SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF	THE	ONTLED	STATES
ROSE MARY KNICK,)		
Petitioner,)		
v.)	No. 17-	-647
TOWNSHIP OF SCOTT, PENNSYLVANIA,	,)		
ET AL.,)		
Respondents.)		

Pages: 1 through 70

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: October 3, 2018

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3	ROSE MARY KNICK,)
4	Petitioner,)
5	v.) No. 17-647
6	TOWNSHIP OF SCOTT, PENNSYLVANIA,)
7	ET AL.,)
8	Respondents.)
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10	
11	Washington, D.C.
12	Wednesday, October 3, 2018
13	
14	The above-entitled matter came on
15	for oral argument before the Supreme Court of the
16	United States at 10:05 a.m.
17	
18	APPEARANCES:
19	J. DAVID BREEMER, ESQ., Sacramento, California; on
20	behalf of the Petitioner.
21	NOEL J. FRANCISCO, Solicitor General, Department of
22	Justice, Washington, D.C.; for the United States
23	as amicus curiae, supporting the Petitioner.
24	TERESA FICKEN SACHS, ESQ., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;
25	on behalf of the Respondents.

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:05 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument first this morning in Case 17-647,
5	Knick versus the Township of Scott,
6	Pennsylvania.
7	Mr. Breemer.
8	ORAL ARGUMENT OF J. DAVID BREEMER
9	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
10	MR. BREEMER: Mr. Chief Justice, and
11	may it please the Court:
12	Requiring Ms. Knick to prosecute her
13	federal takings claim in state court conflicts
14	with Section 1983 and is incompatible with the
15	nature of her claim. Her claim is not based on
16	the government's failure to compensate. It's
17	based on the township's failure to recognize
18	that the imposition of an access easement is a
19	Fifth Amendment taking that triggers a
20	compensation requirement.
21	Because lack of compensation is not an
22	element of her federal takings claim, state
23	compensation remedies do not bear on the
24	presentation of the claim in federal court.
25	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How is it not

- 1 an element of her claim? There's no violation
- 2 unless she is denied just compensation.
- 3 MR. BREEMER: Well, Your Honor, in the
- 4 inverse condemnation context, the problem is
- 5 not that the government's violating the Just
- 6 Compensation Clause by failing to pay. The
- 7 problem is that it's depriving her of her right
- 8 to just compensation because it does not
- 9 recognize that its invasion of her property is
- 10 a taking that triggers the entitlement to
- 11 compensation.
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I
- thought that was the whole point of an inverse
- 14 condemnation. They recognize that they owe her
- money, and the whole point of the process,
- 16 which can be fairly elaborate, is that they're
- just trying to figure out how much. If it's
- 18 not enough, then she can bring a claim.
- 19 But it seems to me that it's imposing
- 20 a considerable burden on the state or the local
- 21 entities to say you've got to pay right away;
- in other words, go through some sort of process
- to figure out what you owe before you can even
- 24 -- you know, it's -- it's simply a process to
- 25 figure out how much is due. I don't know why

it's such a problem to make her go through that

- 2 in the initial instance.
- 3 MR. BREEMER: To -- well, Your Honor,
- 4 it helps to remember that condemnation and
- 5 inverse condemnation takings are quite
- 6 different. In a condemnation case, which
- 7 corresponds to what you were just describing,
- 8 the government condemns a property and then
- 9 it's just a process of -- of figuring out where
- and how she's going to get her money.
- But, when the question is whether
- there is even a constitutional entitlement to
- 13 compensation, that before --
- 14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry. Isn't
- that what condemnation, whether it's regular or
- 16 inverse, does? The first question the court
- 17 answers is, is there a taking? So it does
- 18 reach the constitutional question. Even in a
- 19 -- in a regular condemnation -- condemnation
- 20 proceeding, they have to decide whether it --
- 21 the government has a public interest or not.
- 22 That's what makes it constitutional. So I
- 23 don't understand.
- 24 Can I ask another question, however?
- 25 Assuming that you were right and that you had a

- 1 federal cause of action or should have one
- 2 under 1983, when this case goes to a federal
- 3 court, why would a district court be -- abuse
- 4 its discretion for abstaining under any of the
- 5 three doctrines, Pullman, Louisiana Power &
- 6 Light, or Colorado River? All of them say that
- 7 district courts can abstain when a legal issue
- 8 involves state law and that state law could
- 9 obviate the federal proceeding.
- 10 So one of two things can happen in the
- 11 state court below. They say no taking, and
- then there's no taking; or, second, there's a
- 13 taking, and the inverse condemnation proceeding
- 14 will provide the remedy.
- So, in many ways, this obviates the
- 16 proceeding altogether.
- 17 MR. BREEMER: Well, if I could -- Your
- 18 Honor, if I could answer the abstention
- 19 question first. Williamson County is different
- 20 than any known abstention doctrine. For
- 21 instance, in Quackenbush, this Court held
- 22 that -- a damages claim, that the federal court
- 23 couldn't abstain from a constitutional claim
- 24 for damages under Burford. The other
- 25 abstention doctrines deal when there's an

- 1 explicit state claim that might resolve the
- 2 federal --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Why isn't --
- 4 MR. BREEMER: -- question but there
- 5 isn't here.
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- why isn't that
- 7 the case here? The whole issue is whether this
- 8 graveyard law is a -- was inherent in the
- 9 property she took, meaning that's what I
- 10 understood the legal question was. It's all
- 11 about the state law rights of landowners
- 12 vis-a-vis cemeteries.
- 13 MR. BREEMER: That, Your Honor, is the
- township's defense. That's a merits defense.
- 15 The problem here, the question here is whether
- 16 Ms. Knick must go to the state court with her
- 17 federal claim. She can't even get in through
- 18 the courthouse door. That's the fundamental --
- 19 we think --
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I guess my
- 21 bottom-line question is, if the abstention
- 22 doctrines apply, which I think they would --
- you've given me no reason why they shouldn't --
- 24 aren't you just inviting now a patchwork of
- 25 federal and state involvement in cases?

- 1 Williamson has at least the advantage of
- 2 clarifying where people go and how these claims
- 3 are adjudicated.
- 4 MR. BREEMER: Well --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If we have
- 6 abstention playing in, you're going to have a
- 7 patchwork of some state inverse condemnation
- 8 proceedings, some not, some courts taking
- 9 cases, others rightfully talking about
- 10 abstention.
- 11 MR. BREEMER: Well, I think that's
- 12 actually, the situation you're describing, is
- what is happening under Williamson County.
- 14 There's no predictable forum for adjudicating a
- 15 Fifth Amendment claim that there's a taking
- that creates the entitlement to a compensation
- 17 remedy. Property owners like Ms. Knick for 30
- 18 years have had no reasonable way to litigate
- 19 that federal question: Is there a taking or
- 20 not a quest -- or not a taking?
- 21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, why are you
- 22 claiming that the state courts in an inverse
- 23 condemnation proceeding are inadequate?
- 24 MR. BREEMER: I'm not claiming that at
- 25 all. State courts can deal with many

- 1 constitutional questions and they do. The
- 2 question here, though, is whether Ms. Knick
- 3 must go to a state court with her federal
- 4 takings claim to decide to get the town to
- 5 recognize that there is a taking within the
- 6 meaning of the Constitution that creates an
- 7 entitlement to compensation.
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Breemer, may I get
- 9 back to this -- the question that you started
- off with, which is when exactly the violation
- 11 occurs and why it occurs before the state
- denies compensation in the inverse condemnation
- proceeding, which is, I take it, what you're
- 14 saying.
- 15 Is that because -- are you saying that
- that's because the right to compensation is
- immediate; in other words, there's a right to
- 18 compensation contemporaneous with the taking?
- 19 Is that what your claim is?
- MR. BREEMER: The -- not exactly.
- 21 There is -- there is a right to compensation as
- 22 soon as there's a determined that there's -- a
- 23 determination that there's a taking in the
- inverse condemnation context. Remember, what
- 25 we're talking about is an invasion of property.

