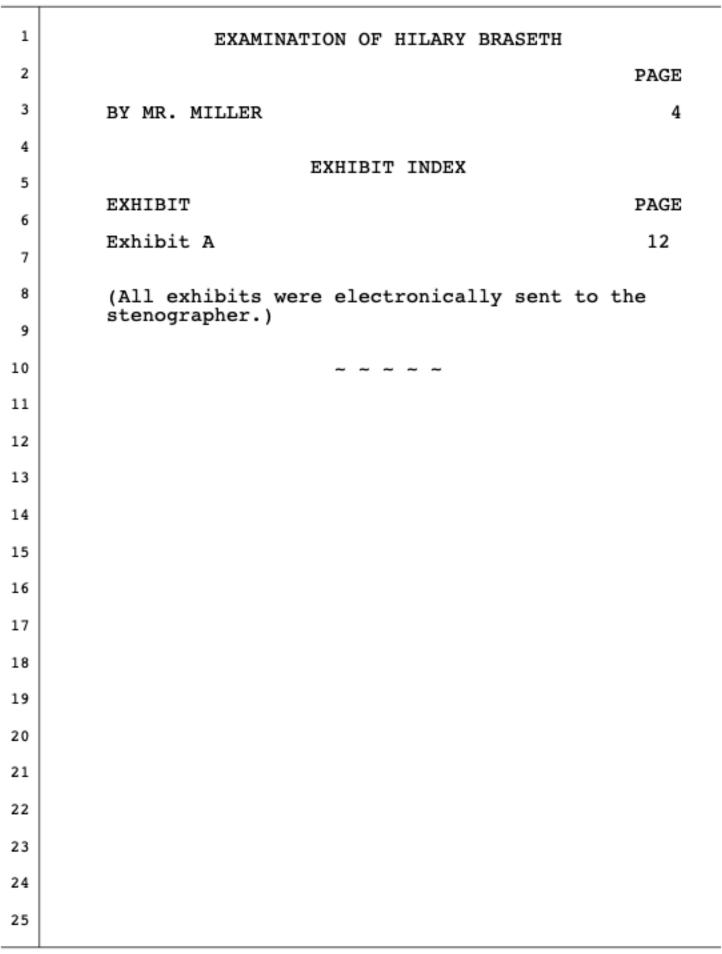
Exhibit 3

1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2	DISTRICT OF MAINE
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4	DINNER TABLE ACTION, FOR OUR FUTURE, and ALEX
5	TITCOMB,
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7	Plaintiffs,
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9	vs. Case No. 24-cv-00430-KFW
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11	WILLIAM J. SCHNEIDER, et al.,
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13	Defendants.
14	~~~~~~~~~~
15	Deposition of
16	HILARY BRASETH
17	April 0 2025
18	April 9, 2025 10:04 a.m.
19	Makan wamatalu wia Zaam widaaganfawanga
20	Taken remotely via Zoom videoconference
21	Eva Petrone, RPR
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23	
24	
25	

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1	APPEARANCES OF COUNSEL
2	
3	On behalf of the Plaintiffs:
4	Institute for Free Speech, by CHARLES MILLER, ESQ.
5	(Pro hac vice) 1150 Connecticut Avenue North West
6	Suite 801 Washington, DC 20036
7	202-301-9800 cmiller@ifs.org
8	OMITTED CITY
9	On behalf of the Defendants:
10	Office of the Maine Attorney General, by
11	JONATHAN R. BOLTON, ESQ. 6 State House Station
12	Augusta, Maine 04333 207-626-8551
13	jonathan.bolton@maine.gov
14	On behalf of the Intervenors:
15	Milbank, by
16	EZRA LOUVIS, ESQ. 1850 K Street Northwest
17	Suite 1100 Washington, DC 20006
18	202-835-7584 elouvis@milbank.com
19	
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HILARY BRASETH, of lawful age, called for examination, being by me first duly sworn, as hereinafter certified, deposed and said as follows:

EXAMINATION OF HILARY BRASETH BY MR. MILLER:

Q. Good morning, Hilary. As you just briefly heard, I'm Chip Miller. It's says Charles on there but I go by Chip, and I'm the attorney for the Plaintiffs in this matter. And, you know, we are obviously doing this meeting by Zoom. I'm sure you are quite familiar with Zoom meetings but you may not be as familiar with depositions.

