

1           IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

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3   14 PENN PLAZA LLC, ET AL.                                 :

4                                 Petitioners                                 :

5                                 v.   :   No. 07-581

6   STEVEN PYETT, ET AL.   :

7   - - - - - x

8   Washington, D.C.

9   Monday, December 1, 2008

10

11                                 The above-entitled matter came on for oral  
12   argument before the Supreme Court of the United States  
13   at 11:00 a.m.

14   APPEARANCES:

15   PAUL SALVATORE, ESQ., New York, N.Y.; on behalf of   the  
16   Petitioners.

17   DAVID C. FREDERICK, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of  
18   the Respondents.

19   CURTIS E. GANNON, ESQ., Assistant to the Solicitor  
20   General, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on  
21   behalf of the United States, as amicus curiae,  
22   supporting the Respondents.

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (11:00 a.m.)

3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument  
4 next in Case 07-581, 14 Penn Plaza LLC v. Pyett.

5 Mr. Salvatore.

6 ORAL ARGUMENT OF PAUL SALVATORE

7 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS

8 MR. SALVATORE: Thank you, Mr. Chief  
9 Justice, and may it please the Court:

10 There are three reasons why this Court  
11 should reverse the Second Circuit's blanket ban on  
12 collectively bargained, arbitral forum -- forum  
13 selection clauses.

14 First, the Second Circuit ignored section  
15 (a) of the National Labor Relations Act, by which  
16 Congress empowered unions to bargain on behalf of their  
17 employees over anything germane to the working  
18 environment, including methods of workplace dispute  
19 resolution.

20 The forum in which an ADEA claim is heard  
21 falls squarely in that authority. Indeed, forbidding  
22 unions from bargaining about the procedural right to an  
23 arbitral forum will carve a judicial exception into the  
24 labor law permitting employers to bypass the union and  
25 deal directly with their employees, defeating Congress's

1 national labor policy.

2 Second, the Second Circuit failed to  
3 consider Congress's strong endorsement of workplace  
4 arbitration contained in both the FAA and section 301.

5 Third, the Second Circuit erroneously and  
6 exclusively relied on Alexander versus Gardner-Denver.  
7 Gardner-Denver is a case about claim preclusion, not  
8 about enforcing an agreement to arbitrate a statutory  
9 claim.

10 JUSTICE SOUTER: Mr. Salvatore, you take the  
11 position that the only thing that is at stake here is  
12 simply, in effect, a selection of the arbitral forum.

13 What do you -- what do you say to the  
14 argument that, in fact, the -- under -- under the  
15 collective bargaining agreement the employee is subject  
16 not merely to the right of the union to choose the  
17 arbitral forum, but, in fact, to -- to assert any claim  
18 at all? What -- what is your answer to that?

19 MR. SALVATORE: Your Honor, in -- in our  
20 collective bargaining agreement, the collective  
21 bargaining agreement here, the -- the union -- the  
22 employee tenders the claim to the union. And in the  
23 majority of cases the -- the employee and the union's  
24 interests will be aligned, and the --

25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But here it wasn't.

1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Yes. What -- what --

2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Here we are dealing with  
3 claims that the union said: Sorry, we are not going to  
4 process these claims because we have some tension since  
5 the younger workers that replaced you, we also represent  
6 them.

7 So you are proposing, as far as I understand  
8 it, a situation where these workers would have no  
9 individual right at all if the union says: We -- we  
10 won't represent you.

11 MR. SALVATORE: No, Your Honor. The -- the  
12 clause requires all claims to be arbitrated, and "all  
13 claims" means that the individuals then have to go to  
14 arbitration with their private counsel in this case and  
15 -- and have their claims heard in the arbitral forum.  
16 So that no one is denying --

17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Where does -- where does  
18 the contract say anything about the -- the individual  
19 succeeding to whatever arrangement there is between the  
20 union and the employer?

21 MR. SALVATORE: Your Honor, I'm looking at  
22 the petition appendix.

23 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought that only --  
24 only the union can invoke the arbitration clause, not an  
25 individual.

1 MR. SALVATORE: No, Your Honor. That's --  
2 that's not the -- the way the contract reads. I'm  
3 looking at the petition appendix page 48a, which is the  
4 "no discrimination" clause.

5 And just -- just as a quick prelude to --  
6 before I -- I go through that language, I just want to  
7 -- to note that this argument that these employees were  
8 not bound to go individually to arbitration was never  
9 raised below.

10 The Second Circuit did not consider it.  
11 Indeed, the Second Circuit found that the clause covered  
12 these employees, and -- and this only came up in the  
13 Respondents' brief in this Court after cert was granted,  
14 the red brief.

15 So that this -- this argument is one that  
16 the factual premises for were never considered below in  
17 the district court or in -- in the court of appeals.

18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Just so I'm clear --

19 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I don't -- I don't wish to  
20 delay your reading, but -- but as -- as part of the  
21 decision we have to make, don't we have to have in the  
22 background the consideration of the -- that the -- the  
23 potentiality that the union might do just what it did  
24 here, and that would help, it seems to me, inform our  
25 decision on the question that you are presenting.

1                   Now, whether or not it's properly raised  
2   here, I do agree with you it comes rather late. But  
3   isn't it a factor that we must necessarily consider?

4                   MR. SALVATORE: Yes, Your Honor. And --  
5   and, indeed, the collective bargaining agreements --and  
6   we'll look at the language in one second -- are -- are,  
7   as this Court has recognized, a little more complicated  
8   to understand than -- than average contracts. You have  
9   to look at the practice and the custom.

10                  The practice here for this union has been to  
11   turn over claims to the individuals. We've had this  
12   clause in place for nine years. The New York courts  
13   have enforced it repeatedly and -- and --

14                  JUSTICE SCALIA: Is this included in the  
15   question presented anyway?

16                  MR. SALVATORE: It was -- it was not, Your  
17   Honor.

18                  JUSTICE SCALIA: Does it have anything to do  
19   with the way the Second Circuit resolved this case?

20                  MR. SALVATORE: It does not, Your Honor.

21                  JUSTICE SCALIA: The Second Circuit simply  
22   said you could not deprive an individual of the right to  
23   a court trial.

24                  MR. SALVATORE: Absolutely, Justice Scalia.

25                  JUSTICE SCALIA: And the issue is whether --

1 now, if -- if we held that you can require the  
2 individual to go to arbitration, in some later case we  
3 could confront the question of whether, if the union is  
4 in exclusive control of the arbitration and the -- the  
5 individual will -- will not get a fair arbitrated deal,  
6 that would invalidate it.

7 But it has nothing to do with the question  
8 presented: Is an arbitration clause which clearly and  
9 unmistakably waives the union member's right to a  
10 judicial forum enforceable.

11 MR. SALVATORE: Absolutely, Justice Scalia.  
12 That is my argument with respect to why this does not  
13 need to be taken up now.

14 JUSTICE SCALIA: I -- I hate to get into  
15 this, you know, 9 years history of dealings between the  
16 union and -- and the employees.

17 MR. SALVATORE: There is no factual record,  
18 Your Honor, for it in the record at all. And --

19 JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, there is at least  
20 some. The collective bargaining agreement is in here.  
21 And if we are deciding anything at all, we are going to  
22 decide whether in this case the -- the Second Circuit  
23 was correct.

24 The question is posed in generalities, but  
25 we are not going to decide the general question in total



1 ignorance of this case. And in this case we've got the  
2 particular collective bargaining agreement in front of  
3 us, and you started to answer the question that -- that  
4 I and Justice Ginsburg posed by referring to the "no  
5 discrimination" clause.