Τ	The	townsnip,	Mulcu	nas	tne	power	OI

- 2 eminent domain, doesn't use the power of
- 3 eminent domain to take that easement. It just
- 4 used its regulatory powers.
- 5 So there's no entitlement to
- 6 compensation until the property owner,
- 7 Ms. Knick, goes in and gets a determination
- 8 that's a taking. After that, compensation --
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And then, and then
- 10 --
- MR. BREEMER: -- issues --
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Okay --
- 13 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- and then what
- 14 happens? Then suppose you're right and the --
- the preliminary question, is there a taking,
- 16 you can bring in federal court.
- 17 Then -- and if the answer to that is
- 18 yes, then the whole inverse condemnation
- 19 proceeding goes forward in -- in federal court
- 20 with --
- 21 MR. BREEMER: I understand your --
- your question, Your Honor. Once a takings
- 23 determination is made, then a federal court
- 24 would hold a -- a damages proceeding, just like
- it does in other Section 1983 contexts,

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1 unreasonable seizure, due -- due process
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- 2 deprivations. And it -- it would be easier in
- 3 a takings context than those other contexts
- 4 because damages for a taking is simply just
- 5 compensation. So a federal court --
- 6 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But how would this
- 7 -- and that's what -- that's what inverse
- 8 condemn -- condemnation is as well. So how do
- 9 -- how does step 2 -- step 1, is there a
- 10 taking? Yes. Something else happens in
- 11 federal court.
- 12 How would -- does that something else
- 13 differ from an inverse condemnation proceeding
- in state court?
- MR. BREEMER: It -- it doesn't. It's
- 16 -- it's dual -- the inverse condemnation
- 17 rights. The Fifth Amendment under First
- 18 English incorporates a right of inverse
- 19 condemnation under the federal Constitution.
- The states have also inverse
- 21 condemnation procedures, but, again, the
- 22 question is when you have a federal claim, when
- your claim is that the takings provision in the
- 24 Fifth Amendment is violated -- excuse me, not
- violated, when it's implicated so that there's

1 a just compensation remedy, do you have to go

- 2 use a state inverse condemnation instead of the
- 3 Fifth Amendment's inverse condemnation
- 4 procedure that's recognized as self-executing.
- 5 JUSTICE KAGAN: Right --
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: Let me see --
- 7 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- but usually --
- 9 your claim, because a little -- some of the
- 10 questions and the discussion up to this point
- is a bit confusing to me.
- 12 I thought your claim was that there is
- a violation of the takings clause and you can,
- therefore, bring a suit under 1983 when the
- 15 state does something that constitutes a taking
- 16 but at the same time says we're not paying you
- 17 anything for this.
- Now it's not a question of when they
- 19 would have to pay once they've admitted that
- there's a taking, but when they do something
- 21 that constitutes a taking, and they say, no,
- this isn't a taking at all, and, therefore,
- you're getting zero, which I understand to be
- your claim here, then you can go directly to
- federal court and bring an action under 1983.

1	And to require you to go to state
2	court before you do that is essentially to
3	require you to exhaust state remedies before
4	you can bring a 1983 claim, which is never
5	required under 1983. I thought that that was
6	your argument.
7	MR. BREEMER: Right. And that is one
8	of our arguments, is that when the government,
9	the township here in this case, invades
10	property without without condemning it, it's
11	clear that it's not compensating and that your
12	claim
13	JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, how
14	MR. BREEMER: accrues at that
15	JUSTICE KAGAN: is it clear that
16	it's not compensating? In other words, what
17	Justice Alito says clarifies matters
18	considerably, that if the state has already
19	said we're not compensating, then it seems you
20	can claim both that you've had a taking and
21	that the state has refused to compensate.
22	But I thought that the question here
23	arose from the fact that the state has not said
24	yet that it's not compensating, that, instead,
25	it uses the inverse condemnation proceeding to

- 1 make that determination. Is that wrong?
- 2 MR. BREEMER: Well, yes, in -- in this
- 3 way: The township is taking her property. The
- 4 township has imposed an easement on Ms. Knick's
- 5 property that allows the public in every day of
- 6 the week, every day of the year.
- 7 It has the power to condemn easements.
- 8 It did not use it. So we know that the
- 9 township is not compensating her. It denies
- 10 that there's even a taking. So it's not a
- 11 matter of what the state does. It's a matter
- of what the township, as the -- as the
- defendant that's taking your property, and
- 14 could have used condemnation and declared a
- taking, gone into state court, kept it there,
- but instead used its regulatory power.
- 17 JUSTICE ALITO: And the township has
- 18 --
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How about the town
- 20 --
- 21 JUSTICE ALITO: -- the township has
- 22 imposed these restrictions on the property and
- it hasn't said that it will pay anything for
- it. Of course, it hasn't said that if you sue
- 25 us in state court and you win in an inverse --

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1 inverse condemnation proceeding which we will
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- 2 resist, we will refuse to pay the judgment of
- 3 the state court. It hasn't said that. But it
- 4 has -- has certainly has not said we admit that
- 5 this is a taking and we owe you money, and
- 6 there -- and you have to go to state court to
- 7 determine how much money we owe. Am I right on
- 8 that?
- 9 MR. BREEMER: That's right. And --
- 10 and the entitle -- that's -- the issue is the
- 11 entitlement. The township denies that there's
- 12 an entitlement to compensation. Ms. --
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: But does it? I mean.
- 14 I -- I'm following Justice Alito's point
- 15 exactly, except what I'm not understanding is I
- 16 -- I had thought that in a case like this there
- 17 had been no determination by the state that
- 18 there was liability one way or the other. In
- 19 other words, the state had not denied
- 20 liability, nor had the state conceded
- 21 liability.
- 22 So this isn't a -- a question where
- 23 the state has said: Look, we deny any
- 24 liability. It's -- it's -- the state hasn't
- 25 said one way or the other. And we're going to

- 1 find out in the inverse condemnation action
- whether the state is, in fact, denying all
- 3 liability or whether the state is going to come
- 4 in and say: You're right, there is liability
- 5 here, and now let's talk about how much.
- 6 MR. BREEMER: Well, we -- we could,
- 7 but, again, that liability issue arises under
- 8 the Fifth Amendment under the takings
- 9 provision. So a federal court is capable of
- deciding that very question, is there liability
- 11 or not?
- 12 If there is, there's a compensation
- 13 remedy ensuring that a de facto taking does not
- 14 go without compensation --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Right. But my --
- MR. BREEMER: -- if there is, which --
- 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- question is, if the
- 18 state has not denied liability yet, how do you
- 19 have a Fifth Amendment claim? If the state has
- 20 denied liability, if it has said we're refusing
- 21 to pay, then I take Justice Alito's point
- 22 exactly. Then you have both your elements of
- 23 the Fifth Amendment claim. There's been a
- 24 taking and the state has refused to pay just
- 25 compensation, allegedly.

- But, if the state has not yet refused
- 2 to pay, how do you have a Fifth Amendment
- 3 claim?
- 4 MR. BREEMER: Because in the inverse
- 5 condemnation context -- well, let me back up
- 6 one minute.
- 7 I think the appropriate actor is the
- 8 township, but in the inverse condemnation
- 9 context, again, the problem is not whether or
- 10 not the government will pay. It's will it
- 11 recognize an entitlement because there's been a
- 12 taking.
- 13 Until you get that entitle -- that
- 14 takings determination made, compensation issues
- don't play into the equation. And if
- 16 compensation issues aren't part of the element
- of the takings dispute, then state remedies are
- irrelevant to the presentation of claims.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But this isn't
- 20 -- this isn't sort of a black or white thing.
- 21 I assume what the state -- well, I thought what
- 22 the state had done and will do in -- in many
- cases is say, look, we don't think we owe you
- anything, but we have a process for determining
- 25 whether we do or not. And if -- if it turns

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1 out under the inverse condemnation action we
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- do, well, that's what we'll pay. Is -- is --
- 3 is that what is going on here?
- 4 MR. BREEMER: Well, again, Your Honor,
- 5 I would say this, that the fact that there are
- 6 state procedures like inverse condemnation
- 7 doesn't mean that they must be used for a
- 8 federal claim. That's the question here: Must
- 9 Ms. Knick use the state inverse condemnation
- 10 remedies rather than the federal remedy that's
- 11 under the Fifth Amendment. And Section 1983
- 12 would say no, the language and purpose of
- 13 Section 1983 says no. The history and language
- and purpose of Section 1331 says no.
- 15 So --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: In this case --
- MR. BREEMER: -- what we're asking --
- 18 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- this case, I
- 19 think the first -- first question was, should
- 20 the Court overrule Williamson.
- 21 Are you asking the Court to do that,
- or are you distinguishing the claim that you're
- 23 making from the claim in Williamson?
- 24 MR. BREEMER: We're -- we are asking,
- 25 Your Honor, for the Court to overrule

