1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES		
2		x	
3	DEPARTMENT OF	:	
4	TRANSPORTATION, ET AL.,	:	
5	Petitioners	: No. 13-1080	
6	V.	:	
7	ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN	:	
8	RAILROADS.	:	
9		x	
10	Washington, D.C.		
11	Monday, December 8,	2014	
12			
13	The above-entitled matte	er came on for oral	
14	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States		
15	at 11:08 a.m.		
16	APPEARANCES:		
17	CURTIS E. GANNON, ESQ., Assist	ant to the Solicitor	
18	General, Department of Justic	ce, Washington, D.C.; on	
19	behalf of Petitioners.		
20	THOMAS H. DUPREE, JR., ESQ., W	ashington, D.C.; on behalf	
21	of Respondent.		
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1	PROCEEDINGS		
2	(11:08 a.m.)		
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument		
4	next this morning in Case 13-1080, Department of		
5	Transportation v. Association of American Railroads.		
6	Mr. Gannon.		
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF CURTIS E. GANNON		
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS		
9	MR. GANNON: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it		
10	please the Court:		
11	The court of appeals held that Section 207		
12	of PRIIA was unconstitutional because it believed that		
13	the statute constituted an actual delegation of		
14	regulatory authority to a private entity. And none of		
15	those three things is true about this statute.		
16	First, under Lebron, Amtrak should not be		
17	considered a private corporation for nondelegation		
18	purposes. Second, the metrics and standards are not		
19	regulatory. The regulatory effect here comes from the		
20	longstanding statutory preference requirement, which was		
21	enacted by Congress, not Amtrak, and is enforced by an		
22	independent adjudicative agency, the Surface		
23	Transportation Board. And third		
24	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Go ahead, please.		
25	MR. GANNON: And third, requiring Amtrak to		

- 1 approve the metrics and standards before they went into
- 2 effect is not a delegation outside the government under
- 3 this Court's cases.
- 4 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I think the Lebron
- 5 argument, Marsh v. Alabama, the company town case, no
- 6 one says that it was a governmental agency. It was just
- 7 exercising governmental-like powers which entitled the
- 8 person to exercise free speech. That's all Lebron can
- 9 stand for. You wouldn't say that Marsh v. Alabama, the
- 10 company town, was a governmental agency after reading
- 11 that opinion, would you?
- MR. GANNON: No. I would say that after
- 13 reading the opinion in Lebron, that the Court concluded
- 14 that Amtrak is a governmental entity for things that
- 15 Congress doesn't have control over.
- 16 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, you could say the
- 17 same thing about Marsh v. Alabama.
- 18 MR. GANNON: Well, I think that the
- 19 difference is that the Court recognized in Lebron that
- 20 Amtrak is a government-created corporation that is under
- 21 the government's control and that under the government's
- 22 control both because of the management control that it
- 23 has over it and because it created the purposes for
- 24 which Amtrak exists and the things that it has to do.
- 25 And then the Court there distinguished between whether Amtrak

- 1 is governmental for constitutional purposes that were
- beyond Congress's control, but acknowledged that
- 3 Congress could control whether Amtrak was governmental
- 4 for other purposes, other powers and privileges of
- 5 government.
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: If Amtrak is governmental
- 7 for nondelegation purposes, is it also governmental for
- 8 appointments clause purposes?
- 9 MR. GANNON: Well, I think that that follows
- 10 from the -- the way the Court approached the question
- 11 about the PCAOB and Free Enterprise Fund where Congress
- 12 had also enacted a statute that said the PCAOB was not
- 13 an agency or instrumentality of government, that no
- 14 board members or employees were going to be considered
- 15 officers or employees of the Federal government. The
- 16 parties in that case, which included the United States,
- 17 did not dispute that the appointments clause and
- 18 separation of powers concerns that were at issue there
- 19 were applicable to the PCAOB, notwithstanding those
- 20 general statements by Congress. And we do think here --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I was just going to
- 22 say your argument that Amtrak is governmental for
- 23 purposes of -- that doesn't get you to the finish line,
- 24 right? I mean, if you had a law that said the
- 25 Department of Defense and the Department of State will

- 1 consult and jointly issue regulations and if they don't,
- 2 this private individual resolved it for them, that would
- 3 still present the same problems.
- 4 MR. GANNON: Well, I think,
- 5 Mr. Chief Justice, you are referring to the arbitrator
- 6 provision.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Right.
- 8 MR. GANNON: Before we get to the arbitrator
- 9 provision, I do think that -- that this would resolve
- 10 the question. And ultimately, if this is not regulatory
- 11 authority that cannot be conditioned --
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, it wouldn't resolve
- 13 the question. Only -- only perhaps for delegation
- 14 purposes. But -- but it doesn't resolve the -- the
- 15 other issue in the case, which is due process. That is
- 16 to say, even if this is a governmental entity, there are
- 17 some things that governmental entities can't do. And,
- 18 indeed, I think that the case law in this area relies on
- 19 the due process clause more than on the distinction
- 20 simply between public and private entities.
- MR. GANNON: Well, to be sure, the Carter
- 22 Coal case talked about both nondelegation ideas and also
- 23 due process issues. We -- we would be surprised if
- 24 the Court wanted to decide the due process issue here
- 25 since it wasn't decided by the court of appeals.

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: It was raised.
- 2 MR. GANNON: It certainty was raised.
- 3 JUSTICE SCALIA: And it's -- and it's argued
- 4 here.
- 5 MR. GANNON: It -- it has been argued in the
- 6 red brief here. And we do think that we're correct on
- 7 the merits with respect to the due process issue and
- 8 that -- for two principal reasons. One is that what is
- 9 at stake here is not the equivalent of what was going on
- 10 in the due process cases. This is not like the
- 11 de-licensing of optometrists in the Gibson v. Berryhill
- 12 case. It's not like the wage and hour requirements in
- 13 Carter Coal, because -- because the analogy to those
- 14 things here is the statutory preference requirement
- 15 rather than the antecedent metrics and standards.
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes. But the statutory
- 17 preference requirement requires -- would require
- 18 consideration of whatever is determined by this body,
- 19 right?
- 20 MR. GANNON: The statutory preference
- 21 requirement is independent of the metrics and standards
- 22 and preexists them. That is what the Surface
- 23 Transportation Board would be enforcing in a proceeding
- 24 under Section 24308(f). The metrics and standards --
- 25 JUSTICE SCALIA: What must it consider?

