 And so is there any piece of information
- 3 that would be relevant that you know of that you would
- 4 introduce, were it sent back, say to the district court,
- 5 that you have not already introduced?
- 6 MR. ORTIZ: Well, Your Honor, first, the
- 7 Solicitor General's office does not now take the
- 8 position that affirmance is proper.
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: I read what they said in
- 10 the last page of their brief. They said either affirm,
- 11 that was their first thing, or send it back. Okay. Now
- 12 my question remains the same.
- MR. ORTIZ: Yes.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Is there --
- MR. ORTIZ: There is.
- 16 JUSTICE BREYER: What is it?
- 17 MR. ORTIZ: On page 197 of the Joint
- 18 Appendix, in the deposition testimony of Ms. Vance, she
- 19 says that Davis told her what to do, what not to do. In
- 20 the internal memo to the file that Justice Sotomayor
- 21 pointed to, William Kimes, who had the authority --
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I think Justice Breyer's
- 23 question was what's not in the record?
- MR. ORTIZ: Oh, what's not -- I'm sorry,
- 25 Your Honor.

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1	JUSTICE	SOTOMAYOR:	Do	vou	have	something

- 2 that's not in the record that will materially add to
- 3 this discourse?
- 4 MR. ORTIZ: Yes, Your Honor. Thank you.
- In document number 62-3, which concerns the
- 6 deposition testimony of another employee -- is not in
- 7 the Joint Appendix, which -- which is the
- 8 deposition testimony of another employee named Julie
- 9 Murphy. Ms. Murphy testifies that Davis, quote unquote,
- 10 gave orders in the kitchen. That's on page 24, I
- 11 believe.
- 12 On page 38, she testifies that Davis was
- 13 understood as a supervisor.
- 14 And on page 37, she indicates that she
- 15 received particular orders from Davis to do different
- 16 things, like clean a particular piece of kitchen
- 17 equipment, at different times.
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's all in the
- 19 record in this Court.
- MR. ORTIZ: Yes.
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Just not in the
- 22 Joint Appendix.
- MR. ORTIZ: Just not in the Joint Appendix,
- 24 Your Honor.
- Thank you.

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1	C	HIEF JUSTIC	CE ROBERTS:	Thank you,	counsel
2	T	he case is	submitted.		
3	(Whereupon,	at 12:06 p.	m., he case	in the
4	above-entitle	d matter wa	as submitted	.)	
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