6 MR. SALVATORE: Yes, Your Honor.

7 JUSTICE SOUTER: And will -- will you go on  
8 to that?

9 MR. SALVATORE: I will. The clause is -- I  
10 am looking at petition appendix 48a, the "no  
11 discrimination" clause. This is the -- the clause at  
12 issue in this case. It covers any present or future  
13 employee. It goes on to state the -- the types of  
14 protected characteristics that are covered by this  
15 clause as well as the -- the relevant statutes  
16 incorporating statutory law, public law, in the -- in  
17 the clause.

18 And then in the second-to-last sentence five  
19 lines up from the bottom it states: "All such claims  
20 shall be subject to the grievance and arbitration  
21 procedure, Articles 5 and 6, as the sole and exclusive  
22 remedy for violations."

23 JUSTICE SCALIA: What does that mean? Does  
24 that mean that they must go to arbitration even if the  
25 union decides that, you know, this claim is -- is so

1 insignificant we don't want to take it to arbitration?

2 MR. SALVATORE: What this means, Justice

3 Scalia, is that these individuals cannot go to court.

4 They have to go either through the union, as has been

5 the practice here, or the union will turn the claim over

6 to them and let them go by themselves.

7 JUSTICE SOUTER: Where did we get this

8 phrase -- where do we get the language "or the union

9 will turn over to them"? The only thing that I can see

10 in here that addresses that is on page 46a. And the --

11 the clause there reads: "All union claims are brought

12 by the union alone, and no individual shall have the

13 right to compromise or settle any claim without the

14 written permission of the union."

15 There is -- there is a lot of gray area in

16 that, but the one thing that seems clear is that the

17 union has total control over any claim, including an

18 arbitration claim.

19 And that seems to lend some substance to the

20 -- to the point made by the other side that if we accept

21 your position here, we are accepting a position not

22 nearly as far -- that the designation -- a procedural

23 designation of a forum should be enforced but that, in

24 fact, total control over the assertion of a statutory

25 Federal right is also being ceded. Now, why doesn't

1 that language from section 46 support that?

2 MR. SALVATORE: Your Honor, it does not  
3 support it for the -- for the following reason. The --  
4 the section 30 clause on page 48a. The "no  
5 discrimination" clause, was added in 1999. It was added  
6 after the Court's decision in Wright. It was added to  
7 comply with Wright. That's an undisputed fact.

8 It -- it was added as a separate section  
9 with a separate arbitration promise because "all claims"  
10 is broader than "union claims." "Union claims" was  
11 something that goes back for 75 years, but before we put  
12 in section 30 --

13 JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, then, "all such  
14 claims" -- "such claims" refers among other things to  
15 the statutory right.

16 MR. SALVATORE: That's correct.

17 JUSTICE SOUTER: And if the statutory right  
18 is the appropriate section of an arbitration agreement  
19 and the union has ultimate control of the arbitration  
20 agreement, then it follows that the union has got  
21 ultimate control over the assertion of the statutory  
22 right.

23 MR. SALVATORE: No, Your Honor, not unless  
24 -- not if the union turns that over. The employee's  
25 reading --

1 JUSTICE SOUTER: Where -- where is the  
2 guarantee that the -- if the union says, we don't want  
3 to touch this, as in this case, that the employee has  
4 the right either to arbitrate or, for that matter, to  
5 sue? Where do you find that?

6 MR. SALVATORE: Your Honor, that -- that  
7 right is -- is described from this language, "all such  
8 claims." There is another route. What Articles 4, 5,  
9 and 6 describe is that -- that the -- you must go to the  
10 office of the contract arbitrator, and it doesn't  
11 specify whether you go with the union or you go by  
12 yourself.

13 JUSTICE ALITO: Has any court decided this  
14 issue of the interpretation of the collective bargaining  
15 agreement in this particular.

16 MR. SALVATORE: No court has decided this  
17 very issue like this, Justice Alito. But what the New  
18 York courts have said is in interpreting this clause  
19 over the last nine years, that they compel the  
20 individual union member to go to arbitration when they  
21 have brought claims in court in violation of this  
22 clause.

23 JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Salvatore, I -- I  
24 didn't think we took this case to -- to determine the  
25 specific meaning as to this issue of this -- of this

1 particular contract, which is not an issue of national  
2 importance. Why -- why must we decide the case here?

3           Could we not simply decide that the Second  
4 Circuit was either correct, in which case the case would  
5 be over, or incorrect to say that you -- that you -- you  
6 cannot -- you cannot in a collective bargaining  
7 agreement have the union responsible for arbitration of  
8 Title VII claims? Why couldn't we just decide that?

9           And then if there is any issue of whether  
10 such concession to the union deprives an individual of  
11 even the right to arbitration, that can -- that can be  
12 decided on remand by the Second Circuit, couldn't it?

13           MR. SALVATORE: Absolutely, Justice Scalia.

14           JUSTICE SCALIA: And the Second Circuit  
15 could look into all of these details.

16           MR. SALVATORE: Absolutely.

17           JUSTICE SCALIA: And inquire into the New  
18 York law that you're talking about now and that I don't  
19 recall being in any of the briefing.

20           MR. SALVATORE: Justice Scalia, as cited in  
21 our briefing, there is a long footnote listing the  
22 cases. But -- but you're right, the -- the issue here  
23 really is can the union agree to this? And that goes to  
24 Congress's giving the union the power under section 9(a)  
25 of the National Labor Relations Act to be the exclusive

1 bargaining representative --

2 JUSTICE BREYER: I ask you -- let me ask you  
3 a naive question possibly that may -- may reflect a  
4 misunderstanding. But my understanding is that suppose  
5 you are -- you are an employee. You believe your  
6 employer discriminated against you, say, on gender  
7 grounds. You have to go to the EEOC.

8 Now, the EEOC looks into it and very often  
9 what they do is they don't really resolve it. They just  
10 give you a letter that gives you a right to sue.

11 So here Congress was so worried about this  
12 kind of thing that they said our specialized agency, you  
13 know, won't be the bottom line. People will go there  
14 and then they have a right to sue later.

15 Now, that's how Congress felt about this  
16 particular statute. Why would they want the union to be  
17 the bottom line when, in fact, the employee himself  
18 hasn't agreed? I mean, the employee might agree in the  
19 first place. He might say I'm going to take that  
20 letter, I'm not going to bring my suit. That's up to  
21 him or her. But here the employee wants to bring her  
22 suit, just like the EEOC letter.

23 MR. SALVATORE: Well, Justice Breyer, the  
24 ADEA provides not only a right to go to court after  
25 you've gotten your right-to-sue letter or waited 60

1 days, but -- but it also provides multiple, as this  
2 court recognized in Gilmer, multiple avenues that  
3 Congress wants to use: Conciliation, persuasion,  
4 conference --

5 JUSTICE BREYER: Exactly. That's my point,  
6 is that the statute as a whole reflects a considerable  
7 effort not to let this employee get cut off at the pass  
8 and an employee who is reasonably determined to get to  
9 court probably can do it. It's not definite. The EEOC  
10 doesn't have to give them a letter giving them a right  
11 to sue, but probably can do it.

12 And if that's a situation where you have  
13 this whole expert thing cut in, it seems to me there is  
14 a parallel here that Congress then wouldn't want the  
15 union and the employer together to be able to cut that  
16 right to sue off, at least not very easily.

17 MR. SALVATORE: Justice Breyer, you have  
18 competing policies here because you have the policies of  
19 the labor laws which say that unions should have a -- a  
20 broad portfolio of -- of topics to bargain about. This  
21 Court has said that anything germane to the working  
22 environment, dispute resolution mechanisms --

23 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But the union could not  
24 bargain about these anti-discrimination rights. These  
25 are rights given to individuals by Congress. The union

1    couldn't bargain about them the way it bargains about  
2    collective rights, the way it bargains about wages and  
3    hours and -- and other things. This is, this is not a  
4    bargainable right. This is a right Congress says you as  
5    an individual have a right not to be discriminated  
6    against. This is nothing that the union can bargain  
7    about.

