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1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
2	x
3	UNIVERSAL HEALTH SERVICES, INC., :
4	Petitioner : No. 15-7
5	v. :
6	UNITED STATES AND MASSACHUSETTS, :
7	EX REL. JULIO ESCOBAR AND CARMEN :
8	CORREA, :
9	Respondents. :
10	x
11	Washington, D.C.
12	Tuesday, April 19, 2016
13	
14	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
15	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
16	at 11:01 a.m.
17	APPEARANCES:
18	ROY T. ENGLERT, JR., ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf
19	of Petitioner.
20	DAVID C. FREDERICK, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of
21	Respondents.
22	MALCOLM L. STEWART, ESQ., Deputy Solicitor General,
23	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; for United
24	States, as amicus curiae, supporting Respondents.
25	

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:01 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	next in Case 15-7, Universal Health Services v. The
5	United States and Massachusetts ex rel. Escobar and
6	Correa.
7	Mr. Englert.
8	ORAL ARGUMENT OF ROY T. ENGLERT, JR.
9	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
10	MR. ENGLERT: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,
11	and may it please the Court:
12	This entire case turns on four words of the
13	statute: "False or fraudulent claim." "False" and
14	"fraudulent" have been unchanged since 1863 in this
15	statute. "Claim" is defined by statute.
16	I'll come back to those words.
17	Three separate State agencies investigated
18	the facts of this case in detail. All three agencies
19	produced lengthy reports and proposed remedial measures
20	for certain alleged regulatory violations. No agency
21	asked for any money back. No sanction at all was
22	imposed on the company. One individual was fined \$1,000
23	and the claimant director was given two years of
24	supervision.
25	Through the magic of the

- 1 implied-certification theory under the False Claims Act,
- 2 the very same facts have now been recharacterized as
- 3 fraud on the government.
- 4 The First Circuit focused on a single
- 5 alleged regulatory violation involving a regulation not
- 6 cited in the complaint, not cited in any appellate
- 7 brief, not cited in the amicus brief of the Commonwealth
- 8 of Massachusetts. That is not what "fraud" means.
- 9 Now, coming back to the four words that
- 10 matter, "false or fraudulent claim."
- "False" means false. This Court construed
- 12 that word in Williams v. United States. Footnote 3 of
- 13 Respondents' brief unsuccessfully tries to distinguish
- 14 Williams. The Solicitor General ignores Williams.
- 15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: It can't mean misleading,
- 16 then?
- 17 So "false" can only mean false? It can't
- 18 mean deceptive, misleading?
- 19 MR. ENGLERT: It cannot, Justice Ginsburg.
- 20 Because the body of law that covers deceptive and
- 21 misleading statements is not falsity. It's the law of
- 22 fraud. And the law of fraud is stated in Section 551 of
- 23 the Restatement (Second) of Torts.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Suppose you have a private
- 25 contract. In the private contract, it's for medical

- 1 services. The written part does not actually use the
- 2 word "doctor," but the circumstances are such that any
- 3 reasonable person would assume, would believe that the
- 4 parties contracted for medical services provided by a
- 5 doctor.
- 6 This is an ordinary contract case. Could
- 7 not a jury or the judge find that that implicit term of
- 8 the contract that the services would be provided by a
- 9 doctor was breached, it was a material breach, and,
- 10 therefore, the implicit statement was false?
- 11 MR. ENGLERT: Two responses, if I may,
- 12 Justice Breyer.
- 13 First, the whole problem here is the
- 14 tortification of contract. Yes, that's a good contract
- 15 case, but it's not automatically a good tort case.
- 16 The second answer --
- JUSTICE BREYER: No, no. What's the second?
- 18 MR. ENGLERT: Section 551(2)(e) of the
- 19 Restatement deals with that exact situation, facts basic
- 20 to the transaction. So the common law has developed a
- 21 meaning of fraud that will accommodate the cases in
- 22 which liability makes sense because every reasonable
- 23 person, as Your Honor said, would assume something to be
- 24 true.
- 25 Comments j and k and Illustrations 3, 4, 5

- 1 and 6 of the Restatement -- rather, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8,
- 2 give one example of facts basic to the transaction and
- 3 five examples of facts not basic to the transaction. It
- 4 is a very, very, very narrow duty of disclosure.
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, fine. But now let's
- 6 go a step further. We have our contract. The facts are
- 7 such that any reasonable person would assume there is an
- 8 implicit statement that the services will be provided by
- 9 a doctor. You say that could be a breach of contract.
- 10 Now it turns out that this company that has
- 11 that contract has sold the shares over the SEC. And the
- 12 SEC says, you know, it's so obvious that that implicit
- 13 statement in the contract meant that they had a doctor
- 14 who was a doctor -- that's so obvious -- that we think
- in selling shares in this company, where indeed this
- 16 contract was absolutely critical, millions of dollars
- 17 was at stake, without a doctor, violating of implicit
- 18 statement that there was a doctor, we think that's fraud
- 19 under Rule 10(b)(5).
- 20 MR. ENGLERT: I'm glad Your Honor brought
- 21 that up.
- JUSTICE BREYER: All right.
- 23 MR. ENGLERT: The SEC has a habit of
- 24 construing fraud under 10(b)(5), and this Court has a
- 25 habit of reining the SEC in. And the Chiarella case is

- 1 quite key here. And Chiarella is not cited in
- 2 Respondents' brief. It's not cited in the government's
- 3 brief. In all the dark green amicus briefs, it's cited
- 4 once, and the citation is to the dissent. Chiarella
- 5 says fraud in a statute is very broad, but it's broad
- 6 enough to cover the common law and no more. If Congress
- 7 wants to go broader than the common law --
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, fine. But what is --
- 9 I'm talking the common law. All I know about contracts
- 10 came from Blackjack Dawson, my contracts teacher --
- 11 (Laughter.)
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: -- who was a great teacher,
- and he taught the common law. So I don't know anything
- 14 else. I -- well, I won't go quite that far, but
- 15 nonetheless. Nonetheless, I think under common law, you
- 16 could say that that was a material breach of contract,
- 17 what I just talked to. And indeed, there happened to be
- 18 a whole set of regulations on the shelf, et cetera,
- 19 which spell it all out to which there was an implicit
- 20 reference in the contract if it's -- you understand what
- 21 I'm saying. It's common law that I'm saying.
- 22 MR. ENGLERT: Well, the thousands of pages
- 23 of regulations and the implicit reference in the
- 24 contract are not what the common law means by fraud.
- 25 They are, sadly, what the lower courts have meant by

- 1 fraud under the False Claims Act.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Englert, I guess I don't
- 3 understand that. I mean, let me take Justice Breyer's
- 4 hypothetical and make it even simpler.
- 5 Let's say that there's a contract and there
- 6 is an explicit term, and it says I commit to providing a
- 7 doctor's care. Yes? And then it turns out that the
- 8 medical care that was provided was not by a doctor. It
- 9 was by a nurse or it was by somebody with not even that
- 10 set of qualifications. And -- and then the person who
- 11 enters into the contract makes a statement, demands
- 12 payment, and says the care was provided.
- Now, some care was provided; it is true.
- 14 But medical care, a doctor's care was not provided.
- Now, by withholding that fact and by just saying the
- 16 care was provided, have I not committed fraud under the
- 17 common law?
- 18 MR. ENGLERT: No, Your Honor. Justice
- 19 Kagan, that is not fraud. And that situation is
- 20 actually dealt with by Restatement Section 551(2)(b) and
- 21 by the famous Junius decision written by Justice Cardozo
- 22 for the New York Court of Appeals.
- 23 JUSTICE KENNEDY: What -- what about
- 24 Restatements -- oh, I think it's 529, which -- which
- 25 says a statement is fraudulent if the maker knows or