Have you ever been involved in a deposition before?

- A. No.
- Q. All right. So one thing that we are doing here is, you know, law likes to do things the old way. So we still mainly like to work on written transcripts that we produce using stenographers.

And so Eva here is our stenographer and so it's important that we speak in a way that allows her to create a good transcript.

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And so the main thing there is we try not to speak over one another and speak slowly enough that she can take everything down. With that. that's sort of the preliminaries that I have here.

And do you happen to have your declarations with you handy?

- I can pull it up. Α.
- Why don't you do that, if this ο. works for you; otherwise, I can share it on the screen.
 - It's no issue. Α. Okav.
- And then you have both the ο. declaration and then the exhibit, your actual report?
 - Α. I do.
- That's great. All right. ο. first, just can you tell me a little bit about yourself, who you are, the organization you are affiliated with and what you do?
- Α. Sure. I am the executive director of OpenSecrets. OpenSecrets is a nonprofit organization. We are almost entirely fully funded by large philanthropic foundations and individual donors. We don't take any

government funding.

We have been around for about four decades and our mission is to follow the money in U.S. politics. We do that at both the state and the federal levels. We don't take any position in an advocacy sense, unless it involves transparency.

So when it comes to policy change around specific, how would I say it, perspectives, I would say, on whether or not money should be unlimited or limited. In elections we don't advocate ourselves, but we will be involved in the transparency sense. Our mission and purpose is to have our data be used in public debate and public forum.

My background is mostly in the private sector. Prior to working at OpenSecrets, I spent a little more than a decade in both a consulting capacity and also in-house building products, digital products.

So I would sit between engineering teams and design teams and build a digital product for an organization or a company, and some of my work related to U.S. elections, and so that's in some ways how I found my path to

OpenSecrets.

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I had done some time at the Kennedy School and was ready to take what I learned in the private sector back into the public sector. And so I've been executive director for this organization for a little more than a year.

- Q. All right. Great. Thank you. So your, I guess professional background, then, is largely on the technical side?
- A. It's in product development. So
 I'm not a coder, but I will sit between
 engineers and designers.
- Q. And what type of degree do you have?
- A. My bachelor's is in economics and political science. I got my master's in public administration.
- Q. And how long have you been with OpenSecrets?
 - A. A little more than a year.
- Q. And you mentioned OpenSecrets will take positions on transparency issues. Can you please explain what positions you take with those issues?
 - A. Yes. So in a case where disclosure

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might be threatened. For example, for part of last year, the FEC was deliberating, making it easier for donors in elections cycles to be exempt from disclosing their identity.

We will take a position that we do believe open data is very important to the integrity of democracy. So we will, in that case, submit our own opinion to the FEC for supporting disclosure.

- ο. All right. And that was on the, not the small dollar issue, but that was on the sort of identity privacy for by personal reason issue?
 - Correct. Α.
- And did you take a position on the о. small dollar issue?
 - We did not. Α.
- ο. All right. And can you explain to me what you were asked to do in this case?
- We were asked to submit a report Α. summarizing data on independent expenditures over the last 13 to 15 years, and so that's what we submitted.
- Okay. And were you compensated at ο. all for this?