1 Williamson County to this -- to this extent,

- 2 the state compensation requirement, because it
- 3 is inconsistent with Section 1983 and with the
- 4 nature of a Fifth Amendment inverse
- 5 condemnation claim.
- 6 But, again, we're not asking the Court
- 7 to overrule the entirety of Williamson County.
- 8 The finality, the ripeness prong, which is
- 9 still a difficult hurdle to get by, would
- 10 remain intact and would keep many claims --
- 11 would -- would stop many claims at an early
- 12 stage. And so we're asking the Court return --
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Would that mean
- that if the state or the locality says once we
- 15 have an administrative law, if you disagree
- 16 with it, you have to go through this
- 17 administrative process and, if we violated
- something, we'll pay for it? Would that be
- 19 okay?
- 20 MR. BREEMER: No, Your Honor, it would
- 21 not, for two reasons, and then I'd like to
- 22 reserve the rest of my time. That would raise
- 23 the same res judicata and issue preclusion
- 24 problems that Williamson County already
- 25 generates because administrative procedures in

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1 Pennsylvania and many places elsewhere are res
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- 2 judicata and issue preclusion in court.
- 3 And, secondly, as this --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So --
- 5 MR. BREEMER: -- Court --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- but wait a
- 7 minute. What you're saying is a state passes a
- 8 law, it says at the bottom of the law we don't
- 9 think this is a condemnation, but, if it is,
- 10 follow this administrative process.
- 11 So it's basically saying we'll pay you
- if you're right. You're saying they don't have
- to exhaust that administrative process even?
- 14 MR. BREEMER: If I understand
- 15 correctly, if you're -- you're saying that if a
- 16 court, a federal court found a taking that
- 17 maybe a property owner should go --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, no.
- 19 MR. BREEMER: Okay. That's what I --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm saying they
- 21 pass an administrative law that puts -- that
- 22 recognizes some sort of easement, whether it's
- 23 historical or not I'm not going to get into.
- 24 There's a dispute as to whether it -- you took
- 25 title to that property with that easement or

- 1 not.
- 2 Do you say that if the state or the
- 3 city or whatever says you have to follow this
- 4 administrative process to determine whether
- 5 this law is right or not, that you don't have
- 6 to exhaust that administrative process?
- 7 MR. BREEMER: No, you wouldn't have
- 8 to, Your Honor, because that would require you
- 9 to prove a taking at an administrative level.
- 10 And as the Court said in Thunder Basin,
- 11 administrative agencies are --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So there's no hope
- for states. They're going to be in federal
- 14 court all of the time on every administrative
- law that they pass?
- MR. BREEMER: May I answer the
- 17 question?
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You can answer
- 19 briefly. You'll be able to reserve some time.
- 20 MR. BREEMER: These cases, takings
- 21 cases, will get spread out across state and
- 22 federal courts just like other constitutional
- 23 claims, and the existing ripeness, the
- 24 traditional ripeness for rule of finality will
- 25 ensure that -- that many of these cases don't

1	make	it	very	far	in	federal	court.

- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 3 counsel.
- 4 General Francisco.
- 5 ORAL ARGUMENT OF NOEL J. FRANCISCO
- 6 ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES,
- 7 AS AMICUS CURIAE, SUPPORTING THE PETITIONER
- 8 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Mr. Chief Justice,
- 9 and may -- may it please the Court:
- 10 I'd like to address two basic points
- 11 that I think are relevant to the discussion
- 12 that we've been having here.
- 13 First, Williamson County's premise was
- 14 correct. The government doesn't violate the
- 15 takings clause if it provides just compensation
- 16 after the fact. But it erred in assuming that
- 17 Section 1983 is only available to address
- 18 constitutional violations. Instead, it's
- 19 available to enforce the deprivation of all
- 20 constitutional rights, and there's no basis for
- 21 concluding that the right to just compensation
- is the only right that Section 1983 doesn't
- 23 cover.
- 24 But, second, I think you can
- 25 effectively reach the same result under Section

- 1 1331 because, as this Court held in
- 2 International College of Surgeons, is -- if a
- 3 state cause of action asserts a federal takings
- 4 claim as such, then that state cause of action
- 5 arises under the Constitution for purposes of
- 6 Section 1331, and so the property owner falls
- 7 within the district court's original
- 8 jurisdiction, and you don't have to address
- 9 whether Williamson County was rightly or
- 10 wrongly decided --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Has that --
- 12 GENERAL FRANCISCO: -- at all.
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- ever been
- 14 considered before? Because it seems a -- a way
- out of this difficulty. Has anybody ever
- 16 addressed it?
- 17 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Your Honor, I
- think the only thing that I can point you to is
- 19 International College of Surgeons itself, but,
- 20 no, no court has addressed it in the context of
- 21 Williamson County.
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, you --
- 23 GENERAL FRANCISCO: But --
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- you can
- answer the letters that we're going to get from

1 district court judges around the country who

- 2 are not going to be very happy learning that
- 3 they now have to adjudicate state inverse
- 4 condemnation actions, which can be fairly
- 5 elaborate.
- 6 You know, the judge appoints a special
- 7 master. They go out and evaluate it. The --
- 8 you know, it's a -- it's like arbitration.
- 9 It's -- it's a very intensive procedure that
- 10 seems more suited for state court than federal
- 11 court.
- 12 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Well, Your Honor,
- 13 I -- I think the Court crossed that bridge in
- 14 International College of Surgeons when it --
- 15 really in a factually analogous case. In that
- 16 case, Illinois's landmarks law applied to
- 17 buildings owned by the International College of
- 18 Surgeons, and they asserted in a state cause of
- 19 action that the application of that law
- 20 constituted a federal taking. And this Court
- 21 held that it was within federal jurisdiction.
- I agree that there are going to be
- 23 Erie issues that courts are going to have to
- 24 confront, but I don't think they'd be
- 25 particularly problematic. Take, for example,

1 affirmative condemnation proceedings, state

- 2 eminent domain proceedings that are brought in
- 3 federal court because of diversity
- 4 jurisdiction.
- 5 The federal rules, Federal Rule
- 6 71.1(k), I think it is, already provide for
- 7 federal courts to apply the state procedural
- 8 rules for assessing the amount of compensation
- 9 in that context.
- 10 So, yes, they will have to confront
- 11 those types of state law questions, but I don't
- think it would be particularly problematic.
- 13 It's something that courts do in diversity
- 14 cases all the time, and in cases -- other cases
- that raise federal questions all the time,
- 16 like --
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: General, my -- my
- 18 question is I can see his point, that you could
- 19 say a state that says our regulation doesn't
- 20 take anything, and they dispute it. And you
- 21 could say a state that acts that way is a state
- that isn't going to pay you any money and,
- 23 therefore, it is complete, the violation. Or
- you could say we don't know about the second
- answer yet, so we'll see. Or you could say

- 1 sometimes the one, sometimes the other.
- 2 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Right.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Or we could go into
- 4 1331. But Williamson was decided 32 years ago.
- 5 This is a very complicated area of law. Why
- 6 not let sleeping dogs lie?
- 7 GENERAL FRANCISCO: And --
- JUSTICE BREYER: It's called stare
- 9 decisis.
- 10 GENERAL FRANCISCO: And, Your Honor --
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: There is one harm,
- 12 the harm of the person who tries to remove and
- 13 then gets kicked out of court.
- 14 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Right.
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: We could write a
- 16 sentence saying that's wrong, you've waived it.
- 17 All right. But I couldn't find in any of these
- 18 briefs any serious harm that would, in fact --
- 19 your 1331 point can be tried out by somebody --
- 20 but any serious point that right now provides a
- 21 strong reason for overturning a case that's
- been on the books in a complex area for 32
- 23 years.
- 24 GENERAL FRANCISCO: So a couple of
- 25 responses, Your Honor. I think our 1331

1 argument doesn't require you to overturn

- 2 Williamson County.
- JUSTICE BREYER: It doesn't.
- 4 GENERAL FRANCISCO: I think it exists
- 5 very nicely alongside of Williamson County.
- 6 JUSTICE GINSBURG: It wasn't raised
- 7 below. Thirteen -- the 1331 theory was not
- 8 raised below.
- 9 GENERAL FRANCISCO: No, Your Honor,
- 10 but we think it is well within the question
- 11 presented. The Court --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Was it raised by
- 13 the parties?
- 14 GENERAL FRANCISCO: That's correct,
- Your Honor, but I think it's well within the
- 16 question presented because this Court granted
- 17 certiorari on whether or not to overrule
- 18 Williamson County. The principal criticism of
- 19 Williamson County is that it closes the federal
- 20 courthouse doors to an entire category of
- 21 takings litigants. And I think that our
- 22 alternative argument is directly relevant to
- whether Williamson County does, in fact, close
- the federal courthouse doors to an entire
- 25 category of takings litigants.