- 1 believes that it's misleading because of his failure to
- 2 add an additional statement to make it true?
- 3 MR. ENGLERT: That's the same principle,
- 4 Justice Kennedy.
- 5 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And I don't see why that
- 6 isn't completely applicable to what the hypothetical
- 7 that Justice Kagan just gave.
- 8 MR. ENGLERT: There's -- there's --
- 9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: There is a failure to make
- 10 an additional or qualifying matter in order to make that
- 11 statement not false. That's exactly the Justice's
- 12 hypothetical.
- MR. ENGLERT: Justice Kennedy, if I
- 14 understood Justice Kagan's hypothetical question
- 15 correctly, it is not fraud within the meaning of
- 16 551(2)(b). But let's suppose that I'm wrong about that,
- 17 okay? Let's suppose that that is fraud. That's still a
- 18 very far cry from the facts in this case in which the
- 19 court of appeals had to invoke a regulation that cross
- 20 referenced another regulation that nobody had cited and
- 21 said the failure to announce a violation of that
- violation when submitting a claim is fraud.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right.
- JUSTICE BREYER: I see that. That's to me
- 25 what's at the heart of this. How do you distinguish

- 1 those regulations, breach of which are fraudulent when
- 2 you breach them, and implicit promise not to, from those
- 3 that not? There are millions of regulations. That's
- 4 what all the amici are worried about.
- 5 But now, this is my basic question, and it
- 6 is a question. The obvious kind of distinction that
- 7 would seem possible is a contract-based distinction
- 8 between matters that are material where the whole
- 9 contract disappears and matters that are sometimes I
- 10 think called nonmaterial, I'll get the -- I'll forget
- 11 the exact word, partial, where even though the condition
- is violated, you don't destroy the contract but you
- 13 might get damages for that.
- Now, that's a distinction that every court
- 15 that deals with contracts is used to applying bread and
- 16 butter. All right? Normal daily basis. Why not use
- 17 that same distinction right here?
- 18 MR. ENGLERT: Because this is not a contract
- 19 case. The government has only --
- JUSTICE BREYER: No, no. What you'd say, of
- 21 course it applies where the condition that was lied
- 22 about was material. And there can be implicit lies. Of
- 23 course, there has to be an implicit lie. But it could
- 24 be an implicit lie that I did not comply -- you might
- 25 implicitly imply that you fulfilled provision

- 1 No. 43876(b) which says paper should be three inches
- 2 long, okay? Okay. Or there could be an implicit lie
- 3 that that person in your hospital was a doctor. The
- 4 first you'd say is not material. The second is
- 5 material.
- Now, that I'm asking because I wonder if a
- 7 distinction like that, drawn from contract law would, or
- 8 would not, satisfy most of the concerns that are -- are
- 9 raised in the amicus briefs supporting you.
- 10 MR. ENGLERT: Justice Breyer, it would not
- 11 satisfy most of those concerns for several reasons.
- 12 First and foremost, the False Claims Act has
- its own definition of materiality, which is greatly
- 14 watered down from the common law. Something that is
- 15 capable of influencing a decisionmaker is material under
- 16 the False Claims Act. So materiality doesn't solve the
- 17 problem.
- Now let me say also that materiality is, at
- 19 least arguably, a different element. When I say "at
- 20 least arguably," the statute actually doesn't say under
- 21 (a) (1) (A) that it has to be material, but courts have
- 22 properly read materiality in. But even if materiality
- 23 is read in, it's a different element on top of a false
- 24 or fraudulent claim.
- 25 And I really want to bring this Court back

- 1 with respect to the four words "false or fraudulent
- 2 claim" because for it to be fraudulent, there must be,
- 3 as Your Honor said, an implicit lie. And the common
- 4 law, cases like Junius, Restatements like 551(2)(b),
- 5 deal with the implicit lie.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry. I'm totally
- 7 confused. I always thought that when you asked for
- 8 payment, you're making a promise: I did what I agreed
- 9 to do. Pay me, please.
- 10 That's, to me, what's sort of understood.
- 11 If I hired you to provide me with doctor services, you
- 12 ask me for money, I'm assuming you provided me with
- 13 doctor services. And you know you didn't. Why isn't
- 14 that a fraud?
- 15 MR. ENGLERT: Because it's a contract
- 16 breach. Breaking a promise is a contract breach. Some
- 17 contract breaches are fraud, most are --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So providing a gun that
- 19 doesn't shoot to the Army is simply a contract breach?
- 20 MR. ENGLERT: I don't know, Justice
- 21 Sotomayor. It depends on the facts of the case.
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What -- what more facts
- 23 do you need? Government contracted for guns. All of a
- 24 sudden you deliver guns that don't shoot. That -- those
- 25 are the facts that led to this Act.

1 MR. ENGLERT: The additional facts I need 2 are what was stated in the claim, what was stated in 3 the regs, what were the reasonable understandings of the 4 contracting parties. And I'm not making these factors 5 up as --6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Do you think that anybody, except yourself, would ever think that it 7 8 wasn't a fraud to provide guns that don't shoot if 9 that's what the -- the government contracted for? 10 Whether --11 MR. ENGLERT: Yes. 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- they made it --13 MR. ENGLERT: Yes, depending on additional 14 facts, Justice Sotomayor, as stated in Section 551 of 15 the Restatement. If I'm wrong about these hypothetical 16 examples, I'm wrong, but I'm happy to rest on 17 Section 551 of the Restatement as to what "fraud" means. Chiarella says as a holding of this Court 18 that the word "fraudulent" requires that there be a 19 20 duty. The Restatement, 551(2), is all about when there 21 is and there isn't a duty. 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If we don't --23 JUSTICE KAGAN: So I understood --24 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Your earlier argument --

your earlier argument was your point that materiality

25

- 1 has its own definition under the Federal contracting
- 2 statutes, and it's so broad that we can't use it, so
- 3 we'll just forget about materiality? Is that -- do I
- 4 understand --
- 5 MR. ENGLERT: No, no. If I may.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: It's my misunderstanding.
- 7 MR. ENGLERT: The False Claims Act was
- 8 amended a few years ago, about 20 -- about 30 years
- 9 ago --
- 10 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Right. Right.
- 11 MR. ENGLERT: -- to redefine materiality. I
- 12 may be wrong on the timing, but it's been amended to
- 13 redefine materiality as a very, very low standard. But
- 14 the point is not use it or don't use it. The point is
- 15 that before you get to materiality, you have to have a
- 16 false or fraudulent claim.
- 17 Materiality is not part of the definition of
- 18 false or fraudulent. It is an additional requirement
- 19 beyond the false or fraudulent.
- 20 JUSTICE KENNEDY: That's what I have a hard
- 21 time understanding. It -- it seems to me we just can't
- 22 think about fraud unless we have materiality in some
- 23 sense. And it could be a very strict standard of
- 24 materiality.
- MR. ENGLERT: Justice --

- 1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Otherwise, it seems to me,
- 2 fraud doesn't make much sense.
- 3 MR. ENGLERT: Justice Kennedy, I agree with
- 4 you. For something to be fraud, it must be fraud as
- 5 defined by the common law, and it must be material.
- 6 That's this Court's holding in the Neder case.
- 7 So yes, I agree with you that to think about
- 8 fraud, one must have the kind of statement that is
- 9 fraudulent and materiality and scienter.
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: So what I understood you to
- 11 be saying, Mr. Englert, was that all of these common
- 12 examples, examples that really led to the False Claims
- 13 Act, are not fraud. So --
- MR. ENGLERT: Oh, Justice Kagan, that's not
- 15 what I'm saying.
- 16 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, let me just give you a
- 17 few of them.
- 18 MR. ENGLERT: Sure.
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: Justice Sotomayor said the
- 20 government contracts to buy guns; the guns don't shoot.
- 21 The government contracts to buy boots -- this was all
- 22 within the context of the Civil War -- the boots fell
- 23 apart after 12 hours. The government contracts to buy
- 24 food; the food was rancid.
- 25 And each of those contractors would come in