8                   MR. SALVATORE: Justice Ginsburg, I agree to  
9    the degree we're talking about -- you're talking about  
10   substantive rights. What we are talking about here is a  
11   procedural switch. As this Court has approved in  
12   Gilmer, what we are talking about is moving the forum  
13   from the judicial one to the -- to the arbitral one.  
14   And here in the -- the scheme of a collective bargaining  
15   agreement where arbitration is the preferred remedy and  
16   has been used for many, many years very successfully in  
17   the -- in the -- by those parties.

18                   It's -- it's taking employment arbitration  
19   and putting it in the collective bargaining context.  
20   And -- and there is, unions do this in many different  
21   ways. Unions bargain about substantive rights. We are  
22   not talking about substantive rights here, though. We  
23   are talking about procedural rights. And the policies  
24   of the labor laws are served and the policies of the  
25   ADEA and the anti-discrimination statutes are not



1 disserved in any way.

2 JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Salvatore, would you --  
3 would you object to or oppose a ruling that said -- that  
4 says yes, the -- the right can be subjected to union  
5 arbitration, but if the union chooses not to arbitrate  
6 it the individual must have the right to arbitrate it on  
7 his own?

8 MR. SALVATORE: That's -- that's the  
9 practice under this agreement, Your Honor. We would --  
10 we would wholeheartedly endorse that -- that rule  
11 because, that's the practice here. And there is -- when  
12 you're talking about statutory rights, why would the  
13 union want to interfere with the ability of the employee  
14 to get a forum if their interests are not aligned? This  
15 goes to the tension that this Court has -- has  
16 recognized in its prior cases.

17 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, that -- that means  
18 that if there is a totally frivolous claim and the  
19 employer -- pardon me, the union says we are not going  
20 to arbitrate, the -- the employee still has the right to  
21 then proceed? The employer hasn't gotten very much.

22 JUSTICE SCALIA: He has got an arbitration  
23 instead of a lawsuit.

24 JUSTICE KENNEDY: If you would -- if you  
25 would answer the question. The employer hasn't gotten

1 very --

2 (Laughter.)

3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- very much for the  
4 bargain.

5 MR. SALVATORE: Justice Kennedy, the  
6 employer has gotten arbitration and --

7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: In the hard cases.

8 MR. SALVATORE: Well, in --

9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But it hasn't got the  
10 ability to have the union help them weed out frivolous  
11 claims.

12 MR. SALVATORE: Well that's true. The  
13 union -- the union wouldn't play that function, except  
14 that we have in this industry, the real estate industry  
15 in New York City, a longstanding relationship that --  
16 that goes back decades. And -- and -- so it's a mature  
17 collective bargaining arrange -- arrangement.

18 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, I'm -- I'm -- I'm  
19 not sure that employers nationwide would -- would --  
20 would accept -- would accept that view.

21 MR. SALVATORE: Well, I think that --

22 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And again, maybe that's --  
23 that's a reason for us not to reach it in this case.

24 MR. SALVATORE: Well, one of the issues  
25 that -- that Congress allows the bargaining parties to

1 figure out is what the scope of their collective  
2 bargaining arrangement should be. That's one of the  
3 hallmarks of the NRLA. So, yes, some collective  
4 bargaining parties may make that choice, Justice  
5 Kennedy; others may make a different choice.

6 What is the alternative here? The  
7 alternative is that employers can bypass the union.  
8 They can just go around the union and -- and have  
9 individual Gilmer agreements signed up. That's what the  
10 D.C. Circuit said en banc in -- in -- in the ALPA Pilots  
11 case.

12 And indeed, the -- the union in that case  
13 was arguing the position that we are arguing here, that  
14 this is a mandatory subject of bargaining, and this is  
15 right in the union's portfolio of -- of what they should  
16 be using to -- to bargain with the employer because it's  
17 a procedural right and there are no substantive outcomes  
18 that are diminished in any way whatsoever.

19 Unions are deemed trustworthy enough to  
20 bring lawsuits in the federal courts on behalf of their  
21 members. Under principles of associational standing,  
22 associational standing, the members are bound by  
23 their -- their union's actions.

24 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And nonmembers, too?  
25 What about the people who -- who are not members of the

1 union, but they have to pay an equivalent amount for the  
2 union's services in collective bargaining? They would  
3 be bound as well? They couldn't --

4 MR. SALVATORE: Absolutely, Justice  
5 Ginsburg. The -- the -- the -- and this type of service  
6 is one of the core functions that an agency payer would  
7 have to pay for. The LM2 that 32B, the local, filed  
8 here on behalf of 80,000 employees has two agency fee  
9 payers out of 80,000. So it's not really an issue in  
10 this case.

11 But that's what unions are for. When  
12 Congress makes them the exclusive bargaining  
13 representative you're -- you're in for it one way or the  
14 other. You're -- you're -- either you're in or you're  
15 out. And if you're in, then you have to go along with  
16 the -- the -- the entire collective bargaining deal that  
17 is made --

18 JUSTICE GINSBURG: You said -- the -- fine.

19 I -- I grasp your answer to that. But you  
20 said that the employee would have the absolute right if  
21 the union says, "sorry, for whatever reason we can't  
22 represent you," absolute right to that arbitral forum.  
23 What -- who pays then?

24 I mean, if the union is in it, then the  
25 union and the employer are going to split -- split the

1 cost. But what happens when the union drops out and you  
2 have the individual and the employer in this arbitral  
3 forum?

4 MR. SALVATORE: In -- in this situation the  
5 employer pays. That's the only -- the Office of the  
6 Contract Arbitrator is an -- essentially a mini-  
7 American Arbitration Association that these parties have  
8 set up, and the -- the RAB, which is the multi- employer  
9 organization that represents all the real estate  
10 employers in -- in New York, they pay for the  
11 arbitration, because the union in this case has said we  
12 are not going to pay.

13 As you point out rightly, if the union is  
14 not involved, they -- they shouldn't pay. So there is  
15 no cost to the employee for that arbitration and -- and  
16 as Justice Edwards said in the D.C. Circuit Kohl case,  
17 that -- that that procedure is -- is a fair one, to have  
18 the employer pick up the -- the costs given -- given the  
19 -- the balance between the -- the two of them.

20 JUSTICE STEVENS: Mr. Salvatore, are you  
21 going to get to your explanation about Gardner-Denver  
22 before you're all through?

23 MR. SALVATORE: Yes -- yes, Your Honor,  
24 Justice Stevens. Gardner-Denver is -- is a case, as  
25 this Court has described, that -- that didn't involve

1 the enforceability of an agreement to arbitrate. The  
2 Gardner-Denver line of cases, McDonald and Barrentine  
3 and Gardner-Denver, had the quite different issue as  
4 this Court said in Gilmer, of whether a contract-based  
5 claim precludes subsequent judicial resolution of a  
6 statutory claim; and so that distinguishes the rule.  
7 But factually these cases are very different as -- as  
8 well.

9                   Mr. Alexander in Alexander v.  
10 Gardner-Denver, the contract there, the collective  
11 bargaining agreement, had a plain vanilla arbitration  
12 clause. It didn't have a clause like the one we looked  
13 at page, petition appendix 48a, that incorporated all  
14 the -- the statutes and gave the arbitrator the power to  
15 sit and -- and to apply those statutes and apply the law  
16 under those statutes and apply the remedies that derive  
17 from those statutes. In that case, the arbitrator sat  
18 as the proctor of the bargain between the collective  
19 bargaining parties, and didn't have that broad  
20 authority, as this Court has -- has recognized.

21                   And -- and we agree that arbitration that --  
22 that resolves just a collective bargaining agreement  
23 claim should not be dispositive of a statutory claim.  
24 They're fish and fowl. So that Gardner-Denver is  
25 correctly decided. Gardner-Denver puts out the rule for

1 -- for that situation. This is a different situation  
2 that we are talking about.

