1	WORKERS' COMPENSATION	COURT
2	IN AND FOR THE STATE OF	MONTANA
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5	DEBRA STAVENJORD,) WO	CC No. 2000-0207
6		arch 8, 2012
7	v.) 8:	:30 a.m.
8	MONTANA STATE FUND,) On	nnibus Hearing
9	Respondent.)	
10		
11	,	CC No. 2000-0222
12	,	
13	•	
14	(
15	V.)	
16	MONTANA STATE FUND)	
17	and)	
18	LIBERTY NORTHWEST) INSURANCE COMPANY,)	
19	Respondents.)	
20		
21	CASSANDRA SCHMILL,) WC	CC No. 2001-0300
22	Petitioner,)	
23	v.)	
24	,	
25	<pre>INSURANCE CORPORATION)</pre>	

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   MONTANA STATE FUND,
       Respondents.
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                                   WCC No. 2002-0676
    DALE REESOR,
        Petitioner,
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 6
        V.
   MONTANA STATE FUND,
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 8
        Respondent.
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11
       BEFORE THE HONORABLE JAMES JEREMIAH SHEA
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        The omnibus hearing in the above-entitled
13
    matter was held on Thursday, March 8, 2012, at 8:30
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15
    a.m., at the Workers' Compensation Court, 1625 11th
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    Avenue, Helena, Montana.
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1	A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S		
2			
3	APPEARING ON BEHALF OF FLYNN/MILLER, et al:		
4	Rex Palmer		
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7	APPEARING ON BEHALF OF SCHMILL:		
8	Laurie Wallace Attorney at Law		
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10	Columbia Falls, Montana 59912		
11	APPEARING ON BEHALF OF LIBERTY NW INS. CORP:		
12	Larry W. Jones Attorney at Law		
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L 4	Missoula, Montana 59808		
15	APPEARING ON BEHALF OF MONTANA STATE FUND:		
16	Bradley J. Luck		
17	Attorney at Law PO Box 7909		
18	Missoula, Montana 59807		
L 9	Thomas E. Martello Special Assistant Attorney General		
20	PO Box 4759 Helena, Montana 59604		
21	,		
22	ALSO PRESENT:		
23	Steven W. Jennings Attorney at Law		
24	PO Box 2529 Billings, Montana 59103		
25	J-, 		

1	A-P-P-E-A-R-A-N-C-E-S (continued)
2	
3	Also Present, continued:
4	Ron Atwood
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7	Kathy Strobel, Claims Examiner for MSF
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- BE IT REMEMBERED that on Thursday, March 8,
- 2 2012, before the Honorable James Jeremiah Shea, at
- 3 the Workers' Compensation Court in Helena, Montana,
- 4 the following proceedings were had:

5

- 6 THE COURT: We are here in -- actually,
- 7 it's an omnibus hearing for all of the open common
- 8 fund or, I guess, in the case of Reesor and
- 9 Stavenjord, since they haven't been, a formal
- 10 decision made, I would characterize them as common
- 11 fund-related cases.
- 12 I have looked at the submissions as
- 13 pertains to Reesor and Stavenjord, and I actually
- 14 -- I have no issues with those. Those look fine in
- 15 terms of the order and the proposed, the status
- 16 report and everything, and was in line with what we
- 17 discussed previously.
- And what I want to do is kind of just
- 19 allow kind of everybody to speak in turn, and what
- 20 I am hoping to do is just any kind of, for lack of
- 21 better way to put it, any kind of mopping up to
- 22 kind of try to get on the final path for
- 23 implementation here that we can do that.
- One of the things that I did just for my
- 25 own perspective, and this is in line with the last

- 1 Flynn appeal, in terms of the paid-in-full
- 2 designation, is I'd kind of like people's thoughts
- 3 in terms of what they are contemplating in terms of
- 4 the process. Of those cases that may never come to
- 5 fruition, but we have that one caveat about if a
- 6 case, for instance, a case that was, would be
- 7 considered paid in full but either, you know,
- 8 there's -- well, we may be beyond 60 months from
- 9 the closure date anyway, so maybe not even getting
- 10 more medical benefits.
- But, you know, a changing condition would
- 12 be the best example, as Laurie had raised in her
- 13 briefing, and what exactly would, if there is some
- 14 sort of a process, either in the software or just
- 15 kind of a checklist that flags a case to check to
- 16 see if a case, as an example, has a claimant who
- 17 would have had a case that was closed, paid in full
- 18 prior to the implementation date of whichever case
- 19 we are talking about but then, say, has a change in
- 20 condition or something like that, how that may be
- 21 flagged. And I guess ancillary to that and for
- 22 your concerns, I would -- my thinking would be, and
- 23 I don't know if there would be any dispute that
- 24 that would be subject to the common fund fee. I
- 25 think those are things probably that that would

- 1 have to be addressed, really, on a case-by-case
- 2 basis, if and when they were to come up.
- I guess I'm just more curious about ideas
- 4 in terms of the process, whether it's just
- 5 something that, you know, somebody has a change in
- 6 condition and there's checklist that says, well --
- 7 and it wouldn't just be making the claim, it would
- 8 be, you know, if there is an actual payment of some
- 9 claim, you know, impairment rating changes,
- 10 whatever, their condition changes. So there's some
- 11 additional benefits that are paid that then it's
- 12 just kind of checked off that, okay, this person
- 13 doesn't fall within any of these classes, or what
- 14 have you.
- So that would be my own thought so, Brad,
- 16 you are looking like you are spring-loaded in your
- 17 chair there.
- MR. LUCK: No, no, that's okay.
- 19 THE COURT: That's fine. I was just kind
- 20 of, like I said, this is -- I look at this as much
- 21 as anything as a spit-balling session to try to get
- 22 everything, whatever issues we may have remaining
- 23 off the table, so please go ahead.
- MR. LUCK: Your Honor, we have one
- 25 housekeeping matter. I noticed this morning, as I

- 1 was looking through our draft letters, two of the
- 2 Stavenjord questionnaires still have the editing
- 3 in, two words were changed. And I thought I had
- 4 changed that out and cleaned that up, but we would
- 5 make that modification so the strike-through is not
- 6 there.
- 7 THE COURT: I assumed that.
- 8 MR. LUCK: We did it, and the others made
- 9 a more definite statement in a sentence and we took
- 10 the strike-through out. We have been giving an
- 11 awful lot of thought to the exact issue you have
- 12 raised, and our review in considering the Flynn
- 13 rule, we have a lot of cases that haven't been paid
- 14 on since the -- to Flynn and Stavenjord decisions,
- 15 and that's 8 and 12 years ago, I believe, at this
- 16 point, and I wondered about how to handle that
- 17 potential in the future. Our hope was that the
- 18 Court might consider an order finalizing the review
- 19 after this many years to those people that would be
- 20 on the final mailing list, at this point in time.
- 21 We didn't put it in proposed order, but wanted to
- 22 at least discuss that.
- 23 Understanding that the literal application
- 24 of the Flynn rule says it's basically open-ended
- 25 forever.

- 1 THE COURT: Uh-huh.
- 2 MR. LUCK: But we are not positive about
- 3 how practically to keep track of that because,
- 4 especially given the reality, it's one thing to
- 5 have the theory and another thing to have reality.
- 6 And at this point in time, we have a group of
- 7 people who would be considered paid in full who
- 8 haven't received anything in 12 years. So to
- 9 design a process that takes that hypothetical
- 10 consideration into account for the rest of time,
- 11 first, our suggestion would be that we could have
- 12 some finality. If we can't have some finality, we
- 13 are not sure how to flag them. At a minimum, it
- 14 would be a case-by-case situation, but the
- 15 identification is easier said than done.
- 16 THE COURT: Right, and that's kind of my
- 17 own thought, and I have been thinking about it as
- 18 well. My own thought is, I think, of necessity, it
- 19 would have to be just a case-by-case basis. I
- 20 mean, if they are paid in full as of the date right
- 21 now, I mean, it would seem they are out of the
- 22 class and may very well -- and I suspect given the
- 23 time that has passed, the vast majority would be.
- 24 I think that probably the people who are identified
- 25 now are probably going to account for 99-plus

- 1 percent. And then you are going to have that small
- 2 fraction that -- and you know, and I recognize
- 3 there's probably in practice no perfect system.
- I think, you know, I'm just, like I said,
- 5 curious as to somebody comes in and, I mean, I
- 6 guess my own thought would be -- and I will leave
- 7 this more to the people who are really much more in
- 8 the trenches as far as nuts and bolts go. But if
- 9 somebody comes in the first step, you look at,
- 10 okay, was this case paid in full before these X
- 11 dates? And it may still be even after you are
- 12 paying and they say, okay, now their condition has
- 13 changed, we agreed it has changed, so we owe X
- 14 amount of whatever kind of benefit. When we pay
- 15 that, just check off the, you know, the various
- 16 cases that may apply.
- 17 MR. LUCK: The concern, I guess, is it's
- 18 going from theoretical to practical. For instance,
- 19 we have people who haven't been paid in 12 years.
- 20 To the extent somebody then requests a payment or
- 21 issues a payment, there are questions about what
- 22 happened in that interim. The real practical issue
- 23 is: Are they entitled? Were there aggravations
- 24 and other injuries? And the hope would be in our
- 25 mind and in my mind, two things: One, we could

