

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

CASE NO: 03-80593-CIV-HURLEY-LYNCH

NIGHT BOX  
FILED



JAMES KEHOE, on behalf of  
himself and all others similarly  
situated,

CLARENCE MADDOX  
CLERK USDC / SDFL / WPB

Plaintiff,

v.

FIDELITY FEDERAL BANK  
AND TRUST,

Defendant.

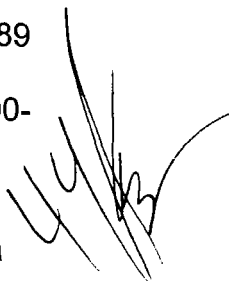
**NOTICE OF FILING SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITY IN CONNECTION WITH  
DEFENDANT'S MOTION TO DISMISS OR, ALTERNATIVELY, FOR SUMMARY  
JUDGMENT SCHEDULED FOR HEARING ON JANUARY 22, 2004**

The Plaintiff, JAMES KEHOE ("KEHOE"), by and through his undersigned counsel,  
files his Notice of Filing Supplemental Authority.

**SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITY**

1. Brief of the Respondent, Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Labor, in the Supreme Court of the United States on Writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in *Buck Doe v. Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Labor*, 306 F.3d 170, 189 A.L.R. Fed. 719, 54 Fed.R.Serv. 3d 49 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. (VA) Sup. 20, 2002), (NO. 00-2247, 00-2292) *Cert. granted*, 123 S. Ct. 2640, 156 L. ED. 2d 654, 71 U.S.L.W. 3613, 71 U.S.L.W. 3645, 71 U.S.L.W. 3793, 71 U.S.L.W. 3798 (U.S.JUN 27, 2003) (NO. 02-1377).

2. December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003, transcript of Oral Argument, in the Supreme Court of the United States in *Buck Doe v. Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Labor*, 306 F.3d 170, 189 A.L.R. Fed. 719, 54 Fed.R.Serv. 3d 49 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. (VA) Sup. 20, 2002), (NO. 00-2247, 00-



In the Supreme Court of the United States

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BUCK DOE, PETITIONER

v.

ELAINE L. CHAO, SECRETARY OF LABOR

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ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI  
TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**BRIEF FOR THE RESPONDENT**

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**QUESTION PRESENTED**

Whether an individual who has been subjected to an “intentional or willful” violation of the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a, must prove that he suffered “actual damages” to be awarded \$1000 under Section 552a(g)(4) of the Act.

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**In the Supreme Court of the United States**

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No. 02-1377

BUCK DOE, PETITIONER

*v.*

ELAINE L. CHAO, SECRETARY OF LABOR

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*ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI  
TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT*

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**BRIEF FOR THE RESPONDENT**

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**OPINIONS BELOW**

The opinion of the court of appeals (Pet. App. 3a-60a) is reported at 306 F.3d 170. The decision of the district court (Pet. App. 61a-68a), adopting in part the report and recommendation of the magistrate judge (Pet. App. 69a-104a), is unreported.

**JURISDICTION**

The court of appeals entered its judgment on September 20, 2002. A petition for rehearing and rehearing en banc was denied on November 15, 2002 (Pet. App. 1a-2a). On January 23, 2003, the Chief Justice extended the time within which to file a petition for a writ of certiorari to and including March 15, 2003, and the petition was filed on March 14, 2003. The jurisdiction of this Court rests on 28 U.S.C. 1254(1).

**STATUTORY PROVISIONS INVOLVED**

The civil remedies provision of the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a(g), provides:

(1) **CIVIL REMEDIES.**—Whenever any agency

(A) makes a determination under subsection (d)(3) of this section not to amend an individual's record in accordance with his request, or fails to make such review in conformity with that subsection;

(B) refuses to comply with an individual request under subsection (d)(1) of this section;

(C) fails to maintain any record concerning any individual with such accuracy, relevance, timeliness, and completeness as is necessary to assure fairness in any determination relating to the qualifications, character, rights, or opportunities of, or benefits to the individual that may be made on the basis of such record, and consequently a determination is made which is adverse to the individual; or

(D) fails to comply with any other provision of this section, or any rule promulgated thereunder in such a way as to have an adverse effect on an individual,

the individual may bring a civil action against the agency, and the district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction in the matters under the provisions of this subsection.

(2)(A) In any suit brought under the provisions of subsection (g)(1)(A) of this section, the court may order the agency to amend the individual's record in accordance with his request or in such other way as the court may direct. In such a case the court shall determine the matter de novo.

(B) The court may assess against the United States reasonable attorney fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in any case under this paragraph in which the complainant has substantially prevailed.

(3)(A) In any suit brought under the provisions of subsection (g)(1)(B) of this section, the court may enjoin the agency from withholding the records and order the production to the complainant of any agency records improperly withheld from him. In such a case the court shall determine the matter de novo, and may examine the contents of any agency records in camera to determine whether the records or any portion thereof may be withheld under any of the exemptions set forth in subsection (k) of this section, and the burden is on the agency to sustain its action.

(B) The court may assess against the United States reasonable attorney fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in any case under this paragraph in which the complainant has substantially prevailed.

(4) In any suit brought under the provisions of subsection (g)(1)(C) or (D) of this section in which the court determines that the agency acted in a manner which was intentional or willful, the United

States shall be liable to the individual in an amount equal to the sum of—

(A) actual damages sustained by the individual as a result of the refusal or failure, but in no case shall a person entitled to recovery receive less than the sum of \$1,000; and

(B) the costs of the action together with reasonable attorney fees as determined by the court.

(5) An action to enforce any liability created under this section may be brought in the district court of the United States in the district in which the complainant resides, or has his principal place of business, or in which the agency records are situated, or in the District of Columbia, without regard to the amount in controversy, within two years from the date on which the cause of action arises, except that where an agency has materially and willfully misrepresented any information required under this section to be disclosed to an individual and the information so misrepresented is material to establishment of the liability of the agency to the individual under this section, the action may be brought at any time within two years after discovery by the individual of the misrepresentation. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize any civil action by reason of any injury sustained as the result of a disclosure of a record prior to September 27, 1975.

**STATEMENT**

1. a. The Privacy Act (the Act), 5 U.S.C. 552a, generally regulates federal agencies' disclosure of personal information, including social security numbers, to other governmental components and to the public. More specifically, the Privacy Act establishes requirements for Executive Branch agencies in their collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of "records" containing information about an "individual" when those records are maintained as part of a "system of records." 5 U.S.C. 552a(a)(1)-(5) and (b). The Privacy Act defines a "record" as "any item, collection, or grouping of information" about a United States citizen or lawful permanent resident alien that is maintained by an agency and contains an individual identifier, such as the individual's name, identifying number, or symbol. 5 U.S.C. 552a(a)(2) and (4).

The Privacy Act prohibits certain agency disclosures of records that are contained within a "system of records" without "the prior written consent of[] the individual to whom the record pertains." 5 U.S.C. 552a(b), and allows an individual to gain access to certain records about himself and request that information in such records be amended if it is not "accurate, relevant, timely, or complete." 5 U.S.C. 552a(d). The Act further requires an agency that maintains certain systems of records to follow specific statutory requirements, including the requirement that the agency maintain records that are used to make determinations about an individual with the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, and completeness that are reasonably necessary to assure fairness to the individual in the determination. 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(5).



The Privacy Act also regulates the use of social security numbers by federal agencies. Among other things, the Act directs that, if any government agency requests an individual to disclose his social security number, the agency "shall inform that individual whether that disclosure is mandatory or voluntary, by what statutory or other authority such number is solicited, and what uses will be made of it." 5 U.S.C. 552a note (Pub. L. No. 93-579, § 7(b), 88 Stat. 1909).

b. The Privacy Act authorizes private civil actions to enforce its terms. If an agency fails to amend a record in response to an individual's request, 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(2), or fails to provide an individual proper access to his record, 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(3), the Act makes the agency subject to a suit for injunctive relief and reasonable attorney's fees. If an agency's failure to maintain a record about an individual with the requisite accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness results in a determination that is "adverse" to the individual, 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(1)(C), or if an agency "fails to comply with any other provision" of Section 552a or its implementing regulations in such a way as to "have an adverse effect on an individual," 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(1)(D), the Act allows that individual to bring a civil action against the agency for money damages. More particularly, if the agency's failure was "intentional or willful," the Act provides that

the United States shall be liable to the individual in an amount equal to the sum of—

(A) actual damages sustained by the individual as a result of the refusal or failure, but in no case shall a person entitled to recovery receive less than the sum of \$1,000; and

(B) the costs of the action together with reasonable attorney fees as determined by the court.

5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(4). The Privacy Act also establishes criminal penalties for willful violations of its terms. 5 U.S.C. 552a(i).<sup>1</sup>

2. Since the inception of the federal government's Black Lung Benefits program in 1969, see 30 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*, the Social Security Administration, and its successor administering agency, the Department of Labor's Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, have used the voluntarily provided social security numbers of claimants seeking black lung benefits as internal case numbers in the processing of their claims. C.A. App. 108-110. Following passage of the Privacy Act, the Department of Labor published, under 5 U.S.C. 552a(a)(7), (b)(3) and (e)(4)(D), a notice of "routine use" of information compiled in the administration of black lung benefits. See 58 Fed. Reg. 49,548, 49,597 (1993). As relevant here, the notice advised black lung claimants that the administration of the benefit program entails the routine disclosure of claimants' records to persons associated with the claimant's case, including mine operators who may be liable for the claim, relevant insurance companies, and the legal representatives of relevant parties. See *id.* at 49,597-49,598. The notice further cautioned that the records subject to

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<sup>1</sup> Damages awards under the Privacy Act are paid out of general treasury funds, rather than agency funds. See 31 U.S.C. 1304(a); Office of Mgmt. & Budget, *Privacy Act Guidelines*, 40 Fed. Reg. 28,968 (1975) (concluding that Privacy Act judgments "would appear to be payable from public funds rather than agency funds") (citing 28 U.S.C. 2414 and 31 U.S.C. 724a (1970), the predecessor to 31 U.S.C. 1304(a)).

such disclosure may include a claimant's social security number. *Id.* at 49,597.

Prior to this litigation, administrative law judges responsible for black lung benefit cases frequently mailed multi-captioned hearing notices containing those same black-lung claim numbers—that is, the claimants' social security numbers—to claimants, their attorneys, coal companies, and insurance carriers. See Pet. App. 5a. Each multi-captioned hearing notice encompassed approximately 15 to 20 different cases and the parties associated with them. C.A. App. 88.<sup>2</sup>

3. In February 1997, petitioner and six other black lung claimants filed lawsuits, using pseudonyms, against the Secretary of Labor under the Privacy Act, alleging that the Department's practice of disclosing claimants' social security numbers to third parties while processing black lung benefits claims violated the Privacy Act. Pet. App. 5a-6a. The cases were consolidated, and the Department of Labor promptly consented to the entry of a stipulated order under which it agreed to discontinue its use of social security numbers on multi-captioned hearing notices. *Id.* at 6a; J.A. 12-13.

In support of a claim for damages, petitioner submitted an affidavit in which he stated that the disclosure of his social security number on multi-captioned

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<sup>2</sup> The Privacy Act permitted the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs to use the claimants' voluntarily provided social security numbers as internal identification numbers, and the Act's routine use provision (5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(3)) permitted the Office to disclose the numbers to parties associated with each claimant's individual case. However, the external disclosure of a claimant's social security number to the numerous persons involved in other cases listed on the multi-captioned hearing notice violated the Privacy Act's limitations on agency disclosures. Cf. 5 U.S.C. 552a(b).

hearing notices had “torn me all to pieces,” and that “no amount of money could compensate me for worry and fear of not knowing when someone would use my name and Social Security number.” J.A. 15. At the same time, petitioner acknowledged that his social security number had been on his driver’s license until more than a year after his suit was filed, and that it “probably” was pre-printed on all of his checks. J.A. 1, 17, 23. No other plaintiff identified any adverse consequence arising from the Department’s dissemination of his social security number. Pet. App. 18a n.7, 22a.

The plaintiffs then sought to certify a class of “all claimants for Black Lung Benefits through the United States Department of Labor since the passage of the Privacy Act.” C.A. App. 79, 81; Pet. App. 6a. The plaintiffs asserted that there were “thousands of members of the class,” C.A. App. 80, noting that there were nearly 23,000 active claims for black lung benefits pending during the relevant time period, and that many of those claimants “would have an identical claim for violations of the Privacy Act.” *id.* at 88. The plaintiffs further estimated that close to 100,000 black lung cases had been scheduled for hearings, and that if each multi-captioned hearing notice had been distributed to 40 or 50 strangers, then there would have been “approximately four to five million” Privacy Act violations. See Mem. in Opp. to Def.’s Supp. Summ. J. Mot. 17. Asserting that each class member had an automatic entitlement to a minimum \$1000 award for each violation of the Act, the plaintiffs concluded that the “multiplication is mind-boggling” and that, however large those numbers may be, the Department of Labor “is liable in the appropriate, corresponding amount.” *Id.* at 14, 17; see also C.A. App. 95.

The district court denied class certification and granted summary judgment for the Department with respect to all claims for damages, except for petitioner's. Pet. App. 61a-68a; see also *id.* at 69a-104a (report and recommendation of magistrate judge). The court first concluded that the Department's mailing of multi-captioned hearing notices containing a claimant's social security number to persons not associated with the claimant's case violated the Privacy Act's non-disclosure provision (5 U.S.C. 552a(b)), and that the practice constituted an "intentional or willful" violation of the Act. Pet. App. 86a-92a, 94a-97a. With respect to petitioner, the district court agreed with the government that proof of actual damages was required. *Id.* at 66a & n.2. The court concluded, however, that petitioner had submitted "sufficient incontrovertible evidence \* \* \* that he suffered 'actual damages,' in the form of emotional distress," and it awarded him the "statutory minimum amount" of damages of \$1000. *Id.* at 66a-67a. With respect to the other named plaintiffs, the court adopted the magistrate judge's finding that none of them had identified any adverse effect resulting from the Department of Labor's inclusion of their social security numbers on the multi-captioned hearing notices. *Id.* at 65a-67a, 99a-100a.

4. a. The court of appeals reversed the district court's grant of summary judgment to petitioner, and otherwise affirmed the district court's grant of summary judgment to the Department. Pet. App. 3a-60a. The court rejected petitioner's argument that he was automatically entitled to an award of \$1000 for having proved an intentional or willful violation of the Privacy Act, holding that the Privacy Act's remedial provision requires plaintiffs to demonstrate some "actual dam-

ages” before they may obtain the statutory minimum award of \$1000. *Id.* at 9a.

The court of appeals first noted that Congress has restricted the minimum \$1000 damages award to a “person entitled to recovery,” 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(4). By placement of that phrase within a subparagraph “the sole and entire purpose of which is to limit the liability of the United States to actual damages sustained,” Pet. App. 9a, the court explained, “Congress has defined ‘recovery’ (albeit indirectly) by its express limitation of the Government’s liability to actual damages sustained.” *Ibid.* The provision thus serves only to “provide[] for a ‘statutory minimum’ to actual damages” in cases “where actual damages are greater than \$0 but less than \$1,000.” *Ibid.* That reading “gives effect to the eminently reasonable \* \* \* presumption that the legislature correlated the plaintiff’s recovery entitlement with the defendant’s liability by limiting the plaintiff’s recovery to actual damages and by providing, by way of incentive to suit, for at least a minimum recovery even where actual damages are minimal.” *Id.* at 10a. At the same time, the court concluded, Congress’s decision only “to *assign* damages awards for persons able to demonstrate some ‘actual damages’ \* \* \* serve[d] a competing objective: preventing the imposition of potentially substantial liability for violations of the Act which cause no ‘actual damages’ to anyone.” *Id.* at 11a n.2.

The court also found its reading to be compelled “as a grammatical matter,” because, “having just defined the recovery that will be permitted against the United States” in terms of actual damages, “it would torture all grammar to conclude that the phrase ‘a person entitled to recovery’ references anyone other than one who has sustained actual damages.” Pet. App. 10a (emphasis

omitted). Had Congress intended to allow an automatic award of \$1000, without any showing of actual damages, the court explained, it could have done so “unequivocally” through “clear” language. *Id.* at 10a-11a.

Finally, because the Privacy Act’s remedial provisions are a limited waiver of sovereign immunity, the court concluded that the scope of the waiver must be “strictly construed . . . in favor of the sovereign.” Pet. App. 13a-14a.

Having found that petitioner’s entitlement to the \$1000 award depended on a showing of actual damages, the court concluded that petitioner’s allegations of emotional upset, which did not include “any evidence of tangible consequences stemming from his alleged angst over the disclosure of his [social security number],” Pet. App. 17a, did not constitute sufficient evidence of actual damages to sustain an award under Section 552a(g)(4)(A).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Petitioner did not seek this Court’s review of that aspect of the court of appeals’ holding. The court of appeals reserved “the issue of whether the term ‘actual damages’ as used in the Act encompasses damages for non-pecuniary emotional distress.” Pet. App. 17a-18a. Accordingly, that issue, on which the courts of appeals have entered conflicting decisions, is not before the Court either. Compare *Hudson v. Reno*, 150 F.3d 1193, 1207 n.11 (6th Cir. 1997) (“actual damages” is limited to pecuniary losses), cert. denied, 525 U.S. 822 (1998), disapproved in part not relevant by *Pollard v. F. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.*, 532 U.S. 843 (2001), and *Fitzpatrick v. IRS*, 665 F.2d 327, 330-331 (11th Cir. 1982) (same), with *Johnson v. Department of Treasury, IRS*, 700 F.2d 971, 974-986 (5th Cir. 1983) (“actual damages” includes non-pecuniary emotional distress damages). In any event, even if some forms of emotional distress are compensable under the Privacy Act’s damages provision, petitioner’s alleged fear of future harm, unaccompanied by any other current injury, is not traditionally compensable. Cf. *Metro-North Commuter R.R. v. Buckley*, 521 U.S. 424,

b. Judge Michael dissented from the majority's holding that an individual must prove actual damages to receive an award of \$1000 under Section 552a(g)(4)(A). Pet. App. 24a-60a. Admitting that the "question is somewhat close," *id.* at 30a, and that his reading of the statute "is not inevitable," *id.* at 45a, Judge Michael would have held that a plaintiff "can recover statutory damages of \$1,000 upon proof that he has suffered an adverse effect as a result of an intentional or willful violation of the Privacy Act, § 552a(g)(1)(D), (g)(4)." *Id.* at 25a. In Judge Michael's view, that reading better comports with "policy considerations" and "Congress's purposes." *Id.* at 47a.

#### SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

The Privacy Act permits individuals whose rights have been violated to sue to recover "actual damages sustained by the individual \* \* \*, but in no case shall a person entitled to recovery receive less than the sum of \$1,000." 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(4)(A). The court of appeals correctly held that the remedial language does not authorize an automatic award of \$1000 in the absence of a showing of actual damages. Rather, the \$1000 award provides a guaranteed minimum recovery for individuals who have demonstrated actual damages, while allowing them and the court to avoid the resource-intensive process of precisely quantifying those damages when their relatively small amount renders such an effort not worth the candle.

Because the Privacy Act's remedial provisions constitute a limited waiver of the United States' sovereign

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432 (1997) (common-law courts generally deny relief to individual who is exposed to hazardous substance and fears that he will become diseased in the future, but who suffers no current physical impairment).



immunity, the question is not whether the statutory text could be read to provide for automatic statutory damages. The question is whether the statutory text clearly and unequivocally compels that conclusion. It does not. By its terms, the Privacy Act makes the minimum \$1000 award available not to every individual who establishes the existence of an intentional or willful violation, but only to a “person entitled to recovery.” The word “recovery” is most naturally understood to refer to *compensation* awarded as a remedy for prior wrongs—and, in the present context, to the “actual damages” specifically authorized by Section 552a(g)(4)(A). Absent proof of the type of harm that would support an “actual damages” award, a Privacy Act plaintiff therefore is not a “person entitled to recovery” under the Act, even if he can demonstrate the commission of an intentional or willful violation.

If Congress had wanted to demarcate the \$1000 payment as a distinct form of automatic statutory damages, available even to a plaintiff who has failed to establish any “actual damages,” it could easily have achieved that result. Congress could simply have provided for “actual damages *or* statutory damages of \$1000, whichever is greater.” Alternatively, Congress could have authorized the payment of “statutory” or “liquidated” damages in its own subsection, separate and apart from the “actual damages” provision. Such labeling or distinct itemization of statutory and liquidated damages is how Congress has provided for such awards in more than a dozen other statutes, including a number of privacy laws. Congress’s decision to take a different course in the Privacy Act, and instead to restrict the \$1000 minimum award to “person[s] entitled to recovery,” therefore must be given meaningful effect by the courts.

Although petitioner discusses at length the Act's legislative history and policy considerations, sovereign immunity can be waived only by duly enacted statutory text. Neither committee reports nor unidimensional notions of good policy can open the federal Treasury to monetary awards that Congress did not expressly authorize. In any event, the legislative history undermines petitioner's argument. Both the House and the Senate repeatedly failed to enact versions of the remedial provision that would have expressly authorized awards of liquidated or statutory damages even in the absence of any actual damages. The legislative compromise that produced the Privacy Act, moreover, eschewed expanding the government's monetary liability beyond actual damages, choosing instead to task a newly formed Commission with studying the need for some form of automatic damages.

Petitioner's policy arguments fare no better. Congress did not legislate with a single-minded focus on encouraging Privacy Act damage claims. It sought to balance the need for effective remedies with responsible fiscal judgments. Congress struck that reasonable balance by allowing actual damages—with a guaranteed minimum recovery to obviate proof difficulties and simplify litigation for many of the small claims that Privacy Act violations can produce—while tabling the inclusion of further remedies pending further study.

**ARGUMENT**

**THE PRIVACY ACT REQUIRES A PLAINTIFF TO  
DEMONSTRATE ACTUAL DAMAGES BEFORE HE  
MAY OBTAIN THE STATUTORILY PRESCRIBED  
MINIMUM AWARD OF \$1000 UNDER 5 U.S.C.  
552a(g)(4)(A)**

The Privacy Act establishes a carefully calibrated damages remedy against federal agencies for intentional or willful violations of certain provisions of the Act, including the improper disclosure of a social security number. Specifically, the Privacy Act provides that, in such a suit,

the United States shall be liable to the individual in an amount equal to the sum of—

(A) actual damages sustained by the individual as a result of the refusal or failure, but in no case shall a person entitled to recovery receive less than the sum of \$1,000; and

(B) the costs of the action together with reasonable attorney fees as determined by the court.

5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(4). The question in this case is whether the Privacy Act entitles every individual who demonstrates an intentional or willful violation of the relevant Privacy Act provisions to an automatic payment of \$1000 from the federal Treasury even if he suffered no damages whatsoever, or whether, instead, such payments are restricted to individuals who have demonstrated some actual damages.

That question of statutory construction concerns the scope of Congress's waiver of the United States' sovereign immunity from money damages and, in particular,

the amount and type of monetary liability to which Congress decided to open the federal Treasury. Under established interpretive principles, any doubt regarding the scope of Congress's waiver must be resolved in favor of preserving sovereign immunity. To obtain the automatic damages that he seeks, petitioner thus must show not simply that his own reading of the pertinent language is a plausible one, but that the statutory text clearly and unequivocally compels that reading. Petitioner cannot make that showing.

**A. Congress's Waiver Of Sovereign Immunity For Automatic, Statutory Damages Must Be Clear And Unequivocal**

It is a "common rule, with which [this Court] presume[s] congressional familiarity," that the United States government is immune from suit unless it has expressly waived its sovereign immunity. *Department of Energy v. Ohio*, 503 U.S. 607, 615 (1992); see also *Lane v. Pena*, 518 U.S. 187, 192 (1996).<sup>4</sup> Any waiver of immunity, moreover, must be "unequivocally expressed" and "not enlarged beyond what the language requires." *United States v. Nordic Vill., Inc.*, 503 U.S. 30, 33-34 (1992) (internal alterations and quotation omitted).

The sovereign immunity of the United States encompasses not only immunity from suit, but also the authority to establish the terms upon which suit may proceed. See, e.g., *Lehman v. Nakshian*, 453 U.S. 156, 160 (1981); *United States v. Testan*, 424 U.S. 392, 399 (1976) ("It

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<sup>4</sup> In drafting the Privacy Act, Congress legislated with that principle in mind. 120 Cong. Rec. 36,660 (1974) (Rep. Erlenborn) ("As I believe most of the lawyers in the House know, it is a general principle of law that the Government, in exercising its governmental functions, is not liable.").

has long been established, of course, that the United States, as sovereign, ‘is immune from suit save as it consents to be sued . . . and the terms of its consent to be sued in any court define that court’s jurisdiction to entertain the suit.’”) (quoting *United States v. Sherwood*, 312 U.S. 584, 586 (1941)). Accordingly, even where the United States has generally waived its sovereign immunity from suit, the availability of monetary relief, interest, and jury trial depend upon an additional express and particularized waiver by Congress. See, e.g., *Nordic Vill.*, 503 U.S. at 34-37 (monetary claims unavailable); *Library of Congress v. Shaw*, 478 U.S. 310, 318-319 (1986) (Title VII’s general waiver of immunity does not authorize interest); *Lehman*, 453 U.S. at 160 (jury trial unavailable); see also *United States v. John Hancock Mut. Life Ins. Co.*, 364 U.S. 301, 308 (1960) (despite the general waiver of immunity from suit in 28 U.S.C. 2410, “the United States is not subject to local statutes of limitations”). Any “limitations and conditions upon which the Government consents to be sued must be strictly observed and exceptions thereto are not to be implied.” *Lehman*, 453 U.S. at 161; see also *Department of the Army v. Blue Fox, Inc.*, 525 U.S. 255, 261 (1999) (a statutory waiver must “be strictly construed, in terms of its scope, in favor of the sovereign”).

Petitioner contends (Br. 24-25) that this Court should eschew a strict construction of the Privacy Act’s text because Congress clearly waived the United States’ immunity from suit and from some form of damages remedy. That argument fails for two reasons.

1. First and foremost, this Court’s long-established precedent is flatly to the contrary. In *Price v. United States*, 174 U.S. 373 (1899), the question before the Court was whether a particular waiver of the govern-

ment's immunity from suit for actual damages for property taken by Indians also encompassed a waiver of immunity for consequential damages—that is, “damages to other property which resulted as a consequence of the taking.” *Id.* at 375. The Court held that the determination of what type of damages Congress had authorized directly implicated the United States' sovereign immunity and, as such, “its liability in suit cannot be extended beyond the plain language of the statute authorizing it.” *Id.* at 376. The Court stressed that the jurisdiction of the court to award damages—including the specification of “contingencies in which the liability of the government is submitted to the courts,” *ibid.*—“is a matter resting in [Congress's] discretion,” *id.* at 377, and “cannot be enlarged by implication,” regardless of what “may seem to this court equitable, or what obligation we may deem ought to be assumed by the government.” *Id.* at 375. Similarly here, the question whether the \$1000 minimum award is available to a Privacy Act plaintiff who has failed to establish any “actual damages” must be resolved through application of the canon requiring narrow construction of waivers of sovereign immunity.

*Department of Energy, supra*, in which the Court held that the federal government was not subject to punitive liability, is to the same effect. Congress, in the Clean Water Act, had waived the government's immunity from suit and authorized monetary “sanction[s]” against the federal government as “civil penalties” for violating the Act's federal-facilities provisions. 503 U.S. at 615, 620-627. The Court held, however, that the explicit waiver of sovereign immunity from monetary “sanctions,” and Congress's use of “a seemingly expansive phrase like ‘civil penalties arising under federal law,’” were not enough to prevent application of the

“rule of narrow construction.” *Id.* at 626-627. To the contrary, application of that traditional rule led the Court to “take[] the waiver no further than” authorizing fines as sanctions to assure the government’s prospective compliance. *Id.* at 627. The Court acknowledged the “unresolved tension” in the statutory scheme, which suggested that punitive sanctions may have been intended by Congress, but held that “under our rules”—with which “congressional familiarity” is presumed—“that tension is resolved by the requirement that any statement of waiver be unequivocal” and narrowly construed to favor the sovereign. *Id.* at 615, 626-627. See also *Missouri Pac. R.R. v. Ault*, 256 U.S. 554, 563-564 (1921) (applying principles of sovereign immunity, the Court construed the scope of a waiver of immunity for damages to be limited to compensatory damages, and not to include additional “double damages” for delayed payment).

Likewise, in *Ruckelshaus v. Sierra Club*, 463 U.S. 680 (1983), the Court applied the canon of strict construction in addressing Congress’s express waiver of sovereign immunity from attorney’s fees in lawsuits brought under the Clean Air Act “whenever [a court] determines that such an award is appropriate.” 42 U.S.C. 7607(f). The Court held that, notwithstanding Congress’s waiver of immunity from suit and its clear authorization of some monetary relief, the term “appropriate” must be narrowly construed to prevent judicial enlargement of the available relief beyond what Congress clearly authorized. *Ruckelshaus*, 463 U.S. at 681-682, 685-686.

2. Petitioner’s contention (Br. 24-26) that, once Congress opens the door to some monetary liability, courts are free to infer or imply broader monetary liability ignores the separation of powers principles that ani-

mate the rule of strictly construing congressional waivers of sovereign immunity. The power to waive sovereign immunity resides exclusively in the hands of Congress. Neither the Executive Branch nor the Judicial Branch can effect a waiver through the exercise of its respective powers. See *OPM v. Richmond*, 496 U.S. 414, 424-434 (1990); *United States v. Shaw*, 309 U.S. 495, 501-502 (1940). The Executive Branch's Article II powers and the Judicial Branch's Article III powers are "limited by a valid reservation of congressional control over funds in the Treasury." *OPM v. Richmond*, 496 U.S. at 425; see U.S. Const. Art. I, § 9, Cl. 7 ("No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law."). This Court's strict construction of statutory waivers of immunity thus ensures that courts do not mistakenly impose burdens on the public fisc that Congress did not authorize, and that "public funds will be spent [only] according to the letter of the difficult judgments reached by Congress as to the common good." 496 U.S. at 428, 432; see also *INS v. St. Cyr*, 533 U.S. 289, 299 n.10 (2001) ("In traditionally sensitive areas, . . . the requirement of [a] clear statement assures that the legislature has in fact faced, and intended to bring into issue, the critical matters involved in the judicial decision.") (quoting *Gregory v. Ashcroft*, 501 U.S. 452, 461 (1991), and citing *Nordic Vill.*, *supra*).

For that reason, this Court has been "particularly alert to require a specific waiver of sovereign immunity before the United States may be held liable" for "monetary exactions." *United States v. Idaho*, 508 U.S. 1, 8-9 (1993). Accordingly, "[w]here a cause of action is authorized against the federal government, the available remedies are not those that are 'appropriate,'"



*Lane*, 518 U.S. at 197, or those that a court can plausibly infer from the statutory text, “but only those for which sovereign immunity has been expressly waived” by Congress itself, *ibid.* Accordingly, absent the clearest indications to the contrary, the Court should assume that “Congress had no intent to subject the United States to an enforcement mechanism that could deplete the federal fisc regardless of a responsible officer’s willingness and capacity to comply in the future,” and regardless of the fact that no individual suffered actual harm as a result of the government’s improper conduct. *Department of Energy*, 503 U.S. at 628.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The potential fiscal consequences of petitioner’s argument cast that concern in stark relief. The Department of Labor’s Office of Administrative Law Judges conducted over three thousand black-lung hearings between February 1995 and February 1997 (see 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(5) (two-year statute of limitations for Privacy Act claims)). Virtually all of those hearings were preceded by the issuance of multi-captioned hearing notices to 15 to 20 claimants and to their attorneys, responsible employers, and insurance companies. See J.A. 9-10; C.A. App. 36, 59, 88, 143; Gov’t Opp. to Pls.’ Req. for Att’y’s Fees 11-12. Indeed, petitioner asserted below that there were over 1.2 million individual violations per year and perhaps “tens of millions of violations” in total. 10/4/00 Aff. of J. Wolfe, Esq. 3. If, as petitioner contended below, each disclosure amounted to an independent violation of the Privacy Act—and if each such violation, in turn, gave rise to a right to recover \$1000—the payment of automatic damages for each violation could amount to well in excess of \$170 million. Cf. Gov’t Opp. to Pls.’ Req. for Att’y’s Fees 12; see also Mem. in Opp. to Def.’s Supp. Summ. J. Mot. 17 (asserting that there would have been “approximately four to five million” Privacy Act violations).

While the United States disagrees that the \$1000 minimum award is available for each violation of the Privacy Act—the better reading authorizes a minimum damages payment to each “person entitled to recovery” in a Privacy Act suit—that statutory construction question has not yet been definitively resolved.

Petitioner's reliance (Br. 25-26) on *Canadian Aviator, Ltd. v. United States*, 324 U.S. 215 (1945), and *American Stevedores, Inc. v. Porello*, 330 U.S. 446 (1947), is misplaced. Both cases involved construction of the terms of Congress's "broad statutory language authorizing suit" against the government under the Public Vessels Act, ch. 428, 43 Stat. 1112, to obtain damages caused by the negligent operation of public vessels by government employees. *Canadian Aviator*, 324 U.S. at 222. In *Canadian Aviator*, the Court declined to restrict an express waiver for "damages caused by a public vessel" to those damages that were caused by a collision involving such a vessel, holding that "Congressional adoption of broad statutory language authorizing suit was deliberate and is not to be thwarted by an unduly restrictive interpretation." *Ibid.* In *Porello*, the Court likewise construed the unqualified waiver of immunity for tort "damages" to reach both injury to property and injury to the person.

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The instant suit, which involves large numbers of plaintiff class members each seeking the minimum \$1000 recovery, is not unique. The federal Treasury faced exposure of over \$100 billion in a Privacy Act class action that was certified to include over 100 million persons to whom the IRS mailed Form 1040 tax packages with mailing labels listing the recipient's name, address, and social security number. See *Ingerman v. IRS*, No. Civ.A.89-5396, 1990 WL 10029523 (D.N.J. July 16, 1990). The government currently faces potential liability in a pending suit against the Department of Veterans Affairs that seeks roughly \$168 million (\$1000 for each class member) for the Department's alleged disclosure of information and failure to establish appropriate safeguards to protect the security of such information in its computer system (5 U.S.C. 552a(b) and (e)(10)). See *Schmidt v. Department of Veterans Affairs*, No. 00-C-1093, 2003 WL 22346323 (E.D. Wis. Sept. 30, 2003), petition for permission to appeal denial of mot. for class certification pending, No. 03-8015 (7th Cir. filed Oct. 20, 2003).

330 U.S. at 450. In both cases, moreover, the Court stressed that the unqualified language used by Congress to effect the broad waiver had an established meaning at law. *Porello*, 330 U.S. at 450 (noting “historical[.]” meaning of damages, “a fact too well-known to have been overlooked by the Congress”); *Canadian Aviator*, 324 U.S. at 224 (Congress used “customary legal terminology”).<sup>6</sup>

Those cases thus stand for the unremarkable proposition that, when Congress’s waiver of immunity is clear and unequivocal, the Court has no license to protect the public purse by narrowing the waiver’s scope with judicially crafted, extra textual limitations. The Privacy Act’s calibrated and closely tailored civil remedial scheme, which specifies particular forms of injunctive relief for two types of claims, and only “actual damages” for the remaining claims, is the antithesis of the broad and unqualified waiver of immunity for “damages” at issue in *Canadian Aviator* and *Porello*.

*West v. Gibson*, 527 U.S. 212 (1999), does nothing to strengthen petitioner’s hand. Contrary to petitioner’s contention (Br. 25), *West* did not hold the canon of narrow construction to be inapplicable to determinations of the types of damages that Congress authorized to be paid out of the federal Treasury. *West* held only

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<sup>6</sup> The Public Vessels Act employed a broad waiver of immunity because Congress sought to equalize governmental and private liability for the same torts. *Canadian Aviator*, 324 U.S. at 218-219. See also *Irwin v. Department of Veterans Affairs*, 498 U.S. 89 (1990) (suits brought against the government under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e, are subject to the same presumption of equitable tolling that applies to Title VII suits against private defendants). The present case, by contrast, involves the imposition of damages liability exclusively on the federal government.

that a clear waiver of immunity for “compensatory damages” applied to both the administrative and judicial phases of Title VII litigation against a federal agency. *Id.* at 222. The Court reached that decision because the statutory scheme at issue met the traditional “specially strict standard” of statutory construction. *Ibid.* While the Court suggested that the rule of narrow construction might not apply to subsidiary questions of “how [a] waived damages remedy is to be administered,” *ibid.*, the Court did not resolve that issue and the language discussing it was dictum. In any event, that dictum has little relevance to the quintessential sovereign immunity question of whether a particular category of plaintiffs—that is, individuals whose rights under the Privacy Act are violated, but who have suffered no “actual damages”—are entitled to a monetary award from the federal Treasury at all.

