| 1 | IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES | | |
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| 3 | ELLEN GELBOIM, ET AL., : | | |
| 4 | Petitioners : No. 13-1174 | | |
| 5 | v. : | | |
| 6 | BANK OF AMERICA : | | |
| 7 | CORPORATION, ET AL. : | | |
| 8 | x | | |
| 9 | Washington, D.C. | | |
| 10 | Tuesday, December 9, 2014 | | |
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| 12 | The above-entitled matter came on for oral | | |
| 13 | argument before the Supreme Court of the United States | | |
| 14 | at 10:11 a.m. | | |
| 15 | APPEARANCES: | | |
| 16 | THOMAS C. GOLDSTEIN, ESQ., Bethesda, Md.; on behalf of | | |
| 17 | Petitioners. | | |
| 18 | SETH P. WAXMAN, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of | | |
| 19 | Respondents. | | |
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- 1 PROCEEDINGS
- 2 (10:11 a.m.)
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
- 4 first this morning in Case 13-1174, Gelboim v. Bank of
- 5 America.
- 6 Mr. Goldstein.
- 7 ORAL ARGUMENT OF THOMAS C. GOLDSTEIN
- 8 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
- 9 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Mr. Chief Justice, may it
- 10 please the Court:
- 11 My clients filed this lawsuit against
- 12 Mr. Waxman's clients. The district court dismissed that
- 13 lawsuit and said that it was terminated.
- Now, from the earliest days of this Court's
- 15 -- excuse me, this nation's jurisdictional statutes,
- 16 that would be an appealable order under the aptly named
- 17 Final Judgment Rule, and that must be so unless
- 18 something changed with Congress's enactment of Section
- 19 1407(a) of the multidistrict litigation statute. And we
- 20 ask you to hold that nothing changed, and it was
- 21 appealable for three reasons.
- The first is the judgment was entered in
- 23 this action. It was dismissed. We had our own
- 24 complaint, our own docket, our own lawyers, our own
- 25 plaintiffs, and our own defendants.

- 1 The second is that there is no judgment in
- 2 the MDL itself, so there is nothing from which we could
- 3 appeal at the end of the MDL litigation, so it must be
- 4 that we appeal from this.
- 5 And the third is that Rule 54(b) of the
- 6 Rules of Civil Procedure does not apply because that
- 7 applies to the dismissal of part of an action, some of
- 8 the claims or some of the parties, not the whole action.
- 9 And here, the whole action was dismissed.
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Could you tell me,
- 11 first, what difference there is, if any, pursuant to
- 12 your reasons, that would not apply to a consolidated
- 13 case for all purposes, number one? And, number two,
- 14 isn't a case consolidated with others, for purposes of
- 15 pretrial proceedings, a pending action that involves
- 16 multiple parties?
- 17 MR. GOLDSTEIN: As to the first, there are
- 18 different forms of consolidation. Both sides agree with
- 19 that. They make this point, the Respondents do, on
- 20 page 33 of their brief. There are forms of
- 21 consolidation that produce a single action. That can
- 22 happen under Rule 20 with joinder. It can happen under
- 23 Rule 42(a)(1) if the parties consent with consolidation.
- 24 The cases can become so intertwined that there is
- 25 effectively one case, one complaint, and one action.

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1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's, frankly, not the
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- 2 majority of the cases. In --
- 3 MR. GOLDSTEIN: That doesn't happen most of
- 4 the time. That's correct.
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In -- in most of the
- 6 MDLs --
- 7 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- most of the cases
- 9 retain their individual character, even though they're
- 10 consolidated for all purposes. There may be a case
- 11 that's taken as a test case among the many, et cetera.
- 12 Your rule basically is saying consolidation
- 13 now will permit piecemeal appeals in almost every
- 14 circumstance, except for a very limited number.
- 15 MR. GOLDSTEIN: One preliminary point and
- 16 then the question about what our rule produces.
- 17 In MDL litigation, as this district court
- 18 recognized, you actually don't have consolidation for
- 19 all purposes. Section 1407(a) specifies is that there
- 20 can be consolidation for pretrial purposes only. The
- 21 pretrial purposes in this case are over. The complaint
- 22 was dismissed.
- Now, as to the policy arguments of the
- 24 Respondents, that there is a grave concern that our rule
- 25 would produce interlocutory appeals that go up to the

- 1 court of appeals, lots of different times, there is a
- 2 straightforward answer to that point, and that is that
- 3 district courts, just as they have the discretion to
- 4 enter a partial final judgment under Rule 54(b), have
- 5 the same discretion to avoid entering a final judgment
- 6 in individual actions under Rule 58(b).
- 7 And this is very common in MDL litigation,
- 8 just as you indicate, Justice Sotomayor. Very
- 9 frequently district courts will enter consolidated
- 10 complaints and will not enter orders in the individual
- 11 actions that would be appealable.
- 12 The distinct feature of this case, the
- 13 critical distinct feature here is that this district
- 14 court decided to dismiss in its entirety our individual
- 15 actions. She didn't have to do that, but she did it
- 16 consciously --
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, does the
- 18 150-day provision kick in? I mean, you said don't worry
- 19 about this. District courts can just put it on the back
- 20 burner for three years, however long. Doesn't the
- 21 150-day provision kick in if, in fact, the district
- 22 court has dismissed all of the claims?
- 23 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Two things, Mr. Chief
- 24 Justice. First, we think it does not. So here we're
- 25 talking about Rule 58(b) and Rule 58(c). And I

- 1 apologize, those --
- 2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Doesn't Rule 58 say
- 3 unless otherwise provided?
- 4 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes. But you --
- 5 JUSTICE GINSBURG: So they -- automatic
- 6 entry of judgment doesn't happen if the district judge
- 7 specifically otherwise provides.
- 8 MR. GOLDSTEIN: That is correct. But there,
- 9 the Chief Justice is pointing out that it's not entirely
- 10 clear what 58(c) means and how long the district court's
- 11 discretion lasts under Rule 58(b). I will give you an
- 12 example, and if the Court wanted the -- the library or
- 13 the clerks to look up the 1935 MDL in the --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Oh, we could do it
- 15 ourselves.
- 16 (Laughter.)
- 17 MR. GOLDSTEIN: The MDL litigation -- as you
- 18 well could -- the MDL litigation in the Chocolate
- 19 litigation, there the district court used the tool that
- 20 we're discussing right now. It said, I'm going to
- 21 resolve some of the claims, but I'm not going to enter
- 22 an appealable judgment.
- We do think that's the better reading.
- JUSTICE BREYER: How do you do that?
- 25 Because not -- not all of us can look it up themselves.

- 1 (Laughter.)
- 2 MR. GOLDSTEIN: There is a --
- 3 JUSTICE BREYER: The --
- 4 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Right.
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: The rule does say that the
- 6 clerk, once the -- once the judge denies all relief, he
- 7 says to you or somebody, I deny all relief in your case,
- 8 then the clerk is supposed to just enter the judgment.
- 9 MR. GOLDSTEIN: With one --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: So how -- how is the judge
- 11 supposed to not do that?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: Just noting that I do want
- 13 to return to the other tools the district court has.
- 14 And I apologize, the parties have not reproduced the
- 15 rules, so I'm going to describe it for you, and that
- 16 is --
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: Why not just answer what I
- 18 just asked you.
- 19 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Okay. That is, that Rule
- 20 58(b)(1) provides --
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah.
- 22 MR. GOLDSTEIN: -- that the district
- 23 court -- and this is the provision Justice Ginsburg is
- 24 talking about -- the district court may direct the clerk
- 25 not to enter a judgment. The Rule 58 --

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1 JUSTICE BREYER: Oh, I get it. I see. So
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- 2 he says don't do it.
- 3 But we have seven -- I mean, I am moved by
- 4 this. We have a group of federal district judges --
- 5 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: -- who actually don't have
- 7 to look these up because every day they work with them.
- 8 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Well, they are actually --
- 9 they are not --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: And tell us your rule -- if
- 11 we agree with you, we are going to produce a mess. And
- 12 then they have about seven different ways in which it
- 13 will produce a mess in various cases. And so,
- obviously, I do pay attention when the district judges
- 15 do say that.
- And so I'm not a district judge, but I don't
- 17 want to produce a mess for them. The MDL is trying to
- 18 do the opposite. So what's the answer to what they say?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: Okay. What they say,
- 20 Mr. Justice Breyer, is actually not that our -- our
- 21 result will produce a mess. It is -- they quite clearly
- 22 say, we're not asking you to -- we're not saying what
- 23 the correct interpretation of the statute or rules are.
- 24 They have a grave concern that you identify, which is we
- 25 don't want automatic interlocutory appeals from MDLs.