- 1 figure out a way to have finality, given that
- 2 practical problem, notwithstanding the language of
- 3 the decision, and two, I'm real concerned that the
- 4 lines of reasonableness in terms of claim handling
- 5 and what our obligations are and people down the
- 6 road ten years from now get upset because there
- 7 were four or five cases that got payments at some
- 8 point that were almost impossible to identify.
- 9 It's, it's the reason why we argued
- 10 against the standard in the first place because the
- 11 -- especially when we get this far out. So we
- 12 would love to have some guidance. We would love to
- 13 have some finality and we would really hope that we
- 14 we could, whatever we end up with, doesn't create
- 15 some ancillary claim-handling problem down the road
- 16 for some justifiable conduct in the inability to
- 17 locate people.
- 18 THE COURT: Well, I guess my -- and I have
- 19 had all of these thoughts myself or all of these
- 20 questions myself. And I guess my own thought on
- 21 that is, from a reasonableness standpoint, you
- 22 know, we are obviously, just to your point exactly,
- 23 we are dealing in hypotheticals that may never come
- 24 to fruition. And so but from a reasonableness
- 25 standpoint, that's almost something where it would

- 1 just have to be, again, on a case-by-case basis
- 2 and, I mean, certainly as with any reasonableness
- 3 determination as far as the penalty and fees would
- 4 go on a case, there would be a, you know, I mean, I
- 5 guess -- to kind of give the difference of two
- 6 examples, if you know, if somebody were to come in
- 7 and it was a situation where the claims adjuster,
- 8 you know, says, well, this person is entitled to
- 9 additional benefits under -- this person's
- 10 condition changed, now they are no longer paid in
- 11 full and, oh, I note there's in the claims notes
- 12 they would be entitled to Schmill benefits now but
- 13 probably isn't going to ask for them, so that would
- 14 probably be unreasonable.
- 15 MR. LUCK: That wouldn't be in the State
- 16 Fund file, Your Honor.
- 17 THE COURT: So that's why I don't think I
- 18 can give a perspective ruling on, you know, the
- 19 failure to recognize and pay benefits on somebody
- 20 who, you know, comes into the class because of a
- 21 post-date changing condition or something that
- 22 allows them to qualify or other additional
- 23 benefits. I don't think I can give a prospective
- 24 ruling on that.
- 25 That being said, the other end of the

- 1 spectrum would be if, whatever the circumstances
- 2 were, that it just was not clear at all that this
- 3 person, you know, there was -- just as with any
- 4 kind of dispute, I guess, where we determine where,
- 5 you know, a claimant is saying it was an
- 6 unreasonable denial or delay and it was
- 7 inadvertently overlooked, or it was a situation
- 8 where we looked at it and did not -- honestly, you
- 9 know, did not believe that they qualified for
- 10 additional benefits under any of the common fund
- 11 cases and therefore it was denied. And you have to
- 12 look at, just as with everything, have to look at
- 13 on a case-by-case basis.
- MR. LUCK: My concern gets back to
- 15 practical, is that monitoring process. Once you
- 16 see it, that's what you do. But we have a
- 17 situation again where we are 12 and 8 years out, we
- 18 haven't had payments, practically speaking, the
- 19 monitoring process until the end of time, you can't
- 20 handle it on case-by-case basis unless it jumps out
- 21 at you. And that's the practical problem that we
- 22 have and that's why it would be nice if there was a
- 23 way to have finality in years or something tied to
- 24 statutes of limitation or the ability to maintain a
- 25 claim or something.

- 1 I'm not sure what your thoughts are or
- 2 what you feel you are able to do given the actually
- 3 holding but, again, it's one thing to talk about
- 4 and we would handle them on a case-by-case basis,
- 5 but another thing to set up a standard for
- 6 reasonableness to identification to identify in the
- 7 first place. And that's very difficult and
- 8 everybody has given it a lot of thought, but we
- 9 don't have any easy answer. You can always design
- 10 a system but it becomes cost prohibitive at some
- 11 point to do that, to identify the theoretical,
- 12 especially if this is one year after the decision.
- 13 It would be one thing. But this many years after.
- 14 I'm thinking of Reesor and Stavenjord.
- THE COURT: Right. Steve?
- MR. JENNINGS: Your Honor, I get Brad's
- 17 argument and I have some agreement with it. In the
- 18 case of Flynn, in the case of Laurie's Schmillers,
- 19 we are talking about an apportionment. If we have
- 20 a change of condition in the future that creates a
- 21 payment of benefits, it is unlikely that we will
- 22 have an apportionment for non-occupational factors
- 23 because that's not the law of the land, and I was
- 24 wondering, Laurie's view on whether or not she
- 25 thinks future benefits are going to create a common

- 1 fund lien, a lien against what? We probably won't
- 2 be taking the A --
- 3 MS. WALLACE: So --
- 4 THE COURT: -- take one before the
- 5 effective date.
- 6 MS. WALLACE: And I agree with that and
- 7 that's where the lien is because then, at that
- 8 point, as I understand Flynn, it kicks in the
- 9 obligation to pay those the benefits you didn't
- 10 pay, and so that's where the fee attaches is to
- 11 those benefits. That's where it's always attached,
- 12 never to --
- 13 THE COURT: I think maybe in, and I don't
- 14 know if we can get consensus on this, but this is
- 15 the reality of it, in terms of standpoint of
- 16 finality, is it strikes me that, you know, there's
- 17 obviously a process in place to identify the people
- 18 who are in the, in the class, for lack of a better
- 19 way to put it now. That is, they were. And even
- 20 under the Flynn decision that these are people who,
- 21 for whatever reason, just looking back from today's
- 22 date, they were not paid in full after the
- 23 effective date, and so they are within the class
- 24 and then, you know, get those screened and you know
- 25 something. And some of them, for various and

- 1 sundry other reasons, may nevertheless be entitled
- 2 to additional benefits.
- 3 But screen those people in the process
- 4 that is identified for -- you know, not holding
- 5 everybody to that exact same process but, you know,
- 6 akin to the process that State Fund has come up
- 7 with in Stavenjord and Reesor and pay them.
- 8 And obviously, like I said, we have and
- 9 then the case can be, you know, the cases can be
- 10 closed, and then those people who are out there
- 11 who, it strikes me, as I said before, at this
- 12 point, because we are so far removed, probably are
- 13 going to be, we are talking about, I would think,
- 14 you know, a fairly small number of cases, you know
- 15 because most of which are never going to come to
- 16 fruition given the passage of time.
- I think the two examples I used in my
- 18 order on Flynn, or at least two of them were, you
- 19 know, payment of additional medical benefits and
- 20 the change in condition, well, it strikes me that
- 21 probably the medical benefits issue is probably
- 22 taken off the table simply because if they haven't,
- 23 if they are more than 60 months out now anyway. So
- 24 if they haven't used their medical benefits now --
- 25 if they have used the medical benefits, they are

- 1 probably within the class already. If they
- 2 haven't, then they are probably, the statute of
- 3 repose has probably run on their medical so they
- 4 wouldn't be getting those additional benefits.
- 5 And I mean, the key distinction there is
- 6 the actual payment of benefits, not just making the
- 7 claim for it that they would have to so they may
- 8 otherwise be entitled to, you know, maybe they had
- 9 a legitimate medical claim but if they are beyond
- 10 the statute of repose and there was a determination
- 11 that, well, we are not going to pay because you are
- 12 beyond the statute of repose, therefore your claim
- 13 remains paid in full.
- MR. LUCK: Some of those don't go back to
- 15 '87, though, Your Honor.
- 16 THE COURT: Oh, yeah, well, like I said, I
- 17 think still in the final analysis, I mean, it's
- 18 almost one of those things, and I guess what I am
- 19 saying is I recognize from a practical standpoint
- 20 that maybe there just isn't an actual process other
- 21 than trying to, you know, let's get the ones taken
- 22 care of who are clearly identified and the ones who
- 23 may have a change in condition or something that
- 24 would then put them into the class because their
- 25 claim now is no longer paid in full because of

- 1 their change in condition. I mean, if and when
- 2 they come up, you know, hopefully they get
- 3 identified and, if they don't, you know, it's -- I
- 4 don't know what to do about it.
- 5 MR. LUCK: So is it fair to say, Your
- 6 Honor, that what you mean and for us to take back
- 7 to the State Fund would be it is not required given
- 8 these years and some of the impracticality that a
- 9 strict monitoring process be figured out and
- 10 implemented. But to the extent any cases
- 11 previously subject to Flynn might have a change in
- 12 status that they be reconsidered and determined on
- 13 case-by-case basis?
- 14 THE COURT: Yeah, that's basically all you
- 15 can do. It's, umm, you know, I just don't know
- 16 what else you can do about that. They are not in
- 17 the class now. They may get into the class. And
- 18 like I said, when I was -- it even had occurred to
- 19 me this, you know, when I wrote the decision, but
- 20 it was kind of like, you know, just kind of paying
- 21 deference to the English language, if you get more
- 22 benefits then it means you weren't paid in full
- 23 before you got those benefits.
- 24 So -- but the practicality of it I
- 25 recognize is a problem, so I guess what we can do

- 1 now is try to, you know, there's processes in
- 2 place, we have parameters for retroactivity issue
- 3 and application, so we have people who are clearly
- 4 in there now, and let's get those folks screened
- 5 and paid and everything, and then the ones who, you
- 6 know, may at some point in the future, you know,
- 7 you just -- hopefully they get identified as they
- 8 come up.
- 9 I don't think -- for one thing, I don't
- 10 think I would have the jurisdiction to on a case
- 11 that isn't even whether we consider it a ripeness
- 12 doctrine or whatever you want to say, if somebody
- 13 doesn't have, if they are not in the class now and
- 14 they -- because they were paid in full before the
- 15 date, and so they are out of the class, whichever
- 16 case. You referred to Flynn. This obviously
- 17 applied to Schmill and other cases as well, just
- 18 setting the broad parameters of retroactivity for
- 19 any of the common fund.
- But my point is that I don't think even
- 21 jurisdictionally, I don't think I can say, "Yeah,
- 22 you have to have a process that I approve of for
- 23 people who don't even have a claim yet and may
- 24 never."
- 25 And like I said, my suspicion is 99