- 1 and would demand payment.
- 2 And the entire idea behind this statute is
- 3 that in that demand of payment is a representation. The
- 4 representation is that I've given you guns that shoot
- 5 and boots that wear and food that can be eaten. And
- 6 when -- when that is not true, that is a fraudulent
- 7 claim. And you're suggesting that all these
- 8 hypotheticals -- that somehow that's not a fraudulent
- 9 claim. And I guess that leaves me sort of wondering
- 10 what do you think would be a fraudulent claim?
- 11 MR. ENGLERT: Two things, Justice Kagan, in
- 12 response. One, those all may be fraudulent claims. I'm
- 13 not denying that any of those can be fraudulent claims.
- 14 And again, Section 551(2)(b) and (e) of the Restatement
- 15 cover those.
- 16 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, if those are
- 17 fraudulent claims --
- 18 MR. ENGLERT: But if I may --
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- I -- I would think that
- 20 this is the exact same, is that the contract was for a
- 21 doctor's medical care, and a doctor's medical care was
- 22 not provided. A nondoctor's care was provided.
- MR. ENGLERT: May I explain my key
- 24 disagreement with that analysis? In your question,
- 25 Justice Kagan, you embedded the proposition that there

- 1 are implicit representations in the claims. That was
- 2 not how the False Claims Act was read from 1863 to 1994.
- 3 The Ab-Tech case, decided by the Court of
- 4 Federal Claims in 1994, was the very first case after
- 5 131 years under the statute to use the
- 6 implied-certification theory.
- 7 This -- this concept that's easy to read
- 8 back to -- graft back onto the Civil War statute, that
- 9 there was an implied certification is not how people
- 10 were speaking at the time of the Civil War. It is a new
- 11 concept. It's something that has been causing the False
- 12 Claims Act to expand dramatically in the last 22 years,
- 13 but it is not -- there's nothing at all -- nobody relies
- on the 1863 legislative. They rely on the 1986
- 15 subsequent legislative.
- 16 JUSTICE KAGAN: If I understand what you're
- 17 saying, you're saying that in representing that you have
- 18 satisfied the terms of the contract, you are -- or --
- 19 or -- let me say that -- I'll start it over.
- In demanding payment for having satisfied
- 21 the contract, you are not representing that you are --
- 22 that you have satisfied the contract; that's your point?
- 23 In demanding payment for satisfaction of the contract,
- 24 you are not making a recommendation that you have
- 25 satisfied the contract?

- 1 MR. ENGLERT: Not that broadly. Not -- not
- 2 every jot and tittle of the contract. And there's a
- 3 policy reason why that's a good rule --
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm not into every jot and
- 5 tittle. I'm into material portions of the contract.
- 6 That -- you know, that the guns shoot, that the boots
- 7 can be worn, that the food can be eaten --
- MR. ENGLERT: That -- that --
- 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- and a doctor's care is a
- 10 doctor's care.
- 11 MR. ENGLERT: That is what the Restatement
- 12 refers to as essentiality, which is a much, much, much
- 13 higher standard than materiality. And this is where the
- 14 problem comes in. When essentiality, which does go to
- 15 the heart of an -- of an implicit representation,
- 16 arguably is confused with materiality, we have the
- 17 problems reflected in the light green amicus briefs in
- 18 this case.
- Now, the Government's and Respondent's main
- 20 argument, as I see it, is really not even a textual
- 21 argument. It is that men must turn square corners when
- 22 they deal with the government. That's a perfectly fine
- 23 principle in certain settings but not when a punitive
- 24 statute is at issue.
- 25 When punishment is at issue, the relevant

- 1 principles are instead the principle of constitutional
- 2 avoidance and fair notice and the rule of lenity. And
- 3 both of those principles cut very strongly against the
- 4 implied certification theory. 27 years ago, this Court
- 5 considered a case of excessive punishment under the
- 6 False Claims Act called United States v. Halper. It was
- 7 later overruled in just eight years, but it remains
- 8 instructive.
- 9 The judicial instinct to avoid excessive
- 10 punishments was so strong that the Court let the
- 11 appellee out of FCA civil liability by invoking the
- 12 Double Jeopardy Clause.
- 13 When the Court overruled Halper, it
- 14 suggested in passing that the Eighth Amendment might be
- 15 better suited than the Fifth to address constitutional
- 16 excessiveness concerns. But the recognition by this
- 17 Court that punishment under the False Act -- False
- 18 Claims Act is Draconian is of long standing, and that
- 19 insight to --
- 20 JUSTICE BREYER: How do you want us to write
- 21 this? The -- you're in an area where billions of
- 22 dollars are at issue. There -- this is going on a long
- 23 time. I don't want to write something that's going to
- 24 upset everybody's expectations in the contract area.
- On the other hand, the common sense of it,

- 1 and you just said the words, you said, well, if, in
- 2 fact, you send in a form which says certainly give me
- 3 money for supplying the guns or the medical care,
- 4 something is implied. And you used the word
- 5 "essentials" to describe that.
- 6 And then I also know that if the agency
- 7 wants to, it could put a little statement at the bottom
- 8 saying, I hereby certify I complied with every
- 9 regulation. And I guess if they -- if they did that,
- 10 then even you would not have an objection saying your
- 11 failure to do it while signing was fraud.
- 12 MR. ENGLERT: If it's --
- 13 JUSTICE BREYER: So what am I --
- MR. ENGLERT: If it's in the taking --
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: From your point of view,
- 16 this word is "essential," whatever that may mean, which
- 17 I will look up, how does it work? What's -- what's the
- 18 correct standard in your --
- 19 MR. ENGLERT: Well, here's how it writes.
- 20 "False" means false. "Fraud" means fraud.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Everybody agrees with that.
- 22 MR. ENGLERT: Okay. "Fraud" means fraud as
- 23 reflected in the Restatement, and here's how it writes
- 24 from a policy dimension, Justice Breyer.
- The government holds all the keys here. It

- 1 can change the claim form. It can change the contract.
- 2 It can go after people for contract violations using the
- 3 law of contracts and the law of government contracts,
- 4 which is very specialized. It can go after people for
- 5 debarment. It can go after people for money. It can go
- 6 after people for restitution. The government holds all
- 7 the keys, and indeed the government, frankly, should
- 8 hold all the keys.
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: Please, because I have
- 10 read -- you have lots of good arguments, and I'm not --
- 11 I'm asking for advice from you, from your point of view,
- 12 what the sentence in the opinion should say that
- describes the circumstances under which the person who
- 14 submits a form saying, I want a thousand dollars, I just
- 15 supplied the guns or the medical care, when that
- 16 person -- and, by the way, there are regs say they have
- 17 to fire, and the regs say it has to be a real doctor.
- 18 When has that person committed fraud or -- that's what I
- 19 want. What is the sentence you want me to write?
- 20 MR. ENGLERT: "See Restatement (Second) of
- 21 Torts, Section 551(2) (b) and (e), and Comments j and k,
- 22 and Illustrations 3 through 8." That's the sentence.
- JUSTICE BREYER: 551 --
- MR. ENGLERT: (2)(e) -- (b) and (e),
- 25 Comments j and k, Illustrations 3 through 8.