- 1 Our answer is that our rule does not produce
- 2 automatic interlocutory appeals because district judges
- 3 are perfectly free, through a number of tools, only one
- 4 of which we've been discussing, not to enter.
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: Has -- has that happened to
- 6 a lot of district judge? Your rule is the district
- 7 judge, despite Rule 58(b), et cetera, says, I deny all
- 8 relief in your case, Mr. Smith, everyone out, good-bye.
- 9 Then you say to the clerk, Clerk, don't
- 10 enter the piece of paper called the judgment because I
- don't want them to take an appeal.
- 12 And then they ask for mandamus on the ground
- 13 that must be an abusive discretion. What happens? Or
- 14 has it happened a lot?
- 15 MR. GOLDSTEIN: There is an MDL in which
- 16 this happened.
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: What?
- 18 MR. GOLDSTEIN: It is the Chocolate MDL.
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: All right.
- 20 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Well, the reason it doesn't
- 21 happen very often, Justice Breyer, is this problem
- doesn't happen very often. So preliminarily, the only
- 23 time --
- 24 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. So I see. Your rule
- 25 will, in fact, win your case for your client.

- 1 MR. GOLDSTEIN: No.
- 2 JUSTICE BREYER: And then in the future, no
- 3 one else is --
- 4 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Justice Breyer, that is not
- 5 correct. Frequently district judges will want these
- 6 questions to go up on appeal because they will get
- 7 quidance.
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: 54.
- 9 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Now, they can do it under 54
- 10 or they can enter a final judgment in the case. So
- 11 there is the 1935 MDL using Rule 58(b), but there are
- 12 many other tools the district judges have.
- 13 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Goldstein, as -- as
- 14 your view of the case is 54(b) would not be
- 15 appropriate --
- 16 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- when the -- when the
- 18 judge says, I dismiss this claim entirely. This
- 19 complaint is out. It's a final judgment. It's not
- 20 appropriate for Rule 54 because Rule 54(b) is when one
- 21 claim is done, but other claims are still pending.
- 22 MR. GOLDSTEIN: That's correct. Justice
- 23 Breyer's suggestion of Rule 54(b) would not work if the
- 24 district judge has dismissed the entire action.
- 25 It does say by its terms that it applies

- 1 only to the dismissal of some of the parties or some of
- 2 the claims in the action. The action throughout the
- 3 rule of civil proceed -- Rules of Civil Procedure refers
- 4 only to one thing, that is, the individual piece of
- 5 litigation. We have our own complaint, our own docket,
- 6 our own plaintiffs, defendants, and lawyers.
- 7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But -- but your -- your
- 8 answer is that, oh, well, the district judge can find
- 9 plenty of ways, disingenuously perhaps, to say this
- 10 isn't going to be entered yet, we're just going to wait.
- 11 And so Chief Justice says you have the 150-day problem.
- 12 It -- it seems to me that if you're asking for these
- 13 sort of furtive measures, we might as well face up to
- 14 the problem right away and just adopt Mr. Waxman's
- 15 position.
- 16 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Well, Justice Kennedy, we
- 17 don't think it's --
- 18 JUSTICE KENNEDY: It seems to me you're
- 19 asking the judge to be almost disingenuous.
- 20 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Well, we disagree for the
- 21 following reason, and that is, if the point of
- 22 Mr. Waxman's side is that district judges need
- 23 discretion to decide when to enter judgments, whether
- 24 they're 54(b), partial final judgments, or final
- 25 judgments under Rule 58, the discretion should be the

- 1 same.
- 2 And the tools that I'm talking about are not
- 3 used disingenuously by your district judges. They are
- 4 used consistently, and that is --
- 5 JUSTICE KAGAN: Are you then saying that
- 6 there's no practical difference between your position
- 7 and Mr. Waxman's position? In other words, you're
- 8 saying Rule 54 is not the right vehicle.
- 9 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: And that's an important
- 11 point.
- 12 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: It's important to get the
- 14 rules right, whether it's Rule 54 or something else.
- 15 But are you saying that there is no practical difference
- 16 between the two?
- 17 MR. GOLDSTEIN: I'm saying there's little
- 18 practical difference. There is some, and that is that
- 19 their side requires the district court and the court of
- 20 appeals to have litigation on whether Rule 54(b)
- 21 certification is appropriate, and whether the district
- 22 court abused its discretion in entering a Rule 54(b)
- 23 judgment. But there isn't much beyond that.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: There's one huge
- 25 difference. The district judge can say no to 54(b) if

- 1 it's a final judgment. In this -- in this very case,
- 2 that's exactly what the judge said. In the first round,
- 3 he said, you have an appeal of right, and -- she said to
- 4 the plaintiff who was dismissed.
- 5 And then when the Second Circuit said no,
- 6 she refused to give a 54(b).
- 7 MR. GOLDSTEIN: The reason it's not a huge
- 8 difference, Justice Ginsburg, is that the district court
- 9 doesn't have to enter a final judgment.
- 10 I'll give you a very specific example. The
- 11 district court in this case entered a ruling in three
- 12 different cases, the OTC plaintiff's case, the exchange
- 13 plaintiff's case, and the -- our clients, the bondholder
- 14 case. And if the district court had instead entered her
- opinion in the OTC or exchange complaints in the
- 16 complaint that had just an antitrust claim, for example,
- 17 that did not have just an antitrust claim, then there
- 18 would not be an appealable final judgment.
- 19 The district court quite consciously
- 20 resolved all the antitrust issues, knowing that they
- 21 would go up on appeal. She just changed her mind only
- 22 after the Second Circuit, in a rule that the Respondents
- 23 do not defend, decided that it did not want to hear the
- 24 appeal as a matter of its discretion.
- 25 It is quite important, I think, that --

- 1 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I don't think this court
- 2 of appeals said as a matter of its discretion, and that
- 3 was one thing that puzzled me about your presentation.
- 4 The court of appeals said we have no jurisdiction.
- 5 That's quite different from saying we have discretion.
- 6 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Ah. But, Justice Ginsburg,
- 7 their rule is a case-by-case determination if they do
- 8 have jurisdiction. And they said, in our -- they did it
- 9 sua sponte. The defendants did not move actually to
- 10 dismiss our appeal. The court of appeals, applying this
- 11 case-by-case rule that's very hard to predict, which is
- 12 why the Respondents don't defend it, said, we think --
- 13 they didn't explain much about what they -- the reason
- 14 that they dismissed it.
- 15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: They said we had no
- 16 jurisdiction.
- 17 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Right, they did. But their
- 18 rule is that sometimes you can have an -- an appeal like
- 19 this, and they will deem it to be an appealable final
- 20 judgment.
- 21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: They said they -- they --
- 22 there was a -- there's a phrase that the Second Circuit
- 23 uses, and it -- something to the effect of an
- 24 extraordinary case, an exceptional case.
- 25 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes, that's correct. Right.