- 1 percent of them never will just given the passage
- 2 of time.
- 3 MR. LUCK: I think the added consideration
- 4 in the State Fund's consideration in terms of
- 5 Reesor and Stavenjord, Your Honor, is we have a
- 6 settlement designed to create finality which was
- 7 approved by the Court.
- 8 THE COURT: Right.
- 9 MR. LUCK: And now this final mailing list
- 10 being approved by the Court under a process that
- 11 was under some pretty strict scrutiny as you came
- 12 and went through everything in that hearing we had
- 13 some time ago. So it seems like, given the
- 14 settlement situation, that there could be, there
- 15 could be some, some finality in terms of taking
- 16 care of these hypothetical problems down the road
- 17 as opposed to all the other open remediation issues
- 18 that other carriers have.
- 19 THE COURT: Yeah.
- MR. LUCK: You could treat the State Fund
- 21 differently because it was -- we did set out to
- 22 settle all of our obligations under those cases.
- 23 We did that. The Court approved a process. The
- 24 Court has approved now the finalization of that
- 25 process and we, we could seek some -- I would hope

- 1 we could seek finality given these hypothetical
- 2 concerns as relates to State Fund because of the
- 3 settlement.
- 4 THE COURT: And Reesor and Stavenjord.
- 5 MR. LUCK: Reesor and Stavenjord.
- 6 THE COURT: I think that's true. I guess
- 7 the only -- and I hate to put any asterisks here,
- 8 would be I don't think, again, and this would go
- 9 back to, you know, what jurisdiction I may or may
- 10 not have even in Reesor and Stavenjord on somebody
- 11 who is -- if you have somebody who, umm, had a
- 12 claim that was paid in full, they are not, they are
- 13 out of the class right now and their condition
- 14 changes down the road such that under whatever
- 15 circumstances, it would, that it would entitle them
- 16 to benefits under Reesor and Stavenjord. Again,
- 17 that would still fall under the case-by-case basis
- 18 where, you know -- I can't, I think I would be
- 19 basically countermanding the Supreme Court's
- 20 decision in Flynn which affirmed me, so I would be
- 21 countermanding my own decision in Flynn. I can't
- 22 say to somebody who, you know, all of a sudden has
- 23 a change in condition and now they are, they might
- 24 otherwise be entitled to benefits under Reesor or
- 25 Stavenjord while you are out because I approved

- 1 this. Jurisdictionally, I wouldn't have the
- 2 authority to do that.
- What I am saying is, though, is I think
- 4 from a finality standpoint, we deal with the ones
- 5 who are identified now and then, those that come
- 6 up, it's almost like any other, you know, I don't
- 7 want to say any other case but they are going to
- 8 come up and be dealt with on an individualized
- 9 basis, if they come up.
- But we could finalize, that doesn't
- 11 preclude finalizing the process in Reesor and
- 12 Stavenjord and then, you know, there may be people
- 13 who are right now are just hypothetical.
- MR. LUCK: I don't think -- we are back to
- 15 what I said before, and so I'm clear and I
- 16 understand the problem and we can accept that. So
- 17 we are down to process. We agree that if a case
- 18 comes up sometime down the road, we will handle it
- 19 on a case-by-case basis, but that we are not
- 20 required to have some strict process in place ad
- 21 infinitum to try to identify those people if they
- 22 become identified on a case-by-case basis, they
- 23 will be handled in the future.
- 24 THE COURT: I don't think I can require
- 25 that anyway under any circumstances. Just as I

- 1 couldn't preclude a claimant and bind a claimant to
- 2 a settlement that they weren't even eligible for.
- 3 I don't think I can require the State Fund to
- 4 follow a process for a hypothetical situation.
- 5 MR. LUCK: But I think it's reasonable if
- 6 we go forward from this point on that basis.
- 7 THE COURT: Well again, I'm hesitant to
- 8 say, I mean, in the metaphysical sense yeah, it
- 9 strikes me as reasonable. I can't give a, you
- 10 know, I don't want this to be taken as a
- 11 prospective ruling because I don't think I can do
- 12 that. I think that, you know, if -- and maybe
- 13 hopefully this will kind of illuminate my thought
- 14 process. If we have that hypothetical come up, I
- 15 don't think that I can say before that hypothetical
- 16 comes up, but if it does, somebody comes in and
- 17 they were, their condition changed, they are now
- 18 entitled to Reesor benefits because of that change
- 19 in condition. They come in and they, you know,
- 20 State Fund pays the Reesor benefits to them and
- 21 they come in saying, "But they were unreasonable
- 22 for not flagging it earlier," or something like
- 23 that, I think I just have to look at the facts of
- 24 how that went down, and if there was due diligence
- 25 employed and it wasn't something, like I said the

- 1 example of, you know, the claims adjuster said,
- 2 their note says, "Entitled to Reesor benefits but I
- 3 don't think he realizes it," then that would be,
- 4 you know, I can't prospectively rule on facts that
- 5 aren't before me.
- 6 MR. LUCK: I didn't say that very well and
- 7 I didn't mean to get a prospective ruling. It's
- 8 this process that I am concerned about that we go
- 9 back and advise State Fund claims people. Given
- 10 the number of years, given the settlements, given
- 11 the non-payments, given the hypothetical nature of
- 12 things, you don't expect that there be some strict
- 13 identification process. What you expect is that
- 14 when cases are identified in the normal course of
- 15 business that they be handled on a case-by-case
- 16 basis.
- 17 THE COURT: Exactly. Yeah, I think that's
- 18 -- candidly, I think that's all you can do. Even
- 19 from, I guess, you know, from a cost benefit
- 20 analysis, and it doesn't make sense when, as I
- 21 said, you may have cases, claims that even under
- 22 the parameters as set forth in Flynn from a
- 23 retroactivity paid-in-full standpoint are going to
- 24 be, I expect, I think would be fairly de minimus
- 25 given the passage of time. I think it's like you

- 1 said, if we were one year out, we'd probably be
- 2 expecting more people to all of a sudden come back
- 3 in either because of medical benefits or change in
- 4 condition or whatever, come back into the class.
- 5 But as we sit here right now, those people
- 6 who would have, you know, within the years
- 7 immediately after the effective date, those people
- 8 are already in the class and would be identified by
- 9 the process that's in place. Moving forward, I
- 10 think it, just from a common sense standpoint,
- 11 doesn't make sense to, you know, put in some sort
- 12 of elaborate process to identify over the next 20
- 13 years, you know, two or three people. I expect
- 14 there would be some sort of normal diligence in
- 15 seeking to, you know, some of them may jump out at
- 16 you, some may not be obvious at all, and that goes
- 17 back to the reasonable issue. If they are
- 18 identified and put to, you know, and come before me
- 19 and, you know, I'll make a judgment on that on a
- 20 case-by-case basis. But I think all you can try to
- 21 do is identify the ones who aren't already in the
- 22 class who may, because of a change in condition
- 23 down the road, try to identify them the best you
- 24 can. You can only do what you can do.
- MR. LUCK: We can live with that, Your

- 1 Honor, thank you.
- THE COURT: What else do we have?
- 3 MR. JENNINGS: Your Honor, we have settled
- 4 with Murphy on Reesor, and although I never
- 5 represented anybody in Stavenjord, we threw
- 6 Stavenjord in at that time. We never submitted
- 7 that settlement to you because it was done during
- 8 the process of appellate mediation, the Court
- 9 didn't have jurisdiction, we didn't think it was
- 10 necessary.
- In reviewing for today, I notice that by
- 12 the time Rex had signed the agreement, the release,
- 13 the case had been -- Stavenjord had been remanded
- 14 back to the Work Comp Court, so you likely did have
- 15 jurisdiction at that time.
- 16 THE COURT: Okay.
- 17 MR. JENNINGS: In the release, Rex agrees
- 18 to do whatever action is necessary to fulfill this
- 19 agreement. Would you -- not Rex, I'm sorry,
- 20 Murphy. Would you like us to submit those now and
- 21 then we just ride along with State Fund's order?
- 22 And again, it's only settling Rex's claim for
- 23 common fund.
- THE COURT: Tom's.
- MR. JENNINGS: Tom's claim.