1 I'd like to reserve the balance of my time. 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel. 3 Mr. Frederick. ORAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID C. FREDERICK 4 5 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS 6 MR. FREDERICK: Thank you, Mr. Chief 7 Justice, and may it please the Court: 8 When a claimant asserts a right to 9 government funds without disclosing that it has 10 knowingly violated the government's material payment 11 conditions, that claim is both false and fraudulent 12 regardless of whether it contains --13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Mr. Frederick --14 MR. FREDERICK: -- express false statements. 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- this confuses me to 16 I don't know why the lower court relied on the no end. 17 Section 423, this -- the director's qualifications and 18 responsibilities when there's a direct regulation that 19 says that the health service will only pay for services 20 rendered by a staff member who's qualified. 21 Why did they go off on this indirect method 22 of analyzing this case? 23 MR. FREDERICK: I think the original sin 24 here, if I can express it that way, Justice Sotomayor, 25 was by the district court which was so focused on what

- 1 were conditions of participation. It used a formulation
- 2 of conditions of participation versus conditions of
- 3 payment. And once it constructed that idealogical
- 4 dichotomy, it was so focused on what the conditions of
- 5 participation were that it lost sight of the fact that
- 6 these regulations all work together and in a way --
- 7 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But there's a regulation
- 8 right on point.
- 9 MR. FREDERICK: I understand, Justice
- 10 Sotomayor. And had I been fortunate enough to litigate
- 11 the case in the district court, we might have cited that
- 12 provision.
- But I would point out that the key point
- 14 here -- and I don't think the other side disputes this,
- is that when you're providing mental healthcare to
- 16 teenagers and other children, it should be supervised,
- 17 and it should be given by people who have the proper
- 18 license.
- I don't think that it takes any great leap
- 20 of essentiality or materiality or intrinsicness or
- 21 whatever words the Petitioner wants to come up with,
- 22 that's pretty basic.
- 23 And the violation that occurred here was one
- 24 that is all over the mass health regulations. You can
- 25 look at it in the supervisor, the clinical director's

- 1 requirements to maintain supervision, which is what the
- 2 First Circuit relied on; if you look at the express
- 3 payment condition, which is .441(a), it expressly links
- 4 to .424, which lays out all the qualifications of the
- 5 nurses and the social workers and the psychologists --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So is your -- is
- 7 your position that every material breach of a contract
- 8 gives rise to a False Claims Act -- a claim under the
- 9 False Claims Act as false and fraudulent?
- 10 MR. FREDERICK: No. Our position is that
- 11 there are two other requirements in the Act. One is
- 12 that they be done knowingly. And under the statute, the
- 13 definition of "knowing" has three features, with
- 14 knowledge, deliberate indifference or reckless
- 15 disregard.
- 16 So there is a knowledge requirement that has
- 17 to be done, and I would point out, Justice Breyer, that
- 18 actually solves virtually every problem in the
- 19 Petitioner's amici because they are talking about
- 20 situations in which they are not focusing on the
- 21 knowledge requirement of the fraudster who is seeking to
- 22 get government funds.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So -- so if -- I
- 24 know you've got another one, and I want to keep that in
- 25 mind, but if it's a situation where the alleged material

- 1 breach is of Massachusetts Regulation 185(Z)(3), (4),
- 2 (8), (10), or whatever, you -- the claimant would have
- 3 to show knowledge of that regulation?
- 4 MR. FREDERICK: Knowledge that -- that when
- 5 it was breaching it, it was going to be material to the
- 6 government. That's the second part of what I think is
- 7 important.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, I guess, I mean
- 9 that --
- 10 MR. FREDERICK: So --
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That causes concern,
- of course, because there are thousands of pages of
- 13 regulations under Medicaid or Medicare programs. And I
- 14 guess your -- your position would precipitate litigation
- 15 over whether or not the person who said, here's our
- 16 bill, knew about -- knew under the reckless and whatever
- 17 standard, about the particular regulation that the
- 18 government or the relator is claiming made the
- 19 submission fraudulent?
- 20 MR. FREDERICK: The court test, Mr. Chief
- 21 Justice, is whether the State could reject the claim for
- 22 reimbursement, whether it had a basis in rejecting it
- 23 because it was a material claim. It's a --
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But I thought you
- 25 said --

- 1 MR. FREDERICK: -- material violation. So
- 2 if it was a material violation --
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes.
- 4 MR. FREDERICK: -- and the government had a
- 5 basis for rejecting the claim in saying your services do
- 6 not cover reimbursement --
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I understand that.
- 8 MR. FREDERICK: -- it becomes a fraudulent
- 9 or false claim if the claimant omits telling the
- 10 government that there was something material --
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but I thought
- 12 your point was the first thing is that the claimant has
- 13 to know about it.
- MR. FREDERICK: That's correct.
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It has to know about
- 16 the particular requirement in the regulation.
- 17 MR. FREDERICK: That's correct. And it has
- 18 to know that it was important to the government. It was
- 19 a material condition for the government, that the
- 20 government could reject payment on this basis.
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But it has to know
- 22 not only about the particular provision but that it was
- 23 material and the government wouldn't pay without it.
- MR. FREDERICK: That's correct. And that's
- 25 why, Justice Kennedy, to go back to your question, the

- 1 key Restatement provision here is not 551, it's 529,
- 2 which we've cited in our brief at page 29, and which
- 3 essentially is not discussed in the opening presentation
- 4 by my friend.
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: But here, looking --
- 6 looking at what you just said, you said the three
- 7 conditions are where it's not written on the form, and
- 8 the -- the submitter has to know about it, second, he --
- 9 it has to have been material.
- 10 MR. FREDERICK: Correct.
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: And, third, he has to omit
- 12 telling the government about it.
- MR. FREDERICK: That's right.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. Now, I look at the
- 15 two things he talked about in the Restatement, and he
- 16 says matters known to him that he knows to be necessary
- 17 to prevent his partial or ambiguous statement from being
- 18 misleading -- boy, that's pretty close to what you
- 19 said -- and then (e) is facts basic to the transaction
- 20 if he knows the other is about to do it under a mistake.
- 21 What's the difference between -- I mean, I
- 22 know the people are experts, and this will tell me there
- 23 are huge differences. But what's the difference between
- 24 what you just said and what he said?
- 25 MR. FREDERICK: Well, I think that the

- 1 difference is that I think there's an easier Restatement
- 2 provision that is more directly on point. And if I
- 3 could just quote from our brief at page 28 to 29. We
- 4 quote the Restatement, Section 529: "A representation
- 5 stating the truth so far as it goes but which the maker
- 6 knows or believes to be" materialness -- "materially
- 7 misleading because of his failure to state additional or
- 8 qualifying matter is a fraudulent representation."
- 9 Here --
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But it's got to
- 11 be -- he has to know about the specific provision in the
- 12 regulation.
- 13 MR. FREDERICK: That's correct. That's
- 14 correct.
- 15 But here, Mr. Chief Justice, I think that it
- 16 would be odd to suppose that in what are 28 provisions
- 17 of the Mass Health regulations in what is a massive
- 18 program involving, you know, billions of dollars, where
- 19 their business model is predicated on serving indigent
- 20 people so that they can get access to
- 21 Medicaid-reimbursed funds, that they would read the
- 22 regulations. And a number of them say it is critical to
- 23 provide supervision when you're providing mental health
- 24 care.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. So you think

- 1 it's an easy case to prove, in other words, because they
- 2 would have necessarily known that. But what they have
- 3 to know is of that regulation, whatever one of the 28 it
- 4 is, and they have to know that the government will
- 5 regard that as material.
- 6 MR. FREDERICK: That's correct. But -- but
- 7 the key point here, Mr. Chief Justice, is I don't think
- 8 that that should be a difficult case.
- 9 Now, the other side spends a lot of time
- 10 talking about worthless services, and they seek in their
- 11 brief at pages 37 and 38 to say that the standard is
- only when these goods are so worthless or the services
- 13 are so worthless, that it would be rather obvious. And
- 14 I would point out that if the worthless services are
- 15 recoverable under the False Claims Act, then it is okay
- 16 to have an implied certification theory. They have
- 17 essentially conceded that if the goods are completely
- 18 worthless, it would be okay for the government to bring
- 19 a False Claims Act case.
- Now, I would submit that if the goods are
- 21 partially worthless, if -- those have also to be
- 22 recoverable because there's no clear way to draw a line
- 23 between those that are partially worthless and those
- 24 that are completely worthless.
- Let me give you a simple example.