3 And -- and here, unlike in Gardner-Denver,  
4 where Mr. Alexander would have had no access to the --  
5 to have his Title VII claim heard if this Court had  
6 affirmed the Tenth Circuit, he -- the door to the  
7 courthouse would have been shut in that case for  
8 Mr. Alexander -- here we are trying to move to compel  
9 arbitration so that there is a forum, and -- and that  
10 these individuals -- these employees --

11 JUSTICE STEVENS: But not a judicial -- not  
12 a judicial forum.

13 MR. SALVATORE: An arbitral forum, Your  
14 Honor.

15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Salvatore, would you  
16 just clarify something for me? I thought that the union  
17 ceded its rights to the employees and said that they  
18 could use this collective bargaining agreement's  
19 arbitral regime so long as they paid for it. But you  
20 tell me they don't have to pay anything; the employer  
21 pays everything.

22 MR. SALVATORE: That's -- that's correct.  
23 That's the union counsel's affidavit. He was saying he  
24 doesn't -- the union doesn't want to pick up the costs,  
25 Justice Ginsburg, but the collective bargaining

1 agreement says there is two payers in the Office of the  
2 Contract Arbitrator, the RAB and the union. If the  
3 union is not paying, then the RAB has to pay.

4 Mr. Chief Justice, I'd like to reserve the  
5 rest of my time for rebuttal, please.

6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.  
7 Mr. Frederick.

8 ORAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID C. FREDERICK  
9 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS

10 MR. FREDERICK: Thank you, Mr. Chief  
11 Justice, and may it please the Court:

12 The Second Circuit's judgment should be  
13 affirmed for three reasons. First, a collective  
14 bargaining agreement gives the union exclusive control  
15 over workers' grievances. Second, unions have inherent  
16 conflicts of interest with respect to individual  
17 statutory anti-discrimination rights; and third, unions  
18 lack authority to serve as gatekeepers of individual  
19 workers' substantive ADEA rights.

20 With respect to the first point, a  
21 collective bargaining agreement generally gives the  
22 union exclusive control over whether to bring grievances  
23 on behalf of workers and how such grievances are  
24 pursued. In such circumstances -- which is this case,  
25 the workers have not advanced the requisite agreement to



1 arbitrate, and control over the arbitral forum to  
2 satisfy this Court's standards in *Gilmer* for effectively  
3 vindicating the workers' statutory anti-discrimination  
4 rights.

5 JUSTICE ALITO: Under your first point, are  
6 you saying it's impossible for there to be a collective  
7 bargaining agreement that reads the way Mr. Salvatore  
8 reads this collective bargaining agreement; a collective  
9 bargaining agreement which says that the union's -- that  
10 the grievance must be arbitrated, and it will be done  
11 either by the union, or if the union declines to pursue  
12 it, by the individual employee?

13 MR. FREDERICK: Justice Alito, I've looked  
14 comprehensively through the cases. We've never found a  
15 collective bargaining agreement that gives the kind of  
16 interpretation that Mr. Salvatore offered in this case.  
17 Now, is it theoretically possible that a collective  
18 bargaining agreement would confer on individuals the  
19 rights this Court said in *Gilmer* are necessary to  
20 vindicate that? I would acknowledge it's theoretically  
21 possible, but it has to be done within the confines of  
22 whether there is actual consent by the individual to the  
23 arbitration, whether the individual has control over the  
24 mechanisms of arbitration, and whether or not the  
25 structure of the arbitral forum effectively vindicates

1 the individual's substantive rights.

2 JUSTICE ALITO: But there is nothing in  
3 Federal labor law that would preclude the negotiation of  
4 a collective bargaining agreement like that.

5 MR. FREDERICK: Nothing except this Court's  
6 case in Magnavox where the Court said that the union may  
7 not bargain away an individual's rights where there  
8 would be a conflict between the union's interests and  
9 the individual's. Here, because this is a  
10 discrimination claim, unions are often brought as  
11 defendants in such claims, particularly in circumstances  
12 as here, where the union agreed to the conditions that  
13 gave rise to the discrimination on the basis of age by  
14 these workers.

15 JUSTICE SOUTER: Even in a case in which you  
16 don't have -- assume -- just assume for the sake of  
17 argument that we don't have the discrimination issue or  
18 the conflict issue. I understood you elsewhere to be  
19 arguing that there had to be the kind of knowing,  
20 intelligent and individual waiver, which I would suppose  
21 a collective bargaining agreement will never include.  
22 So I thought it was the -- ultimately the implication of  
23 your argument that in any -- in any case in which  
24 arbitration is claimed, there would have to be -- or a  
25 right to go to arbitration is claimed by the employer --

1     there would have to be, not merely the collective  
2     bargaining agreement, but a specific waiver by the  
3     employee to -- to go ahead and do that. Is that right?

4                 MR. FREDERICK: That -- that's correct. And  
5     that's why I think the Gilmer point is -- is essential  
6     here, Justice Souter and Justice Alito. Because in  
7     Gilmer there was individual consent; there needs to be  
8     such individual consent under the ADEA waiver itself,  
9     and knowing and individual waiver is necessary before  
10    the person can waive the substantive ADEA rights. That  
11    would need to be part of the hypothetical collective  
12    bargaining agreement that I was positing with Justice  
13    Alito.

14                JUSTICE SOUTER: Right.

15                JUSTICE ALITO: Would that mean --

16                JUSTICE SOUTER: Go ahead.

17                JUSTICE ALITO: Would that mean that the  
18    employer could not unilaterally impose an arbitration  
19    requirement on employees?

20                MR. FREDERICK: I think that would follow,  
21    as that would be a condition of employment that could  
22    not be imposed. The airline --

23                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It wouldn't be  
24    unilaterally imposing, right? He would say if you're  
25    going to work for me, you've got to arbitrate, and that

1     could be negotiated theoretically, and with individual  
2     employee. And -- I mean, the whole point, the whole  
3     benefit of collective bargaining is that that doesn't  
4     happen. You say, well, the employer has a lot of  
5     leverage if he wants to insist upon that, but it would  
6     not -- it would be a matter for negotiation between the  
7     individual and the company.

8                 MR. FREDERICK: That's correct, Mr. Chief  
9     Justice, but there are two different points at which the  
10    condition of employment arose. I understood the  
11    questions on this side to be after the agreement had  
12    taken place and the worker was already on the work site.  
13    Under your hypothetical, if an employee gains entrance  
14    to the work force and is asked, "will you sign this,"  
15    there is individual consent in that circumstance. That  
16    is the fact situation in the Air Line Pilots case.

17                JUSTICE SOUTER: But the one thing that's  
18    uniform throughout in your answer is that the collective  
19    bargaining agreement alone can never subject the  
20    employee to -- to mandatory arbitration?

21                MR. FREDERICK: That's -- that's how we read  
22    this Court's statutory --

23                JUSTICE BREYER: Is also true -- is that  
24    also true with an ordinary tort or any other kind of  
25    suit?

1 MR. FREDERICK: Sorry. With an ordinary --

2 JUSTICE BREYER: A tort suit. It says, some  
3 -- the union -- the same thing here, but we are not  
4 concerned with discrimination; we are concerned with  
5 workplace safety. Somebody is hurt as a result of  
6 machine improperly functioning, or there isn't adequate  
7 notice or so forth. Is your view the same there?

8 MR. FREDERICK: Well, I think that those  
9 category of cases do stand in a different position  
10 because there is less of an inherent conflict of  
11 interest. The union there --

12 JUSTICE BREYER: Why?

13 MR. FREDERICK: Well, the union is not going  
14 to be the Defendant typically in a tort case where the  
15 employer is responsible.

