

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

STATE OF MISSOURI

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING

In the Matter of the Request)
of The Empire District Electric)
Company d/b/a Liberty for) File No. ER-2024-0261
Authority to File Tariffs)
Increasing Rates for Electric)
Service Provided to Customers)
in its Missouri Service Area)

MONDAY, JULY 21, 2025
6:00 p.m. - 10:58 p.m.

Missouri Southern State University
Mills Anderson Justice Center Auditorium
3350 Newman Road
Joplin, MO 64801

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CHARLES HATCHER, Presiding
SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

KAYLA HAHN, Chair,
MAIDA J. COLEMAN, (WebEx)
GLEN KOLKMEYER, (WebEx)
JOHN MITCHELL,
COMMISSIONERS

Stenographically Reported By:
Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640

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BY: JOHN COFFMAN
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1 The following proceedings began at 7:35 p.m:

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Let's go on the record. Today
3 is July 21, 2025, and the current time is just past
4 7:30. The question and answer portion of tonight's
5 event, which you just participated in, is concluded. If
6 you attended that, I do hope that you were able to get
7 your questions answered.

8 We will now be starting the comment portion of
9 the hearing. This is when you all can give your
10 testimony to the Commissioners for them to take into
11 consideration for their decision on this rate case.

12 The Missouri Public Service Commission has set
13 this time for a local public hearing to give members of
14 the public a chance to comment about Liberty's request
15 for a rate increase and that is in Case No.
16 ER-2024-0261.

17 My name is Charles Hatcher, and I am the
18 Regulatory Law Judge that will be overseeing this
19 hearing. The Commission regulates the rates charged by
20 public utility companies in Missouri to ensure that
21 those rates are just and reasonable.

22 The Commission also regulates the quality of
23 service and safety of the operations of public
24 utilities. The Commission is made up of five
25 Commissioners. The Commission's Chair, Kayla Hahn, and

1 Commissioner John Mitchell are here with me tonight, and
2 on our WebEx online we have Commissioner Maida Coleman
3 and Commissioner Glen Kolkmeyer. There is one vacancy
4 at the Commission at the moment.

5 The Commissioners are appointed by the
6 Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Commission
7 employs a staff of engineers, accountants, attorneys,
8 financial analysts and other specialists in the field of
9 utility regulation.

10 Chair Hahn, would you like to make any opening
11 remarks?

12 CHAIR HAHN: Good afternoon or I guess it is
13 evening now. Good evening everyone. Thank you all for
14 coming. I really appreciate you coming out this evening
15 to share your thoughts with us. Right now this rate
16 case is in the beginning steps, and during these steps
17 we always go out to ask the public to get your thoughts
18 and feedback about the particular case and that's what
19 we're here to do this evening.

20 I know many of you may have different thoughts
21 or interests. So just share those with us. While
22 Commissioner Mitchell and I are here in person to hear
23 those comments, we do have Commissioners Kolkmeyer and
24 Coleman on the line and we'll all be listening very
25 intently to what your thoughts are. Again, thank you

1 all so much for coming out, really appreciate it. And I
2 know this is kind of like an odd format. We're not used
3 to sitting up. So sorry about that. I guess this is we
4 had a venue change at the last minute. Just know that
5 we've still got our notebooks, we're still taking notes
6 and listening to everything you've got to say. So with
7 that, thank you all so much.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Chair Hahn. I'd
9 like to go ahead and ask the parties to enter their
10 appearance for the record. First for the company,
11 Liberty, also known as the Empire Electric Company.

12 MS. CARTER: Diana Carter for the Empire
13 District Electric Company doing business as Liberty.

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And for Commission
15 Staff.

16 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Eric Vandergriff
17 representing Staff. Our address is 200 Madison Street,
18 P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City 65102.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And the Office of
20 the Public Counsel.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Nathan Williams, Chief Deputy
22 Public Counsel, representing the Office of the Public
23 Counsel and the public in general. My information is on
24 several pleadings in front of the Commission.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And we do have

1 several intervening parties. I did notice one counsel
2 here in the audience. If any of those parties or their
3 counsel would like to be recognized, please go ahead and
4 do so now.

5 MR. COFFMAN: Thank you, Your Honor. Can you
6 hear me? My name is John Coffman. I'm here appearing
7 for the Consumers Council of Missouri. Thanks.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Are there any
9 other intervening parties? All right.

10 Now, thank you. This is a fairly well
11 attended hearing, as we can all see, which is great as
12 the Commission does want to hear from the public. I
13 also want to make sure that I give everyone the
14 opportunity to speak. So I'm going to have to be
15 limiting the comments tonight to three minutes each.

16 Also, if someone has said the same thing that
17 you would like to say, it is perfectly acceptable to say
18 that I would like to reference the other person's
19 remarks and I have the same remarks as they do. There's
20 no need to overly expound on something that's already
21 been said, but the Commission does want to know what
22 everyone's experiences are.

23 I'm going to ask that everyone please be
24 polite and courteous and respect other people's opinions
25 and give everyone else the same courtesy that I hope

1 that they would give to you. Many of you did sign up in
2 advance. I currently have about five different sign-up
3 sheets. I'm going to call those names first. If you
4 did not sign up on one of these sign-up sheets, at the
5 end of my calling these names I'll ask if anyone else in
6 the audience would like to have an opportunity to speak.
7 When I do call your name, please go ahead and raise your
8 hand or otherwise let me know that you're here. Come on
9 down to one of the microphones. I will swear you in.
10 I'll place you under oath. And then I'll ask you to
11 state and spell your name for the court reporter and
12 then give your comments to the Commission.

13 After you finish giving your comments, I will
14 ask you to stay for just a second at the microphone
15 until I excuse you. I will be then looking to the
16 Commissioners or the attorneys to see if anyone else has
17 questions for you after you've given your statement.

18 Now, the Commission will not be able to answer
19 questions today. The Commissioners need to remain
20 impartial until after all of the evidence is presented
21 at the evidentiary hearing. That's why the
22 Commissioners and myself could not be in attendance at
23 the earlier question and answer period.

24 If you do have a question and you did not get
25 your question answered at the question and answer

1 period, I would encourage you to speak with
2 representatives of the company, the Commission Staff or
3 the Office of the Public Counsel.

4 With that in mind, let's go ahead and start
5 calling names. I will do my best to pronounce all of
6 the names correctly. I do apologize in advance and I
7 will continue apologizing as I mispronounce them. We
8 will start off with Tammy Walker. Is there a Tammy
9 Walker? Thank you. Please come on down to the
10 microphone.

11 Ms. Walker, would you raise your right hand,
12 please. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
13 testimony you're about to give will be the truth, the
14 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

15 MS. WALKER: Yes.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Would you please
17 state and spell your name for the court reporter?

18 MS. WALKER: Tammy Walker, T-a-m-m-y
19 W-a-l-k-e-r.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Walker. Please
21 go ahead.

22 MS. WALKER: I'm the Deputy Director at
23 Economic Security Corporation. We're your local
24 community action agency serving Jasper, Barton, Newton
25 and McDonald Counties. Our agency has a good working

1 relationship with Liberty. We collaborate with them to
2 provide weatherization services to low-income families.
3 Our agency provided weatherization services to 74
4 families totaling \$390,309 with the funds received from
5 Liberty last year.

6 Typically weatherization services include door
7 replacements, HVAC system repairs and replacement,
8 installation of LED lighting, pipe installation. This
9 funding has been an invaluable resource as it has
10 allowed us to serve more households. We are grateful
11 for the partnership with the hope that it will continue
12 in the future. Our agency receives federal Liheap
13 funds. With these funds we operate the energy
14 assistance program and energy intervention program,
15 which are the largest utility assistance provider
16 programs in the four-county service area.

17 Energy assistance helps low-income customers
18 who qualify for a one-time payment in the winter. Last
19 year our agency assisted 6,627 households. 48 percent
20 of those households were either elderly and/or disabled.
21 83 percent had incomes under 75 percent of the poverty
22 guidelines.

23 To give you an example of how much money this
24 is for a one-person household, it is less than \$978 a
25 month. 3,011 of those households were Liberty customers

1 who received energy assistance which totaled \$951,000.

2 We serve 6,671 households with our energy
3 crisis intervention program. 70 percent or 4,605 of
4 those households were Liberty customers. \$1,802,064 was
5 paid out to Liberty to assist low-income customers for
6 shutoff notices or to help them get their service
7 reconnected.

8 With rising costs, affording basic needs is a
9 huge challenge for our customers who struggle each month
10 to make ends meet. With that being said, here's one
11 example of one of our customers. Mary is 96 years old.
12 She rents a home that has not been weatherized. She
13 receives no SNAP benefits to help with her food costs.
14 Her income is \$963 in SSI and social security income,
15 and she reports having no resources. Any rate increases
16 for the economically disadvantaged and our most
17 vulnerable populations, which are our elderly and
18 disabled households, is too much.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Walker. If
20 you'll hold on. Are there any questions? Thank you,
21 ma'am. I appreciate you coming to give us your
22 testimony today.

23 MS. WALKER: Thanks.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: I sincerely appreciate the
25 applause. I would respectfully ask that we hold our

1 applause only because there's approximately 150 to 200
2 people here. So we want to make sure that everyone has
3 the time to give their opinion to the Commissioners. I
4 appreciate that. Maurice Filson. Thank you, sir.
5 Please come on down to the microphone. Take your time.
6 You're doing fine. Thank you. Mr. Filson, if you would
7 please raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or
8 affirm that the testimony you're about to give will be
9 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

10 MR. FILSON: Yep.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. And would you
12 please state and spell your name for the record?

13 MR. FILSON: M-a-u-r-i-c-e, Maurice,
14 F-i-l-s-o-n, Filson.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Filson. Please
16 go ahead with your comments.

17 MR. FILSON: Well, I think I'm in the wrong
18 place at the wrong time but we're still here. I am an
19 old country kid. So whatever I might say I don't mean
20 it to be offensive. It's just country.

21 I heard Liberty's sob story on the expenses.
22 All of the things that they had to go through to
23 justify, and I put that in quotes, justify to charge us
24 more. Well, now here's my sob story. I'm retired,
25 social security, pension, just like most of these

1 brothers and sisters out here. My sob story is I called
2 the assessor the other day, found out that my house was
3 average. I said what do you mean average? She said it
4 needs a lot of work done on it. I can't afford to do
5 that work, because there's not enough money to go
6 around. If this increase goes in, including Walmart's
7 prices, the gas prices. My expenditures have shrunk.
8 And if it goes any higher, I don't know what I'll do.
9 Heat asphalt, I guess. Thank you very much.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Filson.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: If I may.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Filson, question for you.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Filson.

14 MR. FILSON: Yeah.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: I believe you said your
16 expenditures had shrunk. Did you mean they've increased
17 and you don't have sufficient funds to cover them?

18 MR. FILSON: Do what now, sir?

19 MR. WILLIAMS: If I heard you correctly, I
20 believe you said your expenditures had shrunk.

21 MR. FILSON: That's right.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: By that do you mean that you
23 don't have enough money to cover all of your bills?

24 MR. FILSON: It's getting that way, yes.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

1 MR. FILSON: My money, I'm not getting raises.
2 The government sees to that. But they vote themselves a
3 raise and all that does is cost us more money. I'm not
4 against Walmart. I go to them everyday. I'm not
5 against the gas. They get me to where I want to go.
6 But all of these things that are piling up on us. I
7 said that wrong. My money supply has shrunk and that's
8 what you caught me on.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

10 MR. FILSON: My money supply has shrunk. My
11 expenditures are increasing drastically just like these
12 people out here. I'm not complaining. It's just A, B,
13 C, D, E, F, G.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, sir.

15 MR. FILSON: Thank you, sir.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Filson.

17 MR. FILSON: Thank you.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Let's go to Scott Stutt,
19 please. I have the last name Stutt, S-t-u-t-t maybe.
20 Thank you, sir. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that
21 the testimony you're about to give will be the truth,
22 the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

23 MR. STUTT: Yes, sir.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please state and
25 spell your name for our court reporter.

1 MR. STUTT: Scott, S-c-o-t-t, Stutt,
2 S-t-u-t-t. I go along with everybody that's been ahead
3 of me, because all our funds. Like most of these people
4 out here, I'm on low income and Liberty is wanting to
5 raise our electric bills when they're already sky high.
6 We have to depend on what little we do have to either
7 make our med bills, our doctor bills or gas to get
8 around in. I don't see where it's going to come from.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Stutt. Was
10 there anything further you wanted to say?

11 MR. STUTT: No, sir.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: May I?

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Yes, Mr. Williams.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: I just want to make sure there
15 isn't anything else you want to say because from the
16 Commissioners' perspective, the only person they've
17 heard from is you and Mr. Filson.

18 MR. STUTT: That's who I'm going with.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: All right. Thank you.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Stutt. Charlie
21 McGrew. Thank you, sir. Come on down to the
22 microphone. I'll swear you in. Do you solemnly swear
23 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give will
24 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

25 MR. MCGREW: Yes.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you'd please
2 state and spell your name for the record.

3 MR. MCGREW: Charlie McGrew, C-h-a-r-l-i-e
4 M-c-G-r-e-w.

5 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead with your
6 comments.

7 MR. MCGREW: First off, you're going to hear a
8 lot smarter people and more profound statements than I'm
9 going to have. I've just got a couple of very simple
10 points. I'm just a simple taxpayer and citizen and I
11 don't understand. I'd like to make a couple of points.

12 Based on the current economic environment that
13 we're in, very low inflation, and actually the wholesale
14 cost of most energy is actually down in the last six
15 months. And a few other things. It's very difficult
16 for me to understand how a 30 or even 20 percent
17 increase is justified given the current economic
18 conditions.

19 I'd like to just quickly make to the
20 Commission Empire is kind of an anomaly in that they're
21 a utility, a for-profit utility, publicly traded and yet
22 they're subject to this Commission's regulations.

23 I would just like to submit that there's no
24 way that a publicly traded for-profit company can
25 guarantee a 10 percent profit. Other companies are not

1 guaranteed that. They've got that factored in to their
2 request. I would submit and I would just ask the
3 Commission don't reward them for bad decisions and pay
4 for those bad decisions.

5 And I would just cite a couple of examples of
6 that from what the previous Empire employee said.
7 Shutting down the coal plant, which necessitated
8 replacing it at a significant cost, and the wind farms
9 at \$2 billion or \$1 billion I think he said. Those are
10 bad decisions that they made and they should not be
11 rewarded for them. If they don't make a good profit, so
12 be it. Other publicly held companies have to deal with
13 that. That's what I've got to say. Any questions?

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. McGrew. Thank
15 you, sir. I appreciate you coming out.

16 MR. MCGREW: Thank you.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: Ron Petersen. Thank you, Mr.
18 Petersen. I'll swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or
19 affirm that the testimony you're about to give will be
20 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

21 MR. PETERSEN: Yes.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And please state
23 and spell your name for the court reporter.

24 MR. PETERSEN: Ron Petersen, R-o-n
25 P-e-t-e-r-s-e-n.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead with your
2 comments.

3 MR. PETERSEN: After Liberty's billing fiasco
4 last year, I am very surprised that they are wanting a
5 30 percent increase. On top of that, my meter wasn't
6 even read last month after I attended last month's
7 meeting. So I don't know when it will stop with
8 Liberty. They nickel and dime us with layer after layer
9 of charges. My bill was complex. I have nine line
10 items on my bill, one of which is a demand charge min 40
11 and a facility's charge both of which seem to cover
12 infrastructure cost to meet my peak of electricity
13 usage.

14 So of those nine line items, I do know one
15 thing that I'm paying for and that is Liberty's poor
16 planning in 2021. They patted themselves on the back
17 when they closed the Asbury plant early. Yay for us.
18 But due to the plant's inefficiencies is why they closed
19 it. All I know is that my electric bills went up 80
20 percent since that closure that may not have been
21 disclosed to you when they presented that idea to you.
22 But I will say this. All of us in this room would love
23 to have those inefficiencies back in play if that meant
24 our bills would go down by half. If green energy is so
25 great, then why have our bills nearly doubled. Nobody

1 explains that to us.

2 And do I really have to ask who thought it was
3 a great idea to build wind farms in ice storm areas of
4 the country? Completely -- It works in Canada. They
5 don't get ice storms up in Canada where the parent
6 company is.

7 Do they think that wind turbines will turn
8 when they're loaded with six tons of ice? I don't think
9 so. Engineers used to plan for worst-case scenarios.
10 Engineers of days gone by would plan for worst-case
11 scenarios. They design infrastructure for that. And
12 apparently Liberty did not do that with their wind farm
13 and solar arrays.

14 Now, the crux of this and all the public
15 frustration I feel is a cultural difference, stemming
16 from a cultural difference. I'm not a sociologist, but
17 I've traveled the world enough to know a few things
18 about different countries and different cultures and
19 different kinds of people. I've been to Canada. I
20 assure you that there's major differences between
21 Canadian culture and American culture. Canadian ESG
22 policy may work great in Canada. It may work great with
23 Algonquin Power, the parent company of Liberty or Empire
24 as they're now saying today, but it doesn't work in the
25 US.

1 Algonquin is more concerned about carbon
2 emissions, biodiversity, climate change and woke DEI
3 policies than they are for the people in this room. It
4 is obvious and it must end, and I hope that you can have
5 the backbone to stop it. The hardships on the public
6 and business owners are real and they want to make it
7 worse.

8 Algonquin needs to understand the Canadian ESG
9 and business policy just don't work in the heartland.
10 I'm not sure how effective these townhall meetings are
11 except to make everyone feel good while more and more
12 price hikes are levied against us anyway. It's like the
13 gentleman said before, they'll ask for 50 and hope they
14 get 40, or 90, whatever your number was, they'll go this
15 high hoping they're here when really the fair amount is
16 down here for us. It's just this game that's played,
17 and everybody just kind of nods.

18 I think that -- excuse me. Let me turn to the
19 PSC for a minute. I'm trying to understand how the
20 Commission allowed a utility to implement a foreign
21 government's ESG policy on Missourians. Did anybody
22 there look at these proposed closures and things and go
23 hey, you guys are killing the coal plant. It's really
24 going to raise the rate on everybody. It seems like
25 nobody said that. It just like got the nod.

1 You know, you guys are experts too. You know.
2 You guys are engineers. You guys understand power
3 generation. You know what is a very expensive
4 generation, what's a lower cost generation. You know
5 that. I don't know why you've allowed perfectly fine
6 coal plants to be closed. Liberty has zero coal plants.

7 Also, too, the PSC should link rate increases
8 to --

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Sir, I'm sorry. I'm going to
10 need you to wrap up. Thank you. You can go ahead and
11 finish your thought.

12 MR. PETERSEN: I'm done. I just have one more
13 paragraph. That's fine.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: I do have a question.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Yes, Mr. Williams.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: You referred to last year's
17 billing fiasco. What were you referring to?

18 MR. PETERSEN: Well, wow. I don't have the
19 bills. I brought the bills last time. We got nine
20 bills in one month. Sometimes -- One time I got four
21 bills in one day. They were all the same. Some people
22 here got bills with zero. Some people got bills with
23 like \$3,000. It was crazy.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Was that just like one month or
25 was it for a period of time, long period of time?

1 MR. PETERSEN: In my case it was one month.
2 So I just think there needs to be a shared sacrifice if
3 there's going to be rate increases. Liberty needs to
4 have some layoffs. They need to freeze salaries. They
5 need to have a hiring freeze or something. We've all
6 been making sacrifices. We don't see them making
7 sacrifices, not at all.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Mr. Williams,
9 are there any other questions?

10 MR. WILLIAMS: That was it. Thank you.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate that.
12 Steve Brown, please. Steve Brown. Thank you, sir.
13 Please make your way to a microphone. Thank you, sir.
14 I'll go ahead and swear you in real quick. Do you
15 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're about
16 to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing
17 but the truth?

18 MR. BROWN: Yes, I do.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you would
20 please state and spell your name for the record.

21 MR. BROWN: Steve Brown, S-t-e-v-e B-r-o-w-n.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please go
23 ahead with your comments.

24 MR. BROWN: I'll try to make this very short.
25 I'm kind of speaking for myself on everything here,

1 because I figured up my bills for the last year. And I
2 used like 31,134 kilowatts of electricity. That's an
3 average of 2,395 a month. And my total bills were -- it
4 averaged about 357 a month. But my peak usage month was
5 probably January. I got it highlighted here. That was
6 5,400 kilowatts. We figure these rates on 1,000
7 kilowatts or 1,500 kilowatts and say okay, we're going
8 to charge people 31, 38, whatever it is, dollars more a
9 month. Well, you know, I figured it up. I'm not on a
10 level pay. I believe in paying as you go. But my bill
11 is -- that month if we have another one just like that
12 next year, my bill is going to go up 45 percent or 44
13 percent. That's almost half or 50 percent.

14 So, you know, I just think -- well, I'm just
15 like everybody else. I feel like I'm being ripped off,
16 robbed. When they ask for that big of a raise, you
17 know, 33 percent, whatever it is, 30 percent knowing
18 they'll probably get 15. I've been to these meetings
19 before, not Liberty meetings but water meetings, in the
20 past. It seemed like every time whatever they asked for
21 they got half of it. And you know, the Public Service
22 Commission is just too lenient on these people.

23 What was I going to say on this? They ask for
24 \$152.8 million and now the proposal is \$121.8 million.
25 \$31 million less. Half of that is how much? Half of

1 152. Why couldn't we give them half of that or less. I
2 go along with what the last guy said. I can't remember
3 exactly what it was now. I'm sorry.

4 I got this thing out in front there it says
5 utility cost of living index. Utilities in the Joplin
6 metro area are 5.2 percent more expensive than the
7 Missouri state average. Is that true?

8 Okay. Well, this part of the country --

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Sir.

10 MR. BROWN: I'll hurry up. But this part of
11 the country, they say inflation is going down. Well, in
12 this part of the country in the Midwest it's not. I
13 don't know whether everybody else has noticed it or not,
14 but I haven't been paying any less for gas or any less
15 for groceries or any less for anything else. Everything
16 is still going up or staying the same. So I don't know
17 how that can justify that kind of increase. That's all
18 I have to say. Thank you for listening.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Brown. Are
20 there any questions? No. Thank you, sir. Next I have
21 Chuck Crandon, Chuck Crandon. Okay. I'll circle back
22 around to Mr. Crandon. David. Yes. Mr. Balaun.

23 MR. BALAUN: Yes, that's right.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: I'll swear you in. Do you
25 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're about

1 to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing
2 but the truth?

3 MR. BALAUN: I do.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please state
5 and spell your name for the record.

6 MR. BALAUN: David Balaun. That's D-a-v-i-d
7 B-a-l-a-u-n.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Balaun. Go
9 ahead and give your comments to the Commissioners.

10 MR. BALAUN: I'll try to be brief because a
11 lot of what I have to say has already been said before.
12 So I'm going to echo some of the things that the other
13 gentlemen have said. For one thing, you know, as you
14 know, Liberty is a publicly traded company owned by
15 people in Canada and elsewhere. And they have an
16 obligation to them to produce profits, which I
17 understand.

18 There's also a monopoly. So we don't have an
19 option to go to somebody else for our power. We have to
20 go through them. And so when we pay for their green
21 energy agendas and this other stuff and that's passed on
22 to us their bad decisions, we rely on you, the Public
23 Service Commission, to act and to help protect us as
24 they do have a monopoly. As I understand it, that's
25 your obligation and goal is to do that.

1 So I would ask you to protect us from these
2 people. I think that, you know, they're charging us for
3 their agenda. You can see that in the Asbury plant
4 closure. You can see that in the green energy agenda
5 that they've implemented here. You can see that in the
6 government census that they collect. We install solar
7 on our roof and then they pay us next to nothing for the
8 power that they get from us while we pay to maintain
9 their generation capacity and then we take the loss at
10 the end when we pay off the loan and we have to replace
11 our roof until that panel comes down.

12 And so I think just really what I would ask is
13 that you help us protect us from that monopoly. That's
14 really all I had to say.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Balaun. I
16 appreciate that. Are there any questions for
17 Mr. Balaun? No. Thank you. I appreciate you coming
18 down to give your comments tonight. Next we have Rob
19 Brown. Thank you, Mr. Brown. Come on down. I will
20 swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
21 testimony you're about to give will be the truth, the
22 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

23 MR. BROWN: Yes.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And if you would
25 please state and spell your name for the record.

1 MR. BROWN: It's Rob Brown. Common spelling
2 R-o-b B-r-o-w-n.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir, and please go
4 ahead and give your comments to the Commissioners.

5 MR. BROWN: So you had asked about a billing.
6 There has been some commentary about a billing fiasco.
7 We are originally from this area. We moved away. We
8 most recently a couple years ago moved back from Texas,
9 constructed the house, moved last November. I finally
10 did receive a bill in May. It transferred service from
11 the house that we were in to the new home. Didn't see a
12 bill in November. Didn't see one in December. January,
13 February, March. April got an email hey, you got a
14 bill. It was quite a bit of money, several hundred
15 dollars. So I called just to make sure. It was
16 supposed to be paid. I had it set up for auto payment,
17 all that kind of stuff. I know you've had hearings on
18 all of that. Just to make sure that you understand the
19 lack of management of Liberty. That bill did not get
20 auto paid. So I called to make sure there weren't going
21 to be issues with my power getting shut off and all that
22 kind of stuff. Finally in May the auto pay went
23 through.

24 So there is a challenge with Liberty managing
25 their own business. Liberty original asked for 15.99, a

1 16 percent increase last November I believe it was.
2 They amended that to basically the 30 percent that
3 they're asking for now under the guise that there was a
4 technical snafu basically with the tariff filing. There
5 is no way that a company the size of Liberty
6 understanding the regulation and what they need to go
7 through in order to get the increase would have some
8 kind of a technical snafu with the tariff. They had an
9 oh my moment and said we didn't ask for enough and they
10 amended the increase, my personal opinion. There's no
11 way -- if they can't manage their billing, they can't
12 manage the amount of increase that they're asking for,
13 at a maximum if I were on the Commission, I would say
14 that's all you're getting was your original ask. I
15 would go no further than that.

16 All of this started in January of 2017. They
17 talked about all the green stuff. They're right.
18 January 2017, Liberty, Algonquin operating as Liberty
19 purchased Empire. October of that year they said Asbury
20 is out of here, it's a coal plant, because they're
21 green. At the time I believe that retrofitting the
22 Asbury plant and upgrading it again to meet its
23 standards was going to cost \$20 million. That looks
24 like a pretty darn good investment now based on what
25 they're asking for.

1 They said part of the reason was they were
2 going to build wind turbines. Bad idea in this part of
3 the country. They were going to generate 800 megawatts
4 of power with those. That was subsequently reduced
5 through the Commission to 600. I don't know what North
6 Fork (phonetic spelling) is producing today. I couldn't
7 find that information. But I don't believe it's
8 anywhere near even 600 and I'm not sure it's anywhere
9 near what the former plant was producing. We paid to
10 have the old plant raised. That's part of our bill now
11 and we pay a customer charge. We pay about 35, 40, 45
12 bucks, depends on who's -- what the bill is before we
13 buy electricity.

14 So we've got a bill before we're even able to
15 operate our homes. So this has been in the making for
16 quite some time. Again, if I were on the Commission, I
17 would say all you're getting is what you originally
18 asked for at the most. There's no way that a company
19 that size should not be able to manage their capital
20 expenditures. I've worked for two Fortune 500
21 companies. Capital expenditures are a huge part of what
22 you budget for. You've got to know how much it's going
23 to cost to operate your business, how much it's going to
24 cost to maintain your business and what investment you
25 need to make based on your customer base, your markets

1 and your growth strategy. If they can't manage that, I
2 shouldn't have to pay for it and nobody in here should
3 have to pay for that either.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. I appreciate
5 your comments and we do have questions.

6 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Good evening. You said that
7 your first bill was in May.

8 MR. BROWN: Correct.

9 MR. VANDERGRIFF: When was your first bill
10 supposed to be?

11 MR. BROWN: I would anticipate that if I moved
12 in November I would see a bill in December. That's how
13 most monthly payments work as far as utilities are
14 concerned. Water, gas if you have it, internet, any
15 type of a bill.

16 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Thank you.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, I do have along the same
18 lines. What time frame are we talking about? Are we
19 talking about 2023, 2024, 2025?

20 MR. BROWN: When we moved?

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

22 MR. BROWN: November of '24. I received a
23 bill in May of '25. So three months ago -- two months
24 ago.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Brown. I
2 appreciate you coming to give our statement. Our next
3 name is Sue Doennig. Thank you. I apologize. Ms.
4 Doennig, please come on down. I'll swear you in. Do
5 you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're
6 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and
7 nothing but the truth?

8 MS. DOENNIG: Yes.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could
10 please state and spell your name for the record.

11 MS. DOENNIG: Sue, S-u-e, Doennig,
12 D-o-e-n-n-i-g.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Doennig.
14 Please go ahead and give your statement to the
15 Commissioners.

16 MS. DOENNIG: Thank you. I looked up some
17 facts like a lot of people did in here. A lot of us got
18 a cost of living raise of 2.5 percent. My 2.5 percent
19 went to my insurance for Medicare. Actually I paid more
20 than that. So my cost of living increase was nothing.

21 Inflation for June of this year, I looked this
22 up, was 2.7 percent. I've lost again. I also looked up
23 the investor utilities in Missouri. There are four
24 major ones. There are 40 co-ops and 55 public
25 utilities. So around 100 of them. Liberty serves 106

1 communities with just electricity.

2 One of the things that I noted was that we had
3 several increases in the last year for utilities.
4 Missouri Water gave us a rate increase of 17 percent,
5 Spire gave us an increase of 15 percent, and now they're
6 asking for 30 percent for Liberty.

7 I would ask the Commission to look at that and
8 see that we would have some maybe comparable rates that
9 would be reflective of some of the other raises that
10 were given to other utility companies.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate your
12 statement. I'm not hearing any questions. I appreciate
13 you coming down today to give us your opinions.

14 MS. DOENNIG: Thank you.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: The next name I have is Linda
16 Truluck. Thank you. Come on down and we will swear you
17 in. Alena Allen will be the next speaker. If they
18 would like to go ahead and come on down to wait at the
19 other microphone it might help us move to get to
20 everyone's comments a little bit better.

21 Ms. Truluck, let me swear you in. Do you
22 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're about
23 to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing
24 but the truth?

25 MS. TRULUCK: Yes.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, ma'am. If you
2 would please state and spell your name for the court
3 reporter.

4 MS. TRULUCK: Okay. Linda, L-i-n-d-a,
5 Truluck, T-r-u-l-u-c-k.

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, ma'am. If you
7 would please give your comments to the Commissioners.

8 MS. TRULUCK: Okay. I'm a recent widow. I
9 only have one income. I'm also disabled. And I'm just
10 trying desperately to hold on to my home. Since my
11 husband passed, it's been now two years, everything,
12 everything has gone up: The homeowner's insurance, car
13 insurance, this. Part of my problem -- The reason I'm
14 breathing hard, I have a respiratory problem. So bear
15 with me, please.

16 And there's things in my home that I have to
17 have in order to breathe better. I tried to shut those
18 off. I already live with my thermostat at 79 and in the
19 winter at 60. Very difficult, very difficult. Not only
20 that, I think it's very unjust that Liberty wants to
21 raise but they don't want to cut any of their excess
22 spending.

23 I know I have a very close family member, I
24 won't mention names, who works for them. Two years ago
25 they sent her to Arizona for a meeting. They stayed at

1 a 5-star hotel. The meeting was like three days but
2 they were there for a whole week.

3 During that time, they had a pool party, they
4 went -- Liberty is paying for all this -- to go
5 dunebuggying, they ate at fancy restaurants, and like I
6 said before, they stayed at a 5-star hotel. That's not
7 right. Not only that, from my good source, one of the
8 managers in Canada was bragging that her bonus was
9 \$10,000 during that year. The person I'm talking about
10 gets 3,000 plus is making a very, very, very good wage.
11 They have excellent benefits as well and a good
12 excellent retirement. We are paying for all that and
13 it's not right.

14 Three years ago my husband was ill. They talk
15 about how they work with you. Liberty does not work
16 with you. My husband was ill. He was in the hospital.
17 I got my electric bill. It was \$700. I immediately
18 called them and said something is wrong, because I'm not
19 even home because I'd been spending a lot of time at the
20 hospital. They supposedly came out and checked my
21 meter, said everything was fine. I had to pay an
22 electrician to come out. They found absolutely nothing
23 wrong. I didn't change a thing. The following month
24 went to 400, the following month down to three and then
25 finally went back down to my normal \$150. So where is

1 my refund, because nobody could ever find anything
2 wrong. That's all I have to say.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Truluck. I
4 appreciate you coming down to give us your thoughts. We
5 do have questions for you. Go ahead, Mr. Vandergriff.

6 MR. VANDERGRIFF: You mentioned that there was
7 a conference in Arizona. Can you tell me the time frame
8 that was in?

9 MS. TRULUCK: About three years ago.

10 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Three years ago. All right.

11 MS. TRULUCK: Because my husband has been dead
12 two. I'm just kind of guessing in that ballpark.

13 MR. VANDERGRIFF: All right. And you said
14 that you had a \$700 bill just now.

15 MS. TRULUCK: Uh-huh.

16 MR. VANDERGRIFF: You spoke with Empire about
17 that bill. And is it fair to say that that wasn't
18 resolved?

19 MS. TRULUCK: No, it never was. I just paid
20 it, because my husband, like I said, was in the hospital
21 and he was working but then he was on disability. It
22 was a long-term thing going on. So I had to take -- his
23 disability wasn't enough. So I had to take out of our
24 savings just to pay that ridiculous bill. I have a
25 1,600 foot home. Like I told you, I live in the dark as

1 it is. I have a nightlight in the kitchen. I have one
2 in the bathroom. That's it. I still pay \$172 a month.

3 MR. VANDERGRIFF: So when you spoke to the
4 company, did anyone inform you of your ability to
5 request an informal complaint?

6 MS. TRULUCK: No.

7 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Are you aware of your right
8 to?

9 MS. TRULUCK: To be honest, no. At the time I
10 was very concerned about what was going on with my
11 husband because it was very -- a terminal illness. So
12 the furthest thing from my mind. I just knew that there
13 was something wrong because I hadn't changed anything
14 and I didn't have time, or I can't say the patience I
15 guess, to deal with that at that time.

16 MR. VANDERGRIFF: I understand. Thank you.

17 MS. TRULUCK: Sure.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Truluck, for
19 coming down. Alena Allen. Thank you, ma'am. The next
20 name we have will be Dwayne Miller. If Mr. Miller could
21 start making his way to another microphone. Alena
22 Allen. I'll swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or
23 affirm that the testimony you're about to give will be
24 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

25 MS. ALLEN: I do.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you would
2 please state and spell your name for the record.

3 MS. ALLEN: Alena Allen, A-l-e-n-a, last name
4 Allen, A-l-l-e-n.

5 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Allen. I
6 appreciate that. Would you please go ahead and give
7 your comments to the Commissioners.

8 MS. ALLEN: I kind of echo everything
9 everybody is saying. I advocate for a lot of the
10 elderly in here. I work in health care and I was a
11 clinical in-service navigator for Medicare.

12 Liberty talks about these programs, their
13 winterizing programs or their cost programs to help
14 people, but people are already in poverty. And all
15 these hoops and hurdles that we have to jump through to
16 try to get people qualified for these programs, keyword
17 qualified. The threshold being, what, \$900 or less.
18 Cost of living, you can't even afford to live on \$900 or
19 less.

20 Food, everything. You know how many people I
21 speak with everyday that I hear this in my job asking
22 for help with bills or this or that. Not just their
23 electricity but their health care. Do you know how many
24 people sit there and ask me do I not get my
25 prescriptions, do I not eat, because I can't afford to

1 pay my electric bill. Shame on you, Liberty.

2 You guys say we have these programs. I try to
3 help people get on programs, and the months that it
4 takes to get people qualified is ridiculous. Shame on
5 you-ins.

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Are there any
7 questions for Ms. Allen? Hearing none. We'll go ahead
8 and call Dwayne Miller. Thank you, Mr. Miller. Our
9 next name is Rita Anderson. Sorry about the
10 mispronunciation.

11 MS. ANDERSON: It's Rita.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Oh, Rita. Thank you. I'm not
13 reading that correctly. You'll be next. Right after
14 that we'll have Robert Schuchmann. Back to Dwayne
15 Miller. Mr. Miller, let me swear you in. Do you
16 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're about
17 to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing
18 but the truth?

19 MR. MILLER: I do.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Miller. If you
21 would please state and spell your name for the record.

22 MR. MILLER: Dwayne Miller, D-w-a-y-n-e
23 M-i-l-l-e-r.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Miller. Please
25 go ahead with your comments.

1 MR. MILLER: I want to thank you for letting
2 us express our thoughts and stuff. Basically reasonable
3 rates can be and are expected with any kind of
4 servicing, but my thoughts are the following: 21 years
5 up until January I was living in McDonald County on
6 New-Mac Electricity out in the country, and in '04 we
7 moved there and the rate was 13 cents kilowatt. I'm
8 talking the base rate, 600 kilowatt hours. Now it's
9 16.8, and that amounts to a 29 percent increase over 21
10 years which is 1.39 percent.

11 Now, if rural electric that goes over the
12 mountains and the hills and the dales of McDonald County
13 with three or four customers per mile can keep their
14 rates down versus cities that have 50, 60 venues per
15 mile, I don't understand.

16 Liberty area, Joplin is 24.8 percent or 60 to
17 85 years old, median income is 48,000, poverty is 18
18 percent. Neosho, 18 percent or 60 to 85 year olds,
19 talking mostly on fixed incomes. Median income now in
20 Neosho is 54,000, poverty is 16 percent.

21 Mr. Christopher Walters gave testimony to the
22 Commission that electric bills should be, according to
23 S&P, 2 percent of the median income for customers.
24 Joplin should be \$80 a month more or less and Neosho
25 would be \$90 a month with respect to their median

1 income.

2 Liberty is asking small kilowatt users for
3 \$112 a month. Stated that capital -- Mr. Walters stated
4 that capital investments might need elevated but have to
5 be kept reasonable to maintain rates consumers can
6 afford with respect to this income. In the fall of '24,
7 2024, they mentioned a 15 percent rate hike or it could
8 30. But in November they raised it to 19 percent. Then
9 in February it needed a 39 percent according to their
10 holdout just for 600 kilowatt hours or less. This up
11 and more up by the company leads one to suspect no one
12 is really able to accurately predict what the company
13 needs for the future.

14 In the notice mailed out, they said
15 residential customers' increase will be 13 to \$16, but
16 when you look at 600 kilowatt users it's \$31. So nobody
17 is keeping track.

18 Why the increase? Well, in March '25, Liberty
19 Energy and Electric, whatever, bought IMG Company for
20 \$19 million, and then in May they spent \$160 million
21 buying PEC. I believe it's a company in Singapore which
22 had a revenue of 391 million. Interesting that the
23 officers of Liberty received \$15.5 million in
24 compensation last year. 8.8 million of that was in
25 stock options. The stock in June of '24 was 24.69 a

1 share. It is now \$11.49. Stock analysts, 11 of them,
2 covering Liberty expected over the next 12 months the
3 stock will be 17.50, up 44 percent, which means these
4 five officers are going to reap \$4.6 million in extra
5 compensation.

6 Liberty claims increases are due to high
7 demand to boost capacity in Joplin and Branson for
8 security information system to replace poles which will
9 most benefit the commercial. They want to improve
10 infrastructure, but in 2011 we know what happened to
11 Joplin with the tornado. Most of the stuff is fairly
12 new, the infrastructure in Joplin.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Miller, I need you to wrap
14 it up. Okay. Thank you.

15 MR. MILLER: Wow. Okay. Eight board members
16 received \$1,900,249 a year which that's 61,000 per
17 quarterly median or 12 percent more than the median
18 income and they're invested -- been investing money in
19 oil fields and everything else, natural gas. Not
20 electricity. Thank you.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Miller. I
22 don't see any questions. I do hate to rush you along,
23 but we do have other witnesses here we want to try and
24 get to. Rita Anderson.

25 MS. ANDERSON: Yes.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Anderson, do you solemnly
2 swear or affirm that the testimony you're about to give
3 will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
4 truth?

5 MS. ANDERSON: Yes. And that's R-i-t-a,
6 Anderson, A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n.

7 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, ma'am. Please go
8 ahead with your comments.

9 MS. ANDERSON: Because you weren't here
10 earlier, a lot of information that the public gave you
11 never got to hear and they're not -- we think you heard
12 it but because now we know you did not. There are so
13 many facts that you missed because people did not stay.
14 This room was completely full and we had standing room
15 only at one point.

16 I'm a 74-year-old widow. I live now in an
17 apartment because I sold my home when I lost my husband.
18 My temperature this winter in my apartment was set on 60
19 degrees. It is now set on 83 degrees just to be able to
20 make my utilities with all of the other increases that I
21 have.

22 As you know, as everyone stated, our Insurance
23 Commission has allowed huge increases in our car
24 insurances, new tax increases. I came from a generation
25 that we did not ask for assistance. So I have no

1 assistance in any way, shape or form. When they talk
2 about programs available for people with low incomes,
3 this generation has a great deal of problems asking. We
4 depend on you to protect us.

5 These increases are ridiculous. Their CEO in
6 2023, made \$5.6 million, 5.6. In '24, he made \$5.836
7 million in one year, an increase of over \$236,000.
8 \$236,000 would probably supplement the income of 40
9 percent of the people in this room. Can you imagine?
10 And he gets it and he goes to a meeting four or five
11 times a year and you want us to continue to pay these
12 ridiculous amounts of money when we're surviving.
13 That's all we're doing is surviving.

14 I personally worked until I was 67 so that I
15 could get my maximum social security. One year later I
16 lost my husband. So I lost all my social security. I
17 have his. This happens -- In this room there's probably
18 between widows and widowers that our incomes get slashed
19 continually because of these factors but you never cut
20 anything.

21 This person who has sat here with a stone face
22 looking at us knowing the incomes his people make on the
23 executive amount, I don't know how he can look at us
24 with a straight face and not feel like he could crawl
25 under that table. It is so unfair. And we are so

1 depending on you to represent us to stop this nonsense.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate that,
3 Ms. Anderson. I do want to correct the record.
4 Normally the Commissioners and myself, we don't really
5 interact with the witnesses at the local public
6 hearings. As I said, the Commissioners still need to
7 make their evidentiary hearing so they aren't actually
8 able to answer questions. I don't think this impacts
9 the case though. This is Mr. Vandergriff. He works for
10 the Commission Staff. They are a nonpartisan staff and
11 they advise the Commission. They're one of the parties
12 with the case.