- 1 I'd also note that Williamson County
- 2 itself -- the parties below didn't raise the
- 3 issue that we are here talking about before the
- 4 Court. So I think --
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: But this is a theory
- 6 -- a pretty -- there's no reason in history
- 7 that federal courts have to be open to every
- 8 federal claim. I mean, sometimes they are.
- 9 Sometimes they're not.
- 10 GENERAL FRANCISCO: That's --
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: So, therefore, state
- 12 courts can litigate too. They're okay. So --
- so why do it? My question is, why not simply
- 14 say, law for 32 years, end of this case, stare
- decisis, the solicitor general raises a very
- interesting point, not litigated here.
- 17 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Right.
- 18 JUSTICE BREYER: We'll see what
- 19 happens. If it's --
- 20 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Well, look, I'll
- 21 put my 1331 argument to the side because I
- 22 think, as -- as I've -- I've explained, that
- 23 exists alongside Williamson County. But let me
- take on your question directly, why should the
- 25 Court consider overturning Williamson County?

1	And we think that the principal
2	reason, if you decide to get there, and we
3	don't think you have to decide to get there,
4	but if you decide to get there, it's because
5	Williamson County's rationale has never
6	actually been explained.
7	And as a result, it has been
8	understood by the lower courts to produce this
9	unintended consequence of essentially closing
10	the courthouse federal courthouse doors to a
11	class of takings litigants. We
12	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry, the
13	courthouse doors are closed to people on tax
14	issues, even though there's constitutional
15	claims. So there's a class that we have both
16	for for doctrinal reasons and and comity
17	issues and a lot of other reasons, we've closed
18	the courthouse doors.
19	We've closed them to people claiming
20	that they had an unreasonable search and
21	seizure. If they litigated in state court
22	under the Fourth Amendment, a claim in state
23	court, they can't come to federal court
24	afterwards.
25	So it's not as if our courthouse doors

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1 are open uniformly to everybody anytime.
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- 2 There -- there are all sorts of doctrines that
- 3 preclude people --
- 4 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Right.
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- from coming to
- 6 federal court once they've been issue-precluded
- 7 in state court.
- 8 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Right. And that's
- 9 the key, I think, once they've been
- 10 issue-precluded in state court. None of those
- 11 doctrines, with the exception of the tax
- doctrine, which I'll address in a moment,
- actually close the federal courthouse doors
- when there's not a pending state court
- 15 proceeding, because I think the criminal cases
- 16 you're talking about are the Younger doctrine.
- When it comes to the tax laws, that's
- 18 a very tax-specific rule -- rule that doesn't
- 19 just apply to property claims; it applies
- 20 across the board and bars any constitutional
- 21 challenge in federal courts to state or local
- 22 tax laws. There's no comparable rule that
- applies across the board to property claims.
- 24 After all, courts --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, except

1	Williamson,	which	basically	v savs	there's	no

- 2 taking. And you don't -- you're not
- 3 encouraging us to believe that compensation is
- 4 due the minute there's a taking, is it?
- 5 GENERAL FRANCISCO: We don't think --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That it has to be
- 7 -- happen before the taking?
- 8 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Yeah, we certainly
- 9 don't think you violate the clause if you
- 10 provide compensation after the taking. But, to
- 11 go directly to your question, under the First
- 12 Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment, courts
- 13 regularly entertain challenges to state
- 14 property laws. Think of cases like City of
- 15 Cleburne or City of Renton against Playtime
- 16 Theatres.
- 17 There's no general rule that bars all
- 18 federal claims, all claims in federal court to
- 19 state and local property laws, other than
- 20 Williamson County, I agree. And I don't think
- 21 that there's any basis for treating the takings
- 22 clause any differently than the other parts of
- 23 the Constitution.
- 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If --
- 25 JUSTICE KAGAN: General, I assume we

1 wouldn't have a problem here if we didn't have

- 2 preclusive effect of the state action. Is that
- 3 correct in your view?
- 4 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Your Honor, no, I
- 5 don't think it is correct in my view. I think
- 6 that highlights one of the unintended
- 7 consequences of Williamson County, but we
- 8 believe that, properly construed, Section 1983
- 9 was meant to provide a remedy for the
- 10 deprivation of all constitutional rights,
- including the right to just compensation.
- 12 And that's a right that vests the
- moment the property is taken. You don't
- violate it if you pay after the fact, but the
- right, in fact, vests the moment the property
- is taken, which is why you're actually entitled
- 17 to interest from the moment of the taking until
- 18 you get paid.
- 19 So, under Section 1983, we think quite
- 20 literally that a property owner is being
- 21 deprived of the right to just compensation at
- the moment the government engages in the lawful
- act of taking their property without payment.
- 24 That's why we think that the error in
- 25 Williamson County was the --

JUSTICE KAGAN: General, I -- you

	, -
2	know, I read those pages in your brief a couple
3	of times, and I have I have to say that
4	they're it's just going over my head a

- 5 little bit, what -- how it is that you can say
- 6 that there's a deprivation of a right when you
- 7 simultaneously say that there's been no
- 8 violation --

- 9 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Right.
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- even though the
- 11 government hasn't paid yet.
- 12 GENERAL FRANCISCO: Right. And for
- most constitutional provisions, there's no
- 14 difference. So, under the First Amendment, you
- don't deprive somebody of their free speech
- 16 rights unless you violate their free speech
- 17 rights.
- 18 But the takings clause is meaningfully
- 19 different because the right to just
- 20 compensation vests only when the government
- 21 acts lawfully. It's at the moment of the
- 22 government's lawful action in taking your
- 23 property that your right to just compensation
- vests, which is why you get interest. And I'll
- 25 just finish up.

1	And so we think that, quite literally,
2	the property owner is deprived of their right
3	to just compensation from the moment the
4	government acts lawfully to take their property
5	until the property owner is paid.
6	Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
7	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
8	General.
9	Ms. Sachs?
10	ORAL ARGUMENT OF TERESA FICKEN SACHS
11	ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS
12	MS. SACHS: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
13	it please the Court:
14	The reinterpretations proposed here as
15	to both Section 1983 and also what we've heard
16	about a possible interpretation of Section 1331
17	would create federal jurisdiction over every
18	local land use planning decision made in the
19	39,000 plus jurisdictions across the country.
20	We ask that this Court affirm
21	Williamson County because it was correct then
22	and it is correct now in this case. What this
23	Court held in Williamson County was that a
24	claimant can't come to federal court under
25	Section 1983 claiming that their constitutional

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1 right to just compensation has been violated,
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- when the state provides a reasonable, certain,
- 3 and adequate means to obtain just compensation
- 4 --
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I think
- 6 --
- 7 MS. SACHS: -- and Petitioner --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- it was
- 9 clear in Williamson County, because they used
- 10 terms of ripeness and -- and -- and the like
- 11 that I don't think the court contemplated the
- 12 later decision in San Remo, that by sending it
- 13 to state court, they were effectively taking
- 14 the federal courts out of the whole business of
- 15 adjudicating these claims because of the
- 16 preclusive effect of the state -- state remedy.
- 17 MS. SACHS: Well, first of all, Your
- 18 Honor, if I may, the -- the court did use terms
- 19 like ripeness, and at that time, ripeness
- 20 perhaps was not as closely associated with
- 21 jurisdictional considerations as it is today.
- It was not a jurisdictional decision
- and that the court could certainly clarify that
- 24 Williamson County was not jurisdictional. In
- Williamson County, an element of the Section