16 JUSTICE BREYER: Doesn't this allow  
17 discrimination -- doesn't this refer to discrimination  
18 by the employer?

19 MR. FREDERICK: It refers to discrimination,  
20 and as we cite on page 27 of our brief, there are  
21 provisions in the anti-discrimination laws that are  
22 specifically directed at union discrimination. The  
23 legislative history of these statutes indicates that  
24 discrimination by unions was one of the concerns  
25 animating Congress --

1 JUSTICE BREYER: Now, you say section 30  
2 doesn't say anything about union discrimination  
3 particularly; it just talks about discrimination.

4 MR. FREDERICK: Yes. In fact --

5 JUSTICE BREYER: Fine. So you think  
6 sometimes unions do discriminate?

7 MR. FREDERICK: And that's why --

8 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. And sometimes  
9 unions also would rather have the more effective machine  
10 or sometimes unions feel their workers are stupid not to  
11 read the machine label properly or -- I mean, I can  
12 replicate anything you might think. We can think of  
13 tort suits, the two of us, which could put unions and  
14 employees on opposite shores, just as we can think of  
15 discrimination suits. Most unions don't want  
16 discrimination. I mean, most of the time. And most  
17 unions don't want dangerous machines most of the time.

18 So if I decide for you in this case, am I  
19 also saying that they can't arbitrate ordinary tort  
20 suits or contract suits or just whether or not the  
21 workplace which is made of wood is filled with termites?  
22 I mean, you know?

23 MR. FREDERICK: I think, Justice Breyer,  
24 that the discrimination cases do stand in a different  
25 category because of the inherent conflict of the --

1 JUSTICE BREYER: That's the only reason?  
2 Because, in other words, if I think I see no more reason  
3 why a union today, whatever was true 40 years ago, that  
4 I see no more reason today why a union would like  
5 discrimination, then I can see a reason why they would  
6 like a dangerous machine?

7 MR. FREDERICK: I don't think Congress --

8 JUSTICE BREYER: If I think that, then I  
9 should decide against you?

10 MR. FREDERICK: Well, no, because there are  
11 two other reasons: The exclusive control over the  
12 machinery and the union serving as the gatekeeper.

13 I'm not aware of tort suits being subjects  
14 of collective bargaining, Justice Breyer. Nor am I  
15 aware of cases in which the unions have given up  
16 individuals' tort claims in situations, principally  
17 because unions are not the persons against whom such  
18 tort suits are brought.

19 JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, but those -- I'm  
20 sorry.

21 Those examples are examples. You're getting  
22 down to individual cases. I thought you drew the global  
23 line in answer -- which would answer Justice Breyer's  
24 question by saying the -- in the cases that we're  
25 talking about here, Congress has passed a statute giving

1 a specific individual right and that individual right  
2 cannot in effect be compromised except in -- except in  
3 violation of that statute, and that's where we draw the  
4 global line so that when you got to torts, you'd look at  
5 the individual situation rather than draw a categorical  
6 line.

7 MR. FREDERICK: Yes, you would, but the  
8 principles this Court has applied in looking at that  
9 broad line, I'm trying to suggest that there might be  
10 situations in which those principles, where the union is  
11 serving as the gatekeeper, thereby not allowing a person  
12 to vindicate his individual rights in the tort context,  
13 to be not --

14 JUSTICE SOUTER: I agree with you, but I  
15 think -- I don't want to put words in Justice Breyer's  
16 mouth --

17 JUSTICE BREYER: Very helpful of you.

18 JUSTICE SOUTER: But I thought what he was  
19 getting at is, if I hold for you here, am I going to  
20 have to hold for you in every case in which somebody has  
21 in effect a tort claim which is subject to an  
22 arbitration clause?

23 MR. FREDERICK: And the answer is no. I  
24 thought --

25 JUSTICE BREYER: Then I replicate my



1 question because what I'm thinking is simply that there  
2 are thousands, maybe tens of thousands, kinds of claims  
3 that people go to arbitration over. And what I'm  
4 wondering here is if you win here, what is the set of  
5 such claims that I have now said that a union, through a  
6 collective bargaining contract, can force the employee  
7 against his will to go to arbitration over? I don't  
8 have a feeling for that from the briefs. I don't have a  
9 feeling that you want to say that discrimination claims  
10 are special in that regard, that there's no line in that  
11 regard, or that there's some other line.

12 MR. FREDERICK: Well, Justice Breyer, I  
13 think that your question really is getting at the theory  
14 behind collective bargaining agreements and what extent  
15 the union can exercise control over the individual  
16 rights and circumstances of employment. That question  
17 is a very complex question over which many, many --

18 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, can you give me a  
19 hint as to the principle?

20 (Laughter.)

21 MR. FREDERICK: I -- well, I think that  
22 there are limits, of course, on the union's authority  
23 that have been recognized in this Court's decisions, and  
24 I don't think that ruling in the workers' favor in this  
25 circumstance opens up any kind of Pandora's box at all,

1     because all we are arguing for is that the  
2     Gardner-Denver line, which was written by this Court  
3     unanimously more 30 years ago, continue to be the law of  
4     the land, as the Court has reaffirmed --

5                 JUSTICE ALITO:   What if a collective  
6     bargaining agreement requires the arbitration of  
7     discrimination claims that are not based on Federal law?  
8     Maybe they are based on -- they are based on State law  
9     that goes further than Federal law, or maybe they are  
10    based on a type of discrimination that's prohibited  
11    neither by Federal or State law.   Maybe it's  
12    discrimination against young people under 40.   Could  
13    those be -- those would still be discrimination claims  
14    with the same potential for -- with a potential for a  
15    conflict of interest.   Could they be subjected to  
16    mandatory arbitration?

17                MR. FREDERICK:   I -- I think that is a  
18    harder case, Justice Alito, but I think that the answer  
19    under this Court's decisions in Gardner-Denver points  
20    the way here, in footnote 19 of the decision.   Where the  
21    union controls that process and where the union is a  
22    potential defendant in that circumstance, the workers'  
23    individual rights cannot be subordinated --

24                JUSTICE GINSBURG:   What about --

25                MR. FREDERICK:   -- to the union's control.

1 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- if it's not a  
2 statutory right; it's just a wrongful discharge? One  
3 practical problem is so often these are overlapping  
4 claims. You can say, "I was discriminated against  
5 before because of my age. I was arbitrarily  
6 discriminated against. It was a wrongful discharge. It  
7 was a discharge without just cause." Usually, there's  
8 multiple claims that can be made, and some of them would  
9 be bargainable, I mean, would come under the union -- I  
10 mean if it was just a question of the worker says, "I  
11 was discharged without just cause," no Title 7 or  
12 anything else, that would come under the arbitration  
13 clause, wouldn't it?

14 MR. FREDERICK: Yes, and I think that there  
15 have been conditions of employment and discharge that  
16 have been arbitrable, and I don't see that there is a --  
17 an issue there where -- except where that intersection  
18 with the statutory discrimination rights occurs. And  
19 Congress has made a different policy judgment with  
20 respect to individual waivers of such rights in --

21 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why has it? Why has it? I  
22 mean, let's assume that my gripe with my employer is  
23 that he hasn't paid me my salary for the last two  
24 months. Now, you can't take away my right to that  
25 unless I voluntarily waived it. What is sacrosanct

1 about the fact that my grievance here has some  
2 discrimination attached to it?

3 Your briefing talks as though it is  
4 something totally apart from a mere economic right.  
5 Ninety-nine percent of the time, you're talking about  
6 economics. "I was fired because of discrimination." "I  
7 wasn't promoted because of discrimination and therefore  
8 I lost this -- this amount of money or that amount of  
9 money."

10 Why is it unthinkable that the -- that the  
11 employee would have to go through the union-prescribed  
12 arbitration for the fact that he wasn't paid for the  
13 last three months but does not have to do it for an  
14 economic injury that occurs because of discrimination?