13 The gentleman sitting next to him is
14 Mr. Williams. He's with the Office of Public Counsel.
15 They represent the public.

16 MS. ANDERSON: We knew he was on our behalf,
17 but we were under the understanding because he was
18 sitting with representatives from Empire that he was
19 also a representative. There were two people answering
20 the questions.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: I just wanted to make sure,
22 and all of three of those parties will be answering the
23 questions at the Q&A, but everyone up here is generally
24 trying to maybe keep a blank facial expression because
25 this is, in effect, a court case. So we're taking in

1 the testimony and evidence but it's difficult for us too
2 to hear the stories and really not be able to give the
3 empathy that we would outside this room.

4 MS. ANDERSON: Well, I don't know how many of
5 us misunderstood that he was not a representative of
6 Empire.

7 JUDGE HATCHER: No, I certainly understand.

8 MS. ANDERSON: I know I personally did and I
9 thought how can you listen to these ridiculous things
10 and stay.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: I understand, but we need to
12 go to the other witnesses.

13 MS. ANDERSON: Thank you.

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Anderson.
15 Robert Schuchmann.

16 MR. SCHUCHMANN: Yes.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: Okay. And the next witness
18 we'll have is Emily Wilson. Back to Robert Schuchmann.
19 Let me swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm
20 that the testimony you're about to give will be the
21 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

22 MR. SCHUCHMANN: I do.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. If you would
24 please state and spell your name for the record.

25 MR. SCHUCHMANN: Robert Schuchmann,

1 R-o-b-e-r-t S-c-h-u-c-h-m-a-n-n.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And I apologize
3 for my mispronunciation.

4 MR. SCHUCHMANN: It's alright. I've had
5 worse.

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Schuchmann, please go
7 ahead and give us your comments.

8 MR. SCHUCHMANN: I'm a retired team leader and
9 engineer for General Electric for this four-state area.
10 I was responsible for hundreds of millions of dollars
11 worth of equipment in the hospitals, high-end equipment.
12 Most people don't realize that the utility is
13 responsible for mostly power quantity and they're just
14 now getting into a little power quality and they have a
15 loophole that they can average it within 24 hours.

16 So when you have your electronic devices go
17 out in your house, it's usually because of the brownouts
18 and the distortions. That is a fact because I have
19 i-Sense monitors and monitoring equipment over the whole
20 four-state area. So I know exactly what the power is
21 doing. And the power was very, very bad before the
22 tornado. So bad that every hospital had to have a UPS
23 in order to get their equipment running or it would be
24 destroyed.

25 And when I would call Empire and talk to them,

1 they say yeah, yeah, and I would get them to -- I would
2 try to get them to do maintenance to trim power limbs,
3 change out transformers and stuff. There was a lot of
4 stuff. People don't realize the tornado power wise was
5 the best thing that happened to us because it got rid of
6 all the tree limbs they never would take care of. You
7 never saw TreeRight anywhere before the tornado hardly.
8 In fact, I had a limb on my neighbors that I warned them
9 about. And when we had that snowstorm, the tree fell on
10 that power line, my block was without power for a week.
11 Half my block lived with me for a week. We were the
12 last ones to get power.

13 So if you can't make money, if you can't get
14 more money, then one of the things you need to do is be
15 more responsible with your costs and they've not been
16 good stewards with the costs. Overcompensation for
17 executives. The windmills and Asbury power plant were
18 just politically motivated green energy decisions that
19 didn't make sense. They would never pay for themselves.
20 Right now TreeRight this year is the first time you can
21 see a TreeRight truck out doing anything anywhere. But
22 they're not even making sense. They're going by a list
23 in their order and when it's raining and they should
24 just go on a hard streak and trim limbs and do repairs,
25 they're driving in people's yards such as mine cutting

1 4-inch ruts. When you say just move on to the next one,
2 come back later, they don't even do anything that makes
3 sense. So they're increasing my cost.

4 Liberty has not engaged in the virtual net
5 metering. So they're not saving me any money. I'm
6 generating enough power for both my house and my farm
7 but they're only allowing me to use it on my farm. So
8 you think I'm going to turn a light off now to save,
9 because you're only giving me three cents back and
10 you're going to charge me 15, 25 cents for my power. So
11 you're not giving me anything for mine and then -- so
12 I'm just going to leave my lights on. I'm just going to
13 burn it up. I'm not going to give it back to you for
14 nothing. But you should allow me to use that on my
15 house. I get it on the same bill. That's not even
16 right.

17 And then if you have a transformer blow, you
18 warned them hey, there's a transformer that's about to
19 blow or it blew, what shows up? Four trucks, a dump
20 truck, a backhoe and two trucks and only one guy that's
21 working. The other guys are getting double, triple
22 time. So you're not managing your costs well. You
23 don't deserve a raise. In fact, you deserve to just
24 break even. So if you can't get your costs in, then
25 don't push your exorbitant bad decisions off on the

1 consumers. It's not even fair.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Sir, I'm sorry. We've reached
3 our time. Was that your last thought? Okay. Are there
4 any questions? I don't see any questions. Thank you,
5 Mr. Schuchmann. Emily Wilson. Come on down, Ms.
6 Wilson. The name I have after that is Gary Powers and
7 then Kay Niel Pugh (phonetic spelling.) Ms. Wilson, let
8 me swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that
9 the testimony you're about to give will be the truth,
10 the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

11 MS. WILSON: Yes.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please state and
13 spell your name for the record.

14 MS. WILSON: Sure. It's Emily Wilson,
15 E-m-i-l-y W-i-l-s-o-n.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Wilson. Please
17 go ahead with your comments.

18 MS. WILSON: So I can't say speak to the
19 intent of all of the parties involved, but I do ask as a
20 consumer that the Commission ensure that the rate
21 increase is comparable to what the surrounding other
22 utility companies are asking for. It does not make
23 sense in my mind for us to have to compensate a cost
24 that should have been involved in a planning. At least
25 to in my mind it should have been involved in the

1 company's planning for their infrastructure and that
2 shouldn't be a burden of us as consumers. So again, I
3 just would ask that the Commission ensure that the rate
4 increase is comparable to what the surrounding areas
5 from other companies are asking for as well. Thank you.

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Wilson. I
7 appreciate that. Seeing no questions. We'll move on to
8 Mr. Powers.

9 MR. POWERS: Gary Powers, G-a-r-y P-o-w-e-r-s.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Let me swear
11 you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
12 testimony you're about to give will be the truth, the
13 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

14 MR. POWERS: Absolutely.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please go
16 ahead with your comments.

17 MR. POWERS: Well, here's my thoughts on it.
18 I'm 76 years old. I'm not really worried about making a
19 lot of money. When you're older, you cannot generate
20 the money that you was when you was 40. So my idea is
21 to save money.

22 I have four accounts for years. I'm a second
23 generation business owner. In the last six years, both
24 of my businesses have went up two and a half times.
25 About four or five years ago I went to a meeting. An

1 engineer from Empire said I want to look at your bills
2 and your kilowatts and everything. You know what they
3 found out? I use less kilowatts as I get older. I'm
4 still working. It was from rate increases.

5 Now, here's what I think. I absolutely have
6 no -- I might be wrong, but when I see smoke I think
7 there's fire. I think the lobbyists are paying off the
8 utility commission. Because my thoughts are, and I
9 don't like to use this term, but I think the utility
10 commission has raped the customers. And I've seen
11 increases. I've been here all my life. And the only
12 increase I've seen where they would not give it to
13 Liberty was about five or six years ago. That's all
14 I've got to say.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Powers. I
16 appreciate your comments. Next we have Kay Niel Pugh.
17 After that, Max Myers. Kay Niel I think it is P-u-g-h,
18 Pugh. Sir, can I get your name?

19 MR. MYERS: Max Myers.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Myers, let's go ahead and
21 we'll swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm
22 that the testimony you're about to give will be the
23 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

24 MR. MYERS: I do.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. If you would

1 state and spell your name for our court reporter.

2 MR. MYERS: Max Myers. It's M-a-x M-y-e-r-s.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please go
4 ahead with your comments.

5 MR. MYERS: All right. Well, I just -- It's
6 come to my attention that this is probably the poorest
7 managed outfit I have ever seen and everything that I'm
8 hearing tonight just goes to prove that. I did a little
9 research on my own.

10 When these boys came to town, they built the
11 Riverton and the State Line plants three terawatts of
12 electricity. Our rates went up 10 percent. Then they
13 started off on the -- they did Golden City, Galesburg,
14 Mindenmines at a cost of \$1 billion, which I heard
15 tonight apparently they got carbon credits for half of
16 that. And I would say that maybe the auditor gal that
17 was here should see what happened to the money that they
18 got from selling those carbon credits because it came
19 out that they only paid half a billion dollars to build
20 all the windmills. That looks like that might have just
21 slipped through the cracks there. But anyway, that was
22 600 megawatts.

23 And now to pay for that they're wanting a 40
24 percent increase to get 600 megawatts and they got three
25 terawatts for a 10 percent increase back in the day.

1 Their customer service has been terrible. I can't say
2 that I've had any problem with them other than you can't
3 -- until recently you couldn't really get on the website
4 to pay your bill because you couldn't find out who and
5 where.

6 And also it came out today that they've
7 changed the top management, which I think is a good
8 thing. I hope that that improves somewhat for them.
9 Also I heard about the -- I did this research. I wasn't
10 sure it was right so I wasn't going to say anything, but
11 it came up that a year ago they were selling for \$24 a
12 share. Now they're down to \$11 a share. Their earnings
13 per share last year was 12 cents, not a dollar which
14 would be 10 percent. It was 1 percent is what they
15 earned last year. Now they're wanting us to make up
16 that difference so they can get their 10 percent. And
17 that just -- I don't know. I think maybe these boys
18 ought to just go on down the line, let's get a new
19 outfit in here to run this.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Myers. I don't
21 see any questions. I appreciate you coming down to
22 participate tonight. The next names we have on the list
23 are Dustin DeMier. Thank you. And John Ockert. I'm
24 reading O-c-k-e-r-t. Thank you, sir. We'll catch up
25 with you in just a second. Dustin DeMier. Thank you.

1 Let me go ahead and swear you in. Do you solemnly swear
2 or affirm that the testimony you're about to give will
3 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

4 MR. DeMIER: Yes.

5 JUDGE HATCHER: If you would please state and
6 spell your name for our court reporter.

7 MR. DeMIER: Dustin DeMier. That's
8 D-u-s-t-i-n D-e-M-i-e-r.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could
10 please go ahead and give your comments to the
11 Commissioners.

12 MR. DeMIER: Okay. First off, Ms. Doennig, we
13 got a 3 percent raise every year, 3 percent even during
14 2021, 2022, when interest rates were, it was real high.
15 We only got a 3 percent. It was a joke, it was just a
16 joke. Currently I've got a problem. I think we've got
17 a weak Missouri Public Service Commission council as
18 they can't even remember when the last time they said no
19 to Liberty Electric rate increase proposal as outlined
20 in the question and answer segment.

21 If and when the Missouri Public Service
22 Commission council accepts Liberty's Electric outlandish
23 39 percent rate increase, at that point we customers,
24 we're getting robbed, 100 percent getting robbed by
25 Liberty Electric because Liberty Electric cannot even

1 offer its customers a reliable billing program. I have
2 been experiencing power outages, irregular billing and
3 piss poor customer service from Liberty Electric.

4 Once the weak Missouri Public Service
5 Commission council passes the 39 percent rate increase,
6 at that point we need competition. We need to be able
7 to choose who our electric provider is. So we need
8 competition. So Mr. Coleman, Mr. Kolkmeyer who is
9 listening to this, one more time, we need competition.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. DeMier. We do
11 have a question from Mr. Williams.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, I do. Would you elaborate
13 more on the billing issues you referenced?

14 MR. DeMIER: Okay. So I own a house,
15 2-bedroom house. About two years ago, so I was on
16 budget billing. My electric bill was \$70 a month and
17 then it jumped to 120 after they redid my budget
18 billing. Called in many times. Said how on earth can I
19 be using that much kilowatts. So we went through it.
20 We analyzed month by month by month. I spent hours on
21 the phone. So they ended up giving me a credit back.
22 So I got a credit of \$500. So I was like well, all
23 right, we'll go ahead and apply that credit. Well, that
24 credit never got served to my bill so I had to call in
25 again. Called in about three different times, talked to

1 three different agents. Finally I got that credit to be
2 able to be applied to my account which has only been
3 applied about three months ago. So right now I'm only
4 paying \$30 a month but I'm using that \$500 credit. I
5 wanted to go ahead and tap into that. They finally did
6 get to that but it was just -- it took forever for me to
7 get an answer and for me to get a resolution to my
8 issue.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: You said forever. What time
10 period are you talking about? Months, days, weeks,
11 years?

12 MR. DeMIER: Well, specifically are you
13 talking about when I called in multiple times?

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Start from the beginning and
15 just give me a time frame about what happened when.

16 MR. DeMIER: So it was approximately '20 --
17 about 2023 is when my bill changed. So it jumped from
18 70 to about \$120.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: When in 2023 roughly?

20 MR. DeMIER: So I'm going to have to refer
21 you. I'd have to get my exact bills if we're going to
22 get technical. I can log into my account and I can show
23 you.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Well, was it summer? Was it
25 spring? Was it fall?

1 MR. DeMIER: No. My budget billing ends in
2 October. It would have been October whenever I inquired
3 about my budget billing increase. So as far as time
4 frames goes, I can provide you bills and show that to
5 you.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Roughly when did you get
7 resolution that you were satisfied with?

8 MR. DeMIER: That was approximately maybe
9 approximately about four months ago I finally got to the
10 bottom of it.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

12 MR. DeMIER: Yeah.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. And please go
14 ahead and tell me your last name.

15 MR. OCKERT: John Ockert.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Ockert. Thank you.

17 MR. OCKERT: Yes, sir.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Let me swear you in. Do you
19 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you're about
20 to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing
21 but the truth?

22 MR. OCKERT: Yes, sir.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Ockert. Please
24 go ahead and give your statement to the Commissioners.

25 MR. OCKERT: My name is John Ockert. I'm a

1 citizen of Joplin. I would agree with the statements
2 beforehand about, you know, not setting the standard for
3 profit for a for-profit organization by this committee.
4 I would like to say that the Commission in the current
5 rate increase suggestion or request deny it as it
6 stands.

7 Two major things. One, I believe that with
8 the fees that are applied, the multiple fees for
9 different line items on the bill and requesting for some
10 of those line items to increase or additional line items
11 to be added it is as though we're being killed -- death
12 by a thousand cuts. I think a simplified bill should be
13 applied to the citizenry so that we understand what
14 we're paying for. A consumption based billing per
15 kilowatt hour would be beneficial. You know, keep it
16 simply stupid for us to understand what we're paying for
17 and why we're paying for it.

18 The other thing is is that I believe that for
19 whatever reason, mismanagement, poor investments,
20 increased in investments for capacity and efficiency
21 that the amount being requested is high, too high. They
22 mention line items like increasing capacity and
23 efficiency.

24 Efficiency reduces costs, costs of
25 transmission or power generation, wherever they get

1 those efficiencies from. Increased capacity means we
2 can sell more kilowatt hours to the people or get more
3 clients increasing profit per kilowatt hour because
4 you're delivering those goods. Or if we're not here to
5 consume those goods, they can sell that on the market as
6 power companies do. A few other line items.

7 They have a last bit about this fresh start
8 initiative for those that can't afford their bills. We
9 heard earlier from a farmer who has net metering not
10 working in his standard where he has credits that expire
11 like they're singular rollover minutes where maybe there
12 should be a pool established to where his excess credits
13 can be provided to the needy or an established pool to
14 where that can be distributed to those that cannot
15 afford their bills instead of just having one hand feed
16 while the other hand take away from the same populous.
17 Those are my thoughts. I hope they come into your
18 considerations.

19 I'm not here to talk about whether or not the
20 dinosaur of the Asbury plant needed to go and whether
21 that was a good thing. I'm okay with it. We should do
22 something else. I think there may be some expenditures
23 that should be taken away, because when you invest in
24 new infrastructure hopefully it's been made to where
25 it's profitable at some point. So we need to have an

1 expire on the fees that are provided and maybe a
2 simplified billing and less of a bill.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And we do have a
4 question.

5 MR. OCKERT: Yes, from stone cold PSC. Sorry.

6 MR. VANDERGRIFF: You mentioned fresh start.

7 MR. OCKERT: Yes, sir.

8 MR. VANDERGRIFF: But I don't think I caught,
9 you know, what your point was on it. Would you mind
10 repeating it?

11 MR. OCKERT: Yeah. So it was one of the line
12 items on the email that I received from Liberty. If I
13 don't get it correctly, maybe you should expand upon it.
14 It seemed like they were going to have like maybe a
15 forgiveness at the end of a year or some kind of charity
16 case. I believe there was an elderly person up here
17 that said it was hard for her generation to take
18 charity. I believe I'm not near her age, no offense or
19 anything, but I do also have that mindset where we need
20 to be able to be self-sufficient and take care of
21 ourselves and if not take care of ourselves, take care
22 of other people like that farmer wants to.

23 I think that he has the benefit of having
24 solar and having a surplus of that. And instead of it
25 just falling off at the end of the year and being a tax

1 credit or just fading away to time that he can donate
2 that or have some kind of public pool to where that can
3 be credited to those that could use it. That's my
4 mindset. I don't know. There might be a better plan
5 somebody else could come up with.

6 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Thank you.

7 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. I appreciate
8 that. I just want to make sure everyone understands
9 we've gone through about 20 witnesses and I have about
10 60 on my list. So we have another 40 to go. That's why
11 I'm trying to move quickly on the in between. I really
12 don't want to cut off anyone for going over the time
13 limits, but we are trying to make sure that everyone
14 gets to have their say.

15 Leslie Brown is the next name I have and then
16 Camille Lombardi-Olive and then after that Eddie
17 Johnson. Are you Ms. Brown?

18 MS. BROWN: Uh-huh.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: I'll swear you in, Ms. Brown.
20 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
21 you're about to give will be the truth, the whole truth
22 and nothing but the truth?

23 MS. BROWN: Yes, I do.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If we could please
25 keep the noise in the room down while everyone else is

1 testifying. Ms. Brown, if you would please state and
2 spell your name for the court reporter.

3 MS. BROWN: Leslie Brown, L-e-s-l-i-e
4 B-r-o-w-n.

5 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, ma'am. Please go
6 ahead with your comment.

7 MS. BROWN: I had had a question for you all.
8 They spent \$700 million and I was wondering do you all
9 audit them or do they have to show you where their
10 profit went for the last five years, what they spent
11 profit on, why this year they spent \$700 million of our
12 money that they want back, basically they're asking for
13 us back to pay them over the next five years. I don't
14 understand as a consumer how they were allowed to spend
15 this money without any input from the Missouri Public
16 Service Commission. That's in my brain you all should
17 have some input into what this company spends their
18 money on and then comes back to ask us for the money
19 back.

20 And then they were talking about during the
21 question and answering part that they were going to
22 bring it down to 121 million. That's still a lot of
23 money that they spent when maybe in the last four years
24 they spent their profit on other things instead of these
25 improvements that they wanted to do that they did this

1 year. And I thought they were asking for this money to
2 make these improvements in the future. But no, they've
3 spent the money already and are now asking you and us to
4 pay them back. And I don't understand that.

5 Is there no auditing procedure that you all go
6 through? You're the Public Service Commission. I feel
7 like you should be auditing this company. Do they not
8 have any kind of overseeing from you? I know you're not
9 going to answer my question, but I've listened all
10 evening and that's where my thoughts are.

11 So I'm thinking they made some profit over the
12 last five years that they've had this company and what
13 did they spend that money on? Why are they asking?
14 \$700 million. That's a lot of money, you know, for any
15 of us. We don't even understand that quantity of money.
16 So that's all I have to say.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Brown. I
18 appreciate your comments.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Not really a question but there
20 are people here that should be able to answer some of
21 your questions later.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: I was going to point that out
23 as well. Thank you, Mr. Williams. If you're here at
24 the end of our hearing, the attorney for the company,
25 for the staff or for the public counsel I'm sure would

1 be able to answer your question. I wish I could. But
2 like I explained, the way that a rate case works is it's
3 very much similar to a court case in a court of law. So
4 similar to how a judge couldn't answer what all the
5 evidence they're looking at, it's a very similar
6 situation here and as well the Commissioners are still
7 receiving evidence. We haven't had the evidentiary
8 hearing yet. So a lot of that process is still in play.
9 I wish I could touch on it in more detail. If at the
10 end of the hearing you can ask one of the counsels or I
11 think we have some members of staff here, they could
12 probably help you out. Our next witness is this Ms.
13 Lombardi?

14 MS. LOMBARDI-OLIVE: Yes. Camille
15 Lombardi-Olive.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Let me swear you
17 in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
18 you're about to give will be the truth, the whole truth
19 and nothing but the truth?

20 MS. LOMBARDI-OLIVE: Yes.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you would
22 please state and spell your name for the record.

23 MS. LOMBARDI OLIVE: Camille Lombardi-Olive,
24 C-a-m-i-l-l-e, last name L-o-m-b-a-r-d-i-O-l-i-v-e.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead

1 with your comment.

2 MS. LOMBARDI-OLIVE: Yes. I am also elderly
3 and supposedly disabled. That's how they retired me.
4 Like other people, I keep my AC on 82 during the day. I
5 try to avoid lowering it before 10:00 because that's the
6 golden hour is 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. That's when you
7 can almost put some electric on and not die from the
8 cost. So in the winter I put it down to 56 and I use a
9 heated mattress pad. And then during the day it's at
10 62.

11 I am in the bad category for being charged.
12 See, I use less than 500 kilowatts on average most of
13 the year except the summer. So I will be paying
14 according to their proposal 39.45 percent, which is
15 probably an average of \$40 added on to my bill.

16 I moved into the house in November of 2022,
17 and in May of 2023 I had my electric redone. You know,
18 I took out all the gang boxes from the '40s and all
19 that. Put in a 220, you know, fuse box. There was a 60
20 amp whatever fusebox in there. And they told me they
21 were going to change out the meter to a smart meter. I
22 didn't want a smart meter, but they put it in anyways.

23 Liberty is now claiming they put that in in
24 2020. I had to remind them I didn't move in until 2022
25 and I didn't change it out until 2023. So I guess they

1 forgot. My bills went up immediately. So I've been
2 talking about this publicly for two years because it's
3 like it already looks like they imposed a 30 percent
4 increase on my billing. I only got one apology because
5 my billing is erratic. Some months I get it. Sometimes
6 I go three months and then I get a surprise. You know,
7 the surprise is not a good surprise because then I get
8 three bills. I don't know what I'm being charged for.
9 I don't know my kilowatt usage. I don't know what my
10 off peak usage was. I can't go back and disseminate
11 what I'm being charged for. Half the time I swear that
12 I've paid for the bill and I'm being overcharged,
13 overpaying. One month I got two bills. One was like
14 sixty something dollars. Another one was like a hundred
15 and something. Let me see. Same month.

16 It was May. Here's one for 64. Kilowatt
17 usage of 344. I'm in the penalty phase because I had 39
18 percent. And then May 2 I got another bill earlier for
19 \$230 and I only used 239 kilowatts. So to be honest
20 with you, I have no idea if this is the fault of a robot
21 that they're utilizing or if their algorithm is flawed
22 or there's just an idiot running billing. The way they
23 explained it to me they blamed it on a third party.
24 They have a third-party billing system. So whoever that
25 third party is, whatever third world country they live

1 in, I think they need to get rid of them and get more
2 people that are qualified to actually do billing where
3 we can get it monthly and we could see exactly what
4 we're being charged for, because to me if you look them
5 up, we're talking about probably way over maybe \$1,500,
6 1,600 for, what, six months. Yet my usage is 375 or 371
7 kilowatts, 239 kilowatts, 280 kilowatts. I mean, that's
8 like I just use a light bulb. 310. So I would like
9 them to explain what's gone wrong with their billing.
10 Okay. To me the billing is a mess. That's number one.
11 There's no accuracy. There's no trust. I'm pretty sure
12 I'm being ripped off, which by the way is theft by
13 deception.

14 When you keep mailing and sending it to me,
15 half the time I don't get it because I haven't. I have
16 informed delivery from post office which means they take
17 photos of what's coming in my mailbox. So I can prove I
18 didn't get the bills because it was never mailed. It
19 was never put in my mailbox. Yet I've got this mess.

20 So when you mail something that's inaccurate
21 or fraudulent, that is racketeering, theft by deception.
22 That's a RICO charge right there. That's one thing they
23 need to be investigated on. It's not just everything
24 else they're doing. It's like what is going on with
25 their billing. It's a big error that needs to be dealt

1 with.

2 The other thing and the last thing is where is
3 our power coming from? Is it coming from Canada? Okay.
4 Are they producing it in a power plant there, because if
5 you looked at the tariffs, Canada has just imposed a 25
6 percent. That's Ontario. That's where that Algonquin
7 Utilities is based. They just imposed in kind of
8 response to President Trump a 25 percent tariff on
9 utilities.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: I need to ask you to finish
11 your thought.

12 MS. LOMBARDI-OLIVE: So are we getting our
13 power from electric or is it generated here, because if
14 we're getting it there and it's coming all this way,
15 we're getting a lot of extra fees added. I just think
16 you need to look at the billing and see exactly what
17 we're being charged for. You know, I moved in 2022 but
18 I'm getting charged for a storm in 2021, a destruction
19 of a power plant. I don't know when that was. This
20 seems to be the most ridiculous theft I've ever seen and
21 you should all be ashamed of yourself.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: I do have a question.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Lombardi-Olive, we have
24 questions.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Ms. Lombardi-Olive, I see you

1 brought some documents with you. Do you want the
2 Commission to see any of those?

3 MS. LOMBARDI-OLIVE: Well, they could have it
4 if they can make sense of it. These are copies. I
5 mean, you can throw it up or make an airplane out of it.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: What are they copies of?

7 MS. LOMBARDI-OLIVE: Supposedly these are my
8 bills. I haven't been able to take it home and verify
9 that this is the actual bill. As I told you, I would go
10 three months at a time without a bill. I asked them to
11 send me my bills because I don't trust what I'm being
12 charged for.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: Would you like for the
14 Commission to see those? I would like to have those
15 marked as an exhibit.

16 MS. LOMBARDI-OLIVE: I can't verify that this
17 is accurate.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Williams, could I ask you
19 to take possession of those for like the next hour or
20 so. I'm just running out of room up here. And I think
21 we have a second question if you're done.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: As I understand it, these are
23 copies.

24 MS. LOMBARDI-OLIVE: Yeah, they're copies.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Okay.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: And I will state my
2 understanding is that confidential information will not
3 be made public.

4 MS. LOMBARDI-OLIVE: Well, it's my address.
5 If somebody else wants to pay my bill, they're welcome
6 to it.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: By that I'm referring to your
8 personal identifying information.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: We will make sure and take
10 care of that. Mr. Vandergriff.

11 MR. VANDERGRIFF: So just making sure, do you
12 want to mark those as confidential because it has your
13 personal identifying?

14 MS. LOMBARDI-OLIVE: I'm a public figure so it
15 doesn't matter. My name isn't on it. So it doesn't
16 matter. Google me. You'll find out. Thanks.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Lombardi-Olive.
18 Eddie Johnson is our next witness. Please come on down,
19 sir. And then Patricia Spencer and then Michael Moore.
20 Mr. Johnson, let me swear you in. Do you solemnly swear
21 or affirm that the testimony you are about to give will
22 be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

23 MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could
25 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

1 MR. JOHNSON: Eddie Johnson. E-d-d-i-e
2 J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Johnson.
4 Please go ahead with your comment.

5 MR. JOHNSON: This is about some of the
6 billing and a spike in energy. We just built a home.
7 This was back in February of '24. During that time we
8 were in between contractors for about two and a half
9 weeks. You know how that goes. You get to the
10 sheetrock stage, waiting on the painters, waiting on the
11 cabinet companies, et cetera. So there was nobody
12 there.

13 During a 17-day period we used 7,500 kilowatts
14 with two outlets and six temporary lights to the tune of
15 \$900. We live in the home and our last cycle was 1,300
16 kilowatts. It's a total electric home with a gas
17 fireplace. So also was just the inconsistent billing,
18 11 bills in nine weeks. None of them were the same. No
19 dates were the same. We were making the minimum payment
20 by just going down to the Empire office and making the
21 minimum payment because we weren't receiving any bills.
22 Have yet to see any of those credits. I have not paid
23 this \$900. I paid the difference when the bill comes,
24 but I refuse to pay that \$900 during that construction.
25 There's just no way.

1 Everything has been checked. They said --
2 they were blaming it on the HVAC. HVAC was actually
3 installed two, three days after this spike supposedly
4 took place. One of the Liberty employees told us that
5 the spike surge was happening between 5:00 p.m. and 2:30
6 a.m. There's nobody working those hours. And we
7 weren't there. I mean, there was nobody there. We
8 would go there during the day just to check things out.
9 But nobody is working.

10 So it was two days after the outage -- or
11 after the spike surge was when my other contractor
12 finally came in and we were able to complete the home.
13 So this has been disputed. I have filed a complaint,
14 and you have the information on that. But yeah, just
15 the inconsistent billing. So they need to get all of
16 this taken care of before they can ever ask for any kind
17 of a raise. I mean, they've got to get this straight.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Johnson. We do
19 have a question. Mr. Vandergriff.

20 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Just for clarity. You said
21 that you haven't received credits. Specifically what
22 are the credits for?

23 MR. JOHNSON: The credits would have been what
24 we were paying all along, just the minimum payment
25 without having a bill.

1 MR. VANDERGRIFF: What were the minimum
2 payments?

3 MR. JOHNSON: How much? \$15. So we were
4 paying -- still to this day there's no record of any of
5 those credits ever made towards any payment of any kind.

6 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Thank you.

7 MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Excuse me. What time frame are
9 we talking about?

10 MR. JOHNSON: February of this last year.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: February of 2025?

12 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, '25, yes.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: And it's still unresolved?

14 MR. JOHNSON: Oh, yeah. There's nothing.
15 Like I said, we filed a complaint. We have a number and
16 everything on the claim. It's continued on.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: When you say you filed a
18 complaint, is it an informal complaint or formal?

19 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: Informal?

21 MR. JOHNSON: Uh-huh, yeah.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: And Patricia Spencer followed
25 by Michael Moore followed by Nathan Jones. Patricia

1 Spencer. We'll come back to Ms. Spencer. Michael
2 Moore. Michael Moore. Nathan Jones. Mr. Jones, come
3 on down. I'll swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or
4 affirm that the testimony you are about to give will be
5 the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

6 MR. JONES: I do.

7 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please state
8 and spell your name for the court reporter.

9 MR. JONES: My name is Nathan Jones,
10 N-a-t-h-a-n J-o-n-e-s.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead with your
12 comments to the Commissioners.

13 MR. JONES: Again, my name is Nathan Jones.
14 My wife and I -- I'm a teacher. My wife is a postal
15 worker. We live over in Carl Junction. This rate
16 increase would be about \$150 a month for us, if I did
17 the calculations correctly.

18 My increase of pay this year as a teacher was
19 \$50 a month. So this upcoming year I'll get \$50 a
20 month. But if you give them this rate increase, I will
21 still be at a deficit. This rate increase would be very
22 difficult for us. Mr. Wilson, who works at Liberty who
23 spoke during the question and answer time, said that he
24 was here to earn our trust back. Am I saying that
25 correctly? And I don't mean to disparage him, just that

1 we were told in this very room, I was here when they
2 proposed and did the public meeting for the windmills
3 and the closing of the Asbury plant. They told us in
4 that meeting that this would reduce our cost. Obviously
5 that's not been the case.

6 We continue to pay more rather than -- So this
7 is the way he proposes to earn back our trust is to
8 increase our rates, and he seemed very glad about this
9 but I was very frustrated. He suggested that they had a
10 new person, a new chief of some kind of public
11 relations, customer service, some kind of an
12 administrative bloat position that was going to make
13 things better for us; that this person had all this
14 experience. And I'm just seeing like six figures in my
15 head roll around to justify these rate increases to
16 supposedly make us -- to salve the pain that they're
17 causing us.

18 This Asbury closure, they told us it would
19 save us money. They told us that the windmills would
20 save us money, but the truth was is it was a green
21 energy shell game where they were moving money around.
22 They said that the customers would pay half of the cost
23 in rate increases. And the other half was provided by
24 carbon credits, some kind of a government scheme. They
25 never paid any. We paid it all. We paid it through

1 rate increases and we paid it through our taxes that the
2 government gave them some kind of a scheme that they had
3 worked out. We never saw any benefit from those,
4 minimal benefit.

5 The woman that was here before, she testified,
6 didn't testify, she spoke. She said that she lives here
7 too and that she cares about this community, and I
8 believe her. She does live her. I recognize her. But
9 I don't think that this rate increase is coming from
10 here.

11 I would say where does this rate increase
12 originate from. Does it originate in Missouri or does
13 it originate in Canada?

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Jones. Can you
15 finish your thought?

16 MR. JONES: Yeah. It changed from 16 percent
17 to 30 percent in November to January for the requested
18 rate increase. It sounds political. My finances can't
19 afford Liberty's politics. Rather than ask me to take a
20 haircut on this, why doesn't the for-profit Canadian
21 company take the haircut. I would invite the Public
22 Commission to retaliate towards Liberty and grant them
23 zero increase for this outrageous.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Again, I'm sorry,
25 we have another 30 witnesses we need to get to. If

1 we're to listen to all of you, we are trying to make
2 sure we have enough time. Were there any questions for
3 Mr. Jones? Hearing none. Thank you, sir. I appreciate
4 you being here today. Debra Gaskill. Thank you, ma'am.
5 Next on our list is Anna Lee Allenbaugh (phonetic
6 spelling) and then Cheryl Calvert. Back to Debra
7 Gaskill. I'll swear you in, Ms. Gaskill. Do you
8 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are
9 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and
10 nothing but the truth?

11 MS. GASKILL: Yes, sir.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead
13 and state and spell your name for the record.

14 MS. GASKILL: My name is Debra Gaskill,
15 D-e-b-r-a G-a-s-k-i-l-l.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, ma'am. Please go
17 ahead and give your comments to the Commission.

18 MS. GASKILL: I am a case worker at Salvation
19 Army, and so I am speaking on behalf -- I get about 300
20 calls a month for a variety of assistance requests.
21 About 95 of those are electric shutoff notices. About
22 75, the city of Joplin bill, about 45 for their water,
23 about 30 is Spire and about 50 requests for rent
24 assistance. That's on average. Those numbers are not
25 exact.

1 We have a very limited budget at Salvation
2 Army. So out of the 300 calls, we can help 10 clients.
3 There is not enough funds in the city of Joplin to help
4 all of the people that are hurting. I know I'm not the
5 only client or the only case worker that does utility
6 assistance or rent assistance.

7 Economic Security does, Catholic Charity does.
8 We are all out of funds within a week or two. Churches
9 will help when they can, but even then there is not
10 enough funds. 17 percent of the population in Joplin
11 are below poverty. More than that are in that about
12 1,200 a month is what they earn. You start adding the
13 rate increase for their rent which has gone up 30 to 50
14 percent in the last three years. My help with rent used
15 to be about 500 what is what a one bedroom is. Now it's
16 about 900. It's an entirely crazy amount that these
17 low-income people are trying to survive on.

18 A 35 to 40 percent increase you are going to
19 create homeless like you've never seen before. They're
20 not homeless because they want to be homeless. They're
21 not drug addicts. They are hard working people that
22 have worked all their lives or they're disabled. They
23 do not have the funds or the means to get more funds.
24 I'm asking please do not raise the rates. A 10 percent
25 rate on return, I mean, I would love to make a 10

1 percent rate on return. We are investors in my family.
2 I'm happy if we make 5 percent. That's great. And I
3 think that's a normal amount. So you are doubling what
4 a normal rate on return is for a normal person that's
5 investing. Plus then we are paying for all their
6 expenses.

7 They get to make profits. We get to pay the
8 expenses for them. My clients cannot afford that. I'm
9 not talking about me. I actually am lucky enough that
10 we have family money that we can pay our bills, but my
11 clients cannot and I'm advocating please, please do not
12 raise this rate to 40 percent. I think people are
13 willing to pay their bills that they use the utility.
14 If they use it, they're willing to pay for it. They are
15 not willing to pay for all these extra little things
16 that they don't get to benefit from really.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Gaskill. I
18 appreciate you coming and giving us your comments. Were
19 there any questions for Ms. Gaskill? Thank you. I
20 appreciate it.

21 Next we have Ms. Anna Lee Allenbaugh. Then
22 Cheryl Calvert (phonetic spelling), Janet Daniels. I'll
23 keep moving down the list. Dr. John Broom. I'm sorry?
24 No, I've got Anna Lee Allenbaugh, Cheryl Calvert, Janet
25 Daniels. I have an Angela after Dr. John Broom. You're

1 up next.

2 DR. BROOM: Good evening.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Dr. Broom, let me swear you
4 in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
5 you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth
6 and nothing but the truth?

7 DR. BROOM: I do solemnly swear.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you would
9 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

10 DR. BROOM: Dr. John, J-o-h-n, Broom,
11 B-r-o-o-m.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Dr. Broom. If
13 you'd go ahead and give us your comments.

14 DR. BROOM: Thank you. Liberty is saying that
15 they want 10 percent return on investment for their
16 stockholders, yet Simply Wall Street gives them 12
17 percent rate of return and Bargain Hunter, another stock
18 site, says it's 17 percent. Excuse me. I've sacrificed
19 my eyesight in the service of my students.

20 Liberty is required to inspect infrastructure
21 for circuits, streetlights, underground units, wood
22 poles, the service line to your house, that sort of
23 thing. They had an assigned number of inspections of
24 74,560 in 2024, yet they only did 9,500 of those or 12.7
25 percent.

1 I also want to speak to the billing issue. I
2 received a bill in I believe it was July of 2024. I did
3 not get another bill until February of 2024, or excuse
4 me, February of 2025. Then I got four bills in like
5 three days all for different amounts. I cannot access
6 their website.

7 I work online for a living. I believe they
8 hired the firm that built the Obama Care website, yeah,
9 or a couple blind Canadians. A 40 percent increase. My
10 income comes from two sources. One of them is my
11 administrative job with the university and the other one
12 is a teaching job with the same university that's a
13 contract base. My pay was reduced in 2009, because of
14 the housing crisis on the teaching side. That pay has
15 not gone up since then.

16 My administrative pay has had a total of 12
17 percent in that total time frame. I retire in December.
18 And due to my own stupidity, I don't have a huge
19 retirement account. My wife will retire in two years.
20 There's no way on this green earth we can afford a 40
21 percent increase in our utility bills. On top of that,
22 40 percent. Really? What are we paying for? A bunch
23 of pie in the sky green energy? How many thousands of
24 birds does that green energy site kill per year? How
25 often is our wind in Southwest Missouri either

1 negligible or blowing like a hurricane?

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Dr. Broom, if I could ask you
3 to finish.

4 DR. BROOM: Thank you.

5 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. We do have a
6 question, Doctor.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: I do have one question. Has
8 your billing issue been resolved or is it still
9 outstanding?

10 DR. BROOM: Not really. I still can't access
11 the website. I've switched over from electronic
12 billing, which I didn't get, to paper billing which I
13 don't know. Now I'm getting electronic billing.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

15 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Dr. Broom. I
16 appreciate you being here. Angela. I cannot make out
17 your last name. How do you spell that?

18 MS. YORK: Like New York.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Let me swear you
20 in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
21 you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth
22 and nothing but the truth?

23 MS. YORK: Yes.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And Ms. York,
25 please go ahead and give us your comments.

1 MS. YORK: So in 2003, when the tornado went
2 through Carl Junction, I had to get a new home. Empire
3 had a contract where you bought your meter and
4 everything through them and they were responsible for it
5 forever. So I had to call Liberty and they sat there
6 and called me a liar over the phone. It took them about
7 eight hours to come out to my house. It was the meter
8 and the whole box pedestal.

9 The first guy that came out told me it was my
10 responsibility, but there was an older gentleman that
11 had worked for Empire that said no, that's ours. They
12 finally fixed it. And then I called out again because
13 I'm having another issue with it. And I'm being told
14 I'm a liar, that this doesn't exist.

15 I had to pay for this contract for Empire. I
16 have your guys' original pedestal at my house. You guys
17 put the meter in. You put the pedestal in. And besides
18 that, I mean, talking about money, I have a disabled
19 kid. I help my mother who's 74 years old. My electric
20 is 5 to \$600 a month. I can pay it. I have no problem
21 with it. But you're talking about increasing it to
22 almost 800 to \$1,000 what I'm going to have to pay for
23 my mom and everybody else. This is just ridiculous.
24 But I want someone at my house to fix my electric issues
25 because it is on your side. That's it.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. York. We do
2 have a question. Mr. Vandergriff.

3 MR. VANDERGRIFF: You said that you had a
4 contract and you mentioned pedestal. What kind of
5 contract was it for clarity?

6 MS. YORK: Years ago in 2003 when the tornado
7 went through in Carl, you could either buy your own
8 meter or you could go get a contract through Empire and
9 they put it in and they were responsible for the care of
10 it. It could blow away. Anything could happen from
11 that pedestal to whatever was their responsibility.
12 The wires from the pedestal to the house were my
13 responsibility.

14 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Okay. And the issue isn't
15 resolved yet, correct? Have you been informed of your
16 ability to lodge an informal complaint?

17 MS. YORK: No, I've just been told I was
18 lying, this didn't exist, so no.

19 MR. VANDERGRIFF: That is an option you can
20 file an informal complaint with the Public Service
21 Commission.

22 MS. YORK: Okay.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm not totally clear on what
24 issues are still unresolved. Would you explain?

25 MS. YORK: I still have issues. I will have

1 flickering of power. There's flickering of power when
2 the wind blows. The pedestal will move and the power
3 will flicker. It's a fire hazard. It could burn my
4 house down.

5 MR. WILLIAMS: So it's quality of service?

6 MS. YORK: It's a fire hazard. They're not
7 coming out honoring their contract.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

9 MS. YORK: Thank you.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. York. I
11 appreciate you being here tonight. Rory Statt and then
12 Carol Cook and then Billy Freer. Rory Statt. Carol
13 Cook. Billy Freer. Gary Brammer. I think it's
14 B-r-a-m-m-e-r, Gary. Nancy Wilder. Daniel Humble.
15 After Mr. Humble, we have Judith Augustinov and Richard
16 Gieser. Mr. Humble, let me swear you in. Do you
17 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are
18 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and
19 nothing but the truth?