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1 1983 cause of action was missing, for the same
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- 2 reason in this case. The only claim raised was
- 3 a Section 1983 that the -- the Petitioner's
- 4 rights to just compensation had been violated.
- 5 And yet we know from 130 years of this
- 6 Court's jurisprudence that there is no
- 7 violation of the just compensation clause if
- 8 that reasonable, certain, and adequate
- 9 provision exists at the time of the taking.
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: But I think what the
- 11 --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You -- you
- agree -- you agree that the compensation that
- is due runs from the moment of the taking? In
- other words, if it takes you six months to
- 16 adjudicate the -- the claim and you say, well,
- 17 this is how much you owe, you owe interest
- 18 going all the way back to the point at which
- 19 the property was taken, correct?
- 20 MS. SACHS: Well, yes, this Court has
- 21 certainly -- the -- that -- the -- the fact
- that in the interest begins to run is another
- 23 reason --
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And that must
- 25 be --

1 MS	5.	SACHS:		why	the	time	is		the	2
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- 2 time to pursue the inverse condemnation action,
- 3 means that there has not been any deprivation
- 4 of a constitutional right in the interim.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, it turns
- 6 out there was a violation of the constitutional
- 7 right at the moment of the taking, right?
- 8 That's the whole point of interest.
- 9 MS. SACHS: No.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why, if there
- 11 hasn't been a violation, why do you owe
- 12 interest --
- MS. SACHS: That just --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- from the
- moment of the taking?
- 16 MS. SACHS: -- because it's a -- the
- 17 -- the post-deprivation process has been
- determined to be appropriate here, as well as
- 19 in other situations, because there -- this is a
- 20 circumstance, particularly a regulatory
- 21 circumstance, where it's impossible to
- determine in advance, given the, as this Court
- 23 has said, the -- the myriad ways that
- 24 regulations can affect property and whether or
- 25 not any of them will ultimately end up being

- 1 considered to be a taking.
- 2 JUSTICE ALITO: Does the township owe
- 3 --
- 4 MS. SACHS: It's appropriate --
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: -- does the township
- 6 owe Ms. Knick any money, any compensation?
- 7 MS. SACHS: That has yet to be
- 8 determined, Your Honor.
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: You can't -- well,
- 10 have you made any -- you don't know whether you
- 11 owe her any money?
- MS. SACHS: The reason that --
- 13 JUSTICE ALITO: Are you going to go
- 14 back to your office and -- and think about
- 15 that, and then send her a letter saying whether
- 16 you owe her any money? If she does absolutely
- 17 nothing, what will you do?
- 18 MS. SACHS: Your Honor, what she is
- 19 supposed to do in -- in this situation to find
- 20 out the answer to Your Honor's question is
- 21 pursue the Pennsylvania procedure that has been
- in effect for some 300 years.
- JUSTICE ALITO: You can't tell me
- whether you owe her any money?
- 25 MS. SACHS: The state has to tell her

- 1 whether --
- 2 JUSTICE ALITO: You are the state.
- 3 MS. SACHS: -- we owe her any money,
- 4 Your Honor.
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: You represent the
- 6 township. The township is part of the state.
- 7 So what is before us here is the Commonwealth
- 8 of Pennsylvania.
- 9 Does the township owe her any money?
- 10 Yes or no? I don't see how you cannot have an
- 11 answer to that question.
- MS. SACHS: Your Honor, I cannot -- I
- 13 can't have an answer to that question because
- 14 that is why inverse condemnation exists.
- 15 That's why the proceeding --
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: All right. If she --
- 17 MR. SACHS: -- as you recall --
- 18 JUSTICE ALITO: -- files an inverse
- 19 condemnation proceeding, are you going to --
- are you going to confess that you owe her
- 21 money, at the outset?
- MS. SACHS: The first step in a
- 23 Pennsylvania inverse condemnation proceeding
- 24 would not involve that. The first question is
- 25 for the court. The court determines in an

1	inverse	condemnation	proceeding	whether	there
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- 2 has been a taking --
- JUSTICE ALITO: What will your
- 4 position be?
- 5 MS. SACHS: -- we as the township --
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: What will your
- 7 position be?
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: His point is that --
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: What will your
- 10 position be?
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: That's right.
- MS. SACHS: What would the position
- 13 be?
- JUSTICE ALITO: Yes, what will the
- 15 position --
- 16 MS. SACHS: In this particular case --
- 17 JUSTICE ALITO: -- of the township be?
- 18 MS. SACHS: -- I think the township
- 19 would say there has been no taking.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Therefore, if you have
- 21 taken her property, you have taken her property
- and you have denied her compensation. Why is
- 23 that not a violation of the takings clause? It
- is a taking without compensation.
- MS. SACHS: Because we do not agree

- 1 that we have taken anything, Your Honor.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, that's fine.
- 3 That's a merits issue. That can be decided in
- 4 a 1983 action.
- 5 MS. SACHS: But, under 1983, there is
- 6 no violation. Her right to just compensation
- 7 is what Section 1983 protects. And, of course,
- 8 because the Fifth Amendment provides the right
- 9 to compensation, and the Fourteenth Amendment
- 10 prohibits a state from denying that right, we
- 11 have not denied --
- 12 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Counsel, I -- I --
- MS. SACHS: -- that right.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Can I go back --
- 15 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- I think this gets
- 16 back to Justice Breyer's question a little bit,
- 17 which is you could say that the violation is
- 18 complete upon the taking of the property with
- 19 the denial of compensation, as Justice Alito
- 20 just alluded to, as you've just denied that any
- 21 compensation is due.
- 22 Or you could say it should wait until
- 23 a state litigation process has exhausted
- itself. And maybe it makes sense to wait when
- 25 the state has acknowledged a duty to pay, and

1 we can say the state's probably good for it.

- 2 And that's where those cases originally came
- 3 from, Cherokee and some of the early ones.
- But maybe -- maybe it doesn't make
- 5 sense when the state has denied any obligation
- 6 to pay. Maybe -- maybe it makes -- maybe it is
- 7 different when it's an inverse condemnation,
- 8 because when we look at other -- other
- 9 constitutional rights, we don't say that a
- 10 First Amendment violation isn't complete until
- 11 someone has litigated that claim in state court
- 12 under state processes or a Fourth Amendment
- 13 claim.
- 14 And when you look at the history of
- 15 inverse condemnation suits, they originated in
- 16 common law under trespass. It's a simple claim
- 17 against the state for trespass. That's what an
- inverse condemnation suit is. Nothing more,
- 19 nothing less.
- 20 So why should we single out the --
- 21 this particular right, the takings clause, for
- 22 such disfavored treatment to wait to exhaust
- 23 state remedies that wind up in this ripeness
- 24 world to yield a moot federal claim?
- MS. SACHS: A -- a couple of answers

- 1 to that question, Your Honor.
 2 Number one, we are not giving
- 3 disfavored treatment to property rights. Th
- 4 Constitution does not protect the right to hold
- onto your property when the government has a
- 6 just reason to take it.
- 7 And the -- what the Constitution
- 8 protects is the right to get just compensation
- 9 for that. And this Court since, I think, 1895,
- 10 has specifically said inverse condemnation is
- 11 an appropriate form of -- of providing that
- reasonable, certain, and adequate compensation.
- 13 JUSTICE GORSUCH: But we could say --
- MS. SACHS: But when --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- the exact --
- MS. SACHS: -- but when --
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- same thing with a
- 18 Fourth Amendment claim or a First Amendment
- 19 claim. There are a lot of great state judges
- 20 out there, every bit as good as any federal
- 21 judge. And there are a lot of state tort
- 22 claims that are available equivalent to the
- trespass claim of an inverse condemnation suit.
- 24 Why don't we wait to see how they
- 25 adjudicate a Fourth Amendment violation by a

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1 police officer who's engaged in excessive
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- 2 force? Why don't we wait for -- when the
- 3 prosecutor's engaged in malicious prosecution?
- 4 We don't because 1983 says you don't have to
- 5 wait. Why not here?
- 6 MS. SACHS: Actually, with malicious
- 7 prosecution, Your Honor, we do. And that's one
- 8 example of times when we do require litigants
- 9 to have -- have completed their state process.
- 10 And here, that -- we are not suggesting that
- 11 there isn't a right to seek compensation.
- 12 The question is, has Congress created
- 13 a basis in federal court to seek compensation?
- 14 The suggestion that this is a federal takings
- 15 claim is not where this claim -- case --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, Ms. --
- MS. SACHS: -- started or where
- 18 Williamson County started.
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- Ms. Sachs, I -- I
- 20 think you have a pretty good argument that
- 21 there's no Fifth Amendment violation until both
- the taking has been accomplished and there's
- 23 been a denial of just compensation. And until
- both of those things happen, there's no claim.
- 25 But I think the problem is -- and the