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1 MR. GANNON: The metrics and standards play
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- 2 a triggering and gatekeeping role. The -- these
- 3 provisions are reprinted in the government's brief on
- 4 pages 15A and 16A of the appendix, that the -- the
- 5 investigation by the Surface Transportation Board is
- 6 triggered by their having been a failure by Amtrak to
- 7 satisfy the metrics and standards. But I think that --
- 8 that -- that is -- and if we're talking about the due
- 9 process cases, that is not the prohibition that
- 10 the Court has been concerned about. If you look at
- 11 cases like Roberge, which talked about Cusack, it said
- 12 that it's okay to have something that is presumptively
- 13 bad banned by the legislature.
- 14 Here, the analogy to that is the statutory
- 15 preference, and it's okay, then, to allow a private
- 16 party to relax its application in certain circumstances.
- 17 And we think that's the role that the metrics and
- 18 standards play here, because Congress could have allowed
- 19 Amtrak to ask for an STB investigation into violations
- 20 of the statute any time it wanted to. And instead what
- 21 they said is that it is only -- you are only going to
- 22 get that investigation when you have failed to -- to
- 23 perform at an adequate level such that we think there's
- 24 been adequate injury. And then in that investigation,
- 25 you are going to have to establish that the injury to

- 1 you was caused by the violation of the statute.
- 2 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So in your -- in your
- 3 view, the case would come out the same way if Amtrak
- 4 could issue these metrics and standards entirely on its
- 5 own, without consultation with the -- or cooperation
- 6 with the government. Same -- same case --
- 7 MR. GANNON: One of the --
- 8 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- same result?
- 9 MR. GANNON: One prong of our argument is,
- 10 yes, that because this is not regulatory in that sense,
- 11 this is more like the neighbors being able to veto the
- 12 billboard in the neighborhood in Cusack, which the Court
- 13 said was okay in Roberge, because the statutory
- 14 preference is presumptively bad. Violations of the
- 15 statutory preference by the freight railroads were the
- 16 thing that Congress wanted to be enforceable here, and
- 17 the metrics and standards just cabin the circumstances
- in which Amtrak can seek that type of enforcement.
- 19 If I could return to the Chief Justice's
- 20 question about the --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You may. You may.
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That doesn't stop -- do
- 23 the metes and standards stop you from initiating or stop
- 24 the agency from initiating a review, even if a carrier
- 25 meets the metes and standard?

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1 MR. GANNON: Well, it's -- it's not the
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- 2 carrier. It's not the host railroad that would meet the
- 3 standards.
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, it would be --
- 5 MR. GANNON: It would be Amtrak's own
- 6 performance.
- 7 But there is -- there is -- that would
- 8 depend upon the reading of the beginning clause of
- 9 (f)(1) which refers to if on-time performance fails to
- 10 satisfy 80 percent for two consecutive quarters or the
- 11 service quality isn't complied with for two quarters,
- 12 then those are the circumstances in which an
- investigation could be requested and -- in which
- 14 instance the STB would need to start the investigation
- or the STB could initiate the investigation.
- And there is an open question about that
- 17 first clause about whether the 80 percent on-time
- 18 performance reference is something that has to be
- 19 predicated upon the metrics and standards. That's been
- 20 briefed before the Surface Transportation Board in the
- 21 proceeding brought against Canadian National, the
- 22 complaint of which is reprinted -- a snippet from which
- 23 is reprinted at the end of the joint appendix. And so
- 24 the question there would be whether on-time performance
- 25 there depends upon a pre-PRIIA definition rather than

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1 the ones that are included in the metrics and standards.
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- 2 So there's a possibility that the agency
- 3 could --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If we were -- if we were
- 5 to rule that this is not a regulatory action, would that
- 6 satisfy the entire case? We wouldn't have to go to the
- 7 delegation issue or to whether it was public or private,
- 8 et cetera.
- 9 MR. GANNON: I -- I think that is
- 10 right. And I think even in those circumstances, because
- 11 it -- because if it's not regulatory, it's okay for
- 12 private persons to have that power, and I think that
- 13 would cover even the question of whether -- if -- if the
- 14 arbitrator is assumed to be private. That is not what
- 15 we think is the case.
- 16 And we also think that we don't have to win
- 17 on that agreement either on -- on the question of --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: On --
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: If the -- if the
- 20 actions are not regulatory, why -- why did Amtrak's
- 21 performance drop dramatically as soon as the Court
- 22 issued its decision in this case?
- 23 MR. GANNON: Well, I think that's because of
- 24 the -- that had decreased the threat of enforcement of
- 25 the statutory preference. I do think that the -- it is

- 1 the statutory preference that is having the regulatory
- 2 impact here. The freight railroads are not going to be
- 3 held liable for Amtrak's failure to satisfy the metrics
- 4 and standards. They're going to be held liable for
- 5 failing to --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: They're going to
- 7 be -- Amtrak can then force a proceeding at which the
- 8 freight carriers will have to defend, right?
- 9 MR. GANNON: That -- that is correct. And
- 10 the same thing --
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that's a
- 12 significant regulatory impact, to tell railroads I, a
- 13 private party, get to start a governmental proceeding
- 14 and you have to show up to defend it.
- 15 MR. GANNON: Yes. But that -- that
- 16 happens --
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And, by the way, if
- 18 I don't -- it's triggered if I don't comply with
- 19 standards that I get to set.
- 20 MR. GANNON: It's -- but we allow private
- 21 parties to initiate governmental investigations and
- 22 enforcement proceedings all the time, either before
- 23 administrative agencies or courts, and we don't think
- 24 that that is a delegation of legislative power --
- 25 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Gannon --

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1 MR. GANNON: -- to the person who is
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- 2 beginning the investigation.
- 3 JUSTICE KAGAN: Is the -- is the government
- 4 able to award damages without the showing that there's
- 5 been a violation of the metrics and standards?
- 6 MR. GANNON: No. That is -- that is going
- 7 to be a threshold determination. But as I said, that is
- 8 a -- it's serving as a threshold gatekeeping function
- 9 to -- of -- of limiting the circumstances in which the
- 10 investigation can begin and when there will be damages.
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: But I would think if that's
- 12 the case, if the statutory preference does not get -- is
- 13 a -- if a violation of the statutory preference doesn't
- 14 get you all the way to damages, if there is essentially
- 15 a second requirement which is a violation of the metrics
- 16 and standards, I mean, in effect what the -- a statute
- does is it says there are two things you need to show, a
- 18 violation of the preference and a violation of the
- 19 metrics and standards, in order to get to damages. That
- 20 seems -- if -- if that's the case, it seems kind of
- 21 regulatory.
- 22 MR. GANNON: Well, I -- I -- I understand
- 23 the impulse, but I think that seems -- it -- it also
- 24 seems like the ability of the neighbors to veto the
- 25 billboards in Cusack because what Amtrak -- all Amtrak

- 1 has done is relax certain circumstances in which the
- 2 freight railroads can be held liable for violating the
- 3 statutory preference. A violation of the statutory
- 4 preference is presumptively a bad thing.
- 5 And what has happened here is Congress has
- 6 recognized that if it doesn't actually cause Amtrak to
- 7 be -- to have sufficiently subpar performance, then we
- 8 are not going to make a Federal case out of it and we're
- 9 not going to let Amtrak do so. But -- and -- and there
- 10 aren't going to be damages at the end of the day.
- 11 But I do think that the real-world reason of
- 12 why the freight railroads had greater incentive to
- 13 cooperate and Amtrak believes that it was their
- 14 cooperation under the regime in which the metrics and
- 15 standards were in effect, and there was still the
- 16 possibility that there would be enforcement proceedings
- 17 before the STB to determine whether the freight
- 18 railroads had failed to comply with the statute --
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: The statute says that the --
- 20 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Can we -- can we get back
- 21 to the arbitrator? I think the Chief asked that
- 22 question that -- and we passed it and assume it's
- 23 regulatory.
- MR. GANNON: Yes.
- 25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: The arbitrator, it's