- 1 THE COURT: I'm fine with that, if you
- 2 want to talk to Tom about it and, you know, if
- 3 just, I guess in terms of crossing T's and dotting
- 4 I's, that's fine.
- 5 MR. JENNINGS: Okay.
- 6 THE COURT: Okay. Laurie?
- 7 MS. WALLACE: I had some questions on the
- 8 State Fund. You guys had sent me copies of letters
- 9 that you had sent to Schmill claimants you had
- 10 identified back in 2007, and I was wondering if you
- 11 actually sent benefits to those? Did you pay those
- 12 claims?
- MR. LUCK: Your Honor, as I understand the
- 14 situation in Schmill, we identified people who were
- 15 entitled, paid them, sent you copies of letters in
- 16 reviewing for the hearing. In trying to do
- 17 additional due diligence, we actually found another
- 18 handful of people entitled, so some additional
- 19 payments will be going out to the extent that it
- 20 would be our belief that it's been totally
- 21 remediated in terms of benefits. We are waiting
- 22 for additional proceeding on attorney fees to
- 23 approve the payment of attorney fees, and we
- 24 withheld attorneys' fees. And I am not sure, Your
- 25 Honor, if you have had any of these, the hearings

- 1 on attorneys' fees yet.
- THE COURT: We have, so I think we can
- 3 follow the same process. I think -- what did we
- 4 do, a 30-day notice or something like that, and we
- 5 allowed them to respond in writing, or basically we
- 6 have the template for it so we can go ahead, if you
- 7 want to get the other ones paid, and we can have
- 8 set that up for a hearing. I mean, typically what
- 9 we ended up having, we had a few of them now and
- 10 had -- I don't know if anybody has ever shown up in
- 11 person.
- MR. LUCK: The FFR case had people show
- 13 up.
- 14 THE COURT: Yeah.
- MR. LUCK: But in answer to Laurie's
- 16 questions, we believe, especially now with the
- 17 re-review, that we have remediated everything,
- 18 holding the money for attorneys' fees pending an
- 19 approval of payment.
- 20 THE COURT: Okay, so why don't -- you guys
- 21 want to just draft just from the, use the ones we
- 22 have done previously as a template, which I think
- 23 are probably online or Jackie can e-mail them to
- 24 you, and we can just get, just set that up and pick
- 25 a date and set it up for another fairness hearing,

- 1 or fee hearing, excuse me.
- 2 MR. JENNINGS: Your Honor, I don't know if
- 3 you are aware of this, but over the past couple
- 4 days, I have sent in several affidavits for
- 5 dismissal --
- 6 THE COURT: Right.
- 7 MR. JENNINGS: -- that begins the 90-day
- 8 discovery period, and they are welcome to take
- 9 whatever action. That's not all of my clients. In
- 10 one case with Rex, we have identified a Flynn
- 11 claimant that we already paid the benefit without
- 12 withholding the attorney fee. Rex, if you want to
- 13 get together with them, we can work something out
- 14 and seek the Court's approval. But looks like we
- 15 have five or six -- out of what is remaining, we
- 16 have probably five or six potential Flynn
- 17 candidates.
- 18 THE COURT: "We," talking claimants or --
- 19 and you represent multiple insurers --
- 20 MR. JENNINGS: Claimants, Your Honor. We
- 21 don't know for sure because what's not contained in
- 22 the file is their cost incurred in obtaining Social
- 23 Security benefits. That's not something we can
- 24 find out until we contact these individuals. We
- 25 would like to agree on some type of letter, and

- 1 maybe Rex and I can get together and agree on the
- 2 contents of the letter and seek your approval.
- 3 Would you be in agreement?
- 4 MR. PALMER: Sure. We have worked out a
- 5 contact letter with the State Fund, and I am sure
- 6 we can track something.
- 7 MR. JENNINGS: Okay, and Laurie, same
- 8 thing with you, although the insurers have
- 9 indicated that they have just a handful of
- 10 potential Flynners, have not been advised that we
- 11 have any potential Schmillers, so we are going to
- 12 continue to compile affidavits until we run into
- 13 one that says, "Well, we might have one here."
- MS. WALLACE: And the only thing I have in
- 15 response to that, Steve, is that on the affidavits
- 16 that I have been looking through that you are
- 17 filing or have filed, you have amended them to say
- 18 that the individuals haven't found any Schmill
- 19 claims pursuant to the summons and Flynn. And I
- 20 don't believe that that's appropriate because as we
- 21 have just talked about with implementation, if they
- 22 don't identify all Schmill claims, even the
- 23 paid-in-full ones, then they won't have any way of
- 24 knowing that they are a part of the Schmill,
- 25 potentially part of the Schmill class if benefits

- 1 have been paid.
- 2 So it seems to me the insurers should be
- 3 required to identify all Schmill claims under the
- 4 original summons, and the fact that some of them
- 5 aren't, they don't have any benefits that were paid
- 6 after, I think it's June 21 or 22, 2001, simply
- 7 means that those individuals aren't part of the
- 8 class now. But I believe they still should be
- 9 identified by insurers, they should have to go
- 10 through and identify them.
- 11 MR. JENNINGS: I would very much like to
- 12 address that, Your Honor.
- 13 THE COURT: I'm sure you would. But if
- 14 they are paid in full under the Flynn decision,
- 15 they are not in the class right now, anyway. I
- 16 mean, isn't that -- strikes me that was the reason
- 17 we kind of went through that whole thing with both
- 18 Flynn where I had my scrivener's error the first
- 19 time, and to correct it in the second one is to
- 20 define the class. And so right now they are not in
- 21 the class. So it seems to me, I mean, we would be
- 22 sending a notice that -- and I recognize, you know,
- 23 what the original summons may have said, the
- 24 summons, if they have been paid in full,
- 25 notwithstanding the caveat that they may have

- 1 something happen that renders them no longer paid
- 2 in full, but as it stands right now, the paid in
- 3 full is one of the critical things that defines the
- 4 class. It just seems to me we have been notifying
- 5 people that aren't in the class.
- 6 MR. JENNINGS: Your Honor, that's why we
- 7 fought so hard on that issue is because you don't
- 8 really have a starting point to do the search until
- 9 we have the Flynn decision. We have this universe,
- 10 and you have got to have a date, you have to have a
- 11 cut-off, benefits after X. So anybody not
- 12 receiving benefits after X is not part of the
- 13 class. Yes, the summons didn't say that because
- 14 the summons was several years before the decision,
- 15 but Flynn was presumptively retroactive to this
- 16 case, so I would say that that did modify the
- 17 summons for that legal reason and for the practical
- 18 reason that we just needed a starting point.
- 19 THE COURT: I guess my thought on it is,
- 20 and I really hate to, I mean, A, give a ruling
- 21 without, you know, briefing, but more than that, I
- 22 really hate to see more briefing. So it's like, I
- 23 mean, so I guess my, umm, my thought on it is that
- 24 I tend to agree that, you know, it would seem to me
- 25 like if there is a bright line, and the record will

- 1 reflect I'm gesturing towards Larry.
- 2 MR. JONES: Thank you.
- 3 THE COURT: It's the date and the date is
- 4 kind of one of your starting point there and so if
- 5 they were paid in full before the date, they are
- 6 not in the class. And if they weren't, then they
- 7 are clearly in the class now, given all the other
- 8 factors, and they get notice. I don't think that
- 9 they are required to send notice to people who are
- 10 not in the class, I guess is the way I would put
- 11 it.
- 12 And if they are presently paid in full
- 13 before the effective date, then I think that they
- 14 are not in the class. And so I don't think they
- 15 are required to give that notice.
- MS. WALLACE: Well, and I guess in terms
- 17 of a notice, I wouldn't expect them to be required
- 18 to be given a notice. But you had this long
- 19 discussion with Brad about identifying or a process
- 20 in place to identify these potential claims, and it
- 21 seems to me the easiest way to do that is to, I
- 22 mean, the paid in full is obviously the only
- 23 fungible category of these claims. And so it seems
- 24 to me that if you identify them pursuant to the
- 25 search processes that they have in place, Liberty

- 1 can identify them, they will have a list, and
- 2 Larry's, you know, we are working on that. They
- 3 already have a list that says there was
- 4 apportionment in this case but it was before the
- 5 date. And so they will have a list of claims that
- 6 if anything changes in those claims, they will know
- 7 that it is a class claim at that point in time.
- 8 It seems to me that's the easiest thing to
- 9 put in place to identify these claims down the
- 10 line.
- 11 MR. JENNINGS: I think her objection is we
- 12 have indeed modified the choices in the affidavit
- 13 to include description in the summons and as
- 14 required by the Flynn decision. We did that
- 15 because that's the only starting place we have for,
- 16 for the search. It's, it's, as Your Honor
- 17 mentioned, it's not a potential claim, not a
- 18 potential Schmill claim if no benefits were paid.
- 19 THE COURT: After the date.
- 20 MR. JENNINGS: After the relevant date.
- 21 So we start out with a universe of Montana claims,
- 22 and the first pass, we remove everybody who has not
- 23 received benefits, and then we have a smaller,
- 24 workable file.
- Unlike Brad, I represent 65, 60-some

- 1 insurers, depending on which case, and I am not up
- 2 to speed on the actually archival and computer
- 3 technology that Brad is. I just cannot grasp that
- 4 for 60-some insurers. So the guidance I have
- 5 given, I mean, I hate to talk in too much detail
- 6 because I'm consulting an attorney-client privilege
- 7 document, but if someone were to ask me what a
- 8 Schmill claimant was or how to find one, I would
- 9 say: Identify all Montana claimants receiving
- 10 benefits on or after April 10, 2003, from that
- 11 list; remove all claimants whose claims were filed
- 12 after April 10, 2003; from the remaining list
- 13 identify all claimants whose benefits were
- 14 apportioned for non-occupational factors.
- 15 THE COURT: Sounds to me like basically
- 16 it's a question of what you are using as your
- 17 starting point. Your insurers versus what Liberty
- 18 did is identify the galaxy of claimants and weed
- 19 out the ones who were paid in full before. So you
- 20 started off with the broader circle and narrowed
- 21 down based on the paid-in-full date; is that
- 22 accurate, Larry?
- MR. JONES: I don't know, Your Honor. I
- 24 was taken back by Laurie's comment simply because I
- 25 wasn't aware that we had really honed in and

- 1 reduced it to such a fine point that we had
- 2 identified paid in full. I agree, they may be
- 3 captured in the group that we have identified, but
- 4 I'm not aware of any that Liberty has said this is
- 5 the way that we can identify from any list, a
- 6 paid-in-full claim. Except by, for example, by a
- 7 code, we would have to look at dates. And there
- 8 may be something in the list that we gave Laurie
- 9 that would indicate no payments were made during
- 10 certain dates and therefore by implication they are
- 11 paid in full.
- But we don't have a paid-in-full button on
- 13 our computer that we can hit that tells us, yes,
- 14 this is paid in full. So I'm a little bit at a
- 15 loss as to Laurie's comments that we seem to have
- 16 done that. We may have, but it would have been --
- 17 my point is by default as opposed to by explicit
- 18 ability to do so.
- 19 THE COURT: Uh-huh.
- MR. JENNINGS: Your Honor, what I would
- 21 like to try to avoid is Laurie appears to express
- 22 some dissatisfaction with the affidavits. And I
- 23 would like to avoid going back to the insurers and
- 24 saying we have to do it all over again. I think
- 25 the affidavits contemplate a discovery process, and