- 1 Chief Justice referred to this -- the way that
- 2 rule combines with the preclusion principles in
- 3 such a way that it prevents somebody from
- 4 getting into federal court at all. In other
- 5 words, does -- and I don't think Williams
- 6 really understood that this would happen, that
- 7 saying, well, look, you have to go through the
- 8 state process for determining just compensation
- 9 before you can bring a federal claim, I don't
- 10 think Williams understood that the result of
- 11 going through the state process for determining
- just compensation was that you were never going
- to be able to bring a Fifth Amendment claim.
- 14 And -- and that seems to me an issue
- and one that I'm trying to find my way around.
- 16 And I'm wondering whether there is one.
- MS. SACHS: Well, I think, when you go
- 18 back and look at Williamson County, Williamson
- 19 County was, again, in terms of a 1983 cause of
- 20 action, whether there had been a violation. So
- we're talking about establishing whether there
- 22 has been a violation.
- 23 And with respect to the -- the full
- 24 faith and credit aspect, in Williamson County,
- 25 the -- the Court specifically cites the Migra

- 1 case, which the Court had decided one year
- 2 earlier and which specifically turned on
- 3 exactly that point --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: You don't have to --
- 5 MS. SACHS: -- that adjudication --
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: -- the problem -- the
- 7 problem -- I mean, you could say what Justice
- 8 Gorsuch said, couldn't you? The state says:
- 9 No, we're not going to pay you. Ha, because
- 10 there's no compensation -- there's no taking.
- 11 Ha.
- 12 And we could say that's a final
- 13 decision not to take it. We could. I mean, I
- don't see any logic. But Williamson didn't.
- 15 So I thought: Well, why let the sleeping
- 16 dog -- let it lie? And -- and then one thing,
- 17 however, they have a good point and what do you
- think of that? Their point is there's surely
- 19 no reason for the defendant in the state case,
- 20 where you can do so, remove it to federal
- 21 court, and then, once he's in federal court,
- they won't decide it because it wasn't in state
- 23 court.
- 24 You agree that we should -- no matter
- 25 what we do, we should write a sentence which

1	says	that's	wrong?
2		MS	. SACHS:

- MS. SACHS: Yes, Your Honor. And --
- 3 and to -- to put that in context, I think of
- 4 all of the cases that have been raised as
- 5 supposedly illustrating this dramatic problem
- 6 created by Williamson County, there were only
- 7 three situations that we could identify where
- 8 an actual takings -- an actual inverse
- 9 condemnation claim had been pursued properly in
- 10 state court and then was dismissed when it was
- 11 removed.
- 12 And we agree, no one advocates for --
- 13 for not having property owners have their
- 14 appropriate --
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: How does it work?
- MS. SACHS: -- day in court.
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: How does it work? I
- 18 just -- I should know this, but I don't. A
- 19 group of people would like to demonstrate in
- 20 the park next Thursday. To do that in the
- 21 city, you have to have a permit. They go to
- 22 the city authorities. And they say we do not
- want you to demonstrate in park, and we won't
- 24 give you a permit.
- 25 Can the person who wants to

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demonstrate then and there bring a suit in
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- 2 federal court and -- saying that violates my
- 3 First Amendment right?
- 4 MS. SACHS: Well, if -- if that is a
- 5 complete --
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: I should know.
- 7 MS. SACHS: -- yeah, I --
- JUSTICE BREYER: I don't know.
- 9 MS. SACHS: Your Honor, I would say
- 10 that that might be an example of one of the
- 11 many situations where the -- the -- the state
- doesn't have the right to violate anyone's
- 13 First Amendment right. The state doesn't have
- the right to deny anyone of due process.
- 15 The state does have the right to take
- 16 property. That is a normal, legitimate,
- 17 appropriate function of government. And that's
- 18 why the -- the Fourteenth Amendment and the
- 19 Section 1983 cause of action very appropriately
- 20 allow violations of the right to get
- 21 compensation in exchange for the taking --
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You -- you
- 23 answered --
- 24 MS. SACHS: -- to be litigated just
- 25 like any other violation.

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You you
2	answered a question from Justice Breyer about
3	removal, is that correct?
4	MS. SACHS: About
5	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Removal to
6	federal court? Or did I misunderstand?
7	MS. SACHS: About whether a federal
8	whether a federal if a federal cause of
9	action existed, could there be removal, yes.
10	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, under our
11	cases in Gunn and I forget whether it's
12	Gamble or Gramble we said there that
13	logic suggests there would be a federal cause
14	of action in this case, right? Any type of
15	condemnation case?
16	MS. SACHS: We would disagree with
17	that, Your Honor, because federal question
18	jurisdiction, arising under jurisdiction, under
19	Section 1331, is a very different analysis
20	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay.
21	MS. SACHS: and this Court has
22	pointed out.
23	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I'll take your
24	point on that. But then so in what
25	situation would somebody be able to remove an

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1 inverse condemnation case to federal court?
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- MS. SACHS: If it were coupled with a
- 3 claim that properly stated a federal cause of
- 4 action. If there were a facial challenge to
- 5 the --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Oh, so it's
- 7 really not --
- 8 MS. SACHS: -- statute that caused --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- you're not
- 10 talking about anything like the case we're
- 11 talking about today?
- MS. SACHS: No, with it -- and this
- 13 case was --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. So
- 15 removal's not a responsive argument to the
- 16 objections that are being raised?
- MS. SACHS: Well, we -- this case
- 18 didn't start off in state court. This
- 19 plaintiff filed this particular case in federal
- 20 court. So there was no removal issue.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry.
- MS. SACHS: But --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You -- you can
- 24 remove a state -- a state reverse condemnation
- 25 case if there's diversity.

- JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah, that's --
- MS. SACHS: Yes, if there's diversity,
- 3 yes. And there are other circumstances too.
- 4 There could be -- there could be a
- 5 legitimate --
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: That's what I was
- 7 thinking.
- 8 MS. SACHS: Right.
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: I was thinking
- 10 only --
- MS. SACHS: A legitimate --
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: -- I was thinking
- only of their complaint, that there are two or
- three cases where removal is proper, probably
- 15 because of diversity.
- MS. SACHS: Right.
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: And then the poor
- 18 plaintiff gets into federal court and it's
- 19 dismissed.
- 20 MS. SACHS: Right. Diversity is one
- 21 example.
- JUSTICE BREYER: You have no objection
- 23 to changing that?
- MS. SACHS: Correct. The -- the --
- 25 yes, that -- that would not be what the

1 argun	nent is	here.	But	the	distinction	is	
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- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, just
- 3 to --
- 4 MS. SACHS: -- that there has to be a
- 5 right to be in federal court in the first
- 6 place. If they are stating other valid claims
- 7 that belong in federal court, the case should
- 8 be in federal court. But Congress has not
- 9 created a cause of action for general federal
- 10 takings.
- 11 And the -- the City of Chicago case
- 12 that was mentioned earlier --
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: To have a due
- 14 process right claim under 1983 --
- MS. SACHS: A --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- you have to
- have a valid claim that the process that you're
- 18 being offered by the state is inadequate,
- 19 unfair. There's a bunch of different words.
- MS. SACHS: Yes.
- 21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So that if
- 22 compensation is unfair, inadequate, et cetera,
- 23 you could still have a federal claim under
- 24 1983?
- MS. SACHS: Absolutely, Your Honor.