- 1 argued, need not be a government officer. It could be a
- 2 private officer. I have a question to ask about that
- 3 provision.
- 4 Is it -- is this a one-time operation, that
- 5 is, the setting these metrics and standards? In -- in
- 6 fact, there was no arbitrator in this picture. Will
- 7 there be a renewal of this, a repetition where there
- 8 might be an arbitrator?
- 9 MR. GANNON: Well, I -- I don't think that
- 10 the terms of 207(d) contemplate that the arbitrator will
- 11 come into effect again. I think that because the
- 12 beginning of it says that it -- it is only triggered if
- 13 a development of the metrics and standard is not
- 14 completed within the 180-day period required by
- 15 subsection (a), which is the 180 days after PRIIA was
- 16 enacted in 2008.
- 17 And so the arbitration provision was, I
- 18 think, good for one time only. It was never invoked.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but does that
- 20 matter? I mean, the idea is that having the
- 21 arbitrator -- arbitration provision there affected the
- 22 issuance of the regulations.
- 23 MR. GANNON: Yes, I -- I understand that
- 24 question, Mr. Chief Justice. I -- I think that's --
- 25 it -- it mattered the first time around. To the extent

- 1 that there may be any amendments to the metrics and --
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: If --
- 3 MR. GANNON: -- standards in the future --
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Right.
- 5 MR. GANNON: -- the arbitrator wouldn't be
- 6 applicable. We do not think that the best reading of
- 7 the arbitrator reference is that that would be a private
- 8 person. We think that --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I know -- if I
- 10 could -- there's -- the issues are pretty intertwined
- 11 here, so I know it's a difficult thing to keep track of
- 12 for you. But if -- if -- and for us. But if we think
- 13 that the regulations have a regulations -- not to load
- 14 the question --
- 15 MR. GANNON: The metrics and standards have
- 16 a regulatory affect.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. Metrics and
- 18 standards are regulations. And if we think there is
- 19 nothing in the statute that requires -- well, I guess it
- 20 doesn't -- doesn't -- doesn't really matter.
- 21 If that's the case, is the arbitrator an
- 22 officer of the United States? In other words, if he is
- 23 the one that ends up issuing what we will hypothetically
- 24 conclude are regulations, I assume he has to be an
- 25 officer of the United States.

- 1 MR. GANNON: I -- I think that would
- 2 constitute significant governmental authority under
- 3 Buckley against Valeo, and that would be --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, you know, I'm quite
- 5 interested in the government's view of this case, and I
- 6 hope you will calm me down.
- 7 The reason that I find it interesting is
- 8 because it seems to me there are hundreds, maybe
- 9 thousands of organizations that set standards for the
- 10 industry. And some of them operate under government
- 11 memoranda or authority that ask them to do it, the most
- 12 noted being ICANN which sets all the standards for the
- 13 internet.
- Now, it also seems to me very possible that
- 15 a member of such an organization that fails to follow
- 16 the standard could run afoul of other government rules
- or other agency rules or other laws, for example, by
- 18 stalling the internet delivery of services and being
- 19 delayed, and violating some FCC requirement. And since
- 20 I know that there are about 2 or 300 international
- 21 organizations that we belong to, to do such things, I
- 22 just wonder what the implications would be if you lose
- 23 this case. That is to say, if this Court held here that
- 24 if a government, say, Congress, agency, Commerce
- 25 Department, says to a group of private people set

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1 standards, and then if they fail -- or if they do so and
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- 2 a member fails to meet a standard, it runs afoul of a
- 3 different rule, such as a rule that you have to have a
- 4 certain speed on the Internet or some such thing. Were
- 5 we to hold that unconstitutional, I have a feeling --
- 6 that this is what I want assurance on that I'm wrong -- that
- 7 it would work havoc, possibly with the Internet,
- 8 possibly with industry throughout the United States, I
- 9 know not where, possibly in communications, possibly
- 10 with the 200 or so organizations regulated by treaty.
- Now, you've looked into this more than I
- 12 and, therefore, I want you to calm me down and say no,
- 13 this isn't a big-deal case. Don't worry about it.
- MR. GANNON: I think it depends upon how
- 15 broad the Court's ruling is. I think --
- 16 JUSTICE BREYER: No, no. The ruling is
- 17 narrow. It just says the following. It says, these are
- 18 standards which equal legislation and as a result of
- 19 these standards being legislated by this, I think,
- 20 Quango or something, or whatever, by -- by this
- 21 particular entity, bad things happen to freight trains
- 22 when they fail to meet the standards or something and
- 23 they violate some other law and that's all
- 24 unconstitutional.
- 25 MR. GANNON: And I frankly --

1 JUSTICE BREYER: Going back to Carter v.

- 2 Carter Coal.
- 3 MR. GANNON: Yes.
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: We could go back to
- 5 Lochner.
- 6 MR. GANNON: I don't think that -- that
- 7 Respondent is asking for a ruling of that nature. And I
- 8 think that the question here would be because of the
- 9 role that the metrics and standards play in the STB
- 10 investigation. I think that would be the only way in
- 11 which the Court would conclude that it is -- is
- 12 tantamount to regulations. We don't believe that they
- 13 have that effect. We don't think that other standards
- 14 that are conditions for application of -- of the law out
- 15 there in the world have necessarily the same effects
- 16 under even Respondent's view of the case. But I -- and
- 17 so I -- I think that the one you want to get
- 18 reassurances from is actually Respondent, that the
- 19 nature of their challenge is -- is narrower than that.
- 20 But if I could return to the arbitrator --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thanks.
- 22 I know it's a -- if he is an officer, is the
- 23 government's issue a principal officer or an inferior
- 24 officer?
- 25 MR. GANNON: I think that he would be an

- 1 inferior officer given the limited nature of the --
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. Then who --
- 3 which principal officer supervises him?
- 4 MR. GANNON: It -- it would be the STB that
- 5 appointed him.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But he's an
- 7 arbitrator.
- 8 MR. GANNON: He's an arbitrator.
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: One of the parties
- 10 to the arbitration.
- 11 MR. GANNON: I don't think the STB is a
- 12 party to the arbitration. I think that the -- the two
- 13 parties who have to issue the -- their metrics and
- 14 standards are Amtrak and the Federal Railroad
- 15 Administration. If they don't agree, then an
- 16 arbitration -- the arbitrator would be resolving a
- 17 dispute not -- the STB wouldn't be a party to that.
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So if the STB
- 19 doesn't like the arbitrator's decision, can the STB
- 20 change it under the law?
- 21 MR. GANNON: I doubt it because it's
- 22 supposed to be a binding arbitration. But we think that
- 23 from the beginning, this is yet another reason to
- 24 construe the arbitrator as being somebody who is
- 25 governmental, probably somebody who is actually at the

- 1 STB.
- 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: I don't -- I don't see how
- 3 you can say he's an inferior officer. He's supervised
- 4 by nobody. That's what we have held to be the -- the
- 5 touchstone of principal versus inferior.
- 6 MR. GANNON: He's appointed by the super --
- 7 the Surface Transportation Board --
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: That's it. And supervised
- 9 by nobody.
- 10 MR. GANNON: -- to perform a limited task.
- 11 He could be removed by the STB.
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: A limited task is -- is not
- 13 the touchstone. I mean, that's what we said in Morrison
- 14 and we repudiated it in a later case, which said the
- 15 touchstone of a -- of a principal officer is whether
- 16 that person is not subject to control by somebody else.
- 17 And I don't see how this person is subject to any
- 18 control in -- in the task that he's assigned.
- 19 MR. GANNON: Well, in that sense, it's
- 20 consistent with Morrison, and it is not consistent with
- 21 what the Court said was sufficient to enter the question
- 22 in Edmund, but did not say was necessary to answer the
- 23 question in Edmund about there being review within the
- 24 Executive Branch of the decisions being made by the
- 25 Coast Guard judges there.