- 1 Here, under what I understand Petitioner's
- 2 theory to be, if Petitioner had gotten some college
- 3 interns who were studying psychology, and it decided to
- 4 allow those interns to practice in their medical
- 5 facilities, and those college interns gave what was
- 6 called therapy to teenagers, under their theory, they
- 7 don't have to tell the government that these are college
- 8 interns who don't have college degrees, or
- 9 certifications, or licenses required by the State, and
- 10 it is A-OK to charge the government full freight. Not
- only for the service, but under .408, they're also
- 12 charging with the representation that they have embedded
- in a supervision cost.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I suspect most cases
- 15 are a little more complicated than that, and that's
- 16 where the difficulty comes in when you have hundreds,
- 17 thousands of pages of regulations. And typically not --
- 18 probably not the government. They didn't in this case.
- 19 They didn't pick up the -- the false claim; it was the
- 20 relator. And the relator comes in and says, well, you
- 21 didn't -- you violated the provision, not that the
- 22 college intern is a doctor, but that -- whatever it is.
- 23 You know, you have to use this particular syringes or
- 24 drug company, and, in fact, you didn't. And, therefore,
- 25 blah, blah, blah.

- And I guess that's where the problem comes
- 2 in, in that it's a little more complicated than that.
- 3 And I just don't know if I can take your abstract
- 4 hypothetical and transfer it to the reality of
- 5 government contract.
- 6 MR. FREDERICK: Well, let me -- let me go
- 7 with the core of what I think the concern is in your
- 8 statement, and in the position by the amici on the other
- 9 side, and it's that we don't have enough notice. We
- 10 don't know what's really important to the government.
- 11 That's their basic problem. Right?
- Now, they don't solve that problem under
- 13 either of the two theories that they present in their
- 14 case. If notice is the problem, the government could
- 15 solve that by having the check-off box -- I think,
- 16 Justice Breyer, you were the one who mentioned this --
- 17 that says, I certify I've complied with all the
- 18 regulations. Well, that doesn't give them any notice.
- 19 And it doesn't give them any notice if,
- 20 attached to the contract claim form, the Federal
- 21 Acquisition Regulations or the Department of Defense
- 22 regulations or the HHS regulations are copied. We would
- 23 just be killing forests in order to generate that. That
- 24 doesn't give them any more notice either,
- 25 Mr. Chief Justice.

- 1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but it will,
- 2 because it changes the reality. They're going to look
- 3 at that, and they're going to say, wow. Every single
- 4 thing we're going to get in trouble in a False Claims
- 5 Act. So our bid is going to be a little bit higher to
- 6 cover that potential risk.
- 7 MR. FREDERICK: These are not bid-ask
- 8 situations, by and large, Mr. Chief Justice. These are
- 9 in the healthcare area under entitlement programs in
- 10 which the government is setting the rate and in which
- 11 the person is saying, I'm providing service in
- 12 compliance with the Federal statutes and the
- 13 regulations, and, therefore, I have a legal entitlement
- 14 to receive reimbursement.
- So in that scenario, the problem is that
- 16 what they really want is for the government to pick and
- 17 choose among the things that are most important, and
- 18 once you do that, you're creating a roadmap for fraud.
- 19 Because all you're doing -- every time you omit
- 20 something that might be material in any particular
- 21 circumstance, but it's not specified in the list of the
- 22 absolutely most critical things, you're just inviting
- 23 them to say we're not complying with it.
- JUSTICE BREYER: So what has it done? What
- 25 has the government done when they certify things? Do

- 1 they say things like, I hereby certify that I complied
- 2 with all material regulations? What do they say?
- MR. FREDERICK: Well, there's some
- 4 provisions that have certification requirements. But I
- 5 would point out that even if you were to do that, it's
- 6 not going to solve most of --
- 7 JUSTICE BREYER: No, I agree with you.
- 8 MR. FREDERICK: -- because of grant
- 9 programs. There are Federal dollars that are going to
- 10 third parties in which people are engaging in contracts
- 11 with third parties and they are being paid by the
- 12 Federal government. And in those kinds of situations,
- 13 even your kind of basic certification isn't going to
- 14 work.
- So the problem here, Mr. Chief Justice,
- 16 fundamentally, is one where the two elements of
- 17 materiality and knowledge are going to solve the vast
- 18 bulk of the problems. Because if the claimant is acting
- 19 negligently or at a lower standard, simply just missed
- 20 it, that's not going to be a case that will be
- 21 actionable under the False Claims Act.
- 22 And, furthermore, if the claimant is asking
- 23 for something that the government doesn't deem to be
- 24 material, in which the test would be can the government
- 25 withhold payment, then that isn't going to be actionable

- 1 under the False Claims Act either.
- 2 And notably, the other side has a lot of
- 3 amicus briefs, but they don't really point to any
- 4 specific cases. And if you look at Professor Angstrom's
- 5 amicus brief, he is the leading scholar on what has
- 6 happened with the False Claims Act empirically. He has
- 7 studied all 6,000 filings since 1986, and he's charted
- 8 what they -- what's happened to them.
- 9 And his conclusion is that not only has
- 10 there been no spike as a result of the implied
- 11 certification theory having been adopted, but that, in
- 12 fact, the problems that are identified don't actually
- 13 come to pass because the vast bulk of the cases that are
- 14 not intervened in by the government, in fact, are done
- 15 at a motion to dismiss.
- And so I would submit to you that if you
- 17 looked at the actual data for the False Claims Act, a
- 18 lot of what you would conclude on the basis of the other
- 19 side is hyperbole. There is a lot of fear, but it comes
- 20 down to two points: One is they would like to have
- 21 notice so that, presumably, they don't have to comply
- 22 with the things that the government doesn't more
- 23 specifically reticulate in its rules. And they want to
- 24 be able to know, if they want to get around that, what
- 25 are the key things that they have to get around.