- passed with, I believe, 74 percent of the vote, and it's now being challenged in the court. that's the heart of the debate, to limit or not to limit.
- All right. And putting together ο. from what you said earlier, OpenSecrets does not take a position on the merits of this case, correct?
- When you say "the merits of the Α. case," what would you -- how would you define that?
- Whether or not those limits should ο. exist.
 - Α. We do not take a position.
- Can you tell me a little bit about ο. the report that you prepared here?
- We pulled from our federal data the Α. trends and numbers and percent changes around independent expenditures, and we put that data in context, we sliced it up in different ways.
- We do believe that when examining data, it's best to slice it in many different ways to try to understand whether or not there are patterns that are not worthy. So that involved looking at whether a Super PAC

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supported one candidate, or multiple candidates.

We look at whether the donations to Super PACs were donations to Super PACs that spent either on conservative candidates or liberal candidates that could be cast conservative or liberal.

We also looked at the numbers of registered Super PACs over time, as well as the amount that they spent on elections over time.

And we looked at what percent of those contributions to Super PACs were considered as dark versus disclosed.

We also looked at donor demographics when it comes to those who have given \$1,000 or more in elections, as well as \$1 million or more in elections.

- Q. All right. And who was involved in determining what categories that you would place in this report?
- A. I was. And I worked with two of our researchers, our director of insights and our lead researcher on committees.
 - Q. And are those both employees of --
 - A. Yes.

1	Q. All right. I'm going to start
2	going through your actual report here, Exhibit
3	A, and I'm going to get some questions from
4	here on. I will let you know specifically if
5	I'm asking about a particular thing, but
6	otherwise I will sort of go through.
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8	(Thereupon, Exhibit A was marked for purposes
9	of identification.)
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11	BY MR. MILLER:
12	So at the beginning you mentioned
13	that OpenSecrets gets data from federal
14	government agencies. Which agencies?
15	A. The FEC.
16	Q. And that's the only one?
17	A. Yes.
18	Q. Okay. All right. When I said
19	agencies, I wasn't sure if you were getting
20	from IRS or other groups as well.
21	A. No. With our contributions data,
22	it's exclusively FEC.
23	Q. And then getting into Section 1,
24	Independent Expenditures by Multi-Candidate and
25	Single-Candidate Super PACs. Can you explain

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to me how you define a single-candidate Super PAC?

- Essentially, if all of a Super PAC Α. spending is on one candidate at a 95 percent threshold or higher, we consider that a single-candidate Super PAC.
- Okay. 95 percent. And why did you ο. delineate those for this report?
- We think it's useful to break the Α. data down in this perspective, in order for people to better study whether or not there could be undue influence. We do believe that if a Super PAC is set up for one candidate only, that could lend itself to closer collaboration between that candidate and that one Super PAC.

And so we do think it's useful to better understand our Super PACs in general being set up to support one candidate or multiple candidates.

Okay. I guess moving forward to ο. your Figure 2, which is on page 3. And when you -- I'm curious, in addition to sort of breaking this money down by all PACs and single-candidate PACs, have you ever broken it down or do you break it down internally by which -- how much money supports winning candidates versus losing candidates?

- A. We have done analyses -- we do an analysis called "Did Money Win," which is on our website. The website figure is not exclusive to Super PACs. We have the capability to do that, but we don't do that on a regular basis.
- Q. Do you do it on a regular basis just in general for whatever you have in that did-money-win category?
- A. Yes. In that case, the did-money-win analysis looks at, with all of the candidates that ran, how often is it that the candidate who spends the most money or raises the most money also wins. In general, on average, candidates that spend more money win at about an 80 percent threshold.

Again, that doesn't necessarily break down the figures as to whether the money came from just a Super PAC. That's overall, all money.

Q. Okay. All right. That's helpful. Thank you.

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- A. You can find that on our website.
- Q. Okay. And then, I guess just sort of an administrative question about your website. If I kind of go through there and look at those pages, is the data I'm going to see current or is there some stuff on there that will be stale and would it be identified as such?
- A. Typically if it's stale, you will see that, but by -- if it's a chart you will see up until which year it's being displayed.

 If it's an article, it will have a little disclaimer saying this article is more than two years old.