- 1 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But their main rule is
- 2 there's no jurisdiction.
- 3 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Right. And the great
- 4 majority of circuits apply the opposite rule. They
- 5 recognize that there's no reason to depart from the
- 6 ordinary, long-settled understanding of what a final
- 7 judgment is. It is called the final judgment rule. We
- 8 happen --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Can we go back to
- 10 Justice Kennedy's question about the disingenuous nature
- 11 of this?
- 12 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yeah.
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So we write an opinion
- 14 and say, no, it's a final judgment. It could be
- 15 appealed.
- 16 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But district courts, you
- 18 have other tools not to enter the judgment?
- 19 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You can delay it?
- 21 MR. GOLDSTEIN: I --
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That -- that does sound
- 23 like all we're saying that this is a very formalistic
- 24 ruling. But haven't we said -- quoting myself in
- 25 Mohawk -- that the inquiry should always be a practical

- 1 one --
- 2 MR. GOLDSTEIN: It is --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- and that efficiency
- 4 is part of the calculus?
- 5 MR. GOLDSTEIN: The Court has said that
- 6 there is a practical inquiry in one important respect,
- 7 and that is the Court has broadened the notion of what
- 8 could be an appealable final judgment. But it has never
- 9 denied the fact that when you decide the case, you
- 10 resolve it, you terminate it as the district court does
- 11 here. That is a final judgment for the purposes of --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That is, if you look at
- 13 it as narrowly as you do.
- 14 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Your Honor, let me just --
- in the MDL, these cases were brought together because
- 16 there was a common factual allegation. And that is that
- 17 Mr. Waxman's clients manipulated LIBOR. But we have a
- 18 different complaint in a different docket with different
- 19 plaintiffs and defendants, and the district court
- 20 decided to dismiss our case. I admit and I --
- 21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you asked -- you
- asked to be part of the MDL case, didn't you?
- 23 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes, that's correct. In
- 24 the -- well, we filed in the Southern District of New
- 25 York. We asked to be part of the MDL litigation. The

- 1 district court initially said that we would be
- 2 consolidated for all purposes and then recognized she
- 3 could not do, that it would be consolidated only for
- 4 pretrial purposes. The pretrial purposes are now over.
- 5 We were dismissed and therefore --
- 6 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. -- Mr. Goldstein,
- 7 following up the -- what has been called disingenuous.
- 8 If no judgment -- if there is no final judgment, the
- 9 judge says, this is how I'm going to rule, but I'm going
- 10 to defer making the ruling.
- 11 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- 12 JUSTICE GINSBURG: That party still is in
- 13 the case --
- 14 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- 15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- and can participate in
- 16 discovery. Your strong point, I thought, was, here,
- 17 they said I'm out of the case. Can't participate in it
- 18 anymore because I have no standing according to the
- 19 district judge --
- 20 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Right.
- 21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- and yet I have to wait
- 22 six years or however -- however long the MDL proceedings
- 23 go on. So it says you're out, but you can't appeal.
- 24 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes. Now there -- what
- 25 district judges do in this circumstance, Your Honor, is

- 1 that they stay the case that they believe will not go
- 2 forward. This is something that Judge Rakoff does with
- 3 some regularity in complex litigation. What he will say
- 4 is my inclination is I'm going to ultimately say that
- 5 the antitrust claims cannot go forward and what I'm
- 6 going to do, therefore, is stay the antitrust claims
- 7 and, therefore, you do not participate in discovery, for
- 8 example.
- 9 But we do think it is important to recognize
- 10 that there is a real reason for the appeals to go
- 11 forward and that is, that it avoids duplicative
- 12 discovery when we have to come back after appeal and
- 13 there is the very real prospect of multiple appeals in
- 14 multiple different courts after the MDL --
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I don't understand that.
- 16 That's arguing that they shouldn't exercise their 58(c).
- 17 That's what Judge Rakoff is essentially doing. He's
- 18 saying, and you're saying, we shouldn't let them.
- 19 MR. GOLDSTEIN: I'm sorry, Your Honor, no --
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If he can say it for as
- 21 long as he thinks is appropriate --
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- 23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- what's the
- 24 difference?
- 25 MR. GOLDSTEIN: What's the practical

- 1 difference between the parties?
- 2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In terms of the effect
- 3 on you. You're not going to participate in discovery
- 4 under his system.
- 5 MR. GOLDSTEIN: That's -- that is correct.
- 6 And so my point to the Court is the following: And,
- 7 that is, to the extent that members of the Court are
- 8 concerned, that the district courts are concerned, the
- 9 district judges that you cite, Justice Breyer, that we
- 10 shouldn't have these interlocutory appeals, then the
- 11 district courts have the tools to deal with that --
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah, but what they tell
- 13 us, these judges, who are experienced, I stress, on
- 14 pages 12 and 13, "District courts have evaluated the
- 15 Third Circuit factors," that is 54(b) factors, "in
- deciding whether to certify one among several
- 17 consolidated cases for appeal." Footnote, and then in
- 18 the footnote they have several cases which I take it,
- 19 since they tell us that, are cases where they were
- 20 consolidated cases, they used 54(b) to say that one of
- 21 the cases could go ahead on appeal.
- Now, I took that as saying that judges are
- using 54(b) to accomplish the end that we seem
- 24 apparently everyone wants, giving them the flexibility,
- and not the system that you propose.

- 1 MR. GOLDSTEIN: That is not correct, Justice
- 2 Breyer. And here's --
- 3 JUSTICE BREYER: So are they wrong or I'm
- 4 not reading it right? Probably the latter.
- 5 MR. GOLDSTEIN: They -- there is some -- a
- 6 piece of the puzzle that's missing, and that is that
- 7 ours is the rule that for decades has been applied in
- 8 the great majority of the country. There are --
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: In 54 in fifty -- in the
- 10 majority of the country judges have said, when we have
- 11 four cases in front of us, we have consolidated and we
- 12 wish to dismiss one but keep the others going, they have
- 13 said, we cannot use 54(b). They have to have an appeal.
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: No, Justice Breyer. What
- 15 it -- here's the situation. In MDL litigation, which is
- 16 consolidated --
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: I'm not talking about MDL.
- 18 I'm just talking about consolidated cases.
- 19 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Well, if it's consolidated
- 20 for all purposes, that's quite different. You get --
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay.
- 22 MR. GOLDSTEIN: -- a single action.
- 23 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. Then talk about MDL.
- 24 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Okay. MDL litigation, the
- 25 rule is, as described in the cert papers, overwhelmingly

- 1 in our favor, and that is the district courts enter
- 2 judgments when they are prepared for the issue to go up
- 3 on appeal. The rule is, in the great majority of
- 4 circuits, that if you do enter a judgment in an
- 5 individual action in MDL litigation, you appeal. And so
- 6 district courts are perfectly aware of it.
- 7 We call it formal as if it were a bad thing
- 8 that we have a final judgment rule, but it is not a bad
- 9 thing. It is really important to have clarity.
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: But if I could understand,
- 11 Mr. Goldstein, what you're saying. Do you think that a
- 12 judge properly considers the exact same factors whether
- 13 it's done as the Respondents would like under Rule 54,
- or instead, whether it's done your way by staying the
- 15 action or by holding off on a final order?
- 16 MR. GOLDSTEIN: The answer to that question
- 17 is I am agnostic on it. My point is that to the extent
- 18 that you all -- that the Court agrees with Mr. Waxman's
- 19 point, the district courts need that discretion, then
- 20 our solution is simply to give them that discretion with
- 21 respect to the entry of the final judgment. It is not
- 22 an argument against our position.
- 23 The argument for our position that I have
- 24 not gotten to, and I do want to make sure we don't miss
- 25 it, is that I am required under Rule 4 of the Federal

- 1 Rules of Appellate Procedure and Section 2107 of the
- 2 statutes, to appeal within 30 days of the order or
- 3 judgment that is affecting me. At the end of the MDL,
- 4 there is no such order or judgment. The only thing that
- 5 I can appeal from is the dismissal of my action. I do
- 6 not know, at the end of the MDL, what it is that I'm
- 7 actually appealing from. They have -- the other problem
- 8 that they have is that Rule 54(b) doesn't apply here
- 9 because the entire act -- you're going to have to change
- 10 the meaning of what an action is throughout the -- all
- of the Rules of Civil Procedure, which is uniformly the
- 12 single piece of litigation, the single complaint, and
- 13 there is no reason to create confusion.
- 14 Imagine after the ruling that Mr. Waxman
- 15 wants, there are four cases in the district court, and
- 16 they relate to the same sort of facts, and the district
- 17 court dismisses one. If you introduce this ambiguity
- 18 about what an action is, then people are going to be
- 19 unclear about when it is that they should be appealing.
- 20 Because our lawsuit is a separate one; it is in a
- 21 separate docket, we have a separate complaint.
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Doesn't -- doesn't it
- 23 become clear once we announce it? It's not like anybody
- 24 involved in the MDL doesn't carefully know what's going
- on. That's the advantage of those cases.