15 MR. FREDERICK: Well, I'm not sure actually  
16 in answering your hypothetical that they would  
17 necessarily have to go through the union on the  
18 nonpayment because of the Fair Labor Standards Act case.  
19 This Court in Barrentine said that, where an FLSA claim  
20 is at issue, the worker does not -- is not confined or  
21 precluded after arbitrating at the union grievance  
22 process from bringing an FLSA suit in court.

23 So I want to reserve, accepting all of your  
24 hypothetical, Justice Scalia, but in further answer to  
25 the point, I think it's important to keep in mind that

1 in the discrimination context, you're talking about more  
2 than just money. Here my clients are older workers who  
3 are forced into more physically strenuous positions that  
4 they had gotten away from by virtue of their growth in  
5 seniority at the building.

6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, isn't that  
7 kind of conflict always present whenever you have  
8 collective action? I mean, you may be a particularly  
9 good worker and could demand a higher wage than the  
10 union has negotiated, but you're still bound by the  
11 collective bargaining agreement. That happens in every  
12 situation where you have collective action.

13 MR. FREDERICK: Certainly, Mr. Chief  
14 Justice, but where Congress has made a choice that  
15 individual claims for individual anti-discrimination  
16 rights need to be vindicated in particular ways, and  
17 where this Court's --

18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, they don't  
19 have to be vindicated in particular ways. The  
20 individuals can agree to arbitrate these claims, and  
21 they would be -- the arbitration would be binding.

22 MR. FREDERICK: Certainly, but there is  
23 individual consent in that circumstance. I would like  
24 to make a couple of other points before closing.  
25 One is that on pages 4 to 5 in the brief in opposition

1 to cert we specifically raise the issue that the union  
2 controls the arbitration, and there is no opportunity  
3 for individual arbitration under this collective  
4 bargaining agreement.

5           There is nothing in the provision set out in  
6 the petition appendix that gives individual rights, the  
7 individuals the right to arbitrate under this collective  
8 bargaining agreement. The payment provision calls for  
9 50 percent by the employer and 50 percent by the  
10 employee with the employer having the sole right to  
11 terminate the arbitrator for any or no reason at all.

12           JUSTICE SCALIA: You did raise that issue,  
13 but you didn't say that the consequence of that issue  
14 was that you win. You said the consequence of the fact  
15 that that issue was involved in this case was a good  
16 reason not to -- for us to accept cert. And we didn't  
17 take your advice on that.

18           MR. FREDERICK: Well --

19           JUSTICE SCALIA: But it's a totally  
20 different issue whether because of that question you --  
21 you should -- you should win the case.

22           MR. FREDERICK: Certainly, the  
23 interpretation of the collective bargaining agreement is  
24 fairly included within the question presented. And as  
25 this Court found in Wright in a situation where it

1 granted certiorari on the very same question here but  
2 then looked at the specific provisions of the collective  
3 bargaining agreement to determine that, in fact, under  
4 the facts there a different rule applied for a clear and  
5 unambiguous waiver.

6 All we are saying here is that under this  
7 provision there is no opportunity for the individual to  
8 arbitrate, and that raises a -- a problem analogous to  
9 the one that is in Wright. We think that is fairly  
10 included within the question presented, and that the  
11 Court can affirm on that basis, certainly where the  
12 Second Circuit had relied on precedent that said that  
13 where the individual doesn't have a right, that it is  
14 union control of arbitration. That is consistent with  
15 Gardner-Denver.

16 JUSTICE SCALIA: It doesn't have to be  
17 within the question presented. You -- you can sustain  
18 the judgment below on any ground.

19 MR. FREDERICK: Well, I think that --

20 JUSTICE SCALIA: The only question is  
21 whether we will -- we will agree that we should inquire  
22 into new ground. That's all.

23 MR. FREDERICK: My only point is that this  
24 is one of these fuzzy areas where we are not making  
25 independent, alternate ground of affirmance. I think

1 our argument is fairly included within the question  
2 presented and can be affirmed on the basis of that  
3 argument.

4 If the court has no further questions --

5 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What about the argument  
6 that you are -- if you win this case, you are subjecting  
7 the employee to a worse situation because the employer  
8 will simply say: Fine, I don't have to bargain anything  
9 with the union. If you want to work in this workplace,  
10 you sign an arbitration agreement that says you have no  
11 access to the court, and you have to -- just like in  
12 Gilmer, just like in Circuit City.

13 MR. FREDERICK: Well, Justice Ginsburg, I  
14 guess I would answer that question by saying we will pay  
15 our money and take our chances in the sense that the  
16 unions here are supporting the workers where the unions  
17 are acknowledging that there is this kind of conflict of  
18 interest, and the question of whether or not imposing  
19 arbitration on the individual workers would be a  
20 condition of employment. That is a question that you  
21 can safely leave for another day.

22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, they may go  
23 the other way. They may say: Look, we don't like to  
24 arbitrate. In fact, the arbitration is of great benefit  
25 to workers, but it is very expensive to bring these



1 claims, even with the prospect of recovering fees.

2 Most of them like the idea that the union is  
3 going to stand up for them and take it to management,  
4 but they could say: Look, we don't want it. If -- if  
5 you are discriminated against, you know, sue us.

6 MR. FREDERICK: Mr. Chief Justice, in fact,  
7 empirically that is not correct. There is a study that  
8 is cited in a footnote in one of the amicus briefs that  
9 arbitration is more expensive than bringing civil  
10 litigation. And it is because the -- under -- under  
11 their provision if you pay 50 percent of the  
12 arbitrator's costs, you can run up quite a big tab that  
13 you would not have to pay --

14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But under my  
15 scenario, the employer wouldn't have to pay for  
16 arbitration. There would be -- there would be no  
17 arbitration at all.

18 MR. FREDERICK: Well, under your scenario, I  
19 think where the employer would control the arbitral  
20 process, the arbitrator knows who is buttering his  
21 bread.

22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No. There is no  
23 arbitration. The employer says: Look, I don't think I  
24 discriminate. I've got a good record. I'm not going to  
25 agree to arbitrate claims. I'm going to make people go

1 to court because there will be fewer claims brought.

2 MR. FREDERICK: And -- and that has been the  
3 law for 30 years, and we think it should continue to be  
4 the law, Mr. Chief Justice.

5 If the marketplace is going to help weed out  
6 those claims, that's certainly the province of lawyers  
7 taking these cases and clients deciding whether or not  
8 to tell everybody to --

9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But the point is  
10 there are benefits to employees from arbitration as  
11 well.

12 MR. FREDERICK: Certainly --

13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The employer may not  
14 agree to it. If he doesn't have any protection, if it  
15 doesn't buy him anything, if employees can still go to  
16 court, what's the -- what's the point?

17 MR. FREDERICK: That's why this Court has  
18 always said that individual consent and agreement is a  
19 fundamental precept of arbitration. Where that  
20 agreement is absent, a worker should not be forced.  
21 Thank you.

22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,  
23 Mr. Frederick.

24 Mr. Gannon.

25 ORAL ARGUMENT OF CURTIS E. GANNON

1                   ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES,  
2                   AS AMICUS CURIAE,  
3                   SUPPORTING THE RESPONDENTS

4                   MR. GANNON: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it  
5 please the Court: Respondents' fundamental right to a  
6 workplace free of invidious, class-based discrimination  
7 is something their union has no power to barter away in  
8 collective bargaining, and the union --

9                   JUSTICE BREYER: I -- I just want to be sure  
10 that at some point you answer this question, if you can.

11                   I -- I -- the -- the issue in front of us,  
12 as I see it, is just what you said: When can a union  
13 require the worker to accept arbitration rather than a  
14 court case in an instance where the union member has not  
15 signed a special waiver? That's the question, right?  
16 Okay.