If it's looking up a specific, more granular figure, it will have a time stamp at the bottom of the page to show you the most recent update to that data.

Our data is not necessarily in realtime. For example, there's a big download happening next week, and our team usually needs about a handful of days to a week to do our own internal coding, cleaning of the data in order to get it on the website live.

Q. And I should say if you need a

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break at any time to grab a glass of water.

- Α. Thank you. I'm going to chug this while we are discussing.
 - That's great. ο.

Your next section is Dark Money By Cycle, and I think you explained earlier why you choose to highlight dark money. And I guess my question for you is kind of breaking down how you define dark money for the purposes of Super PACs.

- So in the case of a Super PAC -- so Α. you are looking at, I'm just clarifying, Figure 3?
- I guess I'm -- yeah, it would be ο. Specifically looking, I'm looking at Figure 3. the paragraph above it.
- So you are asking how we Α. define whether a source is dark?
 - ο. Yes.
- We'll define a source that's dark Α. if it's a nonprofit that doesn't disclose its donors or if it's a company that cannot be linked to any other business activity, other than giving political contributions.
 - How do you go about tracking that Q.

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and determining that?

A. So in the case of a Super PAC, the donors need to be disclosed, but of course the Super PAC can receive donations from a myriad of entities. So in the event that an entity that is disclosed is giving to a Super PAC, we cannot identify, if it's a nonprofit, their original donors, we consider it dark.

And if it's a company that, when we look into that company's activities, we cannot identify any other LLC activity, or there's no information on the Web about that company, or from its registration documents that indicate as such, we consider that source dark.

- Q. So you do digging into each entity?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And make that --
- A. Yes.
- Q. I'm sorry. Just let me finish the question.
 - A. I'm sorry.
- Q. You do digging into each entity to make individual determinations?
 - A. Correct.
 - Q. And then for the (c)(4), would you

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look at its tax forms to see if it declares who its donors are?

- A. Yes.
- Q. It seems like that would be a major undertaking to do this for all the donations.
 - A. It's not an insignificant list.
- Q. And then how often do you update that? Confirm, you know, that information so if there's an organization out there, do you check every year or once you declare it as a dark entity, it just remains dark?
- A. That's a good question. I don't know.
- Q. Okay. And then do you classify a group as simply dark or not dark? Or do you have kind of a gray area that you would classify them as partial disclosure or how is that?
- A. Yes. You can see on our website there's a classification we either call it fully disclosing, partially disclosing, or completely dark. There's a little icon that you can see next to the organization that it's either a fully dark circle, a half dark circle or no circle at all.

And be able to see their donors

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that they have?

- Α. Yes.
- And I'm sorry, I typically don't ٥. look at your website. So does your website identify whether you consider a Super PAC to be a dark money group or not?
- We would identify whether the donor Α. to the Super PAC is a dark money group or not and whether it's fully disclosing, partial disclosing or dark.
- Okay. And you might have mentioned ο. this earlier, I just maybe I missed it, but what is your threshold for between full and partial?
- Α. That's a good guestion. I could verify with one of our researchers. I don't want to say the wrong threshold. I don't know off the top of my head. We do have a percent threshold, though. I know that.
- It seems like this is very ο. mathematical, so I'm sure you do.

All right. So I was going to ask about some specific Super PACs, but I guess what you are telling me is, if I go onto your website, I can just look for myself and see how you designate them?

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- A. Yes.
- 0. So --
- A. If you ever had a question, you could always reach out to us and usually one of our researchers will get back to you. Or if you wanted data that is not on our website or at a more granular level, we will, in some cases, send the spoke datasets to folks.
 - Q. That's great. Thank you.

I guess I'm now looking at the next section, which is your itemized Super PAC individual donors. And I guess one question has sort of crossed my mind when I was looking at this, and maybe it doesn't specifically apply to individuals, but it seems like that's where it could most apply.