- 1 MR. GOLDSTEIN: It does not.
- 2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And there is an order.
- 3 There's an order terminating the MDL --
- 4 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Justice --
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- and sending the cases
- 6 that are going to be sent back, back, and the ones who are
- 7 finalized, those are finalized.
- 8 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Here's what happens. And I
- 9 suggest that the Court look at the docket, for example,
- in the Fontainebleau MDL, which is I think number 2106.
- 11 So what happens here is that at the end of the
- 12 proceedings, imagine the district court dismisses
- 13 complaint A, that will be my complaint, and then later
- on complaints B and C settle. So they are done. They
- 15 are voluntarily dismissed.
- 16 So there is no final judgment there. It
- 17 could be years later. What the district court will do
- 18 is it will send a recommendation to the JPML saying I
- 19 think that this case is over. The JPML, which is not
- 20 even in that circuit, will enter an order saying, we
- 21 agree. It is possible that the district court will just
- 22 enter a notation in the main MDL docket saying the MDL
- 23 is closed. But that is not an order or judgment from
- 24 which we are appealing. It is not an order or judgment
- 25 that affects us. It's not a judgment at all. It's just

- 1 an administrative notation.
- 2 This is a place where turning square corners
- 3 matters, where you should apply the actual status and
- 4 rules. We don't need a new regime about what an action
- 5 is, what a judgment is, what a final judgment is. In
- 6 order to in -- accommodate the important policy concerns
- 7 that Mr. Waxman may be raising, we don't have to change
- 8 the meaning of Rule 54(b). I have a lawsuit. It has a
- 9 judgment. The district court judge decided to dismiss
- 10 it. I'm supposed to appeal.
- 11 JUSTICE KENNEDY: If -- if there's an MDL
- 12 for pretrial purposes and the district court thinks that
- one -- that some cases like yours just should not
- 14 proceed, does the district judge have authority on its
- own to dismiss those few cases from the MDL? Does he
- 16 have that authority or does he have to go back to the
- 17 MDL panel to do that?
- 18 MR. GOLDSTEIN: The district judge cannot --
- 19 the district judge can dismiss cases in the MDL and
- 20 frequently does. Now, administratively, if the district
- 21 judge thinks that they just don't belong in the MDL --
- 22 JUSTICE KENNEDY: That's my question.
- 23 MR. GOLDSTEIN: They will send a
- 24 recommendation to the JPML. Now, this is, I think, an
- 25 important point. And if I could just take you to

1 Section - forty -- fifty -- the 1407, again, this is a case about a

- 2 statute. And this is going to be in the blue brief at
- 3 page 2; the block quote is the MDL statute.
- 4 And the MDL statute makes quite clear that
- 5 the actions inside the MDL are separate actions during
- 6 the MDL. And so what I recommend to you is the -- if we
- 7 go about halfway down, there is a sentence after the
- 8 word "actions" that begins "Each action." It's the line
- 9 that and begins "Actions." "Each action so transferred
- 10 shall be remanded by the panel" -- so it's a separate
- 11 action, -- "at or before the conclusion" -- so "at or
- 12 before the conclusion of such pretrial proceedings to
- 13 the district from which it was transferred" -- so that's
- 14 when it begins or after it's done -- "unless it shall
- 15 have been previously terminated: Provided, however," --
- 16 and this is the sentence that deals with during the MDL,
- 17 that pan -- "that the panel may separate any claim,
- 18 cross-claim, counter-claim, or third-party claim and
- 19 remand any of such claims before the remainder of the
- 20 action is remanded."
- 21 The MDL statute provides for consolidated
- 22 proceedings, that is, the district judge is going to
- 23 bring the cases together, administer discovery together,
- 24 enter orders. Sometimes they'll apply to individual
- 25 actions; sometimes it will apply to all of the actions.

- 1 But the relevant point is that they are separate
- 2 actions. They are actions that get initiated and at the
- 3 end they get dismissed and it's called the final
- 4 judgment rule, because it's a rule. It's not called the
- 5 semi-final constituent matter principle. When our case
- 6 gets dismissed, it's over and we are supposed to appeal.
- 7 If there are no further questions, I'll
- 8 reserve the remainder of my time.
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 10 Mr. Waxman.
- 11 ORAL ARGUMENT OF SETH P. WAXMAN
- 12 ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENTS
- MR. WAXMAN: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
- 14 please the Court:
- 15 Let me start with what's now been the
- 16 accepted terminology of the disingenuous approach to
- 17 achieving the flexibility of the district court's need
- 18 and to avoid the obligation that the courts of appeals
- 19 must -- because his rule requires immediate seriatim
- 20 piecemeal appeals -- hear those. I have been calling it
- 21 the -- a form of guerilla judging, but the point is that
- 22 the flexibility that both sides agree and the retired
- 23 district judges certainly underscore that district
- 24 courts need and the relief that the courts of appeals
- 25 need from the obligation to hear seriatim piecemeal

- 1 appeals, is achieved by application of the rule that was
- 2 specifically designed for this, which is Rule 54(b).
- Now, he says 54(b) doesn't apply. What that
- 4 means is -- let me just first start by saying, in this
- 5 entire litigation, one and only one authority has been
- 6 cited for that proposition.
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, but that --
- 8 MR. WAXMAN: And that is Petitioner's brief.
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: The text of 54(b) refers to
- 10 a separate appeal for a claim, counterclaim,
- 11 cross-claim, or third-party claim. So your 54(b)
- 12 argument, I think, is dependent on the proposition that
- 13 Mr. Goldstein's complaint became part of a single
- 14 action. Otherwise, so -- it was consolidate -- it be --
- 15 became part of a single action and, therefore, it was --
- 16 it was tantamount to a claim.
- 17 MR. WAXMAN: Yes.
- 18 JUSTICE ALITO: On that theory it could fit
- 19 within 54(b). That takes a little bit of -- more than
- 20 perhaps a little bit of pounding to fit that in there,
- 21 don't you think?
- 22 MR. WAXMAN: No, I don't. And neither does
- 23 every single court that has construed the application of
- 24 54(b) to consolidated litigation.
- 25 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, how did -- where do we

1 look to find that -- that his complaint became part of a

- 2 single action?
- 3 MR. WAXMAN: Well, the --
- 4 JUSTICE ALITO: The MDL statute doesn't --
- 5 doesn't make any reference to that. Quite to the
- 6 contrary.
- 7 MR. WAXMAN: Yes. The MDL statute doesn't
- 8 consolidate cases. It transfers cases to a transferee
- 9 MDL court for --
- 10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Where they remain
- 11 separate actions, and Rule 54(b) was designed for a
- 12 single action with multiple claims.
- MR. WAXMAN: And my --
- 14 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I don't see a single
- 15 reference in the rule, nothing by the advisory committee
- 16 that so much as suggests that a consolidation for
- 17 pretrial purposes only makes it one action for purposes
- 18 of 54(b).
- 19 MR. WAXMAN: Let me -- before I get to
- 20 the -- to the terminology, let me just underscore -- I
- 21 realize this may be waving a red flag in front of this
- 22 body, but there -- not a single court or commentator
- anywhere has suggested that in consolidated cases,
- 24 whether they are -- that -- that are all consolidated
- 25 under Rule 42 whether they come in by an MDL or not,