1 I would submit to you that in the Civil War, 2 as Justice Kagan's hypotheticals pointed out, there was 3 a problem of implied certification because contractors 4 were selling boots that were made out of cardboard, not 5 leather, and guns that didn't shoot, and mules that were 6 not live and whole mules. And that is exactly the same 7 kind of problem that we're talking about now over 150 8 years later, with respect to mental health services that 9 are not being provided by licensed and supervised 10 professionals. Thank you. 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel. 12 Mr. Stewart. 1.3 ORAL ARGUMENT OF MALCOLM L. STEWART 14 FOR UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE, SUPPORTING THE RESPONDENTS 15 16 MR. STEWART: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it 17 please the Court: The statute refers to false or fraudulent 18 claims, and I think there are two different but 19 20 complementary analytic routes that the Court could take to conclude that, if the facts alleged in Respondent's 21 22 complaint are true, false or fraudulent claims were 23 submitted. 24 One way to look at this is to focus on the fact that in Medicaid, as in other government 25

- 1 entitlement programs, a person who submits a claim is
- 2 not simply asking for money; he is representing that he
- 3 has a legal entitlement to be paid. And you can say, if
- 4 a person asserts that he is legally entitled to be paid,
- 5 and he knows that he has no such legal entitlement, the
- 6 claim is false.
- 7 And then you would ask, under what
- 8 circumstances would a person know that he had no legal
- 9 entitlement to be paid? And the answer would be, if the
- 10 person knows that he has failed to comply with a
- 11 material term of the contract or a material regulatory
- 12 requirement, by definition, the government will have no
- 13 obligation to pay, and the claim of legal entitlement
- 14 will be false.
- And I think, Justice Breyer, you were
- 16 exactly right in pointing to the law of contracts which
- 17 draws a distinction between material and nonmaterial
- 18 terms. And the purpose of that distinction is to
- 19 identify the situation in which a breach by one party
- 20 will excuse the counterparty's failure to perform. And
- 21 so a -- if the government is obligated to pay money and
- the contractor makes certain corresponding performances,
- 23 if a nonmaterial term is breached, the government's
- 24 obligation to pay remains intact.
- 25 And so a person who knew himself to be in

- 1 breach of a nonmaterial term and requested payment
- 2 anyway wouldn't be making a false claim. He would be
- 3 claiming a legal entitlement to be paid; he would be
- 4 entitled to be paid because the breach wouldn't excuse
- 5 the government's payment obligation. But if the term
- 6 that was being breached was material, the claim of legal
- 7 entitlement would be false.
- 8 The other analytic route that you could take
- 9 to -- to get to the same result in this case really
- 10 follows up on Justice Kagan's hypothetical about the
- 11 situation in which there is a contract for services to
- 12 be performed by a doctor, and the -- the person who has
- 13 arranged for services to be provided by someone else
- 14 comes in and says services have been performed; pay me.
- And it seems like clear fraud under 529 and
- 16 551 under the Restatement. You have made a
- 17 representation, services have been performed.
- 18 Explaining that they were performed by a nondoctor under
- 19 the circumstances is essential to make that
- 20 representation nonmisleading.
- 21 And what we have here, at least if the facts
- 22 are as alleged, is basically the same thing. The
- 23 complaint recites that in requesting payment, Universal
- 24 Health Services submitted various invoices, and they
- 25 used billing codes, five-digit numbers that were

- 1 determined by -- identified by MassHealth as the codes
- 2 you use for particular types of services. One of them
- 3 corresponded to individual therapy, one to group
- 4 therapy, one to family therapy.
- Now obviously, the claims would have been
- 6 false if no services had been provided at all. And I
- 7 assume everyone would agree that if MassHealth -- I'm
- 8 sorry -- if Universal Health Services had billed for
- 9 services provided in a group setting but had used the
- 10 code that MassHealth had identified for individual
- 11 therapy, that would have been a false claim because
- 12 MassHealth is entitled to treat the use of that code as
- 13 a representation that the services were -- were
- 14 performed individually.
- And, really, it's no -- it's not a large
- 16 leap to say when you use the code for individual
- 17 therapy, you are representing by -- that the services
- 18 were performed, the treatment was performed by a person
- 19 who was legally authorized to provide mental health
- 20 therapy under Massachusetts law.
- Now, unlike the contract hypothetical that
- 22 Justice Kagan identified, in determining what implicit
- 23 representations are being made, we wouldn't look to the
- 24 previous promise that the person had made because
- 25 there's no contract. We would look at the MassHealth

- 1 regs that identify who -- what kind of credentials do
- 2 you have to have to perform particular types of mental
- 3 health services and would --
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How do you tell --
- 5 Mr. Stewart, because at least under Mr. Frederick's view
- 6 you have to have knowledge that the government wouldn't
- 7 pay. I assume the government wouldn't pay even for
- 8 nonmaterial provisions.
- 9 I mean, if you're supposed to pay -- you
- 10 know, for \$100,000 you're going to provide these
- 11 services, and you don't provide small service? You
- 12 still pay, but you wouldn't pay for that. I mean, I
- 13 don't understand that, how some things are material --
- 14 does it go pay at all, or -- or carve out a particular
- 15 provision?
- 16 When -- when is the government -- when is
- 17 there going to be not performance of a contract and the
- 18 government's going to pay for that anyway?
- 19 MR. STEWART: Well, I think if we got a bill
- 20 for particular services and the services had been
- 21 essentially performed as they were expected to be, the
- 22 government's policy objectives were adequately advanced
- 23 but some technical requirement had not been complied
- 24 with, that if it's a nonmaterial term, then by
- 25 definition, it wouldn't excuse the government's duty to

- 1 perform.
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. So the
- 3 contract is to provide all these health services, and by
- 4 the way, you've got to buy, you know, staplers made in
- 5 the United States, not -- not abroad. And they do
- 6 everything, but they don't buy staplers made in the
- 7 United States.
- I would say the government, if they're, you
- 9 know, rigorous contracting officers, would say okay, you
- 10 get, you know, 99,000 whatever, but we're going to
- 11 penalize you because you didn't use staplers -- we put
- 12 that in there for a reason, you didn't do it, so we're
- 13 going to withhold \$100, right?
- MR. STEWART: We would certainly agree that
- in government contracting it's sometimes the case that
- 16 the government's trying to serve ancillary policy
- 17 objectives such as buy America, et cetera.
- 18 And so if under the terms of the agreement
- 19 and the -- the law of contracts, the government would be
- 20 legally entitled to withhold payment or a portion of the
- 21 payment in that circumstance, then that would be a false
- 22 claim.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Not -- if that would
- 24 be --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: If --

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1
                 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- a false claim --
 2
                 MR. STEWART: It --
 3
                 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- and then they
 4
     could bring -- and a relator can sue for that, then I
 5
     don't understand the difference between material and
 6
     immaterial.
 7
                 MR. STEWART: Well, if it -- if it was the
 8
     case -- I mean, it may be that you -- that your more
 9
     expansive conception of material terms is correct, and
     that there would be some circumstances that I hadn't
10
11
     envisioned in which the government could lawfully
12
     withhold payment, even though the violation seemed
13
     fairly tangential to the claim. If that's the case, all
14
     it means is that the --
15
                 JUSTICE KAGAN: What are examples of --
16
                 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I'm sorry. Just --
     all it means is?
17
18
                 MR. STEWART: All it means is that there
19
     would be more expansive False Claims Act liability, but
20
    not because we would be punishing people who didn't
21
     cheat the government. If -- if knowledge of the
22
    particular breach at issue could have led responsible
23
     government contracting officers to withhold payment
24
     wholly or in part, and the person --
25
                 JUSTICE BREYER: Well --
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- 1 MR. STEWART: -- knows that he is in breach,
- 2 he should be made --
- JUSTICE BREYER: The wholly or in part,
- 4 now -- now, I just copied out of the Horn book the basic
- 5 difference between a material breach and a partial or
- 6 nonmaterial breach of contract. A material breach of
- 7 contract is a contract that -- a breach that allows one
- 8 party to repudiate the contract. A nonmaterial breach
- 9 is a breach that gives rise to damages but cannot serve
- 10 as the basis for repudiation.
- Now, until this last interchange, I thought
- 12 that was the distinction you were drawing, that if the
- 13 piece of paper says nothing, but pay me, and there is a
- 14 violation of a reg, if the violation of that reg is such
- 15 to be material, meaning, it would be a basis for
- 16 repudiation, then it is an implied -- then it is an
- 17 implied statement. It was complied with, and it's
- 18 fraud.
- 19 But if it's just staples, you may have to
- 20 pay damage for staples, but that certainly doesn't -- to
- 21 say the contrary there would make the contractor
- 22 responsible for having complied with every one of 40,000
- 23 regulations, the size of the room, size of the table.
- MR. STEWART: Well, I mean, first, there is
- 25 a distinction between situations in which one