Do you have coding issues sometimes as far as how to code donations as far as what entity it goes to or individual?

- A. Could you rephrase that question?
- Q. Yes. So as you are going through and coding individual donations, you know, like I have a very common name. So you sometimes have issues, you know, coding to individuals

1 and figuring out who a donation is from? 2 Α. No. 3 And can you explain why that is? ٥. When we download data from the FEC, 4 Α. 5 the FEC data has the individual linked to the 6 donation. 7 And so that would be the same thing ο. 8 for entities? 9 Correct. Α. 10 ο. All right. And then on the 11 corporate side, do you do things to tally up 12 donations within corporate families? 13 Α. Families? 14 Corporate families like, you know, ο. 15 corporate subsidiaries? 16 Could you be a bit more specific? Α. 17 Yeah. ο. 18 Α. Or give an example? 19 I guess I'll give an actual ο. 20 I don't know that this company makes example. 21 donations, per se, but Walmart owns Sam's Club, 22 so that could be separately incorporated. if there was a donation from Sam's Club, would 23 24 that be billed as double? 25 It's a fantastic question. Α. We have

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often heated internal debates on when to establish a parent-child relationship versus not. I don't know off the top of my head.

This is a question that our research team spends a lot of time on, but you could absolutely go to our website, to Walmart's page and in an instant determine whether or not Sam's Club is listed as a subsidiary or if Sam's Club has their own entity page as well.

- Q. Because I guess these issues would largely come up in sort of tallying unique donors.
- A. Is there a deeper question that you are trying to get at?
 - No, there's not.
 - A. Oh.
- Q. I'm just trying to understand the data in the reports in general.
 - A. I see. Okay.
- Q. Yeah. I'm not thinking of anything in particular.
- A. Got it. I don't know if your question is whether or not there could be duplicates within our data. We spend a lot of

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time making sure that the data is also de-duplicated, which is something the FEC doesn't do.

- Okay. Yeah. I mean that's the ο. other side of it. Basically I'm just trying to understand your -- essentially your data management practices.
 - Got it. Α.
- As you said, the FEC data isn't as ο. nearly as cleanly presented as yours is.

All right. With the duplication issue, I'm kind of curious, to the extent that money would be donated from, let's say an LLC that you consider dark. So money is donated from a dark LLC to a Super PAC, that then makes another donation to a second Super PAC. Then let's say that the intermediary Super PAC -well, let's not even talk about its designation, whether you consider it dark or not, but is that considered two donations or is that considered one donation?

It's a good guestion. I don't know Α. the answer of how our research team classifies I know they spend a lot of time having defined that problem.

I do know on our website we will show a case when a Super PAC gives to another Super PAC. I believe we consider that one donation.

I have to verify, but I know this only because we get, regularly, questions from journalists about this, and that's a big piece of our de-duplication effort.

- Q. So you are largely trying to track money as it enters the system and not necessarily --
 - A. Exactly, enters and exits.
 - Q. Not necessarily --
- A. I didn't mean to talk over you again.
- Q. That's fine. In life we are conversational, and that's fine. Okay.

Is there any way that you track earmarked donations for pass-through purposes?

- A. I would have to check with the team. Could you say more about that?
- Q. Yeah. So this may not matter if you are simply tracking money as it enters and exits the system, but if you didn't, I would be curious to know if you tracked money that is

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1	earmarked.
2	So A donates to B with the express
3	purpose of having that money donated to C. I
4	wasn't sure if there was any separate tracking
5	for that. Now your organization is a (c)(3)
6	not a (c)(4), correct?
7	A. Correct.
8	Q. But just do you disclose your
9	donors?
10	A. We do.
11	Q. Where are those disclosed?
12	A. On our website.
13	Q. Do you have a mission statement for
14	your organization?
15	A. We do.
16	Q. Do you know what that is or could I
17	look at the website?
18	A. You could also look at the website,
19	but our mission is to serve as the trusted
20	authority on money in American politics.
21	Q. I thought you would probably have
22	it memorized.
23	A. There is (crosstalk) on how
24	we do that on our website.

submissions and details and how

Q.