- 1 that -- that action refers to the consolidated
- 2 proceedings for such a length as they are consolidated.
- 3 And, you know, Judge Ginsburg's -- the other Ginsburg on
- 4 the D.C. Circuit's opinion in -- I think it's Hill v.
- 5 Henderson, explains that it is a commonplace in
- 6 consolidated actions for courts that want a piecemeal
- 7 appeal to employ Rule 54(b).
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, you know, maybe
- 9 they're wrong.
- 10 MR. WAXMAN: Now, it's possible that
- 11 everyone is wrong.
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Yes, maybe they are wrong,
- 13 Mr. Waxman, because I mean, they're -- they're obviously
- 14 looking for a certain kind of flexibility, which is
- 15 important, and which I take it both sides have agreed is
- 16 important. But the question is whether they found it in
- 17 the right section. And I think what you're being asked
- 18 is, if you just look at this section, this section is
- 19 about multiparty, multiclaim single actions; that's what
- 20 this section is all about. And it's being used for a
- 21 purpose for which it was never designed.
- 22 MR. WAXMAN: I think that is quite incorrect
- 23 as an historical matter. Rule 54(b) was the product of
- 24 the Court's experience arising out of these multiple
- 25 mass actions, particularly exemplified in the Electric

- 1 Equipment Antitrust Litigation, and that's all over the
- 2 legislative history of Rule 54(b) where 54(b) and 1407
- 3 don't -- didn't exist at the time, and were enacted in
- 4 the wake of that.
- 5 And the -- what the legislative history
- 6 shows is that these four, 50 -- I guess 54(b) was in
- 7 existence but not 1407. 54(b) was the mechanism in
- 8 those consolidated actions by which particular issues of
- 9 law were reviewed by the courts of appeals --
- 10 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But in this --
- 11 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Not any --
- 12 MR. WAXMAN: -- were not.
- 13 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But in this -- in this
- 14 case, at the end of the day, the actions are, in effect,
- 15 unconsolidated. When -- when the pretrial M -- MDL
- 16 is -- is completed here, the separate judgments will be
- 17 remanded to the separate courts. So you're -- what
- 18 you're saying is, well, it's one action for a while, but
- 19 then it's many actions again. Begins as many, then it's
- one for a while, then it's going to be many again.
- 21 Isn't that -- isn't that the dynamic that you're --
- 22 MR. WAXMAN: That -- that is exactly the
- 23 dynamic for whatever length of time the consolidation
- 24 occurs.
- 25 JUSTICE BREYER: But his last point, this in

- 1 my mind is that if we take your route -- one problem
- 2 with his route -- one problem with your route is you
- 3 have to muck around with the word "action." Well, you
- 4 do. I mean, there's no doubt you do. You have to
- 5 consider it a single action while it's consolidated.
- One problem with his route is that, A,
- 7 nobody's ever done it, they've all thought you're right,
- 8 and nobody's said much about it. And one problem with
- 9 his route is you treat consolidations where the
- 10 multidistrict panel is involved and you consolidate it
- 11 for discovery differently than you treat consolidations
- in an ordinary district court, has four cases and
- 13 consolidates them. That's the problem with his route.
- 14 So it seems to me a sort of balance there.
- 15 But one thing he said that I don't -- that did register
- 16 is he said if we take your route, what happens when the
- 17 multidistrict is over, see. Eight months ago, his case
- 18 was dismissed, and a judgment was entered in his -- in
- 19 his case, which is now only part of the case, on your
- 20 theory.
- 21 When is he supposed -- what is he appealing
- 22 from? When did the 30-day clock begin to run? And
- 23 suppose, by the way, it was never sent -- it was never
- 24 really sent back because everybody else settled. How
- 25 does that work?

- 1 MR. WAXMAN: Well, let me just make -- I
- 2 have your question firmly in mind. I want to just
- 3 observe two things about the premises to your question.
- 4 One is that 3 percent of cases that are consolidated
- 5 under the -- of MDL cases get returned to districts for
- 6 trial. The overwhelming majority never leave the
- 7 transferee courts.
- 8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, that's because the
- 9 parties, either they get dismissed pretrial, or they
- 10 settle, or the parties agree that the transferee court
- 11 can be the trial court. But at no -- no one in a
- 12 multidistrict litigation can be forced into going before
- 13 the transferee court for trial.
- 14 MR. WAXMAN: That -- that's --
- 15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And I think it was quite
- 16 clear that Congress didn't give multidistrict forum the
- 17 option to be the trial court.
- 18 MR. WAXMAN: Justice Ginsburg, I totally
- 19 agree. And if there were any ambiguity, this Court's
- 20 unanimous decision in Lexecon made that clear.
- 21 The point is that it is up to the transferee
- 22 judge, as it is up to any judge in a civil case, using
- 23 the tools provided under rule 42 to decide how to manage
- 24 all of the cases that have been transferred. The judge
- 25 may decide to let them proceed -- only a couple of them, let

- 1 me them all proceed on their own. The judge may
- 2 consolidate them, which is a formal act that has a known
- 3 meaning and has real world consequences not just with
- 4 respect to finality but with respect to the compromise
- 5 of the individual litigant's rights during the period in
- 6 which consolidation occurs.
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: But these statutes do not
- 8 speak of consolidation of cases, they speak of
- 9 consolidated proceedings. Where -- where do you get the
- 10 notion that the cases have been consolidated? And if
- 11 that notion were true, surely the consolidation must
- 12 terminate when one of the cases is dismissed, how can it
- 13 still be consolidated when it's dismissed and the other,
- 14 and the other cases are proceeding.
- 15 MR. WAXMAN: I'm not quibbling at all,
- 16 Justice Scalia, with the language. I'm perfectly happy
- 17 to say that the proceedings are consolidated. The point
- 18 here um is --
- 19 JUSTICE SCALIA: It makes a big difference.
- MR. WAXMAN: Well, the -- I don't -- I think
- 21 it doesn't really make a big difference. The point here
- 22 is, as this Court has repeatedly admonished, what
- 23 constitutes a final decision under section 1291 is not a
- 24 technical concept but, rather, quote, "the means to
- 25 achieving a healthy legal system and that does not" --

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1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So please answer Justice
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- 2 Breyer's question, because that is troubling me as well,
- 3 at what moment, and if it's a notation from -- if it's a
- 4 settled case, when does he appeal?
- 5 MR. WAXMAN: The -- the appeal period
- 6 runs from the time that all of the -- that there is --
- 7 that all of the other consolidated proceedings, cases,
- 8 have resolved or been transferred, and so --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What does he appeal
- 10 from? I mean --
- MR. WAXMAN: Excuse me?
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: There is an awkwardness
- 13 here, because he's not appealing from the judgment
- 14 entered on behalf of or against the other parties.
- MR. WAXMAN: Let's be very, very clear about
- 16 what he says he's appealing from. The only document
- 17 that he has pointed to that suggests that he had a
- 18 judgment way back in March of 2013 is entry 43 in the
- 19 Gelboim docket, which is reproduced on Page 11A of the
- 20 joint appendix.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: He has the word of the
- 22 district judge you have an appeal of right, that's what
- 23 she said.
- MR. WAXMAN: Well, what she said in
- 25 adjudicating the request by other parties for a 54(b)

- 1 certification, this is on Page 220 of the petition
- 2 appendix is that these plaintiffs and the Schwab
- 3 plaintiffs have an appeal of right, there is no question
- 4 that she misapprehended the rule in the Second Circuit
- 5 that just because she had dismissed all of the claims in
- 6 their suit they have an appeal of right. But the notion
- 7 that she entered a judgment --
- 8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: She thought that she
- 9 needed to the to do the 54(b) for the other cases that
- 10 had more than one claim, not just the antitrust claim.
- MR. WAXMAN: Correct, and let me say
- 12 something about their subsequent motion under -- the
- 13 Gelboim subsequent motion under 54(b) after the
- 14 dismissal for lack of jurisdiction by the court of
- 15 appeals, but first point out to you that the order that
- 16 she's referring to, 43, which says that the case is
- 17 terminated pursuant to instructions from chambers, you
- 18 know, I wondered, well, why isn't there anything in the
- 19 docket that in fact terminates it, and the answer is on
- 20 page -- pages 15 through 19 of the joint appendix where,
- 21 as you can see on Page 19, she has reissued the same
- 22 memorandum and order as modified, three days later.
- 23 And the language that they like to cite for
- 24 the notion that there was a judgment in their case is
- 25 missing. And that's why they, in fact, continue to be a