17                   And what I think some of us were struggling  
18 for here is: If we say yes to you they can force them,  
19 or no to you they can't, what's the principle?

20                   Now, the easiest kind of case where you tend  
21 to think they can force the worker into arbitration is  
22 where the right grows out of the collective bargaining  
23 agreement, period.

24                   Then we have what we were talking about with  
25 Justice Souter, a common law tort claim. Then we might

1 have a State law giving a claim. Then we might have a  
2 Federal law like this one giving a claim.

3 And we just heard -- I would assume if  
4 Justice Scalia thought of such a case, then the response  
5 was, which was the FSLA: Oh, well, maybe we can't, you  
6 know, force the worker to give that one up either.

7 So what is the line here that we are drawing  
8 with this case? Is it a line that says discrimination  
9 laws, Federal or special? Federal laws are special?  
10 State laws are special? Common law is special?  
11 Collective bargaining, too? What is the principle?

12 MR. GANNON: Yes, Justice Breyer. This  
13 Court's cases have not yet described a specific law, and  
14 --

15 JUSTICE BREYER: That's why I am asking you  
16 for the principle.

17 MR. GANNON: I think that the -- the best  
18 line that we have is -- is stated in both Gardner-Denver  
19 and Barrentine as contrasting statutory rights that are  
20 related to collective activity, and especially economic  
21 activity, are the kinds of things that are normally  
22 delegated to the union. Those are the sorts of things  
23 that the union can actually engage in collective  
24 bargaining about. And when the union negotiates the  
25 underlying right, then it makes perfect sense that the

1 labor arbitration framework that's set forth here would  
2 continue to resolve disputes that are arising under --  
3 out of that specific right.

4 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why -- why doesn't this  
5 come within that?

6 MR. GANNON: Because --

7 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why don't many of these  
8 cases, if not most of them, come within that? The union  
9 negotiates the salaries for various levels, and then the  
10 person says: I should be at this level. The only  
11 reason I didn't get it was that I was discriminated  
12 against.

13 MR. GANNON: Well, I -- I think, Justice  
14 Scalia --

15 JUSTICE SCALIA: You -- you call it a  
16 non-economic theory. Phooey, it's an economic case.

17 MR. GANNON: But I think what's important,  
18 Justice Scalia, is -- is, though -- is the line that the  
19 Court stated in Barrentine: That if a statute is  
20 designed to give specific, minimum protection to  
21 individual workers, then that's the sort of thing that  
22 the union doesn't have the power to engage in collective  
23 bargaining over.

24 And so your salary may well be something  
25 that the union can normally bargain about. But if you

1 want to assert that the -- that the employer or the  
2 union -- because both are the types -- the types of  
3 entities that can be charged with discrimination under  
4 Title VII or the ADA or these other statutes -- the  
5 reason that they gave you a lower salary was on the  
6 basis of something for which you had a Federal statutory  
7 protection, then -- then you have an independent  
8 statutory right that the union's majoritarian  
9 decisionmaking processes should not be in the process of  
10 controlling --

11 JUSTICE SCALIA: It is not taking away the  
12 right. The -- the union is not taking away the right.  
13 It's just saying to vindicate it, you have to go to  
14 arbitration instead of to the courts.

15 MR. GANNON: Yes. And the difference is  
16 that the union is making the decision about where the  
17 claim will be vindicated. And in this case in  
18 particular, the union is going to control whether the  
19 claim will actually be able to be officially vindicated.

20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You have -- you have  
21 focused on the fact that Congress has given individual  
22 rights. But for the many matters that you say are the  
23 subject of collective bargaining, you don't need a  
24 statute. I don't need a statute to negotiate with  
25 someone whether I get paid \$20 an hour or \$15 an hour

1 for a particular job. And, yet, that is something that  
2 you give up when you join the union, and you are subject  
3 to collective bargaining.

4 MR. GANNON: Absolutely, Mr. Chief Justice.

5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, why isn't it  
6 -- why isn't it the same with these statutory rights?  
7 Why aren't they subject to collective bargaining as  
8 well?

9 MR. GANNON: Well, I -- even the employer  
10 here is not claiming that the underlying statutory right  
11 is subject to collective bargaining. They are just  
12 saying --

13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No. No. I am --  
14 the -- the forum for asserting the right.

15 MR. GANNON: Well, in this instance Congress  
16 gave individual employees the right to bring a civil  
17 action in a judicial forum as a means of enforcing their  
18 antidiscrimination claims. And although arbitration may  
19 always provide an alternative forum for that, this Court  
20 has repeatedly made clear that arbitration is always a  
21 matter of contract. And it does not impose on the  
22 employer any more than on the employee a requirement  
23 that they arbitrate a claim when they --

24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why would any  
25 employer want to agree to arbitration under this system?

1 He gets nothing from it. You said you get the ben -- to  
2 arbitrate except when you don't arbitrate.

3 MR. GANNON: Well, Mr. Chief Justice, I  
4 don't think that that's true. Since 1974, this has been  
5 the law of the land, and it's been even after Gilmer in  
6 every circuit --

7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That just begs the  
8 question that your interpretation of Gardner-Denver is  
9 correct.

10 MR. GANNON: Well, it -- it is the  
11 prevailing interpretation in every circuit that has  
12 considered the question since Gilmer except the Fourth  
13 Circuit. And if you look at the empirical data that's  
14 mentioned in some of amicus briefs, including the  
15 particular amicus brief of the National Academy of  
16 Arbitrators, it is true that even when there is just a  
17 labor arbitration machinery that was invalid under the  
18 terms of Gardner-Denver and would not be binding on the  
19 employee if the employee happens to lose in that  
20 arbitration, in most of those cases when the employee  
21 loses that arbitration, he does not go on to file an  
22 independent case in federal court.

23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Your position -- so  
24 their position is going to hurt most employees, because  
25 assuming that the employer wants to arbitrate, the union



1 gets something in return for agreeing to that. I don't  
2 know what it is, another 50 cents an hour, if you agree  
3 to arbitrate all these claims. Well, you don't get that  
4 anymore, because and employer is not going to agree to  
5 arbitrate if it -- if the employees don't have to  
6 arbitrate.

7 MR. GANNON: Well, we don't think that there  
8 is any reason why the employees will not be able to make  
9 a grievance with the employers, as was made possible in  
10 Gilmer. And so that the point is that it just can't be  
11 a vicarious agreement to arbitration on behalf of the  
12 individual.

13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, the employees  
14 have no -- no leverage. I mean, if the -- if the  
15 employer wants to say, look, if you want to work here,  
16 look, you got to arbitrate -- I mean, the employees  
17 don't have bargaining leverage. That's the whole reason  
18 you have a union.

19 MR. GANNON: Well, there was an argument in  
20 Gilmer that they didn't have leverage, either. And the  
21 Court stressed that as long as the employee has actually  
22 agreed to it, that -- and -- and as long as the arbitral  
23 forum is going to be adequate to provide for effective  
24 vindication of the underlying statutory rights, then --  
25 then the arbitral forum would be adequate.

1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Suppose the employer did  
2 have the practice that the Chief Justice suggested, it  
3 tells each employee you have to sign an arbitration  
4 form, could the union in its collective bargaining  
5 negotiations say that you will withdraw this forum and  
6 that you shall not impose this obligation?

7 MR. GANNON: Well, that's -- as  
8 Mr. Frederick mentioned and is as discussed in several  
9 of the briefs, that's an undecided question of labor  
10 law. The National Labor Relations Board --

11 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I'm asking in your view if  
12 it came up to it, how would that be decided --

13 MR. GANNON: Well --

14 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Because I'm concerned it's  
15 the same thing as the Chief Justice mentioned, I just  
16 don't think the employer is going to get very much under  
17 this interpretation. And that may, ultimately, hurt the  
18 employee.