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: Let me -- let me talk about
- 2 regulatory effect. As I understand it, once these --
- 3 what do you call them?
- 4 MR. GANNON: The metrics and standards.
- 5 JUSTICE SCALIA: Metrics and standards.
- 6 Once they were issued, wow, the -- the on-time record of
- 7 Amtrak went way, way up. So they had a very immediate
- 8 and clear effect on the behavior of -- of the parties.
- 9 Now, do you think that because the
- 10 sentencing guidelines are now just advisory that we
- 11 could have the sentencing guidelines issued by some
- 12 private party that -- that is not appointed pursuant to
- 13 the requirements of the Constitution? Because after
- 14 all, they're just advisory. Now, the reality is, they
- 15 have a significant effect on -- on the behavior of -- of
- 16 lower courts. And I think it's the same thing here.
- 17 There's a significant effect. I don't know --
- 18 MR. GANNON: I -- I don't think that this is
- 19 the same as the sentencing guidelines, the effect that
- 20 it has on the judges, because those are advice to the
- 21 judges. Here, what the metrics and standards do is they
- 22 satisfy conditions in the world when -- when the Federal
- 23 statute is going to be applicable. It's in that sense,
- 24 just like the Court contemplated in JW Hampton or indeed
- 25 in cases like Currin v. Wallace and Rock Royal

- 1 Cooperative, where the policy was established by the
- 2 Federal government, the Secretary of Agriculture wanted
- 3 to put a price order in effect or to say that a
- 4 particular tobacco market would be subject to a Federal
- 5 inspection regime and that could not occur until --
- 6 until there was approval from private entities.
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why did the record improve
- 8 so -- so rapidly and so promptly?
- 9 MR. GANNON: Because for the first time in
- 10 decades there was a meaningful threat that there would
- 11 be an enforcement proceeding, not to enforce the metrics
- 12 and standards, but to enforce the statutory preference
- 13 requirement, which is not challenged here, which was not
- 14 written by Amtrak, and which would be enforced by the
- 15 Surface Transportation Board in an independent
- 16 adjudication in which they would take evidence from both
- 17 sides and determine what the real story was. There's --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Can -- can I go back to
- 19 my question, okay? Can the STB on its own start an
- 20 investigation?
- 21 MR. GANNON: I --
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If -- if it gets --
- 23 MR. GANNON: That depends, Justice
- 24 Sotomayor, on -- on the answer to as I said is an
- 25 unresolved question about whether the 80 percent on-time

- 1 performance trigger at the beginning of 24308(f)(1)
- 2 is -- is read as being confines to the on-time
- 3 performance metrics and standards that were adopted
- 4 under PRIIA or whether that can be a reference to a
- 5 pre-PRIIA, on-time performance metric. And so for
- 6 decades, Amtrak, pursuant to ICC -- originally pursuant
- 7 to an ICC order used endpoint on-time performance
- 8 metrics that looked very much like the ones that were
- 9 ultimately adopted --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: So doesn't this show
- 11 something? Actually, the sentencing guidelines are a
- 12 pretty good example. You do have the Model Penal Code.
- 13 We have law professors telling judges what to do all the
- 14 time. We have judges who receive information in briefs.
- 15 We had lots of guidelines promulgated by the states.
- 16 There are all kinds of systems, and judges do use them,
- 17 and some of them do have a practical effect and make a
- 18 difference.
- 19 But once this Court starts down the road --
- 20 and it would be starting, because I am aware of no
- 21 precedent -- once we start down the road of saying
- 22 Congress cannot tell even a private agency to go and
- 23 make some standards, which we all know will be followed,
- once we start down that road there is no stopping place
- and, therefore, the measure has nothing to do with

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1 separation of powers. It is exactly what Justices
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- 2 Cardozo, Hughes, Brandeis and Stone said in Carter Coal,
- 3 the measure is the due process clause, and we're all off
- 4 on something of a wild goose chase in this case. That's
- 5 what is suggested to me by the sentencing guideline
- 6 analogy.
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: Wow, I didn't mean that.
- 8 (Laughter.)
- 9 MR. GANNON: To the extent that Justice
- 10 Scalia also doesn't see a nondelegation problem in
- 11 Carter Coal, then I -- I take it that you are agreeing, but I
- 12 think here that -- that the criminal sentencing context
- 13 may present different issues. And I do think that the
- 14 basic -- the basic reasons why the due process issue is
- 15 not one where we would have a problem is both because of
- 16 the -- what we think is the -- the fact that this is
- 17 relaxing the regulatory effect of -- of the statutory
- 18 preference. And secondly, because those cases about
- 19 bias in the due process context involve the entity
- 20 that's actually doing the adjudication. And here the
- 21 analogy is that's the STB is acting as the Board of
- 22 Optometrists in -- in the Gibson v. Berryhill.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: I think it was the
- 24 Respondent's brief in which they gave the hypothetical.
- 25 Suppose that the government together with auto

- 1 manufacturer A made standards, but then auto
- 2 manufacturers B and C had to follow them. That seems
- 3 wrong. Why is this different?
- 4 MR. GANNON: I take the point that that
- 5 seems wrong. We don't think that this is the equivalent
- of regulating the automotive industry because Congress
- 7 has put the regulation in place. That's the statutory
- 8 preference requirement. This is something in which
- 9 automobile manufacturer A would be, in advance, saying,
- 10 I, automobile manufacturer --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Suppose Congress put that
- 12 in place? Suppose Congress said, and once this is
- 13 promulgated, all manufacturers have to obey it.
- 14 MR. GANNON: I think that that would --
- 15 without the federal agreement that we also have here,
- 16 the federal railroad administration's contemporaneous
- 17 agreement with the standards, that would present non
- 18 delegation problems.
- But, if I could reserve the remainder of my
- 20 time.
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 22 Mr. Dupree.
- ORAL ARGUMENT OF THOMAS H. DUPREE, JR.
- 24 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- 25 MR. DUPREE: Mr. Chief Justice and may it