1	The
2	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And if you have a
3	if you're claiming that you haven't had a
4	fair process, you can still go even after
5	you finish the process, you can still go to
6	federal court and you won't be claim-precluded
7	if you prove that the process you received
8	wasn't fair, correct?
9	MS. SACHS: Correct. Absolutely.
10	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So to say
11	JUSTICE GINSBURG: And when you were
12	discussing
13	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: that you have a
14	right
15	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
16	Ginsburg.
17	JUSTICE GINSBURG: City of Chicago,
18	when you you were in the middle of saying
19	something about City of Chicago, which the
20	the solicitor general relies on for the 1331
21	argument. Could you complete your answer to
22	that, the relevance of City of Chicago?
23	MS. SACHS: Absolutely, Justice
24	Ginsburg. The reason that we we wanted to

point out City of Chicago is that City of

- 1 Chicago is another example, I think, of what
- 2 Justice Sotomayor was just talking about: a
- 3 case that belonged in federal court from the
- 4 start or could have been filed in federal court
- from the start, because, when you look at the
- 6 actual complaint, a notice of removal, which we
- 7 actually got from the federal court archives
- 8 for that purpose, they were all federal facial
- 9 claims that could have been brought in federal
- 10 court in the first place.
- 11 There was no claim for compensation
- 12 that was removed. The issue in that case and
- the reason the Court referenced, I think,
- 14 Section 1331 jurisdiction was because the Court
- made a point of saying every issue raised by
- the plaintiff in that case was a substantial
- 17 federal issue.
- 18 And so that was a case that was
- 19 properly in federal court. And those cases --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, that's not
- 21 100 percent clear.
- MS. SACHS: I'm sorry, Your Honor?
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Because I dissented
- 24 in City of Chicago.
- 25 (Laughter.)

1	MS.	SACHS:	And	and	I	 I	 I

- 2 remember that, Your Honor, because of the cross
- 3 -- the cross sort of jurisdictional appeal
- 4 issue, which was really, I think, what was a
- 5 big issue in that case, not whether there
- 6 weren't claims that couldn't have been brought
- 7 in federal court to start with. And I think
- 8 that's --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: One of the
- 10 problems --
- 11 MS. SACHS: -- what it's been cited
- 12 for here.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- one of the
- 14 problems with requiring takings plaintiffs to
- 15 go to state court is that the inverse
- 16 condemnation procedures can be very elaborate,
- 17 can be very expensive, requiring the hiring of
- 18 experts and economic analyses and all that.
- 19 And somebody with a legitimate takings claim,
- 20 forced to go through the state procedures, as a
- 21 practical matter may not be able to defend
- 22 their -- their rights.
- MS. SACHS: Well, that is certainly
- 24 not the case in Pennsylvania, Your Honor, which
- 25 is what I can speak to. Pennsylvania's process

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1 not only is very comprehensive, their -- it
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- 2 provides for expert review, it provides for
- 3 more relief --
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, okay --
- 5 well, I -- I assume it's not necessarily the
- 6 case in every other state. So what would you
- 7 do in a situation where -- where that's the --
- 8 the case, that the -- the procedure is very
- 9 expensive and requiring someone to go through
- 10 it will discourage people with legitimate
- 11 federal claims from going forward with them?
- MS. SACHS: Again, nobody advocates
- for a position that would not allow owners to
- 14 go to court. But what Your Honor is positing
- 15 sounds like it could be a Section 1983 claim
- 16 because there's been a denial of a means to
- 17 provide just compensation.
- 18 If the process is so byzantine or long
- or complicated that it -- it doesn't represent
- that reasonable, certain, adequate component,
- 21 that constitutionality demands.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Ms. Sachs --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Are there -- are there
- 24 any reliance interests at issue here? That's
- an important consideration under stare decisis.

- 1 MS. SACHS: Yes, I think there are,
- 2 Your Honor. And I --
- JUSTICE ALITO: In what way are states
- 4 and their subdivisions in a different position
- 5 today than they were on the eve of the decision
- 6 in Williamson County?
- 7 MS. SACHS: Well, I think the
- 8 Williamson County, and just if -- if I may put
- 9 a bit of context to that question, because
- 10 there's been so much focus on Williamson
- 11 County, Williamson County was actually not so
- much the sea change in this area as Monell,
- 13 because Monell was where this Court first said
- 14 you can make a Section 1983 claim against a
- 15 municipality.
- 16 That was just seven years before
- 17 Williamson County. And the Court said we're
- not establishing the contours of -- of what
- 19 liability against township -- municipalities
- 20 will look like.
- 21 So the amount of Section 1983
- 22 litigation really arose after Monell and -- and
- 23 -- and came to this Court in Williamson County.
- 24 But to answer then the question of -- of the
- 25 difference between then and now, before and

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1 after Williamson County, states have used
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- 2 eminent domain and inverse condemnation
- 3 proceedings to be sure that they're providing
- 4 the appropriate compensation for any regulatory
- 5 taking that might be deemed to occur.
- And, of course, they've continued to
- 7 -- to do that and to enact statutes in
- 8 reliance, and regulations, in reliance --
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: So what --
- 10 MS. SACHS: -- upon the fact that --
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: -- have they done --
- 12 what have they done in reliance on their
- 13 understanding that they can't be required to go
- 14 directly to federal court in a case like this?
- MS. SACHS: Well, I -- I -- I think
- that they've relied on the existence of their
- 17 processes as providing the compensation that is
- 18 required for any taking so that they don't have
- 19 to determine that in some fashion --
- 20 JUSTICE ALITO: What --
- MS. SACHS: -- in advance.
- JUSTICE ALITO: So what would they
- 23 have done differently if that rule had never
- 24 been adopted?
- 25 MS. SACHS: If -- if Williamson County

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had come out differently?
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- 2 JUSTICE ALITO: Yeah. What would they
- 3 have done differently?
- 4 MS. SACHS: I --
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: What would they have
- 6 done differently as a result of Williamson
- 7 County that cannot be easily undone?
- 8 MS. SACHS: It's -- it's -- well, I
- 9 think depending upon the basis for -- for
- 10 undoing Williamson County, if this Court were
- 11 to say that you have to make payment in
- 12 advance, I think that would affect counties and
- municipalities all over the country
- 14 tremendously because it would require the
- 15 rewriting of every eminent domain code out
- there and it would require every statute,
- 17 presumably, or regulation or ordinance --
- 18 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, but, counsel,
- 19 that's not --
- MS. SACHS: -- to somehow be --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- that's not --
- that's not quite what's at issue, of course.
- We're just talking about a remedial regime in
- 24 either case, a suit in federal court or a suit
- 25 in state court.

1	And I would have thought presumably
2	the answer would be that the state's conduct
3	would be the same in either circumstance.
4	You'd be prepared to pay just compensation for
5	takings, and prepared not to pay just
6	compensation where there is no taking, and it
7	wouldn't matter whether the claim's in federal
8	court or state court. Isn't that right?
9	MS. SACHS: If if if
10	that's the question and then I misunderstood
11	Justice Alito's question, and I apologize, but
12	I thought when you were talking about
13	overruling Williamson County, you were thinking
14	of one of the arguments that we've heard here
15	today, which is that perhaps it's always
16	unconstitutional if taking isn't made at the
17	time
18	JUSTICE ALITO: No, I'm talking about
19	MS. SACHS: of inverse
20	JUSTICE ALITO: reliance. Usually,
21	in a stare when when stare decisis is at
22	issue, the party invoking stare decisis will
23	say: Well, you know, this has been on the
24	books for a long time, and and we've done
25	all sorts of things or the society has done all

1 sorts of things, and it would be a great burden

- 2 to undo, very upsetting to undo all of that.
- 3 That's what I was getting at.
- 4 But you've addressed the reliance
- 5 part. What -- what other factors under stare
- 6 decisis weigh strongly in favor of retaining
- 7 Williamson County in your judgment?
- 8 MS. SACHS: The fact that it was
- 9 correct from the outset, Your Honor, and the
- 10 fact that this is an area where one of the
- 11 factors for stare decisis is whether the
- 12 Court's recent decisions are consistent or
- inconsistent with any steps Congress may have
- 14 taken recently.
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, if we overruled
- 16 it. --
- MS. SACHS: Now some --
- 18 JUSTICE ALITO: -- would that
- 19 undermine other decisions of ours?
- MS. SACHS: Well, Your Honor, there
- 21 isn't a whole web of -- of precedents from this
- 22 Court, both on the full faith and credit issue,
- but, obviously, that would be minimized, but
- 24 things like Del Monte Dunes, where the Court
- 25 specifically said, again, and I think in the