19 MR. GANNON: We think that as long as the  
20 employee have been -- have been able to indicate exactly  
21 the same level of individual agreements that was upheld  
22 in Gilmer and that the arbitral forum itself is going to  
23 be adequate, that that takes care of that half of the  
24 question.

25 The National Labor Relations Board which

1 has -- which would be entitled to deference on this  
2 question and which has never spoken to the labor law  
3 question of what role the unions might be able to play  
4 in helping facilitate the agreements negotiated between  
5 the employers and the individual employees, it could  
6 come out in at least three different ways.

7           One of them is the arrangement outlined in  
8 the Abbott D.C. Circuit decision that -- that  
9 Petitioners rely upon. But, of course, that's an  
10 instance where there were two completely separate  
11 agreements that the employment arbitration was agreed to  
12 by the employees before they are even represented by the  
13 union. It was at the outset of the establishment of the  
14 employment relationship, which Mr. Frederick discusses.

15           JUSTICE SOUTER: But doesn't it boil down --  
16 doesn't your argument really boil down to this: That  
17 the only case in which it's really going to matter is  
18 the case in which the arbitration agreement contains a  
19 clause that gives the union plenary authority over the  
20 disposition of the claim? And I say that for this  
21 reason. If -- if this is outside the subject of  
22 mandatory bargaining, then the employer can impose it;  
23 in effect, as a matter of individual contract.

24           If it's within the subject of mandatory  
25 bargaining but it's not effective unless the employee

1   also signs at the time of the incident or at the time he  
2   is hired an individual waiver, then, in fact, the only  
3   case in which it's going to make any difference as to  
4   whether you win or he wins is the case in which the  
5   agreement has got a clause in there that gives the union  
6   plenary authority to dispose of the claim.

7                   Isn't that correct?

8                   MR. GANNON: Well, not necessarily, Justice  
9   Souter, because there are all sorts of other attributes  
10  of the arbitral forum that might -- might well be  
11  relevant to the question of whether it's sufficient to  
12  effectively been -- rights. In Gilmer itself, the Court  
13  specifically considered whether the employee,  
14  Mr. Gilmer, would have an opportunity to play a role in  
15  selecting the arbitrator.

16                   In this instance, even under Petitioner's  
17  view of the CBA, which we don't think is supported by  
18  the text of the CBA, this -- these employees are still  
19  stuck with an arbitrator who has been chosen by the  
20  employer and by the union. And those are the two  
21  entities that have already decided that their claim is  
22  meritless.

23                   JUSTICE ALITO: -- more variables of Justice  
24  Souter's question, if those variables are satisfied,  
25  what's -- what is your answer to his question?

1 MR. GANNON: If the variables are --

2 JUSTICE ALITO: You're saying that this  
3 might -- this might not be true and that may not be  
4 true, but suppose all of those other requirements are  
5 satisfied?

6 MR. GANNON: We think that there needs to be  
7 individual agreement in order to comply with Gilmer  
8 because of the underlying inherent tension between the  
9 collective interest of the union and the individual  
10 interests of the employees, especially in  
11 anti-discrimination statutes.

12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.

13 Mr. Salvatore, you have four minutes  
14 remaining.

15 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF PAUL SALVATORE

16 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS

17 MR. SALVATORE: Thank you, Mr. Chief  
18 Justice. A couple of quick points in response.

19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Salvatore, would you  
20 straighten out this business it seems about who pays?  
21 Mr. Frederick said that 50 percent would have to be paid  
22 by the employee. If the union bows out and there is  
23 just the employer and the employee in the arbitration,  
24 that employee would have to pick up 50 percent. I think  
25 I understood him to say that.

1 MR. SALVATORE: And I refer you, Justice  
2 Ginsburg, to page 47a of the joint -- of the petition  
3 appendix, which contains the main frame arbitration  
4 Article 6 of this collective bargaining agreement, the  
5 last paragraph --

6 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What page did you -- did  
7 you reference?

8 MR. SALVATORE: 47a of the petition  
9 appendix, the last paragraph on that page.

10 JUSTICE SCALIA: Article 7, no.

11 MR. SALVATORE: I'm sorry?

12 JUSTICE SCALIA: You said Article 6. Isn't  
13 it Article 7, if it's on 47a?

14 MR. SALVATORE: Article 6 starts on 43a. It  
15 goes all the way over to 47a of the petition appendix,  
16 right after the ellipses at the bottom of the page.

17 JUSTICE SCALIA: Oh, I see. Okay, so you  
18 are on 6. I got you.

19 MR. SALVATORE: The cost of the office of  
20 the contract arbitrator shall be shared equally in a  
21 manner determined by the union and the RAB. The way  
22 that the parties -- the bargaining parties have  
23 determined that these costs be shared is that if -- if  
24 the union is not involved in a case, the employer pays.  
25 And -- and so, that's -- I mean, that's right from the

1 --

2 JUSTICE SCALIA: Where does that appear?

3 JUSTICE SOUTER: Is that written down

4 somewhere?

5 JUSTICE SCALIA: Where does that appear?

6 MR. SALVATORE: That's -- that's the -- the

7 agreement between the collective bargaining parties.

8 It's not -- it's not written down beyond that -- that --

9 that place. The office -- that place in the contract.

10 The office of the contract arbitrator is -- is -- is a

11 place. It's an arbitration forum. It's like going to

12 the American Arbitration Association.

13 It has hearing rooms. It -- it -- there --

14 it has administrators who assign the arbitrators. The

15 arbitrators aren't picked out of -- you know, by one

16 side or the other. Yes, they are put on the panel by --

17 by the bargaining parties, but they are picked by a case

18 administrator.

19 There's 700 arbitrations that go on in this

20 industry every year and that's why instead of going to

21 the American Arbitration Association, these parties a

22 long time ago set up their own. A couple --

23 JUSTICE GINSBURG: If the -- if the idea is

24 that the union sees this right to the worker, then

25 doesn't have to -- doesn't the burden go with the right

1 as well? I mean, the -- if the union would pay, you're  
2 saying that the employer will just accept that the  
3 employer picks up the entire tab?

4 MR. SALVATORE: Yes, Justice Ginsburg. And  
5 there are -- are several points. First, there is no  
6 conflict here in this case. The union did the right  
7 thing. It turned the claim over to the individual  
8 employees with their private counsel and let them go  
9 arbitrate it themselves. They refused. This isn't a  
10 Magnavox situation. The union is not --

11 JUSTICE SOUTER: I mean, they didn't turn it  
12 over, did they, until the action had been brought in the  
13 Federal court? I mean, they didn't -- maybe I'm wrong  
14 in this, but I didn't think that on day one they -- they  
15 said, oh, well, because the union doesn't want to  
16 proceed with this, you're welcome to chug ahead by  
17 yourself.

18 MR. SALVATORE: Let me explain that time  
19 frame, Justice Souter. What happened here was the claim  
20 was originally tendered by these employees to the union  
21 to bring an arbitration. The union decided after the  
22 first hearing day with the arbitrator that they couldn't  
23 go forward for whatever reasons -- it's not in the  
24 record -- and then they, several months went by, these  
25 employees filed with their counsel at the EEOC under



1 Waffle House, we did nothing and waited and the --  
2 representing the employers, and then the -- the lawsuit  
3 was filed.

4 At that point the record is clear that  
5 demand was made on -- on the employee's counsel,  
6 Mr. Kreisberg -- it's in his affidavit -- that -- that  
7 he returned to Arbitrator Pfeiffer to the pending  
8 arbitration and continue in that forum, and he refused  
9 to. That was the basis of the motion to compel.

10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.  
11 The case is submitted.

12 MR. SALVATORE: Thank you.

13 (Whereupon, at 12:00 p.m., the case in the  
14 above-entitled matter was submitted.)  
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