20 MR. HUMBLE: Yes, I do.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please state
22 and spell your name for our court reporter.

23 MR. HUMBLE: Yes. It's Daniel Humble,
24 D-a-n-i-e-l, last name Humble, H-u-m-b-l-e.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead with your

1 comments.

2 MR. HUMBLE: So we've been living in Southwest
3 Missouri for about ten years under New-Mac for our house
4 outside of Granby, Missouri. Had no issues with them
5 whatsoever. We owned two businesses in Granby,
6 Missouri, two restaurants. We started having issues
7 with Liberty with billing. That's the main thing I've
8 heard tonight. Back in March of 2024, the landlord was
9 paying it. Then they said hey, we need to switch off,
10 we're doing new stuff. So we said okay, put it in our
11 name. We called. Nothing. After the first month we
12 should get a bill. That's how it was supposed to be.
13 It was in our name. We paid the deposit. Nothing.

14 In April called. Nothing. May we called
15 several times. Nothing. This is still in 2024. Called
16 them in June, July, August. We finally moved from one
17 location on Main Street in Granby up to our new place
18 now in August of 2024.

19 As soon as we moved, because they went to a
20 new billing service, as soon as we moved we got all of
21 our bills all at once. It was a 3, almost \$4,000 bill
22 all at once. Told to pay it now. We're going to shut
23 you off. Small business owners should be in the
24 heartland of America is we want small mom and pops. We
25 had at that time six, seven employees. Like we had to

1 cut families off. That's not what we did. So we went
2 and we called and called and called try to get answers.

3 I even had a guy several times they wouldn't
4 even call us back. They'd say hey, your supervisor is
5 going to call, supervisor is going to call. They would
6 never call. I don't know how many people had that.

7 Then you'd call. You'd have the supervisors'
8 names, everything. So you'd have facts. We have email.
9 I said no, email is for documentation. There was a lady
10 that was even fired from Liberty because she actually
11 called and said hey, do this and this. She was gone two
12 weeks later from trying to correct things and make
13 things right. It wasn't until I want to say March of
14 this year we had a meeting with them. February of this
15 year we finally had a sit-down. We went to -- Neosho
16 has a Liberty office you can go in and talk to. He says
17 no, go to Joplin. We went to the Joplin office. That's
18 a joke in there. There's two ladies that's trying to
19 help people. They had it -- it takes them at least 30
20 minutes to read down the whole thing of what's going on.
21 They have no idea. Rude people in the back have no
22 idea. Finally had a sit-down conversation where we
23 finally sat down with one of their accountant, business
24 accountant representatives, plus a couple supervisors.
25 We finally got it mapped out. Something that a billing

1 that should have been handled from day one. It's
2 costing us an extra two hundred some dollars a month on
3 top of what we already pay now. We have to pay it
4 because it's either pay it or get shut off.

5 We just had another pizza place in town. We
6 had to transfer our name last month on June 16. It took
7 until today calling four more times to get them. Oh, we
8 tried calling. There's no records of it. There's no
9 voicemails. There's no nothing. Finally we just got it
10 today a month and a half later. Now I have a \$1,000
11 bill that I've got to try to pay on that business
12 because they can't bill correctly.

13 As a business owner, especially a profitable,
14 you try to be a profitable business owner as Liberty is
15 trying to be. They're profitable. When you have
16 breakdowns, you've got to handle it yourself. If you
17 mismanage your funds -- If I go out and buy let's say 30
18 fryers just because if my fryer goes down I'm going to
19 have one and I don't have my funds to pay my employees
20 the next day. Guess what. I shut down.

21 Cost of food goes up. How many people cost of
22 food has went up astronomically, right? We eat that. I
23 can't charge \$10 for a cheeseburger and fries today.
24 Tomorrow because it was slow I'm going to pay you 13.
25 That's a 30 percent increase. It's 13 today because I

1 didn't have enough people today.

2 So think about the common sense part of
3 business. If they're going to be a profitable business,
4 take care of managing your funds. Make it a competition
5 piece. Make New-Mac be able to take over, because we're
6 at 13 cents for New-Mac and we're at 22, 23 percent for
7 Liberty. What's the cost?

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Humble, I hate to
9 interrupt, but can you finish your thought?

10 MR. HUMBLE: That's it.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Okay. We do have questions.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: Not very many I hope. Do you
13 have multiple accounts or do you have a single account?

14 MR. HUMBLE: We have two accounts.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: And are they consolidated on
16 billing or are they separate?

17 MR. HUMBLE: They're separate. It's two
18 separate LLCs.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Vandergriff.

21 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Just for clarity sake.
22 You're talking about commercial bills?

23 MR. HUMBLE: Yes, business side.

24 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Thank you.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Humble. I

1 appreciate you being here. Judith Augustinov. Yes,
2 ma'am. After this is Richard Gieser and then Amber
3 Gonzalez. Ms. Augustinov, let me swear you in. Do you
4 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are
5 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and
6 nothing but the truth?

7 MS. AUGUSTINOV: I prefer to affirm.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: I'm sorry. I didn't catch
9 that.

10 MS. AUGUSTINOV: I prefer to affirm.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Yes, absolutely. Thank you.
12 If you could please state and spell your name for the
13 court reporter.

14 MS. AUGUSTINOV: Judith, J-u-d-i-t-h
15 A-u-g-u-s-t-i-n-o-v.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead
17 and give your comments.

18 MS. AUGUSTINOV: Yes. Our income for the
19 family is \$950 a month. My father's social security is
20 1,200. And our bill for this month is nearly \$400 for
21 the electricity. So a 40 percent increase is quite
22 outrageous. And that's not -- that's in addition to all
23 the comments here for a lack of a company that is very,
24 yeah, unreputable.

25 I also last -- two months ago when there was a

1 meeting here I requested to have all our bills
2 consolidated into one so we could have things clearer.
3 I also asked for our smart meter to be changed out and
4 they said that's possible to have just plain digital
5 readers -- meters. And nothing has been done until now.
6 Nothing of that is done. I think that all the people of
7 -- all the citizens of Joplin and all of the surrounding
8 areas should probably get together and talk to Carthage
9 and see how their citizens manage to have an electric
10 company that is citizen owned and work towards having
11 our own company to supply our own electricity. I think
12 that's really important. That's all I've got to say.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate you
14 being here. I don't see any questions. Thank you,
15 ma'am. Richard Gieser. Mr. Gieser, thank you. Let me
16 swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
17 testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the
18 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

19 MR. GIESER: Yes, sir, I do.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could
21 please state and spell your name for the record?

22 MR. GIESER: Richard Gieser, R-i-c-h-a-r-d
23 G-i-e-s-e-r.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. If you could
25 please go ahead and give us your comments.

1 MR. GIESER: Considering that Liberty is
2 already charging us more than anybody else in the area,
3 instead of their 40 percent increase they should be
4 reduced 10 percent. I'd like to know what I'm getting
5 for that 40 percent improvement in my residential
6 service. And if they don't get their 40 percent
7 increase or some part of it, how much will they be
8 degrading my service by what percent? I haven't heard
9 anything about any benefit to me at all.

10 Second issue. I'm a California escapee
11 recently. I'm quite familiar with the disaster that's
12 going on over there with their electric rates and the
13 way the state handled the whole thing. They totally
14 destroyed -- the state of California has totally
15 destroyed the residential solar market.

16 Two years ago it was a totally different
17 picture. My son got in early in Los Angeles. He got a
18 100 percent credit back for his surplus electricity.
19 April of 2024, they changed it from 100 percent to 10
20 percent. You get 3 cents back. You get 3 cents back
21 for your electricity that you give them.

22 The state of California has turned totally
23 solar residential unfriendly, hostile. We might be
24 going that way with Liberty here. As Liberty raises
25 their rates, they are encouraging people to go more

1 solar and other alternatives. When that happens, they
2 lose customers. They'll probably do the same thing
3 California did. They'll punish the remaining customers
4 and they'll do everything they can to punish the people
5 who are on solar and still grid-tied. They're going to
6 lose customers and then they're going to blame solar for
7 it.

8 Before 2030 is over, I'm going off grid. I'm
9 going to take all my neighbors with me. Thank you.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Gieser. I
11 appreciate you being here tonight. All right. It is
12 9:49 at night and we are down to just under 20 witnesses
13 left. Amber Gonzalez. Thank you. Following will be
14 Christy Moore, Gene Griffith and then Dave Griffith.
15 Ms. Gonzalez, let me swear you in. Do you solemnly
16 swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give
17 will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
18 truth?

19 MS. GONZALEZ: Absolutely.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could
21 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

22 MS. GONZALEZ: My name is Amber Gonzalez,
23 A-m-b-e-r G-o-n-z-a-l-e-z.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Please go ahead with your
25 comments.

1 MS. GONZALEZ: Well, first let's quote Albert
2 Einstein. The definition of insanity is doing the same
3 thing over and over and expecting a different result.
4 That's exactly what Liberty is doing. They want another
5 rate increase, another rate increase, and we see no
6 benefits. The same thing is said over and over. It's
7 for infrastructure. Great. Where are the benefits?
8 What's being improved? We never see it.

9 I noticed a lot of interest from the
10 Commission due to billing. So let's talk about billing.
11 In January of 2024, I noticed that my bills were
12 incorrect. I have two meters and one outside light.
13 One of my meters was not being billed. I told Liberty
14 this. We'll look into it. Six months later every month
15 telling them that, I get a letter in the mail. Your
16 bills are correct. Please stop bothering us.

17 I'm keeping that letter. I don't owe you
18 then. Well, guess what? Then I get another bill. Over
19 \$200 for that meter with another one that said we
20 apologize. We found the mistake. Okay. I turned it in
21 to the Commission.

22 Weird thing is this is where you guys really
23 need to look at Liberty's integrity. Whenever you all
24 asked for my bills from Liberty, magically that meter
25 was on all those previous bills. They're not on mine.

1 Don't know how that happened.

2 Another bill that I turned in to the
3 Commission, we're constantly talking about this February
4 storm Asbury charge. I have it highlighted. I'm
5 charged twice on each meter, plus my outside light. I
6 turned in to the Commission. Liberty refuted and said
7 it's only on there once. The bill they provided you
8 shows it only once, but the amounts are the same. Huh.

9 Another issue that I've had with them multiple
10 times is just, for example, the ice storm that we had
11 many years back. My electricity bill went up to \$600.
12 That would make total sense if I was electric. I burn
13 wood. Makes no sense. So I called them and they said
14 we'll check your meter. Fantastic. They called me
15 later and said your meter is fine. I said how do you
16 check it? What makes you believe my meter is correct
17 that I used all these kilowatts?

18 Well, we start from the beginning and if it
19 goes up, it's right. That makes zero sense. Just
20 because it went up does not mean it's correct, but there
21 doesn't seem to be any way to check if it's not. At
22 least they can't provide it.

23 You asked multiple times are we told that we
24 can have a grievance and if there's any way for us to
25 complain. I had no idea until my neighbor told me.

1 Going back to Liberty constantly telling us if you're
2 running short on your payment, just ask and we'll help.
3 No. They refer you to Economic Security which is
4 federally funded so they still get paid. Liberty does
5 not help. They do not look out for the little person.
6 Even going -- I know a lot of people have touched on
7 social security.

8 Let's just say your bill is \$400. 40 percent
9 increase, that's \$160 more. I don't know about anyone
10 else. My job is not offering extra hours. My salary is
11 not increasing.

12 Even not being on social security, I'm in
13 trouble, especially as a mother. Liberty needs to be
14 held accountable and I would say either deny this
15 request or cut the rate so they're not a monopoly. This
16 is an illegal monopoly according to the definition.
17 They're not providing a better service than anyone else.
18 Thank you.

19 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Gonzalez. We
20 do have questions. Mr. Vandergriff.

21 MR. VANDERGRIFF: You said you lodged a
22 complaint?

23 MS. GONZALEZ: Yes.

24 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Is it an informal complaint
25 or a formal complaint?

1 MS. GONZALEZ: Can't tell you. All I know is
2 I called the Missouri Department Commission. I sent
3 them all of my bills. They looked into it with Liberty.
4 Liberty sent them whatever. And then I got a phone call
5 from the Commission saying that Liberty showed that they
6 didn't, you know, bill me incorrectly and there was
7 nothing they could do.

8 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Would you like to offer
9 those copies that you have here today into evidence?

10 MS. GONZALEZ: I can. A lot of this is the
11 bills for the shop that I got, I don't know, six times,
12 five or six times. If they want to cut cost, paper and
13 postage would be a great way to start.

14 MR. VANDERGRIFF: One more question. Those
15 bills have your personal information on there. Would
16 you like for them to be confidential?

17 MS. GONZALEZ: Sure.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Gonzalez, those are just
19 copies? I'm not super comfortable. Maybe,
20 Mr. Vandergriff, maybe you could follow up after this or
21 a phone call to arrange copies.

22 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Are you staying until the
23 end?

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Actually we might have a
25 solution. Mr. Williams I think is going to take

1 pictures. I'm going to let you three take care of that
2 on the side. I'm going to keep calling witnesses.
3 Christy Moore. Christy Moore. Gene Griffith. Dave
4 Griffith. Michael, I apologize, Kiele, K-i-e-l-e.
5 Steve Reeder. Mr. Reeder, come on down to the
6 microphone. Jonathon Calliccoat, you'll be next and then
7 Sondra Oliver. Mr. Reeder, let me swear you in. Do you
8 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are
9 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and
10 nothing but the truth?

11 MR. REEDER: I do.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please state
13 and spell your name for our court reporter.

14 MR. REEDER: My name is Steve Reeder,
15 R-e-e-d-e-r. My first name is Steve, S-t-e-v-e.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please go
17 ahead with your comments.

18 MR. REEDER: Most of the comments that I had
19 others have expressed. I asked a question earlier if
20 they could give me the percentages of increase over the
21 14-year period that the Neilsberg Research Institute
22 gave for increase in median income for Jasper County. I
23 did not get that answer.

24 The increase from Jasper County was reported
25 to be 7.89 percent. Where we're looking at this type of

1 an increase, and people have already expressed it, it
2 seems like it would be overwhelming what they have
3 gained in income over the past 14 years. There have
4 been increases in the median income. There have been
5 decreases. But the net gain was 7.89 percent. So
6 that's already been addressed. I did ask that question.

7 There's been comments made about the executive
8 pay. I addressed that issue myself in the question and
9 answer session. The issue of poor judgment on Liberty's
10 part has already been addressed with the going green. I
11 attended the meeting back here at MSSU when Liberty was
12 in question -- or Asbury was in question and we were
13 going to bring on the wind turbines. It just does not
14 seem to work. That's all I can say about that.

15 Others have already said more about that
16 already. Liberty made comments that there are programs
17 available to lower income people. That is good. But
18 the common everyday customer who is on social security
19 or on a fixed income or as the one gentleman said his
20 income doesn't go up by the percentage that they're
21 asking for and won't. That seems to be an issue. And
22 then I'll just say that about CEOs. A headline from
23 Energy and Policy Institute from July 2024 said as
24 customers struggled, utility's CEOs pay spiked last
25 year. The first paragraph stated while many Americans

1 saw their energy bills go up substantially in the past
2 year, investor-owned electric and gas utilities in the
3 country's largest public-owned utility paid their CEOs
4 over \$640 million in 2023. That was an increase of 9
5 percent. That's what they're trying to make is 9
6 percent.

7 And again another person mentioned if you can
8 get a return on investment of 4 to 5 percent right now
9 in today's economy, that's pretty good. So 10 percent,
10 I think they're asking their customers to help pay for
11 that increase or for that profit margin. Millions of
12 disconnections were noted as on the rise due to the
13 inability to pay by customers. Customers have already
14 mentioned they're in fear of being disconnected because
15 of this increase.

16 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Reeder, we've reached the
17 end of your time. Can you wrap up your thoughts?

18 MR. REEDER: I understand. You initially said
19 we'd get up to four minutes.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: I think I said three. I
21 believe it is four now.

22 MR. REEDER: Okay. That is basically the gist
23 of my comments. And like I said, most of them have
24 already been expressed. Thank you.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I appreciate you

1 being here, Mr. Reeder. Mr. Calliccoat, you're up next.
2 The names I have next on the list are Sondra Oliver,
3 Christine Choate, Joey Burton. Mr. Calliccoat, let me
4 swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
5 testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the
6 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

7 MR. CALLICOAT: Yes, sir.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. If you could
9 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

10 MR. CALLICOAT: My name is Jonathon Calliccoat,
11 J-o-n-a-t-h-o-n C-a-l-l-i-c-o-a-t.

12 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please go
13 ahead with your comments.

14 MR. CALLICOAT: So initially I came here to
15 share some of my personal experiences with our business
16 regarding some of the billing issues that we've all
17 heard a lot about tonight. I kind of thought it was an
18 isolated occurrence with our particular account in a
19 pretty short time frame, but that obviously turned out
20 to not be the case.

21 In my particular instance, there were four
22 months of billing where the bill wasn't totally missing
23 but I knew that it was a lot less than it should be. We
24 run a manufacturing facility which can consume 1,500
25 kilowatt hours a month to 15,000 kilowatt hours a month,

1 depending on the time of year. So I'm pretty familiar
2 with all the equipment and the electricity draw and
3 where the bill should be. I watch pretty carefully over
4 the four meters that are located on the property.

5 When the bill was a lot less than I was
6 expecting, you know, obviously I was pretty happy about
7 that. Three, four months later whenever the grand bill
8 came in and it was \$7,000 that needed to be paid
9 immediately, that was not a great event for the
10 business. It was difficult to kind of manage that.

11 I went down here to the Joplin corporate
12 office to speak with them directly. They knew of the
13 problem, but they couldn't tell me anything about the
14 problem. All they told me is the bill needs to be paid
15 as soon as possible. They did say that they weren't
16 going to shut off the electric, which was great, but
17 still being hit with a bill like that all of a sudden
18 was difficult to manage.

19 I'd be remiss if I didn't say that Liberty has
20 treated us well as far as boots on the ground goes.
21 We've had lightning strikes. We've had various
22 instances occur where we've had power outages that
23 needed to be dealt with in a timely fashion and the
24 people on the ground have always responded well. But
25 the billing is obviously a concerning issue. And

1 whenever I initially came here, like I said, I thought
2 it was an isolated event. So I was a little surprised
3 whenever I found out that Liberty was asking for a 40
4 percent increase in rates when they can't even get the
5 billing right. To come here and find out that this was
6 a widespread event and they're still asking for 40
7 percent increase, I went from like slightly surprised to
8 just kind of shocked. And that's really my sentiment.

9 You know, one of the key points brought up
10 tonight that I hadn't thought of was the elderly
11 population. We are dealing with hotter temperatures as
12 everybody has experienced today and yesterday. I think
13 the elderly are far more likely to turn their
14 thermostats down in the winters and turn them up in the
15 summers to unbearable temperatures rather than go
16 through a hard to manage online portal where they have
17 to jump through a bunch of hoops to qualify for the
18 programs that were mentioned a few times tonight by
19 Liberty's personnel. So that's really the take home. I
20 echo the sentiment of Public Counsel in that there's
21 really no reason to raise the rates when you can't bill
22 accurately for today's service. Thank you for your
23 time.

24 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Calliccoat. I
25 appreciate that. We do have a question.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Just a couple hopefully. You
2 indicated you had billing issues. When did that occur?

3 MR. CALLICOAT: That occurred last summer
4 during the months of April, May, June and July.

5 MR. WILLIAMS: It's resolved now?

6 MR. CALLICOAT: Yes, sir, it's resolved now.
7 It was resolved last year.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: When did you get the
9 resolution?

10 MR. CALLICOAT: We resolved it quickly to try
11 to get it off our desk. But it was difficult to manage.
12 So the whole process I guess took about five months.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: Well, I'm not talking -- I
14 don't know -- I'm trying to get at when there was an
15 issue about the billings not taking -- well, first of
16 all, let's just start with when you got the billing
17 straightened out versus when you got payment worked out
18 to your satisfaction.

19 MR. CALLICOAT: I got the billing issue kind
20 of straightened out after the grand bill -- between the
21 grand bill coming of like almost \$7,000, I think, and
22 getting it sorted out took about 30 days.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: When was the big bill?

24 MR. CALLICOAT: The big bill came, I believe,
25 in July, July or August of last year.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

2 MR. CALLICOAT: One more note. Like I
3 mentioned, I watch all of the equipment very closely. I
4 heard somebody else mention tonight that they have a
5 concern about the lack of accuracy with the electricity
6 consumption. I share that concern, because, again, like
7 I know how much electricity these pieces of equipment
8 pull and the amount that we were billed during the same
9 time of year like each following year is inconsistent
10 and I have no explanation for that.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: I will follow with one more.
12 Have you had any subsequent billing issues that you're
13 aware of at least?

14 MR. CALLICOAT: Not that I am aware of, no,
15 sir.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

17 MR. CALLICOAT: Yes, sir.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Appreciate
19 you being here tonight. Sondra Oliver. Sondra Oliver.

20 MS. CHOATE: Christine Choate (phonetic
21 spelling).

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Christine Choate, please come
23 on down.

24 MS. CHOATE: Hello.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Let me get you sworn in. Do

1 you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are
2 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and
3 nothing but the truth?

4 MS. CHOATE: So help me God and yes, I
5 believe.

6 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, ma'am. I
7 appreciate that. And please go ahead and give your
8 comments to the Commission.

9 MS. CHOATE: The first thing I'd like to say
10 is something that's happening right this second. The
11 Liberty attorney has been on her phone playing Candy
12 Crush or whatever she's doing showing nothing but
13 disinterest and respect for the people of this
14 community. On top of that, when you go to your boss and
15 you ask for a raise, I've been taught, although I'm
16 almost 70 and it's been a hundred years ago, that you
17 explain to your boss how invaluable you are to them and
18 what you can do for them and how you deserve that raise.

19 With all this money that has been spent on
20 electric poles and better grids and all that stuff, up
21 until two days ago I'm still getting power outages. Two
22 days ago a power outage. Why should I give you a raise
23 for not providing the service you have promised? The
24 last meeting we had 30, 40 days ago I told some things
25 about this situation going on and people were concerned.

1 I got multiple business cards. I got them from Liberty.
2 I got them from the society here. And I have written
3 letters to the Commission.

4 The letter I wrote to the Commission was the
5 same thing the other lady did. And well, we contacted
6 Liberty and they said they're correct, so there's
7 nothing we can do. Just because they say they're
8 correct doesn't mean they are correct and something
9 should be done.

10 I have lost over \$5,000 worth of my
11 refrigerators, my TV that's almost the size of a sign
12 above your head. I'm losing them. I'm having to repay
13 for them. And nobody is helping me pay for that. I'm
14 still paying my electric bill. Not only on time but I
15 make sure it's always paid early.

16 I'm on social security. I finally retired. I
17 was a nurse in this area for 40 years serving this
18 community. I got a raise. I was ecstatic. I got a
19 raise. It was a quarter an hour and that was for a
20 nurse.

21 People are coming into our ERs because I've
22 been both an ER and a surgical nurse, because they can't
23 adjust their heat because they can't afford it. When
24 we're taking care of 80 and 90 year olds with heat
25 exhaustion and they're dying from it or because during

1 the winter their heaters explode because they're coming
2 in with burns and we're taking care of them. But they
3 want a pay raise. And I'm still not getting electricity
4 on a regular basis. They want to keep money in their
5 pocket. One month I got seven bills. All seven bills
6 were for zero dollars. Seriously? They could save
7 money on the five pages every time they sent me that
8 paper. That's ridiculous. And yes, it's a turnover of
9 systems.

10 Okay. One month is acceptable. Three months
11 of being told you don't owe anything and you're getting
12 five bills in every month is ridiculous. It's not
13 acceptable. I'm paying for that paperwork, not them.

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Choate. If you
15 could finish your thought and we do have questions.

16 MS. CHOATE: Yeah, I'd be glad to finish. I
17 got these and one that I left at home from all of you,
18 including the letter from the state, that nothing has
19 been addressed. Nothing. I don't trust you, I don't
20 trust them, and I'm trying very hard of the good things
21 I've heard about the two of you to trust you, but it's
22 still very limited because I think that 10 percent out
23 of that 40 percent they want, that 10 percent they want
24 to give their stockholders, you guys are stockholders
25 and you're not going to do shit about it.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: I appreciate you, Ms. Choate.
2 I appreciate you being here tonight, but we do have a
3 question for you.

4 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Thank you for coming back.
5 You said that you have power outages?

6 MS. CHOATE: Yes.

7 MR. VANDERGRIFF: What were they about? Do
8 you know?

9 MS. CHOATE: Do you mean what were they about,
10 how they were caused? No, because I'm not an
11 electrician. I've been told over the phone that a
12 squirrel was in the transformer. I've been told someone
13 has hit a telephone pole. I've been told really, nobody
14 else is complaining. I mean, sometimes my power outage
15 may only be five minutes. Sometimes my power outage may
16 be three or four hours. I don't know why. I'm just
17 told they're working on it.

18 MR. VANDERGRIFF: All right. And you said
19 that you're still going through them now?

20 MS. CHOATE: Today is, what, Monday. So it
21 was actually last week, about three, four days ago. I
22 thought it was two. I'm probably not keeping track as
23 well. I actually write it down on my calendar that I
24 have at home. I write down the time that it goes off
25 and I write down the time it comes back on on the day it

1 happens.

2 MR. VANDERGRIFF: And you said that you did
3 contact the Commission for an informal complaint?

4 MS. CHOATE: Yes. Like I said, I've written a
5 letter to the Jeff City Commission people. I think
6 that's you guys. That's what I think. And I was told
7 that we contacted Liberty and they say everything is
8 good. So as far as we're concerned, everything is good.
9 No investigation. Just -- I guess that is an
10 investigation. Hey, we asked. They're okay with it, so
11 we are too.

12 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Thank you.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: I have a couple.

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Go ahead, Mr. Williams.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: You said you were at some event
16 before. Was that one of the townhalls that the
17 Commission held for the -- well, Commission staff held
18 for --

19 MS. CHOATE: It was here June 10, I think, was
20 the date.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Then my other question pertains
22 to whenever you got the billing issues. What time frame
23 was that?

24 MS. CHOATE: I would say the same time
25 everybody else did. I just kept looking at them. I

1 called and said why do I have five bills. The first
2 bill had an amount on it. The other four have a zero.
3 Why are you telling me I owe zero amount. They were
4 like oh, it's just our computers. I do have two meters
5 on my property, and that seems to confuse them. I don't
6 know why having two meters confuses them. We get fuel
7 surcharges on both bills so to speak. It all comes in
8 one package but they separate everything. It's the same
9 amount of time to get to my house when they have to come
10 check something. It's the same amount of time that they
11 get their fuel from where it is to make the energy go.
12 Why am I being charged twice for that? Well, because we
13 can. That's one of their favorite words, because we
14 can.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm still going to try to tie
16 down a time frame a little. Was it last summer? Was it
17 the spring?

18 MS. CHOATE: That would be just after the
19 first of the year this year that I got all those bills.
20 I got them for a couple months.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Choate. We
23 have Joey Burton, Laura Barbee and then the next name I
24 have is Dale Cardwell. Are you Laura?

25 MS. BARBEE: Laura.

1 JUDGE HATCHER: Barbee?

2 MS. BARBEE: Barbee.

3 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. I thought I might
4 have stated that wrong. Let me swear you in. Do you
5 solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are
6 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and
7 nothing but the truth?

8 MS. BARBEE: I affirm.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And if you would
10 please state and spell your name for the record.

11 MS. BARBEE: Laura Barbee, L-a-u-r-a. Barbee
12 is B-a-r-b-e-e.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead.

14 MS. BARBEE: I was not sure I was going to
15 actually speak tonight. Hearing the others having
16 similar issues. My mother last year March through the
17 end of August, August 31, she was not getting billed.
18 She was calling. She's one of those people she has to
19 pay her bill like right on time when it's due. She
20 doesn't want anything late. That's just kind of how
21 she's engrained.

22 We have called them multiple times over and
23 over and over again. We'll get a bill out. We'll do
24 this. We'll do that to no avail. She was told to speak
25 to managers, to supervisors. She was said call this

1 number, go back to -- go in office, see what you can do
2 in office. Basically she went in circles. She's old,
3 she's elderly and she's disabled. It's just too much.
4 Why is she having to do the work of this company. You
5 know, why should any of us have to do the billing work
6 of this company. We're all having to. She also had
7 incorrect bills.

8 I know I've had one personally. I'll have to
9 show you the graph. It was three times higher just in
10 one month and I had lived at my house since 2016, new
11 built home, and it was three times the rate and they
12 just says oh, well, you just must have used more
13 electricity or what was the weather like that day. Was
14 it warm, was it cold, yada, yada. It's the same thing.
15 It's always oh, the weather must be. It must have been
16 when it was cold out. It's cold every winter. It's hot
17 every summer. And my bills, you know, are pretty
18 consistent, but I've had two that were just like
19 outlandishly ridiculous, you could tell that there was a
20 problem. Sorry to digress.

21 I'll go back to my mom. When she would call,
22 we would ask how are we going to know how much my bill
23 is, can I send a payment. She was so worried about
24 trying to make a payment and not owe anything or have
25 occurring bill. And she just didn't get any answers.

1 She went in circles. It took five and a half months.
2 Then she got multiple bills. Like she was getting
3 inundated with bills, different amounts here. She says
4 well, how did they come to this amount, how did they
5 come to that amount, why do I have -- it's just a mess.

6 For a company who's wanting to increase our
7 rates, you would think that you all would get your ducks
8 in a row with your billing. If you can't do your
9 numbers, then, I mean, we all think your 39 percent or
10 whatever it's going to equate, if you can't even
11 mitigate your billing, something simple as that, get a
12 new accountant, get a new company, do something. It
13 doesn't take a rocket scientist. Why are we still
14 having the same problems? A lot of people have left.
15 But the problem has been going on since last year I know
16 for many.

17 And then I also wanted to touch base on low
18 income. You know, you're all killing. These rates are
19 killing low-income people. I myself, I'm disabled. I
20 don't want to really announce that to the world, but
21 unfortunately that's my circumstance. I'm a single
22 parent. So every time these rates go up you all don't
23 think -- you all aren't thinking about us because that
24 takes food out of our homes. It takes away from my
25 child to be able to do an activity. It takes away from

1 a lot. It's hard. I mean, I'm not trying to preach to
2 the choir or play victim or woe is me. Life is life.
3 You suck it up. We keep moving on obviously. But the
4 amount that you're asking for is outlandish. I
5 strongly, strongly ask that you deny what they're asking
6 for.

7 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Barbee, I need you to wrap
8 up.

9 MS. BARBEE: The other thing with the low
10 income -- I'm sorry. I'm all over the place. I'm
11 tired. With the low-income help like Liheap and things
12 like that that you tell us to go get that. That goes
13 away really quick. As soon as they might get green
14 lighted, okay, we've got money, those things are gone
15 like that. So then what do you expect people to do when
16 there's no funds to help them. I personally do all of
17 my laundry, anything that has to take electricity --

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Barbee, I'm really sorry
19 but we're getting rather lot.

20 MS. BARBEE: I know. A lot of us are
21 adjusting the times that we do things into the overnight
22 hours where it's peak hours. I mean, to try to offset
23 our bills. I'm sorry. There's so much. Sorry
24 everyone. Get your bills in order.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Barbee, thank you so much.

1 Were there any questions?

2 MR. WILLIAMS: My only question is whether the
3 billing issues are resolved or not.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Barbee, we had a question
5 if your billing issues have been resolved.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm asking whether or not your
7 mother's billing issue and your billing issue have been
8 resolved.

9 MS. BARBEE: Mine has not. My mother's has
10 because she moved out. She was trying to get her bill
11 taken care of because she was moving out. It was August
12 31 of last year. And so she needed to have that final
13 bill to pay everything because she actually lived in an
14 apartment. So she had to have her stuff done so the new
15 tenant can come in her place. She was still dealing
16 with it in September. So it is now done. But to the
17 length that we had to go and which she had to do was
18 just too much.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: I understand. Thank you.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. The next name I
21 have on my list, and I have a total of seven witnesses
22 left, Dale Cardwell. Dale Cardwell. Dakota Kuhel,
23 K-u-h-e-l. It could be K-u-b-e-l. Ellie Wolsey. The
24 next names are Lisa Baldwin and Rachel Braun. You are
25 Ellie Wolsey?

1 MR. WOLSEY: Yes.

2 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Let me swear you
3 in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony
4 you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth
5 and nothing but the truth?

6 MR. WOLSEY: I do.

7 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could
8 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

9 MR. WOLSEY: Ellie Wolsey, E-l-l-i-e
10 W-o-l-s-e-y.

11 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. And please go
12 ahead with your comments.

13 MR. WOLSEY: I'd like to start off by saying
14 I've seen a lot of lying here today, a lot of lying from
15 Liberty. They've hurt us as a people, all of us in
16 Missouri. Every county that they operate in they've
17 raised the rates beyond what's comprehensible especially
18 in comparison to other competitors in the state which we
19 don't have an opportunity to receive power from. It's a
20 tragedy.

21 I've grown up with nothing but economic
22 downturn. Born in 2004, right into the housing market
23 crash. 2016 happened. 2020 happened. And now every
24 turn I make, every time I try to improve my life I have
25 another corporation breathing down my neck like Liberty

1 seeking to suck money from me for nothing but, what,
2 investor gain. That's all we care about now? That's
3 all we've ever been told. It's been hammered into our
4 heads since birth. Work for the investor. Work for the
5 investor. We're seeing it first hand here today. A
6 violation of not only monopoly laws but of basic human
7 decency. It's vile. We see them taking a problem that
8 they can afford to solve on their own. They're a
9 multi-hundred million dollar company. They can fix
10 their stuff. They don't need our money to do that. We
11 already gave them our money. Yet they seek here to
12 raise our rates by 40 percent to pay for maybe 45
13 projects which can easily be handled within their profit
14 margins, yet they refuse to adjust for that and instead
15 they seek to suck more money out of us so that they can
16 raise the money that their investors make. They say it
17 out plainly. They want 10 percent more.

18 They're making hundreds of millions of dollars
19 and they want more from us. They want to bleed us. I
20 live with my grandma, and I'm the only reason she can
21 make it by. She makes \$2,000 a month. Her overall
22 expenses including our Liberty bill \$2,100 a month. I
23 have to make up that difference. I work a minimum wage
24 job. I suffer every day so that others around me can
25 survive.

1 I work with Hearts and Hammers building ramps
2 for those who can't afford to do it for themselves.
3 What do you do at Liberty? What do you do for our
4 community? You suck us and you bleed us dry as if we're
5 nothing to you, we're trash, and it's a tragedy. That's
6 all I have to say.

7 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Wolsey. I
8 appreciate you being here and hearing your comments
9 tonight. Lisa Baldwin. Thank you, Ms. Baldwin. Let me
10 swear you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
11 testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the
12 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

13 MS. BALDWIN: Yes, sir, I do.

14 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could
15 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

16 MS. BALDWIN: Okay. My name is Lisa Baldwin,
17 L-i-s-a B-a-l-d-w-i-n.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead
19 with your comments.

20 MS. BALDWIN: I'm a teacher from Neosho. I
21 get paid once a month. And I'm kind of confused as to
22 why Liberty needs to raise 30, 40 percent. My bills
23 have jumped significantly since the billing system
24 switchover of last summer.

25 In August, I realized that I didn't get a

1 bill. And as someone who gets paid once a month, that
2 was kind of important to me. So I called them. They
3 said oh, we've had a few people fall through the cracks,
4 we're working on it, we'll get the glitch worked out and
5 we'll send you a bill. Don't worry. When you get your
6 bill, we'll work with you. I said you know what, I have
7 solar panels, my bill is supposed to be \$13 a month to
8 pay for my meter. If you don't mind, I'm going to go
9 ahead and keep sending you money and that way when we
10 get on the other side of this I'll have a credit. So I
11 kept paying. And I thought well, I'm going to pay \$30,
12 \$40. I'd just kind of look and see what I had extra.
13 One month I paid 50. One month I paid 100. I just
14 didn't want a big bill when we came out on the other
15 side. So that was August 2024.

16 January 2025, I get the shock of my life when
17 bills start coming in. I start getting emails about my
18 bills. When it was all said and done, they said I owed
19 them \$1,400. That's like over half my paycheck. I
20 mean, I was appalled. I just didn't know what to do.
21 So I started calling. I spent hours on the phone
22 reaching out to people. I have filed a complaint with
23 the Commission. I sent in my testimony. I called -- I
24 talked to people out of New York, people out of Iowa. I
25 couldn't ever seem to get a hold of anybody locally.

1 When you're teaching school, you don't have
2 time during the day to spend hours on the phone. And by
3 the time you get done tutoring and you get home, the
4 offices are closed. So my bill is still not resolved,
5 just to answer that question.

6 And as a solar customer, like I said, my bill
7 was supposed to be around \$13 a month. Of course we had
8 months where we used extra energy and maybe our bill
9 might be 30 or \$40 but nothing astronomical. Since
10 January, my bills are regularly running over \$100. I
11 just checked the app. In July, my bill is sitting at
12 \$277 for this month and I pay a \$275 solar panel payment
13 every month. So you figure out what my electricity is.
14 It's ridiculous.

15 I live in about around 2,100 square foot home.
16 It's not elaborate, I promise you. So anyway, my bill
17 regularly runs over \$100 a month. I get regular
18 disconnection notices which completely stresses me out.
19 I'm someone who I pride myself on paying my bills,
20 having good credit, being a good standing citizen in our
21 community.

22 I cannot imagine a 40 percent increase. My
23 increase for next year as a school teacher at Neosho was
24 less than 2 percent. My husband's company said they
25 couldn't afford raises. So he got zero percent. A 30,

1 40 percent, it's just ridiculous. My neighborhood has
2 had six houses go up for sale in the last 90 days just
3 on the street I drive down to to get my house. My
4 realtor tells me that people are specifically asking
5 whether a house is in the Liberty district or the
6 New-Mac district. They are not buying houses in the
7 Liberty district because they can't afford the
8 utilities. How do you think that makes me feel?

9 We actually have a realtor coming tomorrow.
10 We are seriously considering selling our house. We
11 bought it three years ago in September of 2022, and we
12 can no longer afford the utilities. Like it's just
13 ridiculous.

14 I heard earlier that there are systems in
15 place for low-income families. Is Liberty prepared for
16 the people who cannot no longer hang onto the middle
17 class status and we fall into that poverty status.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Ms. Baldwin.

19 MS. BALDWIN: Yes. I do have major concerns
20 for my low-income students. And the last thing I want
21 to say is I'm expected to balance my budget and fiscally
22 responsible for my financial decisions whether they're
23 good or bad. I think the Commission should expect
24 Liberty to do the same. Thank you.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Baldwin. I

1 appreciate you being here. I don't see any questions.
2 Thank you. We're down to three witnesses and it is
3 currently 10:30. Rachel Braun. I appreciate everyone
4 staying to the end of the hearing. Terry Meyers and Ray
5 Cooper. Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Let me swear you in.
6 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you
7 are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and
8 nothing but the truth?

9 MR. COOPER: I do so help me God.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please state
11 and spell your name for our court reporter.

12 MR. COOPER: Ray Cooper, R-a-y C-o-o-p-e-r.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please go
14 ahead with your comments.

15 MR. COOPER: I've only got one comment.
16 Monopoly, monopoly, monopoly. If I could go to New-Mac,
17 I would. I only live a little over a mile from
18 Carthage. If I could attach to them, I would. If I
19 could also go to Barton County. But they've got the
20 monopoly and you guys control it. So don't give them
21 this.

22 I'm retired. I'm lucky. I worked for
23 EaglePicher for 30 years. So I've got a good
24 retirement. I lost my wife two years ago. So I lost
25 \$900 there. But I can still afford what they're

1 charging other than I've got a well that is just the
2 well on a meter, not the house. I normally have 13 to
3 \$15 a month. This month I got the bill, \$53. Why? I
4 could understand in the wintertime when the heater is on
5 to keep the well from freezing. Then it's up 30 to \$40.
6 But \$53 in this type weather. They are ripping
7 everybody off. Thank you.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Cooper. I
9 appreciate you being here and hearing from you tonight.
10 That is the end of our list of witnesses. As I said, I
11 will call for anyone who is still wanting to testify. I
12 have two hands raised. I have three hands raised. I
13 saw you first. If you two would come down, you'll be
14 number three. I'm going to swear you in first and then
15 I will ask your name and spelling just like the rest.
16 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you
17 are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and
18 nothing but the truth?

19 MR. ALLEN: I do.

20 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could
21 please state and spell your name for our court reporter,
22 please.

23 MR. ALLEN: Joshua Allen, J-o-s-h-u-a
24 A-l-l-e-n.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Go

1 ahead with your comments.

2 MR. ALLEN: I didn't know what I was going to
3 say tonight. Didn't know if I was going to come up here
4 tonight. Glad I did. I learned a lot. I've known a
5 lot about Liberty/Empire for years. Always keep that in
6 my head of what's going on in the world. You have to.

7 We're all citizens. We're all up here saying
8 not to raise rates. I haven't heard anybody come up
9 here say raise our rates. We've had our rates raised
10 over and over and over again. I have a store in Joplin.
11 I don't turn my air conditioner on. It's too expensive
12 to run it. Other business owners on Main Street in
13 fact, other businesses in Joplin, they don't turn their
14 air conditioners on. They don't turn their heaters on.
15 I don't turn my heater on in the wintertime. We can't
16 afford it. Many of our businesses can't afford it.
17 Homes can't afford it. Why are you doing that? None of
18 these other towns are doing that that have other utility
19 companies. Can we just be reasonable to the citizens.
20 That's it.

21 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. I
22 appreciate you being here and waiting until the end.
23 You alright?

24 MR. HARRISON: Oh, yeah.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: I'll swear you in.

1 MR. HARRISON: When you get to my age,
2 everything trips and falls. My name is Dan Harrison.
3 It's D-a-n H-a-r-r-i-s-o-n.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Harrison, let me swear you
5 in real quick. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
6 testimony you're about to give will be the truth, the
7 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

8 MR. HARRISON: Yes.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. Please go ahead
10 with your comment.

11 MR. HARRISON: I'll be real short. I took a
12 little time this morning I had a little time so I run on
13 to the computer started looking up things that I wanted
14 to understand about the company who owns Empire or
15 Liberty. Algonquin is I guess how you pronounce it or
16 Algonquin.