**B. The Statutory Text And Structure Restrict The Award Of \$1000 To Persons Who Have Suffered Actual Damages**

In light of the sovereign immunity rule of narrow construction, the question in this case is not whether the statutory text *could* be read to support an award of automatic damages, regardless of actual injury. The question is whether the statutory text *compels* that reading. The answer is no. To the contrary, a straightforward reading of the text of the Privacy Act’s remedial provision restricts the award of \$1000 to a claimant who has sustained “actual damages” and who thus is a “person entitled to recovery.”

1. The statutory text provides that the government “shall be liable to the individual” whose rights were violated “in an amount equal to the sum of” two things: (A) “actual damages sustained by the individual,” and

(B) costs and reasonable attorney fees. 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(4). As petitioner appears to acknowledge (Br. 30-32), the term “actual damages” does not, in legal practice or common parlance, embrace the concept of liquidated damages or an automatic statutory payment regardless of actual harm. The follow-on clause in subparagraph (A), providing \$1000 to a “person entitled to recovery,” appears only after the statute has confined the remedy available to aggrieved individuals to “actual damages.” The phrase is thus not logically or naturally read to disavow the very precondition to recovery—a showing of “actual damages”—that Congress just imposed. Instead, the structure of the sentence requires a plaintiff first to demonstrate some “actual damages sustained,” and only then to become eligible for a minimum award of \$1000.

That reading fully comports with the statement of congressional purpose in the Privacy Act, which expressed Congress’s intent that federal agencies “be subject to civil suit for any damages *which occur* as a result of willful or intentional action which violates any individual’s rights under th[e] Act.” 5 U.S.C. 552a note (Pub. L. No. 93-579, § 2(b)(6), 88 Stat. 1896) (emphasis added). That statement stresses Congress’s intent to provide a damages remedy for, and only for, losses which actually “occur.”

2. That same understanding is consonant with Congress’s use of the term “recovery” in conjunction with the “actual damages” requirement. The most common meaning of the term “recover” now, and at the time of the Privacy Act’s enactment, is “to get or win back.” *Webster’s Third New Int’l Dictionary* 1898 (1966). That is precisely what actual damages do. They represent a “recovery” of money or resources lost due to the government’s violation of the Privacy Act. By contrast, an

automatic statutory payment of damages would not reflect a “recovery” of anything; it would be a free-standing award of money. Such automatic awards are designed, in petitioner’s own words (Br. 29), not to effectuate a “recovery,” but to provide an “incentive to enforce the Act” and to “deter future agency violations.” Thus, the phrase “person entitled to recovery” is most sensibly read as referring to a person “entitled to recover[.]” actual damages, as opposed to a person who has demonstrated agency error but is not “re-cover[ing]” anything.<sup>7</sup>

Petitioner’s contention (Br. 15-16) that the \$1000 minimum award is itself the “recovery” to which he is “entitled” is anomalous in another respect as well. The phrase “person entitled to recovery” can meaningfully define eligibility for the \$1000 minimum award only if an individual plaintiff’s “entitle[ment] to recovery” can be determined without reference to the availability of the \$1000 award itself. If the Act did not provide for such a minimum award, petitioner could not plausibly claim to be a “person entitled to recovery”; petitioner has not challenged the court of appeals’ holding that he failed to prove actual damages (Pet. App. 18a), and the Privacy Act does not provide for any other form of compensatory relief. Under petitioner’s theory, however, it is precisely and only his purported eligibility for a \$1000 award that makes him a “person entitled to recovery.” That wholly circular argument overlooks that the

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<sup>7</sup> For example, a plaintiff who established the prerequisites for declaratory or injunctive relief would not naturally be characterized as a “person entitled to recovery”; a party does not “recover” an injunction or a declaratory judgment. Even though a declaratory or injunctive order might substantially benefit the plaintiff by reducing the likelihood of future violations, it would not represent a “recovery” because it would not compensate him for prior harms.

statutory text makes the payment of \$1000 a *consequence* of being a “person entitled to recovery.”

3. Congress’s employment of the unique phrase “person entitled to recovery” reinforces that reading. Petitioner surmises (Br. 16) that the phrase “person entitled to recovery” refers to a plaintiff who has established an intentional or willful violation under Section 552a(g)(4) and the adverse effect required by Section 552a(g)(1)(D) as a prerequisite to suit. The Privacy Act’s text demonstrates otherwise. Throughout the remedial provision, a plaintiff whose rights have been violated is referred to as an “individual,” not a “person entitled to recovery.” Indeed, Section 552a(g)(4) makes the government liable “to the individual” and requires the payment of actual damages sustained “by the individual.” See also 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(1)(A), (B), (C) and (D); 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(2)(A). The phrase “person entitled to recovery” appears for the first and only time in the entire Act in the “actual damages” subparagraph of Section 552a(g)(4), and thus functionally serves to describe that particular class of individuals who have established some level of actual damages. When Congress “seemingly goes out of its way to avoid [a] standard term,” employing in its place an “entirely novel phrase” or “neologism,” the Court must give effect to that judgment. *BFP v. Resolution Trust Corp.*, 511 U.S. 531, 537 (1994); see also *Department of Energy*, 503 U.S. at 619 (“Such differences in treatment within a given statutory text are reasonably understood to reflect differences in meaning intended.”). To read “person entitled to recovery” as nothing more than the “individual” who establishes an adverse effect from intentional or willful conduct, as petitioner advocates, would ignore Congress’s pointed use of distinct terminology.

Congress hewed to that same drafting pattern in other legislation safeguarding privacy rights at the time of the Privacy Act's enactment. See 18 U.S.C. 2520(a) (1970) (amended 1986) (authorizing "actual damages but not less than liquidated damages computed at the rate of \$100 a day for each day of violation or \$1,000, whichever is higher"); 15 U.S.C. 1681n(1)-(3) (1970) (amended 1996) (structurally separating the different types of damages authorized).

In short, when Congress wishes to authorize statutory or liquidated damages, it does so plainly by referring specifically to "statutory" or "liquidated" damages, or otherwise structurally demarcating such damages as available separate and apart from actual damages. Moreover, in none of the statutes—either those contemporaneous with or those postdating the Privacy Act—did Congress employ the unique phrase "person entitled to recovery" to describe a party entitled to receive liquidated or statutory damages. As petitioner himself insists (see Br. 20-23), such evidence of consistent congressional practice is highly relevant to the interpretive question presented here. Accordingly, the presence in the Privacy Act of the phrase "person entitled to recovery"—and the absence of either a similar structure separately itemizing the \$1000 award in its own subparagraph or using one of the descriptive phrases "liquidated damages" or "statutory damages"—speaks volumes.

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liquidated damages computed at the rate of \$100 a day for each day of violation or \$1,000, whichever is higher"); Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, 50 U.S.C. 1810(a) (authorizing the award of "actual damages, but not less than liquidated damages of \$1,000 or \$100 per day for each day of violation, whichever is greater"), 1828(1) (same).



In response, petitioner offers (Br. 20-21) a tax law that was repealed 21 years ago, 26 U.S.C. 7217(c) (Supp. II 1978) (repealed 1982), but petitioner's argument either proves nothing or proves our point. Section 7217 authorized suits against private persons and government officials in their *personal* capacities, see 26 U.S.C. 7217(a) (1976) and 7701(a)(1); *Vermont Agency of Natural Resources v. United States*, 529 U.S. 765, 780-781 & n.9 (2000), for the improper disclosure of tax return information. The damages provision, 26 U.S.C. 7217(c) (Supp. II 1978), employed language similar to that in the Privacy Act.<sup>9</sup> The existence of that now-repealed provision proves nothing, however, because its text was never authoritatively interpreted by this Court; nor was it analyzed by the courts of appeals with the care required for waivers of sovereign immunity because it did not authorize suit against the United States.<sup>10</sup> The repealed statutory language thus, at best,

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<sup>9</sup> The analogy is not perfect, however. Section 7217(c) consistently referred to the person receiving damages as the "plaintiff." It did not introduce (as the Privacy Act does) a new and distinct label, such as "person entitled to recovery," to describe the individual who had demonstrated actual damages.

<sup>10</sup> Neither *Johnson v. Saenger*, 120 F.3d 1307 (5th Cir. 1997), nor *Rorex v. Trugnot*, 771 F.2d 683 (5th Cir. 1985) (each cited at Pet. Br. 21), analyzed the text of Section 7217. *Johnson* stated in dicta that Section 7217 provided "liquidated damages of \$1,000 per disclosure," but the court did not specifically consider whether that \$1000 sum should be awarded in the absence of other damages, because that question had been resolved in district court, was not contested by the parties on appeal, and thus was law of the case. See 120 F.3d at 1313, 1325 n.6. The *Rorex* court stated that a "statutory minimum award of \$1,000" was available under Section 7217 for unlawful disclosures where neither actual nor punitive damages were awarded, but it did so without any analysis of the statutory text. See 771 F.2d at 387-388.

raises the same question presented here; it does not answer it.

The evolution of Section 7217(c), in fact, proves our point. When Congress repealed Section 7217(c) and, instead, made the United States a defendant in such actions, Congress replaced the ambiguous actual damages provision with a new provision that follows the pattern identified above of structurally demarcating statutory damages as distinct from actual damages. See 26 U.S.C. 7431(c)(1) (subsection (A) permits the award of “\$1,000 for each act of unauthorized inspection or disclosure,” while subsection (B) authorizes “actual damages”). That change indicates Congress’s understanding that the predecessor language in Section 7217(c) either did *not* authorize automatic statutory damages, or was sufficiently *unclear* as to require a clarifying amendment in order to impose monetary liability upon the United States. The successor law thus “illustrates Congress’ ability to craft a clear waiver of the Federal Government’s sovereign immunity against particular remedies for violations of the Act.” *Lane*, 518 U.S. at 194. That clear language and structure are notably absent from the Privacy Act.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Petitioner’s reliance (Br. 22-23) on 18 U.S.C. 2707(c) suffers from the same problem, compounded by the fact that the statute does not apply to the United States, 18 U.S.C. 2707(a), and thus says nothing about whether the text is sufficiently clear to waive sovereign immunity for money damages. Petitioner’s reliance on 26 U.S.C. 6110(j)(2)(A) is even farther afield, because the relevant statutory language provides that, upon establishing an intentional or willful violation, a “person” shall “be entitled to receive [no] less than the sum of \$1,000.” Relief is not restricted to a sub-class of “person[s]”—those “entitled to recovery” of actual damages. In any event, petitioner acknowledges (Br. 22) that “[n]o court has interpreted this provision.”

5. Limiting damages payments to individuals who have demonstrated some actual harm from the government's violation of the Privacy Act promotes structural equity among the different remedial schemes authorized by Congress in the Privacy Act. Section 552a(g) includes three different remedial provisions. Section 552a(g)(2) authorizes a civil action for injunctive relief, costs, and attorney fees when an agency fails to amend or correct an individual's record. Section 552a(g)(3) likewise authorizes a civil action for injunctive relief, costs, and attorney fees when an agency fails to provide an individual with access to his record. Section 552a(g)(4) authorizes actual damages for certain violations of the Privacy Act's other requirements. In neither (g)(2) nor (g)(3) did Congress deem it necessary to authorize automatic monetary relief in order to provide an "incentive to enforce the Act" or to "deter future agency violations" (Pet. Br. 29). There is thus no reason to believe that Congress would have thought additional incentives or sanctions, beyond the award of actual damages, were necessary to enforce the other rights protected by the Privacy Act either. See *Memphis Comm. Sch. Dist. v. Stachura*, 477 U.S. 299, 310 (1986) ("[D]amages that compensate for actual harm ordinarily suffice to deter constitutional violations."); *Carey v. Piphus*, 435 U.S. 247, 254-255 (1978) (the "cardinal principle of damages in Anglo-American law is that of *compensation for*" injury caused by a defendant's breach of duty).

6. Petitioner's textual arguments to the contrary fail. Petitioner first argues (Br. 13-15) that limiting recovery to actual damages (with a guaranteed minimum recovery of such damages) conflicts with the statutory text stating that the agency "shall be liable" whenever an intentional or willful violation is proven.

No such conflict exists. Congress did not establish liability in the air. It established liability only for “actual damages sustained.” There is thus nothing counter-textual about requiring the plaintiff to show not just that the agency committed an intentional or willful violation of the Privacy Act, but also that he sustained actual damages. That is exactly what Congress commanded. If the Act had simply provided that “an agency that commits an intentional or willful violation shall be liable for actual damages,” petitioner could not plausibly argue that the unavailability of any monetary award in cases where no actual damages were shown would somehow subvert Congress’s determination that the agency “shall be liable.” The fact that in the Privacy Act, individuals who have established some actual damages are also guaranteed a minimum award does not introduce incongruity; it simply eases or avoids quantification and other proof problems at trial. See Pet. Br. 12 (noting that the amount of damages can be “inherently difficult to quantify”).

Petitioner next argues (Br. 17-18) that restricting damages awards under Section 552a(g)(4) to those persons who have shown actual harm would render “superfluous” the requirement in Section 552a(g)(1)(D) that plaintiffs demonstrate an “adverse effect” arising from the agency’s failure to comply with the Privacy Act’s terms as a prerequisite to suit. The required showing of an adverse effect, however, is not a remedial standard. It establishes the individual’s standing to bring suit under the Privacy Act, just as it does under the Administrative Procedure Act, see 5 U.S.C. 702. See *Director, Office of Workers’ Comp. Programs v. Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co.*, 514 U.S. 122, 126 (1995) (“The phrase ‘person adversely affected or aggrieved’ is a term of art used in many statutes to

designate those who have standing to challenge or appeal an agency decision, within the agency or before the courts.”); cf. S. Rep. No. 1183, 93d Cong., 2d Sess. 83 (1974) (describing function of Senate’s “aggrieved person” language). The showing of an adverse effect demonstrates both the “injury in fact” and causation components of Article III standing, see *Vermont Agency*, 529 U.S. at 771 (discussing Article III standing requirements), and further demonstrates that the plaintiff’s alleged injury falls within the “zone of interests” sought to be protected by the Privacy Act. See *Lujan v. National Wildlife Fed’n*, 497 U.S. 871, 883 (1990); *Clarke v. Securities Indus. Ass’n*, 479 U.S. 388, 399-400 (1987).<sup>12</sup>

The type of threshold allegation or showing needed to bring suit at all is a far cry from the proof of actual damages needed to obtain monetary relief at the end of the lawsuit. Indeed, this Court’s cases “firmly establish[]” that the “possibility that the [plaintiff’s] averments might fail to state a cause of action on which [he] could actually recover” has no effect on the plaintiff’s standing or the court’s jurisdiction. See *Steel Co. v. Citizens for a Better Env’t*, 523 U.S. 83, 89 (1998) (quoting *Bell v. Hood*, 327 U.S. 678, 682 (1946)). For standing purposes, it is sufficient if a plaintiff establishes an injury in fact that is “fairly traceable” to the agency’s allegedly unlawful action, that falls within the

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<sup>12</sup>The courts of appeals uniformly have held that the “adverse effect” requirement speaks to an individual’s standing to bring suit under the Privacy Act. See Pet. App. 18a n.7; *Orekoya v. Mooney*, 330 F.3d 1, 7 (1st Cir. 2003); *Quinn v. Stone*, 978 F.2d 126, 135-136 (3d Cir. 1992); *Johnson v. Department of the Treasury, IRS*, 700 F.2d 971, 976-977 & n.9 (5th Cir. 1983); cf. *Albright v. United States*, 732 F.2d 181, 186 (D.C. Cir. 1984); *Parks v. IRS*, 618 F.2d 677, 682-683 & n.2 (10th Cir. 1980).

zone of interests protected by the Act, and that likely would be redressed if the plaintiff were to obtain “the requested relief” of actual damages. See *Steel Co.*, 523 U.S. at 103; see also *id.* at 96 (past injury is redressable “if the relief *requested*” is “money damages”).

Petitioner argues lastly (Br. 18-19) that reading Section 552a(g)(4)(A) to permit money judgments against the United States only upon a showing of actual damages would create a potential “constitutional defect” in the law because it would permit the award of attorney’s fees even if no actual damages were awarded. The notion that every statute authorizing monetary damages and attorney’s fees is unconstitutional unless it guarantees that, at the end of the day, every plaintiff goes home with some damages payment is breathtakingly broad. It is also incorrect. As an initial matter, a plaintiff who fails to allege *any* basis for a damages recovery at the outset will lack standing to pursue a damages claim under Section 552a(g)(4) because he will have failed to satisfy the redressability prong of standing. *Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife*, 504 U.S. 555, 560 (1992). In those circumstances, the individual would be limited to pursuing injunctive relief under the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. 706, to halt any ongoing agency violation of the Privacy Act (if he is able to demonstrate that he is affected adversely by the agency’s practice, 5 U.S.C. 702; *City of Los Angeles v. Lyons*, 461 U.S. 95 (1983)). That, in fact, was the basis for the injunction issued, by consent, in this case.”

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<sup>13</sup> See Dist. Ct. Mem. Op. (Mar. 18, 1998); see also Office of Mgmt. & Budget, *Privacy Act Guidelines*, 40 Fed. Reg. 28,968 (1975) (individuals may pursue civil remedies for Privacy Act violations under 5 U.S.C. 552a(g) as well as “judicial review under other provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act”). Such a suit is permissible, notwithstanding the Privacy Act’s independent

Beyond that, if the plaintiff alleges, but then ultimately fails to prove, any actual damages, he will not be entitled to attorney's fees. That is because the Privacy Act permits an award only of "reasonable" attorney's fees. 5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(4)(B). The most critical factor in determining the reasonableness of an attorney fee award is the degree of success obtained. See *Farrar v. Hobby*, 506 U.S. 103, 114-115 (1992). For a plaintiff who enjoys no success in prosecuting his claim, "the only reasonable fee" is "no fee at all." *Ibid.* ("only reasonable fee" for successful but nominal award "is usually no fee at all").