- 1 party to the consolidated --
- 2 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, then you're just --
- 3 let's go back to my question. I agree with you, I'd
- 4 always learned like Hornbook rule number 1 is, there is
- 5 a separate piece of paper called a judgment entered by
- 6 the district court, and that is what you appeal from.
- 7 Now you have just told me, there isn't one here, in
- 8 which case he can't appeal, okay, that's a separate
- 9 reason. I'm now assuming another case. The case is,
- 10 there is a separate piece of paper in his case called a
- 11 judgment. His point is, that gives me a piece of paper
- 12 called a judgment to appeal from, it was entered at a
- 13 certain time and now I know when the clock starts.
- 14 MR. WAXMAN: That's right, yes.
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: Now, what I said was,
- 16 some time ago, that I thought he had a point, is in such
- 17 a case, if we treat the consolidation of
- 18 proceedings like we treat a consolidation of cases
- 19 without the multidistrict, he cannot appeal from that
- 20 piece of paper. He has to wait in the ordinary
- 21 situation, not multidistrict, until there is another
- 22 piece of paper resolving everything, then he starts to
- 23 appeal but at least he has a piece of paper which maybe
- 24 he lacked here. All right, now, he's saying here in the
- 25 multidistrict situation, there will be a separate piece

- 1 of paper, I can't appeal from, what is the piece of
- 2 paper from which I know the clock on appeal begins to
- 3 run?
- 4 MR. WAXMAN: The same piece of paper that he
- 5 lacks even to this day.
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: That's a red herring at the
- 7 moment.
- 8 MR. WAXMAN: Well okay but, et me at least finish my
- 9 sentence.
- 10 At the end, when the district judge
- 11 certifies that the consolidation period is over, whether
- 12 that's, you know, at the end of discovery or at the end
- of pretrial proceedings or in a case under rule 42 at
- 14 the end of the trial of the case, or a case, the parties
- 15 will seek to the extent the court has not entered it,
- 16 under rule 58 a separate piece of paper that says either
- 17 judgment or that's the functional equivalent of judgment
- 18 under rule, under rule 54(A), which says a judgment is
- 19 an appealable order.
- 20 JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Waxman, have you made
- 21 this argument before, did you make this argument in
- 22 opposition to the petition for certiorari, namely that
- 23 there was no final judgment here.
- 24 MR. WAXMAN: We did, and it got discouraged
- 25 when the Court granted cert. But I mean, I'm not here

- 1 just making a jurisdictional argument, my point in this
- 2 case is --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Waxman, the Second
- 4 Circuit didn't think that there was a problem because
- 5 the -- a judgment hadn't been entered. They said in all
- of these cases when a consolidated or pretrial, there is
- 7 no right of appeal, you have to get permission under
- 8 rule 54(b). They did not say anything about the problem
- 9 in this case is that there was no judgment document.
- 10 And isn't there, I know that there -- there is a
- 11 provision that says, if the judgment -- if for some
- 12 reason you don't have the piece of paper, that's not
- 13 fatal.
- 14 MR. WAXMAN: Justice Ginsburg, I
- 15 respectfully suggest that you're mistaken in reading
- 16 what the Second Circuit said. This is on Page 2A of the
- 17 petitioner appendix and what it says is, this court has
- 18 determined sua sponte that it lacks jurisdiction over
- 19 these appeals because a final order has not been issued
- 20 by the district court as contemplated by section 1291,
- 21 comma, and the orders of -- the orders appealed from did
- 22 not dispose of all the claims in the consolidated
- 23 action. The court --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Are you telling me that
- 25 the Second Circuit doesn't have that rule if there is a

- 1 piece of paper that says judgment on it?
- 2 MR. WAXMAN: The piece of -- the Second
- 3 Circuit's rule, which is the rule we think that ought to
- 4 be applied throughout the country is that the -- when
- 5 there is -- when all of the claims of a party or, in
- 6 a -- in any multi claim, multidistrict proceeding,
- 7 whether it's a single consolidated complaint or
- 8 consolidated proceedings, judgment is entered by
- 9 district courts when a rule 54(b)(1) certification is
- 10 made, or, assuming the court of appeals agrees, when
- 11 there is a recommendation under section 1292(b). That
- 12 is --
- 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: But aren't --
- 14 MR. WAXMAN: -- the way courts issue
- 15 judgments during the period of consolidation when the
- 16 other cases are proceeding.
- 17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, 1292(b) can't be
- 18 applicable here.
- MR. WAXMAN: No, it's not.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: 1292(b) is when you don't
- 21 have a final judgment. It's an interlocutory appeal,
- 22 the typical case for 1292(b) is the court decides
- 23 liability, but it hasn't decided damages yet. You can't
- 24 run upstairs at that point unless you get a 1292(b)
- 25 order.

1 MR. WAXMAN: You are absolutely right, and I

- 2 stand corrected. My point is that during the period,
- 3 when there are multi claim, multiparty proceedings,
- 4 either because they are different cases that are
- 5 consolidated for a period of consolidation or a single
- 6 omnibus complaint which could have happened in this
- 7 case, a ruling as to all the claims of a particular
- 8 party or all of the parties as to a particular claim
- 9 becomes a judgment when and only when the district court
- 10 certifies a judgment under 54(b).
- 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes, but that's quite
- 12 different. You were defending the proposition, I
- 13 thought, that the Second Circuit said that there had
- 14 been no final judgment in this case. Not in the
- 15 consolidated cases but no final judgment in this case.
- 16 And I don't read that -- that order on -- on Page 2A as
- 17 saying anything other than that there's not been a final
- 18 order under -- under 1291 because all the cases have not
- 19 been disposed of.
- MR. WAXMAN: Well, I guess, you know, we can
- 21 speculate about what they meant. They didn't say
- 22 because, they said there's no final order under 1291,
- 23 and all of the cases in the consolidated proceedings
- 24 haven't been disposed of. But let me just make one
- 25 point.

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1 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, I -- that's a very
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- 2 strange way to read that.
- 3 MR. WAXMAN: I mean, our -- look --
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: Given the opinion of --
- 5 MR. WAXMAN: My case isn't turning on what
- 6 actually happened here, but I think in thinking about
- 7 the meaning of "final decision" under 1291, which
- 8 doesn't use the word "action" what a final decision is,
- 9 with an eye toward what is a healthy legal system, this
- 10 case, I think -- I think it's important to focus on just
- 11 the features of this case as one of many, many examples
- 12 why the rule that they're advocating is not correct.
- 13 JUSTICE ALITO: You raised the argument
- 14 before us this morning that there wasn't a final
- 15 judgment and Petitioner argues that there was under Rule
- 16 58(c)(2)(b) and you didn't address that, I believe, in
- 17 your brief. So what is wrong with that argument?
- 18 MR. WAXMAN: 58(c)(2)(b).
- 19 Well, the 58(c)(2)(b) is 150 days from the,
- quote, judgment that's reflected in 58(b), and 58(b)(1)
- 21 in particular says, you know, entering judgment without
- 22 the court's direction. And it says that if a court
- 23 issues an order otherwise -- unless the court orders
- 24 otherwise, the clerk has to enter a written judgment.
- 25 But the caveat there, which does apply in

- 1 this case for reasons because this does involve -- these
- 2 consolidated proceedings are an action within the
- 3 meaning of 54, is that 58(b)(1) is, quote, "subject to
- 4 54(b)."
- Now, in terms of -- let me just make the
- 6 point I was trying to make before, which is, look
- 7 exactly at what the Petitioner is trying to do in this
- 8 case, just as an example of what a healthy judicial
- 9 system is.
- 10 They say that they're entitled to -- they're
- 11 required immediately to appeal and the Second Circuit is
- 12 obligated immediately to consider their appeal,
- 13 notwithstanding, among other things, two things in
- 14 particular; one, even as we are -- the Court is
- 15 considering this case, the district judge is considering
- 16 claims by the Plaintiffs in seven other consolidated
- 17 cases that have raised Sherman Act claims that, in fact,
- 18 her prior ruling on Sherman Act antitrust injury does
- 19 not apply to them. The briefing on those motions, on
- 20 that issue, will be completed, I believe, on Christmas
- 21 Eve, and so if an appeal had been proceeding, the Second
- 22 Circuit would be considering precisely the same thing
- 23 that the judge is reconsidering, and the cases are
- 24 legion in which --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that would