1 1983 context, that there is no -- that you need

- 2 that element of denial.
- JUSTICE BREYER: I don't know if
- 4 you've come across this anywhere, but --
- 5 MS. SACHS: I'm sorry, Your Honor?
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: I don't know if
- 7 you've come across this in stare decisis cases,
- 8 but I think a factor that moves me -- maybe it
- 9 shouldn't -- is it's a technical area of law,
- 10 two generations at least of lawyers have grown
- 11 up knowing this is how you proceed, that if you
- 12 change it, suddenly there will be new lines
- that have to be drawn, which are the complete
- 14 refusals, which are the not refusals, but we --
- which are the partial refusals, and maybe it
- 16 will be a boon to law schools that have courses
- 17 to catch property lawyers up on what's going
- 18 on.
- 19 Now is that sort of thing relevant to
- 20 stare decisis?
- 21 MS. SACHS: I -- I think that they --
- the ability to rely upon existing
- jurisprudence, to trust the courts to say that
- 24 we trust the state courts to resolve these
- 25 issues and to know that, especially in property

1	rights	cases,	where	stare	decisis	has
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- 2 particular force because people do rely upon
- 3 what they know about property rights, and --
- 4 and this Court has called that particular area
- 5 sort of a super-specialized type of stare
- 6 decisis that requires a super-specialized
- 7 justification --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Ms. Sachs?
- 9 MS. SACHS: -- for overruling it. And
- 10 that doesn't exist. I'm sorry?
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: I probably should know
- 12 the answer to this question, but if -- if
- 13 Pennsylvania, instead of using an inverse
- 14 condemnation procedure, used a strictly
- administrative process so it didn't go to the
- 16 courts, it was just some kind of administrative
- 17 body, would that have the same kind of
- 18 preclusive effect as a state court judgment
- 19 does?
- 20 MS. SACHS: I think it would not have
- 21 the same type of preclusive effect in an
- 22 administrative proceeding. So that --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Can you go over
- 24 what -- you said that there's an element
- 25 missing, this is not a 1983 claim because

- there's an element of such a claim that's
- 2 missing. What is the element that's --
- 3 MS. SACHS: I think the element that
- 4 is missing, Justice Ginsburg, is the denial or
- 5 the -- the deprivation of a constitutional
- 6 right. There has been no deprivation of a
- 7 constitutional right because the right that
- 8 this Court has said is protected is the right
- 9 to get just compensation, that that can happen
- 10 afterwards as long as that reasonable, certain,
- 11 adequate provision exists.
- 12 And the Petitioner has not been
- 13 deprived of that. So, to state this as a 1983
- 14 cause of action, it -- it misses the fact that
- 15 it is missing an element.
- 16 This is an inverse condemnation case
- 17 which Petitioner could still bring. The
- 18 statute of limitations has not run on this
- 19 case. She has always had the right to file
- 20 what she should have filed in the first place,
- 21 which is an inverse condemnation proceeding
- where, in Pennsylvania, there's all sorts of
- emphasis on promptness, to Your Honor's point
- about the length of -- of what could happen.
- 25 That's not the situation in Pennsylvania.

L	There's	а	tremendous	emphasis	on	now
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- these proceed, and also a tremendous benefit to
- 3 a takings claimant who is successful, because
- 4 our inverse condemnation proceeding if
- 5 successful pays, and shall pay -- this is
- 6 mandatory -- attorneys' fees, costs, expert
- 7 fees, appraisal fees, interest obviously.
- 8 It is a very beneficial process for
- 9 property owners. This is not a bad situation
- 10 for them to --
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How much --
- MS. SACHS: -- be in, and they haven't
- 13 claimed that it is.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: If you do owe
- 15 Ms. Knick compensation for requiring her to
- 16 grant access to people to come see the grave,
- 17 how -- how much do you think that would be
- 18 worth?
- MS. SACHS: Oh, Your Honor --
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I know.
- 21 But my point is that it's very hard to litigate
- 22 that question. It's a fairly abstract
- 23 question. She's entitled to some compensation.
- It's a taking of an easement. It's going to
- 25 require extraordinary amounts of valuation

- 1 procedures.
- And you say, well, you get attorneys'
- 3 fees and expert fees, but only if you win at
- 4 the end, and that's requiring the property --
- 5 property owner to undertake a very big gamble
- 6 to vindicate a right granted under the
- 7 Constitution.
- 8 MS. SACHS: Your Honor, there's
- 9 nothing to suggest, and Petitioners have not
- 10 suggested, that the Pennsylvania process is any
- more long or burdensome or expensive than any
- 12 litigation process would be.
- 13 And -- and -- and we submit that
- 14 actually it's the opposite. Pennsylvania would
- be a much faster process. Here we are four
- 16 years later and -- and we're still litigating a
- 17 preliminary issue. If an inverse condemnation
- 18 proceeding had been filed, with all of the
- 19 emphasis on promptness and on the ability to
- take interlocutory appeals, which is unusual,
- 21 but -- in Pennsylvania, but is provided for
- this cause of action, this case would have been
- 23 over long ago.
- 24 The -- so the -- there -- there's been
- 25 no suggestion that Pennsylvania's process is

1 burdensome. I can't say there's no process out

- there, but, certainly, there's nothing before
- 3 this Court that would give that as a basis to
- 4 say that the -- the -- the Pennsylvania
- 5 process doesn't provide the reasonable,
- 6 certain, and adequate component.
- 7 And this Court has said it so many
- 8 times, for 130 years, that that is adequate.
- 9 And the -- that is what we have provided and
- 10 continue to provide.
- 11 And, you know, to suggest that every
- one of these claims would now be appropriately
- in the federal forum really deprives the -- the
- 14 states of the ability to help shape --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Now I have --
- 16 MS. SACHS: -- state property laws.
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- I have -- may
- 18 I?
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes.
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And I know there's
- 21 some dispute below, but have you taken a look
- 22 at sovereign immunity? Can states be sued for
- 23 reverse condemnation in federal court unless
- they've agreed to be sued in federal court?
- MS. SACHS: States cannot. But the

- 1 townships are -- do not have --
- 2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The township
- 3 could, but --
- 4 MS. SACHS: The township could. That
- 5 -- that -- the immunity was not an issue, Your
- 6 Honor. So that was not raised.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 8 counsel.
- 9 MS. SACHS: Thank you.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Breemer,
- 11 you have two minutes remaining.
- 12 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF J. DAVID BREEMER
- 13 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- MR. BREEMER: Thank you, and may it
- 15 please the Court:
- 16 Williamson County is not a sleeping
- 17 dog. It has run wild through the state and
- 18 federal courts for 30 years swallowing just
- 19 compensation rights of ordinary people like
- 20 Ms. Knick.
- 21 There are so many problems with Ms. --
- 22 excuse me, with Williamson County -- res
- 23 judicata, removal, Rooker-Feldman, its
- 24 infection of other constitutional claims --
- 25 there's no way to set things right except

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1 overruling that portion of Williamson County
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- 2 and returning --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Sorry. I -- the
- 4 only right at issue here that you're claiming
- 5 is the right to have this adjudicated in
- 6 federal court. You haven't suggested that the
- 7 Pennsylvania inverse condemnation system is
- 8 unfair, unjust, not reasonable, not fast, not
- 9 anything else, right? So your only absolute
- 10 claim is "I should have had this done in
- 11 federal court, not state court, " correct?
- MR. BREEMER: Your Honor --
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Because I wanted
- 14 it in federal court?
- MR. BREEMER: The state process is
- 16 more complicated. Just like the government
- 17 sometimes wants a constitutional claim in
- 18 federal court, sometimes a person like
- 19 Ms. Knick believes that her federal rights will
- 20 be better protected in a federal forum.
- 21 Since it's a federal question whether
- 22 or not there is a taking --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, she's not --
- 24 MR. BREEMER: -- that is
- 25 appropriate --

1	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: guaranteed
2	that, unfortunately, because even under the
3	abstention doctrines, the issue of whether or
4	not there was a permanent easement on her
5	property the day she bought it, because this
6	has been historically true for 300 years, I
7	don't know. I don't know how the district
8	court's going to do that without referring to
9	state law. And so that's what she wishes for.
10	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You you may
11	answer, briefly.
12	MR. BREEMER: Williamson County is not
13	an abstention doctrine. It's an incorrect
14	doctrine. The violation of a person's right to
15	just compensation occurs at the time of a
16	taking when the government has no intent or
17	means to compensate or denies compensation.
18	And that's what happened here when the
19	township took Ms. Knick's property without
20	condemning it and without any ability or means
21	to compensate.
22	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
23	counsel. The case is submitted.
24	(Whereupon, at 11:08 a.m., the case
25	was submitted.)

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