**C. The Legislative History Of The Privacy Act, Congress's Overall Purpose, And Policy Considerations Confirm That Congress Did Not Authorize Any Damages Award For Plaintiffs Who Have Failed To Prove Actual Damages**

Petitioner argues (Br. 29-31) that the Privacy Act's legislative history reveals a desire on Congress's part

remedial scheme, because the Privacy Act itself is part of the Administrative Procedure Act. The Privacy Act's provisions principally derive from the House bill (H.R. 16373, 93d Cong., 2d Sess. (1974)). Compare H.R. 16373, *supra*, and 120 Cong. Rec. 40,398-40,400 (1974), with *id.* at 40,400-40,405 (compromise text). The House Bill was designed to protect personal privacy "within the framework of the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552)," H.R. Rep. No. 1416, 93d Cong., 2d Sess. 2 (1974), which itself was enacted as an amendment to Section 3 of the Administrative Procedure Act (Act of June 11, 1946, ch. 324, § 3, 60 Stat. 238). See *Department of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 754 (1989). To do so, H.R. 16373 proposed amending Title 5 of the U.S. Code by inserting a Section 552a within the codified provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act immediately after the Freedom of Information Act. See H.R. Rep. No. 1416, *supra*, at 1, 27; Privacy Act of 1974, Pub. L. No. 93-579, §§ 3-4, 88 Stat. 1897-1905.

to provide statutory damages to plaintiffs who have suffered no actual harm from the agency's violation. The short answer is that "the 'unequivocal expression' of elimination of sovereign immunity that [the Court] insist[s] upon is an expression in statutory text. If clarity does not exist there, it cannot be supplied by a committee report." *Nordic Vill.*, 503 U.S. at 37; see also *Lane*, 518 U.S. at 192 ("A statute's legislative history cannot supply a waiver that does not appear clearly in any statutory text."). The long answer is that the legislative history "no more supports" petitioner's reading of the Privacy Act's damages provision "than does the statutory language itself." *Lehman*, 453 U.S. at 165.

1. Draft bills that expressly provided for liquidated damages and did not use the phrase "person entitled to recovery" were considered and rejected in both the House and the Senate. A direct predecessor to H.R. 16373, 93d Cong., 2d Sess. (1974), the amended provisions of which became the Privacy Act, specifically provided for liquidated damages. See H.R. 13872, 93d Cong., 2d Sess., § 552a(g)(1) (1974) (providing that any agency committing a violation of the act shall be liable in an amount equal to "actual and general damages but not less than liquidated damages computed at the rate of \$1,000 for each" violation plus "punitive damages" where appropriate). That provision did not survive consideration by a subcommittee, and it was soon replaced by H.R. 16373, which provided only that the United States "shall be liable" for "actual damages sustained by the individual as a result of" a "willful, arbitrary, or capricious" violation. See H.R. 16373, *supra*, § 552a(g)(3) (Oct. 2, 1974) (as reported by committee); see also H.R. Rep. No. 1416, 93d Cong., 2d 11 (1974). The absence of any liquidated damages provision, moreover,



was not an oversight. Ten committee members expressly advocated that inclusion of a provision for “liquidated damages is essential” because “[a]ctual damages resulting from an agency’s misconduct will, in most cases, be difficult to prove.” *Id.* at 38 (Additional Views); see also 120 Cong. Rec. 36,645 (1974) (Rep. ~~Abner~~ Commission testimony of the “only

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and general damages.” See S. 3418, 93d Cong., 2d Sess., § 303(c) (Nov. 22, 1974) (as amended); 120 Cong. Rec. at 36,917-36,921 (passage by full Senate). The “general damages” provision likely derived from the common law tort of invasion of privacy, where “general damages” may be awarded as “presumed damages” without proof of harm.<sup>14</sup> After each bill was reported out of committee, President Ford expressed “enthusiastic support” for H.R. 16,373, *supra*, but expressed his view that S. 3418, *supra*, still required “major technical and substantive amendments.” 120 Cong. Rec. at 34,838; see also *id.* at 36,892 (Sen. Ervin).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See Restatement (First) of Torts § 621 cmt. a (1939) (defamation); *id.* § 867 cmt. d (privacy tort); *Johnson v. Department of Treasury, IRS*, 700 F.2d 971, 982 & n.31 (5th Cir. 1983); cf. *Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc.*, 418 U.S. 323, 349 (1974) (defamation).

<sup>15</sup> A memorandum (the origins of which are unclear) placed in the legislative record by Senator Ervin on the day that the Senate passed its version of the Privacy Act called for “a provision for liquidated damages of say \$1,000.” 120 Cong. Rec. at 36,891 (Sen. Ervin). No such “liquidated damages” provision ever appeared. See *id.* at 36,917, 36,921. Instead, the next day, the Senate passed an amendment to both the House and Senate bills that added a provision for “actual and general damages sustained by any person but in no case shall a person entitled to recovery receive less than the sum of \$1,000.” See H.R. 16373, *supra*, § 303(c)(1) (Nov. 22, 1974) (as passed by the Senate); see also 120 Cong. Rec. at 37,085 (Sen. Byrd) (amending engrossed Senate bill, S. 3418, *supra*). Petitioner contends (Br. 30) that the amendment must have been a response to the call in the memorandum submitted by Senator Ervin for liquidated damages. Because all prior Senate bills authorizing liquidated damages had explicitly identified the payments as “liquidated damages” or as “actual damages \* \* \* plus” a specific dollar award, S. 2810, *supra*, § 7(c)(1); S. 3633, *supra*, § 11(b)(1); S. 2963, *supra*, § 308(e), consistent with the longstanding legislative practice discussed at pages 30-32, *supra*, the better reading of the amendment is that the “person entitled to recovery”

With the 93d Congress drawing to a close, the members of the committees that reported the bills determined that there was not sufficient time to “resolve the complex differences between the two bills in a conference committee.” 120 Cong. Rec. at 40,880.<sup>16</sup> Proceeding through a process of informal compromise, members of the two committees agreed to “retain the basic thrust of the House version,” but also to “include important segments of the Senate measure.” *Ibid.* That compromise eliminated the authorization for general or “presumed” damages and, instead, created a Privacy Protection Study Commission to study and report back to Congress on provisions “not included in the compromise” bill, including “whether the Federal government should be [made] liable for general damages.” *Id.* at 40,881; see also Privacy Act of 1974, Pub. L. No. 93-579, § 5(c)(2)(B)(iii), 88 Stat. 1907. That approach was consistent with Congress’s final determination, given the press of time, to proceed cautiously by enacting a law containing basic, broadly agreed-upon protections for privacy, while leaving other more controversial matters for further study and debate. See Privacy Protection Study Comm’n, *Personal Privacy in an Information*

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<sup>16</sup> § 1900 was the person who had proven actual or general damages. In any event, never-enacted language that simply “provides an unanswered question” does not suffice to demonstrate that the “law is clear.” *BFP*, 511 U.S. at 547.

<sup>17</sup> The congressional proponents of a broader bill were under considerable pressure to defer their more controversial provisions. Had Congress failed to reach a compromise in the few remaining weeks after its Thanksgiving recess, it was understood that President Ford planned to issue an executive order “nearly identical” to the House bill, but containing no civil remedies at all, and, by doing so, to “steal the thunder” of privacy reform from the Congress. See 120 Cong. Rec. at 35,763; *id.* at 36,644 (Rep. Moorhead).

*Society: Report of the Privacy Protection Study Commission 530* (1977) (Congress “restrict[ed] recovery [under the Act] to specific pecuniary losses until the Commission could weigh the propriety of extending the standard of recovery.”).<sup>17</sup> Petitioner’s effort to obtain the very type of automatic damages payment for which Congress deferred consideration, due to the controversy surrounding that form of relief, thus ignores the legislative compromise that brought the Privacy Act into being.<sup>18</sup>

3. Petitioner argues (Br. 27) that allowing automatic damages would help “fulfill[] the Act’s purpose[] of protecting privacy. Perhaps so, but an argument based on “policy, no matter how compelling, is insufficient, standing alone, to waive [sovereign] immunity.” *Library of Congress*, 478 U.S. at 321. Beyond that, “no legislation pursues its purposes at all costs,” and “[d]eciding what competing values will or will not be

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<sup>17</sup> See also 120 Cong. Rec. at 36,895 (Sen. Percy) (“This bill is certainly not the final word on privacy. There will be additional laws needed to solve particular problems \* \* \*. But this bill is a historic beginning.”); *id.* at 36,967 (Rep. Moorhead) (“It is not a perfect bill. But it is a start and an important first step in the right direction.”); *ibid.* (Rep. Holifield) (“It may not be as complete as some would want.”); *Privacy Act of 1974: Statement by the President upon Signing the Bill into Law*, 11 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 5 (Jan. 1, 1975) (noting that there will be “continuing legislative and executive efforts to reassess the proper balance between the privacy interests of the individual and those of society”).

<sup>18</sup> Indeed, even though it was the Senate that pressed for the most generous damages relief, the Senate itself rejected liquidated damages provisions of only \$100. See S. 2810, *supra*, § 7(c)(1); S. 3633, *supra*, § 11(b)(1). It thus is implausible that a compromise with the more fiscally restrictive House version of the legislation would produce a liquidated damages provision *ten times* what the Senate itself had refused to enact.

sacrificed to the achievement of a particular objective is the very essence of legislative choice.” *Rodriguez v. United States*, 480 U.S. 522, 525-526 (1987) (per curiam). To “assume that *whatever* furthers the statute’s primary objective must be the law” “frustrates rather than effectuates legislative intent” by failing to reserve for Congress the difficult trade-offs inherent in nearly all legislative decisions. *Id.* at 526; see also *Newport News*, 514 U.S. at 136 (“Every statute proposes, not only to achieve certain ends, but also to achieve them by particular means—and there is often a considerable legislative battle over what those means ought to be.”).<sup>19</sup>

The legislative history, in fact, documents that, in considering the competing remedial provisions before it, Congress did not proceed with a single-minded focus on encouraging Privacy Act litigation, to the exclusion of the fiscal consequences attending the authorization of broad damages awards:

[W]e are trying to balance two great interests here. We are trying to balance the necessity of balancing

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<sup>19</sup> Even though relief is restricted to those who have suffered actual damages, the monetary remedies provided by the Privacy Act are not parsimonious compared with the remedies available for other statutory violations. The Administrative Procedure Act, which provides the usual basis for challenging federal agency action, specifically excludes “money damages” from the available forms of relief. 5 U.S.C. 702. In suits against the United States, the availability of retrospective monetary relief is therefore the exception rather than the rule. To permit monetary awards even without proof of actual damages would be more unusual still. Though Congress has, on occasion, authorized such awards (see p. 34, *supra*), a decision to do so cannot be said to follow naturally or typically from Congress’s decision to prohibit particular agency conduct.

the budget, and we are trying to protect the Government from undue liability.

I think it is wrong to make the Government of the United States and this congressional budget subject to an absolutely incalculable amount of liquidated damages. If we had a hundred lawsuits and if we had a hundred verdicts of \$1 million each, there would be no guarantee that this Congress could protect itself against that liability.

120 Cong. Rec. at 36,659 (Rep. McCloskey) (commenting on an amendment to authorize punitive damages); see also *id.* at 36,956 (Rep. Erlenborn) (opposing an amendment that would have provided damages for any violation of the Act because it “expose[d] the Government to undue liability” which “[w]e just cannot afford”); *id.* at 36,659 (Rep. McCloskey) (“[I]s it not true that there would be no way of ascertaining in advance of any one year, when this Congress is ascertaining the budget, what might possibly be the amount of damages that might be awarded?”); *id.* at 36,644 (Rep. Moorhead) (“We have tried to tailor this bill so that it will protect individual rights and at the same time permit the Government to operate responsibly and perform its functions without unjustifiable impediments.”).

The remedial text that Congress ultimately enacted—which includes no reference to “general,” “liquidated,” “statutory,” or “presumed” damages—reflects that compromise by limiting monetary recoveries to those who have sustained “actual damages,” while at the same time providing those same persons a guaranteed minimum award. That minimum guarantee, in turn, obviates the proof difficulties that frequently arise in quantifying damages precisely, streamlines the proof of multiple, minor damages claims, and provides an

incentive to prove the existence of actual damages even when they are small in amount.

In short, the legislative history makes clear that, when Members of Congress favored some form of automatic damages payment, they said so explicitly. The history also reveals that such provisions were controversial because of their budgetary implications. The resulting compromise bill enacted the remedies provision on which there was common ground—one allowing “actual damages”—and deferred to a later day the consideration of other types of damages. Petitioner’s reading of the statutory language thus attempts to obtain through judicial interpretation what was lost in the inevitable “give-and-take of the legislative process.” *Bell v. Maryland*, 378 U.S. 226, 317 (1964) (Goldberg, J., concurring).

4. Finally, petitioner invokes (Br. 33-34) the Office of Management and Budget’s Privacy Act Guidelines in support of his broad reading of the damages provision. The Privacy Act charges the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to “develop and, after notice and opportunity for public comment, prescribe guidelines and regulations for the use of agencies in implementing the provisions of [the Privacy Act],” and to “provide continuing assistance to and oversight of the implementation of [the Privacy Act] by agencies.” 5 U.S.C. 552a(v). Guidelines issued by OMB in 1975 state that an agency will be required to pay “[a]ctual damages or \$1,000, whichever is greater,” when it is found to have committed an intentional or willful violation of the provisions of the Privacy Act for which an actual damages award is permitted. 40 Fed. Reg. at 28,970.

OMB has informed this Office that, in recognition of the principle that waivers of sovereign immunity must be strictly construed, OMB does not interpret its

Guideline to require the payment of \$1000 to plaintiffs who have sustained no actual damages from a violation of the Act. Furthermore, even if the relevant Guideline provision unambiguously supported petitioner's position, it would not be entitled to judicial deference, because it concerns a provision of the Act that is administered solely by the courts, not by OMB or any other federal agency. See *Adams Fruit Co. v. Barrett*, 494 U.S. 638, 649-650 (1990).

More importantly, OMB's Guidelines are irrelevant to the sovereign immunity question before this Court. Any waiver of sovereign immunity must be clearly and unequivocally expressed in the statutory text. *Nordic Vill.*, 503 U.S. at 33, 37. If the text is clear, "that is the end of the matter; for the court, as well as the agency, must give effect to the unambiguously expressed intent of Congress." *Chevron U.S.A. Inc. v. Natural Res. Def. Council, Inc.*, 467 U.S. 837, 842-843 (1984). If the statutory text is ambiguous and susceptible of competing interpretations, then the canon of narrow construction of waivers of sovereign immunity dictates that immunity is not waived. *Nordic Vill.*, 503 U.S. at 37. OMB could not, through the issuance of interpretative guidance, effect a waiver of sovereign immunity that Congress did not unambiguously enact. See *OPM v. Richmond*, 496 U.S. at 424-434 (Executive Branch official cannot bind government to monetary payment absent congressional appropriation); *Shaw*, 309 U.S. at 501. The Privacy Act's text contains no unambiguous authorization for statutory or liquidated damages absent proof of actual damages, and that is the end of the matter.



**CONCLUSION**

The judgment of the court of appeals should be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted.

HOWARD M. RADZELY  
*Acting Solicitor of Labor*

ALLEN H. FEIDMAN  
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OCTOBER 2003

## APPENDIX A

Section 552a of Title 5, United States Code, provides in pertinent part as follows:

### **Records maintained on individuals**

**(a) DEFINITIONS.**—For purposes of this section—

**(1)** the term “agency” means agency as defined in section 552(e) of this title;

**(2)** the term “individual” means a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence;

**(3)** the term “maintain” includes maintain, collect, use, or disseminate;

**(4)** the term “record” means any item, collection, or grouping of information about an individual that is maintained by an agency, including, but not limited to, his education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history and that contains his name, or the identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual, such as a finger or voice print or a photograph;

**(5)** the term “system of records” means a group of any records under the control of any agency from which information is retrieved by the name of the individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual;

**(6)** the term “statistical record” means a record in a system of records maintained for statistical research or reporting purposes only and not used in

whole or in part in making any determination about an identifiable individual, except as provided by section 8 of title 13;

(7) the term "routine use" means, with respect to the disclosure of a record, the use of such record for a purpose which is compatible with the purpose for which it was collected;

\* \* \* \* \*

**(b) CONDITIONS OF DISCLOSURE.**—No agency shall disclose any record which is contained in a system of records by any means of communication to any person, or to another agency, except pursuant to a written request by, or with the prior written consent of, the individual to whom the record pertains, unless disclosure of the record would be—

(1) to those officers and employees of the agency which maintains the record who have a need for the record in the performance of their duties;

(2) required under section 552 of this title;

(3) for a routine use as defined in subsection (a)(7) of this section and described under subsection (e)(4)(D) of this section;

(4) to the Bureau of the Census for purposes of planning or carrying out a census or survey or related activity pursuant to the provisions of title 13;

(5) to a recipient who has provided the agency with advance adequate written assurance that the record will be used solely as a statistical research or reporting record, and the record is to be transferred in a form that is not individually identifiable;

(6) to the National Archives and Records Administration as a record which has sufficient historical or other value to warrant its continued preservation by the United States Government, or for evaluation by the Archivist of the United States or the designee of the Archivist to determine whether the record has such value;

(7) to another agency or to an instrumentality of any governmental jurisdiction within or under the control of the United States for a civil or criminal law enforcement activity if the activity is authorized by law, and if the head of the agency or instrumentality has made a written request to the agency which maintains the record specifying the particular portion desired and the law enforcement activity for which the record is sought;

(8) to a person pursuant to a showing of compelling circumstances affecting the health or safety of an individual if upon such disclosure notification is transmitted to the last known address of such individual;

(9) to either House of Congress, or, to the extent of matter within its jurisdiction, any committee or subcommittee thereof, any joint committee of Congress or subcommittee of any such joint committee;

(10) to the Comptroller General, or any of his authorized representatives, in the course of the performance of the duties of the General Accounting Office;

(11) pursuant to the order of a court of competent jurisdiction; or

(12) to a consumer reporting agency in accordance with section 3711(e) of title 31.