17 JUDGE HATCHER: I think it's Algonquin.

18 MR. HARRISON: Algonquin. Okay. One of the
19 things that kind of concerned me after I was looking at
20 it is, and especially right now, I wasn't going to speak
21 but I've listened to all the people. They all are
22 asking you not to approve this.

23 In their latest Investor Update dated June 3,
24 2025, I'm sorry I'm ten years behind or so. But on June
25 3, 2025, they called it Extra Investor Update for their

1 year. In that update, they're explaining to their
2 investors the executing of operational and regulatory
3 fundamental expected to drive earned -- returns equity
4 uplift. What they've done is made a chart stating how
5 they're going to over the next two years, '26, '27 --
6 '25, '26 and '27 starting at the mid year of '25, they
7 gain 8.5 percent for their investor -- the number one
8 person for that, number one, is Empire. They already
9 assumed they've got the raise that they're asking for
10 because in here it says the up rate case for Missouri
11 Empire Electric will be the number one issue in 2026.

12 So my question to us is why would the people
13 who's asking for the increase already be publishing
14 something that they think they are going to get or have
15 been given and not back off or have you already
16 presenting it to us that it's already in place, because
17 they go for that to the next one in '27, which also says
18 Empire plus California Pepco will be the next one.

19 So it's already in their update that they're
20 planning on this increase as presented. That's all I
21 have. Thank you.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Harris. I
23 appreciate you being here hearing your comments. Sir,
24 go ahead. Let me go ahead and swear you in real fast.
25 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony

1 you're about to give will be the truth, the whole truth
2 and nothing but the truth?

3 MR. TILLEY: I do.

4 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could
5 please state and spell your name for the court reporter.

6 MR. TILLEY: My name is Frank Tilley,
7 F-r-a-n-k T-i-l-l-e-y.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Tilley. Please
9 go ahead with your comments.

10 MR. TILLEY: I'm a business owner for almost
11 40 years and most of the concerns of the business owners
12 are my concerns so I'm not going to really go into that
13 end of it. I don't understand how a company as large as
14 they are cannot run an accounting firm that can handle
15 their billings. I've had the same occasion as the other
16 people where they give you the baloney about well, we're
17 changing our accounting system. You get three or four
18 bills and four months later if you spend two weeks on
19 the phone with them you might get your answer.

20 Finally, some of us get answers, which I'm not
21 a quitter. That's why I sat in the chair. Okay. I'm
22 going to get an answer. I'd like to get answers from
23 you, but I guess we can't ask you questions. We can
24 just give us, or excuse me, give you our occasions.

25 I've had occasions where we're paying for

1 services that we used to get and now we don't get now
2 that we have a new company that owns, Liberty owns. I
3 don't get tree trimming any longer. I get service
4 outages because there's no trimming done. I get
5 trespassing when I'm told that I go -- I work for FEMA
6 -- worked for FEMA. It looks like we're going to get
7 cut out next, you know. I don't know whether that will
8 happen or not.

9 When I would go away, I would put my neighbor
10 in charge of the property to let people on or not come
11 on the property. Well, we had an occasion where a power
12 pole got knocked down. Well, the people came in to work
13 on the power pole. They didn't get permission. They
14 just knocked the gate down, which all they had to do was
15 reach around the back of the pole that was on a nail. I
16 mean, it wasn't like it was locked because you're not
17 supposed to lock your property without giving someone a
18 key for access.

19 Well, they made big ruts in the property and,
20 of course, they don't do their own landscaping. They
21 subcontract it out. The guy come in. He half did the
22 yard, still left the ruts. I ended up fixing the ruts
23 because I don't want to -- I don't have the time to
24 spend six or eight calls, ten calls like everybody else.
25 You can't spend -- When you're a business person, you're

1 trying to make money. You don't make money on the phone
2 talking to something that is a problem that they should
3 be addressing.

4 Like I said, the other things that we've
5 talked about about investments and losses, again,
6 engineering and whatever, that's their responsibility.
7 That's not us to pay for their faulty visions. I don't
8 understand that either. Really that's all that I have
9 to say, sir.

10 JUDGE HATCHER: We do have a question for you,
11 Mr. Tilley. We do have a question. If you can go ahead
12 and go to the microphone, we'll make sure and get that
13 on the transcript.

14 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Is this for a business or
15 residential address, the tree trimming?

16 MR. TILLEY: That was for -- now it's
17 residential. Okay. Yes. It used to be a business but
18 when I went to work for FEMA it became residential.
19 That's another issue which I keep getting billed as a
20 commercial and I'm not. I'm a residence.

21 MR. VANDERGRIFF: How long have you been
22 incorrectly billed as commercial even though it's
23 residential?

24 MR. TILLEY: Probably five years. I guess
25 that's a different rate. That's why I've called them

1 and told them. It keeps coming out as a business.

2 MR. VANDERGRIFF: And you said that the
3 services are -- you're not getting services for tree
4 trimming any more?

5 MR. TILLEY: No. There's trees all over the
6 line when the wind blows hard.

7 MR. VANDERGRIFF: How often do you think --
8 how often does that happen?

9 MR. TILLEY: About every other month I'd say.
10 And sometimes, you know, it will be not for a couple
11 months and then you'll get two or three occasions where
12 it happens frequently.

13 MR. VANDERGRIFF: How long are your outages
14 when they happen?

15 MR. TILLEY: That varies too. It will be a
16 day sometimes. But most of the time they get out there
17 and get it serviced. I'm not going to say that's a
18 major concern. The tree trimming is because it's going
19 to become more of a concern as the trees get worse and
20 worse.

21 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Thank you. No further
22 questions for me.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Mr. Tilley. I
24 appreciate you being here tonight. I will ask the
25 audience one last time for any other persons who would

1 like to testify. Okay. We've got -- you've already
2 testified. Let's give everybody a chance because we're
3 coming up on -- we're getting close to eleven o'clock at
4 night. Sir, come on down. Thank you. Let me swear you
5 in first. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
6 testimony you're about to give will be the truth, the
7 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

8 MR. BARKER: I do.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Please state and spell your
10 name for the court reporter.

11 MR. BARKER: Randall Barker, R-a-n-d-a-l-l
12 B-a-r-k-e-r.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Please go
14 ahead and give your comments to the Commission.

15 MR. BARKER: I already have comments with the
16 PSC. So you probably all have read them. That's
17 officially been documented. I don't have a formal
18 complaint. I've been working with Mr. Geoff Marke. And
19 I have worked with the attorney general and had
20 correspondence with Liberty back and forth.

21 It all started back when I bought my home a
22 year and a half ago approximately and didn't know it was
23 Liberty, got Liberty. It's been a nightmare ever since.
24 Never had such a high bill. I don't think my bill is
25 correct. And after living there long enough, they first

1 came out, because I had a power outage I believe it was.
2 And I addressed trees and a power outage. They came
3 out. You've got flickering lights. EOC came out.
4 Liberty came out. They checked everything out. They
5 said the trees are fine for now. If there's a problem,
6 call later. I said these trees are going to be need to
7 be trimmed. That was it on that.

8 After living there a while, I realized that I
9 was having what they say flashing lights, flickering
10 lights, power outages. I started experiencing them
11 consistently.

12 I take care of an elderly woman right down the
13 hill from me. She has the very same issue. So this was
14 about me to start with, and it turned into me being an
15 advocate for the area. And the elderly, the old lady,
16 she's 89 years old. She's got limited income, all the
17 stuff we talked about that's in issue. And so times
18 went on. I had consistent power outages four to six
19 times a month for the first year of living there for a
20 year and a half. They've changed transmission lines and
21 they got a little better.

22 Now they've changed them back to Joplin again.
23 And it's back to I've had four outages this month, three
24 outages last month. I believe it was three or two
25 before that on the month before that. Still having

1 consistent power outages. And it's gotten worse since
2 they hooked back up to Joplin.

3 So in regard to that, I went around in the
4 beginning. I'm a volunteer firefighter. I serve the
5 people. I see the elderly. I see them suffering like
6 all those other statements. So I won't go on about
7 that. But you're going to kill and harm these people
8 and you already are at your rate now let alone
9 increasing it. My statement is I'm totally against any
10 rate increase. And I've been strongly about the Asbury
11 plant that Liberty does not deserve and I don't know how
12 in the good heart of the PSC or anybody involved with
13 it, governors and the legislative body can in their
14 hearts do this to customers, especially elderly and
15 disabled, poor, less fortunate people, let alone anybody
16 well off.

17 So I went around passing out attorney general
18 forms. I believe that's what she was referring to
19 earlier, the form that has correspondence with Ms. Diana
20 Carter. That's my main statement. I'm still having
21 power outages. I don't believe my bill is right. I
22 believe the meters are bad. And I have an elderly lady
23 that's an advocate that spoke with me, says that she's
24 had a lineman, which I won't say a name because they
25 love to fire people, that the meters are junk. And so

1 that's another issue.

2 I think it's part of the billing problem
3 besides their firmware, hardware, software and their
4 coding and such. That's pretty much it. I made my
5 other statements when the PSC was in with the attorney
6 general. I've called the governor. Spoke with
7 Mr. Geoff Marke. That's it. Thank you.

8 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. If you'd
9 stick around, we have a couple questions. Mr. Williams
10 was first.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm curious about the time
12 frame. You indicated you recently had outages.

13 MR. BARKER: Yes, sir.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: When did they start? When did
15 you start experiencing outages?

16 MR. BARKER: Just recently or since I lived
17 there?

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Well, when did you move there?

19 MR. BARKER: September, October of '23.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: And then you said you don't
21 believe your bill is right. Has it always been that
22 case or is it recent?

23 MR. BARKER: I believe the first bill was an
24 estimate because I wasn't even living there and just
25 moving in and not using electricity. I mean, much

1 electricity and it's a fairly efficient home. So there
2 was a lot going on in there. It was the time of year
3 where it wasn't hot.

4 MR. WILLIAMS: So like September 2023 you
5 think the billing is wrong?

6 MR. BARKER: Yes, somewhere right in there we
7 closed.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: Mr. Vandergriff.

10 MR. VANDERGRIFF: You said you spoke to PSC.

11 MR. BARKER: Yes.

12 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Was that today or was it --

13 MR. BARKER: No. I spoke with PSC because
14 it's on the bill from Liberty. And I've made statements
15 for my lady that I take care of next door. She gave me
16 permission to speak for her. PSC has failed me. I put
17 that in my statement that the front line PSC I've called
18 20 to 40 times that first year probably. I did a
19 document request and I came back with two and there was
20 nothing to speak of there at all. It was I could talk
21 forever. And then Ms. Nancy (phonetic spelling) did a
22 deeper dive, and she found three quick hits. I believe
23 that's right. So five total out of 20 to 40 calls was
24 documented, because I told them that I don't write and
25 read and spell well so if they could take my statement

1 and put it down and put it in the record my comments
2 that I would appreciate it. I thought that was done.
3 It never happened. The only documentation I have is
4 with the attorney general besides the last stuff that I
5 sent to the PSC that's underneath this case file.

6 MR. VANDERGRIFF: So when you say you spoke to
7 the PSC, that was an informal complaint?

8 MR. BARKER: It was public comments that, you
9 know, like the tree guy had been out, the power went out
10 for -- I probably left this part out. I had this short
11 power outage I called them because they want to always
12 twist the words. It's one to seven seconds. I did a
13 claim once. They said it was only seven seconds. That
14 seven seconds is the worst thing on electronics,
15 sensitive electronics. Many people have testified or
16 made statements that they have this very same issue
17 losing TVs, appliances, sensitive electronics.

18 Well, I've lost my meat in my freezer because
19 it's usually right after the power flash or power outage
20 that's only a few seconds, not a minute even. It's
21 seconds and it pops back on. It jacks with your stuff
22 and you've got to go reset it all. I've had other
23 things that's happened. I have lost a freezer full of
24 meat and a freezer because of this.

25 MR. VANDERGRIFF: So just to be clear, you

1 haven't requested an informal or formal complaint yet?

2 MR. BARKER: I have an informal complaint form
3 at the house but I was told just to go ahead and send
4 the multiple ones. I've sent three or four public
5 comments and it's got the case number on. They said
6 that would work. So I haven't done the actual court
7 document that I have in the manila envelope.

8 MR. VANDERGRIFF: So public comment is a
9 little bit different than an informal complaint.

10 MR. BARKER: I understand.

11 MR. VANDERGRIFF: And a formal complaint is
12 where you can bring your case before the Commission and
13 request information that way.

14 MR. BARKER: I don't feel confident and don't
15 trust in what's going on with all of this as others have
16 expressed. And so I don't know that it's worth my time
17 and my time is very valuable to do it other than doing
18 what I've been doing. I've been to these townhalls. I
19 went to the Aurora one and then I've made my comments to
20 you in written form and here my testimony now. So
21 ballpark of it.

22 MR. VANDERGRIFF: Thank you. No further
23 questions from me.

24 MR. BARKER: Okay. Thank you.

25 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, sir. Appreciate

1 you being here and waiting through tonight. Last call
2 for witnesses. I'm sorry, sir. I'd have to open it up
3 to let everybody have a second chance. What you can do
4 is submit a written comment. It's online. You go to
5 the PSC website and you can click on a link that says
6 submit your comment. Just put down this case number and
7 that's ER-2024-0261.

8 Sir, I'll go ahead. Thank you. Submit your
9 comment in writing and we can add that to the public
10 comments that the Commission has received. Right now
11 we're going to go ahead -- we do have another comment.

12 MS. LOUM: I just have one quick statement.

13 JUDGE HATCHER: Please. Let me swear you in
14 first. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the
15 testimony you're about to give will be the truth, the
16 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

17 MS. LOUM: Yes, I do.

18 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you. If you could
19 please state and spell your name for our court reporter.

20 MS. LOUM: Jinnifer Loum, J-i-n-n-i-f-e-r,
21 last name Loum, L-o-u-m.

22 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, Ms. Loum. And
23 please go ahead with your comments.

24 MS. LOUM: I just would like you to take into
25 consideration the impact that this will have on young

1 families. We had a young lady here earlier this evening
2 that had concern about foster families and how that
3 could possibly increase the number of children that
4 would go into the foster care system. It will possibly
5 have an impact on learning and success of our students
6 in our communities, and that is all I have to say.

7 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you, ma'am.

8 MS. LOUM: Thank you.

9 JUDGE HATCHER: I don't see any questions. I
10 appreciate you sticking around to give your comments.
11 Last call for witnesses. Okay. Hearing none. We will
12 go ahead and conclude our hearing.

13 Commissioner Mitchell, would you like to make
14 any closing remarks?

15 COMMISSIONER MITCHELL: Sure. Thank you,
16 Judge Hatcher. On behalf of the entire Commission, we'd
17 like to thank you for being here tonight and thank you
18 for the robust turnout. You've provided us with some
19 very valuable information and insights into your
20 opinions and thoughts about this matter. They will be
21 taken under consideration and be taken to heart. So
22 thank you for being here. We appreciate it.

23 JUDGE HATCHER: Thank you all. I'd like to
24 echo the Commissioner's comments. And again if anyone
25 would like to make further comments or if you know

1 someone who could not be here tonight who'd like to make
2 comments, we are still accepting those comments on the
3 PSC website. That's psc.mo.gov. The link is labeled
4 submit comments in the upper right of the page. Please
5 just include this case number. That's ER-2024-0261. If
6 you need to contact the Office of the Public Counsel,
7 their email is mopco@opc.mo.gov. That's
8 mopco@opc.mo.gov.

9 Thank you all for attending tonight. This
10 hearing is adjourned and we are off the record.

11 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings concluded at 10:58
12 p.m.)

1	I N D E X	
2	Opening Remarks by Chair Hahn	Page 4
3	Witnesses:	
4	Tammy Walker	8
5	Maurice Filson	11
6	Scott Stutt	14
7	Charlie McGrew	15
8	Ron Petersen	17
9	Steve Brown	21
10	David Balaun	24
11	Rob Brown	26
12	Sue Doennig	30
13	Linda Truluck	32
14	Alena Allen	36
15	Dwayne Miller	38
16	Rita Anderson	41
17	Robert Schuchmann	45
18	Emily Wilson	48
19	Gary Powers	49
20	Max Myers	51
21	Dustin DeMier	53
22	John Ockert	57
23	Leslie Brown	61
24	Camille Lombardi-Olive	64
25	Eddie Johnson	70
26	Nathan Jones	73
	Debra Gaskill	76
	Dr. John Broom	79
	Angela York	82
	Daniel Humble	85
	Judith Augustinov	89
	Richard Gieser	91
	Amber Gonzalez	93
	Steve Reeder	97
	Jonathon Calliccoat	100
	Christy Choate	105
	Laura Barbee	111
	Ellie Wolsey	116
	Lisa Baldwin	118
	Ray Cooper	122
	Joshua Allen	124
	Dan Harrison	125
	Frank Tilley	127
	Randall Barker	131
	Jinnifer Loum	138
	Closing Remarks by Commissioner Mitchell	139

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

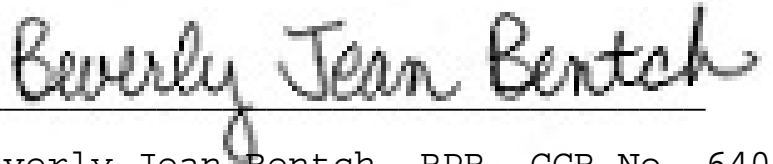
STATE OF MISSOURI)

COUNTY OF COLE)

I, Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing Public Service Local Public Hearing and that the transcript, pages 1 through 141, is a true record of my stenographic notes.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

Dated this 31st day of July, 2025.



Beverly Jean Bentch, RPR, CCR No. 640

\$	\$2 16:9	\$640 99:4	77:2,24,25	17.50 40:3
\$1 16:9 51:14	\$2,000 117:21	\$7,000 101:8	79:15 91:4,19	18 38:17,18
\$1,000 82:22	\$2,100 117:22	103:21	99:9 107:22,	19 39:8
87:10	\$20 27:23	\$70 54:16	23 109:19	
\$1,400 119:19	\$200 93:19	\$700 33:17	117:17	2
\$1,500 66:5	\$230 65:19	34:14 61:8,11	100 30:25	2 38:23 65:18
\$1,802,064	\$236,000	62:14	53:24 91:18,	120:24
10:4	42:7,8	\$80 38:24	19 119:13	2,100 120:15
\$1,900,249	\$24 52:11	\$90 38:25	106 30:25	2,395 22:3
40:16	\$275 120:12	\$900 36:17,18	10:00 64:5,6	2-bedroom
\$10 87:23	\$277 120:12	70:15,23,24	10:30 122:3	54:15
\$10,000 33:9	\$3,000 20:23	122:25	11 40:1 70:18	2.5 30:18
\$100 120:10,	\$30 55:4	\$950 89:19	12 40:2,17	2.7 30:22
17	119:11	\$951,000 10:1	52:13 79:16	20 15:16
\$11 52:12	\$31 22:25	\$963 10:14	80:16	55:16 60:9
\$11.49 40:1	39:16	\$978 9:24	12.7 79:24	92:12 135:18,
\$112 39:3	\$390,309 9:4		120 54:17	23
\$120 55:18	\$4,000 85:21	0	121 61:22	200 5:17 11:1
\$121.8 22:24	\$4.6 40:4	04 38:6	13 38:7 39:15	2003 82:1
\$13 119:7	\$40 64:15	1	87:24,25 88:6	83:6
120:7	119:12 120:9	1 52:14	123:2	2004 116:22
\$15 72:3	123:5	1,000 22:6	14 98:3	2009 80:13
123:3	\$400 89:20	1,200 77:12	14-year 97:21	2011 40:10
\$15.5 39:23	95:8	89:20	15 22:18 31:5	2016 112:10
\$150 33:25	\$5,000 106:10	1,300 70:15	39:7 47:10	116:23
73:16	\$5.6 42:6	1,500 22:7	15,000 100:25	2017 27:16,18
\$152.8 22:24	\$5.836 42:6	100:24	15.99 26:25	2020 64:24
\$16 39:15	\$50 73:19	1,600 34:25	150 11:1	116:23
\$160 39:20	\$500 54:22	66:6	152 23:1	2021 17:16
95:9	55:4	1.39 38:10	16 27:1 38:20	53:14 67:18
\$172 35:2	\$53 123:3,6	10 15:25	75:16 87:6	2022 53:14
\$19 39:20	\$600 82:20	51:12,25	16.8 38:9	64:16,24
	94:11	52:14,16	17 31:4 77:10	67:17 121:11
			79:18	2023 29:19
			17-day 70:13	42:6 55:17,19

64:17,25 99:4 135:4	<hr/> 3 <hr/>	39.45 64:14 391 39:22	5,400 22:6 5-star 33:1,6	7.89 97:25 98:5
2024 29:19 39:7 79:24 80:2,3 85:8, 15,18 91:19 93:11 98:23 119:15	3 53:13,15 85:21 91:20 125:23,25	<hr/> 4 <hr/>	5.2 23:6 5.6 42:6	70 10:3 55:18 105:16
2025 3:3 29:19 72:11 80:4 119:16 125:24,25	3,000 33:10 3,011 9:25	4 99:8 4,605 10:3 4-inch 47:1	50 19:13 22:13 38:14 76:23 77:13 119:13	74 9:3 82:19 74,560 79:24 74-year-old 41:16
2026 126:11	30 15:16 17:5 22:17 27:2 31:6 39:8 65:3 75:17,25 76:23 77:13 86:19 87:17, 25 103:22 105:24 118:22 120:9, 25 122:23 123:5	40 17:10 19:14 28:11 30:24 42:8 49:20 51:23 60:10 77:18 78:12 80:9, 20,22 89:21 91:3,5,6 95:8 102:3,6 105:24 106:17 107:23 117:12 118:22 120:22 121:1 127:11 135:18,23	500 28:20 64:12 77:15 54,000 38:20 55 30:24 56 64:8 5:00 71:5	75 9:21 76:22 76 49:18 79 32:18 7:30 3:4 7:35 3:1
2030 92:8	300 76:19 77:2	400 33:24 40s 64:18 44 22:12 40:3 45 22:12 28:11 76:22 117:12 48 9:19 48,000 38:17	<hr/> 6 <hr/>	<hr/> 8 <hr/>
21 3:3 38:4,9	31 22:8 111:17 115:12	400 33:24 40s 64:18 44 22:12 40:3 45 22:12 28:11 76:22 117:12 48 9:19 48,000 38:17	6,627 9:19 6,671 10:2 60 32:19 38:14,16,18 41:18 60:10 64:19 600 28:5,8 38:8 39:10,16 51:22,24 61,000 40:16 62 64:10 64 65:16 65102 5:18 67 42:14 6:00 64:6	8.5 126:7 8.8 39:24 80 17:19 106:24 800 28:3 82:22 82 64:4 83 9:21 41:19 85 38:17,18 89 132:16
22 88:6	31,134 22:2 310 66:8 33 22:17 344 65:17 35 28:11 77:18 357 22:4 360 5:18 371 66:6 375 66:6 38 22:8 39 39:9 53:23 54:5 65:17 113:9	<hr/> 5 <hr/>	<hr/> 7 <hr/>	<hr/> 9 <hr/>
220 64:19		5 78:2 82:20 99:8	7,500 70:13	9 99:4,5 9,500 79:24 90 19:14 106:24 121:2 900 77:16 95 76:21
23 88:6 134:19				
239 65:19 66:7				
24 29:22 39:6, 25 42:6 45:15 70:7				
24.69 39:25				
24.8 38:16				
25 29:23 39:18 47:10 67:5,8 72:12 126:6				
26 126:5,6				
27 126:5,6,17				
280 66:7				
29 38:9				
2:30 71:5				

96 10:11	36:12 37:9,16	17 133:6,10	accurately	74:12 80:11, 16
9:49 92:12	41:2 42:2	134:11	39:12 102:22	
	44:20 46:9	138:15 139:2, 20	act 24:23	advance 7:2 8:6
A	47:18 48:9	above 106:12	action 8:24	advise 43:11
	49:12,18,25	absolutely	activity	advocate 36:9
A-L-E-N-A	50:13,22 52:9	33:22 49:14	113:25	132:15
36:3	53:2 54:15,25	50:5 89:11	actual 68:9	133:23
A-L-L-E-N	55:3,10,13, 15,17,18	92:19	137:6	advocating
36:4 123:24	56:3,9,19	AC 64:4	actually	78:11
A-M-B-E-R	57:2 58:7,19	acceptable	15:13,14	affirm 8:12
92:23	60:9,21 61:20	6:17 107:10, 13	30:19 43:7	11:8 13:20
A-N-D-E-R-S-	63:18 65:2	accepts 53:22	66:2 71:2	14:23 16:19
O-N 41:6	66:5 69:21	access 80:5	78:9 86:10	21:15 23:25
A-U-G-U-S-T-I-	70:5,8 72:9	81:10 128:18	96:24 108:21, 23 111:15	25:20 30:5
N-O-V 89:15	73:4,16 74:8	according	115:13 121:9	31:22 35:23
a.m. 64:6 71:6	75:7 76:9,19, 21,22,23	38:22 39:9	add 138:9	37:16 41:2
ability 35:4	77:11,15,16	64:14 95:16	added 57:11	44:19 48:8
83:16	78:9 79:5	account 55:2, 22 80:19	64:15 67:15	49:11 50:21
able 3:6 7:18	81:21 82:6, 18,21 84:18	88:13 100:18	addicts 77:21	53:2 56:19
28:14,19	85:3 88:2,22	accountable	adding 77:12	60:20 63:17
39:12 41:19	89:5 90:17	95:14	addition	69:21 73:4
43:8 44:2	91:9 92:16	accountant	89:22	76:8 79:4
54:6 55:2	93:10 94:3	86:23,24	additional	81:20 84:17
59:20 62:20	95:9 97:9	113:12	57:10	89:4,7,10
63:1 68:8	98:7,14,15,22	accountants	address 5:17	90:16 92:16
71:12 88:5	100:5,17	4:7	69:4 129:15	97:8 100:4
113:25	101:6,13	accounting	addressed	105:1 111:5,8
about 3:14	103:12,15,22	127:14,17	98:6,8,10	116:3 118:10
4:18 5:3 7:2	104:5 105:2, 25 107:21,25	accounts	107:19 132:2	122:6 123:16
8:13 11:8	108:7,9,21	49:22 88:13, 14	adjust 106:23	125:5 126:25
13:21 14:23	111:6 112:23	accuracy	117:14	131:5 138:14
16:19 18:18	113:23 116:4	66:11 104:5	adjusting	afford 12:4
19:1 21:15	117:2 118:11	accurate	114:21	36:18,25 39:6
22:4 23:25	119:17	68:17	administrative	58:8,15 75:19
25:21 26:5,6	120:15 122:7			78:8 80:20
27:17 28:11	123:17 124:5			106:23 117:8
29:18,19 30:6	125:6,14			118:2 120:25
31:22 33:9,15	127:1,16			121:7,12
34:9,16	129:5 130:9			122:25
35:10,23	131:6 132:14,			124:16,17

affording 10:8	50:13 52:11	airplane 68:5	101:2,14,17	40:22 71:24
after 7:13,17, 20 17:3,6,8 37:13 48:6 50:17 54:17 60:16 71:3, 10,11 78:25 84:15 85:11 89:2 96:20 103:20 110:18 125:19 131:25 132:8 136:19	54:15 55:3 56:9 83:6 89:25 91:16 105:16,21,22, 24 108:21 121:11 122:24 131:22	Albert 93:1	103:16 104:3 105:19,20 107:5,17 108:18 110:7, 19 112:6 113:7,9,18, 22,23 114:10, 16 116:15 117:2,3 118:6 119:18 124:7 125:21 126:20 128:14 129:8 130:5 131:16, 21 132:16 133:6 135:20 136:22 137:15 139:6, 23	already 6:20 14:5 24:11 32:18 36:14 62:3 65:3 87:3 91:2 98:1,6,10,15, 16 99:13,24 117:11 126:8, 13,15,16,19 131:1,15 133:8
afternoon 4:12	agree 57:1	Alena 31:17 35:19,21 36:3	129:8 130:5 131:16, 21 132:16 133:6 135:20 136:22 137:15 139:6, 23	alright 45:4 124:23
again 4:25 27:22 28:16 30:22 49:2 54:25 73:13 75:24 82:12 99:7 104:6 111:23 124:10 129:5 132:22 139:24	ahead 5:9 6:3 7:7 8:4,21 11:16 14:2 15:5 17:1 20:10 21:14, 23 24:9 26:4 30:14 31:18 34:5 36:6 37:7,25 41:8 45:7 48:17 49:16 50:20 51:4 53:1,10 54:23 55:5 56:14,24 61:6 63:25 70:4 73:11 76:12, 17 79:13 81:25 84:25 89:16 90:25 92:24 97:17 100:13 105:7 109:14 111:13 116:12 118:18 119:9 122:14 124:1 125:9 126:24 127:9 129:11 131:14 137:3 138:8,11,23 139:12	algorithm 65:21	Allen 31:17 35:19,22,25 36:3,4,5,8 37:7 123:19, 23,25 124:2, 21	also 3:22 5:11 6:13,16 20:7 24:18 30:22 32:9 43:19 52:6,9 59:19 64:2 70:17 80:1 89:25 90:3 112:6 113:17 122:19 126:17
against 13:4,5 19:12 133:9	air 124:11,14	all 3:9 4:13,24 5:1,7 6:9,11 7:20 8:5 11:22 12:23 13:3,6 14:3, 19 17:19,22 18:14 20:21 21:5,7 23:17 25:14 26:17, 18,21 27:14, 16,17 28:17 33:4,12 34:2, 10,13 36:14 41:20 42:13, 16 43:22 46:6 48:19 50:11, 13 51:5,20 54:22 61:7,8, 16 62:5,9,16 63:4 64:18 67:14,21 71:24 74:13, 25 76:1 77:4, 8,22 78:5,15 80:5 85:20, 21,22 89:22 90:1,6,7,12 91:9 92:9,11 93:23,25 94:17 96:1,3 98:14 100:16	Allenbaugh 76:5 78:21,24	alternatives 92:1
age 59:18 125:1		allow 47:14	allowed 9:10 19:20 20:5 41:23 61:14	although 105:15
agency 8:24, 25 9:3,12,19		allowing 47:7	almost 22:13 64:7 82:22 85:21 103:21 105:16 106:11 127:10	always 4:17 101:24 106:15 112:15 124:5 134:21 136:11
agenda 25:3,4		along 14:2 23:2 29:17		Amber 89:2 92:13,22
agendas 24:21				amended 27:2,10
agents 55:1				America
ago 26:8 29:23,24 32:24 33:14 34:9,10 49:25				

85:24	65:14,18	94:21,24	apologizing	130:24 136:2
American	75:25 79:17	104:12 112:5,	8:7	137:25
18:21	80:3 82:13	25 115:1	apology 65:4	139:10,22
Americans	87:5 93:4,5,	122:1 128:3	app 120:11	approve
98:25	18,19 94:2,9	130:4,25	appalled	125:22
amount 19:15	99:7 116:25	133:9 139:9,	119:20	approximately
27:12 42:23	129:19 134:1	14	apparently	11:1 55:16
57:21 77:16	138:11	anybody	18:12 51:15	56:8,9 131:22
78:3 104:8	answer 3:4	19:21 91:2	appearance	April 26:13
110:2,3,9,10	7:18,23,25	119:25 124:8	5:10	85:14 91:19
113:4,5 114:4	43:8 53:20	133:12,15	appearing 6:6	103:4
amounts 38:9	55:7 62:9,20	anyone 7:5,16	applause	area 9:16 23:6
42:12 80:5	63:1,4 73:23	35:4 60:12	10:25 11:1	26:7 38:16
94:8 113:3	97:23 98:9	95:9,17	appliances	45:9,20 91:2
amp 64:20	120:5 127:19,	123:11	136:17	106:17
analysts 4:8	22	139:24	applied 55:2,3	132:15
40:1	answered 3:7	anything	57:8,13	areas 18:3
analyzed	7:25	14:10,15	apply 54:23	49:4 90:8
54:20	answering	23:15 34:1	appointed 4:5	Arizona 32:25
and/or 9:20	43:19,22	35:13 42:20	appreciate	34:7
Anderson	61:21	46:21 47:2,11	4:14 5:1	Army 76:19
37:9,11	answers 86:2	52:10 59:19	10:21,24 11:4	77:2
40:24,25	112:25	83:10 91:9	16:15 21:11	around 12:6
41:1,5,6,9	127:20,22	101:13	25:16,17 29:4	14:8 23:22
43:3,16 44:4,	anticipate	107:11	30:2 31:11,12	30:25 74:15,
8,13,14	29:11	111:20	34:4 36:6	21 117:24
Angela 78:25	any 4:10 6:2,8	112:24	43:2 49:7	120:7,15
81:16	10:15,20 12:8	114:17	50:16 52:21	128:15 133:3,
Angeles	16:13 21:9	anyway 19:12	60:7 62:18	17 134:9
91:17	23:14,15,20	51:21 120:16	76:3 78:18,20	139:10
Anna 76:5	25:16 29:14	anyways	81:16 84:11	arrange 96:21
78:21,24	31:12 32:21	64:22	89:1 90:13	arrays 18:13
announce	37:6 38:3	anywhere	92:11 99:25	as 5:11,13
113:20	40:22 42:1	28:8 46:7,21	102:25	6:11,19 8:7
anomaly	47:5 48:4	apartment	104:18 105:7	9:9 18:24
15:20	52:2,21 61:15	41:17,18	108:1,2 118:8	22:10 24:13,
another 22:11	62:8,14 68:2	115:14	122:1,3 123:9	23,24 27:18
35:21 60:10	70:21,22	apologize 8:6	124:22	29:13 33:11
	71:16 72:4,5	30:3 45:2	126:23	34:25 41:22
	74:25 75:3	93:20 97:4		43:6 46:25
	76:2 78:19			
	90:14 91:9			

48:19 49:2,5 50:3 53:17,19 56:3 57:5,11 58:5 61:14 62:23 63:6 68:9,15,22 69:12 73:18 85:19,20 87:13,14 91:24 95:13 98:19,23 99:12 101:15, 20 102:11 108:22 109:8 113:11 114:13 116:15 118:4, 21 119:1 120:6,23 123:10 126:20 127:13,15 129:19,22 130:1,19 137:15 Asbury 17:17 25:3 27:19,22 46:17 58:20 74:3,18 94:4 98:12 133:10 ashamed 67:21 ask 4:17 5:9 6:23 7:5,10, 14 10:25 16:2 18:2 19:13 22:16,23 25:1,12 27:9, 14 31:7 36:24 41:25 48:19 49:3 61:18 63:10 67:10 68:18 71:16	75:19 81:2 95:2 98:6 105:15 112:22 114:5 123:15 127:23 130:24 asked 22:20 26:5,25 28:18 68:10 90:3 93:24 94:23 97:19 109:10 asking 27:3, 12,25 31:6 36:21 39:2 42:3 48:22 49:5 61:12 62:1,3,13 77:24 98:21 99:10 102:3,6 114:4,5 115:6 121:4 125:22 126:9,13 asphalt 12:9 assessor 12:2 assigned 79:23 assist 10:5 assistance 9:14,15,17 10:1 41:25 42:1 76:20,24 77:6 assisted 9:19 assumed 126:9 assure 18:20 astronomical 120:9	astronomically 87:22 at 3:1 4:4 5:4 7:4,14,21,22, 25 8:22 11:18 16:8,9 19:22 21:7 25:9 27:13,21 28:18 31:7,18 32:18,19,25 33:5,6,19 35:9,15 39:16 41:15 42:22, 23 43:5,23 48:24 50:1 51:14 53:23 54:6 58:25 59:15,25 62:23 63:5,9 64:9 67:5,16 68:10 73:21, 22 76:18 77:1 82:16,24 85:21,22,25 86:19 88:6 91:9 92:12 93:23 94:21 97:25 98:11 103:14 104:13 107:17 108:24 109:15,25 112:10 118:3 120:11,23 125:19 126:6 131:3 133:8 135:20 137:3 ate 33:5 attach 122:18 attendance 7:22	attended 3:6 6:11 17:6 98:11 attention 51:6 attorney 62:24 105:11 131:19 133:17 134:5 136:4 attorneys 4:7 7:16 audience 6:2 7:6 130:25 audit 61:9 auditing 62:5, 7 auditor 51:16 August 85:16, 18 103:25 111:17 115:11 118:25 119:15 Augustinov 84:15 89:1,3, 7,10,14,18 Aurora 137:19 auto 26:16,20, 22 avail 111:24 available 42:2 98:17 average 12:3 22:3 23:7 45:15 64:12, 15 76:24	averaged 22:4 avoid 64:5 aware 35:7 104:13,14 away 26:7 58:16,23 60:1 83:10 113:24, 25 114:13 128:9 <hr/> B <hr/> B-A-L-A-U-N 24:7 B-A-L-D-W-I-N 118:17 B-A-R-B-E-E 111:12 B-A-R-K-E-R 131:12 B-R-A-M-M-E-R 84:14 B-R-O-O-M 79:11 B-R-O-W-N 21:21 26:2 61:4 back 17:16,23 23:21 26:8 33:25 37:14 44:18 47:2,9, 13 51:25 54:21 61:12, 13,18,19 62:4 65:10 70:7 73:1,24 74:7 76:6 85:8 86:4,21 91:18,20
---	---	---	--	---

94:11 95:1 98:11 108:4, 25 112:1,21 126:15 128:15 131:20,21 132:22,23 133:2 135:19 136:21 backbone 19:5 backhoe 47:20 bad 16:3,4,10 24:22 28:2 45:21,22 47:25 64:11 121:23 133:22 balance 121:21 Balaun 23:22, 23 24:3,6,8, 10 25:15,17 Baldwin 115:24 118:9, 13,16,20 121:18,19,25 ballpark 34:12 137:21 baloney 127:16 Barbee 110:23,25 111:1,2,8,11, 14 114:7,9, 18,20,25 115:4,9 Bargain 79:17	Barker 131:8, 11,15 134:13, 16,19,23 135:6,11,13 136:8 137:2, 10,14,24 Barton 8:24 122:19 base 28:25 38:8 80:13 113:17 based 15:12 27:24 28:25 57:14 67:7 basic 10:8 117:6 basically 27:2,4 38:2 61:12 99:22 112:2 basis 107:4 bathroom 35:2 bear 32:14 became 129:18 because 11:1 12:5 14:3,15 22:1 24:10 27:20 33:18, 19 34:1,11,20 35:11,13 36:25 41:9, 12,13,17 42:19 43:17, 24 45:17,18 46:5 47:9 50:8 51:18 52:4 53:25 58:3,23 64:5	65:2,4,7,17 66:4,15,18 67:4,13 68:11 69:12 70:21 77:20 80:13 82:12,25 85:19 86:10 87:4,12,18, 24,25 88:5 94:20 99:14 104:6 106:7, 21,22,23,25 107:1,22 108:10 110:12,13 113:23 115:10,11,13 121:7 126:10, 16 128:4,16, 23 130:18 131:2 132:1 133:24 134:24 135:13,24 136:11,18,24 become 130:19 bedroom 77:15 before 19:13 22:19 24:11 28:12,14 33:6 45:21 46:7 64:5 71:16 75:5 77:19 92:8 109:16 132:25 137:12 beforehand 57:2 began 3:1	beginning 4:16 55:14 94:18 133:4 behalf 43:16 76:19 139:16 behind 125:24 believe 12:15, 20 22:10 27:1,21 28:7 39:21 57:7,18 59:16,18 75:8 80:2,7 94:16 99:21 103:24 105:5 132:1, 24 133:18,21, 22 134:21,23 135:22 below 77:11 beneficial 57:15 benefit 40:9 59:23 75:3,4 78:16 91:9 benefits 10:13 33:11 93:6,7 besides 82:17 134:3 136:4 best 8:5 46:5 better 31:20 32:17 60:4 74:13 95:17 105:20 132:21 between 18:20 42:18 60:11 70:8 71:5 103:20	beyond 116:17 big 22:16 66:25 103:23, 24 119:14 128:19 bill 17:9,10 22:10,12 26:10,12,14, 19 28:10,12, 14 29:7,9,12, 15,23 33:17 34:14,17,24 37:1 47:15 52:4 54:16,24 55:17 57:9,12 59:2 64:15 65:12,18 68:9,10 69:5 70:23 71:25 76:22 80:2,3 85:12,21 87:11,12 89:20 93:18 94:2,7,11 95:8 96:6 100:22 101:3, 5,7,14,17 102:21 103:20,21,23, 24 106:14 110:2 111:19, 23 112:22,25 115:10,13 117:22 119:1, 5,6,7,14 120:4,6,8,11, 16 123:3 131:24 133:21 134:21,23 135:14
--	---	--	---	--