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many should be included and all of those great discussions.

Is there anything All right. that's ever done to sort of go back and true-up data with the FEC, if the FEC gets updated reports from committees?

- Is there ever? What was the first Α. part of that question?
- Like a true-up activity where you go back and kind of confirm that you are making all of the changes that they are making?
- I would have to check with the Α. It depends on the nature of our download We have a pretty set download cycle. I believe it's monthly. And so my understanding is if the FEC does any edits or updates, that data would be included in the subsequent download.
- So you prepared this report and you broke out the figures in this way, and I assume you did so for specific reasons. So I think that you -- I assume that you broke out single candidate versus multiple candidate, because you think that is a significant potential source of corruption of having single-candidate

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Super PACs, is that accurate?

- Α. It doesn't automatically indicate We think it could be a potential source, and so that's why we break down the data in those ways.
- So that would also indicate that you think that multi-candidate Super PACs are less of a potential source?
 - Potentially. Α.
- And I take it you break out the ο. dark money groups because you think that the lack of transparency from dark money donations is problematic to democracy, is that fair?
- Α. We believe that transparency is inherently essential in democracy.
- I guess along those lines, I'm ο. curious if you have had requests for information, or independently done work into attempting to determine if there are any dark money sources coming from foreign sources?
 - Α. Could you repeat the question?
- I'll do it in plain English. ο. Has there been a recent increase in interest in whether dark money is coming from foreign sources?

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So I think what's interesting here in the first table, is that there was a flip that happened when it comes to the number of unique individual donors. So up until 2018, the number of unique individual donors that gave to conservative leaning Super PACs, outnumbered those who gave to liberal leaning.

And then that switched in 2018 where the number of individual donors to liberal leaning Super PACs, began to outnumber conservative Super PACs. And overall what we are seeing from these two charts, is that this activity happens on both sides of the aisle.

- Q. Okay. And also in this data, is there any significance that you've called -- and by significance I mean to you -- anything material about differences in donations and use of Super PACs in presidential cycles versus non-presidential cycles?
- A. Well, in presidential cycles, the use of Super PACs is much greater and the amount of money spent is much greater.
 - Q. Right, but other than simply

MR. LOUVIS:

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Nothing for me either.

1	MR. MILLER: I think this is going
2	to conclude pretty rapidly here and you'll be
3	done by 8:00 p.m.
4	THE STENOGRAPHER: Would you like
5	this written up?
6	MR. MILLER: I would, please.
7	THE STENOGRAPHER: Would you like a
8	copy?
9	MR. BOLTON: I would like a copy as
10	well, yes.
11	MR. LOUVIS: I would, too.
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13	(The deposition concluded at 10:42 a.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

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Raymer Reporting, Inc.

I, Eva Petrone, do hereby certify that as such Reporter I took down in Stenotypy all of the proceedings had in the foregoing transcript; that I have transcribed my said Stenotype notes into typewritten form as appears in the foregoing transcript; that said transcript is the complete form of the proceedings had in said cause and constitutes a true and correct transcript therein.

> Eva Petrone, Notary Public within and for the State of Ohio

My commission expires February 1, 2028.

HILARY BRASETH

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Case 1:24-cv-00430-KFW

Document 62-1

52-1 Filed 04/23/25 Page 36 of 43 PageID #: 849nner Table Action, For Our Future, and Alex Titcomb vs. William J. Schneider Deposition of Hilary Braseth

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4	HILARY BRASETH

Case 1:24-cv-00430-KFW

Document 62-1

62-1 Filed 04/23/25 Page 37 of 43 PageID #: 850nner Table Action, For Our Future, and Alex Titcomb vs. William J. Schneider

Deposition of Hilary Braseth

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