- 1 seem to be very efficient. It would save her the
- 2 difficulty of reconsidering it if the Second Circuit
- 3 rules one way or another.
- 4 It seems to me that the efficiency arguments
- 5 in these cases, you know, they can go either way and
- 6 probably do go either way depending upon the nature of
- 7 the case. It would be very efficient, would save her
- 8 the time to reconsider it, if she had a ruling from the
- 9 Second Circuit.
- 10 MR. WAXMAN: Just to be clear, Mr. Chief
- 11 Justice, what she's considering are not requests to
- 12 reconsider. She denied those a year ago August. These
- 13 are Plaintiffs who claim that their antitrust claims
- 14 are, in their mind, significantly different than the
- 15 claims that Gelboim brought.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. I thought you
- 17 were making the other point. So the claims that she's
- 18 looking at really are not affected by the Gelboim
- 19 claims.
- 20 MR. WAXMAN: That's right, although --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Then what problem is
- 22 it to appeal?
- MR. WAXMAN: Excuse me?
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Then what's the
- 25 problem with going ahead with the Gelboim appeal?

- 1 MR. WAXMAN: Well, the problem with going
- 2 ahead with the Gelboim appeal is the inefficiency and
- 3 the lack -- and the threat to the --
- 4 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But it's a different
- 5 reason. She said in the Gelboim case you have no
- 6 antitrust injury. In other words, you have no standing,
- 7 out the door. And you say the other cases are different
- 8 from that. Is -- they don't center on antitrust injury?
- 9 MR. WAXMAN: No, they do. They are claiming
- 10 that we -- notwithstanding your prior ruling in the
- 11 circumstances of our cases, we do have antitrust injury,
- 12 and from a point of view of a healthy judicial system,
- 13 you would want the court of appeals to be able to
- 14 consider the question of antitrust injury after the
- 15 district judge has finally come to a concluded view as
- 16 to all of the consolidated cases.
- 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, I think what the Chief
- 18 Justice is indicating is to the extent that the issues,
- 19 the claims are the same, the efficiency argument can cut
- 20 both ways; to the extent that the claims are different,
- 21 what's the problem with an appeal?
- 22 MR. WAXMAN: Well, the -- the court of
- 23 appeals is being asked to consider the -- the
- 24 sufficiency of the allegations as to antitrust injury
- 25 with respect to a common core of -- of of a alleged

- 1 facts, a course of conduct, and different parties --
- 2 JUSTICE KAGAN: But is that the only thing,
- 3 that they're going to have to learn the facts twice?
- 4 MR. WAXMAN: Well, there -- look, you can
- 5 always argue that there are certain efficiencies in
- 6 taking immediate piecemeal appeals. Our system, since
- 7 the Judiciary Act of 1789, has set its sight against
- 8 that and said that piecemeal appeals are disfavored.
- 9 Another feature of this very case --
- 10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But if the district judge
- 11 had been right the first time, she said I have a claim
- 12 that's totally been dismissed, it's out, then there are
- 13 these other people that have antitrust claims and other
- 14 claims, so what I'm going to do is this, final judgment
- for the one that has no other claims, 54(b) on the
- 16 antitrust claims for the others so that the Second
- 17 Circuit will then hear antitrust standing all at once.
- 18 MR. WAXMAN: And the -- the point is that
- 19 there are other parties in the consolidated pre --
- 20 pleadings that say that their claims and their
- 21 Plaintiffs stand in a different position under the
- 22 Sherman Act with respect to antitrust injury than
- 23 Gelboim does, and why wouldn't a healthy system --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, the district judge
- 25 obviously didn't think so because she said, I'm -- one

- 1 party has an appeal of right and I am going to do the
- 2 54(b) order for the others.
- 3 MR. WAXMAN: She didn't consider, Justice
- 4 Ginsburg, the seven parties that are now claiming that
- 5 they are different. She was only considering the
- 6 application by certain other parties for a 54(b)
- 7 certification.
- 8 And if you look at what the judge did after
- 9 the Second Circuit held that it lacked jurisdiction, I
- 10 think it's pretty revealing. Mr. -- Ms. Gelboim's
- 11 lawyers and the lawyers of the parties who previously
- 12 had had a 54(b) certification went back to the judge and
- 13 said, okay, there was -- the Second Circuit thinks that
- 14 there wasn't a final order, but it would be great to
- 15 have the court of appeals decide the antitrust injury
- 16 issue, please issue a 54(b) certification. And here is
- 17 what the judge said. This is on Page 294 of the joint
- 18 appendix: Quote, This case has a wonderful host of
- 19 interesting issues. We could send six different issues
- 20 up to the circuit. We're not doing that seriatim, we're
- 21 going to clean up this complaint, we're not picking and
- 22 choosing particular questions and sending them up.
- 23 And at the end of that hearing, the counsel
- 24 for some of the Plaintiffs with Sherman Act claims said,
- 25 well, when you get done resolving -- when you get done

- 1 cleaning up the complaint and resolving the issues as
- 2 the pleading disputes, would you then con -- would you
- 3 then grant a 54(b) certification? And she said, I'm not
- 4 prepared to rule on that at this moment. And obviously
- 5 --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, there's
- 7 efficiencies -- there's efficiency to the system and you
- 8 have arguments about that, but there's also fairness to
- 9 the parties. I mean, how many years are these people,
- 10 whose case is done as far as the District Court is
- 11 concerned, supposed to sit around and wait for the big
- 12 fish to resolve their cases?
- 13 MR. WAXMAN: Well, the -- the -- it is a
- 14 feature of the rule against piecemeal litigation that
- 15 individual litigants sometimes have to wait. But what
- 16 is particularly --
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That just kind of
- 18 begs the question whether this is piecemeal or not for
- 19 these people.
- 20 MR. WAXMAN: Well, I think here's the point,
- 21 there is no case, they have found not a single case in
- 22 46 years of MDL litigation where any party in their
- 23 position or a similar position has had to wait an
- inordinate amount of time and that is because in
- 25 appropriate cases, whether the cases are consolidated

- 1 for all purposes or some limited purpose, the courts
- 2 exercised their discretion under Rule 54(b).
- 3 It has never happened that someone in their
- 4 position has had to re -- has been required to wait for
- 5 years and years, at least neither we nor they, who I'm
- 6 confident have scoured the record of MDLs, in fact, has
- 7 done this. And --
- 8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, then that sort of
- 9 contradicts what you said before. You said she wasn't
- 10 going to deal with these things piecemeal. By the way,
- 11 on that point, she said, given the reaction of the
- 12 Second Circuit more than once, it's time to give up.
- 13 She said that first, as -- as far as that's --
- 14 MR. WAXMAN: I think, Justice Ginsburg, that
- 15 the point I wanted to make here is she has left fully
- 16 open the possibility that when she finishes resolving
- 17 the pleading problems, including the claims of the other
- 18 seven Sherman Act plaintiffs who say they're different,
- 19 she will reconsider whether to grant Rule 54(b).
- 20 And while I, you know, my -- my friend on
- 21 the other side says, well, there is -- you know, there
- 22 are all sorts of obscure procedural mechanisms where you
- 23 could get this flexibility, the point here is that we
- 24 have a rule that has already been made to deal with the
- 25 resolution of all the claims of a party or all the

- 1 parties of a claim which is 54(b) and --
- 2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But to what -- what --
- 3 MR. WAXMAN: -- the advantage of --
- 4 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What is obscure about a
- 5 stay? Multidistrict cases have lots and lots of issues,
- 6 and quite often stays of some cases are issued. That's
- 7 not --
- 8 MR. WAXMAN: Here --
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- obscure.
- 10 MR. WAXMAN: Here's the difference. The
- 11 difference is that under the -- under the stay regime,
- 12 the status quo, that is the presumption is that
- 13 piecemeal appeals will go forward unless the district
- 14 judge affirmatively acts. Under the regime, as we
- 15 understand it, and as all courts and commentators have
- 16 understood it, the pros -- the appeal will not go
- 17 forward unless the district court makes the two findings
- 18 that Rule 54(b) requires. One is that there really is a
- 19 final order or final decision; and, second, that there
- 20 is no just cause for delay, and it is that discipline,
- 21 that focus, that the rules place on the party that
- 22 benefit the system.
- Thank you.
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 25 Mr. Goldstein, you have six minutes