\* \* \* \* \*

**(d) ACCESS TO RECORDS.**—Each agency that maintains a system of records shall—

(1) upon request by any individual to gain access to his record or to any information pertaining to him which is contained in the system, permit him and upon his request, a person of his own choosing to accompany him, to review the record and have a copy made of all or any portion thereof in a form comprehensible to him, except that the agency may require the individual to furnish a written statement authorizing discussion of that individual's record in the accompanying person's presence;

(2) permit the individual to request amendment of a record pertaining to him and—

(A) not later than 10 days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) after the date of receipt of such request, acknowledge in writing such receipt; and

(B) promptly, either—

(i) make any correction of any portion thereof which the individual believes is not accurate, relevant, timely, or complete; or

(ii) inform the individual of its refusal to amend the record in accordance with his request, the reason for the refusal, the procedures established by the agency for the individual to request a review of that refusal by the head of the agency or an officer designated by the head

of the agency, and the name and business address of that official;

(3) permit the individual who disagrees with the refusal of the agency to amend his record to request a review of such refusal, and not later than 30 days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) from the date on which the individual requests such review, complete such review and make a final determination unless, for good cause shown, the head of the agency extends such 30-day period; and if, after his review, the reviewing official also refuses to amend the record in accordance with the request, permit the individual to file with the agency a concise statement setting forth the reasons for his disagreement with the refusal of the agency, and notify the individual of the provisions for judicial review of the reviewing official's determination under subsection (g)(1)(A) of this section;

(4) in any disclosure, containing information about which the individual has filed a statement of disagreement, occurring after the filing of the statement under paragraph (3) of this subsection, clearly note any portion of the record which is disputed and provide copies of the statement and, if the agency deems it appropriate, copies of a concise statement of the reasons of the agency for not making the amendments requested, to persons or other agencies to whom the disputed record has been disclosed; and

(5) nothing in this section shall allow an individual access to any information compiled in reasonable anticipation of a civil action or proceeding.

(e) **AGENCY REQUIREMENTS.**—Each agency that maintains a system of records shall—

(1) maintain in its records only such information about an individual as is relevant and necessary to accomplish a purpose of the agency required to be accomplished by statute or by executive order of the President;

(2) collect information to the greatest extent practicable directly from the subject individual when the information may result in adverse determinations about an individual's rights, benefits, and privileges under Federal programs;

(3) inform each individual whom it asks to supply information, on the form which it uses to collect the information or on a separate form that can be retained by the individual—

(A) the authority (whether granted by statute, or by executive order of the President) which authorizes the solicitation of the information and whether disclosure of such information is mandatory or voluntary;

(B) the principal purpose or purposes for which the information is intended to be used;

(C) the routine uses which may be made of the information, as published pursuant to paragraph (4)(D) of this subsection; and

(D) the effects on him, if any, of not providing all or any part of the requested information;

(4) subject to the provisions of paragraph (11) of this subsection, publish in the Federal Register upon establishment or revision a notice of the existence and character of the system of records, which notice shall include—

(A) the name and location of the system;

(B) the categories of individuals on whom records are maintained in the system;

(C) the categories of records maintained in the system;

(D) each routine use of the records contained in the system, including the categories of users and the purpose of such use;

(E) the policies and practices of the agency regarding storage, retrievability, access controls, retention, and disposal of the records;

(F) the title and business address of the agency official who is responsible for the system of records;

(G) the agency procedures whereby an individual can be notified at his request if the system of records contains a record pertaining to him;

(H) the agency procedures whereby an individual can be notified at his request how he can gain access to any record pertaining to him contained in the system of records, and how he can contest its content; and

(I) the categories of sources of records in the system;

(5) maintain all records which are used by the agency in making any determination about any individual with such accuracy, relevance, timeliness, and completeness as is reasonably necessary to assure fairness to the individual in the determination;

(6) prior to disseminating any record about an individual to any person other than an agency, unless



the dissemination is made pursuant to subsection (b)(2) of this section, make reasonable efforts to assure that such records are accurate, complete, timely, and relevant for agency purposes;

(7) maintain no record describing how any individual exercises rights guaranteed by the First Amendment unless expressly authorized by statute or by the individual about whom the record is maintained or unless pertinent to and within the scope of an authorized law enforcement activity;

(8) make reasonable efforts to serve notice on an individual when any record on such individual is made available to any person under compulsory legal process when such process becomes a matter of public record;

(9) establish rules of conduct for persons involved in the design, development, operation, or maintenance of any system of records, or in maintaining any record, and instruct each such person with respect to such rules and the requirements of this section, including any other rules and procedures adopted pursuant to this section and the penalties for noncompliance;

(10) establish appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to insure the security and confidentiality of records and to protect against any anticipated threats or hazards to their security or integrity which could result in substantial harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to any individual on whom information is maintained;

(11) at least 30 days prior to publication of information under paragraph (4)(D) of this subsection, publish in the Federal Register notice of any new use

or intended use of the information in the system, and provide an opportunity for interested persons to submit written data, views, or arguments to the agency; and

(12) if such agency is a recipient agency or a source agency in a matching program with a non-Federal agency, with respect to any establishment or revision of a matching program, at least 30 days prior to conducting such program, publish in the Federal Register notice of such establishment or revision.

**(f) AGENCY RULES.**—In order to carry out the provisions of this section, each agency that maintains a system of records shall promulgate rules, in accordance with the requirements (including general notice) of section 553 of this title, which shall—

(1) establish procedures whereby an individual can be notified in response to his request if any system of records named by the individual contains a record pertaining to him;

(2) define reasonable times, places, and requirements for identifying an individual who requests his record or information pertaining to him before the agency shall make the record or information available to the individual;

(3) establish procedures for the disclosure to an individual upon his request of his record or information pertaining to him, including special procedure, if deemed necessary, for the disclosure to an individual of medical records, including psychological records, pertaining to him;

(4) establish procedures for reviewing a request from an individual concerning the amendment of any record or information pertaining to the individual, for

making a determination on the request, for an appeal within the agency of an initial adverse agency determination, and for whatever additional means may be necessary for each individual to be able to exercise fully his rights under this section; and

(5) establish fees to be charged, if any, to any individual for making copies of his record, excluding the cost of any search for and review of the record.

The Office of the Federal Register shall biennially compile and publish the rules promulgated under this subsection and agency notices published under subsection (e)(4) of this section in a form available to the public at low cost.

**(g)(1) CIVIL REMEDIES.**—Whenever any agency

(A) makes a determination under subsection (d)(3) of this section not to amend an individual's record in accordance with his request, or fails to make such review in conformity with that subsection;

(B) refuses to comply with an individual request under subsection (d)(1) of this section;

(C) fails to maintain any record concerning any individual with such accuracy, relevance, timeliness, and completeness as is necessary to assure fairness in any determination relating to the qualifications, character, rights, or opportunities of, or benefits to the individual that may be made on the basis of such record, and consequently a determination is made which is adverse to the individual; or

(D) fails to comply with any other provision of this section, or any rule promulgated thereunder, in such a way as to have an adverse effect on an individual,

the individual may bring a civil action against the agency, and the district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction in the matters under the provisions of this subsection.

**(2)(A)** In any suit brought under the provisions of subsection (g)(1)(A) of this section, the court may order the agency to amend the individual's record in accordance with his request or in such other way as the court may direct. In such a case the court shall determine the matter de novo.

**(B)** The court may assess against the United States reasonable attorney fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in any case under this paragraph in which the complainant has substantially prevailed.

**(3)(A)** In any suit brought under the provisions of subsection (g)(1)(B) of this section, the court may enjoin the agency from withholding the records and order the production to the complainant of any agency records improperly withheld from him. In such a case the court shall determine the matter de novo, and may examine the contents of any agency records in camera to determine whether the records or any portion thereof may be withheld under any of the exemptions set forth in subsection (k) of this section, and the burden is on the agency to sustain its action.

**(B)** The court may assess against the United States reasonable attorney fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in any case under this paragraph in which the complainant has substantially prevailed.

**(4)** In any suit brought under the provisions of subsection (g)(1)(C) or (D) of this section in which the court determines that the agency acted in a manner

which was intentional or willful, the United States shall be liable to the individual in an amount equal to the sum of—

(A) actual damages sustained by the individual as a result of the refusal or failure, but in no case shall a person entitled to recovery receive less than the sum of \$1,000; and

(B) the costs of the action together with reasonable attorney fees as determined by the court.

(5) An action to enforce any liability created under this section may be brought in the district court of the United States in the district in which the complainant resides, or has his principal place of business, or in which the agency records are situated, or in the District of Columbia, without regard to the amount in controversy, within two years from the date on which the cause of action arises, except that where an agency has materially and willfully misrepresented any information required under this section to be disclosed to an individual and the information so misrepresented is material to establishment of the liability of the agency to the individual under this section, the action may be brought at any time within two years after discovery by the individual of the misrepresentation. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize any civil action by reason of any injury sustained as the result of a disclosure of a record prior to September 27, 1975.

\* \* \* \* \*

(i)(1) **CRIMINAL PENALTIES.**—Any officer or employee of an agency, who by virtue of his employment or official position, has possession of, or access to, agency records which contain individually identifiable information the disclosure of which is prohibited by this

section or by rules or regulations established thereunder, and who knowing that disclosure of the specific material is so prohibited, willfully discloses the material in any manner to any person or agency not entitled to receive it, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000.

(2) Any officer or employee of any agency who willfully maintains a system of records without meeting the notice requirements of subsection (e)(4) of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000.

(3) Any person who knowingly and willfully requests or obtains any record concerning an individual from an agency under false pretenses shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than \$5,000.

\* \* \* \* \*

(v) **OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET RESPONSIBILITIES.**—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall—

(1) develop and, after notice and opportunity for public comment, prescribe guidelines and regulations for the use of agencies in implementing the provisions of this section; and

(2) provide continuing assistance to and oversight of the implementation of this section by agencies.

**APPENDIX B**

The Privacy Act of 1974, Pub. L. No. 93-579, 88 Stat. 1896 (reproduced in part at 5 U.S.C. 552a note), provides in pertinent part as follows:

**SEC. 2 (a)** The Congress finds that—

(1) the privacy of an individual is directly affected by the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of personal information by Federal agencies;

(2) the increasing use of computers and sophisticated information technology, while essential to the efficient operations of the Government, has greatly magnified the harm to individual privacy that can occur from any collection, maintenance, use, or dissemination of personal information;

(3) the opportunities for an individual to secure employment, insurance, and credit, and his right to due process, and other legal protections are endangered by the misuse of certain information systems;

(4) the right to privacy is a personal and fundamental right protected by the Constitution of the United States; and

(5) in order to protect the privacy of individuals identified in information systems maintained by Federal agencies, it is necessary and proper for the Congress to regulate the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of information by such agencies.

(b) The purpose of this Act is to provide certain safeguards for an individual against an invasion of

personal privacy by requiring Federal agencies, except as otherwise provided by law, to—

(1) permit an individual to determine what records pertaining to him are collected, maintained, used, or disseminated by such agencies;

(2) permit an individual to prevent records pertaining to him obtained by such agencies for a particular purpose from being used or made available for another purpose without his consent;

(3) permit an individual to gain access to information pertaining to him in Federal agency records, to have a copy made of all or any portion thereof, and to correct or amend such records;

(4) collect, maintain, use, or disseminate any record of identifiable personal information in a manner that assures that such action is for a necessary and lawful purpose, that the information is current and accurate for its intended use, and that adequate safeguards are provided to prevent misuse of such information;

(5) permit exemptions from the requirements with respect to records provided in this Act only in those cases where there is an important public policy need for such exemption as has been determined by specific statutory authority; and

(6) be subject to civil suit for any damages which occur as a result of willful or intentional action which violates any individual's rights under this Act.

\* \* \* \* \*

**SEC. 5. (a)(1)** There is established a Privacy Protection Study Commission (hereinafter referred to as the



“Commission” which shall be composed of seven members as follows:

(A) three appointed by the President of the United States,

(B) two appointed by the President of the Senate, and

(C) two appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

\* \* \* \* \*

(b) The Commission shall—

(1) make a study of the data banks, automated data processing programs, and information systems of governmental, regional, and private organizations, in order to determine the standards and procedures in force for the protection of personal information; and

(2) recommend to the President and the Congress the extent, if any, to which the requirements and principles of section 552a of title 5, United States Code, should be applied to the information practices of those organizations by legislation, administrative action, or voluntary adoption of such requirements and principles, and report on such other legislative recommendations as it may determine to be necessary to protect the privacy of individuals while meeting the legitimate needs of government and society for information.

\* \* \* \* \*

(c) \* \* \*

(2) \* \* \*

(B) The Commission shall include in its examination a study of—

\* \* \* \* \*

(iii) whether the Federal Government should be liable for general damages incurred by an individual as the result of a willful or intentional violation of the provisions of sections 552a(g)(1)(C) or (D) of title 5, United States Code[.]

\* \* \* \* \*

**SEC. 7. (a)(1)** It shall be unlawful for any Federal, State or local government agency to deny to any individual any right, benefit, or privilege provided by law because of such individual's refusal to disclose his social security account number.

(2) the provisions of paragraph (1) of this subsection shall not apply with respect to—

(A) any disclosure which is required by Federal statute, or

(B) the disclosure of a social security number to any Federal, State, or local agency maintaining a system of records in existence and operating before January 1, 1975, if such disclosure was required under statute or regulation adopted prior to such date to verify the identity of an individual.

(b) Any Federal, State, or local government agency which requests an individual to disclose his social security account number shall inform that in-

dividual whether that disclosure is mandatory or voluntary, by what statutory or other authority such number is solicited, and what uses will be made of it.

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IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

- - - - -X  
BUCK DOE, ET AL., :  
Petitioner :  
v. : No. 02-1377  
ELAINE L. CHAO, SECRETARY :  
OF LABOR :  
- - - - -X

Washington, D.C.  
Wednesday, December 3, 2003

The above-entitled matter came on for oral  
argument before the Supreme Court of the United States at  
11:03 a.m.

APPEARANCES:

JACK W. CAMPBELL, IV, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of  
the Petitioner.  
NABSOLEM E. STEWART, ESQ., Assistant Solicitor General,  
Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on behalf of  
the Respondent.

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

2 (11:03 a.m.)

3 CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST: We'll hear argument  
4 next in No. 02-1377, Buck Doe v. Elaine Chao.

5 Mr. Campbell.

6 ORAL ARGUMENT OF JACK W. CAMPBELL, IV

7 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER

8 MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it  
9 please the Court:

10 In this case, it is undisputed that petitioner  
11 Buck Doe suffered an adverse effect, the emotional  
12 distress typical of a privacy invasion caused by the  
13 Department of Labor's intentional and willful violation of  
14 the Privacy Act. The only question is whether under these  
15 circumstances, petitioner is entitled to recover the  
16 Privacy Act's modest \$1,000 statutory damages remedy.

17 QUESTION: Before we go further, could you help  
18 me out on one thing? You spoke of the modest \$1,000  
19 recovery. The argument is made on the other side that, in  
20 fact, it would be \$1,000 for every publication in this  
21 case, for example, for every caption of a - of - of an  
22 order that went out, to everyone to whom that order was  
23 sent, so that it would not be \$1,000, it would be many,  
24 many thousands. Is that the proper construction of the  
25 statute?

1           MR. CAMPBELL: The answer to that is no, Justice  
2 Souter, and let me answer that in at least two ways.  
3 First of all, the District of Columbia Circuit has already  
4 held that the number of - that the \$1,000 is key to each  
5 individual and not to the number of disclosures. For  
6 example, in the Tomasello case in the D.C. Circuit, there  
7 was a simultaneous disclosure of information about a  
8 single individual to some 4,000 recipients. That court  
9 held -

10           QUESTION: Okay.

11           MR. CAMPBELL: - and I think correctly, that that  
12 would be considered one disclosure under the act and,  
13 thus, the individual would be entitled to only a single  
14 \$1,000 recovery.

15           QUESTION: What if - what if there had been an  
16 initial disclosure and he had protested it? He said,  
17 you're violating the statute when you do this and they did  
18 it again. Would that be a separate offense?

19           MR. CAMPBELL: That's a closer question - it -  
20 because then you - you've got the - the temporal  
21 separation that did not exist in the Tomasello case.

22           QUESTION: Yeah, but you'd have temporal  
23 separation if there were 10 pleadings over a period of 10  
24 months.

25           MR. CAMPBELL: But -

1 QUESTION: And I take it in that case you're  
2 saying, no, there would still just be a - a - a one  
3 violation and - and the maximum recovery, at least under  
4 this provision, would be 1,000.

5 MR. CAMPBELL: I - I - I think that's right,  
6 Justice Souter, and I want to make clear too that for each  
7 of those disclosures you're describing, there would have  
8 to be an adverse effect described and - and a causation  
9 element met in each of those in any case before you even  
10 got to the question.

11 QUESTION: But suppose the IRS -

12 QUESTION: But that's so easy to establish, as  
13 shown here. I mean, it bothers me that somebody else  
14 knows my Social Security number. You don't think that's a  
15 realistic reason for not assuming application of the  
16 statute, do you?

17 MR. CAMPBELL: I - if I understand your question,  
18 Justice O'Connor, the answer is, yes, there is a real harm  
19 suffered here, and adverse effect is not a meaningless  
20 standard. And in this case, you don't just have a  
21 situation in which Buck Doe - it's obviously a pseudonym -  
22 just alleges, I was harmed. This is a case in which he  
23 submitted an affidavit, and more importantly, testified in  
24 open court as to the severity and veracity of his  
25 emotional -



1 QUESTION: Well, but wouldn't -

2 MR. CAMPBELL: - and was cross-examined.

3 QUESTION: - wouldn't every person who wanted to  
4 make such a claim make similar allegations? Is a class  
5 action a reasonable possibility in a case like this?

6 MR. CAMPBELL: Let me answer both parts of your  
7 question. As to the first part, I - I don't think we can  
8 presume that plaintiffs are going to make up an adverse  
9 effect. They are certainly under the obligations to  
10 testify truthfully, and in this case, the Government had  
11 every opportunity that - to - and did cross-examine Mr.  
12 Doe as to the veracity of his adverse effect. The  
13 magistrate found as a matter of fact he did suffer an  
14 adverse effect, the district court adopted it and the  
15 Government never appealed that finding, so whatever  
16 arguments they have at this point are gone.

17 Second part of your question, class actions.  
18 That's certainly the parade of horrors that the  
19 Government is trotting out here, and I think perhaps,  
20 Justice Souter, may go more - more directly to your  
21 question as well. The answer is no. Even if an  
22 individual who has suffered an adverse effect caused by an  
23 intentional or willful violation of the act is entitled to  
24 a statutory damages award without being required to  
25 quantify actual damages.

1           There are still at least two individualized  
2 issues that will exist in every case. One is the pleading  
3 and proof of the adverse effect, which necessarily may  
4 vary among different plaintiffs. Second is the causation,  
5 and particularly in the causation question, Justice  
6 O'Connor, this is not a - a standard that - that  
7 plaintiffs lightly leap over.