- 1 if Laurie is dissatisfied with that, I think that
- 2 that, that perhaps the discovery process is the way
- 3 to address that.
- 4 MS. WALLACE: Well, Larry, I'm only going
- 5 off of your letter. Your letter says Ms. Kern was
- 6 able to locate the file in the computer and confirm
- 7 that an apportionment was made. No payment was
- 8 made on the claim after the Schmill common fund
- 9 decision. As such, it does not fall under the
- 10 common fund under the holding of Flynn/Miller.
- 11 Doesn't that say what I said?
- MR. JONES: Your Honor, that's the idea by
- 13 implication. Again, we don't have an express
- 14 button that says paid in full, so if that's what
- 15 Laurie is referring to, we will stand by that.
- 16 THE COURT: You identified where
- 17 apportionment was taken first, and then screened
- 18 out the ones that were paid in full. And what
- 19 Steve is saying, their starting point is, let's
- 20 screen out everybody who was paid in full before
- 21 the effective date, and then we will look at where
- 22 apportionment was taken of those people who were
- 23 not paid in full.
- MR. JENNINGS: Your Honor, I think that
- 25 makes a lot of sense from our standpoint because

- 1 our market share by 60-some insurers combined have
- 2 a very small market share. And if we throw out, if
- 3 we do it in the manner that we have done it, we are
- 4 left with a manageable number of files to review.
- 5 THE COURT: I guess more fundamentally,
- 6 and I am just going back to the legal aspect of it
- 7 and the, you know, the parameters that have been
- 8 established now through, well, ultimately through
- 9 the Supreme Court decisions, is one of the things,
- 10 that one of the fundamental parameters that was
- 11 established is the retroactive date, as far as the
- 12 paid in full goes.
- And I, I just, I think that from a notice
- 14 standpoint or even an identification standpoint,
- 15 what the obligation is to identify people who are
- 16 in the class presently, umm, and that would be
- 17 people who, among other things, were not paid in
- 18 full.
- 19 MR. JENNINGS: Received a benefit after X.
- 20 THE COURT: Received a benefit after the
- 21 effective date of the decision date, whatever you
- 22 want to call it. And so they are in the class, and
- 23 then that's, you know, those are clearly people who
- 24 have to be screened. I think in terms of how those
- 25 parameters are applied is a nuts and bolts decision

- 1 that frankly, I mean, is I think almost getting a
- 2 little too deep into the weeds.
- 3
 It strikes me that there's -- either
- 4 process -- again, I hesitate to use the word
- 5 "reasonable" out of abundance of caution, but I
- 6 think either process makes sense to me that, you
- 7 know, you are identifying the class and there's,
- 8 you know, however those parameters fall. But one
- 9 of those parameters is the retroactivity date and,
- 10 you know, you identify your claimants, you are
- 11 identifying people who are actual claimants. And
- 12 whether you start with retroactive application date
- 13 and then screen from there, or you start from a
- 14 more global perspective as in Schmill, who were
- 15 people who had apportionment because of
- 16 non-occupational factors, and then screen from
- 17 there, I think is just -- I don't think that it's,
- 18 it's, like I said, either process in terms of the
- 19 order that you follow in terms of setting those
- 20 parameters.
- 21 MS. WALLACE: I'm trying to understand
- 22 what date everybody is using for this date that you
- 23 can -- you are in or you are out. Is it particular
- 24 by case? Because if so --
- THE COURT: The date of the decision. And

- 1 that's why it's not obviously a standard date. I
- 2 don't have all of the different dates, you know,
- 3 off the top of my head but it was, I mean, we set
- 4 the, like in Flynn, it was, we talked about this
- 5 specific date. There's been the decisions that
- 6 even came before that Judge McCarter issued that
- 7 said these were the cut-off dates because it was
- 8 the date of the decision that established the
- 9 entitlement to benefits basically.
- 10 And I am kind of speaking free form off
- 11 the top of my head but, you know, go ahead.
- MS. WALLACE: Well, because in the
- 13 affidavit for Schmill, the claim period was from
- 14 July 1, 1987, until June 22, 2001. So I guess I
- 15 always assumed June 22, 2001, was the date that
- 16 would then apply pursuant to Flynn/Miller. So I
- 17 don't, I guess I don't know where you are coming
- 18 from, Steve, when you said a date of April 10,
- 19 2003.
- 20 MR. JENNINGS: That actually benefits you.
- 21 If you want to trade that for June 2001, I'll do
- 22 that.
- MS. WALLACE: Why would it benefit me?
- MR. JENNINGS: April 10, 2001, is the date
- 25 of the --

- 1 MS. WALLACE: You said 2003.
- 2 MR. JENNINGS: -- is the date of the
- 3 decision creating the Schmill benefit. If I'm
- 4 wrong, then what I am probably referring to is the
- 5 date finding a common fund, okay? But if it's --
- 6 and I don't know the date, the Flynn, the initial
- 7 Schmill decision came out. Do you have that?
- 8 MS. WALLACE: June 22.
- 9 MR. JENNINGS: Then I have misstated the
- 10 date. The date --
- 11 MS. WALLACE: Well, my concern is whether
- 12 your insurers have looked back further.
- MR. JENNINGS: I'll have to go check that.
- 14 THE COURT: And that's something you guys
- 15 can hammer out and if there's an issue, I'll get
- 16 involved. But in terms of what the specific date
- 17 is that should have been applied, if that's an
- 18 issue, that's an issue, but I'll address --
- MR. JENNINGS: If the April 10, 2003, is
- 20 the date that we have used, Laurie, then what we
- 21 have done is we have looked at a more inclusive
- 22 period than what we were required to because what
- 23 we would have been looking was for benefits paid
- 24 after April 10, 2003. And if I simply misquoted
- 25 the date -- and I don't know if I did or not --

- 1 then we have included essentially two years where
- 2 benefits could have been paid to keep the claim
- 3 alive that we didn't have to, but I'll go back
- 4 and --
- 5 MS. WALLACE: And I think it's the other
- 6 way around. You are missing two years. If they
- 7 paid benefits between '01 and '03, they would be in
- 8 the class.
- 9 MR. JENNINGS: You are right. You are
- 10 right.
- 11 THE COURT: So that may require a new
- 12 screening.
- 13 MR. JENNINGS: And I will take a look at
- 14 that.
- 15 MS. WALLACE: I had one other issue that I
- 16 know Larry is aware of this because we have talked
- 17 about it a number of times. I'm not sure anybody
- 18 else is aware of this, or maybe they are and don't
- 19 want to bring it up, but you issued an order in
- 20 this case dated July 10, 2007, in Schmill. It was
- 21 a decision that was written by Jay that you
- 22 adopted.
- THE COURT: Oh, right.
- MS. WALLACE: And actually found that
- 25 there were not cases that were paid in full. They

- 1 found a definition of paid in full, and it's always
- 2 been Schmill's position that that order was
- 3 controlling in this case. That order was never
- 4 certified as final and so it's just been sitting
- 5 there while these other proceedings have been going
- 6 on.
- 7 And I think that it should be certified as
- 8 final because one of the issues that we have always
- 9 maintained in Schmill is that this whole
- 10 controversy around paid in full doesn't apply
- 11 because that statute was enacted after all of the
- 12 Schmill claims. And we raised that in that
- 13 briefing and that's the order that came out of
- 14 that, and so we still feel as though there's yet
- 15 one more appeal.
- 16 THE COURT: Jason puts his hockey mask
- 17 back on. Sorry.
- 18 So and that's fine. I mean, if that's --
- 19 and I apologize if I neglected to certify it as
- 20 final or whether -- I'm sorry, go ahead, Larry.
- MR. JONES: Your Honor, that might be
- 22 Docket No. 410.
- THE COURT: In Schmill.
- MR. JONES: In Schmill, Your Honor.
- THE COURT: Okay.