- 1 contracting party could sue for damages, and situations
- 2 in which one contracting party could refuse to
- 3 perform --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes.
- 5 MR. STEWART: -- its own obligations under
- 6 the contract, including payment.
- 7 But I think the second thing is that the
- 8 scienter requirement really is crucial here. It applies
- 9 both to knowledge of the breach, and knowledge that it
- 10 is material to the government.
- 11 The only other thing I wanted to -- to
- 12 clarify in response to -- to your question is, we would
- 13 say the test is whether the person knew that the
- 14 government could lawfully withhold payment, not
- 15 necessarily --
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Withhold payment,
- 17 but not repudiate the contract.
- MR. STEWART: Withhold payment on the
- 19 particular claim, because there would certainly be
- 20 plenty of situations in which, if somebody billed for
- 21 services that were not reimbursable under the terms of
- 22 the particular program, there --
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: In other words, if
- 24 they don't -- if they put the wrong billing code down,
- 25 and, you know, you shouldn't have to pay them. But I

- don't know that means you can say, okay, you're fired as
- 2 our Medicare provider in the State of Massachusetts,
- 3 which is what I understand materiality in the contract
- 4 concept to be.
- 5 But what you're saying is it's a false claim
- 6 if it's -- and, you know, you said you were providing
- 7 X-rays and you didn't. Okay. But -- and that's
- 8 material, I would think, in the sense that you have to
- 9 pay for it. You shouldn't pay them for it, but I don't
- 10 know if it's material in the sense that you can get out
- 11 of the whole --
- MR. STEWART: Then I would say material in
- 13 the sense of allowing the government to decline to
- 14 comply with its corresponding obligation to pay for that
- 15 particular shipment or those particular services,
- 16 because we certainly, as you say --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, but that doesn't
- 18 answer the question. There's a miscoding that's
- 19 intentional and knowing, and there's a miscoding that's
- 20 negligent.
- 21 MR. STEWART: Exactly.
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So if it's a mistake,
- 23 you could withhold payment, but you can't sue under the
- 24 False Claims Act, correct?
- 25 MR. STEWART: Exactly. And there is a

- 1 mental state that the FCA contemplates between
- 2 negligence and actual knowledge, because it defines the
- 3 term "knowingly" to include recklessness and --
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Stewart -- I'm sorry.
- 5 MR. STEWART: Go ahead.
- 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: Could you just -- what are
- 7 immaterial terms for the government? I mean, give me
- 8 some examples. What would count as not material?
- 9 MR. STEWART: I mean, I don't know if there
- 10 are any terms that are wholly immaterial, because if
- 11 there were, presumably they wouldn't be in the -- the
- 12 agreement or the -- the regulations. But there are
- 13 certainly terms that would be immaterial to particular
- 14 claims.
- So, for example, if the government had a
- 16 rule that said at all times, a hospital that is
- 17 receiving Medicaid reimbursement has to have the
- 18 following equipment in its operating room. It might
- 19 well be the case that a violation of that requirement
- 20 would disentitle the claimant to payment for -- for
- 21 surgical services performed, but would not disentitle
- 22 the claimant to payment for services that had nothing to
- 23 do with use of the operating room.
- And so to follow up on what I was saying
- 25 before, I think what we have here is really a fairly

- 1 close variant on the hypothetical that -- that you
- 2 floated, the case in which they represent that they
- 3 performed individual therapy. They don't say that the
- 4 person who performed it was not legally authorized to
- 5 render billable services under the MassHealth program.
- 6 That would seem to be a classic case of implied
- 7 misrepresentation, fraudulent omission, et cetera.
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: When you started and you
- 9 said that there are two ways in which this could be
- 10 argued, do you have a preference as to which one of
- 11 those two ways makes most sense, or are there cases
- 12 where they diverge, and we should be aware of that?
- 13 MR. STEWART: I think this -- probably the
- 14 one that would be most helpful to the government is the
- 15 first one: That if you assert a claim of legal
- 16 entitlement to be paid and you know that you are not
- 17 legally entitled to be paid or are reckless as to that
- 18 fact, the claim is -- the claim is false and it's
- 19 knowingly false. That -- that would be the one that's
- 20 most helpful to the government just because there are
- 21 so -- there's such variations in the nature of the
- 22 documentation that is provided by claimants under
- 23 various government programs. That -- that general rule
- 24 would be of the greatest health -- help.
- 25 The second I offer, really because in a

- 1 sense, it's an easier way to decide this case. If the
- 2 government was not -- I mean, I'm sorry -- if the Court
- 3 was not ready yet to decide whether the broader
- 4 proposition was correct, it could still say, in this
- 5 case, there was not simply a claim for a particular
- 6 dollar amount. There was at least a little bit of
- 7 detail as to what were the nature of the services to be
- 8 performed. And giving that detail without giving the
- 9 offsetting fact, if it is a fact, that the services were
- 10 performed by noncredentialed, unsupervised people, would
- 11 render the -- the statement that was made misleading.
- 12 The last two things, if I -- if I could just
- 13 say them very briefly, Mr. Englert referred to the
- 14 newness of implied certification. The term "implied
- 15 certification" is new. I don't believe it was used
- 16 until the last 25 years or so. But the concept that a
- 17 person can be held liable for fraud even though he says
- 18 nothing explicitly false but labors to create a false
- 19 impression, that's been around for ages.
- The second thing is, Mr. Englert said that
- 21 the current FCA adopts a watered-down version of the
- 22 materiality requirement. I think if you compare the
- 23 current statutory definition to this Court's formulation
- 24 of the traditional materiality standard in Neder, in
- 25 Gaudin, in Kungys, that the current statutory definition

- 1 is drawn essentially verbatim from this Court's
- 2 description of what material -- materiality had
- 3 traditionally been at common law.
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And, Mr. Stewart,
- 5 both United States and Massachusetts did not intervene
- 6 in this case; is that right?
- 7 MR. STEWART: That's correct.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why is that?
- 9 MR. STEWART: We don't -- I don't know the
- 10 answer, and we don't typically give public explanations
- 11 of why we don't intervene. Sometimes it's because the
- 12 dollar amount is small. Sometimes it's because the --
- 13 we think that the relator is capable of handling the
- 14 case himself, or the relator's counsel. Sometimes we do
- 15 decline to intervene, because we're skeptical of the
- 16 merits of a case. But even in those situations, it
- 17 could be that we agree with the relator's theory and
- 18 simply don't know whether the facts could be proved. It
- 19 comes in all variations.
- 20 I -- our amicus brief is obviously the --
- 21 the best evidence of what we believe the correct legal
- 22 rule to be. The only other thing I would say is that
- 23 our decisions about whether to intervene in particular
- 24 cases would be skewed if we believed that courts would
- 25 draw from our failure to intervene an adverse inference

- 1 as to our views on the legal theory. If we felt that we
- 2 would be made to seem skeptical of the implied
- 3 certification by not intervening, we'd feel pressured to
- 4 do it.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 6 Eight minutes, Mr. Englert.
- 7 MR. ENGLERT: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 8 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF ROY T. ENGLERT, JR.
- 9 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- 10 MR. ENGLERT: The False Claims Act uses
- 11 words drawn from the common law of torts, not words
- 12 drawn from the common law of contracts. This is
- 13 Henry Steiner and Duncan Kennedy, not Charles Fried.
- 14 The test, as stated by my friends on the
- 15 other side, is the core test is whether the State could
- 16 reject the claim for reimbursement. That is a contract
- 17 standard; that is not a tort standard. And if this
- 18 Court accepts that version of the implied-certification
- 19 theory, it will be much broader than anything the lower
- 20 courts have ever done, and a parade of horribles in the
- 21 light green amicus briefs would cite many horrible
- 22 cases. Mr. Frederick says they cite none. They cite
- 23 many real-world horrible cases. That would be the tip
- of the iceberg if this Court accepts their theory.
- 25 It has been suggested that everyone knows