8           In fact, there are a number of cases, one of  
9 which is the Oroquoia decision of the First Circuit, which  
10 was handed down while this petition was pending, noted  
11 that in cases where the - the adverse effect alleged is a  
12 - an emotional distress-type problem, you may well run  
13 into causation problems. There could be any number of  
14 other stressors in this person's life.

15           QUESTION: Let's assume that somebody wrongfully  
16 and intentionally releases Social Security numbers, you  
17 knew, just - just a whole bunch of Social Security numbers  
18 of their - their entire list. They sell their - their  
19 list to somebody. Why wouldn't that be a perfectly valid  
20 class action? Every one of them has had the adverse  
21 effect of having his Social Security number out there, and  
22 every one of them has this same adverse effect, which is  
23 the, I don't know, the trauma of knowing that - that your  
24 - your Social Security number is floating out there where  
25 anybody can use it. Why wouldn't that be a perfectly good

1 class action?

2 MR. CAMPBELL: Well, I - I think that the example  
3 you give, the problem remains, particularly one of  
4 causation. Some folks may not have an adverse effect,  
5 they may not be concerned, I think, particularly if you're  
6 describing a case in which it's only the number that's  
7 released but the number's not linked to a name. I think  
8 in those cases you might have difficulty.

9 QUESTION: Those numbers are - are linked to  
10 names.

11 MR. CAMPBELL: I'd still go back to the - there's  
12 a causation problem. If - if you're going to talk - that  
13 is an individualized issue. Now, I -

14 QUESTION: May I ask, with respect to that, you  
15 brought this case. I mean, you tried to get it certified  
16 as a class action and you were unsuccessful. So I - I  
17 hear you telling this Court, we were way off-base in  
18 attempting to bring this as a class action because the  
19 adverse effect is different for each person. So you're  
20 giving up on your first loss. I mean, there are other  
21 circuits that might say, yeah, why not class action?

22 MR. CAMPBELL: I don't - I don't - I don't  
23 contend that there aren't arguments to be made. What I am  
24 stating here is that there are some very strong -

25 QUESTION: But you say you lost fair and square,

1 and now you've seen the error of your ways?

2 MR. CAMPBELL: Well, we lost fair and square and  
3 I - and I want to point out too, I want to give another  
4 example of a case, and it's one of the cases that the  
5 Government cites in its brief as the example of - of this  
6 - this problem, and that's the Schmidt case that is  
7 pending in the Western District of Wisconsin, which  
8 involves a putative class action against the Veterans  
9 Administration. In that case, the Western District of  
10 Wisconsin held, and this has been since cert was granted  
11 in this case, held that, if you prove an adverse effect  
12 caused by an intentional, willful violation of the act,  
13 you are entitled to statutory damages of \$1,000.  
14 Nonetheless, that district court refused to certify a  
15 class on precisely the grounds that I am describing to you  
16 today.

17 So is it conceivable there could be a class  
18 action in a case? Yes, it's conceivable, and I do -

19 QUESTION: But even if they're not class actions,  
20 I have, I think, the same problem people have expressed.  
21 In Massachusetts, we put our Social Security number on our  
22 driver's license. I have it right in my pocket. I show  
23 it 10 million times a day, or however many. So suppose  
24 that, you know, the IRS releases - California wants to do  
25 the same thing. They have 35 million drivers, and the IRS

1 sends them a list so they can check it out, or the Social  
2 Security Administration does that and, my God, there's 35  
3 million lawsuits, \$1,000 each, that's only 35 billion.  
4 Suppose they do it nationwide. There's 200 billion, and  
5 that's only Social Security numbers. All you have to do  
6 is read through these 14 pages of fine print of the  
7 requirements of the Privacy Act, certain days have to be  
8 met, certain deadlines, and it's very easy to imagine  
9 bankruptcy in the Federal Treasury.

10 All right. So, I mean, you know, trillions,  
11 it's easy to see that. I can make up hypotheticals, which  
12 I'll spare you, but you see where I'm going, because what  
13 I want is that is the horrible. And when I read the  
14 horrible, I think, my God, they're right. All right.  
15 Now, you tell me why they're not.

16 MR. CAMPBELL: In the hypothetical that you're  
17 proposing, Justice Breyer, I think there are several  
18 answers.

19 QUESTION: And just make up, you know, it's easy  
20 for both of us to make up a lot.

21 MR. CAMPBELL: Sure.

22 QUESTION: I want to know what are the  
23 protections if you win against generating millions and  
24 millions of lawsuits with billions of dollars.

25 MR. CAMPBELL: In - in the hypotheticals that

1 you've described, if I could take those on their terms  
2 first. It's very likely that one of the exceptions to the  
3 Privacy Act disclosure is going to apply usual - if it's  
4 the case that - that this is a working relationship  
5 between the Federal Government and various state  
6 governments and the like, that may well fall within the  
7 usual use.

8           There are a number of these exceptions listed,  
9 so certainly you have to look to those first. Have to go  
10 - go back to - this would have to be intentionally  
11 wrongful conduct by the Government -

12           QUESTION: Well, yeah, I can't imagine any  
13 government agency that takes place that isn't intentional.  
14 You always have people intending to do what they do in the  
15 Government.

16           MR. CAMPBELL: Well -

17           QUESTION: Nobody released these - nobody -  
18 nobody puts anything on a piece of paper, releases it,  
19 isn't intentional.

20           MR. CAMPBELL: Certainly the - the intent to  
21 release the - the information would be correct, but that's  
22 not the same as to say there was an intent to violate the  
23 Privacy Act.

24           QUESTION: Ah, in other words, in order to  
25 recover - now, that's an important point to me - in order

1 to recover, the plaintiff has to show that the government  
2 individuals or the agency not only intended to do what did  
3 violate the act, but they intended that what they did  
4 would violate the Act. They knew about the - that's  
5 willful, it's like they knew about the legal obligation  
6 and they intentionally violated it.

7 MR. CAMPBELL: That's correct, Justice

8 QUESTION: Well, then, how did you ever win this  
9 one?

10 QUESTION: That's - that's - that's a very  
11 strong -

12 QUESTION: Yeah, very strong.

13 QUESTION: - instruction. Ordinary - ignorance  
14 of the law is - is no defense, and there are all sorts of  
15 statutes that use the word willful, which simply means  
16 that you intended to do the act that you did, not that you  
17 know it violated the law.

18 MR. CAMPBELL: Well, in - in this case - I - the  
19 consistent constructions of - of the Privacy Act is it's -  
20 it's greater than gross negligence. It - it necessarily  
21 encompasses more than just I intended to do something.  
22 It's that I - I willfully blind to my obligations in the -

23 QUESTION: Well, how about this case? How - how  
24 was that shown in this case?

25 MR. CAMPBELL: In pages - if I could point the

1 Court to pages - bear with me for one moment - pages 90 -  
2 96 -

3 QUESTION: This was a - this was a distribution  
4 by administrative law judges -

5 MR. CAMPBELL: That's correct.

6 QUESTION: - of hearing notices and decisions?

7 MR. CAMPBELL: That - among other things. The  
8 answer is yes, Justice O'Connor. On pages 96A to 97A of  
9 the petitioner's appendix, there is the description of the  
10 magistrate judge's finding that there was a willful  
11 violation of the Privacy Act here and that there was a -  
12 there was no attempt even - no even attempt to comply with  
13 the act's requirements, and I - I would point -

14 QUESTION: But to say there's no intent to comply  
15 isn't the same thing as saying that you knew you were  
16 violating the act when you acted.

17 MR. CAMPBELL: Well, let me candidly answer in  
18 this way, Mr. Chief Justice. A willful ignorance - a  
19 willful ignoring of the act's requirements would qualify  
20 as a willful - and I - I want to -

21 QUESTION: Well, how can you - how can you  
22 willfully ignore an act's requirements?

23 MR. CAMPBELL: Well, the Department of Labor was  
24 well aware of what the Privacy Act's requirements were and  
25 made no attempt to get the administrative law judges to



1 comply, and - and I want to go back here this - to one of  
2 the answers I gave with respect to your adverse effect  
3 questions. This issue was decided by the magistrate  
4 judge, adopted by the district court, and this was never  
5 appealed by the Federal Government.

6 QUESTION: Well, but our concern -

7 QUESTION: We're concerned here, Justice Breyer  
8 and I guess - what is going to happen if we rule in your  
9 favor? That will probably not result in any benefit for  
10 the Government on this ground, but are we just opening a  
11 can of worms or is - by ruling in your favor?

12 MR. CAMPBELL: The answer is no, and - and  
13 certainly I acknowledge, Mr. Chief Justice, and Justice  
14 Souter and Justice Breyer, that in future cases there  
15 might well be a lot more time spent litigating the issues  
16 of whether there was an adverse - truly an adverse effect  
17 and whether - and - and whether the - the violation was  
18 truly intentional and willful. But I want to -

19 QUESTION: Okay, but can - can we just go back to  
20 that for a second?

21 MR. CAMPBELL: Sure.

22 QUESTION: Because we've been concentrating on  
23 willful, and you say, well, willful requires a very high  
24 standard. As - as you just indicated in your answers, the  
25 statute doesn't require willful. It requires intentional

1 or willful.

2 MR. CAMPBELL: Or willful.

3 QUESTION: And it would be even more remarkable  
4 to construe the - the term intentional as requiring  
5 conscious disregard of - of a known statutory obligation.

6 MR. CAMPBELL: Let - let me answer this way in  
7 response, and maybe it will - will help ease the concerns.  
8 For 22 years, the interpretation of the Privacy Act that  
9 petitioner offers today has been the law of the land, and  
10 in that -

11 QUESTION: Do you have a case that says  
12 intentional standing alone must be construed to include  
13 this conscious disregard of a - of a known legal  
14 provision?

15 MR. CAMPBELL: I can't cite a specific case for  
16 that proposition, Justice Souter, but I again go back to  
17 we were talking about intentional or willful, it's a high  
18 burden under any concept of what intentional or willful  
19 will be, and for years, for 22 years, from 1975 to, at the  
20 earliest 1997, when the Sixth Circuit decided the Reno  
21 case, the interpretation that I am offering this Court is  
22 the one that the courts of appeals had unanimously  
23 adopted, and never in those 22 years had the kind of  
24 parade of horrors that the Government posits in this  
25 case materialize.

1           Indeed, if anything, if you look - there is a -  
2 a reporter that lists every single case decided under the  
3 Privacy Act since 1975.

4           QUESTION: But have any of those cases involved  
5 disclosure of Social Security numbers?

6           MR. CAMPBELL: None that I recall. That seems to  
7 be a relatively new -

8           QUESTION: See, this seems to me a particular  
9 kind of disclosure that might happen over and over again  
10 in a very casual way.

11          MR. CAMPBELL: I - I submit, Justice Stevens, if  
12 it happens in a casual way, that's not going to provide  
13 anyone with a cause of action.

14          QUESTION: Well, pursuant to a policy such as  
15 they had here of that's the way they use to identify -  
16 driver's license they use it on, the Holiday Inn uses it  
17 for their social - all sorts of people use Social Security  
18 number for another purpose.

19          MR. CAMPBELL: That's true. It's certainly true  
20 that Social Security numbers are used for other purposes.  
21 But what is clear from this statute is that Congress was  
22 specifically focused on concerns about Social Security  
23 numbers being disclosed and the adverse effects that can  
24 result from that.

25          QUESTION: That - that may be true. What's

1     bothering me, which may be the same thing, as Justice  
2     Stevens says, is that I might have thought that a Labor  
3     Department official could reasonably think, I have a list  
4     of 50,000 people here, several are named John Smith, I  
5     want to be sure we get the right ones so I'll put the  
6     Social Security number as identifier. That doesn't on its  
7     - on its face seem like such an unreasonable thing to  
8     think, even if it's wrong.

9             And - and yet we have here a finding that not  
10    only is it wrong, but that it's intentional and willful,  
11    and that's what brings up the problem you come to argue,  
12    and I don't know how to deal with it, because I think,  
13    well, if this statute, intentional, willful really means  
14    the tough thing that you say, well, then it'll work, then  
15    you're right, there won't be a horrible. But then I see  
16    this case, which seems to me to stand for the proposition  
17    that that tough standard isn't being applied. And then I  
18    think, my goodness, you're opening the door to the  
19    horribles and - and I don't know how to do it because the  
20    other part isn't being argued. That's my honest dilemma.  
21    I put it to you.

22             MR. CAMPBELL: I - I - I under - I well  
23    understand your dilemma, Justice Breyer, and I again go  
24    back to, I don't doubt if this - if the statute is given  
25    its natural reading, that the \$1,000 statutory damages is

1 available to those to whom the United States shall be  
2 liable, there will be an awful lot more traction, a lot  
3 more fighting over the adverse effect and the particular  
4 circumstances that would rise to the level of an  
5 intentional or willful violation in the future.

6 QUESTION: Mr. Campbell -

7 MR. CAMPBELL: That's simply not an issue here.

8 QUESTION: Really what - what Justice Breyer is  
9 saying is - is that this issue of willfulness or not is  
10 not in the case and we wish it were, because the answer to  
11 that is important. Could we talk a little bit about what  
12 is in the case?

13 MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, yes, Justice Scalia, thank  
14 you.

15 QUESTION: Can - can you tell me what - I - I  
16 really have trouble understanding how there can be an  
17 adverse effect without actual damage. That's a very  
18 strange line. I mean, in - in the Administrative  
19 Procedure Act, you talk about any person adversely  
20 affected or aggrieved, and that's a person who suffered  
21 damage. It seems very strange for Congress to use  
22 language that - that sets up two different categories,  
23 adverse effect on the one hand, and actual damage on the  
24 other. When - when is there an adverse effect without  
25 actual damage?

1 MR. CAMPBELL: I think there frequently can be an  
2 - an emotional harm that is not quantifiable in dollar  
3 terms -

4 QUESTION: Well -

5 MR. CAMPBELL: - and that's very common in the  
6 law.

7 QUESTION: That doesn't mean that it's not  
8 actual. It just means that it's hard to quantify, but  
9 you've had the emotional harm. Why isn't that an - why  
10 isn't that actual - actual harm?

11 MR. CAMPBELL: I - I want - I - I agree with you  
12 that that is an actual harm, and I think that's one of the  
13 things that the Government is - is trying to cloud the  
14 issue a bit in this case, and that is to equate actual  
15 damages and actual harm. I submit they are different,  
16 that the - in - in interpreting the statute, the  
17 deliberate use of a term adverse effect and the deliberate  
18 use of a term actual damages, those must be given  
19 different meanings.

20 QUESTION: Well, do you agree that, or do you  
21 contend that adverse effect include - includes emotional  
22 distress and that you have to show something like  
23 emotional distress before there is an adverse effect?

24 MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, yes indeed, Justice Kennedy,  
25 and that is indeed the unanimous position of the Federal

1 courts on that question.

2 QUESTION: What - what do you say about the  
3 position of the - which I understood the circuit to be  
4 taking that, on the assumption that there - there was some  
5 emotional damage, at least in the sense that the - the man  
6 said, I was very upset when I heard that the number was  
7 out. Assuming that, I thought the Fourth Circuit was  
8 saying, there is a category of harm that is generally non-  
9 compensable in the law, and we assume it ought to be non-  
10 compensable here, and that category is emotional damage,  
11 which has no physical manifestation. And the general  
12 policy behind that is, we don't allow generally, tort law  
13 doesn't allow recovery there because it's too easy to  
14 fake.

15 And the fourth circuit, I thought, was saying,  
16 you know, whether you're talking about damage or whether  
17 you're talking about effect, this is an effect that the  
18 law simply doesn't generally recognize and it shouldn't be  
19 recognized here. That's a different issue from whether it  
20 can be quantified or not. What the circuit was saying is,  
21 you don't even get to the point of proving quantification.  
22 What - what is your response to that?

23 MR. CAMPBELL: If that is indeed what the Fourth  
24 Circuit's position is, it's squarely wrong. At common law  
25 and intentional torts generally, and in privacy torts

1 specifically, this type of harm is compensable in some at  
2 least minimal way, even if it cannot be quantified, and I  
3 think that's why -

4 QUESTION: What about - even if there is no  
5 physical manifestation?

6 MR. CAMPBELL: Even if there is no physical  
7 manifestation. Indeed, I submit, Justice Souter, it's -  
8 there's nothing surprising about the overall remedial  
9 scheme here, because it does track what happened at common  
10 law and intentional torts and with respect to intentional  
11 privacy torts. In fact, the Privacy Act is more strict  
12 even than what was required at common law. At common law,  
13 even no damage at all, no - I'm sorry - I don't - I don't  
14 want to get back into the confusion over the terms. Even  
15 if there was no harm at all, there would be still be some  
16 at least minimal award, recognizing the invasion.

17 QUESTION: Sure, because privacy -

18 MR. CAMPBELL: Here you have to put -

19 QUESTION: - I mean, in your - I understand your  
20 privacy argument, but that's because the invasion of  
21 privacy or the infringement of privacy is regarded simply  
22 as - as injury per se, and - and I thought the circuit was  
23 saying, that's not what we're dealing with here. But  
24 you're saying, what, privacy is privacy and - and -

25 MR. CAMPBELL: Well, I - I want to -



1                   QUESTION: But it's - but if that is so, then let  
2 me just get to my question. If that is so, why did the  
3 statute go into speaking of actual damage at all? Why  
4 didn't the statute simply say, if they invade the privacy  
5 by publishing something they shouldn't publish, you get at  
6 least \$1,000 regardless. But that's not what it said.  
7 It's keyed it to actual damage, and it said, if there's  
8 actual damage, the person entitled to recovery for actual  
9 damage gets at least 1,000, which is something quite  
10 different. It does not take the position that it's a per  
11 se compensable harm.

12                   MR. CAMPBELL: Well, I - I, of course, disagree  
13 with your characterization of what subsection (A) in fact  
14 says, but let me go back to first part of the answer. We  
15 are talking about an adverse effect, so we are talking  
16 about having to prove a harm. We're not just talking  
17 about the ability to vindicate a privacy interest in the  
18 abstract. You can certainly do that at common law, and  
19 Congress could have written a statute that allowed you to  
20 do that under the Privacy Act. It didn't. It did at  
21 least require that you demonstrate an adverse effect and  
22 real harm.

23                   QUESTION: And what - can - can you - and this  
24 goes back to Justice Scalia's initial question, what is  
25 the difference in adverse effect and actual damage?