- 1 please the Court:
- 2 The constitution does not permit Congress to
- 3 create a corporation, deem it nongovernmental, and then
- 4 launch it into the commercial sphere with a for-profit
- 5 mandate and then vest it with regulatory authority over
- 6 other companies in the same industry.
- 7 The text of the constitution places all
- 8 legislative power in the Congress. Although this Court
- 9 has approved grants of rulemaking authority to executive
- 10 branch agencies or judicial branch agencies, it has
- 11 never approved a grant of regulatory power to a private
- 12 corporation.
- 13 JUSTICE GINSBERG: What do you do about --
- 14 JUSTICE SCALIA: That's the big problem
- 15 here, regulatory authority. As far as I'm concerned,
- 16 that's the big difficulty. Why is this an exercise of
- 17 regulatory authority when all it does is enable an
- 18 investigation?
- 19 MR. DUPREE: Well, Justice Scalia, I don't
- 20 think it's quite correct to say all it does is enable an
- 21 investigation. For one thing, there is the provision in
- 22 Section 207 (c) that requires the freight railroads to
- 23 amend their contracts with Amtrak to the extent
- 24 practicable to incorporate the metrics and standards.
- 25 So there is a direct regulatory command on the freight

- 1 railroad.
- 2 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, but to the extent
- 3 practicable, I mean, what does that mean?
- 4 MR. DUPREE: Well, unless it's a null set,
- 5 Justice Kagan, it has to mean something. And I don't
- 6 think the government has ever said that the freight
- 7 railroads --
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So instead you want a
- 9 rule that lets the STB investigate even when you have
- 10 one failure to accommodate?
- MR. DUPREE: Well, I'm not sure that's the
- 12 rule we want, Justice Sotomayor, but at least that would
- 13 have the merit --
- 14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But you would prefer
- 15 that?
- MR. DUPREE: Well, it would at least have
- 17 the merit of being constitutional. In other words, the
- 18 problem here is not necessarily the scope of the
- 19 investigatory power. It's the fact that Congress gave
- 20 Amtrak the pen or co-authorship of the regulation.
- 21 That's the constitutional vice here --
- 22 JUSTICE BREYER: Just like the Department of
- 23 Commerce acting under authority from Congress gave ICANN
- 24 the power to write standards for the internet.
- 25 MR. DUPREE: Well, and, Justice Breyer, let

- 1 me address your concern head on. Because we've been
- 2 litigating this case against the government for several
- 3 years now and to my knowledge no party involved -- the
- 4 parties, the amici have foreseen the dire consequences
- 5 that you honor posits --
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: I'm not saying it's a dire
- 7 consequence. By coincidence, I happen to be reading
- 8 about the internet. I'm trying to learn about
- 9 something.
- 10 MR. DUPREE: Well, Justice Breyer, I can
- 11 make a few points in response. One is that in the ICANN
- 12 case that's not a situation where you have a company
- 13 trying to regulate other competitors in the market.
- 14 That is one difference. Another difference is that a
- 15 lot of these organizations tender their proposed
- 16 standards to the agency for approval. So at the end of
- 17 the day, it's the agency that has the final say in many
- 18 cases. That's this model that Congress enacted.
- 19 And here, Congress plainly could have given
- 20 Amtrak an advisory role, Section 207 (a) gives all sorts
- 21 of entities and participants with a stake in these rules
- 22 an advisory role. And there is absolutely no reason
- 23 that Congress could not easily have drafted that statute
- 24 to give Amtrak an advisory role.
- 25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But if the government

- 1 agency, the FRA, it says, you know, what Amtrak
- 2 proposes, the government's assent is essential to this
- 3 scheme, right?
- 4 MR. DUPREE: That's correct, Justice Ginsburg. But
- 5 I think the key point here is that Amtrak's assent is
- 6 also essential. So, to be sure, the government could
- 7 halt a regulation that Amtrak wanted to put in effect, but the
- 8 constitutional advice here is that Amtrak has the same
- 9 power. It could prevent the government from putting the
- 10 government's preferred regulation in place. And that's
- 11 giving too much power to a private entity to be able to
- 12 dictate to the federal government what regulations will
- 13 be issued --
- 14 JUSTICE BREYER: You don't have to answer
- 15 this question, but have you thought through what this
- 16 means -- what I think is called the Baal conference
- 17 where you have groups of regulators and banks meeting
- 18 together to determine what they are going to do about
- 19 interest rates, money supplied, et cetera. You have
- 20 not, is the answer, and I don't know enough about it, so
- 21 skip it.
- MR. DUPREE: Very good.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, but then, how do
- 24 you -- do you say that we were just plain wrong when we
- 25 let the tobacco industry and milk producers veto

- 1 regulations in our two prior cases Currin and Rock
- 2 Royal?
- 3 MR. DUPREE: Yes, the difference in those
- 4 cases, Justice Sotomayor, is that in those cases it was
- 5 a federal government that drafted the regulation. And
- 6 what happened at that point was that Congress gave the
- 7 industry -- or in those cases a super majority of the
- 8 industry the power to vote whether to subject themselves
- 9 to the regulation. And the distinction there is between
- 10 the government exercising the legislative authority and
- 11 the private company determining when that
- 12 authority becomes effective. That's --
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's -- that line is
- 14 too thin for me. Because consent to me means it has to
- 15 satisfy both parties. And that's no different than a
- 16 veto. This is the STB saying, this satisfies us, this
- 17 is what we would like to do. Amtrak is this -- are you
- 18 willing to be regulated, just like the tobacco produce
- 19 -- the tobacco industry and the milk producers.
- 20 MR. DUPREE: Well, for one thing my clients,
- 21 the regulated parties, were not given a say in this. So
- 22 to say Amtrak, is this what you want --
- 23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's the due process.
- 24 That's the due process.
- 25 MR. DUPREE: Fair enough. Then, with regard

- 1 to Your Honor's point --
- 2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And that's fair enough
- 3 by the way. That's an issue that's fair enough. But --
- 4 and subject to more talk. But I'm not quite sure why
- 5 this becomes --
- 6 MR. DUPREE: With regard to Your Honor's
- 7 earlier point about that being a thin line, I understand
- 8 that but at the same time that is the line, the precise
- 9 line that this Court explicitly drew both in Curran and
- 10 in J.W. Hampton where it said that allowing this vote of
- 11 the regulated parties, that doesn't amount to
- 12 legislative action. Agreed it may be a fine line but it
- 13 is the line that this Court has reverted to time and
- 14 again.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I don't know what they
- 16 meant because they were subjecting themselves to
- 17 standards.
- 18 MR. DUPREE: Well, and I would simply go
- 19 back to our point that we never had a vote in this
- 20 process.
- 21 JUSTICE ALITO: What do you make of the
- 22 provision to which you referred earlier that says that
- 23 the metrics and standards shall be incorporated into the
- 24 operating agreements to the greatest extent practicable
- 25 or to the extent practicable. If a particular railroad

- 1 took the position that it will never agree to the
- 2 incorporation of the metrics and standards into an
- 3 operating agreement, is there anything that the federal
- 4 government could do?
- 5 MR. DUPREE: Well, Justice Alito, I think in
- 6 that situation what would likely happen if Amtrak and
- 7 the freight railroad could not reach agreement and
- 8 therefore there was no agreement on the terms of the
- 9 operating agreement, is that the Surface Transportation
- 10 Board ultimately would be called upon to step in and
- 11 essentially dictate terms or help the parties reach
- 12 terms and proscribe the terms of the operating
- 13 agreement. And I think in that situation -- again, it
- 14 hasn't yet arisen but it would not surprise me in the
- 15 slightest if Amtrak's argument at that point to the
- 16 Surface Transportation Board was pointing to the
- 17 language of 207 (c) and saying, this freight railroad is
- 18 under a statutory mandate that it shall amend its
- 19 agreements to the extent practicable. And nothing in
- 20 the statute suggests that the determination as to
- 21 practicability is something that falls within the
- 22 exclusive jurisdiction of the freight railroads. The
- 23 statutory language doesn't suggest that. If this Court
- 24 were to hold that, I certainly wouldn't quarrel with it,
- 25 but I'm not quite sure the statutory language gets you