<p>billed 93:13 104:8 111:17 129:19,22</p> <p>billing 17:3 20:17 26:5,6 27:11 54:1,2, 13,16,18 56:1,3 57:14 59:2 65:4,5, 22,24 66:2,9, 10,25 67:16 70:6,17 71:15 80:1 81:8,12, 13 85:7,20 86:25 88:16 93:10 100:16, 22 101:25 102:5 103:2, 16,19 104:12 109:22 112:5 113:8,11 115:3,5,7 118:23 134:2 135:5</p> <p>billings 103:15 127:15</p> <p>billion 16:9 51:14,19</p> <p>bills 12:23 14:5,7 17:19, 24,25 20:19, 20,21,22 22:1,3 36:22 38:22 50:1 55:21 56:4 58:8,15 65:1, 8,13 66:18 68:8,11 70:18,21 78:10,13 80:4,21 85:21</p>	<p>88:22 90:1 93:11,16,24, 25 96:3,11,15 99:1 107:5,12 110:1,7,19 112:7,17 113:2,3 114:23,24 118:22 119:17,18 120:10,19 127:18</p> <p>Billy 84:12,13</p> <p>biodiversity 19:2</p> <p>birds 80:24</p> <p>birth 117:4</p> <p>bit 26:14 31:20 58:7 137:9</p> <p>blame 92:6</p> <p>blamed 65:23</p> <p>blaming 71:2</p> <p>blank 43:24</p> <p>bleed 117:19 118:4</p> <p>blew 47:19</p> <p>blind 80:9</p> <p>bloat 74:12</p> <p>block 46:10, 11</p> <p>blow 47:17,19 83:10</p> <p>blowing 81:1</p> <p>blows 84:2 130:6</p>	<p>board 40:15</p> <p>body 133:13</p> <p>bonus 33:8</p> <p>boost 40:7</p> <p>boots 101:20</p> <p>Born 116:22</p> <p>boss 105:14, 17</p> <p>both 17:11 47:6 49:23 106:22 110:7</p> <p>bothering 93:16</p> <p>bottom 56:10</p> <p>bought 39:19 82:3 121:11 131:21</p> <p>box 5:18 64:19 82:8</p> <p>boxes 64:18</p> <p>boys 51:10 52:17</p> <p>bragging 33:8</p> <p>brain 61:16</p> <p>Brammer 84:13</p> <p>Branson 40:7</p> <p>Braun 115:24 122:3</p> <p>break 47:24</p> <p>breakdowns 87:16</p> <p>breathe 32:17</p> <p>breathing 32:14 116:25</p>	<p>brief 24:10</p> <p>bring 61:22 98:13 137:12</p> <p>Broom 78:23, 25 79:2,3,7, 10,12,14 81:2,4,10,15</p> <p>brothers 12:1</p> <p>brought 20:19 68:1 102:9</p> <p>Brown 21:12, 18,21,24 23:10,19 25:19,23 26:1,5 29:8, 11,20,22 30:1 60:15,17,18, 19,23 61:1,3, 7 62:17</p> <p>brownouts 45:17</p> <p>bucks 28:12</p> <p>budget 28:22 54:16,17 56:1,3 77:1 121:21</p> <p>build 18:3 28:2 51:19</p> <p>building 118:1</p> <p>built 51:10 70:6 80:8 112:11</p> <p>bulb 66:8</p> <p>bunch 80:22 102:17</p> <p>burden 49:2</p>	<p>burn 47:13 84:3 94:12</p> <p>burns 107:2</p> <p>Burton 100:3 110:23</p> <p>business 5:13 19:6,9 26:25 28:23,24 49:23 85:23 86:23 87:11, 13,14 88:3,23 100:15 101:10 106:1 124:12 127:10,11 128:25 129:14,17 130:1</p> <p>businesses 49:24 85:5 124:13,16</p> <p>but 6:21 8:14 11:9,18 13:2, 6,22 14:24 16:20 17:18, 22 18:16,24 21:17 22:4, 10,19 23:10, 14 24:2 25:22 28:7 30:7 31:24 32:21 33:1 34:21 35:24 36:14, 23 37:18 38:4 39:4,8,15 40:10,23 41:3,12 42:19 43:17,23 44:1,11,21 46:21 47:7,14 48:10,19 49:13 50:6,9,</p>
---	--	---	---	---

23 51:21 52:10 53:3 55:4,6 56:21 59:8,19 60:13,22 62:2,9,19 63:1,19 64:22 67:17 69:22 70:24 71:9,14 73:5,20 74:9, 20 75:8 76:10 77:9 78:10 79:6 81:22 82:10,21,24 84:19 88:9 89:6 90:18 92:17 94:8,20 97:10 98:5,17 100:6,19,23 101:13,16,24 103:11 105:3, 12 106:14 107:2,21 108:2 110:8 111:7 112:18 113:15,20 114:3,19 115:16 116:5, 21 117:1,6 118:12 120:9 122:8,19,25 123:6,18 125:7,21,24 127:2,23 129:17 130:16 131:7 133:7 137:3 138:16 buy 28:13 83:7 87:17 buying 39:21 121:6	by 3:19 4:5,6 12:22 17:24 18:10 24:14 39:11 46:22 53:24 54:20 57:3,12 66:12,21 69:7 70:20 72:25 74:23 91:8 98:20 99:13 102:18 116:13 117:12,21 120:2 <hr/> C <hr/> C-A-L-L-I-C-O- A-T 100:11 C-A-M-I-L-L-E 63:24 C-H-A-R-L-I-E 15:3 C-O-O-P-E-R 122:12 cabinet 70:11 calculations 73:17 calendar 108:23 California 91:10,14,22 92:3 126:18 call 7:3,7 37:8 45:25 54:24 82:5 86:4,5,6, 7 96:4,21 111:25 112:21 123:11 132:6	138:1 139:11 called 12:1 26:15,20 33:18 54:18, 25 55:13 82:6,12 85:11,14,15 86:2,11 94:13,14 96:2 110:1 111:22 119:2,23 125:25 129:25 134:6 135:17 136:11 Callicoat 97:6 100:1,3,7,10, 14 102:24 103:3,6,10, 19,24 104:2, 14,17 calling 7:5 8:5 87:7,8 97:2 111:18 119:21 calls 76:20 77:2 128:24 135:23 Calvert 76:6 78:22,24 came 33:20 41:24 51:10, 18 52:6,11 71:12 82:9 100:14 101:8 102:1 103:24 119:14 128:12 132:1, 2,3,4 135:19 Camille 60:16 63:14,23	Canada 18:4, 5,19,22 24:15 33:8 67:3,5 75:13 Canadian 18:21 19:8 75:20 Canadians 80:9 Candy 105:11 cannot 49:19 53:25 58:14 78:8,11 80:5 81:16 120:22 121:16 127:14 capacity 25:9 40:7 57:20,22 58:1 capital 28:19, 21 39:3,4 car 32:12 41:23 carbon 19:1 51:15,18 74:24 cards 106:1 Cardwell 110:24 115:22 care 36:10,23 46:6 59:20,21 69:10 71:16 80:8 83:9 88:4 97:1 106:24 107:2 115:11 117:2 132:12 135:15 139:4	carefully 101:3 cares 75:7 Carl 73:15 82:2 83:7 Carol 84:12 Carter 5:12 133:20 Carthage 90:8 122:18 case 3:11,15 4:16,18 21:1 43:9,12,25 59:16 63:2,3 74:5 76:18 77:5 100:20 126:10 134:22 136:5 137:5,12 138:6 catch 52:24 89:8 category 64:11 Catholic 77:7 caught 13:8 59:8 caused 108:10 causing 74:17 census 25:6 cents 38:7 47:9,10 52:13 88:6 91:20 CEO 42:5 CEOS 98:22, 24 99:3
---	---	--	---	--

certainly 44:7	chart 126:4	113:1	closed 17:17, 18 20:6 120:4 135:7	131:4
cetera 70:11	check 71:8 94:14,16,21 110:10	circuits 79:21	closely 104:3	comes 25:11 61:18 70:23 80:10 108:25 110:7
chair 3:25 4:10,12 5:8 127:21	checked 33:20 71:1 120:11 132:4	circumstance 113:21	closing 74:3 139:14	comfortable 96:19
challenge 10:9 26:24	cheeseburger 87:23	cite 16:5	closure 17:20 25:4 74:18	coming 4:14 5:1 10:21 16:15 25:17 30:2 31:13 34:4 35:19 52:21 66:17 67:3,14 75:9 78:18 84:7 103:21 106:21 107:1 108:4 119:17 121:9 130:1 131:3
chance 3:14 131:2 138:3	Cheryl 76:6 78:22,24	cities 38:14	closures 19:22	comment 3:8, 14 61:6 64:1 70:4 122:15 125:10 137:8 138:4,6,9,11
change 5:4 19:2 33:23 46:3 64:21,25	chief 5:21 74:10	citizen 15:10 57:1 90:10 120:20	co-ops 30:24	commentary 26:6
changed 35:13 52:7 55:17 75:16 90:3 91:19 132:20,22	child 113:25	citizenry 57:13	coal 16:7 19:23 20:6 27:20	comments 4:23 6:15 7:12,13 11:16 15:6 17:2 21:23 24:9 25:18 26:4 29:5 31:20 32:7 36:7 37:25 41:8 45:7 48:17 49:16 50:16 51:4 53:10 62:18 73:12 76:17 78:18 79:13 81:25
changing 127:17	children 139:3	citizens 90:7, 9 124:7,19	coast 20:4	
charge 11:23 17:10,11 22:8 28:11 47:10 66:22 87:23 94:4 128:10	Choate 100:3 104:20,22,24 105:4,9 107:14,16 108:1,6,9,20 109:4,19,24 110:18,22	city 5:18 51:13 76:22 77:3 109:5	coding 134:4	
charged 3:19 64:11 65:8,11 66:4 67:17,18 68:12 94:5 110:12	claim 72:16 136:13	claiming 64:23	Coffman 6:5,6	
charges 17:9	claiming 64:23	claims 40:6	cold 59:5 112:14,16	
charging 25:2 91:2 123:1	clarity 71:20 83:5 88:21	clarify 71:20 83:5 88:21	Coleman 4:2, 24 54:8	
charity 59:15, 18 77:7	class 121:17	clear 83:23 136:25	collaborate 9:1	
Charles 3:17	clearer 90:2	clearer 90:2	collect 25:6	
Charlie 14:20 15:3	click 138:5	client 77:5	come 7:8 8:9 11:5 14:8,21 25:19 30:4 31:16,18 33:22 47:2 48:5 51:6 58:17 60:5 69:18 73:1,2 82:7 97:5 102:5 104:22 110:9 113:4,5 115:15 123:13 124:3, 8 128:10,21	
	clients 58:3 77:2 78:8,11	climate 19:2		
	Chuck 23:21	clinical 36:11		
	Churches 77:8	close 32:23 131:3		
	circle 23:21			
	circles 112:2			

85:1 89:17,23 90:25 92:25 97:17,18 98:7,16 99:23 100:13 105:8 116:12 118:8, 19 122:14 124:1 126:23 127:9 131:14, 15 136:1,8 137:5,19 138:10,23 139:10,24,25 commercial 40:9 88:22 129:20,22 commission 3:12,19,22,24 4:4,6 5:14,24 6:12,21 7:12, 18 8:2 15:20 16:3 19:20 22:22 24:23 27:13 28:5,16 31:7 38:22 41:23 43:10, 11 48:20 49:3 50:8,10 53:17,22 54:5 57:4 61:16 62:6 68:2,14 75:22 76:17 83:21 93:10, 21 94:3,6 96:2,5 105:8 106:3,4 109:3,5,17 119:23 121:23 131:14 137:12 138:10 139:16	Commission's 3:25 15:22 Commissione r 4:1,2,3,22 139:13,15 Commissione r's 139:24 Commissione rs 3:10,25 4:5, 23 7:16,19,22 11:3 24:9 26:4 30:15 32:7 36:7 43:4,6 53:11 56:24 63:6 73:12 Commissione rs' 14:16 committee 57:3 common 26:1 88:2 98:18 communities 31:1 139:6 community 8:24 75:7 105:14 106:18 118:4 120:21 companies 3:20 15:25 16:12 28:21 31:10 48:22 49:5 58:6 70:11 124:19 company 5:10,11,13 8:2 15:24 18:6,23 24:14 27:5 28:18	35:4 39:11, 12,19,21 61:17 62:7, 12,24 75:21 89:23 90:10, 11 112:4,6 113:6,12 117:9 120:24 125:14 127:13 128:2 company's 49:1 comparable 31:8 48:21 49:4 comparison 116:18 compensate 48:23 compensation 39:24 40:5 competition 54:6,8,9 88:4 competitors 116:18 complain 94:25 complaining 13:12 108:14 complaint 35:5 71:13 72:15,18 83:16,20 95:22,24,25 109:3 119:22 131:18 136:7 137:1,2,9,11 complete 71:12	completely 18:4 41:14 120:18 complex 17:9 comprehensib le 116:17 computer 125:13 computers 110:4 concern 104:5,6 130:18,19 139:2 concerned 19:1 29:14 35:10 105:25 109:8 125:19 concerning 101:25 concerns 121:19 127:11,12 conclude 139:12 concluded 3:5 conditioner 124:11 conditioners 124:14 conditions 15:18 conference 34:7 confident 137:14	confidential 69:2,12 96:16 confirmed 4:6 confuse 110:5 confused 118:21 confuses 110:6 consideration 3:11 138:25 139:21 consideration s 58:18 considering 91:1 121:10 consistent 112:18 132:18 133:1 consistently 132:11 consolidated 88:15 90:2 constantly 94:3 95:1 constructed 26:9 construction 70:24 consume 58:5 100:24 consumer 48:20 61:14 consumers 6:7 39:5 48:1 49:2 consumption
---	--	--	---	---

57:14 104:6 contact 109:3 contacted 106:5 109:7 continually 42:19 continue 8:7 9:11 42:11 74:6 continued 72:16 contract 80:13 82:3,15 83:4,5,8 84:7 contractor 71:11 contractors 70:8 control 122:20 conversation 86:22 Cook 84:12, 13 Cooper 122:5, 9,12,15 123:8 copies 68:4,6, 23,24 96:9, 19,21 corporate 101:11 corporation 8:23 116:25 correct 29:8 43:3 83:15 86:12 93:16 94:16,20	106:6,8 131:25 correctly 8:6 12:19 37:13 59:13 73:17, 25 87:12 correspondeen ce 131:20 133:19 cost 13:3 15:14 16:8 17:12 23:5 27:23 28:23, 24 30:18,20 36:13,18 47:3 48:23 51:14 64:8 74:4,22 87:21 88:7 96:12 costing 87:2 costs 10:8,13 46:15,16 47:22,24 57:24 could 7:22 30:9 34:1 35:20 39:7 42:15,24 53:9 60:3,5,24 63:1,9,11 66:3 68:3,18 69:24 81:2 83:7,8,10 84:3 89:12 90:2,20,24 92:20 96:7,20 97:20 100:8 107:6,15 112:19 115:23 116:7 118:14 122:16,18,19	123:4,20 127:4 135:20, 25 138:18 139:3 couldn't 23:1 28:6 52:3,4 63:4 101:13 119:25 120:25 council 6:7 53:17,22 54:5 counsel 5:20, 22,23 6:1,3 8:3 43:14 62:25 102:20 counsels 63:10 Counties 8:25 countries 18:18 country 11:19,20 18:4 23:8,11,12 28:3 38:6 65:25 country's 99:3 county 38:5, 12 97:22,24 116:16 122:19 couple 15:9, 11 16:5 26:8 80:9 86:24 103:1 109:13 110:20 130:10 134:9 course 120:7 128:20	court 7:11 8:17 13:25 16:23 32:2 43:25 51:1 53:6 61:2 63:3 69:25 73:8 79:9 84:22 89:13 92:21 97:13 100:9 116:8 118:15 122:11 123:21 127:5 131:10 137:6 138:19 courteous 6:24 courtesy 6:25 cover 12:17, 23 17:11 covering 40:2 cracks 51:21 119:3 Crandon 23:21,22 crash 116:23 crawl 42:24 crazy 20:23 77:16 create 77:19 credit 54:21, 22,23,24 55:1,4 60:1 91:18 119:10 120:20 credited 60:3 credits 51:15, 18 58:10,12 70:22 71:21,	22,23 72:5 74:24 crisis 10:3 80:14 Crush 105:12 crux 18:14 cultural 18:15,16 culture 18:21 cultures 18:18 curious 134:11 current 3:3 15:12,17 57:4 currently 7:2 53:16 122:3 customer 28:11,25 52:1 54:3 74:11 98:18 120:6 customers 9:17,25 10:4, 5,9,11 38:13, 23 50:10 53:23 54:1 74:22 92:2,3, 6 98:24 99:10,13 133:14 customers' 39:15 cut 32:21 42:19 60:12 86:1 95:15 96:12 128:7 cuts 57:12
---	--	--	---	---

cutting 46:25	Dave 92:14	16:3,4,10	Deputy 5:21	digress
cycle 70:15	97:3	24:22 46:18	8:22	112:20
	David 23:22	47:25 121:22	deserve 47:23	dime 17:8
D	24:6	decreases	105:18	dinosaur
	day 12:2	98:5	133:11	58:20
D-A-N 125:3	20:21 51:25	deeper	design 18:11	directly
D-A-N-I-E-L	64:4,9 71:8	135:22	desk 103:11	101:12
84:24	72:4 87:1,20	deficit 73:21	desperately	Director 8:22
D-A-V-I-D	108:25	definition	32:10	disability
24:6	112:13	93:2 95:16	destroyed	34:21,23
D-E-B-R-A	117:24 120:2	degrading	45:24 91:14,	disabled 9:20
76:15	130:16	91:8	15	10:18 32:9
D-E-M-I-E-R	days 18:10	degrees	destruction	64:3 77:22
53:8	33:1 55:10	41:19	67:18	82:18 112:3
D-O-E-N-N-I-G	71:3,10 80:5	DEI 19:2	detail 63:9	113:19
30:12	103:22	delivering	devices 45:16	133:15
D-U-S-T-I-N	105:21,22,24	58:4	Diana 5:12	disadvantage
53:8	108:21 121:2	delivery 66:16	133:19	d 10:16
D-W-A-Y-N-E	dead 34:11	demand	die 64:7	disaster
37:22	deal 16:12	17:10 40:7	difference	91:11
Dakota	35:15 42:3	Demier 52:23,	18:15,16	disclosed
115:22	dealing	25 53:4,7,12	52:16 70:23	17:21
Dale 110:24	102:11	54:10,14	117:23	disconnected
115:22	115:15	55:12,16,20	differences	99:14
dales 38:12	dealt 66:25	56:1,8,12	18:20	disconnection
Dan 125:2	101:23	deny 57:5	different 4:20	120:18
Daniel 84:14,	death 57:11	95:14 114:5	7:2 18:18,19	disconnection
23	Debra 76:4,6,	Department	54:25 55:1	s 99:12
Daniels	14	96:2	57:9 80:5	disinterest
78:22,25	December	depend 14:6	91:16 93:3	105:13
dark 34:25	26:12 29:12	42:4	113:3 129:25	disparage
darn 27:24	80:17	depending	137:9	73:25
date 109:20	decency	43:1 101:1	difficult 15:15	disputed
dated 125:23	117:7	depends	32:19 44:1	71:13
dates 70:19	deception	28:12	73:22 101:10,	disseminate
	66:13,21	deposit 85:13	18 103:11	65:10
	decision 3:11		digital 90:4	distortions
	decisions			

45:18 distributed 58:14 district 5:13 121:5,6,7 dive 135:22 doctor 14:7 81:6 document 135:19 137:7 documentatio n 86:9 136:3 documented 131:17 135:24 documents 68:1 Doennig 30:3, 4,8,11,13,16 31:14 53:12 doing 5:13 11:6 42:13 45:21 46:21 66:24 85:10 93:2,4 105:12 124:17,18 137:17,18 dollar 52:13 117:9 dollars 22:8 26:15 45:10 51:19 65:14 87:2 107:6 117:18 donate 60:1 done 12:4 20:12 68:21 90:5,6 106:9	115:14,16 119:18 120:3 126:4 128:4 136:2 137:6 door 9:6 135:15 double 47:21 doubled 17:25 doubling 78:3 down 7:9 8:9 11:5 14:21 15:14 16:7 17:24 19:16 23:11 25:11, 18,19 30:4 31:13,16,18 33:24,25 34:4 35:19 38:14 48:5 52:12, 18,21 60:25 61:22 64:8 69:18 70:20 73:3 78:23 84:4 86:20,23 87:18,20 92:12 97:5 101:11 102:14 104:23 108:23,24,25 110:16 116:25 121:3 122:2 123:13 128:12,14 131:4 132:12 136:1 138:6 downturn 116:22 Dr 78:23,25 79:2,3,7,10,	12,14 81:2,4, 10,15 drastically 13:11 draw 101:2 drive 121:3 126:3 driving 46:25 drug 77:21 dry 118:4 ducks 113:7 due 17:18 40:6 80:18 93:10 99:12 111:19 dump 47:19 dunebuggyin g 33:5 during 4:16 33:3,9 53:13 61:20 64:4,9 70:7,13,24 71:8 73:23 103:4 104:8 106:25 120:2 Dustin 52:23, 25 53:7 Dwayne 35:20 37:8,14,22 dying 106:25 <hr/> E <hr/> E-D-D-I-E 70:1 E-L-L-I-E 116:9	E-M-I-L-Y 48:15 each 6:15 10:9 94:5 104:9 Eaglepicher 122:23 earlier 7:23 41:10 58:9 65:18 97:19 121:14 133:19 139:1 early 17:17 91:17 106:15 earn 73:24 74:7 77:12 earned 52:15 126:3 earnings 52:12 earth 54:18 80:20 easily 117:13 eat 36:25 87:22 echo 24:12 36:8 102:20 139:24 economic 8:23 15:12,17 77:7 95:3 116:21 economically 10:16 economy 99:9 ecstatic 106:18	Eddie 60:16 69:18 70:1 effect 43:25 effective 19:10 efficiencies 58:1 efficiency 57:20,23,24 efficient 135:1 eight 40:15 82:7 128:24 Einstein 93:2 either 9:20 14:6 29:3 80:25 83:7 87:4 95:14 129:8 elaborate 54:12 120:16 elderly 9:20 10:17 36:10 59:16 64:2 102:10,13 112:3 132:12, 15 133:5,14, 22 electric 5:11, 13 14:5 17:19 33:17 37:1 38:11,22 39:19 45:9 53:19,22,25 54:3,7,16 64:7,17 67:13 70:16 76:21 82:19,24 90:9 91:12 94:12 99:2 101:16
--	--	---	--	--

105:20 106:14 126:11 electrician 33:22 108:11 electricity 17:12 22:2 28:13 31:1 36:23 38:6 40:20 51:12 89:21 90:11 91:18,21 94:11 101:2 104:5,7 107:3 112:13 114:17 120:13 134:25 135:1 electronic 45:16 81:11, 13 electronics 136:14,15,17 elevated 39:4 eleven 131:3 Ellie 115:23, 25 116:9 else 6:25 7:5, 16 14:15 22:15 23:13, 15 24:19 40:19 58:22 60:5,25 66:24 69:5 82:23 91:2 95:10,17 104:4 108:14 109:25 128:24 elsewhere 24:15	email 26:13 59:12 86:8,9 emails 119:17 Emily 44:18 48:5,14 emissions 19:2 empathy 44:3 Empire 5:11, 12 15:20 16:6 18:23 27:19 34:16 43:18 44:6 45:25 50:1 70:20 82:2,11,15 83:8 125:14 126:8,11,18 employee 16:6 employees 71:4 85:25 87:19 employs 4:7 encourage 8:1 encouraging 91:25 end 7:5 19:4 25:10 59:15, 25 62:24 63:10 96:23 99:17 111:17 122:4 123:10 124:22 127:13 ended 54:21 128:22 ends 10:10 56:1	energy 9:13, 14,17 10:1,2 15:14 17:24 24:21 25:4 39:19 46:18 70:6 74:21 80:23,24 98:23 99:1 110:11 120:8 engaged 47:4 engineer 45:9 50:1 engineering 129:6 engineers 4:7 18:9,10 20:2 engrained 111:21 enough 12:5, 23 18:17 27:9 34:23 47:6 76:2 77:3,10 78:9 88:1 131:25 ensure 3:20 48:20 49:3 enter 5:9 entire 139:16 entirely 77:16 envelope 137:7 environment 15:12 EOC 132:3 equate 113:10 equipment 45:11,19,23 101:2 104:3,7	equity 126:3 ER 106:22 ER-2024-0261 3:16 138:7 Eric 5:16 erratic 65:5 error 66:25 ERS 106:21 escapee 91:10 ESG 18:21 19:8,21 especially 87:13 95:13 116:17 125:20 133:14 established 58:12,13 estimate 134:24 et 70:11 even 15:16 17:6 28:8,14 33:19 36:18 46:22 47:2, 15,24 48:1 53:13,18,25 62:15 77:9 86:3,4,10 95:6,12 102:4 113:10 129:22 134:24 136:20 evening 4:13, 14,19 29:6 62:10 79:2	139:1 event 3:5 101:9 102:2,6 109:15 ever 34:1 51:7 67:20 71:16 72:5 117:3 119:25 131:23 every 22:20 45:22 53:13 93:14 107:7, 12 112:16,17 113:22 116:16,23,24 117:24 120:13 130:9 everybody 14:2 19:17,24 22:15 23:13 36:9 82:23 102:12 109:25 123:7 128:24 131:2 138:3 everyday 13:4 36:21 98:18 everyone 4:13 6:13,23, 25 11:2 19:11 41:22 43:23 60:8,13,25 114:24 122:3 everyone's 6:22 31:20 everything 5:6 21:25 23:15 32:11, 12 33:21 36:8,20 40:19 50:2 51:7
---	---	--	--	--

66:23 71:1 72:16 82:4 86:8 92:4 109:7,8 110:8 115:13 125:2 132:4 evidence 7:20 44:1 63:5,7 96:9 evidentiary 7:21 43:7 63:7 exact 55:21 76:25 exactly 23:3 45:20 66:3 67:16 93:4 example 9:23 10:11 94:10 examples 16:5 excellent 33:11,12 except 19:11 64:13 excess 32:21 58:12 excuse 7:15 19:18 72:8 79:18 80:3 127:24 executing 126:2 executive 42:23 98:7 executives 46:17 exhaustion	106:25 exhibit 68:15 exist 82:14 83:18 exorbitant 47:25 expand 59:13 expect 114:15 121:23 expected 38:3 40:2 121:21 126:3 expecting 93:3 101:6 expenditures 12:7,16,20 13:11 28:20, 21 58:22 expenses 11:21 78:6,8 117:22 expensive 20:3 23:6 124:11 experience 74:14 experienced 102:12 experiences 6:22 100:15 experiencing 54:2 132:10 134:15 experts 20:1 expire 58:10 59:1 explain 66:9	83:24 105:17 explained 63:2 65:23 explaining 126:1 explains 18:1 explanation 104:10 explode 107:1 expound 6:20 express 38:2 expressed 97:19 98:1 99:24 137:16 expression 43:24 extra 40:4 67:15 78:15 87:2 95:10 119:12 120:8 125:25 eyesight 79:19 <hr/> F <hr/> F-I-L-S-O-N 11:14 F-R-A-N-K 127:7 face 42:21,24 facial 43:24 facility 100:24 facility's 17:11 fact 45:18 46:8 47:23	124:13 factored 16:1 factors 42:19 facts 30:17 41:13 86:8 fading 60:1 failed 135:16 fair 19:15 34:17 48:1 fairly 6:10 40:11 135:1 fall 39:6 55:25 119:3 121:17 falling 59:25 falls 125:2 familiar 91:11 101:1 families 9:2,4 86:1 121:15 139:1,2 family 32:23 78:1,10 89:19 fancy 33:5 Fantastic 94:14 far 29:13 56:3 101:20 102:13 109:8 farm 18:12 47:6,7 farmer 58:9 59:22 farms 16:8 18:3 fashion 101:23	fast 126:24 father's 89:19 fault 65:20 faulty 129:7 favorite 110:13 fear 99:14 February 26:13 39:9 70:7 72:10,11 80:3,4 86:14 94:3 federal 9:12 federally 95:4 feed 58:15 feedback 4:18 feel 18:15 19:11 22:15 42:24 62:6 121:8 137:14 fees 57:8 59:1 67:15 fell 46:9 FEMA 128:5,6 129:18 few 15:15 18:17 58:6 102:18 119:3 136:20 fiasco 17:3 20:17 26:6 field 4:8 fields 40:19 figure 22:6 69:14 120:13
--	---	---	---	---

figured 22:1,9	fire 50:7 84:3, 6 133:25	82:12 98:19	25:2,7,16,25	22 82:4,11,
figures 74:14	fired 86:10	fixing 128:22	26:16,25	15,22 83:5,9
file 83:20	firefighter 133:4	flash 136:19	27:3,9,12,25	84:22 85:3
136:5	fireplace 70:17	flashing 132:9	28:15,18,20,	86:9 87:23
filed 71:13	firm 80:8	flawed 65:21	22 29:2,3	88:6,21
72:15,17	127:14	flicker 84:3	30:10,19,21	89:12,18,20,
119:22	firmware 134:3	flickering 84:1 132:3,9	31:3,6 32:2,	23 90:3,21
filing 27:4	first 5:10 7:3	follow 96:20	24,25 33:2,4,	91:5,18,21
Filson 11:4,6,	15:7 29:7,9	104:11	12 34:5 35:18	92:6,21 93:7,
10,13,14,15,	46:20 53:12	followed 72:24,25	36:2,9,11,16,	19,24 94:10,
17 12:10,12,	82:9 85:11	following 3:1	22 37:7,21	24 95:5
13,14,18,21,	93:1 97:15	33:23,24 38:4	38:1,23 39:2,	96:11,16
24 13:1,10,	98:25 103:15	92:13 104:9	10,13,19 40:7	97:13,22
15,16,17	105:9 110:1,	food 10:13	41:25 42:2	98:21 99:10,
14:17	19 117:5	36:20 87:21,	43:9 44:1,24	11 100:9
final 115:12	123:13,14	22 113:24	45:3,9,10,13	101:9 102:3,
finally 26:9,22	131:5,25	foot 34:25	46:10,11,16,	6,17,22
33:25 55:1,5	132:19	120:15	19 47:6,10,	104:10
56:9 71:12	134:10,23	for 3:10,11,	11,13 48:13,	105:13,15,18,
82:12 85:16	135:18	13,15 4:13	22,23 49:1,5,	23 106:13,17,
86:15,22,23,	138:14	5:1,10,12,14	22 51:1,15,	19 107:6,13
25 87:9	fiscally 121:21	6:7 7:11,14,	23,25 52:8,11	108:3,4
106:16	five 3:24 7:2	17 8:17 9:11,	53:6 55:6,7	109:3,17,18
127:20	40:4 42:10	18,24 10:5,9,	57:2,3,8,9,14,	110:12,20
finances 75:18	49:25 50:13	16 11:12	16,17,18,20	111:10 113:6,
financial 4:8	61:10,13	12:12 13:25	58:8 59:17	16 114:4,6
121:22	62:12 96:12	15:2,16 16:3,	60:12 61:2,7,	116:8 117:1,
find 28:7 34:1	103:12 107:7,	4,11,23	10,12,18	4,12,14
52:4 69:16	12 108:15	17:15,17	62:1,14,24,25	118:2,3,15
102:5	110:1 113:1	18:9,10,11	63:22 64:11	119:8 120:12,
fine 11:6 20:5,	129:24	19:3,13,16,19	65:2,8,11,12,	23 121:2,15,
13 33:21	135:23	20:25 21:20,	16,18 66:4,6	20,22 122:11,
94:15 132:5	fix 82:24	25 22:1,16,	67:17,18	22,23 123:11,
finish 7:13	117:9	20,23 23:14,	68:12,13,19	21 124:5
20:11 67:10	fixed 38:19	15,18 24:5,	69:25 70:8	125:25 126:7,
75:15 81:3		13,19,20	71:16,20,22	8,9,10,13,17
88:9 107:15,			73:8,16,22	127:5,10,25
16			74:2,13	128:5,6,18
			75:17,23	129:7,10,14,
			76:2,13,20,	16,18 130:3,
			22,23 77:13	10,22,25
			78:4,5,8,14,	131:10 132:5,
			15,19 79:9,	15,19 135:15,
			15,21 80:5,7,	16 136:10

138:2,19 139:11,17,18, 22 for-profit 15:21,24 57:3 75:20 foreign 19:20 forever 55:6,9 82:5 135:21 forgiveness 59:15 forgot 65:1 Fork 28:6 form 42:1 133:19 137:2, 20 formal 72:18 95:25 131:17 137:1,11 format 5:2 former 28:9 forms 133:18 forth 131:20 fortunate 133:15 Fortune 28:20 foster 139:2,4 found 12:2 33:22 50:3 93:20 102:3 135:22 four 20:20 30:23 38:13 42:10 47:19 49:22,25 56:9 61:23 80:4 87:7 99:19,21	100:21 101:4, 7 108:16,21 110:2 127:17, 18 132:18,23 137:4 four-county 9:16 four-state 45:9,20 frame 29:18 34:7 55:15 72:8 80:17 100:19 109:22 110:16 134:12 frames 56:4 Frank 127:6 fraudulent 66:21 Freer 84:12, 13 freeze 21:4,5 freezer 136:18,23,24 freezing 123:5 frequently 130:12 fresh 58:7 59:6 fries 87:23 from 6:12 9:4 14:8,15,17 16:6 18:16 25:1,8,13 26:7,8,10 33:7 35:12	41:24 43:18 49:5 50:1,4 51:18 54:3,11 55:14,17 58:1,9,16 59:5,12 61:15 62:8 64:7,18 66:16 67:3,13 75:3,9,12,16 78:16 80:10 81:11 83:10, 12 85:16 86:10,12 87:1 91:19 93:9,24 94:18 96:5 97:24 98:22, 23 102:7 106:1,2,25 107:17,18 110:11 113:24,25 116:14,19 117:1,19 118:20 122:17 123:5, 9 127:22 132:13 135:14 137:23 front 5:24 23:4 135:17 frustrated 74:9 frustration 18:15 fryer 87:18 fryers 87:18 fuel 110:6,11 full 41:14 136:23	fundamental 126:3 funded 95:4 funding 9:9 funds 9:4,13 12:17 14:3 77:3,8,10,23 87:17,19 88:4 114:16 further 14:10 27:15 130:21 137:22 139:25 furthest 35:12 fuse 64:19 fusebox 64:20 future 9:12 39:13 62:2 <hr/> G <hr/> G-A-R-Y 49:9 G-A-S-K-I-L-L 76:15 G-I-E-S-E-R 90:23 G-O-N-Z-A-L- E-Z 92:23 gain 98:5 117:2 126:7 gained 98:3 gal 51:16 Galesburg 51:13 game 19:16 74:21	gang 64:18 Gary 48:6 49:9 84:13,14 gas 12:7 13:5 14:7 23:14 29:14 40:19 70:16 99:2 Gaskill 76:4, 7,11,14,18 78:17,19 gate 128:14 gave 31:4,5 38:21 41:10 75:2 97:22 117:11 135:15 Gene 92:14 97:3 general 5:23 45:9 131:19 133:17 134:6 136:4 generally 43:23 generate 28:3 49:19 generated 67:13 generating 47:6 generation 20:3,4 25:9 41:24 42:3 49:23 57:25 59:17 gentleman 19:13 43:13 82:10 98:19
--	---	---	---	--

gentlemen 24:13	17 121:3 125:1 126:14 127:17,19,20, 22 128:1,3,4, 6,13 129:12 130:11,16,17, 19	41:2 44:2,20 45:7 47:13 48:9 49:12 50:12,22 53:2,10 55:15 56:20,24 60:21 63:18 69:21 73:4,20 76:9,17 79:5, 13 81:21,25 84:18 89:5,17 90:17,25 91:21 92:16 97:9,20 100:5 105:2,7,22 107:24 111:6 116:4 118:11 122:7,20 123:17 125:6 127:1,16,24 131:2,6,14 138:15 139:10	20:10 21:14, 22 22:10,12 23:2 24:8,19, 20 26:3 27:6, 15 30:14 31:18 33:4 34:5 36:6 37:7,25 41:7 44:12 45:6,16 46:24 48:17 49:15 50:20 51:3 52:18 53:1,10 54:23 55:5 56:13,24 58:20 60:10 61:5 62:5 63:25 65:6,10 68:9 70:4 71:8 73:11 76:12,16 79:13 81:25 83:8 84:25 86:16,17 87:17 89:16 90:25 91:25 92:24 97:16 98:20 99:1 100:12 102:15 105:7, 14 109:14 110:11 111:13 112:1, 21 113:22 114:12 115:17 116:11 118:18 119:8 121:2 122:13, 16,19 123:25 125:9 126:17, 24 127:9,12 128:5,9 129:11,12 131:13 133:6	136:22 137:3 138:4,8,11,23 139:4,12 goal 24:25 God 105:4 122:9 goes 12:6,8 38:11 42:10 51:8 56:4 70:9 87:18,21 94:19 101:20 108:24 114:12 going 6:14,23 7:3 14:8,18 15:7,9 19:24 20:9 21:3 22:7,12,23 23:11,16 24:12 26:20 27:23 28:2,3, 22,23 34:22 35:10 40:4 46:22 47:8, 10,12,13 52:10 55:20, 21 59:14 60:12 61:21 62:9,22 64:21 66:24 70:20 74:12 77:18 82:22 85:22 86:5,20 87:18,24 88:3 91:12,24 92:5,6,8,9 95:1,6 96:25 97:1,2 98:10, 13 101:16 105:25 107:25 108:19
Geoff 131:18 134:7	get 3:6 4:17 7:24 10:6 13:5 14:7 18:5 19:14 22:18 25:8 26:19 27:7 31:19 36:16, 24 37:3,4 40:24 42:15, 18 45:23 46:1,2,12,13 47:15,24 50:3,18 51:24 52:3,16,18 55:6,7,21,22 56:6 57:25 58:2 59:13 65:5,6,7 66:1, 3,15,18 70:9 71:17 73:19 75:25 76:19 77:23 78:7,16 80:3 81:12 82:2 83:8 85:12 86:2 87:4,7 90:8 91:6,20 93:15,18 95:4 97:23 99:8,19 102:4 103:8, 11,14 104:25 110:6,9,11 111:23 112:25 113:7, 11,12 114:12, 13,24 115:10 118:21,25 119:4,5,10, 16,25 120:3,	get all 71:15 gets 33:10 42:10 60:14 119:1 getting 12:24 13:1 26:21 27:14 28:17 45:14 47:21 53:24 67:12, 14,15,18 81:13 91:4 103:22 105:21 107:3, 11 111:17 113:2 114:19 119:17 129:19 130:3 131:3 Gieser 84:16 89:2 90:15, 19,22 91:1 92:10 gist 99:22 give 3:9,13 6:13,25 7:1, 12 8:13 9:23 10:21 11:3,8 13:21 14:23 16:19 21:16 23:1 24:1,9 25:18,21 26:4 30:2,6,14 31:13,23 32:7 34:4 35:23 36:6 37:17	given 7:17 15:17 31:10 126:15 gives 79:16 giving 7:13 47:9,11 54:21 78:18 128:17 glad 74:8 107:16 124:4 Glen 4:3 glitch 119:4 go 3:2 4:17 5:9 6:3 7:7 8:4,21 11:16, 22 12:5 13:4, 5,18 14:2 15:5 17:1,24 19:14,22	

110:15 111:14 112:22 113:10,15 119:8,11 123:14 124:2, 3,6 125:20 126:5,14 127:12,22 128:6 130:17, 18 132:6 133:7 135:2 137:15 138:11 golden 51:13 64:6 gone 18:10 32:12 60:9 66:9 77:13 80:15 86:11 114:14 Gonzalez 89:3 92:13, 15,19,22 93:1 95:19,23 96:1,10,17,18 good 4:12,13 8:25 16:11 19:11 27:24 29:6 33:7,10, 11 46:16 52:7 58:21 65:7 79:2 98:17 99:9 107:20 109:8 120:20 121:23 122:23 133:12 goods 58:4,5 Google 69:16 got 5:5,6 15:9	16:1,13 19:25 20:19,20,22 22:5,21 23:4 26:13 28:14, 22 30:17 33:17 41:11 46:5 50:14 51:15,18,24 53:13,15,16 54:22,24 55:1 56:9 65:4,13, 18 66:19 71:17 78:24 80:4 85:20 86:25 87:9, 11,16 90:12 91:17 96:4,11 103:16,17,19 106:1,2,18 107:5,17 109:22 110:19,20 113:2 114:14 120:25 122:15,19,23 123:1,3 126:9 128:12 131:1, 23 132:3,16, 21 136:22 137:5 gotten 133:1 government 13:2 25:6 74:24 75:2 government's 19:21 governor 4:6 134:6 governors 133:13 Granby 85:4, 5,17	grand 101:7 103:20,21 grandma 117:20 grant 75:22 graph 112:9 grateful 9:10 great 6:11 17:25 18:3,22 42:3 78:2 93:7 96:13 101:9,16 green 17:24 24:20 25:4 27:17,21 46:18 74:20 80:20,23,24 98:10 114:13 grid 92:8 grid-tied 92:5 grids 105:20 grievance 94:24 Griffith 92:14 97:3,4 groceries 23:15 ground 101:20,24 grown 116:21 growth 29:1 guarantee 15:25 guaranteed 16:1 guess 4:12 5:3 12:9	35:15 64:25 87:20 93:18 103:12 109:9 125:15 127:23 129:24 guessing 34:12 guidelines 9:22 guise 27:3 guy 23:2 47:20 82:9 86:3 128:21 136:9 guys 19:23 20:1,2 37:2 47:21 82:16 93:22 107:24 109:6 122:20 guys' 82:16 <hr/> H <hr/> H-A-R-R-I-S- O-N 125:3 H-U-M-B-L-E 84:24 hadn't 35:13 102:10 Hahn 3:25 4:10,12 5:8 haircut 75:20, 21 half 17:24 22:13,21,25 23:1 46:11 49:24 51:15, 19 65:11	66:15 70:8 74:22,23 87:10 113:1 119:19 128:21 131:22 132:20 hammered 117:3 Hammers 118:1 hand 7:8 8:11 11:7 58:15,16 117:5 handle 87:16 127:14 handled 87:1 91:13 117:13 hands 123:12 hang 121:16 happen 83:10 128:8 130:8, 14 happened 40:10 46:5 51:17 55:15 94:1 116:23 136:3,23 happening 71:5 105:10 happens 42:17 92:1 109:1 130:12 happy 78:2 101:6 hard 32:14 46:24 59:17 77:21 102:16 107:20 114:1
--	--	---	---	--