1           MR. CAMPBELL: The difference is the ability to  
2 quantify the harm in some dollar amount.

3           QUESTION: Yes, but if that's - if that's the  
4 case, I don't see why the risk of being subjected to  
5 identity theft would be increased by the disclosure of  
6 your Social Security number, and if that's true, and I  
7 think some people could prove the risk is increased, that  
8 would be true of every release of every Social Security  
9 number.

10          MR. CAMPBELL: I - I - I would certainly agree  
11 that there is a real risk of identity theft any time  
12 there's a disclosure of a Social Security number,  
13 particularly as here when it's linked directly with the  
14 name.

15          QUESTION: So does it not necessarily follow that  
16 every one of those releases causes an adverse effect?

17          MR. CAMPBELL: I don't think it is. There could  
18 be - there could be people who aren't bothered by that or  
19 who don't share that fear.

20          QUESTION: Whether they're bothered about it or  
21 not, they're - they have an increased risk, just if you  
22 increase your risk of death, maybe they're not aware of  
23 it, but it's still an adverse effect.

24          MR. CAMPBELL: Well, I do not contend that the  
25 Privacy Act is a statute that - that compensates in some

1 way for merely increased risk. I think that does go back  
2 to the adverse effect here. You do have to have some sort  
3 of harm that actualizes, and here it did actualize in his  
4 real emotional distress about the disclosure.

5 QUESTION: Well, I mean, that doesn't answer it.  
6 The harm does actualize, as you say it, once the Social  
7 Security number is released, the harm actualizes. You're  
8 at greater risk than you were before. That's - that's  
9 actual as can be.

10 MR. CAMPBELL: I can't support that  
11 interpretation of the act, although candidly, it - it  
12 probably would be a better one for plaintiffs in the - in  
13 the run-of-the-mine case. And the reason is this: If the  
14 - if the disclosure itself is the adverse effect, what  
15 happens is that the causation language in subsection  
16 (g)(1)(D) becomes superfluous, and I am being careful to  
17 the - the text here -

18 QUESTION: Well, it's superfluous with respect to  
19 Social Security numbers, but the statute covers a whole  
20 range of activities other than this particular case.

21 MR. CAMPBELL: Absolutely, Justice Stevens, and I  
22 - I - but I'm not sure - I - I don't think the answer is  
23 that it would be just superfluous with respect to Social  
24 Security numbers. In every case, if the release of any  
25 information, let's say it's a medical record, not a Social

1 Security number. If the release itself is the adverse  
2 effect, the problem is that does not - that does not hew  
3 to the - the causation language contained in subsection  
4 (g)(1)(D).

5 QUESTION: Well, the release of medical  
6 information doesn't necessarily increase the risk of any  
7 particular harm. But this particular information does  
8 increase the risk of an identity theft for everybody.

9 MR. CAMPBELL: It does increase that - it does  
10 increase the risk -

11 QUESTION: It is not true if you say, well,  
12 you're taking aspirin three times a day or something like  
13 that. So what? But this is not a so-what situation.

14 MR. CAMPBELL: No, it's a - I agree, Justice  
15 Stevens. It does increase the risk, but - but for some  
16 people, that increased risk may not cause them an adverse  
17 effect, the personal adverse effect.

18 I would like to reserve the remainder of my time  
19 for rebuttal, if I may.

20 QUESTION: Very well, Mr. Campbell.

21 Mr. Stewart, we'll hear from you.

22 ORAL ARGUMENT OF MALCOLM L. STEWART

23 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT

24 MR. STEWART: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it  
25 please the Court:

1           I'd like to begin by discussing the distinction  
2 as we see it between the terms adverse effect and actual  
3 damages. And as one of Justice Scalia's questions  
4 indicate, the term adverse effect is not one that  
5 originated in the Privacy Act. It's - it's a term of art.  
6 The general judicial review provision of the  
7 Administrative Procedure Act grants a right of action to  
8 persons adversely affected or aggrieved, and I don't think  
9 it's the case that a plaintiff under the APA needs to show  
10 that he has suffered the type of harm that would  
11 ordinarily be compensable in damages.

12           Because the APA excludes money damages as an  
13 available item of relief, the typical inquiry in - under  
14 the APA in determining whether a plaintiff has standing is  
15 whether he is likely to suffer harm in the future, not  
16 whether he has been harmed in the past. And if we had a  
17 hypothetical APA suit, for instance, challenging an  
18 ongoing or imminent program by which the Government  
19 intended to release Social Security numbers, and a  
20 particular plaintiff could show there is a likelihood that  
21 my own Social Security number will be released in the near  
22 future, I think that would be sufficient in and of itself  
23 to establish that that person was adversely affected or  
24 aggrieved within the meaning of the act.

25           He would be suffering a - a violation of his

1 legal right to have information about him maintained  
2 within the Government's files and he would also suffer at  
3 least an increased risk of identity theft. That would be  
4 enough to get him into the - into court to seek  
5 prospective, injunctive, or declaratory relief. But those  
6 certainly wouldn't be the types of harms that would  
7 ordinarily be compensable in damages.

8 QUESTION: Well, but that - but that's not the  
9 question. It - it - the point is it's - it's not only  
10 enough to get him into court, which is what it is said  
11 adverse effect does here, it is enough under the APA to  
12 give him judgment. He wins.

13 MR. STEWART: He wins -

14 QUESTION: It - it is enough to give - to make  
15 his claim a valid - a valid claim.

16 MR. STEWART: He - he wins but -

17 QUESTION: And the reason he can't get money  
18 damages has nothing to do with the magic words, adversely  
19 affected. It has to do with simply the fact that money  
20 damages are not available under the APA.

21 MR. STEWART: But -

22 QUESTION: But he wins under the APA.

23 MR. STEWART: But the fact that a plaintiff can  
24 win under the APA and, in our view, can't win under the  
25 damages provision of the Privacy Act simply reflects what

1 is implicit in the APA's exclusion of money damages as an  
2 available item of relief, namely the view that agency  
3 action should ordinarily be reviewable in court, and  
4 plaintiffs who can show that they would be injured by  
5 unlawful government conduct in the future should  
6 ordinarily be able to get a judicial order decreeing that  
7 that not take place. But plaintiffs are not ordinarily  
8 entitled to receive money damages from the Government for  
9 wrongs committed against them.

10 QUESTION: And I take it you're - you're saying  
11 here - and they're not here because there's a further  
12 requirement of actual damage before they get money.

13 MR. STEWART: That - that's right.

14 QUESTION: Yeah.

15 MR. STEWART: That the damages provisions  
16 restricts the availability of monetary relief to a person  
17 entitled to recovery, and the phrase, person entitled to  
18 recovery, is most naturally construed to mean someone who  
19 has not only established a violation of law, but who has  
20 established the prerequisites to an award of compensatory  
21 relief.

22 QUESTION: Why - why did they put that phrase,  
23 entitled to recovery, in there in addition to actual  
24 damages? I'll be candid with you that I - I was thinking  
25 that maybe they put it in there because they anticipated

1 this - this category of cases like emotional damage  
2 without physical manifestations is non-compensable, and  
3 that - and that they were trying to leave open that kind  
4 fo a condition.

5 MR. STEWART: One - one hypothesis as to why the  
6 phrase may appear as it does. The phrase originated in  
7 the Senate version of the legislation, and the Senate  
8 version said that a plaintiff who establishes a will - an  
9 intentional or willful violation can collect actual or  
10 general damages, but a person entitled to recovery shall  
11 receive no less than \$1,000. And so, in the context of  
12 that provision, the phrase, person entitled to recovery,  
13 could be a shorthand for person entitled to recover either  
14 actual or general damages.

15 QUESTION: well, he is entitled to recover actual  
16 damages if he has any.

17 QUESTION: Yeah.

18 MR. STEWART: But that -

19 QUESTION: And he's entitled to recover it if he  
20 doesn't have any. He's entitled to recover it, whether he  
21 has some or whether he doesn't have some. So I will - I  
22 don't understand, you say the most natural meaning of a  
23 person entitled to recovery is a person entitled to  
24 recovery who actually has actual damages. That isn't how  
25 I'd normally read it. I'd - I'd read it somebody who's -



1 who's entitled to get it if he has it.

2 QUESTION: Well, I guess that's the issue.

3 QUESTION: Yeah, that is the issue. So I just  
4 want you to explain a little bit more -

5 (Laughter.)

6 MR. STEWART: I mean, I think - I think -

7 QUESTION: - about why that's the most natural  
8 reading.

9 MR. STEWART: I mean, the more - I think the more  
10 natural reading is that a person entitled to recovery is  
11 someone who not only has established some of the  
12 prerequisites to an actual recovery, namely a compensatory  
13 award, but who has established all of them. And if the  
14 only compensatory relief available is actual damages, then  
15 a person who hasn't established actual damages is not  
16 entitled to recovery.

17 But even if a plausible argument could be made  
18 the other way, then the canon of construction that waivers  
19 of sovereign immunity are to be construed narrowly would  
20 compel the Court to read it in - in the narrow way.

21 QUESTION: Well, plus - plus the canon that -  
22 that you don't give words a meaning that renders them  
23 totally superfluous.

24 MR. STEWART: That - that's -

25 QUESTION: And if it means what Justice Breyer

1 suggests, you can just leave out the words, a person  
2 entitled to recovery.

3 MR. STEWART: Or - or -

4 QUESTION: Just read it, but in no case shall he  
5 receive less than the sum of 10,000, of \$1,000.

6 MR. STEWART: That's correct. If - if Congress  
7 had intended that any plaintiff who established an adverse  
8 effect from a willful or intentional violation would  
9 automatically receive at least \$1,000, it could have used  
10 the word person or individual or complainant, which was -  
11 which were the words that Congress used elsewhere in the  
12 Privacy Act to describe the individual whose rights had  
13 arguably been violated.

14 QUESTION: Or just - just drop entitled to  
15 recovery.

16 MR. STEWART: Exactly.

17 QUESTION: Shall a person receive less than the  
18 sum of -

19 MR. STEWART: And the other point I would - we  
20 would make in following up on one of Justice -

21 QUESTION: Mr. Stewart, if - and before going to  
22 the words of the statute, this - there are any number of  
23 statutes that have actual damages and it can say, or the  
24 statutory damages, and some of them have this formula,  
25 actual damages and person entitled to recover, and then

1 there's shades in between. Do you - do you really think  
2 that Congress, by using those different formulas, meant a  
3 different result in what would seem to be cases that don't  
4 - are not sensibly distinguished?

5 MR. STEWART: I mean, I think - I think we have  
6 to infer that Congress or presume that Congress meant  
7 something by the choice of words that it used. And the  
8 phrase entitled to recovery is -

9 QUESTION: A benign fiction, right?

10 MR. STEWART: A benign fiction, that's right.  
11 And I think it is also the cause that the phrase, person  
12 entitled to recovery, is used very rarely in the United  
13 States Code. There are a number of provisions along the  
14 lines of actual damages or \$1,000, whichever is greater,  
15 references to statutory damages or liquidated damages.  
16 But the phrase, person entitled to recovery, is very rare  
17 and we would presume that Congress intended something  
18 specific -

19 QUESTION: All right. I - I would - rather than  
20 do the presumption of what they intended deduced from  
21 canons, et cetera. You assume that it is ambiguous. You  
22 certainly got me there. I'm - I see it's ambiguous. And  
23 I also believe that Congress did not want to bankrupt the  
24 Treasury, destroying Medicare, Social Security, and every  
25 other programs we give \$1 trillion in damages to people

1 who have the social - I - I - you've got me there.

2 Now, how do - what they - what your opponents  
3 say is that is a made-up problem. It doesn't - it isn't  
4 going to happen, and the reason it isn't going to happen  
5 is because these words, intentional or willful, are not  
6 used, the word intentional, as it normally is. It's used  
7 in a very special way so that they have to almost - well,  
8 you've - now, you've - I'm cross-referencing our earlier  
9 argument and I'm at a dilemma here because it's not  
10 argued, I don't know how to deal with it, but it seems  
11 relevant to the underlying question that is moving me  
12 about what Congress intended.

13 MR. STEWART: The petitioner is correct that the  
14 phrase intentional or willful has been construed by the  
15 lower courts essentially as a term of art, and the  
16 prevailing test in the lower courts is whether the agency  
17 exhibited flagrant disregard for -

18 QUESTION: Oh, I'm sorry. The lower court thing  
19 that we've looked up uses an or about that, and one of the  
20 parts of the or is without grounds for believing the  
21 action to be lawful, which means that part of the test,  
22 that if we have an ALJ, or we have people in the agency,  
23 just never think about it, as they might not in this case,  
24 that that cover - is covered by intentional or lawful.  
25 And that's one of the problems I'm having, because it

1 makes me think that that word intentional is a pretty  
2 complicated issue, which isn't argued. It seems to be  
3 very important, and I don't know what to do.

4 MR. STEWART: I - I think, with respect to the -  
5 the language from the court of appeals' opinion that you  
6 quoted, the without grounds to believe that -

7 QUESTION: I have three of them like that.

8 MR. STEWART: Right. I - I think what the courts  
9 are getting at is something at least akin to the standard  
10 that would prevail in a Bivens action, where an individual  
11 Federal officer was sued, where the question would be,  
12 could a reasonable officer in this person's position have  
13 believed that what he was doing was legal? Probably the  
14 courts have applied it in a - in a manner that's slightly  
15 more deferential to the government.

16 In - in - it doesn't mean, however, that the  
17 Government has to have been shown either to have  
18 intentionally violated the law or to have intentionally  
19 sought to bring about harm to the plaintiff.

20 QUESTION: Do we have to decide that in this  
21 case?

22 MR. STEWART: No, no, I don't think you need to  
23 decide that.

24 QUESTION: I'd like a lot more argument on it  
25 before I decide that question.

1 do it.

2 MR. STEWART: I mean -

3 QUESTION: Now, that'll be pretty rare and the -

4 MR. STEWART: It would be rare.

5 QUESTION: So the -

6 MR. STEWART: Well, you could - you could imagine  
7 a situation, and we wouldn't condone this - this conduct,  
8 but you can imagine a situation in which an agency  
9 official gets back the 100,000 forms from the printer and  
10 says, oh my gosh, the U.S. Code cite was left off, but  
11 then decides, I know we're supposed to do this, but I'm  
12 not going to reprint 100,000 forms for something like  
13 that, let's circulate them. We don't condone that  
14 behavior. It would be a violation of law, but it's hard  
15 to imagine that Congress would have intended that  
16 everybody who fills out information on those forms would  
17 then be entitled to \$1,000.

18 QUESTION: Just to try to get this issue out of  
19 the case, are you content to have us decide this case on -  
20 on the assumption, just for the sake of argument but  
21 without ruling, that - that the act requires willfulness  
22 in the - in the most extreme sense that Justice Breyer  
23 describes? Are you willing to have us decide the case on  
24 that assumption?

25 MR. STEWART: Yes.

1           QUESTION: You're willing to have us decide what  
2 was not - what it was over, that there is an adverse  
3 effect? In fact, the - the Government didn't dispute  
4 that, didn't dispute adverse effect, did it?

5           MR. STEWART: Not - not as to Buck Doe. The -  
6 the magistrate judge held that each of the plaintiffs had  
7 established an adverse effect simply by release of the  
8 Social Security numbers, and the district court didn't  
9 expressly endorse that view, but didn't reject it either.

10           QUESTION: Is it your - is it your argument - and  
11 I'm glad we're back to the statute - that in order to  
12 determine in this case, in this case, whether there was a  
13 cause of action, you had to read beyond the adverse effect  
14 clause and go down to for - or before - and decide also  
15 whether there was actual damages, before there was a cause  
16 of action?

17           MR. STEWART: You - you wouldn't have to decide  
18 whether there was proof of actual damages, but yes, I  
19 think if it was apparent on the complaint that there was  
20 an adverse effect but no possibility of proving actual  
21 damages, then the suit shouldn't be - shouldn't go  
22 forward, but -

23           QUESTION: That - that's an - that's an unusual  
24 way to write the statute. It's unusual to - to write the  
25 statute in a way where I don't know if I have a cause of

1 action until I get down to where the damages are defined.

2 MR. STEWART: I - I agree, but I think it would  
3 be -

4 QUESTION: Usually I would say that any person  
5 injured is the way we would expect this statute to have  
6 been written.

7 MR. STEWART: I agree, and it may be that to -  
8 Congress anticipated that questions concerning damages  
9 would be resolved at the end of the day, and there would  
10 obviously be a lot of cases in which a plaintiff would  
11 allege damages at the outset, and therefore, would have a  
12 cause of action, but if he failed to prove damages in the  
13 - the course of the trial, he wouldn't be entitled to the  
14 \$1,000, even if he proved that he suffered an adverse  
15 effect from a willful or intentional violation.

16 QUESTION: But Mr. Stewart, I - I take it that  
17 even - even if there was no indication of actual damage,  
18 the - by - by pleading the violation of the statute, he  
19 would at least have pleaded enough to entitle him to - to  
20 ask for a - to ask for equitable relief.

21 MR. STEWART: We would say that equitable relief  
22 is not, in this context, is not specifically authorized by  
23 the Privacy Act. But we would say that equitable relief  
24 would be available under the APA, and the allegation would  
25 be that the -



1 QUESTION: Okay.

2 MR. STEWART: - agency's action was not in  
3 accordance with law -

4 QUESTION: I - I see.

5 MR. STEWART: - because it violated the Privacy  
6 Act.

7 QUESTION: May -

8 MR. STEWART: So - so - and indeed, this suit at  
9 the outset included a request for injunctive relief  
10 against further disclosures, and the Government settled  
11 that part of the case with lightning speed. There was -  
12 the - the plaintiff did obtain a judicial order directing  
13 the Government not to continue with its practice.

14 QUESTION: So indeed there's - there - there's  
15 nothing bizarre about letting him get into court just on  
16 the basis of - of an adverse effect, because he can win in  
17 court on the basis of an adverse effect, not by reason of  
18 this act alone, but by reason of the obligations under  
19 this Act plus the APA.

20 MR. STEWART: That's correct.

21 QUESTION: Right.

22 QUESTION: May I - may I go to another issue? I  
23 mean, one of things that's bothering us is several issues  
24 that seem crucial, which we're just having to make  
25 assumptions about here, and depending on the assumptions,

1 the scope of liability may - may be enormous.

2 Here's the one that is bothering me. The - the  
3 Government is not contesting here that in fact there -  
4 there was some kind of actual damage, even though it was  
5 not quantified.