- 1 there.
- 2 I think one fundamental flaw with the
- 3 statute which we've not yet touched on, an additional
- 4 flaw, is the problem of accountability. That, of
- 5 course, is the concern that has animated this Court's
- 6 non delegation and due process jurisprudence. And here
- 7 you have a situation where Congress, the President and
- 8 Amtrak itself have repeatedly declared to the public in
- 9 explicit terms that Amtrak is not the government.
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: Do you think that's
- 11 dispositive? Because I've always thought that the
- 12 labels that Congress decides to put on these things is
- 13 not of particular relevance.
- MR. DUPREE: I'm not so sure I would go so
- 15 far as to say it's dispositive, Justice Kagan. But I do
- 16 think it's highly relevant. I think when this Court has
- 17 spoken about transparency and accountability in the
- 18 legislative process, what it's been talking about is the
- 19 ability of the public to look at a regulation or a law
- 20 and make a judgment as to where to assign blame. And
- 21 when you have all parties involved assuring the public
- 22 that Amtrak is not a government actor, I think the
- 23 public is entitled to take the President and the
- 24 Congress at their word and say that this is not the --
- 25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And not look at the

- 1 animal as it exists? Lebron said that the government
- 2 exerts control over Amtrak as a policy maker. This --
- 3 Amtrak, you will agree, is not like a private
- 4 corporation. It's -- there's a great deal of federal
- 5 involvement in Amtrak, right?
- 6 MR. DUPREE: I agree. I agree. But I think
- 7 what resolves this case is the fact that Amtrak operates
- 8 under a statutory mandate to conduct its affairs as
- 9 though it were a non-governmental entity and a
- 10 for-profit corporation. In fact, in the briefing --
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, the post office is
- 12 supposed to be a for-profit corporation, too, to the
- 13 same extent, right?
- MR. DUPREE: Well, yes, Justice Kagan, keep
- in mind the post office is expressly created as a
- 16 federal entity, it's in our Constitution and in Federal
- 17 statutory law it says the post office is an agency or an
- 18 entity within the executive branch.
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: But then that all goes back
- 20 to labels. I mean, I guess I'm just wondering what
- 21 about Amtrak is not governmental other than the label.
- 22 MR. DUPREE: Well --
- 23 JUSTICE KAGAN: Subject to the policy
- 24 control of Congress, which Congress exercises pretty
- 25 much on a routine basis, it's entirely funded by

- 1 Congress, all the members of the board are appointed by
- 2 the President with the advice and consent of the Senate,
- 3 save the -- save one.
- 4 You know, I guess I'm just wondering other
- 5 than this label, what suggests that this is not the
- 6 government?
- 7 MR. DUPREE: Well, first, I would take issue
- 8 with just the label. In other words, the organic
- 9 statute of Amtrak in the US Code says it is not the
- 10 government. So it may be a little more than just a
- 11 label.
- But taking Your Honor's point, I think what
- 13 makes Amtrak not the government for nondelegation
- 14 purposes is that Amtrak's officers and employees are not
- 15 Federal employees, they don't take an oath of office and
- 16 they are constrained by various financial incentives and
- 17 statutory mandates to operate Amtrak not in the common
- 18 good, not as a neutral, disinterested regulator would,
- 19 but as a for-profit commercial actor.
- 20 That's actually the very point that Amtrak
- 21 made to this Court in its Lebron brief where it said
- 22 keep in mind, we are not neutral government regulators,
- 23 we are hungry capitalists. That's how we run Amtrak.
- 24 We have a --
- 25 JUSTICE KAGAN: Yes. We rejected that

- 1 argument.
- 2 MR. DUPREE: Well, it rejected the ultimate
- 3 constitutional conclusion for purposes of the First
- 4 Amendment claim, but I don't think this Court took issue
- 5 with the fact that Amtrak's officers and directors have
- 6 said from day one very publicly that we don't govern in
- 7 any sense. We are not neutral, disinterested
- 8 regulators. We are a for-profit business. And that's
- 9 what makes this case different, Justice Kagan.
- 10 JUSTICE SCALIA: So for -- I mean, for that
- 11 purpose, what difference does it make whether it's a
- 12 governmental entity or not, so long as it is operating
- on a for-profit basis and is giving -- is given the last
- 14 word on some regulatory matters that disadvantage its
- 15 competitors, there's a violation of due process. I -- I
- don't see how it makes any difference whether you call
- 17 it governmental or not.
- 18 MR. DUPREE: Justice Scalia, I certainly
- 19 agree a hundred percent with you on the due process
- 20 point. I think that whether it is government or
- 21 nongovernmental may play a role if this Court were to
- 22 approach this case through the lens of nondelegation,
- 23 but as far as due process goes, Your Honor is exactly
- 24 correct. No matter what we call Amtrak, the question
- 25 ultimately at the end of the day is whether this

- 1 Federally-chartered corporation with all of the various
- 2 financial incentives, statutory mandates and commands,
- 3 can exercise regulatory power over other commercial
- 4 actors in the marketplace.
- 5 JUSTICE GINSBURG: The due process question
- 6 wasn't -- the due process question wasn't aired below at
- 7 all; isn't that so?
- 8 MR. DUPREE: It was aired below, Justice
- 9 Ginsburg. We have fully briefed due process at every
- 10 stage of this case, as has the government. The district
- 11 court resolved it on the merits and the D.C. Circuit
- 12 didn't need to reach it because it resolved it on
- 13 nondelegation grounds, but it did drop a footnote and
- 14 said, nondelegation and due process are so closely
- 15 intertwined in this context and, frankly, we're not
- 16 sure, as Justice Scalia suggested, whether ultimately it
- 17 would make a difference. So that's why I took the
- 18 nondelegation route. But there's no question that due
- 19 process is fully briefed, fully teed up for this Court's
- 20 review.
- 21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And not decided by the
- 22 D.C. Circuit.
- MR. DUPREE: I beg your pardon?
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: And not decided --
- 25 MR. DUPREE: That's correct.