130:6 hardly 46:7 hardships 19:5 hardware 134:3 harm 133:7 Harris 126:22 Harrison 124:24 125:1, 2,4,8,11,18 Hatcher 3:2, 17 5:8,14,19, 25 6:8 8:16, 20 10:19,24 11:11,15 12:10,12 13:16,18,24 14:9,13,20 15:1,5 16:14, 17,22 17:1 20:9,15 21:8, 11,19,22 23:9,19,24 24:4,8 25:15, 24 26:3 29:4 30:1,9,13 31:11,15 32:1,6 34:3 35:18 36:1,5 37:6,12,20,24 40:13,21 41:1,7 43:2, 21 44:7,11, 14,17,23 45:2,6 48:2, 12,16 49:6, 10,15 50:15, 20,25 51:3 52:20 53:5,9 54:10 56:13,	16,18,23 59:3 60:7,19,24 61:5 62:17,22 63:16,21,25 67:10,23 68:18,25 69:9,17,24 70:3 71:18 72:24 73:7,11 75:14,24 76:12,16 78:17 79:3,8, 12 81:2,5,15, 19,24 83:1 84:10,21,25 88:8,11,20,25 89:8,11,16 90:13,20,24 92:10,20,24 95:19 96:18, 24 97:12,16 99:16,20,25 100:8,12 102:24 104:18,22,25 105:6 107:14 108:1 109:14 110:22 111:1, 3,9,13 114:7, 18,25 115:4, 20 116:2,7,11 118:7,14,18 121:18,25 122:10,13 123:8,20,25 124:21,25 125:4,9,17 126:22 127:4, 8 129:10 130:23 131:9, 13 134:8 135:9 137:25 138:13,18,22 139:7,9,16,23	hate 40:22 88:8 having 10:15 58:15 59:23, 24 71:25 82:13 85:6 90:10 106:12 110:6 111:15 112:4,6 113:14 120:20 132:9, 25 133:20 hazard 84:3,6 head 74:15 106:12 124:6 headline 98:22 heads 117:4 health 36:10, 23 hear 4:22 6:6, 12 15:7 36:21 41:11 44:2 heard 11:21 12:19 14:17 41:11 51:14 52:9 58:9 85:8 91:8 100:17 104:4 107:21 121:14 124:8 hearing 3:9, 13,19 6:11 7:21 31:12 37:7 43:7 51:8 62:24 63:8,10 76:3 111:15 118:8 122:4 123:9 126:23	139:11,12 hearings 26:17 43:6 heart 133:12 139:21 heartland 19:9 85:24 hearts 118:1 133:14 heat 12:9 106:23,24 heated 64:9 heater 123:4 124:15 heaters 107:1 124:14 held 16:12 95:14 109:17 Hello 104:24 help 10:6,13 24:23 25:13 31:19 36:13, 22 37:3 63:12 77:2,3,9,14 82:19 86:19 95:2,5 99:10 105:4 114:11, 16 122:9 helping 106:13 helps 9:17 here 4:1,19,22 6:2,6 7:8 11:2,18 12:1 13:12 14:4 19:15,16 20:22 21:25 22:5 25:5	27:20 29:2 30:17 36:10 40:23 41:9 42:21 43:23 50:11 51:17 52:19 58:4,19 59:16 62:20, 23 63:6,11 67:13 68:20 73:24 74:1 75:5,6,10 76:4 81:16 84:11 89:1,23 90:1,14 91:24 92:11 96:9 98:11 100:1, 14 101:11 102:1,5 104:19 106:2 108:2 109:19 113:3 116:14 117:5,11 118:8 122:1 123:9 124:3, 7,9,22 126:10,23 130:24 137:20 138:1 139:1,17,22 here's 10:10 11:24 49:17 50:5 65:16 hey 19:23 26:13 47:18 85:9 86:4,11 109:10 high 14:5 19:15 40:6 53:14 57:21 131:24 high-end 45:11
---	---	---	---	---

higher 12:8 112:9	Honor 6:5	82:7,16,24	Huh 94:8	94:25
highlighted 22:5 94:4	honoring 84:7	83:12 84:4	human 117:6	identifying 69:8,13
hike 39:7	hooked 133:2	85:3 110:9	Humble	idiot 65:22
hikes 19:12	hoops 36:15 102:17	112:10 121:3, 5,10 123:2 137:3	84:14,15,16, 20,23,24 85:2 88:8,10,14, 17,23,25	if 3:5 6:2,16 7:3,5,16,24 10:19 11:6 12:6,8,11,19 15:1 16:11 17:23,24 21:2,19 22:11 25:24 27:11, 13 28:16 29:1,11,14 30:9 31:17 32:1,6 35:20 36:1 37:20 38:11 44:23 46:13 47:17, 24 50:25 53:5,9,21 55:21 58:4 59:12,21 60:24 61:1 62:23 63:9,21 65:20,21 66:4 67:4,13 68:4, 21 69:5,24 73:16,20 75:25 78:2,14 79:8,12 81:2 87:16,17,18 88:3 89:12 90:20,24 91:6 92:20 94:12, 18,21,24 95:1 96:12 97:19 99:7 100:8 101:19 107:14 111:9 113:8,10 115:5 116:7 118:4,14
hired 80:8	hope 3:6 6:25 9:11 19:4,13 52:8 58:17 88:12	household 9:24	hundred 26:14 65:14 87:2 105:16	
hiring 21:5	hopefully 58:24 103:1	households 9:10,19,20,25 10:2,4,18	hundreds 45:10 117:18	
hit 101:17 108:13	hoping 19:15	houses 121:2, 6	Hunter 79:17	
hits 135:22	hospital 33:16,20 34:20 45:22	housing 80:14 116:22	hurdles 36:15	
hold 10:20,25 32:10 119:25	hospitals 45:11	how 9:23 15:16 19:10, 19 22:25 23:17 28:22, 23 29:12 33:15 36:20, 23 42:23 44:4,9 54:18 61:14 63:4 64:3 70:9 72:3 80:23,24 81:17 85:12 86:6 87:21 90:9 91:7 94:1,15 104:7 105:17,18 108:10 111:20 112:22 113:4 121:8 125:15 126:4 127:13 129:21 130:7, 8,13 133:11 139:2	hurricane 81:1	
holdout 39:10	hostile 91:23		hurry 23:10	
home 10:12 26:11 32:10, 16 33:19 34:25 41:17 68:8 70:6,15, 16 71:12 82:2 102:19 107:17 108:24 112:11 120:3, 15 131:21 135:1	hot 112:16 135:3		hurt 116:15	
homeless 77:19,20	hotel 33:1,6		hurting 77:4	
homeowner's 32:12	hotter 102:11		husband 32:11 33:14, 16 34:11,20 35:11 41:17 42:16	
homes 28:15 113:24 124:17	hour 57:15 58:3 64:6 68:19 106:19		husband's 120:24	
honest 35:9 65:19	hours 38:8 39:10 45:15 54:20 58:2 71:6 82:7 95:10 100:25 108:16 114:22 119:21 120:2		HVAC 9:7 71:2	
	house 12:2 26:9,11 45:17 47:6,15 54:14,15 64:16 79:22	huge 10:9 28:21 41:23 80:18	<hr/> I <hr/>	
			i-sense 45:19	
			ice 18:3,5,8 94:10	
			idea 17:21 18:3 28:2 49:20 65:20 86:21,22	

119:8 122:16, 18 123:13,20 124:3 127:4, 18 129:11 132:5 134:8 135:25 138:18 139:24,25 ill 33:14,16 illegal 95:16 illness 35:11 imagine 42:9 120:22 IMG 39:19 immediately 33:17 65:1 101:9 impact 138:25 139:5 impacts 43:8 impartial 7:20 implement 19:20 implemented 25:5 important 90:12 119:2 imposed 65:3 67:5,7 improve 40:9 116:24 improved 93:8 improvement 91:5 improvements 61:25 62:2	improves 52:8 in 3:5,15,20 4:8,16,22 5:23,24 6:2 7:1,5,9,22 8:4,6 9:12,16, 18 10:14 11:17,23 12:6 14:8,22 15:13,14,20 16:1,18 17:16,22,23 18:3,4,5,22, 24 19:3,9 20:20,21 21:1,14 22:10,19 23:4,5,11,12, 24 24:15 25:3,4,5,20 26:10,11,12, 22 27:7,16 28:2,15 29:2, 7,12,23 30:4, 17,23 31:3, 17,21 32:16, 17,18 33:8,16 34:7,8,12,20, 25 35:1,2,22 36:10,14,21 37:15 38:5,6, 19 39:6,8,9, 14,18,20,21, 23,24,25 40:4,7,10,12, 18 41:16,18, 23 42:1,5,6,7, 9,17 43:25 44:19 45:11, 17,23 46:8, 23,25 47:4, 23,24 48:8, 23,24,25	49:11,23 50:21 51:25 52:19,25 53:1,20 54:18,24,25 55:13,19 56:1,18 57:4, 20 58:10,23 60:11,19,25 61:16,23 62:2 63:3,8,9,17 64:8,11,16, 17,19,20,22, 23,24 65:17 66:1,17,19 67:4,7,17,18 69:20 70:6,7, 8,15,18 71:12 73:3,15 74:1, 3,14,23 75:12,13,17 76:7 77:3,10, 11,14 78:1 79:4,19,24 80:2,4,13,17, 19,21,23,25 81:20 82:1,17 83:6,7,9 84:16 85:2,5, 8,10,13,14, 15,16,17,18, 23 86:16,18, 21 87:5 89:3, 22 90:16 91:2,5,17 92:15 93:11, 15,20 94:2,6 95:12 97:7,22 98:3,4,8,12 99:1,2,4,9,14 100:4,18,21 101:8,23 102:4,14,20 103:25	104:25 106:17 107:2, 4,12 108:12 110:7 111:4 112:1,2,9 113:1,8 114:24 115:13,15,16 116:3,15,16, 18,22 118:10, 25 119:17,23 120:11,15,20 121:2,5,6,11, 14 122:5 123:4,6,14 124:5,6,10, 12,13,15,25 125:5,23 126:1,10,11, 16,17,19,24 127:21 128:10,12,19, 21 131:5 132:17 133:3, 12,13 134:5, 25 135:2,6,17 136:1,18 137:7,15,20 138:9,13 139:6 in-service 36:11 inability 99:13 inaccurate 66:20 include 9:6 including 12:6 107:18 117:22 income 10:14 14:4 32:9 38:17,19,23	39:1,6 40:18 42:8 80:10 89:18 97:22 98:3,4,17,19, 20 113:18 114:10 132:16 incomes 9:21 38:19 42:2, 18,22 inconsistent 70:17 71:15 104:9 incorrect 93:12 112:7 incorrectly 96:6 129:22 increase 3:15 12:6 15:17 17:5 23:17 27:1,7,10,12 30:20 31:4,5 38:9 39:15,18 42:7 48:21 49:4 50:12 51:24,25 53:19,23 54:5 56:3 57:5,10 65:4 73:16, 18,20,21 74:8 75:9,11,18,23 77:13,18 80:9,21 87:25 89:21 91:3,7 93:5 95:9 97:20,22,24 98:1 99:4,11, 15 102:4,7 113:6 120:22, 23 126:13,20 133:10 139:3
--	--	--	---	---

increased 12:16 57:20 58:1	infrastructure 17:12 18:11 40:10,12 49:1 58:24 79:20 93:7	intent 48:19	109:9,10	83:24,25
increases 10:15 20:7 21:3 31:3 40:6 41:20, 23,24 42:5 50:4,11 74:15,23 75:1 98:4	initially 99:18 100:14 102:1	intently 4:25	investing 40:18 78:5	85:4,6 100:16 103:2 104:12 109:22 111:16 115:3, 5
increasing 13:11 47:3 57:22 58:3 82:21 95:11 133:9	initiative 58:8	interest 53:14 93:9	investment 27:24 28:24 79:15 99:8	it 4:12 5:1
index 23:5	input 61:15, 17	Interesting 39:22	investments 39:4 57:19,20 129:5	6:17 9:9,11, 24 11:20 12:3,4,8 16:8, 12 17:7,19 18:2,4,22,24 19:3,4,5,6,24, 25 20:23,25 21:1,10 22:3, 5,8,9,17,20, 21 23:3,4,13 24:24 26:10, 14,15,16 27:1,22 29:2, 14 31:19 33:17 34:17, 19,20,21 35:1,2,11 37:3 39:7,8,9 40:1,14 41:12,19 42:10,25 45:15,23 46:5 47:7,13,15,19 48:22,25 49:17 50:4, 12,17 51:18 52:6,10,11,14 53:14,15 54:17,19 55:6,16,17, 24,25 56:2,10 57:5,11,15,17 58:21 59:9, 10,11,13,14, 17,24 60:3 61:22 63:9 64:5,8,22,25
indicating 103:2 134:12	inspect 79:20	interests 4:21	investor 30:23 117:2, 4,5 125:23,25 126:7	
inefficiencies 17:18,23	inspections 79:23	internet 29:14	investor-owned 99:2	
inflation 15:13 23:11 30:21	install 25:6	interrupt 88:9	investors 78:1 117:16 126:2	
inform 35:4	installation 9:8	intervening 6:1,9	invite 75:21	
informal 35:5 72:18,20 83:16,20 95:24 109:3 136:7 137:1, 2,9	installed 71:3	intervention 9:14 10:3	involved 48:19,24,25 133:12	
information 5:23 28:7 40:8 41:10 69:2,8 71:14 96:15 137:13 139:19	instance 100:21	into 3:10 45:14 55:5,22 58:17 61:17 64:16 90:2 93:14 96:3,9 106:21 114:21 116:22 117:3 121:17 127:12 132:14 138:24 139:4, 19	Iowa 119:24	
informed 66:16 83:15	instances 101:22	inundated 113:3	irregular 54:2	
	instead 58:15 59:24 61:24 91:3 117:14	invaluable 9:9 105:17	isolated 100:18 102:2	
	Institute 97:21 98:23	invest 58:23	issue 55:8 80:1 81:8 82:13 83:14 91:10 94:9 98:8,9,21 101:25 103:15,19 115:7 126:11 129:19 132:13,17 134:1 136:16	
	insurance 30:19 32:12, 13 41:22	invested 40:18	issues 26:21 54:13 82:24	
	insurances 41:24	investigated 66:23		
	integrity 93:23	investigation		

65:3,5,16,23 66:3,14,15,18 67:3,4,13,14 68:3,4,5,8,22 69:6,12,14,15 71:2,10 72:18 74:18,20,25 75:1,12,13, 16,18 78:14, 20 80:2 81:8 82:4,6,7,9,12, 13,20,21,25 83:5,9,10 84:3 85:9,10, 12,13,21,22 86:13,19,25 87:3,4,6,8,9, 16,24 88:4,10 91:7,16,19 92:7,11 93:8, 14,20 94:4,8, 16,18,20,22 95:24 96:3 98:1,2,13 99:21 100:17, 23 101:8,10 102:2 103:7, 10,11,22 106:19,23,25 107:25 108:17,20,22, 23,24,25 109:10,19 110:2,7,11,16 112:9,11,14, 15,16 113:1, 12,24,25 114:3 115:11, 16,23 117:5, 16,21 118:2 119:4,18 121:11 122:2, 20 124:12,16, 17,20 125:15,	20,25 126:10, 16 127:13 128:6,16,21 129:17,18 130:1,10,12, 15,17 131:21, 22 132:1,7, 14,24 133:9, 13 134:4,7, 21,22 135:2, 3,12,20 136:1,2,3,8, 13,21,22 137:17,21 138:2 139:4, 22 it's 11:20 12:24 13:12 14:8 15:15 19:12,16,23 23:12 26:1 27:20 28:7,8, 22,23 32:11, 20 33:13 37:11 38:8 39:16,21 44:1 45:4,17 46:23 48:1,14 51:2, 5 58:24,25 63:2,5 64:9 65:2 66:23, 24,25 67:14 69:4 70:16 72:13,16 77:15,16 79:18 84:3,5, 6,13,23 87:1, 4,25 88:17 93:6 94:7,19, 20,21 103:5,6 105:16 106:15 107:8, 12,21 110:4, 8,10 111:19	112:3,14,15, 16 113:5,10 114:1,22 116:19 117:3, 7 118:5 120:14,16 121:1,12 123:5 124:11 125:3,17 126:16,19 129:16,22 130:18 131:23 132:23 133:1 134:2 135:1, 14 136:12,19, 20 137:5,16 138:4 items 17:10, 14 57:9,10,22 58:6 59:12 its 27:22 54:1 <hr/> J <hr/> J-I-N-N-I-F-E-R 138:20 J-O-H-N 79:10 J-O-H-N-S-O-N 70:2 J-O-N-A-T-H-O-N 100:11 J-O-N-E-S 73:10 J-O-S-H-U-A 123:23 J-U-D-I-T-H 89:14 jacks 136:21	Janet 78:22, 24 January 22:5 26:12 27:16, 18 38:5 75:17 93:11 119:16 120:10 Jasper 8:24 97:22,24 Jeff 109:5 Jefferson 5:18 Jinnifer 138:20 job 36:21 80:11,12 95:10 117:24 Joey 100:3 110:23 John 4:1 6:6 52:23 56:15, 25 78:23,25 79:10 Johnson 60:17 69:18, 20,23 70:1,3, 5 71:18,23 72:3,7,10,12, 14,19,21,23 joke 53:15,16 86:18 Jonathon 97:6 100:10 Jones 72:25 73:2,6,9,13 75:14,16 76:3 Joplin 23:5 38:16,24 40:7,11,12	57:1 76:22 77:3,10 86:17 90:7 101:11 124:10,13 132:22 133:2 Joshua 123:23 judge 3:2,18 5:8,14,19,25 6:8 8:16,20 10:19,24 11:11,15 12:10,12 13:16,18,24 14:9,13,20 15:1,5 16:14, 17,22 17:1 20:9,15 21:8, 11,19,22 23:9,19,24 24:4,8 25:15, 24 26:3 29:4 30:1,9,13 31:11,15 32:1,6 34:3 35:18 36:1,5 37:6,12,20,24 40:13,21 41:1,7 43:2, 21 44:7,11, 14,17,23 45:2,6 48:2, 12,16 49:6, 10,15 50:15, 20,25 51:3 52:20 53:5,9 54:10 56:13, 16,18,23 59:3 60:7,19,24 61:5 62:17,22 63:4,16,21,25 67:10,23 68:18,25
---	---	--	---	--

69:9,17,24 70:3 71:18 72:24 73:7,11 75:14,24 76:12,16 78:17 79:3,8, 12 81:2,5,15, 19,24 83:1 84:10,21,25 88:8,11,20,25 89:8,11,16 90:13,20,24 92:10,20,24 95:19 96:18, 24 97:12,16 99:16,20,25 100:8,12 102:24 104:18,22,25 105:6 107:14 108:1 109:14 110:22 111:1, 3,9,13 114:7, 18,25 115:4, 20 116:2,7,11 118:7,14,18 121:18,25 122:10,13 123:8,20,25 124:21,25 125:4,9,17 126:22 127:4, 8 129:10 130:23 131:9, 13 134:8 135:9 137:25 138:13,18,22 139:7,9,16,23 judgment 98:9 Judith 84:15 89:1,14	July 3:3 80:2 85:16 98:23 103:4,25 120:11 jump 36:15 102:17 jumped 54:17 55:17 118:23 Junction 73:15 82:2 June 30:21 39:25 85:16 87:6 103:4 109:19 125:23,24 junk 133:25 just 3:3,5,21 4:21 5:4 7:14 11:20,25 13:11,12 14:14 15:9, 10,19,23 16:2,5 19:9, 16,17,25 20:12,24 21:2 22:11,14,22 25:12 26:15, 18 31:1 32:9 34:12,14,19, 24 35:12 36:22 39:10 41:19 43:21 45:13 46:18, 24 47:1,12,23 49:3 51:5,8, 20 52:17,18, 25 53:15 55:6,15 58:15 59:25 60:1,8 65:22 66:8,23 67:5,7,15 68:20 69:11	70:6,17,20,25 71:8,14,20,24 73:25 74:14 82:23 83:17 87:5,9,18 88:21 90:4 92:12 94:10, 19 95:2,8 96:18 98:13, 22 102:8 103:1,16 106:7 108:16 109:9,25 110:4,18 111:20 112:3, 9,12,18,25 113:5 115:18 119:12,13,20 120:5,11 121:1,2,12 123:1,15 124:19 127:24 128:14 134:16,24 136:25 137:3 138:6,12,24 justified 15:17 justify 11:23 23:17 74:15 <hr/> K <hr/> K-I-E-L-E 97:4 K-U-B-E-L 115:23 K-U-H-E-L 115:23 Kay 48:7 50:16,17	Kayla 3:25 keep 38:13 43:24 57:15 60:25 64:4 66:14 78:23 97:2 107:4 114:3 119:9 123:5 124:5 129:19 keeping 39:17 93:17 108:22 keeps 130:1 kept 39:5 109:25 119:11 key 102:9 128:18 keyword 36:16 kid 11:19 82:19 Kiele 97:4 kill 80:24 133:7 killed 57:11 killing 19:23 113:18,19 kilowatt 38:7, 8 39:2,10,16 57:15 58:2,3 65:9,16 100:25 kilowatts 22:2,6,7 50:2, 3 54:19 64:12 65:19 66:7 70:13,16 94:17	kind 5:2 15:20 19:17 21:25 23:17 26:17, 22 27:8 34:12 36:8 38:3 59:15 60:2 62:8 67:7 71:16 72:5 74:10,11,24 75:2 83:4 100:17 101:10 102:8 103:19 111:20 118:21 119:2, 12 125:19 kinds 18:19 kitchen 35:1 knew 35:12 43:16 100:23 101:12 knocked 128:12,14 know 4:20 5:2,4 6:21 7:8 12:8 17:7,14, 19 18:17 20:1,3,4,5 22:9,14,17,21 23:13,16 24:13,14 25:2 26:17 28:5,22 32:23 36:20, 23 40:10 41:12,22 42:23 44:4,8 45:20 50:2 52:17 57:2,15 59:9 60:4 62:8,14 64:17,19 65:6,8,9
---	--	---	---	---

67:17,19 70:9 77:4 81:13 86:6 91:4 94:1 95:6,9 96:1,6,11 101:6 102:9 103:14 104:7 108:8,16 110:6 112:5, 8,17,22 113:15,18 114:20 119:6, 20 124:2,3 128:7 130:10 131:22 133:11 136:9 137:16 139:25 knowing 22:17 42:22 known 5:11 124:4 Kolkmeier 4:3,23 54:8 Kuhel 115:22	138:21 lack 26:19 89:23 104:5 ladies 86:18 lady 86:9 106:5 132:15 133:22 135:15 139:1 landlord 85:8 landscaping 128:20 large 127:13 largest 9:15 99:3 last 5:4 9:5,18 13:19 15:14 17:4,6 20:16, 19 22:1 23:2 26:9 27:1 31:3 36:3 39:24 46:12 48:3 49:23 52:13,15 53:18 56:14 58:7 61:10,23 62:12 63:24 67:2 70:15 72:10 77:14 81:17 84:24 87:6 89:25 98:24 103:3, 7,25 105:24 108:21 110:16 111:16 113:15 115:12 118:24 121:2, 20 130:25 132:24 136:4 138:1,21	139:11 late 111:20 later 42:15 47:2 62:21 86:12 87:10 93:14 94:15 101:7 127:18 132:6 latest 125:23 laundry 114:17 Laura 110:23, 24,25 111:11 law 3:18 63:3 laws 117:6 layer 17:8 layoffs 21:4 leader 45:8 leads 39:11 learned 124:4 learning 139:5 least 48:24 86:19 94:22 104:13 leave 47:12 LED 9:8 Lee 76:5 78:21,24 left 92:13 107:17 113:14 115:22 128:22 136:10 legislative	133:13 length 115:17 lenient 22:22 Leslie 60:15 61:3 less 9:24 22:25 23:1, 14,15 36:17, 19 38:24 39:10 50:3 59:2 64:12 100:23 101:5 120:24 133:15 let 7:8 19:18 31:21 37:15 44:19 48:7 49:10 53:1 56:18 63:16 65:15 69:20 79:3 81:19 84:16 89:3 90:15 92:15 97:1,7 100:3 104:25 111:4 116:2 118:9 122:5 125:4 126:24 128:10 131:4 138:3,13 let alone 133:8,15 let's 3:2 8:4 13:18 50:20 52:18 87:17 93:1,10 95:8 103:16 131:2 letter 93:15, 17 106:4 107:18 109:5	letters 106:3 letting 38:1 level 22:10 levied 19:12 liar 82:6,14 Liberty 5:11, 13 9:1,5,25 10:4,5 14:4 17:8 18:12,23 20:6 21:3 22:19 24:14 26:19,24,25 27:5,18 30:25 31:6 32:20 33:4,15 36:12 37:1 38:16 39:2,18,23 40:2,6 47:4 50:13 53:19, 25 54:3 59:12 64:23 71:4 73:22 75:22 79:14,20 82:5 85:7 86:10,16 87:14 88:7 91:1,24 93:4, 13,24 94:6 95:1,4,13 96:3,4,5 98:11,16 101:19 102:3 105:11 106:1, 6 109:7 116:15,25 117:22 118:3, 22 121:5,7, 15,24 125:15 128:2 131:20, 23 132:4 133:11 135:14
<hr/> L <hr/>				
L-A-U-R-A 111:11				
L-E-S-L-I-E 61:3				
L-I-N-D-A 32:4				
L-I-S-A 118:17				
L-O-M-B-A-R- D-I-O-L-I-V-E 63:24				
L-O-U-M				

Liberty's 3:14 11:21 17:3,15 53:22 75:19 93:23 98:9 102:19 Liberty/ empire 124:5 life 50:11 114:2 116:24 119:16 light 47:8 66:8 93:12 94:5 lighted 114:14 lighting 9:8 lightning 101:21 lights 47:12 70:14 132:3, 9,10 Liheap 9:12 114:11 like 4:10 5:2,9 6:3,17,18 7:6 11:25 13:11 14:3 15:11, 19,23 19:12, 24,25 20:23, 24 22:2,11, 15,20 27:24 30:17 31:18 33:1,5 34:20, 25 42:24 50:9 51:20 54:22 57:4,22 58:11 59:14,22 62:7 63:2 64:4 65:3,13,14 66:8,24 68:13,14,19	72:15 74:14 77:19 80:4 81:1,18 85:25 91:4 96:8,16 98:2 99:23 101:17 102:1, 7 103:21 104:2,6,9 105:9 109:4 110:4 111:19 112:13,18 113:2 114:11, 12,15 116:13, 25 119:19 120:6 121:12 123:15 127:22 128:6, 16,24 129:4 131:1 133:5 135:4 136:9 138:24 139:13,17,23, 25 likely 102:13 limb 46:8 limbs 46:2,6, 24 limited 77:1 107:22 132:16 limiting 6:15 limits 60:13 Linda 31:15 32:4 line 4:24 17:9, 14 46:10 51:11 52:18 57:9,10,22 58:6 59:11 79:22 130:6 135:17	lineman 133:24 lines 29:18 132:20 link 20:7 138:5 Lisa 115:24 118:9,16 list 46:22 52:22 60:10 76:5 78:23 100:2 115:21 123:10 listen 44:9 76:1 listened 62:9 125:21 listening 4:24 5:6 23:18 54:9 little 14:6 31:20 45:14 51:8 78:15 95:5 102:2 110:16 122:17 125:12 132:21 137:9 live 32:18 34:25 36:18 41:16 65:25 70:15 73:15 75:8 117:20 120:15 122:17 lived 46:11 112:10 115:13 134:16	lives 75:6 77:22 living 23:5 30:18,20 36:18 38:5 80:7 85:2 131:25 132:8, 19 134:24 LLCS 88:18 loaded 18:8 loan 25:10 lobbyists 50:7 local 3:13 8:23 43:5 locally 119:25 located 101:4 location 85:17 lock 128:17 locked 128:16 lodge 83:16 lodged 95:21 log 55:22 Lombardi 63:13,23 Lombardi- olive 60:16 63:14,15,20, 23 64:2 67:12,23,25 68:3,7,16,24 69:4,14,17 long 20:25 129:21 130:13 131:25	long-term 34:22 longer 121:12,16 128:3 look 19:22 31:7 39:16 42:23 50:1 66:4 67:16 93:14,23 95:5 119:12 looked 30:16, 21,22 67:5 96:3 looking 7:15 42:22 63:5 97:25 109:25 125:13,19 looks 27:23 51:20 65:3 128:6 loophole 45:15 Los 91:17 lose 92:2,6 losing 106:12 136:17 loss 25:9 losses 129:5 lost 30:22 41:17 42:16 106:10 122:24 136:18,23 lot 12:4 15:8 24:11 30:17 33:19 36:9 41:10 46:3 49:19 61:22
--	--	---	---	---

62:14 63:8 67:15 93:9 95:6 96:10 100:17,23 101:5 113:14 114:1,19,20 116:14 124:4, 5 135:2 Loum 138:12, 17,20,21,22, 24 139:8 love 17:22 77:25 133:25 low 14:4 15:13 42:2 113:17 114:9 low-income 9:2,17 10:5 77:17 113:19 114:11 121:15,20 lower 20:4 98:17 lowering 64:5 lucky 78:9 122:22 lying 83:18 116:14 <hr/> <div>M</div> <hr/> M-A-U-R-I-C-E 11:13 M-A-X 51:2 M-C-G-R-E-W 15:4 M-I-L-L-E-R 37:23	M-Y-E-R-S 51:2 ma'am 10:21 32:1,6 35:19 41:7 61:5 76:4,16 89:2 90:15 105:6 139:7 made 3:24 16:10 42:6 58:24 62:11 69:3 72:5 98:7,16 126:4 128:19 134:4 135:14 136:16 137:19 Madison 5:17 magically 93:24 Maida 4:2 mail 66:20 93:15 mailbox 66:17,19 mailed 39:14 66:18 mailing 66:14 main 85:7,17 124:12 133:20 maintain 25:8 28:24 39:5 maintenance 46:2 major 18:20 30:24 57:7 121:19 130:18	make 4:10 6:13 10:10 11:2 14:7,14 15:11,19 16:11 19:6,11 21:13,24 26:15,18,20 28:25 41:20 42:22 43:7,21 46:13,19 48:22 52:15 60:8,13 62:2 68:4,5 69:9 74:12,16 76:1 77:25 78:2,7 81:16 86:12 88:4,5 94:12 99:5 106:15 110:11 112:24 116:24 117:16,21,23 129:1,12 139:13,25 makes 47:2 94:13,16,19 117:21 121:8 making 21:6 28:15 33:10 35:21 46:22 49:18 69:11 70:19,20 117:18 manage 27:11,12 28:19 29:1 90:9 101:10, 18 102:16 103:11 managed 51:7 management	26:19 52:7 managers 33:8 111:25 managing 26:24 47:22 88:4 manila 137:7 manufacturin g 100:24 many 4:20 7:1 36:20,23 41:13 44:4 54:18 80:23 86:6 87:21 88:12 94:11 98:25 113:16 124:16 136:15 mapped 86:25 March 26:13 39:18 85:8 86:13 111:16 margin 99:11 margins 117:14 mark 69:12 Marke 131:18 134:7 marked 68:15 market 58:5 91:15 116:22 markets 28:25 Mary 10:11 matter 69:15, 16 139:20	mattress 64:9 Maurice 11:4, 13 Max 50:17,19 51:2 maximum 27:13 42:15 maybe 13:19 31:8 43:24 51:16 52:17 56:8 58:11 59:1,13,14 61:23 66:5 96:19,20 117:12 120:8 Mcdonald 8:25 38:5,12 Mcgregor 14:21,25 15:3,7 16:14, 16 me 4:1 6:6 7:8 13:5,8 14:3 15:16 19:18 31:21 32:15 34:7 36:24 37:15 44:19 46:11 47:5,7, 9,10,11,14 48:8 49:10 53:1 54:21 55:6,7,15 56:14,18 63:16 64:3,20 65:15,23 66:4,10,14 68:11 69:16, 20 72:8 75:19 78:9 79:3,18 80:4 81:19 82:6,9 84:16
--	---	--	---	---

89:3 90:15 91:9 92:9,15 94:14,25 96:6 97:7,20 100:3 101:13,14 104:25 105:4 106:13 107:7 110:3 111:4 114:2 116:2 117:1,24 118:9 119:2 120:18 121:4, 8 122:5,9 125:4,19 126:24 127:24 130:22 131:4 132:13,14 133:23 135:15,16 137:23 138:13 mean 11:19 12:3,16,22 66:7 68:5 71:7,17 73:25 77:25 82:18 94:20 106:8 108:9,14 113:9 114:1, 22 119:20 128:16 134:25 means 40:3 58:1 66:16 77:23 meant 17:23 meat 136:18, 24 med 14:7 median 38:17, 19,23,25	40:17 97:22 98:4 Medicare 30:19 36:11 meet 10:10 17:12 27:22 meeting 17:7 32:25 33:1 42:10 49:25 74:2,4 86:14 90:1 98:11 105:24 meetings 19:10 22:18, 19 megawatts 28:3 51:22,24 member 32:23 members 3:13 40:15 63:11 mention 32:24 57:22 104:4 mentioned 34:6 39:7 59:6 83:4 99:7,14 102:18 104:3 mess 66:10, 19 113:5 meter 17:5 33:21 64:21, 22 82:3,7,17 83:8 90:3 93:19,24 94:5,14,15,16 119:8 123:2	metering 47:5 58:9 meters 90:5 93:12,13 101:4 110:4,6 133:22,25 metro 23:6 Meyers 122:4 Michael 69:19 72:25 73:1,2 97:4 microphone 7:14 8:10 11:5 14:22 21:13 31:19 35:21 97:6 129:12 microphones 7:9 mid 126:6 middle 121:16 Midwest 23:12 mile 38:13,15 122:17 Miller 35:20 37:8,15,19, 20,22,24 38:1 40:13,15,21 million 22:24, 25 27:23 39:20,22,23, 24 40:4 42:6, 7 61:8,11,22 62:14 99:4 117:9 millions 45:10 99:11 117:18	min 17:10 mind 8:4 35:12 48:23, 25 59:9 119:8 Mindenmines 51:14 mindset 59:19 60:4 mine 46:25 47:11 93:25 115:9 minimal 75:4 minimum 70:19,21 71:24 72:1 117:23 minute 5:4 19:19 136:20 minutes 6:15 58:11 86:20 99:19 108:15 mismanage 87:17 mismanagem ent 57:19 mispronounc e 8:7 mispronuncia tion 37:10 45:3 missed 41:13 missing 100:22 Missouri 3:12,20 6:7 23:7 30:23 31:4 53:17,21 54:4 61:15	75:12 80:25 85:3,4,6 96:2 116:16 126:10 Missourians 19:21 mistake 93:20 misunderstoo d 44:5 Mitchell 4:1, 22 139:13,15 mitigate 113:11 mom 82:23 85:24 112:21 moment 4:4 27:9 Monday 108:20 money 9:23 12:5,23 13:1, 3,7,10 26:14 40:18 42:12 46:13,14 47:5 49:19,20,21 51:17 61:12, 15,18,23 62:1,3,13,14, 15 74:19,20, 21 78:10 82:18 105:19 107:4,7 114:14 117:1, 10,11,15,16 119:9 129:1 monitoring 45:19 monitors 45:19
--	---	---	--	--

monopoly 24:18,24 25:13 95:15, 16 117:6 122:16,20	130:11	mountains 38:12	19,20,22,24 38:1,21 39:3 40:13,15,21 43:9,14 44:16,22,25 45:4,6,8 48:5 49:8,9,14,17 50:15,19,20, 24 51:2,5 52:20 53:4,7, 12 54:8,10, 11,12,14 55:9,12,14, 16,19,20,24 56:1,6,8,11, 12,15,17,22, 23,25 59:5,6, 7,8,11 60:6 62:19,23 67:22,25 68:6,13,18,22 69:1,7,10,11, 20,23 70:1,3, 5 71:18,19, 20,23 72:1,3, 6,7,8,10,11, 12,13,14,17, 19,20,21,22, 23 73:2,6,9, 13,22 75:14, 16 76:3 81:7, 14 83:2,3,14, 19,23 84:5,8, 15,16,20,23 85:2 88:8,10, 12,14,15,17, 19,20,21,23, 24,25 90:15, 19,22 91:1 92:10 95:20, 21,24 96:8, 14,20,22,25 97:5,7,11,14, 18 99:16,18,	22 100:1,3,7, 10,14 102:24 103:1,3,5,6,8, 10,13,19,23, 24 104:1,2, 11,14,16,17 108:4,7,18 109:2,12,13, 14,15,21 110:15,21 115:2,6,19 116:1,6,9,13 118:7 122:5, 9,12,15 123:8,19,23, 25 124:2,21, 24 125:1,4,8, 11,18 126:22 127:3,6,8,10 129:11,14,16, 21,24 130:2, 5,7,9,13,15, 21,23 131:8, 11,15,18 134:7,9,11, 13,14,16,18, 19,20,23 135:4,6,8,9, 10,11,12,13 136:6,8,25 137:2,8,10, 11,14,22,24
month 9:25 10:9 17:6 20:20,24 21:1 22:3,4,9,11 33:23,24 35:2 38:24,25 39:3 54:16,20 55:4 65:13,15 73:16,19,20 76:20 77:12 82:20 85:11 87:2,6,10 89:19,20 93:14 100:25 107:5,10,12 112:10 117:21,22 118:21 119:1, 7,13 120:7, 12,13,17 123:3 130:9 132:19,23,24, 25	Moore 69:19 72:25 73:2 92:14 97:3 more 9:10 11:24 13:3 15:8 19:1,11 20:12 22:8 23:6 30:19 38:24 39:11 40:17 46:14, 15 54:9,13 58:2 63:9 66:1 74:6 77:11,23 87:7 91:2,25 95:9 96:14 98:15 102:13 104:2, 11 112:12 117:15,17,19 130:4,19 morning 125:12 most 10:16 11:25 14:3 15:14 26:8 28:18 29:13 40:9,11 45:12 64:12 67:20 97:18 99:23 127:11 130:16 mostly 38:19 45:13 mother 82:19 95:13 111:16 mother's 115:7,9 motivated 46:18	move 31:19 47:1 49:7 60:11 64:24 84:2 134:18 moved 26:7,8, 9 29:11,20 38:7 64:16 67:17 85:16, 19,20 115:10 moving 74:21 78:23 114:3 115:11 134:25 Mr 5:16,21 6:5 11:6,10,13, 15,17 12:10, 11,12,13,14, 15,18,19,21, 22,24,25 13:1,9,10,14, 15,16,17,23 14:1,9,11,12, 13,14,17,18, 19,20,25 15:3,7 16:14, 16,17,21,24 17:3 20:12, 14,15,16,18, 24 21:1,8,10, 18,21,24 23:10,19,22, 23 24:3,6,8, 10 25:15,17, 19,23 26:1,5 29:6,8,9,11, 16,17,20,21, 22,25 30:1 34:5,6,10,13, 16 35:3,7,16, 20 37:8,15,	11,12,14 55:9,12,14, 16,19,20,24 56:1,6,8,11, 12,15,17,22, 23,25 59:5,6, 7,8,11 60:6 62:19,23 67:22,25 68:6,13,18,22 69:1,7,10,11, 20,23 70:1,3, 5 71:18,19, 20,23 72:1,3, 6,7,8,10,11, 12,13,14,17, 19,20,21,22, 23 73:2,6,9, 13,22 75:14, 16 76:3 81:7, 14 83:2,3,14, 19,23 84:5,8, 15,16,20,23 85:2 88:8,10, 12,14,15,17, 19,20,21,23, 24,25 90:15, 19,22 91:1 92:10 95:20, 21,24 96:8, 14,20,22,25 97:5,7,11,14, 18 99:16,18,	Ms 5:12 8:11, 15,18,20,22 10:19,23 30:3,8,11,13, 16 31:14,21, 25 32:4,8 34:3,9,11,15, 19 35:6,9,17, 18,25 36:3,5, 8 37:7,11 40:25 41:1,5, 9 43:3,16

44:4,8,13,14 48:5,7,11,14, 16,18 49:6 53:12 60:17, 18,19,23 61:1,3,7 62:17 63:12, 14,20,23 64:2 67:12,23,25 68:3,7,16,24 69:4,14,17 73:1 76:7,11, 14,18 78:17, 19,21 81:18, 23,24 82:1 83:1,6,17,22, 25 84:6,9,10 89:3,7,10,14, 18 92:15,19, 22 93:1 95:19,23 96:1,10,17,18 104:20,24 105:4,9 107:14,16 108:1,6,9,20 109:4,19,24 110:18,22,25 111:2,8,11,14 114:7,9,18, 20,25 115:4,9 118:9,13,16, 20 121:18,19, 25 133:19 135:21 138:12,17,20, 22,24 139:8 MSSU 98:11 much 5:1,7 9:23 10:18 12:9 22:25 28:22,23 54:19 63:3	72:3 91:7 104:7 112:3, 22 114:23,25 115:18 134:4, 25 multi-hundred 117:9 multiple 55:13 57:8 88:13 94:9,23 106:1 111:22 113:2 137:4 my 3:17 5:23 6:6 7:5 8:5 11:24 12:1,2, 7 13:1,7,10 17:5,9,10,12, 19 21:1 22:1, 3,4,10,12 26:21 27:9,10 30:18,19,20 32:10,13,16, 18 33:7,14, 16,17,20,25 34:1,11,20 35:10,12 36:21,24 37:1 38:4 41:17, 18,20 42:15, 16 45:3 46:8, 10,11 47:3,6, 7,10,12,14 48:23,25 49:17,20,24 50:8,11 51:6, 9 54:16,17,24 55:2,7,17,21, 22 56:1,3,25 58:17 60:3,10 61:16 62:9,10 64:4,15,17 65:1,4,5,9 66:6,17,19	68:7,11 69:1, 4,5,15 71:11 73:9,13,14,18 74:14 75:18 76:14 77:14 78:1,8,10 79:19 80:9, 10,13,16,18, 19 82:7,9,16, 19,23,24 83:12 84:3 87:18,19 89:19 91:5,8, 17 92:9,22 93:11,13,24 94:5,11,16,25 95:10 96:3 97:14,15 99:23 100:10, 15,21 102:8 106:10,11,14 108:14,15,23 109:21 110:5, 9 111:16 112:10,17,21, 22 113:21,24 114:17 115:2, 9,21 116:24, 25 117:20 118:16,22 119:7,8,16, 17,19,23 120:4,6,10, 11,13,16,19, 22,24 121:1, 3,20,21,22 122:24 124:6, 11,15 125:1,2 126:12 127:6, 12 128:9 131:21,24 133:9,20,21 134:4 135:15, 17,25 136:1,	18 137:16,17, 19,20 Myers 50:17, 19,20,24 51:2,5 52:20 myself 7:22 21:25 43:4 98:8 113:19 120:19 <hr/> N <hr/> N-A-T-H-A-N 73:10 nail 128:15 name 3:17 6:6 7:7,11 8:17 11:12 13:19, 25 15:2 16:23 21:20 24:5 25:25 30:3,10 31:15 32:2 35:20 36:2,3 37:9,21 44:24 48:6,13 50:18 51:1 53:6 56:14,25 60:15 61:2 63:22,24 69:15,25 73:8,9,13 76:13,14 79:9 81:17 84:22, 24 85:11,13 87:6 89:12 90:21 92:21, 22 97:13,14, 15 100:9,10 110:23 111:10 115:20 116:8 118:15,16	122:11 123:15,21 125:2 127:5,6 131:10 133:24 138:19,21 names 7:3,5 8:5,6 32:24 52:22 86:8 100:2 115:24 Nancy 84:14 135:21 Nathan 5:21 72:25 73:2,9, 13 natural 40:19 navigator 36:11 near 28:8,9 59:18 nearly 17:25 89:20 necessitated 16:7 neck 116:25 need 6:20 7:19 20:10 21:4,5 27:6 28:25 39:4 40:13 43:6 44:11 46:14 54:6,7,9 58:25 59:19 66:1,23 67:10,16 71:15 75:25 85:9 93:23 114:7 117:10 132:6
---	---	---	---	--

needed 39:9 58:20 101:8, 23 115:12	113:12 115:14 119:24 128:2	23:20 25:17 27:5,10,15 28:18 34:19 35:6,9 39:11 41:25 44:7 49:7 50:6 53:18 56:1 59:18 62:2,5 65:20 66:11 70:18,25 72:4 78:24 80:20 82:11,20 83:17,18 85:4 86:9,17,21 87:8,9 93:5 94:13,25 95:3 102:21 104:10,14 108:10 109:9 111:24 114:16 121:12,16 128:4 130:5, 21 135:13 137:22	43:1 normal 33:25 78:3,4 normally 43:4 123:2 North 28:5 not 5:2 7:4,18, 22,24 10:12 12:5 13:1,3,4, 12 15:25 16:10 17:20 18:12,16 19:10 21:7 22:9,19 23:12,13 26:19 28:8,19 31:12 32:19 33:6,7,13,15, 18 36:22,24, 25 37:12 40:19 41:11, 12,13,25 42:24 44:2,5 46:15,22 47:4,5,11,13, 15,22 48:1,22 49:18 50:12 52:13 57:2 58:4,9,19 59:18,21 62:7,8,19 64:7 65:7 66:23 69:2 70:22 74:5 76:24 77:3,4, 9,20,21,23,24 78:9,11,15 80:3,15 81:10 83:23 84:6 86:1 88:12 89:22 93:13, 25 94:20,21	95:5,10,11, 12,15,17 96:19 97:23 98:13 100:20 101:9 103:13, 15 104:14 105:23 106:14 107:3, 12,13,25 108:10,22 111:14,17 112:24 114:1 115:3,6,9 117:6 120:4, 16 121:6 123:2 124:8 125:22 126:15 127:12,20 128:8,10,16 129:7,20 130:3,10,17 133:11 134:25 136:20 note 104:2 notebooks 5:5 noted 31:2 99:12 notes 5:5 nothing 8:14 11:9 13:22 14:24 16:20 21:16 24:1 25:7,22 30:7, 20 31:23 33:22 35:24 37:17 41:3 44:21 47:14 48:10 49:13 50:23 53:3
needs 10:8 12:4 19:8 21:2,3 39:13 66:25 95:13 101:14 118:22	New-mac 38:6 85:3 88:5,6 121:6 122:16 Newton 8:24 next 22:12 23:20 25:7,18 30:2 31:15,17 35:19 37:9,13 40:2 43:13 44:17 47:1 50:16 52:22 60:15 61:13 63:12 68:19 69:18 76:5 78:21 79:1 87:20 97:6 100:1,2 110:23 115:20,24 120:23 126:5, 17,18 128:7 135:15	nobody 17:25 19:25 29:2 34:1 39:16 70:11 71:6,7, 9 106:13 108:13 nod 19:25 nods 19:17 noise 60:25 none 37:7 70:18 76:3 124:17 139:11 nonpartisan 43:10 nonsense		
needy 58:13				
negligible 81:1				
neighbor 94:25 128:9				
neighborhood 121:1				
neighbors 46:8 92:9				
Neilsberg 97:21				
Neosho 38:18,20,24 86:15 118:20 120:23				
net 47:4 58:9 98:5	nickel 17:8 Niel 48:7 50:16,17 night 92:12 131:4 nightlight 35:1 nightmare 131:23 nine 17:9,14 20:19 70:18 no 3:15 6:20 10:13,15 14:11 15:23			
never 34:19 41:11 42:19 46:6,7,19 54:24 66:18, 19 74:25 75:3 77:19 86:6 93:8 131:24 136:3				
new 26:11 40:12 41:24 52:18 58:24 74:10 81:18 82:2 85:10, 17,20 112:10				