6 MR. STEWART: No, I think we are contesting that.

7 QUESTION: Well, I - but - but you're not  
8 contesting the fact - let me put it - I - I misspoke -  
9 you're not contesting the fact that if he showed emotional  
10 damage and emotional damage alone, no physical effects,  
11 that that would be enough for recovery if - if a fact-  
12 finder said, well, I think the emotional damage is worth  
13 \$250 -

14 MR. STEWART: No, no. We - we are contesting  
15 that and -

16 QUESTION: You are contesting that?

17 MR. STEWART: It hasn't really been -

18 QUESTION: Are - may - may I ask you just a  
19 further question, then you can tell me which - whatever  
20 you want. Are you contesting as a matter of law the  
21 sufficiency of this plaintiff's testimony to at least get  
22 to the fact-finder on whether there was actual damage? He  
23 testified - I forget his exact words - but he testified,  
24 you know, I was so upset when I heard that they had  
25 released my Social Security number, I just didn't know

1 what to do or what to say, something like that. Are you  
2 contesting the sufficiency of that evidence to put an  
3 issue of actual damage to the fact-finder?

4 MR. STEWART: Yes, and let me backtrack for a  
5 second to say that the Fourth Circuit decided that Mr. Doe  
6 had not proved actual damages, and the petitioner did not  
7 seek this Court's review of that holding, so -

8 QUESTION: But they said he didn't prove actual  
9 damages because there was no physical effect.

10 MR. STEWART: That - that's right. There was -

11 QUESTION: They didn't say that, as a matter of  
12 law, if you don't have the emotional physical effect rule,  
13 he wouldn't have had enough to - to get to the fact-finder  
14 an actual damage.

15 MR. STEWART: That - that's correct. My - my  
16 only point was, the reason we haven't briefed the question  
17 of whether there were in fact actual damages is that our  
18 understanding is that, because petitioner didn't seek this  
19 Court's review of that aspect of the - the court of  
20 appeals' holding, as the case comes to the Court, we're  
21 assuming that there were no actual damages.

22 QUESTION: And you didn't - you didn't cross?

23 MR. STEWART: But - but to answer your - your  
24 question about what the Government's position on the law  
25 is, our - our first argument is that in the context of

1 this specific statute, the phrase actual damages refers  
2 only to pecuniary harm, and we've cited in a footnote a  
3 conflict among the circuits with respect to that question,  
4 and that - that isn't presented by this case.

5 QUESTION: Okay.

6 MR. STEWART: But we would -

7 QUESTION: Mr. Stewart, may I ask you a question  
8 with respect to that? Suppose this Doe said, I'm very  
9 concerned about the impact of this on my credit rating, so  
10 I'm going to spend \$10 to a credit - credit reporting  
11 company to find out whether there's been any theft of my  
12 identity, \$10. Would there then be a claim under this  
13 statute for actual damages?

14 MR. STEWART: I mean, there - there would be a  
15 question of whether that was - whether there was  
16 causation, whether that was a reasonable response to the  
17 threat, but in theory, an expense like that could qualify  
18 as pecuniary harm and, thus, is actual damages.

19 QUESTION: But it made - it made me think that if  
20 there's ambiguity in this statute, that wouldn't have made  
21 much sense for Congress to write a statute like this  
22 where, to meet the actual damage requirement, all you have  
23 to do is make a \$10 expense.

24 MR. STEWART: I mean, I agree that it's a  
25 somewhat anomalous result that the availability of the

1 thousand can turn on a relatively small pecuniary loss.  
2 It's - it's somewhat analogous at least to the common law  
3 rule that punitive damages are available only to a  
4 plaintiff who's shown some level of compensatory damages,  
5 and there also a plaintiff might be able to contrive a  
6 small loss that is compensable, and thereby make himself  
7 eligible for punitive damages that far exceed the amount  
8 of -

9 QUESTION: But it's not just not contrived,  
10 because now it's a formula for - for all the people who  
11 have this kind of complaint, so I think if that's what -  
12 what the line is, then Mr. Doe, is it, all the future Mr.  
13 Does will ask to have their credit checked.

14 MR. STEWART: I mean, we would still want to - we  
15 would still have to know whether that was in fact a  
16 reasonable response to what the Government had did - done  
17 - and what the - the threat that it posed to the - the  
18 plaintiff. And even if that kind of machination might be  
19 possible in in one category of cases, it would still not  
20 be possible in a lot of other categories of potential - of  
21 Privacy Act violations.

22 To continue with my answer to Justice Souter's  
23 question, the - the second thing we would say about the  
24 emotional injury is that, even if some emotional harms  
25 were compensable as actual damages under the statute, we

1 don't think that the particular emotional harm alleged  
2 here would be, because a Social Security number, unlike,  
3 for instance, intimate details about a person's family  
4 life, is not inherently private or secret or confidential.  
5 It's not the sort of information that would cause a person  
6 to say, I would be horrified to think that somebody else  
7 knew that even if I could be sure that that person wasn't  
8 going to misuse it against me.

9           The - the reason that people are worried about  
10 release of Social Security numbers is that that release  
11 may lead to some further, more tangible harm, identify  
12 theft or -

13           QUESTION: So you're saying as a matter of law,  
14 this is just what he testified to is simply too de minimis  
15 to be considered evidence -

16           MR. STEWART: That -

17           QUESTION: - sufficient evidence.

18           MR. STEWART: That's correct. And we've cited  
19 the Metro-North case in our brief, and I think that the  
20 harm - the emotional harm that he's alleged is really -  
21 really very similar to the fear of cancer as a result of  
22 asbestos exposure that was held not to be compensable in  
23 the absence of some current physical impairment.

24           So to - to - follow up on this and make our  
25 position absolutely clear, we are saying that if the term

1 adverse effect is given its usual meaning, and every  
2 plaintiff who establishes an adverse effect from a willful  
3 or intentional violation is entitled to \$1,000, that the  
4 potential financial consequences would be enormous. Now,  
5 I would say in all candor that if we lose this case, it's  
6 quite possible that the Government would argue in the  
7 lower courts that to protect the public fisc, the - the  
8 phrase adverse effect should be given a narrower  
9 construction under this statute than under the APA. But  
10 our basic point is -

11 QUESTION: May I ask, with respect to the parade  
12 of horrors that we're confronted with, is it - it's my  
13 understanding that there are several other statutes under  
14 entirely different statutes, they have the similar  
15 provision but they're clearly worded in a way that says,  
16 if you get anything, you'll get the minimum, and - but  
17 it's the position that your opponent contends is the  
18 proper reading of that statute. There are several such  
19 statutes, am I -

20 MR. STEWART: There are a lot of statutes with  
21 wording, for instance, to the effect of a plaintiff who  
22 establishes a violation will receive actual damages or  
23 \$1,000, whichever is greater. Most of those don't apply  
24 to suits against the United States -

25 QUESTION: And - and -

1 MR. STEWART: - but there are many such laws.

2 QUESTION: And most of those would not require  
3 proof of actual damages?

4 MR. STEWART: That's correct. Under the plain  
5 terms of the statute, the plaintiff would get the 1,000 -

6 QUESTION: Why in your view did Congress come up  
7 with a different formula in this case than it has in that  
8 - in the pattern of statutes that those represent?

9 MR. STEWART: I'm - part of it may be that most  
10 of those statutes are not dealing with suits against the  
11 United States, and Congress may be more protective of the  
12 public fisc, and part of it is the - the legislative  
13 debates reveal that Congress considered a variety of  
14 potential damages provisions, some of which were more  
15 generous than the one that was ultimately enacted, some of  
16 them less generous. For instance, the more generous  
17 provisions -

18 QUESTION: But this statute is unique, is it not?

19 MR. STEWART: It's not quite unique. I believe  
20 there are a couple of other provisions that use the  
21 phrase, person entitled to recovery, and that phrase has  
22 not been authoritatively construed by this Court, so those  
23 - interpretation of those statutes would raise the same  
24 question this one does.

25 QUESTION: But there's a number of them that



1 start out with actual damages.

2 MR. STEWART: And - and sometimes, again, the  
3 words are to the effect of actual damages or \$1,000,  
4 whichever is greater. And because the availability of the  
5 \$1,000 is not limited to a, quote, person entitled to  
6 recovery, unquote, the plain language of many of those  
7 statutes compels the conclusion that \$1,000 will be  
8 awardable regardless of actual damages.

9 QUESTION: Now, there was an interpretation -  
10 Congress told OMB to do interpretive guides, and it did,  
11 and it - and it gave it the meaning that this plaintiff  
12 gives it. It's - it read the statute - didn't - wasn't  
13 that what OMB said? Wasn't that their contemporaneous -

14 MR. STEWART: I mean, I think the more - I think  
15 you're right that the more natural reading - the OMB  
16 guideline didn't address in terms the situation where a  
17 plaintiff shows no actual damages but nevertheless claims  
18 the thousand, but the OMB guideline did say, a person who  
19 suffers an adverse effect from a willful or an intention  
20 violation shall receive a 1,000 - actual damages or  
21 \$1,000, whichever is greater.

22 QUESTION: It said actual damages or 1,000. As I  
23 understood the - that original interpretation, it was the  
24 reading that the plaintiff is putting forward here and  
25 your response to it in your brief seemed to be that was a

1 wrong interpretation because it didn't take account of  
2 sovereign immunity or saving the sovereign fisc and an  
3 official at OMB said it was wrong and it's not - no longer  
4 effective.

5 MR. STEWART: I mean, I think if - if plaintiffs  
6 are using the OMB interpretation to establish the point  
7 that intelligent people can read the statute the way that  
8 they did, I - I think it's validly used for that purpose.  
9 But the OMB guideline is not entitled to deference, as the  
10 Court held in Adams Fruit, a statutory provision that is  
11 to administered solely by the courts is not one as to  
12 which the Court will defer to administrative  
13 interpretations. The - the OMB -

14 QUESTION: But didn't - didn't Congress designate  
15 OMB to - to these guides?

16 MR. STEWART: Congress designated OMB, but it's -  
17 the particular provision that is at - specifically, at  
18 issue is reprinted at page 13a to the appendix to the  
19 Government's brief. And it says, the director of the  
20 Office of Management and Budget shall develop and, after  
21 notice and opportunity for public comment, prescribe  
22 guidelines and regulations for the use of agencies in  
23 implementing the provisions of this section.

24 So the only specific directive that OMB had was  
25 to instruct or direct agencies as to their substantive

1 obligations under the act. Now, in the course of doing  
2 that, it was entirely appropriate for OMB to go further  
3 and offer its view to the agencies as to what consequences  
4 would follow if they breached their substantive  
5 obligations, but that wasn't a task that was specifically  
6 entrusted to OMB by statute, so I don't think there's any  
7 basis for inferring that Congress -

8 QUESTION: I see. You're - you're saying that -  
9 that it - it was meant just to tell the agencies what you  
10 have to do to comply with the act.

11 MR. STEWART: Exactly.

12 QUESTION: Yeah, that - that's probably the best  
13 reading of it.

14 MR. STEWART: Exactly.

15 QUESTION: Yeah.

16 MR. STEWART: So the - the last - the last point  
17 I wanted to make is, it might be possible, if - if we lost  
18 this case, it might be possible to mitigate the financial  
19 consequences to the Government by giving the term adverse  
20 effect a narrow construction, but our - our view is, if  
21 the consequence of adopting plaintiff's reading of the  
22 phrase person entitled to recovery is that an established  
23 term of art like adverse effect has to be construed in  
24 other than its normal manner in order to make the statute  
25 make sense, there's something wrong with plaintiff's

1 reading.

2 QUESTION: But why - why do you say that?  
3 Because, see, the adverse effect part governs people who  
4 don't even want damages. I mean, it - it's to get into  
5 court, it's just to get into court, bring the suit, isn't  
6 it?

7 MR. STEWART: Right.

8 QUESTION: So - so I would have thought that your  
9 - your reaction - I just want you to clarify this - would  
10 be, if they win this case, then the reaction would be to  
11 go back and say, all right, if we're going to give \$1,000  
12 to people who really are just feeling bad about what  
13 happened, we've got to give them all \$1,000, well, it's  
14 only in circumstances where the agency really did  
15 something quite wrong. And so you'll read that  
16 intentional or willful requirement toughly, not - not the  
17 adverse effect part tough. I mean, why - why wouldn't  
18 that be the reaction?

19 MR. STEWART: I mean, I guess if - if this - if  
20 this Court held that the phrase intentional or willful was  
21 limited to situations -

22 QUESTION: I don't see - yeah?

23 MR. STEWART: If it - if it was limited to  
24 situations in which the Government set out to violate an  
25 individual's rights under the Privacy Act, that - that

1 would be another way at least of -

2 QUESTION: Yeah, yeah, and then you'd say, well,  
3 we should assume that's what happened here, though. It  
4 certainly didn't -

5 MR. STEWART: I - I mean -

6 QUESTION: - but we should assume that. Now,  
7 suppose I assume that, and then I decide that they're  
8 right on the basis of that assumption, and then in the  
9 next case it turns out my assumption happened to be quite  
10 wrong because Congress had a broad intent there. Now what  
11 happens?

12 MR. STEWART: I mean, even under the narrowest  
13 possible interpretation of what intentional or willful  
14 means, you could have hypotheticals like the one with the  
15 form that left off the O.S.C. site, and again, we - we  
16 hope those things would happen very rarely, but it seems  
17 highly unlikely that Congress would have wanted each of  
18 the hundred thousand people who put on - information on  
19 the form to get \$1,000. Thank you.

20 QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Stewart.

21 Mr. Campbell, you have five minutes remaining.

22 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF MR. JACK W. CAMPBELL, IV

23 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER

24 MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.

25 Justice Kennedy, I'd like to address my first

1 point to you, because I - I think you put your finger on  
2 one of the number of - of absurd results, or difficult-to-  
3 swallow results that flow from accepting the Government's  
4 interpretation. The Government's essential contention  
5 here is that quantification of actual damages is an  
6 essential element of a Privacy Act claim, but boy, what a  
7 strange way to write the statute if that's what Congress  
8 intended.

9           The - the relative language is reproduced at  
10 pages 3 and 4 of petitioner's brief, and it says that  
11 whenever an agency fails to comply with any other  
12 provision of this section, and I'm going to ellipsis, in  
13 such a way as to have an adverse effect on an individual,  
14 the individual may bring a civil action against the  
15 agency, and I'm putting another ellipsis there. You then  
16 go to subsection (g)(4), which states that if that adverse  
17 effect was the result of an intentional or willful  
18 violation, then the Government, the United States shall be  
19 liable, in the sum - in an amount equal to the sum of.

20           Liability is established once those three  
21 prerequisites are met. All that is left at that point is  
22 an exercise of arithmetic. It would be a very strange  
23 statute that says the United States shall be liable in the  
24 sum of the following amounts you are to add up, and that  
25 amount would be zero. And, in fact, that would never be

1 the case. Costs are always available to a Privacy Act  
2 plaintiff who establishes an adverse effect caused by an  
3 intentional or willful violation of the act.

4 So there are certainly going to be at least some  
5 recovery. There's no qualification of the costs award  
6 with reasonableness of precondition of actual damages. So  
7 some - there is going to be a recovery in those cases.  
8 Now, if that's the only recovery that's available, it's a  
9 very - it's, one, a very strange statute, and number two,  
10 a statute that arguably is unconstitutional. But you  
11 don't need to read it that way, because the natural  
12 reading is, as was pointed out in the argument, that, yes,  
13 Congress did anticipate precisely this issue, that privacy  
14 invasions very typically result in emotional harms that  
15 inherently are not quantifiable, and Congress didn't  
16 intend, I can't imagine, to - to make the line of recovery  
17 turn on whether you can prove that you put 37 - a 37-cent  
18 stamp on an - on an envelope to get your credit report or  
19 pay the \$10 fee. That's a very arbitrary line. Why would  
20 Congress be solicitous of people who suffer the same harm  
21 - be solicitous of the one who put a stamp on an envelope?  
22 That's a nonsensical.

23 Moreover, it reduces any efficiency savings that  
24 are realized under the act as Congress intended by saying,  
25 look, we're not going to get into those sorts of proof

1 issues. If you have an emotional distress and it's  
2 typical, it's caused by the intentional violation, we  
3 don't go through that. You get your damages of \$1,000 and  
4 let's not go through the proof. That's a very natural  
5 reading of the act.

6 But the Government - the Government is asking  
7 you to adopt a - an interpretation that has a number of  
8 additional problems. It renders the adverse effect  
9 requirement superfluous. Proof of actual damages will  
10 necessarily in every case require proof of an actual harm  
11 and causation. So even the attempt by the Government to  
12 place a - a meaning on the adverse effect requirement must  
13 fail. Again, it turns the shall language into may, or at  
14 best, renders shall illusory, because the sum would be  
15 zero in much cases.

16 QUESTION: As to your point about the - the  
17 costs. You don't get costs unless, it says the court may  
18 assess reasonable attorneys' fees and other litigation  
19 costs reasonably incurred in any case in which the  
20 complainant has substantially prevailed. And I assume  
21 that when later on they - they say the costs of the action  
22 together with reasonable attorneys' fees as determined by  
23 the court, they're referring back to the court has allowed  
24 those - those costs and fees, because he has substantially  
25 prevailed?



1 MR. STEWART: I'm sorry, Justice Scalia. I - are  
2 you referring to the language that's in (g)(2) and (g)(3)  
3 of the statute?

4 QUESTION: Yes, I am.

5 MR. STEWART: (g)(2) and (g)(3) are entirely  
6 different causes of actions. Those deal with requests for  
7 injunctive relief, and this is the only type of injunctive  
8 relief under the Privacy Act, injunctive relief for access  
9 to files or correction of files. Those are separate  
10 causes of action. In fact, I submit, Justice Scalia -

11 QUESTION: I see. I see what you're saying.

12 MR. STEWART: - that the contrast in the language  
13 between (g)(2) and (g)(3) -

14 QUESTION: I see what you're saying.

15 MR. STEWART: - and (g)(4) proves my point.  
16 Here, Congress anticipated that there is a substantial -  
17 substantially prevailing party. That party -

18 QUESTION: Well, what assumption would you like  
19 us to make -

20 QUESTION: Right, right.

21 QUESTION: - in respect to the meaning of  
22 intentional or willful?

23 MR. STEWART: I - I submit that a perfectly  
24 proper interpretation of intentional or willful can  
25 include conscious disregard of - of the - of the legal

1 obligations. That's a well-established standard.

2 Thank you.

3 CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST: Thank you, Mr.  
4 Campbell. The case is submitted.

5 (Whereupon, at 11:57 a.m., the case in the  
6 above-entitled matter was submitted.)

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