- 1 MS. WALLACE: I forgot to write the docket
- 2 number, July 10, 2007.
- 3 THE COURT: So let me ask you then -- you
- 4 guys just looking at YouTube over there?
- 5 MR. JENNINGS: Solitaire.
- 6 MR. LUCK: Could I ask a question while
- 7 they are looking at that? You also issued kind of
- 8 an omnibus order that all paid-in-full issues in
- 9 relation to common fund concerns would be
- 10 controlled by Flynn, and it was repeated by the
- 11 Supreme Court, I believe, in the last two
- 12 decisions. Our feeling is this paid in full has
- 13 been decided at your direction applicable to all
- 14 claims, and whatever that order says, that wasn't
- 15 final would seem like would be trumped by the
- 16 actual Flynn decision.
- MR. JENNINGS: Your Honor, I would second
- 18 that. And not only would I add, not only has this
- 19 Court and the Supreme Court used Flynn as the model
- 20 for determining the scope of retroactivity, and the
- 21 statute in effect, it was not about, I mean, she is
- 22 talking about the definition of paid in full, but
- 23 what the decision decided was the scope of
- 24 retroactivity. There's no statute describing that.
- I would also suggest that the legal

- 1 doctrine that you might be looking for is the
- 2 doctrine of retroactivity. Flynn is presumptively
- 3 retroactive to the earlier Schmill case until
- 4 proven otherwise under the Chevron factors, so it
- 5 is presumptively retroactive to this case thus
- 6 abrogating your earlier order, Your Honor.
- 7 THE COURT: Let me ask you, I mean, just
- 8 about that, the point that I think I do think I
- 9 said and, umm, and I think the Supreme Court said
- 10 that the decision in Flynn as pertained to paid in
- 11 full or to retroactivity, retroactive application
- 12 of the decision would be essentially the
- 13 controlling factor. So notwithstanding the fact
- 14 that that Schmill decision was not certified as
- 15 final, is it -- would it not be controlled by --
- 16 I'm seriously asking because I have not read that
- 17 decision in probably, what was it, 2007, so five
- 18 years. But so I'm seriously asking, would Flynn
- 19 and just the statement that both this Court and the
- 20 Supreme Court that that would control the, be the
- 21 model essentially and control the issue or resolve
- 22 the issue of retroactivity and paid-in-full issue,
- 23 that doesn't control --
- MS. WALLACE: I have a hard time with
- 25 that, Your Honor, because the language of paid in

- 1 full is tied to a statute. I mean, that's where it
- 2 came from and that statute was not in effect on the
- 3 date of any of the Schmill claims.
- 4 THE COURT: But if I recall correctly, my
- 5 decision even in the -- going back to the first
- 6 Flynn decision where I used the definition of
- 7 settled from the other statute -- but I mean, just
- 8 well, yeah, I mean, in the Flynn One decision, and
- 9 again, I'm speaking off the top of my head, I was
- 10 applying the statute as basically a guidance
- 11 because with the recodification, the definition of
- 12 settled, I was using the definition of settled even
- 13 though it wasn't technically --
- 14 MR. LUCK: I think you are right, Your
- 15 Honor. And you even said in one of the orders, and
- 16 I have a specific recollection of the statement of
- 17 the Court, this statute, we are going to borrow the
- 18 language from the statute even though it wasn't
- 19 applicable to all periods of time --
- THE COURT: Right.
- 21 MR. LUCK: -- that involved, that are
- 22 involved in these cases, and I won't be -- I don't
- 23 know the exact wording, but this was an approach
- 24 adopted by the legislature. It makes sense in the
- 25 face of arguments that the statute was for totally

- 1 different purposes. The Court reasoned and the
- 2 Supreme Court approved that that kind of language
- 3 makes sense in relation to the workers'
- 4 compensation arena, and it's a language that the
- 5 legislature adopted that could be used for the
- 6 definition of settlement.
- 7 So I don't think it was tied at all
- 8 specifically because those were some of the
- 9 arguments that were made to when it was in effect
- 10 or not in relation to the claims.
- 11 THE COURT: Right, yeah, and no, I mean,
- 12 that's my recollection as well is that the statute
- 13 didn't technically apply because it had been when
- 14 the recodification had been taken out and moved
- 15 into whatever part, but I said, well, this was the
- 16 definition of settled and it included paid in full,
- 17 which I did not include in my final line in the
- 18 first Flynn order but that it was -- and so I mean,
- 19 regardless of whether the statute was in effect, I
- 20 was just using it more as a guidance as to what
- 21 made sense to define a settled claim. And
- 22 obviously in Flynn Two, what made sense to me was
- 23 deciding paid in full. So go ahead.
- 24 (Cell phone ringing.)
- MR. JENNINGS: I would just point out that

- 1 we have all been proceeding under the impression
- 2 that Flynn is to be the model for the scope of
- 3 retroactivity. And if we revisit this issue now
- 4 and if Laurie wins, Schmill will now be retroactive
- 5 to Flynn and we are nowhere.
- 6 THE COURT: Well, here's the thing, I
- 7 guess, so that we can move on. I mean, I have
- 8 given my thoughts off the top of my head. I mean,
- 9 certainly, Laurie, I don't think as reluctant as I
- 10 am, I said to encourage more briefing, if you want
- 11 to, I think it's your prerogative to move to have
- 12 it certified as final. I guess that's the, where
- 13 it would go from there, and then I can, you know, I
- 14 think probably look at the last two Flynn
- 15 decisions, both the one containing the scrivener's
- 16 error and the more recent one. And then whether
- 17 that -- obviously you have, but whether that
- 18 controls that Schmill decision supersedes it, and
- 19 if it -- if you are, if you think that
- 20 notwithstanding that it, Schmill should be, that
- 21 this should be certified as final, I certainly
- 22 can't, and I will make, I mean -- I'm not saying
- 23 what my ruling would be on that one way or the
- 24 other, but if you want to file a motion to have
- 25 that decision certified as final, that's your

- 1 prerogative to do that and we can take it from
- 2 there.
- Go ahead.
- 4 MR. JONES: Your Honor, just so we are
- 5 clear, Laurie and I were looking at the I-pad and
- 6 we weren't playing solitaire.
- 7 THE COURT: I couldn't see, couldn't see
- 8 --
- 9 MR. JONES: I think we are in agreement
- 10 this would be Order No. 380; is that correct?
- 11 THE COURT: 380 in Schmill?
- MR. JONES: Yes, Your Honor.
- 13 THE COURT: Great, thank you. So Laurie,
- 14 why don't we just, so that we are, you know, like I
- 15 said, trying to bring some definitiveness to this
- 16 in whatever shape, say, within 30 days, if you, and
- 17 that will be reflected in the minute entry here --
- MR. JONES: Your Honor, are you now
- 19 certifying that order as final and setting the
- 20 briefing schedule?
- 21 THE COURT: No. I'm giving Laurie 30
- 22 days, if she decides she wants to file a motion to
- 23 have it certified as final.
- MR. JONES: Thank you.
- 25 THE COURT: And we will kind of cross that

- 1 bridge when we come to it, if there's a bridge to
- 2 cross. So anything else? Rex?
- 3 MR. PALMER: Hearing No. 4054, April 22 of
- 4 '09, I made a request that -- this is the minute
- 5 entry noting that I made a request for opportunity
- 6 to conduct Rule 30(b)(6) depositions to determine
- 7 whether the, what the insurers are doing to locate
- 8 claimant's potentially deserving of benefits. It
- 9 says the motion is denied. Mr. Palmer will be
- 10 granted leave to renew the motion contingent on the
- 11 ruling on central issue of paid in full.
- 12 So now we have come through that process
- 13 and we need to test the reasonableness of their
- 14 efforts. So that needs to be done in order to give
- 15 any life to the, umm, amendment that the Court
- 16 permitted over objection to determine the
- 17 reasonability of their actions.
- THE COURT: You want to do 30(b)(6)
- 19 depositions to find out what process is being
- 20 followed?
- MR. PALMER: Right.
- MR. JENNINGS: Your Honor, I think that's
- 23 part of the discovery that the affidavits
- 24 contemplate.
- THE COURT: Yeah, I mean, I don't, umm, I

- 1 think frankly at this juncture, I think what it's
- 2 -- I think what it's, as Steve alluded, that's
- 3 discovery, and so I think you notice up a 30(b)(6)
- 4 deposition.
- 5 MR. PALMER: Okay.
- 6 THE COURT: And if for whatever reason
- 7 somebody thinks that you shouldn't have one, they
- 8 can move to quash it and I will deal with that as
- 9 it comes up. But I think -- I guess for purposes
- 10 of going back to that order, and I appreciate you
- 11 bringing it up because I remember the ruling on
- 12 that, that I think the denial is revisited.
- MR. PALMER: We are there now, sure.
- 14 THE COURT: I think it's your prerogative
- 15 within the discovery process. You just notice them
- 16 up and if, and then if whatever insurer doesn't
- 17 feel you should have one, for whatever reason, they
- 18 can move to quash and I will address it, okay?
- 19 Larry, go ahead.
- MR. JONES: Your Honor, I haven't said
- 21 anything because State Fund has been the biggest
- 22 fish in the pond, and the second biggest would be
- 23 Steve's.
- THE COURT: He's got a school of small
- 25 fish.

- 1 MR. JONES: It seems to me that we are
- 2 dealing with three categories of insurers. The
- 3 State Fund has had a lot more, thankfully,
- 4 experience dealing with this issue. And we have
- 5 with three categories of insurers, three different
- 6 categories of cases. And I am not sure that what
- 7 we have done today has necessarily clarified
- 8 Liberty's obligations. And so on this Stavenjord
- 9 and Reesor cases, the State Fund has had hearings
- 10 and they have elaborate pleadings and letters, what
- 11 have you, and my client has not been part of that
- 12 because there was no common fund attorney in those
- 13 cases.
- 14 THE COURT: Right.
- 15 MR. JONES: So I would ask the Court at
- 16 the conclusion, when we get there, of this hearing
- 17 for some guidance on my client's obligation on the
- 18 Reesor and Stavenjord given the absence of common
- 19 fund attorney to implement those cases.
- 20 Second category of cases would be just
- 21 because of Rex's comments, I would say the
- 22 Flynn/Miller category, and my sense of what Rex
- 23 said is that this was really directed at carriers
- 24 who believe they have completed the implementation
- 25 process in Flynn/Miller as opposed to Liberty where