56:20 60:22 63:19 69:22 72:14 73:5 76:10 79:6 81:22 84:19 85:11,13,14, 15 87:9 89:6 90:5,6,18 92:17 96:7 97:10 100:6 105:3,12 106:7 107:18, 19 111:7 116:5,21 117:1 118:5, 12 120:9 122:8 123:18 125:7 127:2 131:7 135:20 138:16 notice 6:1 39:14 noticed 23:13 93:9,11 notices 10:6 76:21 120:18 November 26:9,12 27:1 29:12,22 39:8 64:16 75:17 now 3:8 4:13, 15 6:4,10 7:18 11:24 12:18 18:14, 24 22:24 23:3 27:3,24 28:10 31:5 32:11 34:14 38:8, 11,19 40:1 41:12,16,19 45:14 46:20 47:8 50:5	51:23 52:12, 15 55:3 62:3 64:23 77:15 81:13 85:18, 22 87:3,10 90:5 99:8,21 103:5,6 108:19 115:16 116:23 117:2 125:20 128:1 129:16 132:5, 22 133:8 137:20 138:10 number 19:14 66:10 72:15 79:23 112:1 123:14 126:7, 8,11 137:5 138:6 139:3 numbers 76:24 113:9 nurse 106:17, 20,22 <hr/> O <hr/> o'clock 131:3 O-C-K-E-R-T 52:24 oath 7:10 Obama 80:8 obligation 24:16,25 obvious 19:4 obviously 74:4 100:19 101:6,25 114:3	occasion 127:15 128:11 occasions 127:24,25 130:11 occur 101:22 103:2 occurred 103:3 occurrence 100:18 occurring 112:25 Ockert 52:23 56:15,16,17, 22,23,25 59:5,7,11 October 27:19 56:2 134:19 odd 5:2 of 3:4,8,13,22, 23,24 4:7,8, 20 5:2,19,22, 24 6:2,7 7:1, 4,5,9,20 8:2, 3,5 9:8,20,21, 23,25 10:3,11 11:22,25 12:4,23 13:6 14:3 15:9,11, 14,20 16:5 17:5,9,10,11, 12,14,22 18:3,8,10,14, 19,23 19:17 20:25 21:25 22:2,3,16,21, 25 23:1,5,8,	10,12,17 24:11,12 26:14,17,18, 19,22 27:5,8, 12,16,19,20 28:1,2,4,10, 21 29:15,22, 23 30:17,18, 20,21,25 31:2,4,5,9 32:13,21 33:7,19 34:12,23 35:4,7 36:8,9, 18 38:3,12,23 39:6,22,23, 24,25 40:1,11 41:10,20 42:3,7,8,9,12, 19 43:11,14, 22 44:4,5 45:10,11,17 46:3,5,6,14 48:19 49:2, 19,24 51:11, 14,15 54:22 56:10 57:1, 10,24 58:15, 20 59:2,11, 15,20,21,22, 23,24,25 60:2 61:11,22,24 62:8,14,15, 20,24 63:3,8, 10,11 64:12, 15,16,17 65:17,20 66:1,17 67:7, 15,19,21 68:2,4,5,6,19, 20 69:10 70:5,7,14,18, 22 71:4,15, 16,17 72:4,5,	10,11 73:18 74:3,10,11, 22,24 75:2 76:1,20,21,22 77:2,3,4,8,10 79:17,19,22, 23,24 80:2,3, 4,10,13,16, 21,23 83:4,9, 15 84:1,5 85:4,8,18,20, 24 86:13,14, 20,23 87:3,8, 21 88:2,4 89:23 90:6,7 91:3,7,14,19, 22 93:2,9,11, 13 95:6 96:3, 10 97:1,18, 20,25 98:9 99:4,8,11,14, 15,17,23 100:15,16,17, 22 101:1,10, 12,17 102:8, 9,10,17,20 103:4,15,20, 21,25 104:3, 5,7,9,13,14 105:13,14 106:10,11,24 107:2,8,11, 17,20,21,23 109:16 110:9, 10,13,19 111:17,18,20 112:4,5,6 113:14,24 114:16,20 115:11,12,21 116:14,15 117:6,15,18 118:21,24 119:2,10,12,
---	--	---	---	--

16,24,25 120:7 121:11 122:4 123:10 124:6,16,17 125:18,19 126:2,6 127:11,13,20 128:10,15,20 130:16,19 132:12,19 133:12 134:2, 19 135:2,15, 20,23 136:23, 24 137:15,21 139:3,5,16 off 8:8 15:7 22:15 25:10 26:21 32:18 47:8,25 50:7 51:13 53:12 59:25 60:12 65:10 66:12 85:9,23 86:1 87:4 92:8 101:16 103:11 108:24 116:13 123:7 126:15 133:16 offense 59:18 offensive 11:20 offer 54:1 96:8 offering 95:10 office 5:19,22 8:3 43:14 66:16 70:20 86:16,17 101:12 112:1, 2	officers 39:23 40:4 offices 120:4 officially 131:17 offset 114:22 often 80:25 130:7,8 oil 40:19 old 10:11 11:19 28:10 38:17 49:18 82:19 112:2 132:15,16 older 49:19 50:3 82:10 olds 38:18 106:24 OLIVE 63:23 Oliver 97:7 100:2 104:19 on 3:2,11 4:2, 24 5:23 6:20 7:4,8 8:9 10:20 11:5,21 12:4 13:6,8 14:4,6,21 15:12 17:5, 10,16 19:5, 21,24 21:25 22:6,9,22,23 24:21,22 25:7,19 26:17 27:13,24 28:12,16,25 30:4 31:16,18 32:10 34:21, 22 35:10 36:18 37:1,3, 4 38:5,19	41:18,19 42:4,22 43:1, 16 46:8,9,24 47:1,7,12,14, 15,25 48:5 49:7,17 51:9, 13 52:3,18,22 54:13,15,18, 20 57:9 58:5 59:1,9,12 60:10,11 61:11,18,24 62:13 63:9 64:4,7,12,15 65:4,23 66:23,24 67:8 69:15,18 70:10 71:2,14 72:16 73:3 75:20 76:5, 19,24 77:17, 25 78:1,4 79:15 80:14, 20,21 82:25 83:23 85:17 86:20 87:2,6, 11 88:15 91:12 92:5 93:25 94:5,7 95:2,6,12 96:15 97:2,5 98:9,13,18,19 99:8,12 100:2 101:1,4,20,24 104:23 105:11,14,19, 25 106:14,16 107:4,7 108:17,23,25 110:2,5,7 111:19 113:15,17 114:3 115:21 117:8 119:4,	10,14,21 120:2,19 121:3 123:2,4 124:6,11,12, 14,15 125:12, 24 126:20 127:18 128:10,11,13, 15 129:1,13 131:3,4 132:7,18,25 133:6 135:2, 14 136:14,21 137:5,15 138:5,25 139:5,16 once 54:4 85:21,22 94:7,8 118:21 119:1 136:13 one 4:3 6:1 7:4,9 10:10, 11 17:10,14 20:12,20,21, 24 21:1 22:11 24:13 26:12 31:2 32:9 33:7 35:1 39:11 41:15 42:7,15 43:11 46:14 47:1,20 54:9 57:7 58:15 59:11 63:10 65:4, 13,14,16 66:10,22 71:4 77:15 80:10, 11 81:7 85:16 86:23 87:1,19 90:2 93:12, 13,19 96:14 98:19 102:9 104:2,11	107:5,10,17 109:16 110:8, 13 111:18 112:8,10 119:13 122:15 125:18 126:7, 8,11,17,18 130:25 136:12 137:19 138:12 one-person 9:24 one-time 9:18 ones 30:24 46:12 137:4 online 4:2 80:7 102:16 138:4 only 11:1 14:16 32:9,19 33:7 41:15 47:7,9,20 50:11 51:19 53:15 55:2,3 65:4,19 77:5 79:24 94:7,8 106:14 108:15 115:2 117:6,20 122:15,17 136:3,13,20 Ontario 67:6 onto 121:16 open 138:2 opening 4:10 operate 9:13 28:15,23 116:16
--	---	--	---	---

operating 27:18	67:2 71:11 74:23 80:11	92:21 97:13 100:9,15,18	115:10,11 117:15,17	45:19 60:12 61:13 62:11
operational 126:2	92:1 106:5 109:21 110:2	103:11 106:21 110:4	119:4,14,22, 24 120:13,18	66:5 73:15 81:11 82:6
operations 3:23	114:9 116:18 119:10,14	113:6,24 114:23 116:8	128:7,21 130:1,16	88:5 91:12 92:8 93:3,6,
opinion 11:3 27:10	123:1 124:12, 13,18 127:15	117:3,10,11, 12,22 118:3,	132:1,3,4 133:17	18 97:20 98:3 99:4 101:3
opinions 6:24 31:13 139:20	129:4 130:9, 25 133:6	15 120:8,20 121:10	135:23 136:9, 10	106:10 108:11
opportunity 6:14 7:6 116:19	134:5 136:22 137:17	122:11 123:10,21	outage 71:10 105:22	111:22,23 114:10
option 24:19 83:19	others 97:19 98:15 111:15	124:9,16 127:17,24	108:14,15 132:1,2	119:19 120:10,17
options 39:25	117:24 137:15	138:19 139:5, 6,12	136:11,19	122:17 124:10 126:5
order 27:7 32:17 45:23 46:23 114:24	otherwise 7:8	ours 82:11	outages 54:2 101:22	130:5 overall 117:21
organization 57:3	ought 52:18	ourselves 59:21	105:21 108:5 128:4 130:13	overcharged 65:12
original 26:25 27:14 82:16	our 4:2 5:5,17 8:25 9:3,12,	out 4:14,17 5:1 10:5 12:1,	132:10,18,23, 24 133:1,21	Overcompens ation 46:16
originally 26:7 28:17	19 10:2,9,11, 16,17,25	2 13:12 14:4 16:15 23:4	134:12,15	overly 6:20
originate 75:12,13	13:25 14:3,5, 7 17:24,25	27:20 33:20, 22 34:23 38:6	outfit 51:7 52:19	overnight 114:21
other 4:8 6:9, 18,24 12:2	24:19 25:7,11 28:10,15 30:2	39:14 45:17 46:3,21 50:3	outlandish 53:22 114:4	overpaying 65:13
15:15,25 16:12 21:9	34:23 37:8 38:2 41:22,23	51:19 52:4,6 62:22 63:12	outlandishly 112:19	overseeing 3:18 62:8
24:12,21 31:9,10,19	42:18 43:16 48:3 51:1,12	64:18,21,25 68:5,20 69:16	outlets 70:14	overwhelming 98:2
40:23 41:20 44:12 47:21	53:6 54:7 61:11 62:24	71:8 75:3 77:2,8 81:16	outlined 53:19	owe 93:17 107:11 110:3
48:21 49:5 52:2 57:18	63:12 67:3,12 69:18,25	82:7,9,12 84:7 86:25	outrageous 75:23 89:22	112:24 owed 119:18
58:6,16 59:22 61:24 64:4	70:15 73:24 74:4,7,8 75:1	87:17 90:3 95:5 100:19	outside 44:3 85:4 93:12	own 26:25 51:9 54:14
	76:5 78:10 79:9 80:21,25	102:3,5 103:17,20,22	94:5	80:18 83:7
	84:22 85:3, 10,13,17,21	107:22 111:23	outstanding 81:9	90:11 117:8
	87:6 89:18,20 90:1,3,11	112:16 113:24	over 38:9,11 40:2 42:7	128:20

owned 24:14 85:5 90:10	painters 70:10	133:17	78:5 80:22 85:9 106:14 107:13 119:11 120:19 127:25	90:6 91:25 92:4 95:6 98:1,17 101:24 105:13,25 106:21 109:5 111:18 113:14,19 114:15 116:15 119:3, 22,24 121:4, 16 125:21 126:12 127:16 128:10,12 133:5,7,15,25 136:15
owner 49:23 87:13,14 127:10	panel 25:11 120:12	past 3:3 22:20 98:3 99:1		
owners 19:6 85:23 124:12 127:11	panels 119:7	patience 35:14		
owns 125:14 128:2	paper 81:12 96:12 107:8	Patricia 69:19 72:24,25	payment 9:18 26:16 70:19, 21 71:24 72:5 95:2 103:17 112:23,24 120:12	
P	paperwork 107:13	patted 17:16		
	paragraph 20:13 98:25	pay 16:3 22:10 24:20 25:7,8,10 26:22 28:11 29:2,3 33:21 34:24 35:2 37:1 42:11 46:19 51:23 52:4 61:13 62:4 69:5 70:24 73:18 74:6,22 78:7, 10,13,14,15 80:13,14,16 82:15,20,22 85:22 87:3,4, 11,19,24 98:8,24 99:10,13 106:13 107:3 111:19 115:13 117:12 119:8, 11 120:12 129:7	payments 29:13 72:2	
	parent 18:5, 23 113:22		peak 17:12 22:4 65:10 114:22	
P-E-T-E-R-S- E-N 16:25	part 23:8,10, 12 28:1,2,10, 21 32:13 61:21 88:2 91:7 98:10 134:2 136:10		PEC 39:21	people's 6:24 46:25
P-O-W-E-R-S 49:9			pedestal 82:8, 16,17 83:4, 11,12 84:2	Pepco 126:18
P-U-G-H 50:17	participate 52:22		penalty 65:17	per 38:13,14 40:16 52:13 57:14 58:3 80:24
p.m 3:1	participated 3:5		pension 11:25	percent 9:19, 21 10:3 15:16,25 17:5,20 22:12,13,17 23:6 27:1,2 30:18,22 31:4,5,6 38:9, 10,16,18,20, 23 39:7,8,9 40:3,17 42:9 51:12,24,25 52:14,16 53:13,15,23, 24 54:5 64:14 65:3,18 67:6, 8 75:16,17 77:10,14,18,
p.m. 64:6 71:5	particular 4:18 100:18, 21		people 11:2 13:12 14:3 15:8 18:19 19:3 20:21,22 22:8,22 24:15 25:2 30:17 36:14,16,20, 24 37:3,4 41:13 42:2,9, 22 43:19 45:12 46:4 58:2 59:22 62:20 64:4 66:2 77:4,17, 21 78:12 86:6,19,21 87:21 88:1	
P.O. 5:18	parties 5:9 6:1,2,9 43:11, 22 48:19	paycheck 119:19		
package 110:8	partnership 9:11	paying 17:15 22:10 23:14 33:4,12 50:7 55:4 57:14, 16,17 64:13 71:24 72:4		
pad 64:9	party 33:3 65:23,25			
pages 107:7	passed 24:21 32:11			
paid 10:5 26:16,20 28:9 30:19 34:19 51:19 65:12 70:22,23 74:25 75:1 85:13 95:4 99:3 101:8,14 106:15 118:21 119:1, 13	passes 54:5			
pain 74:16	passing			

24 78:1,2,12 79:15,17,18, 25 80:9,17, 21,22 87:25 88:6 89:21 91:3,4,5,6,8, 18,19,20 95:8 97:25 98:5 99:5,6,8,9 102:4,7 107:22,23 113:9 117:12, 17 118:22 120:22,24,25 121:1 126:7	112:8 114:16 personnel 102:19 persons 130:25 perspective 14:16 pertains 109:21 Petersen 16:17,18,21, 24 17:3 20:12,18 21:1	85:17 87:5 114:10 115:15 121:15 126:16 plain 90:4 plainly 117:17 plan 18:9,10 60:4 planning 17:16 48:24 49:1 126:20 plant 16:7 17:17 19:23 25:3 27:20,22 28:9,10 46:17 58:20 67:4,19 74:3 133:11 plant's 17:18 plants 20:6 51:11 play 17:23 63:8 114:2 played 19:16 playing 105:11 pleadings 5:24 please 6:3,23 7:7 8:9,12,16, 20 11:5,7,12, 15 13:19,24 15:1,5 16:22 17:1 21:12, 13,20,22 24:4 25:25 26:3 30:4,10,14 32:2,7,15 36:2,6 37:21,	24 41:7 44:24 45:6 48:12,16 49:15 51:3 53:5,10 56:13,23 60:24 61:1,5 63:22,25 69:18,25 70:4 73:7,11 76:12,16 77:24 78:11 79:9 81:25 84:21,25 89:12,16 90:21,25 92:21,24 93:16 97:12, 16 100:9,12 104:22 105:7 111:10,13 116:8,11 118:15,18 122:10,13 123:21,22 125:9 127:5,8 131:9,13 138:13,19,23 plus 33:10 78:5 86:24 94:5 126:18 pocket 107:5 point 41:15 53:23 54:6 58:25 59:9 62:22 points 15:10, 11 102:9 pole 108:13 128:12,13,15 poles 40:8 79:22 105:20	policies 19:3 policy 18:22 19:9,21 98:23 polite 6:24 political 75:18 politically 46:18 politics 75:19 pool 33:3 58:12,13 60:2 poor 17:15 54:3 57:19 98:9 133:15 poorest 51:6 pops 85:24 136:21 population 77:10 102:11 populations 10:17 populous 58:16 portal 102:16 portion 3:4,8 position 74:12 possession 68:19 possible 90:4 101:15 possibly 139:3,4 post 66:16 postage 96:13
percentage 98:20 percentages 97:20 perfectly 6:17 20:5 period 7:23 8:1 20:25 55:10 70:13 97:21 permission 128:13 135:16 person 4:22 14:16 33:9 42:21 59:16 74:10,13 78:4 95:5 99:7 126:8 128:25 person's 6:18 personal 27:10 69:8,13 96:15 100:15 personally 42:14 44:8	phase 65:17 phone 54:21 82:6 96:4,21 105:11 108:11 119:21 120:2 127:19 129:1 phonetic 28:6 48:7 76:5 78:22 104:20 135:21 photos 66:17 picture 91:17 pictures 97:1 pie 80:23 piece 88:5 pieces 104:7 piling 13:6 pipe 9:8 piss 54:3 pizza 87:5 place 7:10 11:18 71:4			

postal 73:14	pretty 27:24 66:11 99:9 100:19 101:1, 3,6 112:17 134:4	28:6,9 67:4	74:7	15:21,24 16:12 24:14 65:2
poverty 9:21 36:14 38:17, 20 77:11 121:17	previous 16:6 93:25	profit 15:25 16:11 57:3 58:3 61:10, 11,24 62:11 99:11 117:13	protect 24:23 25:1,13 42:4	publishing 126:13
power 18:23 20:2 24:19 25:8 26:21 28:4 45:13, 14,20,21 46:2,4,10,12, 17 47:6,10 54:2 57:25 58:6 67:3,4, 13,19 84:1,2 101:22 105:21,22 108:5,14,15 116:19 128:11,13 132:1,2,10,18 133:1,21 136:9,11,19	price 19:12	profitable 58:25 87:13, 14,15 88:3	prove 51:8 66:17	Pugh 48:7 50:16,18
Powers 48:6 49:8,9,14,17 50:15	prices 12:7	profits 24:16 78:7	provide 9:2 56:4 94:22	pull 104:8
preach 114:1	pride 120:19	profound 15:8	provided 9:3 58:13 59:1 74:23 94:7 139:18	punish 92:3,4
predict 39:12	probably 22:5,18 42:8, 17 51:6 63:12 64:15 66:5 90:8 92:2 108:22 129:24 131:16 135:18 136:10	program 9:14 10:3 54:1	provider 9:15 54:7	purchased 27:19
prefer 89:7,10	problem 32:13,14 52:2 53:16 82:20 101:13,14 112:20 113:15 117:7 129:2 132:5 134:2	programs 9:16 36:12, 13,16 37:2,3 42:2 98:16 102:18	providing 95:17 105:23	push 47:25
prepared 121:15	problems 42:3 113:14	projects 117:13	PSC 19:19 20:7 59:5 131:16 133:12 134:5 135:10,13,16, 17 136:5,7 138:5	put 11:23 64:7,8,19,22, 23 66:19 82:17 83:9 85:10 128:9 135:16 136:1 138:6
prescriptions 36:25	procedure 62:5	promise 120:16	public 3:12, 13,14,20,23 4:17 5:20,22, 23 6:12 8:3 18:14 19:5 22:21 24:22 30:24 41:10 43:5,14,15 53:17,21 54:4 60:2 61:15 62:6,25 69:3, 14 74:2,10 75:21 83:20 102:20 136:8 137:4,8 138:9	<hr/> Q <hr/>
presented 7:20 17:21 126:20	proceedings 3:1	promised 105:23	public-owned 99:3	Q&a 43:23
presenting 126:16	process 63:8 103:12	pronounce 8:5 125:15	publicly	qualified 36:16,17 37:4 66:2
President 67:8	produce 24:16	property 101:4 110:5 128:10,11,17, 19		qualify 9:18 102:17
	producing	proposal 22:24 53:19 64:14		quality 3:22 45:14 84:5
		proposed 19:22 74:2		quantity 45:13 62:15
		proposes		quarter 106:19
				quarterly 40:17
				question 3:4 7:23,24,25

12:12 20:14 53:20 54:11 59:4 61:7,21 62:9,19 63:1 67:22 68:21 71:19 73:23 81:6,7 83:2 96:14 97:19 98:6,8,12 102:25 108:3 109:21 115:2, 4 120:5 126:12 129:10,11	quote 93:1 quotes 11:23 R R-A-N-D-A-L-L 131:11 R-A-Y 122:12 R-E-E-D-E-R 97:15 R-I-C-H-A-R-D 90:22 R-I-T-A 41:5 R-O-B 26:2 R-O-B-E-R-T 45:1 R-O-N 16:24 Rachel 115:24 122:3 racketeering 66:21 raining 46:23 raise 7:7 8:11 11:7 13:3 14:5 19:24 22:16 30:18 32:21 47:23 53:13 71:17 77:24 78:12 102:21 105:15,18,22 106:18,19 107:3 117:12, 16 118:22 124:8,9 126:9 raised 28:10 39:8 116:17 123:12 124:9	raises 13:1 31:9 91:24 120:25 ramps 118:1 Randall 131:11 raped 50:10 rate 3:11,15 4:15 10:15 19:24 20:7 21:3 31:4 38:7,8 39:7 48:20 49:3 50:4 53:19,23 54:5 57:5 63:2 73:15, 20,21 74:15, 23 75:1,9,11, 18 77:13,25 78:1,4,12 79:17 93:5 95:15 112:11 126:10 129:25 133:8, 10 rates 3:19,21 22:6 31:8 38:3,14 39:5 51:12 53:14 74:8 77:24 91:12,25 102:4,21 113:7,18,22 116:17 117:12 124:8, 9 rather 74:6 75:19 102:15 114:19 Ray 122:4,12	reach 128:15 reached 48:2 99:16 reaching 119:22 read 17:6 86:20 131:16 135:25 readers 90:5 reading 37:13 52:24 real 19:6 21:14 53:14 125:5,11 126:24 realize 45:12 46:4 realized 118:25 132:8 really 4:14 5:1 18:2 19:15,23 25:12,14 39:12 43:4 44:2 49:18 52:3 60:11 62:19 78:16 80:22 81:10 90:12 93:22 102:8,19,21 108:13 113:20 114:13,18 127:12 129:8 realtor 121:4, 9 reap 40:4 reason 28:1 32:13 57:19 102:21	117:20 reasonable 3:21 38:2 39:5 124:19 receive 26:10 116:19 received 9:4 10:1 29:22 39:23 40:16 59:12 71:21 80:2 138:10 receives 9:12 10:13 receiving 63:7 70:21 recent 32:8 134:22 recently 26:8 52:3 91:11 134:12,16 recognize 75:8 recognized 6:3 reconnected 10:7 record 3:2 5:10 11:12 15:2 21:20 24:5 25:25 30:10 36:2 37:21 43:3 44:24 48:13 63:22 72:4 76:13 90:21 111:10 136:1 records 87:8 redid 54:17
--	--	--	---	---

redone 64:17	3:19,22	9:7	requests 76:20,23	responsible 45:10,13
reduce 74:4	regulation 4:9 27:6	replacing 16:8	required 79:20	46:15 82:4
reduced 28:4 80:13 91:4	regulations 15:22	reported 97:24	research 51:9 52:9 97:21	83:9 121:22
reduces 57:24	regulatory 3:18 126:2	reporter 7:11 8:17 13:25	reset 136:22	rest 123:15
Reeder 97:5, 7,11,14,18	relations 74:11	16:23 32:3	residence 129:20	restaurants 33:5 85:6
99:16,18,22	relationship 9:1	51:1 53:6	residential 39:15 91:5,	result 93:3
100:1	reliable 54:1	61:2 69:25	15,23 129:15,	retaliate 75:22
refer 55:20	rely 24:22	73:8 79:9	17,18,23	retire 80:17, 19
95:3	remain 7:19	84:22 89:13	resolution 55:7 56:7	retired 11:24
reference 6:18	remaining 92:3	92:21 97:13	103:9	45:8 64:3
referenced 54:13	remarks 4:11 6:19 139:14	100:9 116:8	resolved 34:18 81:8	106:16
referred 20:16	remember 23:2 53:18	118:15	83:15 103:5,	122:22
referring 20:17 69:7	remind 64:24	122:11	6,7,10 115:3,	retirement 33:12 80:19
133:18	remiss 101:19	123:21 127:5	5,8 120:4	122:24
reflective 31:9	rent 76:23	131:10	resource 9:9	retrofitting 27:21
refrigerators 106:11	rents 10:12	138:19	resources 10:15	return 77:25
refund 34:1	repairs 9:7 46:24	reports 10:15	respect 6:24 38:25 39:6	78:1,4 79:15,
refuse 70:24	repay 106:12	represent 43:1,15	105:13	17 99:8
117:14	repeating 59:10	representative 43:19 44:5	respectfully 10:25	returns 126:3
refuted 94:6	replace 25:10 40:8	representative s 8:2 43:18	respiratory 32:14	revenue 39:22
regard 133:3	replacements	86:24	responded 101:24	reward 16:3
regarding 100:16		representing 5:17,22	response 67:8	rewarded 16:11
regular 107:4 120:17		request 3:14 16:2 35:5	responsibility 82:10 83:11,	Richard 84:15
regularly 120:10,17		57:5 95:15	13 129:6	89:2 90:15,22
regulates		135:19		RICO 66:22
		137:13		rid 46:5 66:1
		requested 57:21 75:17		ridiculous 34:24 37:4
		90:1 137:1		42:5,12 44:9
		requesting 57:9		

67:20 82:23 107:8,12 112:19 120:14 121:1, 13 right 4:15 6:9 8:11 11:7 12:21 14:19 23:23 27:17 33:7,13 34:10,13 35:7 37:13 46:20 47:16 51:5 52:10 54:23 55:3 66:22 86:13 87:22 92:11 94:19 99:8 102:5 105:10 108:18 111:19 116:22 125:20 132:12 133:21 134:21 135:6, 23 136:19 138:10 ripped 22:15 66:12 ripping 123:6 rise 99:12 rising 10:8 Rita 37:9,11, 12 40:24 Riverton 51:11 Rob 25:18 26:1 robbed 22:16	53:24 Robert 37:14 44:15,18,25 robot 65:20 robust 139:18 rocket 113:13 roll 74:15 rollover 58:11 Ron 16:17,24 roof 25:7,11 room 17:22 19:3 41:14 42:9,17 44:3 60:25 68:20 74:1 Rory 84:11,12 roughly 55:19 56:6 row 113:8 Rude 86:21 run 52:19 100:24 124:12 125:12 127:14 running 45:23 65:22 68:20 95:2 120:10 runs 120:17 rural 38:11 rush 40:22 ruts 47:1 128:19,22	S S&p 38:23 S-C-H-U-C-H-M-A-N-N 45:1 S-C-O-T-T 14:1 S-T-E-V-E 21:21 97:15 S-T-U-T-T 13:19 14:2 S-U-E 30:11 sacrifice 21:2 sacrificed 79:18 sacrifices 21:6,7 safety 3:23 said 6:16,21 10:10 12:3, 15,20 13:7 16:6,9 19:13, 25 23:2 24:11,13 27:9,19 28:1 29:6 33:6,18, 21 34:13,20 39:14 43:6 50:1 53:18 54:18 55:9 59:17 71:1,20 72:15 73:23 74:22 75:6 82:11 83:3 85:9,10 86:9, 11 90:4 93:6, 19 94:6,13,15 95:21 98:15, 19,23 99:18,	20,23 102:1 106:6 108:5, 18 109:2,4,15 110:1 111:25 119:3,6,18 120:6,24 123:10 129:4 130:2 132:5,6 134:20 135:10 136:13 137:5 sake 88:21 salaries 21:4 salary 95:10 sale 121:2 Salvation 76:18 77:1 salve 74:16 same 6:16,19, 25 20:21 23:16 29:17 47:15 58:16 65:15 70:18, 19 80:12 92:2 93:2,6 94:8 104:8 106:5 109:24 110:8, 10 112:14 113:14 121:24 127:15 132:13 136:16 sat 42:21 82:5 86:23 127:21 satisfaction 103:18 satisfied 56:7 save 47:8 49:21 74:19,	20 107:6 saving 47:5 savings 34:24 saw 46:7 75:3 99:1 123:13 say 5:6 6:17 11:19 14:10, 15 16:13 17:22 22:7,23 23:11,18 24:11 25:14 27:13 28:17 34:2,17 35:14 37:2 46:1 47:1 48:18 50:14 51:16 52:1,10 57:4 60:14 62:16 72:17 75:11 86:4,13 87:17 90:12 95:8,14 98:14,22 101:15,19 105:9 106:7 109:7,24 117:16 118:6 121:21 124:3, 9 129:9 130:9,17 132:9 133:24 136:6 139:6 saying 18:24 36:9 73:24 79:14 96:5 116:13 124:7 says 23:4 79:18 86:16 112:12 113:3 126:10,17 133:23 138:5 scenarios
--	--	---	--	--

18:9,11 scheme 74:24 75:2 school 120:1, 23 Schuchmann 37:14 44:15, 16,18,22,25 45:4,6,8 48:5 scientist 113:13 Scott 13:18 14:1 second 7:14 49:22 52:25 68:21 91:10 105:10 138:3 seconds 136:12,13,14, 20,21 security 8:23 10:14 11:25 40:8 42:15,16 77:7 89:19 95:3,7,12 98:18 106:16 see 6:11 7:16 14:8 21:6 25:3,4,5 26:11,12 29:12 31:8 40:22 46:21 48:4 50:6 51:17 52:21 64:12 65:15 66:3 67:16,25 68:2,14 70:22 90:9,14 93:5, 8 112:1 117:7 119:12 122:1	133:5 139:9 seeing 49:7 74:14 117:5 seek 117:11, 15 seeking 117:1 seem 17:11 94:21 98:14 119:25 seemed 22:20 59:14 74:8 seems 19:24 67:20 98:2,21 110:5 seen 50:10,12 51:7 67:20 77:19 116:14 sees 13:2 segment 53:20 self-sufficient 59:20 sell 58:2,5 selling 51:18 52:11 121:10 Senate 4:6 send 68:11 112:23 119:5 137:3 sending 66:14 119:9 sense 46:19, 22 47:3 48:23 68:4 88:2 94:12,13,19 sensitive 136:15,17	sent 32:25 96:2,4 107:7 119:23 136:5 137:4 sentiment 102:8,20 separate 88:16,17,18 110:8 September 115:16 121:11 134:19 135:4 seriously 107:6 121:10 serve 9:10 10:2 133:4 served 54:24 serves 30:25 service 3:12, 23 9:16 10:6 22:21 24:23 26:10 52:1 53:17,21 54:3,4 61:16 62:6 74:11 79:19,22 83:20 84:5 85:20 91:6,8 95:17 102:22 105:23 128:3 serviced 130:17 services 9:2, 3,6 128:1 130:3 servicing 38:4 serving 8:24	106:17 session 98:9 set 3:12 26:16 41:18,19 setting 57:2 seven 85:25 107:5 115:21 136:12,13,14 several 5:24 6:1 26:14 31:3 85:15 86:3 Shame 37:1,4 shape 42:1 share 4:15,21 40:1 52:12,13 100:15 104:6 shared 21:2 sheetrock 70:10 sheets 7:3,4 shell 74:21 shit 107:25 shock 119:16 shocked 102:8 shop 96:11 short 21:24 95:2 100:19 125:11 136:10 should 16:10 20:7 28:19 29:2 38:22,24 46:23 47:14 48:24,25 51:17 57:12	58:12,21,23 59:13 61:16 62:7,20 67:21 85:12,23 87:1 90:8 91:3 100:23 101:3 105:22 106:9 112:5 121:23 129:2 shouldn't 29:2 49:2 show 55:22 56:4 61:9 112:9 showed 96:5 showing 105:12 shows 47:19 94:8 shrunk 12:7, 16,20 13:7,10 shut 26:21 32:17 85:22 87:4,20 101:16 shutoff 10:6 76:21 Shutting 16:7 side 80:14 82:25 88:23 97:2 119:10, 15 sign 7:1,4 106:11 sign-up 7:2,4 significant 16:8 significantly
---	---	---	--	--

118:23 similar 63:3,4, 5 111:16 simple 15:9, 10 113:11 simplified 57:12 59:2 simply 57:16 79:16 since 17:20 32:10 80:15 112:10 113:15 117:4 118:23 120:9 131:23 133:1 134:16 sincerely 10:24 Singapore 39:21 single 88:13 113:21 singular 58:11 sir 6:8 11:4,11 12:18 13:14, 15,20,23 14:11,21 16:15 20:9 21:8,12,13,22 23:9,20 24:4 26:3 29:4 44:23 48:2 49:10,15 50:18,25 51:3 52:24 56:13, 17,22 59:7 60:7 69:19 72:23 73:7 76:3,11 81:5	84:21 90:19, 24 97:12,16 100:7,8,12 103:6 104:15, 17,18 118:13 122:10,13 126:23 129:9 131:4,13 134:8,13 137:25 138:2, 8 sisters 12:1 sit 36:24 sit-down 86:15,22 site 79:18 80:24 sitting 5:3 43:13,18 120:11 situation 63:6 105:25 six 15:14 18:8 49:23 50:13 66:6 70:14 74:14 85:25 93:14 96:11, 12 121:2 128:24 132:18 sixty 65:14 size 27:5 28:19 106:11 sky 14:5 80:23 slashed 42:18 slightly 102:7 slipped 51:21	slow 87:24 small 39:2 85:23,24 smart 64:21, 22 90:3 smarter 15:8 smoke 50:6 snafu 27:4,8 SNAP 10:13 snowstorm 46:9 sob 11:21,24 12:1 social 10:14 11:25 42:15, 16 89:19 95:7,12 98:18 106:16 society 106:2 sociologist 18:16 software 134:3 solar 18:13 25:6 59:24 91:15,23 92:1,5,6 119:7 120:6, 12 sold 41:17 solemnly 8:12 11:7 13:20 14:22 16:18 21:15 23:25 25:20 30:5 31:22 35:22 37:16 41:1 44:19 48:8	49:11 50:21 53:1 56:19 60:20 63:17 69:20 73:3 76:8 79:4,7 81:20 84:17 89:4 90:16 92:15 97:8 100:4 105:1 111:5 116:3 118:10 122:6 123:16 125:5 126:25 131:5 138:14 solution 96:25 solve 117:8 some 20:21, 22 21:4 24:12 26:6 27:7 28:16 30:16 31:8,9 57:9 58:22,25 59:15 60:2 61:17 62:11, 20 63:11 64:7 65:5 68:1 70:5 74:10, 11,24 75:2 87:2 91:7 100:15,16 105:24 109:15 127:20 139:18 somebody 24:19 60:5 69:5 104:4 someone 6:16 82:24 108:12 119:1 120:19	128:17 something 6:20 21:5 33:18 35:13 58:22 65:14, 15 66:20 86:25 105:10 106:8 110:10 113:11,12 126:14 129:2 sometimes 20:20 65:5 108:14,15 130:10,16 somewhat 52:8 somewhere 135:6 son 91:17 Sondra 97:7 100:2 104:19 soon 85:19,20 101:15 114:13 sorry 5:3 20:9 23:3 37:9 48:2 59:5 75:24 78:23 89:8 112:20 114:10,18,23 125:24 138:2 sort 79:22 sorted 103:22 sounds 75:18 source 33:7 sources 80:10 Southwest
--	--	--	--	---