- 1 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- because the D.C.
- 2 Circuit went on a delegation.
- 3 MR. DUPREE: That's correct. But as I said,
- 4 they said in the footnote, Footnote 3 toward the
- 5 beginning of the opinion, that they didn't see much of a
- 6 difference in this context because Carter Coal speaks
- 7 both to nondelegation and due process and it did an
- 8 analysis under Carter Coal.
- 9 So regardless if this Court thinks that
- 10 Carter Coal is more properly characterized as
- 11 nondelegation of due process, the merits of that
- 12 question are squarely before this Court.
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So are you attacking the
- 14 statute that says that competitors have to accommodate
- 15 Amtrak? Is that what you're saying is the due process
- 16 violation?
- 17 MR. DUPREE: It's not, Justice Sotomayor.
- 18 The statute that we're attacking is Section 207 of
- 19 PRIIA.
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But the -- but the
- 21 investigation is only going to determine whether you
- 22 violated the statute's failure to accommodate Amtrak.
- 23 MR. DUPREE: I don't think that's quite
- 24 right, Your Honor. In other words, the -- a necessary
- 25 predicate for liability is not just violation of the

- 1 preference statute, but also a violation of the metrics
- 2 and standards. The government needs to prove both. It
- 3 needs to prove violation of the metrics and standards
- 4 and violation of the preference requirement.
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: Can the government -- what
- 6 is the due process violation? That is to say, if the
- 7 Department of Energy under delegated authority says that
- 8 the makers of the bulbs that are energy efficient must
- 9 use, and they may choose any one of the five methods
- 10 that produces green light or white light or whatever it
- is, and they are -- they are to choose the method, and
- 12 that's just it. Now, that puts at a disadvantage those
- 13 competitors who do not use energy-efficient bulbs. Is
- 14 that a violation of due process?
- 15 MR. DUPREE: Well, if I'm understanding Your
- 16 Honor's hypothetical, it doesn't sound like it because
- 17 you have a situation where it's the government that's
- 18 prescribing the regulations.
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: No. It gives them
- 20 considerable leeway as to make subsidiary decisions. I
- 21 was trying to make it realistic. They make subsidiary
- 22 decisions as to how they go about fulfilling the basic
- 23 energy efficiency mandate.
- 24 MR. DUPREE: Right. It -- it -- the way
- 25 Your Honor described that --

1 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, I just described it

- 2 now.
- 3 MR. DUPREE: Right.
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: They have broad authority,
- 5 but they have to meet certain energy-efficient mandates
- 6 and they can prescribe standards and so forth that will
- 7 allow them to do it. Does that violate due process
- 8 because it hurts the manufacturers of ordinary energy
- 9 bulbs?
- 10 MR. DUPREE: If -- when you say "prescribe
- 11 standards," it would pose a problem if the standards
- 12 they're prescribing apply to others in the industry. If
- 13 the way Your Honor posited it originally, it sounded as
- 14 though Congress was essentially giving --
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: It applies. They don't
- 16 have to meet it. What happens is it gives them an
- 17 advantage the way they choose over non-energy efficient
- 18 bulbs.
- 19 MR. DUPREE: That doesn't sound like a due
- 20 process violation.
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: Then what is your violation
- 22 here? I'm trying to figure out what your violation --
- 23 MR. DUPREE: The violation here is that
- 24 Congress has given Amtrak the pen.
- 25 JUSTICE BREYER: The what?

1 MR. DUPREE: The pen. To write the Federal

- 2 regulations.
- 3 JUSTICE SCALIA: You have to posit that the
- 4 energy department manufactures bulbs.
- 5 MR. DUPREE: No.
- 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: And that it keeps the
- 7 profit from the bulbs on its own. It doesn't have to go
- 8 deposit it in the treasury. So the -- so the -- it is a
- 9 profit-making entity and it prescribes standards, as
- 10 Justice Breyer suggested, that harms other people. That
- 11 would be a parallel to this.
- MR. DUPREE: Well -- and if that's the
- 13 situation where the government is both acting in the
- 14 marketplace as a commercial actor and as a regulator of
- 15 the industry, that's a problem.
- But what makes this case, I think, so
- 17 difficult is that being a commercial for-profit actor is
- 18 fundamentally incompatible with the notion of being a
- 19 disinterested government regulator. That's because the
- 20 essence of a --
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: That's what I was -- I'm
- 22 trying to get at -- I started with the statement, I
- 23 think, that due process -- your argument -- it didn't
- 24 matter whether you called them private or public; am I
- 25 right?

- 1 MR. DUPREE: That's right.
- 2 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. Now, let's imagine
- 3 they're just a company, not the Department of Energy.
- 4 The Department of Energy has a broad energy efficient
- 5 standard. It delegates to the people who make that kind
- 6 of bulb all kinds of minor interstitial standards to
- 7 make. They make them. They hurt the energy bulbs, the
- 8 ordinary energy bulbs. Is that a violation of due
- 9 process? If so, why? If not, how is yours different?
- 10 MR. DUPREE: Well, that -- I think that
- 11 might be a violation of due process because in that
- 12 situation what happens is that the Department of Energy
- 13 is giving authority to private corporations to set
- 14 rules, standards that govern the conduct of other
- 15 private corporations.
- 16 JUSTICE BREYER: It will hurt the other
- 17 private organizations.
- 18 MR. DUPREE: Right.
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: My reaction was the way you
- 20 deal with that normally is the statute would be
- 21 interpreted not to give them the authority to write
- 22 anticompetitive regulations and you'd attack it under
- 23 the antitrust laws. There may be other ways to do it.
- 24 I've never heard of an example where the due process
- 25 problem really was a constitutional problem under due

- 1 process.
- Now -- now, maybe there's some cases I've
- 3 overlooked. The only one coming close, it seemed to me,
- 4 is Carter v. Carter Coal, which I always put in the same
- 5 box as Lochner. Now -- now, are we supposed to
- 6 resurrect that? Is there other authority for that
- 7 proposition? What is it?
- 8 MR. DUPREE: Well, Justice Breyer, I do
- 9 believe that this Court on multiple occasions subsequent
- 10 to the Lochner era has reaffirmed the core holding of
- 11 Carter Coal about delegations to private parties are
- 12 forbidden. This Court said that in Mistretta. A number
- 13 of justices have said in separate opinions that that
- 14 holding remains --
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: But your due process, I
- 16 want some authority for your due process point on the
- 17 private agencies.
- MR. DUPREE: Well, our -- the foundational
- 19 case we have for due process in this context is Carter
- 20 Coal. Absolutely. But again, I simply take issue with
- 21 Your Honor's suggestion that it's a remnant of the
- 22 Lochner era. I think it retains its vitality today as
- 23 many subsequent opinions of this Court have recognized.
- Let me address Mr. Gannon's point very
- 25 briefly, if I may, on the notion that it was somehow the

- 1 preference requirement that was driving the dramatic
- 2 change in Amtrak's performance. The preference
- 3 requirement was enacted in the early 1970s. So Mr.
- 4 Gannon is unable to explain why this magical change
- 5 didn't occur until the metrics and standards came into
- 6 effect.
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, he said the metrics
- 8 and standards for the first time made it realistic that
- 9 there would be enforcement of that requirement.
- 10 MR. DUPREE: Well, first, I would say if
- 11 that's true, that, to me, strikes me as a pretty plain
- 12 regulatory effect in that the metrics and standards are
- on the books and the freight railroads know that they
- 14 now need to comply or they're going to face enforcement
- 15 actions. The government --
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: No. I think -- I think you
- 17 can allow a private party to bring an enforcement
- 18 action.
- 19 MR. DUPREE: You can allow a private
- 20 party --
- 21 JUSTICE SCALIA: I mean, even if they just
- 22 said an enforcement action shall be commenced if Amtrak
- 23 requests it. I think that would be perfectly
- 24 constitutional.
- 25 MR. DUPREE: I agree, Justice Scalia, but at