- 1 we are still working with Rex. And with the
- 2 Court's permission, I would like that second
- 3 category of cases clarified.
- 4 THE COURT: Umm, and I think well, as part
- 5 of that, you guys are working together, I mean, on
- 6 that process as far as Flynn/Miller goes, I don't
- 7 know if Rex is contemplating, and I am not going to
- 8 ask you to say whether you are or not at this time
- 9 because you may not have made a decision whether or
- 10 not you are wanting to do a 30(b)(6) in
- 11 Flynn/Miller with Liberty or not. Sounds to me
- 12 like you guys are sharing information, am I wrong
- 13 on that, in terms of what the process is being
- 14 followed and whether that obviates the need for
- 15 30(b)(6) or not? I can't make that judgment. I
- 16 appreciate and I am certainly prepared to talk
- 17 about Reesor/Stavenjord because that's kind of a
- 18 unique situation because there is no common fund
- 19 counsel on claimant's side.
- Let me ask you, Rex, in terms of the
- 21 Flynn/Miller issue.
- MR. PALMER: Well, there was a time that
- 23 Liberty had its files in town and my staff, my
- 24 paralegal and I went over and looked at some of
- 25 those files in the process and we felt like in an

- 1 effort to cooperate with them, it's our view that
- 2 it's their obligation to do a process to find these
- 3 claimants. And I think it's their view that it's
- 4 not their obligation to do that. So there's an
- 5 issue there.
- Now, the paper files are no longer in
- 7 Montana. They are in some other remote location.
- 8 They may be returnable, they may be digitized, but
- 9 we have never acquiesced that it would be our
- 10 obligation to go through and locate the specific
- 11 claimants looking through their files. That's
- 12 certainly not what we did with the State Fund. So
- 13 that's a potential issue.
- We haven't revisited how would we look if
- 15 we were willing to. But it's our position what we
- 16 would be looking for, in a 30(b)(6) or perhaps any
- 17 of the multitude of affidavits that were filed, we
- 18 might choose the individual to sign the affidavit
- 19 to test and see what was done and did we believe it
- 20 was reasonable. And if we didn't, then they might
- 21 agree that it was unreasonable or they might
- 22 disagree and then we might bring that to you and
- 23 determine if the petition for a determination of
- 24 reasonableness as regards attorney fees and a
- 25 penalty should be granted or denied, which would be

- 1 a hearing on a given insurer.
- We have to test the water to begin with,
- 3 and I think as you have already said, we are at
- 4 that point where a denial was contemplating that
- 5 after the ruling on paid in full, we would do that.
- 6 THE COURT: Kind of --
- 7 MR. JONES: Your Honor, I understand Rex's
- 8 comments. I think contrary to what's happened in
- 9 the past on these cases, which has been that rather
- 10 than having an insurer go out and unilaterally
- 11 implement a decision, come to the Court and then
- 12 have claimants' common fund counsel pass judgment,
- 13 it's adequate or inadequate, the process has been
- 14 the Court is required, defense counsel and
- 15 claimant's counsel, to attempt to agree to an
- 16 implementation process so we don't have this
- 17 constant going back and forth.
- And so I would disagree with Rex's comment
- 19 that my client isn't prepared to implement the
- 20 decision. My client's position is that it wants to
- 21 follow the Court's prior practice of attempting to
- 22 get implementation rules so the cases, relevant
- 23 cases are identified one time, and once those rules
- 24 have been followed, there can be no question by
- 25 claimants' common fund counsel as to the adequacy

- 1 of the identification of that group of cases.
- 2 And that's where I then see a second stage
- 3 which maybe is addressing the State Fund's position
- 4 that Rex may want a 30(b)(6) at that point to see
- 5 under the terms of those implementation, mutually
- 6 agreed implementation procedures what, in fact, was
- 7 done.
- 8 COURT REPORTER: Excuse me, what is that
- 9 pop-popping sound?
- 10 (Off-record discussion.)
- 11 THE COURT: So is the transcript -- the
- 12 transcript is going to be littered with pop, pop,
- 13 pop?
- MR. JONES: Victor Borge-type of
- 15 presentation, if you would.
- So Your Honor, this is why I have tried to
- 17 carve Liberty out of what the State Fund has been
- 18 doing because they have had a head start and have
- 19 really done a lot more work than we have been able
- 20 to do. And I was hoping to propose in addition to
- 21 that Stavenjord/Reesor element that I think would
- 22 be peculiar to Steve's clients would want to
- 23 participate, would be dealing separately with
- 24 Liberty's obligations in Flynn/Miller and Liberty's
- 25 obligations in Schmill.

- 1 Because we have had some preliminary work in both
- 2 of those cases and try to get that if the Court is
- 3 in agreement, try to get that implementation
- 4 process agreed to today and then move forward on
- 5 it, on all three categories of cases.
- And we have the unique opportunity here
- 7 because we have Flynn/Miller common fund counsel
- 8 and Schmill common fund counsel as regards
- 9 Liberty's obligations and, again, if Steve's
- 10 clients would want to join in with that, seems like
- 11 they have taken a different path, but my client is
- 12 not going to take the position, at this point, we
- 13 are simply going to give you an affidavit and
- 14 engage in discovery. My client would like to
- 15 follow the procedure that's been done in the past
- 16 which is attempt to work out a mutually agreeable
- 17 implementation process and then implement it and
- 18 provide the information to common fund counsel.
- 19 And then presumably, if common fund counsel had any
- 20 questions or was dissatisfied, would bring it
- 21 before the Court perhaps in 30(b)(6) motion or some
- 22 other fashion. So that's my client's proposal for
- 23 the Court, Your Honor.
- MR. PALMER: The idea that we would skip
- 25 past the insurer's obligation to pay on an order

- 1 that was entered over a year and-a-half ago and
- 2 which they never appealed -- granted we appealed --
- 3 and just say we are going to sit back and it would
- 4 be convenient for us to do it in a big lump, the
- 5 process we have gone through in this case has
- 6 identified a broad group of potential claimants
- 7 that the insurers have tried to narrow down the
- 8 involved group. And that's okay, but they didn't
- 9 appeal the last order, and so the idea that there's
- 10 some different process that absolves them of their
- 11 obligation to comply with a Court order that they
- 12 did not appeal, that's new. That's not, there's no
- 13 room that says you do that.
- So there are two areas, see. There's that
- 15 area that we would be testing as far as what have
- 16 you done, and then would present the question, we
- 17 wouldn't skip past that and go to the next question
- 18 of what else has been done since the Supreme
- 19 Court's order on that order you didn't appeal.
- 20 That's another question.
- 21 But those would be various steps on a
- 22 group that has, would never have gotten any smaller
- 23 for the last year and-a-half.
- 24 THE COURT: Well, and I don't think, I
- 25 mean, I don't think that these processes are

- 1 necessarily mutually exclusive. What Larry is
- 2 talking about is you guys just come together and
- 3 agree. Part of that process could be, you know,
- 4 you were saying, well, we have this order that lays
- 5 out some parameters and/or some procedures and so
- 6 we think that's part of it, and you are
- 7 identifying, and I don't think that -- I don't
- 8 know. I don't think that Liberty is taking the
- 9 position that we are not going to start paying
- 10 anybody until the final, until everybody is
- 11 identified, or are they, Larry?
- MR. JONES: Well no, Your Honor. The
- 13 Flynn/Miller, I guess I'm struggling with Rex's
- 14 comments, is though that they are prior to the
- 15 Flynn/Miller decision on December 29th of 2011,
- 16 there was a known group of Flynn/Miller claimants.
- 17 My client's position is until that decision came
- 18 down, we could not effectively identify the group
- 19 of people because we did not know who would be in
- 20 that group given the paid-in-full issue.
- I think I hear Rex saying that somehow at
- 22 some point under some of yet undefined date of
- 23 decision or order, Liberty should have been on its
- 24 own going out and attempting to identify certain
- 25 people and paying certain benefits, I think that's

- 1 totally contrary to probably a decade of common
- 2 fund practice in which the parties have waited
- 3 until they could have an implementation process so
- 4 that the relevant group could be identified and
- 5 then potentially paid and systematically, if there
- 6 were any objections, they could be presented to the
- 7 Court.
- 8 But my client's position is they have been
- 9 following the common fund procedure.
- 10 THE COURT: Go ahead, Steve.
- 11 MR. JENNINGS: Your Honor, I would -- I
- 12 also would disagree with Rex's comment that we have
- 13 identified some sort of number of claimants. This
- 14 process so far has identified exactly zero
- 15 claimants. But in any event, I do disagree with
- 16 Larry a little bit to the extent that I think what
- 17 I think he is looking for is agreement on the
- 18 search parameters. And this is where I differ from
- 19 Larry and State Fund because they only have one
- 20 client. They can have some expertise on the
- 21 archival systems and computer systems and filing
- 22 systems that they can manipulate and access.
- 23 Larry talks about his trouble with, he
- 24 doesn't have a paid-in-full button. I'm lacking 65
- 25 paid-in-full buttons, so I would hope to avoid a

- 1 discussion of detailed parameters, and I would rely
- 2 on the discovery process in the affidavit. I think
- 3 that's what that's for.
- 4 THE COURT: I think it's, yeah, no, I'm
- 5 sorry. I'll cut you off because I'm agreeing with
- 6 you, Steve.
- 7 MR. JENNINGS: Okay.
- 8 THE COURT: It's a little unwieldy to do
- 9 this as we sit here today, too. I think that what
- 10 Larry is talking about does seem to, you know, make
- 11 sense from the standpoint of, you know, start with
- 12 talking to each other and, you know, try to work
- 13 out the process. If there are things that, you
- 14 know, that you see is deficient in it, then you can
- 15 certainly bring that to me in whatever fashion,
- 16 would probably be some sort of whether it's, oh,
- 17 you know, there are individuals that you think
- 18 should have been paid, you know, a long time ago
- 19 and, you know, so you think there's a, penalty and
- 20 fees are warranted. Then, you know, again, this
- 21 goes back to Brad's question about the, you know,
- 22 the reasonableness of, you know, people who aren't
- 23 in the class and what is -- I can only address
- 24 those on a case-by-case basis.
- 25 And I am not trying to duck the issue

- 1 here, but I can't say whether it was -- I suspect
- 2 Larry -- would come in and say Joe Smith should
- 3 have been identified and paid a long time ago, so
- 4 he is entitled to a 20 percent penalty and fees,
- 5 and Larry would say this is not the process we have
- 6 ever followed, and we were waiting for clearer
- 7 parameters before we did that, and I will make a
- 8 determination. And that then sets a precedent for,
- 9 you know, other people within that class. I think
- 10 it's a heck of a lot easier to do that than
- 11 globally because within the class, obviously there
- 12 are going to be individuals with somewhat unique
- 13 circumstances.
- 14 From a standpoint of whether they could
- 15 have or should have been identified and paid
- 16 earlier, umm, you know, so that's the best we can
- 17 do. But as far as the process goes -- and now I'm
- 18 speaking specifically to Flynn and Miller, although
- 19 I mean, I guess it would apply to Schmill as well
- 20 because there is common fund counsel there, as
- 21 Larry alluded to, certainly historically, was kind
- 22 of the process, but it certainly makes sense now to
- 23 work out what you can, and whatever you can't agree
- 24 on in terms of the implementation process then, you
- 25 know, bring that to me.