- 1 remaining.
- 2 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF THOMAS C. GOLDSTEIN
- 3 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
- 4 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 5 Justice.
- 6 Three brief preliminary points and then just
- 7 --
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Excuse me. You believe
- 9 that the notation on 11a is the final judgment you're
- 10 speaking about?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: I do, and this goes to
- 12 Justice Scalia's point and the questions that were asked
- 13 at oral argument. This argument was raised in the brief
- in opposition whether we did have an appealable
- 15 judgment. We addressed it in Footnote 1 of our cert.
- 16 reply brief, and we were so obviously right that this is
- governed by Rule 58(c) that the respondents abandoned
- 18 this argument in the merits brief. The district said
- 19 our action is terminated and we have an appeal as a
- 20 matter of right.
- 21 That was quite plainly the judgment. We
- 22 appealed within 150 days after that. So this -- you
- 23 considered this fully, I am sure, because if --
- 24 JUSTICE SCALIA: You addressed it where,
- 25 Footnote 1 of --

- 1 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Footnote 1 of the brief
- 2 in -- excuse me, our reply brief on cert. We have only
- 3 one footnote.
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: Okay.
- 5 MR. GOLDSTEIN: And we discuss at length
- 6 their concession that there was a final judgment, what
- 7 it is the Second Circuit did, why it is terminating as a
- 8 judgment, all of those points. This was presented to
- 9 you. And we were so plainly right that they didn't even
- 10 make the argument in their merits brief. It's still
- 11 jurisdictional, but there quite clearly was a
- 12 termination of the action that the district court
- 13 understood was appealable. That's why Rule 58 exists.
- 14 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And what are -- what are
- 15 your other three points --
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: Okay.
- 17 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- that make you plainly
- 18 right on the rest of the case?
- 19 MR. GOLDSTEIN: That was actually the first
- 20 point.
- 21 The second one goes to Justice Breyer's
- 22 concern that no one thinks that we are right. And
- 23 just -- and Mr. Waxman's point that, oh, everyone
- 24 understoods -- understands, every commentator, that this
- is done under Rule 54(b), that is, in a word,

- 1 ridiculous. Ours is the rule in the overwhelming
- 2 majority of the country and has been for decades. Every
- 3 time --
- 4 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Excuse me, what is that
- 5 word.
- 6 MR. GOLDSTEIN: I'll give you two kinds of
- 7 case cites. The cert. petition cites all the cases in
- 8 the court of appeals --
- 9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Okay. Okay.
- 10 MR. GOLDSTEIN: -- including the D.C.
- 11 circuit, that say when you enter the judgment in the
- 12 individual action, it's appealable. I have given you
- the 1935 MDL that uses the 58(b) example.
- 14 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Okay.
- 15 MR. GOLDSTEIN: But as Justice Ginsburg
- 16 indicates, it's commonplace for MDL courts to enter
- 17 stays and put act -- individual actions on ice without
- 18 entering judgments. The system, as we describe it, has
- 19 been working for decades without any difficulty.
- 20 And, Justice Ginsburg, my third preliminary
- 21 point is that when Mr. Waxman says there are all of
- 22 these other actions out there, it is a little bit of an
- 23 optical illusion. When this district court entered this
- 24 opinion which resulted in our judgment, she entered the
- 25 same order in every other single pending case. She was

- 1 quite clear that it applied to all of the cases in the
- 2 MDL. She denied reconsideration, explained that no one
- 3 could have antitrust standing.
- 4 If there are other unrelated antitrust
- 5 claims, then there's no problem with our appeal.
- Now, my big point is that there is no reason
- 7 for you to muck about with and cause confusion in the
- 8 law with respect to what a final judgment is, what an
- 9 action is, what a -- what a constituent matter in an
- 10 action is, when we can address all of his policy
- 11 concerns in the way that MDL courts have been doing for
- 12 decades. There is going to be considerable confusion
- 13 that results.
- 14 What are we supposed to appeal from?
- 15 Justice Breyer, if you know the answer to your question
- 16 which you asked three times at the -- at the end of this
- 17 argument, you are alone, I believe. I do not know what
- 18 it is that I am supposed to appeal from, particularly if
- 19 some of the cases settle. What is a -- it's called the
- 20 Final Judgment Rule. We have a final judgment in our
- 21 action.
- Imagine the following forms of confusion.
- 23 What happens with American Pipe tolling? When was our
- 24 action dismissed? Therefore, some other individual
- 25 person is required to file an individual lawsuit. What

- 1 happens when you have multiple lawsuits that are
- 2 together that look alike? Are those now a single
- 3 action? What if the different lawsuits are coordinated
- 4 rather than consolidated? Because, remember, the three
- 5 Schwab lawsuits were consolid -- coordinated here, not
- 6 consolidated. What do those people do?
- 7 Why is it that you want to create a regime
- 8 that creates all of these doubts that has a new Final
- 9 Judgment Rule, a new definition of action, despite the
- 10 uniform meaning in all of the civil procedures, that
- 11 will create just follow-on confusion when I have offered
- 12 you the simple solution, and that is the district judge
- 13 will enter a final judgment in the action if the
- 14 district judge wants it to be appealable?
- 15 If the district judge --
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: His is -- basically
- 17 you're saying are there any other mechanisms for the
- 18 district court to get to where it wants? A rake-off,
- 19 don't enter anything.
- 20 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Don't enter -- enter
- 21 anything.
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Stay and don't enter
- 23 under 58. Tell the court --
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- the clerk of the

- 1 court not to enter it?
- 2 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Under -- under 42 create a
- 3 consolidated complaint as was done here with the OTC and
- 4 exchange actions. That's actually very common. And
- 5 that is the MDL court will say, I have four lawsuits in
- 6 front of me. I am, under Rule 42, going to consolidate
- 7 them into a single master complaint. That master
- 8 complaint will have four different claims in it. And
- 9 then the district court will simply resolve one of the
- 10 claims in the master action without entering a judgment
- in the individual action -- not the master action, the
- 12 master complaint. It's not actually an action. There's
- 13 an MDL docket, a main MDL docket, and the district court
- 14 just doesn't enter a judgment in the individual
- 15 action --
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Can that be done when
- 17 it's consolidated only for purposes of pretrial
- 18 discovery?
- 19 MR. GOLDSTEIN: It can. It is what's
- 20 known -- there's a Sixth Circuit case called Refrigerant
- 21 that discusses this issue and a Second Circuit case
- 22 called Katz. It is called an administrative complaint.
- 23 The district court uses this administrative complaint to
- 24 manage the litigation, and that administrative complaint
- 25 doesn't have the same docket as the individual actions.

- 1 And the district court is perfectly capable of saying,
- 2 I'm going to resolve the antitrust claim -- not an
- 3 action, an antitrust claim -- inside this larger
- 4 administrative complaint without entering a judgment.
- 5 And when there is no judgment, there's no appeal. And
- 6 you can announce that rule and give the district courts
- 7 the flexibility that the retired district judges want
- 8 without creating all this necessary dock here trial.
- 9 As you say, Justice Sotomayor, district judges pay a lot
- 10 of attention to your rulings. They will know what it is
- 11 that they are supposed to do, and we just don't have a
- 12 mess later on.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: I don't see anything in
- 14 the rules about it, and this is the first time I've
- 15 heard about this administrative --
- 16 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes.
- 17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- complaint.
- 18 MR. GOLDSTEIN: The administrative
- 19 complaints are the most common tools the district judges
- 20 use in MDL litigation. I suggest the -- the Refrigerant
- 21 and Katz cases do explain it.
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 23 The case is submitted.
- 24 (Whereupon, at 11:11 a.m., the case was
- 25 submitted.)

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