- 1 that it's common sense and that it's obvious that people
- 2 who provide counseling services to teenagers must be
- 3 licensed. Well, apparently, the Commonwealth of
- 4 Massachusetts doesn't find it obvious. Section
- 5 429.424(E)(1), quoted on page 8 of our opening brief,
- 6 states the standards in which "counselors and unlicensed
- 7 staff may provide counseling services."
- If it's so obvious, why did the First
- 9 Circuit have to rely on a regulation that applies only
- 10 to satellite facilities? When the First Circuit found a
- 11 regulation that no one had cited in all of this
- 12 litigation, it didn't cite one that applies to every
- 13 facility. It cited one that applies only to satellite
- 14 facilities. And yet, we're told it's so obvious that my
- 15 clients should have known that, and that there is
- 16 materiality and scienter in this case.
- 17 Volume II of the Joint Appendix contains
- 18 seven complaints to State agencies, four reports by
- 19 State agencies, two consent decrees, and four other
- 20 documents. They cite many, many, many, many
- 21 regulations. This morass of regulations, bluntly, is
- 22 worse than the Internal Revenue Code. It's full of
- 23 cross-references; it's full of contradictions, as the
- 24 First Circuit itself acknowledged in footnote 15.
- The way the First Circuit resolved the

- 1 contradiction was to refer to the nonpromulgating
- 2 agency; so it's Chevron on steroids. These things are
- 3 not obvious. These regulations are not obvious.
- 4 Now, Mr. Frederick and Mr. Stewart, and in
- 5 particular Mr. Frederick, may seem to have scored a blow
- 6 when he put -- said fraudster shouldn't get to pick and
- 7 choose which regulations they comply.
- 8 Well, if you assume fraud, if you put the
- 9 rabbit in the hat, you can take the rabbit out of the
- 10 hat. People should pick and choose which regulations
- 11 they comply with. Why? Because there's so many and
- 12 confusing. And who holds the keys to telling them which
- 13 regulations to comply with? The regulating agency or
- 14 the contracting agency.
- 15 If the contracting agency or the regulating
- 16 agency says, please focus on this regulation because it
- 17 really matters, guess what? People will focus on the
- 18 regulation because they know it really matters. If
- 19 relators come in after the fact, not the Commonwealth of
- 20 Massachusetts, not the United States, but relators come
- 21 in after the fact and say, this was so critical that you
- 22 should have known and you acted -- it was material, it
- 23 was essential, and you acted with scienter, and they get
- treble damages, attorney's fees, \$5500 or more, \$5500
- 25 minimum per claim civil penalties, and the opprobrium of

- 1 calling someone a fraudster, that's not the system in
- 2 which the regulators have control. That is not the
- 3 administrative state we know. That is a game of
- 4 got-you, after-the-fact got-you.
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: How does it differ, what
- 6 you just said, from this thing in the Restatement where
- 7 you say it would be fraud, facts basic to the
- 8 transaction or matters known, that he knows to prevent
- 9 his statement from being misleading? The statement is,
- 10 implicitly, I did the work. And this kind of problem,
- 11 is it or is it not, basic to the transaction that the
- doctor be certified, is the kind of thing that I think
- 13 you and other lawyers argue very well on opposite sides,
- 14 as you just did.
- But the standard you advocate is, according
- 16 to the Restatement, misleading statement about a fact
- 17 basic to the transaction, misleading, implicitly, I did
- 18 it. Truth? I didn't. You see, I'm saying your
- 19 standard gives rise to the same problem, doesn't it?
- MR. ENGLERT: No.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Why?
- 22 MR. ENGLERT: Because the common law has
- 23 worked through these problems, Justice Breyer. The
- 24 common law of torts, not the common law of contracts.
- 25 Look at illustrations 3 through 8 of the -- of the

- 1 Restatement.
- 2 But if that doesn't do it for you, think
- 3 about the dog that didn't bark in the room. Look for
- 4 common-law fraud cases that state their theory. You
- 5 won't find them. You won't find them. They don't
- 6 exist. This is a theory made up by the plaintiffs' bar
- 7 in the last 22 years, and it has run amok.
- 8 There is a parade of horribles in the light
- 9 green amicus briefs. There is a parade of horribles in
- 10 the red -- in the dark green amicus briefs. Their
- 11 parade of horribles is that it would be A-OK to do these
- 12 things. It's not A-OK to do these things. There are
- 13 calibrated remedies administered by the government for
- 14 breach of contract, for violating regulations.
- The Massachusetts authorities had calibrated
- 16 remedies in this case: Two years of suspension and a
- 17 \$1,000 fine. They didn't ask for any money back. They
- 18 didn't ask for any money back. They didn't say, this is
- 19 the kind of thing that is so basic that you should give
- 20 us our money back. They said, we need some corrective
- 21 measures. These are services for poor people. These
- 22 are --
- 23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Let's not forget
- 24 something. Money came from the Federal government. It
- 25 may be a system in this cooperative program that's

- 1 flawed, but Massachusetts Health has no incentive to
- 2 seek the money back because they're not paying it.
- 3 The people with the incentive are the
- 4 Federal government, and that's why we have the False
- 5 Claims Act, because the Federal government can't enforce
- 6 all seeking of money back in these cooperative programs.
- 7 MR. ENGLERT: Okay. But it has to be a
- 8 false or fraudulent claim, which are terms derived from
- 9 the common law, construed in this Court's cases,
- 10 elaborated through the common law --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I have a very hard time
- 12 accepting that if you provide -- if you claim money for
- 13 a service that you don't render, not a qualified
- 14 individual, unsupervised by a qualified individual,
- 15 which is a requirement specifically in the regulations,
- 16 I'm having a hard time understanding how you have not
- 17 committed a fraud --
- MR. ENGLERT: Your Honor, all the --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- if you knew what you
- 20 were doing.
- 21 MR. ENGLERT: All that was submitted was a
- 22 request for payment. The government controls what it
- 23 will require in a request for payment. There is no
- 24 allegation of a false statement in the request for
- 25 payment. The only allegation is that every jot and

- 1 tittle of every MassHealth regulation is incorporated as
- 2 long as it's approved --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I don't think that it's
- 4 every --
- 5 MR. ENGLERT: -- under scienter.
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- provision.
- 7 MR. ENGLERT: Well, Your Honor, it's --
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But I think it's a very
- 9 basic provision --
- 10 MR. ENGLERT: Your Honor, with respect --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- when you say, I
- 12 performed this service, that you performed a service in
- 13 accordance with the contract.
- 14 MR. ENGLERT: And in seven complaints to
- 15 administrative agencies, in the -- in the operative
- 16 complaint in this case, amended many times, why is not
- 17 the regulation the First Circuit relied on even cited?
- 18 Why is the regulation Mr. Frederick says he would have
- 19 used if he had been litigating this case in the district
- 20 court even cited?
- It proves my point, Your Honor, that this is
- 22 a morass. And for one to think, after the fact, this is
- 23 basic and central and this is fraud, is a plaintiff's
- lawyer's game.
- 25 Thank you.

Т	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Counsel.
2	The case is submitted.
3	(Whereupon, at 12:01 p.m., the case in the
4	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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