- 1 the same time the problem here is that Congress has
- 2 given Amtrak the power to define the terms and to draft
- 3 the regulations in which it may bring an enforcement
- 4 action. If --
- 5 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Dupree, I mean, one way
- 6 to look at this on the delegation question, not on the
- 7 due process question but on the delegation question, is
- 8 that there is government all over this at every step,
- 9 that there is all kinds of supervision of Amtrak itself,
- 10 no matter what Amtrak does that; but with respect to the
- 11 metrics and standards, particularly, that there is no
- 12 way Amtrak is actually going to be able to get anything
- 13 unless the FRA comes aboard, and that furthermore, that
- 14 even those metrics and standards are useless unless the
- 15 Surface Transportation Board decides to enforce the
- 16 preference requirement.
- 17 So there is, like, no place at which a
- 18 private actor can do something itself in this scheme, it
- 19 would seem to me.
- 20 MR. DUPREE: Well, I -- I take the point
- 21 that the FRA is involved in the development of the
- 22 standards, but I don't think it follows from -- from
- 23 that premise to say that Congress can give a private
- 24 company and the Federal government joint ownership of
- 25 the pen in drafting the regulations. That's the

- 1 problem.
- 2 And with regard to the issue of government
- 3 control over Amtrak, the government conceded in the D.C.
- 4 Circuit that it did not control Amtrak on a day-to-day
- 5 basis and that includes, for present purposes, the
- 6 rulemaking at issue. In fact, Congress certainly did
- 7 not view the Federal government as controlling Amtrak in
- 8 the rulemaking, because if it did, it would not have
- 9 inserted the arbitration provision.
- 10 Congress clearly understood that in the
- 11 context of this rulemaking, the Federal government did
- 12 not control Amtrak. That is why the arbitration
- 13 provision is in there.
- Unless there are further questions, we'll
- 15 ask that the judgment below be affirmed.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 17 Mr. Gannon, you have four minutes remaining.
- 18 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF CURTIS E. GANNON
- 19 ON BEHALF OF PETITIONERS
- 20 MR. GANNON: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 21 Mr. Dupree stressed the question of
- 22 accountability, and I think as Justice Kagan was just
- 23 pointing out that there is plenty of accountability here
- 24 for the Federal government. The Federal government's
- 25 fingerprints are all over not just Amtrak but also the

1 metrics and standards because the FRA had to approve

- 2 them.
- 3 On the Amtrak side here, the metrics and
- 4 standards were approved by Amtrak's president who is
- 5 somebody who is appointed by the eight presidential
- 6 appointees and serves at their pleasure. And so the
- 7 notion that this is just somebody down in the bowels
- 8 of -- of a corporation's day-to-day operations that the
- 9 Federal government had no connection with, I think, is
- 10 misguided.
- 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: Would you talk about the
- 12 contract provision?
- 13 MR. GANNON: Yes, we think that --
- 14 JUSTICE SCALIA: You should have raised that
- 15 in your -- I should have raised it in your principal.
- 16 MR. GANNON: We think that the contract's
- 17 provisions are -- the statutory provision there in 207
- 18 does require the contracts to be incorporated to the
- 19 extent practicable. We have actually said in our brief
- 20 that we think that is something that is largely due
- 21 to negotiation between the parties. There are certain
- 22 aspects of the metrics and standards that it would not
- 23 make sense to incorporate in the contracts, and what the
- 24 statute --
- 25 JUSTICE SCALIA: But if they can't come to

- 1 an agreement, who decides what the contract --
- 2 MR. GANNON: As Mr. Dupree said, that the --
- 3 then the dispute goes before the surface transportation
- 4 board, this is in 24308 --
- 5 JUSTICE SCALIA: And the STB --
- 6 MR. GANNON: Will determine what are, quote,
- 7 "reasonable terms and conditions."
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: Which would include --
- 9 which would include the requirement that, to the extent
- 10 practicable, the standards set forth by Amtrak be
- 11 followed.
- MR. GANNON: But we -- we don't think that
- 13 that requires they be -- they are not things that would
- 14 be binding on the freight railroads. The statute
- 15 provides that there needs to be an incentive payment.
- 16 For instance, the statute provides that there needs to
- 17 be an incentive payment in the contracts. But it
- 18 doesn't mean that that -- that the incentive payment now
- 19 has to correspond precisely to what the metrics and
- 20 standards are. That is something that's subject to
- 21 negotiation between the parties, and --
- 22 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, as -- as your friend
- 23 said, to the extent practicable, unless the whole thing
- 24 is nugatory, certainly does not wash out the whole
- 25 provision.

- 1 MR. GANNON: Well, I think that --
- 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: It must have some bite.
- 3 What bite does it have?
- 4 MR. GANNON: I think it was to encourage the
- 5 parties to ensure that they are now collecting data in
- 6 systematic ways, that they can nationalize things,
- 7 that -- that they now measure things in the same
- 8 fashion, they use minutes instead of seconds or
- 9 whatever, and also that there are some parts of the
- 10 metrics and standards that wouldn't make sense to go in
- 11 the contracts at all, things that have to do with
- 12 customer service surveys about -- satisfaction surveys
- 13 about the cleanliness of the cars. And so -- and
- 14 ultimately even the canon of constitutional avoidance
- 15 could be used to prevent that from doing the work that
- 16 would -- that would make it regulatory in this context
- if that were to make it a problem here.
- I think that it's also the case that
- 19 Mr. Dupree is talking about Amtrak as a competitor of
- 20 the freight railroads, and we think that that's the
- 21 wrong analogy, that Amtrak is effectively like a
- 22 customer of a common carrier that is entitled to get
- 23 services from the railroads at a particular rate. And
- that's the way it's always been. And under Respondent's
- 25 approach, there would be both nondelegation problems and

- 1 due process problems, apparently, with the type of thing
- 2 that occurred in Boston against Maine, where this Court
- 3 held that Amtrak was able to initiate a condemnation
- 4 proceeding for rail property before the ICC, and its
- 5 determination that it needed that particular property
- 6 had a strong presumption that it was going to be true
- 7 and governing in that proceeding. This Court held that
- 8 that was not an impermissible delegation of eminent
- 9 domain authority, because the ICC made the ultimate
- 10 determination there, notwithstanding the fact that
- 11 Amtrak had to trigger the proceeding and Amtrak's
- 12 decision to do so created a statutory presumption that
- 13 there would be need.
- I think that Mr. Dupree also is concerned
- 15 about the need for Amtrak's consent here. This goes
- 16 back to the very first argument that we have in our
- 17 brief that under cases like Currin and Rock Royal
- 18 Cooperative, the fact that the government needed to
- 19 secure the consent of Amtrak is not something that makes
- 20 that a delegation outside the government. Even though
- 21 they had the pen along the way, the veto power is what
- 22 is most important, and we think it's especially easy to
- 23 get there in the context of an entity like Amtrak which
- 24 is, at worst, for us quasi-private rather than entirely
- 25 private.

1	And we think if you take that into account
2	here, also the limited effect that the metrics and
3	standards have, that this is not a non-delegation
4	problem for any of the three problems the court of
5	appeals believed.
6	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
7	The case is submitted.
8	(Whereupon, at 11:59 a.m., the case in the
9	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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