80:25 85:2 speak 6:14 7:6 8:1 36:21 48:18 80:1 101:12 110:7 111:15,24 125:20 135:16,20 speaker 31:17 speaking 21:25 76:19 specialists 4:8 specifically 55:12 71:21 121:4 spell 7:11 8:17 11:12 13:25 15:2 16:23 21:20 24:5 25:25 30:10 32:2 36:2 37:21 44:24 48:13 51:1 53:6 61:2 63:22 69:25 73:8 76:13 79:9 81:17 84:22 89:12 90:21 92:21 97:13 100:9 111:10 116:8 118:15 122:11 123:21 127:5 131:9 135:25 138:19 spelling 26:1 28:6 48:7 76:6 78:22 104:21	123:15 135:21 Spencer 69:19 72:24 73:1 spend 61:14 62:13 120:2 127:18 128:24,25 spending 32:22 33:19 spends 61:17 spent 39:20 54:20 61:8, 10,11,23,24 62:3 105:19 119:21 spike 70:6 71:3,5,11 spiked 98:24 Spire 31:5 76:23 spoke 34:16 35:3 73:23 75:6 133:23 134:6 135:10, 13 136:6 spring 55:25 110:17 square 120:15 squirrel 108:12 SSI 10:14 staff 4:7 5:15, 17 8:2 43:10 62:25 63:11 109:17	stage 70:10 standard 57:2 58:10 standards 27:23 standing 41:14 120:20 stands 57:6 start 8:4,8 35:21 55:14 58:7 59:6 77:12 94:18 96:13 103:16 116:13 119:17 132:14 134:14,15 started 27:16 51:13 85:6 119:21 125:13 131:21 132:10 starting 3:8 126:6 state 7:11 8:17 11:12 13:24 15:2 16:22 21:20 23:7 24:4 25:25 30:10 32:2 36:2 37:21 44:24 48:12 51:1,11 53:5 61:1 63:22 69:1,25 73:7 76:13 79:9 84:21 89:12 90:21 91:13,14,22 92:21 97:12	100:9 107:18 111:10 116:8, 18 118:15 122:10 123:21 127:5 131:9 138:19 stated 39:3 41:22 98:25 111:4 statement 7:17 30:2,14 31:12 56:24 133:9,20 135:17,25 138:12 statements 15:8 57:1 133:6 134:5 135:14 136:16 stating 126:4 Statt 84:11,12 status 121:17 stay 7:14 41:13 44:10 stayed 32:25 33:6 staying 23:16 96:22 122:4 stemming 18:15 steps 4:16 Steve 21:12, 21 97:5,14,15 stewards 46:16 stick 134:9	sticking 139:10 still 5:5 11:18 23:16 35:2 43:6 50:4 61:22 63:6,8 72:4,13 73:21 81:8,10 83:24,25 85:15 92:5 95:4 101:17 102:6 105:21 106:14 107:3, 22 108:19 110:15 113:13 115:15 120:4 122:25 123:11 128:22 132:25 133:20 stock 39:25 40:1,3 79:17 stockholders 79:16 107:24 stone 42:21 59:5 stop 17:7 19:5 43:1 93:16 store 124:10 stories 44:2 storm 18:3 67:18 94:4,10 storms 18:5 story 11:21, 24 12:1 straight 42:24 71:17
--	--	---	--	---

straightened 103:17,20	subject 15:22	supervisor 86:4,5	surprised 17:4 102:2,7	switched 81:11
strategy 29:1	submit 15:23 16:2 138:4,6, 8	supervisors 86:24 111:25	surrounding 48:21 49:4 90:7	switchover 118:24
streak 46:24	subsequent 104:12	supervisors' 86:7	survive 77:17 117:25	sworn 104:25
street 5:17 79:16 85:17 121:3 124:12	subsequently 28:4	supplement 42:8	surviving 42:12,13	system 9:7 40:8 65:24 118:23 127:17 139:4
streetlights 79:21	substantially 99:1	supply 13:7, 10 90:11	suspect 39:11	systems 107:9 121:14
stresses 120:18	success 139:5	supposed 26:16 29:10 85:12 119:7 120:7 128:17	swear 7:9 8:12 11:7 13:20 14:22 16:18 21:14, 15 23:24,25 25:20 30:4,5 31:16,21,22 35:22 37:15, 16 41:2 44:19 48:8 49:10,11 50:21 53:1 56:18,19 60:19,20 63:16,17 65:11 69:20 73:3 76:7,8 79:3,4,7 81:19,20 84:16,17 89:3,4 90:16 92:15,16 97:7,8 100:4 105:1 111:4,5 116:2,3 118:10 122:5, 6 123:14,16 124:25 125:4, 5 126:24,25 131:4,5 138:13,14	takes 37:4 86:19 113:24,
strikes 101:21	such 46:25 131:24 134:4	supposedly 33:20 64:3 68:7 71:3 74:16	surcharges 110:7	table 42:25
strongly 114:5 133:10	suck 114:3 117:1,15 118:4	sure 6:13 11:2 14:14 19:10 26:15,18,20 28:8 35:17 43:21 48:14 52:10 60:8,13 62:25 66:11 69:9,11 76:2 96:17 106:15 111:14 129:12 139:15	switch 85:9	take 3:10 11:5 25:9 34:22,23 46:6 58:16 59:17,20,21 66:16 68:8,19 69:9 75:19,21 88:4,5 92:9 96:25 97:1 102:19 113:13 114:17 132:12 135:15,25 138:24
struggle 10:9	sudden 101:17	surge 71:5,11		taken 58:23 71:16 115:11 139:21
struggled 98:24	Sue 30:3,11	surgical 106:22		
students 79:19 121:20 139:5	suffer 117:24	surplus 59:24 91:18		
stuff 24:21 26:17,22 27:17 38:2 40:11 46:3,4 85:10 105:20 115:14 117:10 132:17 136:4, 21	suffering 133:5	surprise 65:6, 7		
stupid 57:16	sufficient 12:17			
stupidity 80:18	suggested 74:9			
Stutt 13:18, 19,23 14:1,9, 11,18,20	suggestion 57:5			
subcontract 128:21	summer 55:24 64:13 103:3 110:16 112:17 118:24			
	summers 102:15			
	super 96:19			

T

T-A-M-M-Y

8:18

T-I-L-L-E-Y

127:7

T-R-U-L-U-C-K

32:5

<p>25</p> <p>taking 5:5 43:25 103:15 106:24 107:2 117:7</p> <p>talk 33:14 42:1 45:25 58:19 86:16 90:8 93:10 135:20</p> <p>talked 27:17 54:25 119:24 129:5 132:17</p> <p>talking 29:18, 19 33:9 38:8, 19 55:10,13 61:20 65:2 66:5 72:9 78:9 82:18,21 88:22 94:3 103:13 129:2</p> <p>talks 36:12</p> <p>Tammy 8:8,18</p> <p>tap 55:5</p> <p>tariff 27:4,8 67:8</p> <p>tariffs 67:5</p> <p>taught 105:15</p> <p>tax 41:24 59:25</p> <p>taxes 75:1</p> <p>taxpayer 15:10</p> <p>teacher 73:14,18 118:20 120:23</p>	<p>teaching 80:12,14 120:1</p> <p>team 45:8</p> <p>technical 27:4,8 55:22</p> <p>telephone 108:13</p> <p>tell 34:7 56:14 96:1 101:13 112:19 114:12</p> <p>telling 93:15 95:1 110:3</p> <p>tells 121:4</p> <p>temperature 41:18</p> <p>temperatures 102:11,15</p> <p>temporary 70:14</p> <p>ten 85:3 125:24 128:24</p> <p>tenant 115:15</p> <p>terawatts 51:11,25</p> <p>term 50:9</p> <p>terminal 35:11</p> <p>terrible 52:1</p> <p>Terry 122:4</p> <p>testified 75:5 131:2 136:15</p> <p>testify 75:6 123:11 131:1</p>	<p>testifying 61:1</p> <p>testimony 3:10 8:13 10:22 11:8 13:21 14:23 16:19 21:15 23:25 25:21 30:5 31:22 35:23 37:16 38:21 41:2 44:1,20 48:9 49:12 50:22 53:2 56:19 60:20 63:17 69:21 73:4 76:8 79:4 81:20 84:17 89:4 90:17 92:16 97:8 100:5 105:1 111:5 116:3 118:11 119:23 122:6 123:16 125:6 126:25 131:6 137:20 138:15</p> <p>Texas 26:8</p> <p>than 9:24 15:8 19:3 23:6 27:15 30:20 40:17 52:2 64:12 74:6 75:19 77:11 91:2 95:17 100:23 101:5 102:15 120:24 123:1 137:9,17</p> <p>thank 4:13,25 5:7,8,14,19,</p>	<p>25 6:5,8,10 8:9,16,20 10:19,20 11:4,6,11,15 12:9,10,25 13:9,14,15, 16,17,20,24 14:9,19,20,21 15:1 16:14, 16,17,22 20:10 21:8, 10,11,12,13, 19,22 23:18, 19,20 24:4,8 25:15,17,19, 24 26:3 29:4, 16,25 30:1,3, 9,13,16 31:11,14,16 32:1,6 34:3 35:16,18,19 36:1,5 37:6,8, 12,20,24 38:1 40:14,20,21 41:7 43:2 44:13,14,23 45:2 48:4,12, 16 49:5,6,10, 15 50:15,25 51:3 52:20, 23,24,25 53:9 54:10 56:11, 13,16,23 59:3 60:6,7,24 61:5 62:17,23 63:16,21,25 69:17,24 70:3 71:18 72:6,22 73:7 75:14,24 76:3,4,12,16 78:17,19 79:8,12,14 81:4,5,14,15, 19,24 83:1</p>	<p>84:8,9,10,21 88:19,24,25 89:11,16 90:13,14,15, 20,24 92:9, 10,13,20 95:18,19 97:12,16 99:24,25 100:8,12 102:22,24 104:1,16,18 105:6 107:14 108:4 109:12 110:21,22 111:3,9,13 114:25 115:19,20 116:2,7,11 118:7,9,14,18 121:24,25 122:2,5,10,13 123:7,8,20,25 124:21 125:9 126:21,22 127:4,8 130:21,23 131:4,13 134:7,8 135:8 137:22,24,25 138:8,18,22 139:7,8,15, 17,22,23</p> <p>Thanks 6:7 10:23 69:16</p> <p>that's 4:18 6:20 7:21 12:21 13:7 14:2,18 16:13 19:16 20:13 22:2,13 23:17,23 24:6,21,24</p>
--	--	---	--	---

25:13 27:14 28:10 29:12 33:6 34:2 35:2 40:16 41:5 42:13 47:15,18,20 50:13 53:7 60:3,10 61:16,22 62:10,14,16 64:3,5,6 66:7, 10,20,22 67:6 74:5 76:24 78:2,3,4 80:12 82:11, 25 85:7,12 86:1,17,18 87:25 88:10 89:22 90:4,12 91:11 93:4 95:9 98:6,14 99:5,9 102:8, 19 105:10 106:11 107:8 109:6 110:13 111:20 113:21 117:2 118:5 119:19 124:20 126:20 127:21 129:6, 7,8,19,25 130:17 131:16 132:17 133:18,20,23 134:1,4,7 135:23 136:5, 20,23 138:7 theft 66:12,21 67:20 them 3:10 8:7 9:1 10:6	12:17 13:4 16:3,11 21:6 23:1 24:16,20 30:25 32:24 33:18 40:1 45:25 46:1,2, 8 47:18 52:2, 8 61:9,13 62:4 64:24 66:1,4,9 68:10 70:18 73:20 75:2,22 78:8 79:16 80:10 82:4,6 85:4,16 86:14,19 87:7 91:21 93:15 94:9,13 96:3, 4,16 99:23 101:12 102:14 105:17,18 106:1,2,12,13 107:2,13,20 108:19 109:25 110:5, 6,20 111:22 114:16 117:7, 11 119:2,19 122:18,20 127:19 129:25 130:1 131:16 132:10,22 133:5 135:24 136:11 themselves 13:2 17:16 46:19 118:2 then 7:10,12, 15 17:25 25:7,9 33:24 34:21 39:8,20	46:14 47:11, 17,24 48:7 51:12 54:17 60:15,16 61:18,20 64:9 65:6,7,18 69:19 76:6 77:9 78:5,21 80:4,15 82:12 84:11,12 85:9 86:7 89:2 92:6,14 93:18 96:4 97:6 98:22 109:21 110:23 113:2, 9,17 114:15 123:5,14 130:11 134:20 135:21 137:19 there's 6:19 11:1 12:5 15:23 18:20 21:3 24:18 27:10 28:18 32:16 42:17 47:18 50:7 65:22 66:11 70:25 71:6 72:4,14 80:20 84:1 86:18 87:8,9 94:24 98:7 102:20 106:6 114:16, 23 128:4 130:5 132:5 thermostat 32:18 thermostats 102:14 these 4:16	7:4,5 9:13 11:25 13:6,11 14:3 19:10,22 22:6,18,22 25:1 36:12, 15,16 37:2 40:3 42:5,11, 19 44:9 51:10 52:17 61:24 62:2 68:4,7, 22 74:15 77:16 78:15 94:17 104:7 107:17 113:18,22 124:18 132:6 133:7 137:18 They'd 86:4 they'll 19:13, 14 22:18 92:2,3,4 they've 12:16 14:16 16:1 25:5 46:15 52:6 62:2,12 71:17 116:15, 16 122:19 126:4,9 132:20,22 thing 6:16 17:15 23:4 24:13 33:23 34:22 35:12 46:5 52:8 57:18 58:21 66:22 67:2 79:23 85:7 86:20 91:13 92:2 93:3,6, 22 105:9 106:5 112:14 114:9 121:20	136:14 things 11:22 13:6 15:15 18:17 19:22 24:12 31:2 32:16 44:9 46:14 57:7 61:24 71:8 74:13 78:15 86:12,13 90:2 105:24 107:20 114:11,14,21 125:13,19 129:4 136:23 think 11:17 16:9 18:7,8 19:18 21:2 22:14 25:2,12 32:20 41:11 43:8 47:8 50:5,6,7,9,17 52:7,17 53:16 57:12 58:22 59:8,23 63:11 66:1 67:15 68:20 75:9 78:3,12 84:13 88:2 90:6,11 96:25 99:10, 20 102:12 103:21 107:22 109:5, 6,19 113:7,9, 23 121:8,23 125:17 126:14 130:7 131:24 134:2 135:5 thinking 62:11 113:23 third 65:23,25
--	---	---	--	---

third-party 65:24	97:25 99:15 102:5 105:10, 13,19,25 106:17 110:19 111:24,25 112:4,6 113:4 119:10 120:12 122:21 123:3, 6 125:12,22 126:20 129:14 132:13,23 133:14 136:5, 10,16,24 137:15 138:6, 25 139:1,20	88:9 100:17 102:1,10 107:15 108:22 111:3 119:11 136:2	75:1 82:2,4 83:7,8 102:16,17 108:19 111:16 119:3 138:1	timely 101:23 times 42:11 49:24 54:18, 25 55:13 85:15 86:3 87:7 94:10,23 96:11,12 102:18 111:22 112:9, 11 114:21 132:17,19 135:18
this 3:9,11,13, 18 4:14,15,19 5:2,3 6:10 9:8,23 12:6 15:22 17:22 18:14 19:3, 14,16 21:24 22:23 23:4,8, 10,12 24:21 26:7 27:16 28:2,15 30:21 32:13 33:4 36:21,22 39:6,10 41:14,18 42:3,9,17,21 43:1,8,9,25 44:3 45:9 46:20 50:9 51:6 52:9,19 54:9 57:3 58:7 61:11, 15,17,25 62:1,7,12 63:12 65:2,20 66:19 67:14, 19 68:9,16 70:5,7,23 71:3,13,16,17 72:4,10 73:15,18,19, 20,21 74:1,4, 6,8,13,18 75:7,9,11,20, 23 78:12 80:20 82:14, 15,23 83:18 85:15 86:11, 14 89:2,20 93:14,22 94:3 95:14,15 96:10,20	those 3:21 4:21,23 6:2 7:3 9:20,25 10:4 16:4,9 17:14,23 28:4 32:17 43:22 51:18 57:10 58:1,4,5,8,14, 17 60:3 68:2, 14,19 69:12 70:22 71:6 72:5 75:3 76:21,24 79:24 93:25 96:9,14,18 110:19 111:18 114:14 118:2 133:6	thoughts 4:15,17,20,25 34:4 38:2,4 49:17 50:8 58:17 62:10 99:17 139:20 thousand 57:12 thousands 80:23 three 6:15 29:23 33:1, 14,24 34:9,10 38:13 43:22 47:9 51:11,24 54:25 55:1,3 65:6,8 68:10 71:3 77:14 80:5 97:1 99:20 101:7 107:10 108:16,21 112:9,11 121:11 122:2 123:12,14 127:17 130:11 132:23,24 135:22 137:4 threshold 36:17 through 11:22 24:20 26:23 27:7 28:5 36:15 51:21 54:19 60:9 62:6 74:25	throw 68:5 tie 110:15 Tilley 127:3,6, 8,10 129:11, 16,24 130:5, 9,15,23 time 3:3,13 11:3,5,18 20:19,20,25 22:20 27:21 28:16 29:18 33:3,19 34:7 35:9,14,15 46:20 47:22 48:3 53:18 54:9 55:9,15 56:3 60:1,12 65:11 66:15 68:10 70:7 72:8 73:23 76:2 80:17 85:25 99:17 100:19 101:1 102:23 104:9 106:14 107:7 108:24,25 109:22,24 110:9,10,16 111:19 113:22 116:24 120:2, 3 125:12 128:23 130:16,25 134:11 135:2 137:16,17	tired 114:11 to 3:6,10,13, 14,20 4:10, 15,17,19,22, 25 5:3,6,9 6:3,12,13,14, 15,17,18,20, 21,23 7:1,3,6, 9,10,12,14, 15,16,18,19 8:1,5,9,13 9:1,2,3,10,23 10:5,6,10,13, 21 11:1,2,3,5, 8,20,22,23 12:4,5,17,23 13:2,4,5,18, 21 14:4,6,7,8, 10,14,15,21, 23 15:7,9,11, 16,19,22,23 16:1,12,13,19 17:11,12,18, 21,23 18:1,2, 3,9,17,19 19:5,6,8,11, 18,19,20,24 20:6,8,9,10, 16,17 21:2,3, 4,5,13,16,24 22:8,12,18,23

23:18,22 24:1,9,10,11, 12,16,19,22, 23,25 25:1,7, 8,10,14,18,21 26:4,11,15, 16,18,20,21 27:2,6,7,22, 23 28:2,3,5,9, 14,19,22,23, 24,25 29:2,3, 10 30:2,6,14, 19 31:7,10, 13,18,19,23 32:7,10,16, 17,20,21,25 33:4,21,22, 24,25 34:2,4, 17,22,23,24 35:3,4,8,9,15, 21,23 36:7, 13,15,16,18, 25 37:2,4,14, 17 38:1,9,16, 18,21,22,25 39:4,5,6,8,9, 11,12,15 40:4,6,7,8,9, 10,13,22,23, 24 41:2,11,19 42:4,10,11 43:1,3,6,8,13, 21,24 44:2,9, 11,12,18,20 45:22,23,25 46:1,2,5,12, 14 47:1,7,8, 10,12,13,14, 18,23 48:9, 18,21,23,25 49:4,7,12,21, 25 50:1,9,12, 14,22 51:6,8, 10,17,19,23,	24 52:4,10, 12,15,18,19, 21 53:2,10,19 54:6,7,9,17, 24,25 55:1,2, 5,6,7,18,20, 21 56:4,9,20, 24 57:4,10, 11,13,16 58:2,4,12,13, 14,19,20,24, 25 59:14,17, 20,22 60:1,2, 3,8,10,11,12, 13,14,21 61:9,13,14, 18,21,22,25 62:1,3,9,16, 20,22 63:1,3, 4,18 64:5,6,8, 14,15,21,24 65:19,23 66:1,2,4,9,10, 14,23,25 67:8,10,16,20 68:2,8,10,14, 19 69:5,6,7, 12,21 70:9, 14,20,22,24 71:8,12,15,17 72:4 73:1,4, 12,24,25 74:6,7,12,15, 16 75:17,19, 22,25 76:1,6, 9,17 77:3,13, 15,17,18,20, 23,25 78:7, 12,13,14,15, 16 79:5,20,22 80:1,18 81:3, 12,21 82:2,5, 7,15,20,21, 22,24 83:11,	12,16 84:18 85:9,12,17, 19,22,25 86:2,5,12,13, 15,16,17,18, 20 87:3,6,7, 11,14,15,16, 18,19,24 88:3,5,8 89:5, 7,10,22 90:1, 3,4,8,9,11,12, 17 91:4,9,19, 25 92:4,5,6,9, 12,16 93:10, 21,23 94:2,6, 11,21,24 95:1,3,13,16 96:8,12,13, 16,21,25 97:1,2,5,9,25 98:13,14,17, 21 99:5,8,10, 12,13,19 100:5,14,20, 25 101:8,10, 11,12,14,16, 18,23 102:5, 7,13,15,16, 17,21 103:10, 11,14,18 105:2,8,9,14, 17 106:3,4,12 107:4,16,21, 24,25 109:5, 22 110:5,7,9, 11,15 111:6, 14,18,24,25 112:1,4,5,6,8, 20,21,22,24 113:4,5,6,10, 17,20,25 114:1,7,12, 15,16,17,22 115:10,12,13,	14,16,17 116:4,13,18, 19,24 117:1, 8,10,11,12, 14,15,19,23 118:2,5,6,11, 21,22 119:2, 7,8,11,20,22, 24,25 120:2, 5,7 121:3,21, 24 122:2,4,7, 16,18,19 123:2,5,11, 14,17 124:2, 3,6,8,12,19 125:1,6,13, 14,20,21,22 126:1,3,5,12, 14,16,17 127:1,12,22 128:1,6,10, 12,14,17,23 129:1,2,7,9, 12,17,18 130:17,19 131:1,3,6,14 132:6,14,18, 22,23 133:2, 3,7,14,18,25 135:10,16,18, 20,23 136:5, 6,11,12,22,25 137:3,17,18, 19 138:2,3,4, 9,11,15,24 139:6,10,13, 17,21,23,25 today 3:2 7:19 10:22 18:24 28:6 31:13 52:6 76:4 87:7,10,23,25 88:1 96:9 102:12	108:20 116:14 117:5 135:12 today's 99:9 102:22 together 90:8 told 34:25 64:20 68:9 71:4 74:1,3, 18,19 82:9,13 83:17 85:22 93:13 94:23, 25 101:14 105:24 107:11 108:11,12,13, 17 109:6 111:24 117:3 128:5 130:1 135:24 137:3 tomorrow 87:24 121:9 tonight 4:1 6:15 25:18 51:8,15 52:22 84:11 85:8 92:11 100:17 102:10,18 104:4,19 108:2 111:15 118:9 123:9 124:3,4 130:24 138:1 139:17 tonight's 3:4 tons 18:8 too 10:18 20:1,7 22:22 44:1 57:21 75:7 109:11 112:3 115:18
---	---	--	--	--

124:11 130:15 took 55:6 64:18 71:4 82:6 87:6 103:12,22 113:1 125:11 top 17:5 52:7 80:21 87:3 105:14 tornado 40:11 45:22 46:4,7 82:1 83:6 total 22:3 70:16 80:16, 17 94:12 115:21 135:23 totaled 10:1 totaling 9:4 totally 83:23 91:13,14,16, 22 100:22 133:9 touch 63:9 113:17 touched 95:6 towards 72:5 75:22 90:10 town 51:10 87:5 townhall 19:10 townhalls 109:16 137:18 towns 124:18	track 39:17 108:22 traded 15:21, 24 24:14 tragedy 116:20 118:5 transcript 129:13 transfer 87:6 transferred 26:10 transformer 47:17,18 108:12 transformers 46:3 transmission 57:25 132:20 trash 118:5 traveled 18:17 treated 101:20 tree 46:6,9 128:3 129:15 130:3,18 136:9 Treeright 46:7,20,21 trees 130:5,19 132:2,5,6 trespassing 128:5 tried 32:17 87:8 trim 46:2,24	trimmed 132:7 trimming 128:3,4 129:15 130:4, 18 triple 47:21 trips 125:2 trouble 95:13 truck 46:21 47:20 trucks 47:19, 20 true 23:7 Truluck 31:16,21,25 32:4,5,8 34:3, 9,11,15,19 35:6,9,17,18 Trump 67:8 trust 66:11 68:11 73:24 74:7 107:19, 20,21 137:15 truth 8:13,14 11:9 13:21,22 14:24 16:20 21:16,17 24:1,2 25:21, 22 30:6,7 31:23,24 35:24 37:17, 18 41:3,4 44:21 48:9,10 49:12,13 50:23 53:3 56:20,21 60:21,22 63:18,19 69:22 73:5	74:20 76:9,10 79:5,6 81:21, 22 84:18,19 89:5,6 90:17, 18 92:17,18 97:9,10 100:5,6 105:2,3 111:6,7 116:4,5 118:11,12 122:7,8 123:17,18 125:6,7 127:1,2 131:6,7 138:15,16 try 21:24 24:10 36:16 37:2 40:23 46:2 64:5 86:2 87:11,14 103:10 110:15 114:22 116:24 trying 19:19 32:10 43:24 60:11,13 76:1 77:17 86:12, 18 87:15 99:5 103:14 107:20 112:24 114:1 115:10 129:1 tune 70:14 turbines 18:7 28:2 98:13 turn 18:7 19:18 47:8 102:13,14 116:24	124:11,13,14, 15 turned 91:22 93:20 94:2,6 100:19 132:14 turnout 139:18 turnover 107:8 tutoring 120:3 TV 106:11 TVS 136:17 twice 94:5 110:12 twist 136:12 two 28:20 29:23 32:11, 24 34:12 43:19 47:20 49:24 54:15 57:7 65:2,13 70:8,14 71:3, 10 77:8 80:10,19 85:5,6 86:11, 18 87:2 88:14,17 89:25 91:16 93:12 105:21 107:21 108:22 110:4, 6 112:18 122:24 123:12,13 126:5 127:18 130:11 132:24 135:19 type 29:15
--	---	---	--	--

97:25 123:6 Typically 9:6	unfriendly 91:23 units 79:21 university 80:11,12 unjust 32:20 unreputable 89:24 unresolved 72:13 83:24 until 7:15,20 25:11 38:5 42:14 52:3 64:24,25 80:3 86:13 87:7 90:5 94:25 96:22 105:21 124:22 up 3:24 5:3 7:1,4 13:6 17:19 18:5 20:10 22:1,9, 12 23:10,16 26:16 30:16, 22 32:12 38:5 39:10,11 40:3,14 43:23 47:13,19 49:24 51:12 52:11,15,24 54:21 59:16 60:5 65:1 66:5 68:5,20 77:13 79:1 80:15 85:17 87:21,22 94:11,19,20 96:20 98:20 99:1,17,19 100:1 102:9, 14 105:20	113:22 114:3, 8 116:21 117:23 121:2 123:5 124:3, 7,8 125:13 126:10 128:22 131:3 133:2 138:2 upcoming 73:19 update 125:23,25 126:1,19 upgrading 27:22 uplift 126:4 upon 59:13 UPS 45:22 us 4:15,21 9:10 10:21 11:23 13:3,6 17:8,17,22 18:1,25 19:12,16 24:22,23 25:1,2,7,8,13 30:17 31:4,5, 13,19 34:4 38:2 42:4,11, 22,23 43:1 44:1,5 45:7 46:5 48:23 49:2 52:15 57:16 61:13, 18 62:3,15 71:4 73:16,22 74:3,13,16, 17,18,19,20 78:18 79:13 81:25 86:4 87:2 90:25	91:2 93:16 94:24 95:1 101:20 112:5 113:23 114:12,20 116:15 117:15,19 118:4 126:12, 16 127:20,24 129:7 139:18 usage 17:13 22:4 65:9,10, 17 66:6 use 47:7,14 50:3,9 60:3 64:8,12 66:8 78:13,14 used 5:2 18:9 22:2 65:19 70:13 77:14 94:17 112:12 120:8 128:1 129:17 users 39:2,16 using 54:19 55:4 134:25 usually 45:17 136:19 utilities 3:24 23:5 29:13 30:23,25 31:3 41:20 67:7,9 99:2 121:8,12 utility 3:20 4:9 9:15 15:21 19:20 23:5 31:10 45:12 48:22 50:8,9 77:5 78:13 80:21 99:3 124:18	utility's 98:24 utilizing 65:21 V vacancy 4:3 valuable 137:17 139:19 Vandergriff 5:16 29:6,9, 16 34:5,6,10, 13,16 35:3,7, 16 43:9 59:6, 8 60:6 69:10, 11 71:19,20 72:1,6 83:2,3, 14,19 88:20, 21,24 95:20, 21,24 96:8, 14,20,22 108:4,7,18 109:2,12 129:14,21 130:2,7,13,21 135:9,10,12 136:6,25 137:8,11,22 varies 130:15 variety 76:20 various 101:21 venue 5:4 venues 38:14 verify 68:8,16 versus 38:14 103:17 very 4:24 12:9 15:9,13,15
-------------------------------------	--	---	--	---

17:4 20:3 21:24 32:19, 20,23 33:10 35:10,11 45:21 63:3,5 73:21 74:1,8, 9 77:1 88:12 89:23 104:3 107:20,22 132:13 136:16 137:17 139:19 victim 114:2 vile 117:7 violation 117:6 virtual 47:4 visions 129:7 voicemails 87:9 volunteer 133:4 vote 13:2 vulnerable 10:17	waiting 70:10 124:22 138:1 Walker 8:8,9, 11,15,18,20, 22 10:19,23 Wall 79:16 Walmart 13:4 Walmart's 12:6 Walters 38:21 39:3 want 6:12,13, 21 11:2 13:5 14:14,15 19:6 32:21 38:1 40:9,23 42:11 43:3 50:1 60:8,12 61:12 64:22 68:1 69:12 77:20 79:15 80:1 82:24 85:24 86:13 93:4 96:12 107:3, 4,23 111:20 113:20 117:17,19 119:14 121:20 128:23 136:11 wanted 14:10 43:21 55:5 61:25 113:17 125:13 wanting 14:4 17:4 51:23 52:15 113:6 123:11 wants 32:20	59:22 69:5 warm 112:14 warned 46:8 47:18 watch 101:3 104:3 water 22:19 29:14 31:4 76:22 way 12:24 15:24 21:13 27:5,11 28:18 35:21 42:1 63:2 65:22 66:5,12 67:14 70:25 74:7 80:20 91:13, 24 94:21,24 96:13 119:9 137:13 we 3:8 4:2,17, 23 5:3,25 6:11 8:7 9:1, 10,13 10:2,25 11:2 14:6 20:19 21:6 22:6,11 23:1 24:18,19,20, 22 25:6,8,9, 10,18 26:7,11 27:9 28:9,11, 12 29:5,18,20 31:2,8,16 33:12 34:4 35:20 36:15 37:2 38:6 40:10,23 41:11,12,14, 25 42:3,25 43:4,16,17 44:3,11 46:9, 11 50:16	52:22 53:12, 15,23 54:6,7, 9,10,19,20 57:13 58:1,8, 21,25 59:3,19 60:10,13,24 62:15 63:7,11 66:3 67:12,23 68:21 69:9 70:6,7,13,15, 19,21 71:6,7, 12,18,24 72:3,9,15 73:15 74:1,6, 25 75:1,3,25 76:1,2 77:1,2, 8 78:1,2,5,7, 10,21 80:20, 22 81:5 83:1 84:15 85:5,6, 9,10,11,13, 14,16,19,20, 24,25 86:1,2, 8,14,15,17, 22,25 87:3,5, 7,9,22 88:11, 14 90:2 91:23 92:12 93:5,8, 19,20 94:10, 18,23 95:19 96:24 98:12 100:23 102:11,25 103:10 104:8 105:24 106:5, 7 107:15 108:2 109:7, 10,11 110:6, 12,13,22 111:22 112:22 113:9, 13 114:3,21 115:4,17 116:18 117:2,	7,10 119:9,14 120:7,8 121:9,10,11, 17 124:15,19 127:23 128:1, 2,11 129:10, 11 132:17 134:9 135:6 138:9,11 139:1,11,22 we'd 99:19 139:16 we'll 4:24 37:7,14 44:18 49:7 50:21 52:24 54:23 73:1 93:14 94:14 95:2 111:23,24 119:4,5,6 129:12 we're 4:19 5:2,5 8:23 11:18 15:13 22:7 28:14 42:12,13 43:25 53:24 55:21 57:11, 14,16,17 58:4 66:4,5 67:14, 15,17 76:1 85:10,22 88:5,6 94:3 97:25 106:24 107:2 109:8 112:6 114:19 117:5 118:4,5 119:4 122:2 124:7 127:16, 25 128:6 131:2,3 138:11
W				
W-A-L-K-E-R 8:19 W-I-L-S-O-N 48:15 W-O-L-S-E-Y 116:10 wage 33:10 117:23 wait 31:18				

we've 5:5 21:5 28:14 48:2 53:16 60:9 85:2 99:16 100:16 101:21,22 114:14 117:3 119:3 124:9 129:4 131:1	93:1,18 94:18 101:20,24 103:13,15 106:5 108:23 109:17 110:12 112:12 113:4 119:11 123:1, 2,5 127:16 128:11,12,19 133:16 134:18 135:25 136:18	50:2,5 51:17 52:14 55:9,15 57:13,16 59:9 61:10,17 62:12 63:4 65:8,9,11 66:3,6,24 67:16 68:6,11 71:21,23 72:1,8 77:12, 15 78:3 80:22 82:22 83:4,23 86:1 87:3,20 91:4,8 93:4, 18 94:16 98:2 99:5 105:18 108:7,9,20 109:6,22 112:1,13 114:5,15 117:1 118:3 119:6,12,20 120:13 122:25 124:2 126:4 132:9 133:18 137:18 138:3	when 3:9 7:7 14:5 17:7,17, 21 18:8 19:15 22:16 24:20 25:10 29:9,20 35:3 39:16 41:17 42:1,12 45:16,25 46:9,23 47:1 49:19,20 50:6 51:10 53:14, 18,21 55:13, 15,17,19 56:6 58:23 61:23 64:6 66:14,20 67:19 70:23 71:11 72:17 74:1 77:9 82:1 83:6 84:1 87:15 89:25 92:1 98:11 101:5 102:4,21 103:2,8,14, 16,17,23 105:14 106:23 110:9 111:19 112:16,21 114:15 119:5, 9,14,16,18 120:1 123:4 125:1 128:5, 9,25 129:18 130:6,14 131:21 134:5, 14,18 136:6	33:25 50:12 52:5 58:10, 11,12,14,24 59:19 60:2 61:9 62:10 66:2 67:2,6 74:21 75:11 82:3 86:22 93:7,22 97:25 100:22 101:3, 22 102:16 110:11 114:22 120:8 127:16,25 128:11 130:11 135:3 137:12
weak 53:17 54:4				
weather 112:13,15 123:6				
weatherizatio n 9:2,3,6	went 17:19 26:22 30:19 33:4,24,25 49:24,25 51:12 54:19 61:10 65:1 82:1 83:7 85:19 86:1, 15,17 87:22 94:11,20 101:11 102:7 112:2 113:1 129:18 132:18 133:3, 17 136:9 137:19			
weatherized 10:12				wherever 57:25
Webex 4:2				whether 23:13 58:19, 20 115:2,6 121:5,22 128:7
website 52:3 80:6,8 81:11 138:5				which 3:5 6:11 9:15 10:1,17 16:7 17:10,11 24:16 38:10 39:21 40:3,8, 16 51:14 52:7,13 55:2 64:14 66:12, 16 77:13 81:12 95:3 100:24 101:16 115:17 116:18 117:13 120:18 126:17 127:20
week 33:2 46:10,11 77:8 108:21		what's 20:4 66:9,17 86:20 88:7 93:8 116:17 124:6 137:15		
weeks 55:10 70:9,18 86:12 127:18	what 4:18,25 6:21 12:3,8, 18 13:8 14:6 16:6,13 20:3, 17 22:23 23:2,3 24:11 25:12 27:6,24 28:5,9,12,17, 21,24 29:18 35:10 36:17 39:12 40:10 45:20 47:19 48:21 49:4	whatever 11:19 19:14 22:8,17,20 39:19 57:19 64:20 65:25 83:11 96:4 105:12 113:10 129:6		
Weird 93:22		whatsoever 85:5		
welcome 69:5			whenever 56:2 93:23 101:7 102:1,3 109:22	
well 6:10 11:17,24 20:18 22:9,14 23:8,11 33:11 39:18 44:4 47:22 49:5,17 51:5 54:22,23 55:12,24 62:23 63:6 68:3 69:4			where 13:5 14:8 18:5	

128:14 129:19 133:24 while 4:21 19:11 25:8 58:16 60:25 98:25 132:8 who 9:18 10:1,9 14:18 18:2 32:24 42:21 52:4 54:7,8 58:9 73:22 92:5 98:18 118:2 119:1 120:19 121:16 123:11 125:14 130:25 who's 28:12 82:19 113:6 126:13 whoever 65:24 whole 8:14 11:9 13:22 14:24 16:20 21:16 24:1 25:22 30:6 31:23 33:2 35:24 37:17 41:3 44:21 45:19 48:10 49:13 50:23 53:3 56:20 60:21 63:18 69:22 73:5 76:9 79:5 81:21 82:8 84:18 86:20 89:5 90:18 91:13 92:17	97:9 100:6 103:12 105:2 111:6 116:4 118:12 122:7 123:17 125:7 127:1 131:7 138:16 wholesale 15:13 why 7:21 17:18,25 20:5 23:1 39:18 57:17 60:10 61:11 62:13 75:20 105:22 108:16 110:1, 3,6,12 112:4, 5 113:5,13 118:22 123:3 124:17 126:12 127:21 129:25 widespread 102:6 widow 32:8 41:16 widowers 42:18 widows 42:18 wife 73:14 80:19 122:24 Wilder 84:14 will 3:8,18 7:9,13,15,18 8:5,7,8,13 9:11 11:8 13:21 14:23 16:19 17:7,22 18:7 21:16	24:1 25:19,21 30:6 31:16, 17,23 35:20, 23 37:17 39:15 40:3,8 41:3 43:22 44:20 48:9 49:12 50:22 53:2 56:20 60:21 63:18 64:13 69:1,2, 9,21 73:4,20 76:9 77:9 79:5 80:19 81:21 83:25 84:2,3,18 89:5 90:17 91:7 92:13,17 97:9 100:5 104:11 105:2 111:6 116:4 118:11 122:7 123:11,15,17 125:6 126:11, 18 127:1 128:7 130:10, 15,24 131:6 138:15,25 139:4,11,20 Williams 5:21 12:11,13,15, 19,22,25 13:9,14 14:12,13,14, 19 20:14,15, 16,24 21:8,10 29:17,21,25 43:14 54:11, 12 55:9,14, 19,24 56:6,11 62:19,23 67:22,25 68:6,13,18,22 69:1,7 72:8,	11,13,17,20, 22 81:7,14 83:23 84:5,8 88:12,15,19 96:25 103:1, 5,8,13,23 104:1,11,16 109:13,14,15, 21 110:15,21 115:2,6,19 134:9,11,14, 18,20 135:4,8 willing 78:13, 14,15 Wilson 44:18 48:5,6,7,11, 14,16,18 49:6 73:22 wind 16:8 18:3,7,12 28:2 80:25 84:2 98:13 130:6 windmills 46:17 51:20 74:2,19 winter 9:18 32:19 41:18 64:8 107:1 112:16 winterizing 36:13 winters 102:14 wintertime 123:4 124:15 wires 83:12 wise 46:4 wish 63:1,9	with 4:1,15,21 5:6 8:1,4,8 9:1,4,11,13 10:2,8,10,13 11:16 14:2,18 15:5 16:12 17:1,7,8 18:8, 12,22 20:22 21:23 23:2 26:21,24 27:4,8 28:4 31:1 32:15,18 33:15,16 34:16 35:10, 15 36:21,22 37:25 38:3, 13,25 39:6 40:11 41:8,20 42:2,21,24 43:5,12,14,18 46:11,15,16 48:17 49:16 51:4 52:2,25 56:7 57:1,7 58:21 60:5 61:6 64:1 65:20 66:9,24 67:1 68:1 70:4,14,16 73:11 77:14 80:11,12 82:13,21 83:20 84:25 85:4,7 86:14, 23 91:11,12, 24 92:9,24 93:19 94:9 96:3 97:17 98:10 100:13, 15,18 101:2, 12,17,23 102:11 103:16 104:5, 11 105:19
---	---	---	---	---

106:24 107:2 109:10 113:3, 8 114:9,11 115:16 116:12,21 117:20 118:1, 19 119:6,22 122:14 124:1 125:10 127:9, 19 131:15,18, 19,20 132:14 133:12,19,23 134:5,6 135:13,19 136:4,21 137:15 138:23 139:18 within 45:15 77:8 117:13 without 46:10 61:15 68:10 71:25 128:17 witness 44:17 63:12 69:18 witnesses 40:23 43:5 44:12 60:9 75:25 92:12 97:2 115:21 122:2 123:10 138:2 139:11 woe 114:2 woke 19:2 Wolsey 115:23,25 116:1,6,9,13 118:7 woman 75:5 132:12	won't 32:24 98:21 133:6, 24 wondering 61:8 wood 79:21 94:13 words 110:13 136:12 work 12:4,5 18:22,24 19:9 29:13 33:15 36:10 80:7 90:10 98:14 112:4,5 117:4,23 118:1 119:6 128:5,12 129:18 137:6 worked 28:20 42:14 75:3 77:22 82:11 103:17 119:4 122:22 128:6 131:19 worker 73:15 76:18 77:5 working 8:25 34:21 47:21 50:4 58:10 71:6,9 77:21 108:17 119:4 131:18 works 18:4 32:24 43:9 63:2 73:22 world 18:17 65:25 113:20 124:6 worried 49:18	112:23 worry 119:5 worse 19:7 45:5 130:19, 20 133:1 worst 136:14 worst-case 18:9,10 worth 45:11 106:10 137:16 would 4:10 6:3,17,18 7:1, 6 8:1,11,16 10:25 11:6,11 15:23 16:2,5 17:22,24 18:10 21:19 25:1,12,24 27:7,13,15 28:17 29:11, 12 31:7,8,9, 18 32:2,7 36:1,6 37:21 38:25 42:8 44:3,23 45:23,25 46:1,6,19 49:3 50:12,25 51:16 52:14 53:5 54:12 56:2 57:1,4, 15 59:9 61:1 62:25 63:21 66:8 68:9,13, 14 71:8,23 73:16,21 74:4,18,19,22 75:11,21 77:25 79:8 83:24 86:5 94:12 95:14	96:8,13,15 98:2 109:24 110:18 111:9 112:21,22 113:7 122:17, 18 123:13 126:12 128:9 130:25 136:2 137:6 138:24 139:4,13,25 wouldn't 86:3 wow 20:18 40:15 wrap 20:10 40:13 99:17 114:7 write 108:23, 24,25 135:24 writing 138:9 written 106:2 109:4 137:20 138:4 wrong 11:17, 18 13:7 33:18,23 34:2 35:13 50:6 66:9 111:4 135:5 wrote 106:4 <hr/> Y <hr/> yada 112:14 yard 128:22 yards 46:25 Yay 17:17 yeah 12:14 46:1 56:12 59:11 68:24	71:14 72:14, 19,21 75:16 80:8 89:24 107:16 124:24 year 9:5,19 17:4 22:1,12 27:19 30:21 31:3 33:9 38:18 39:24 40:16 42:7, 11,15 46:20 52:11,13,15 53:13 59:15, 25 61:11 62:1 64:13 72:10 73:18,19 80:24 86:14, 15 98:25 99:2 101:1 103:7, 25 104:9 106:24 110:19 111:16 113:15 115:12 120:23 126:1, 6 131:22 132:19,20 135:2,18 year's 20:16 years 10:11 26:8 32:11,24 33:14 34:9,10 38:4,10,17 49:18,22,23, 25 50:13 54:15 55:11 61:10,13,23 62:12 65:2 77:14 80:19 82:19 83:6 85:3 91:16
--	---	---	--	--

94:11 98:3	79:16,24	
105:16	83:15 117:11,	
106:17	14 137:1	
121:11	York 81:18,	
122:23,24	23,24 82:1	
124:5 125:24	83:1,6,17,22,	
126:5 127:11	25 84:6,9,10	
129:24	119:24	
132:16	you-ins 37:5	
Yep 11:10	young 138:25	
yes 8:15	139:1	
12:24 13:23	yourself	
14:13,25	67:21 87:16	
16:21 20:15		
21:18 23:22,		
23 25:23		
29:17,21 30:8	Z	
31:25 40:25	zero 20:6,22	
41:5 44:16	75:23 94:19	
48:11 53:4	107:6 110:2,3	
54:12 56:17,	120:25	
22 59:5,7		
60:23 63:14,		
20 64:2 69:23		
72:7,12,23		
76:11 81:23		
84:20,23		
88:23 89:1,		
11,18 90:19		
95:23 100:7		
103:6 104:17		
105:4 107:8		
108:6 109:4		
116:1 118:13		
121:19 125:8		
129:17		
134:13 135:6,		
11 138:17		
yesterday		
102:12		
yet 15:21 63:8		
66:6,19 70:22		