- But at this juncture, you know, one of the
- 2 things we have, you know, been dealing with and
- 3 certainly made the last few trips up to the Supreme
- 4 Court with is to at least establish some defined
- 5 parameters of what constitutes the class. And so
- 6 with that in mind, in terms of retroactive
- 7 application and what have you, you know, we have at
- 8 least got that to start with, and then you can use
- 9 that as kind of your foundation to build the
- 10 process on, as well as using the historical
- 11 processes that have been followed as guidance but
- 12 -- and if there are disputes where you think that
- 13 that process is, what you have discussed, you think
- 14 in some fashion what Liberty wants to do is
- 15 inadequate and Larry, you think what Rex wants to
- 16 do is too onerous, if that can't be agreed on, I
- 17 can sort that out at that juncture. Go ahead,
- 18 Larry.
- 19 MR. JONES: Thank you, Your Honor. I
- 20 think you provided two things in your comments, and
- 21 that's the idea of identifying the class. Clearly,
- 22 the Court's decisions -- the Supreme Court and this
- 23 Court -- has given us guidance to get the process
- 24 started. But the second step is to the one I know
- 25 my client is most concerned about now, which is how

- 1 do we with the systems we have, identify who falls
- 2 in that class. And to me, that's what the
- 3 implementation process has been.
- 4 THE COURT: Right.
- 5 MR. JONES: For example, with the Schmill
- 6 case, we have sent Laurie two lists of cases -- and
- 7 I hope I'm not speaking out of turn, Laurie, and
- 8 tell me if you think I am -- but we had class codes
- 9 on a certain system that suggested cases falling
- 10 under the class codes would be occupational
- 11 diseases. Then we went and found out in which
- 12 cases there has been indemnity payments. If there
- 13 are no indemnity payments, there's no
- 14 apportionment, so we have been able to parse out
- 15 that category of cases.
- 16 Then we are now talking about the list and
- 17 how we might, if it's appropriate to further define
- 18 them. But my client's goal is to get to the point
- 19 with Laurie where we agreed this was, the inquiry
- 20 is sufficient, this is the group of cases, they are
- 21 sufficient. And looks like the next step may be to
- 22 go and hand by hand to look at the files to see if
- 23 apportionment was taken. And we haven't reached
- 24 these agreements. I'm just suggesting that's the
- 25 direction we take.

- 1 But on the Flynn/Miller case, I don't
- 2 think we have got to that point. We had a
- 3 preliminary search and, quite frankly, I would have
- 4 to go back and look at the file in detail to see
- 5 how we agreed on the group of cases and hard copy
- 6 that we provided Rex at that time.
- 7 So what I am asking the Court, at least in
- 8 Flynn/Miller, is a direction to the attorneys to
- 9 reach an agreement on the method of the search to
- 10 get to the point where, if that search is done
- 11 under the conditions contained in the search
- 12 criteria, that will satisfy that part of the common
- 13 fund process and implementation and would go to the
- 14 next step, which is to agree on how those files are
- 15 then to be examined, because that's what's happened
- 16 in the past.
- 17 What I hear Rex suggesting is it's totally
- 18 the obligation of my client to come up with some
- 19 search criteria, run a search, and then he will be
- 20 free on behalf of his clients to say that's
- 21 inadequate, do it again. So I'd like some
- 22 direction to both claimant's counsel and my client
- 23 as to those particular steps.
- 24 THE COURT: No, I think, I mean, I would
- 25 assume -- and it certainly strikes me as being more

- 1 expedient than to say, "Here's our process, no,
- 2 that doesn't look okay, let's try this," for the
- 3 two of you to get together and see what you can
- 4 agree on and, you know, try to work through -- I
- 5 mean, blue sky, the entire process. And you know
- 6 that's, maybe I'm just a cockeyed optimist, but,
- 7 well, actually I'm not because I don't expect that
- 8 to happen.
- 9 But I mean, I think it is incumbent on
- 10 both sides to come together and figure out from
- 11 soup to nuts, how do we get this process done? And
- 12 as I said, there will be probably where, Rex, you
- 13 think that it's the process is inadequate, and
- 14 Larry, you think that what Rex wants is too
- 15 onerous. But you do need to get something worked
- 16 through.
- And you are not waiving anything by
- 18 engaging in that process. You are not waiving any
- 19 right to say, "Well, something should have been
- 20 done earlier with X, Y, and Z," and you know, we
- 21 can take that, you know, and say, "Hey, Joe Smith
- 22 should have been, he was clearly identified. I
- 23 sent Larry a letter and there was no question this
- 24 guy should have been paid," or whatever. And I
- 25 will address that on, like I said, if and when that

- 1 person comes before me on some sort of a, you know,
- 2 penalty and attorney fees petition.
- 3 But I do think it's incumbent on both
- 4 sides to try to get as much of that process nailed
- 5 down. If there is something in the implementation
- 6 of that process, as Steve eluded to, the discovery
- 7 where -- or just as part of that whole process, if
- 8 a, you know, if a formalized 30(b)(6) deposition is
- 9 necessary, fine, or I'm not prospectively denying a
- 10 motion to quash.
- If you feel that that's necessary, you
- 12 know, then notice it up and either it'll happen or
- 13 there will be motions to quash or whatever. But it
- 14 is just impossible for us to sit here today and
- 15 say, other than to say to work together and bring
- 16 up and work out as much as you can. And then
- 17 whatever can be worked out, great. Whatever can't,
- 18 I'll address and take it up on a case-by-case
- 19 basis. But this is, as I said, my cool hand Luke
- 20 rule, which is, you know, to communicate.
- 21 So that's -- so with that, that's where --
- 22 I don't know, does that answer your question there,
- 23 Larry?
- MR. JONES: It does very thoroughly, Your
- 25 Honor.

- 1 THE COURT: Now to back up as it would
- 2 pertain in Liberty's obligations in Reesor and
- 3 Stavenjord, you know, I mean, it is kind of a
- 4 unique situation and there are -- and I raise these
- 5 even when State Fund came before me and we had
- 6 counsel that there were some issues because there
- 7 was no formalized procedure that, that I had signed
- 8 off on because there is -- they have not been
- 9 certified as common fund and there's not -- and
- 10 there's not common fund counsel.
- I mean, I quess what the best I can say at
- 12 this juncture is, you know, and I recognize that
- 13 the software and the capacities and whatever are
- 14 different, that they are not, you know, necessarily
- 15 the same for Liberty as they are for State Fund,
- 16 that those procedures, you know, that I am signing
- 17 off on are kind of maybe as a broad goal post in
- 18 terms of how to try to -- and you know, now we have
- 19 obviously the Flynn decision as at least pertains
- 20 to the retroactivity in defining the parameters.
- 21 But in terms of the nuts and bolts of how do you go
- 22 about identifying and contacting, you know, no more
- 23 than what like Steve was saying in terms of the
- 24 difference between do you start with the effective
- 25 date or do you start with, you know, who was denied

- 1 their benefits because they reached retirement age
- 2 or had their PPD benefits cut off because they
- 3 reached retirement age? Which one is the cart and
- 4 which one is the horse?
- 5 I don't think I have -- particularly in
- 6 Reesor and Stavenjord as pertains to Liberty -- the
- 7 jurisdiction to tell you. I think, you know, I
- 8 think that the process that I approved with State
- 9 Fund might be a good guide post. And I guess
- 10 that's the best I can tell you with that.
- 11 MR. JONES: Just so the record is clear,
- 12 the Court believes there is a duty on Liberty's
- 13 part to go back and implement those procedures now
- 14 -- implement those cases now that we have
- 15 Flynn/Miller?
- 16 THE COURT: (Laughter.) Umm, yeah. You
- 17 are talking about in Reesor and Stavenjord.
- MR. JONES: Yes, Your Honor.
- 19 THE COURT: Well, again, this goes back
- 20 to, I don't know that -- and I know that, well,
- 21 actually I don't know that. I know this in terms
- 22 of what did you reach. Did Liberty, I know, like
- 23 obviously State Fund submitted a process for me to
- 24 approve and so that kind of puts it in a unique
- 25 situation distinct from Liberty. I think the best

- 1 I can say about that since there is no common fund
- 2 certification of these cases, you know, and since I
- 3 have not approved any sort of process that Liberty
- 4 has, you know, voluntarily subjected itself to the
- 5 Court's jurisdiction under Reesor or Stavenjord, is
- 6 I think the best I can probably say to that is, you
- 7 know, it may behoove Liberty from a standpoint of a
- 8 reasonableness issue, if that were to come up.
- 9 But I don't care. I have the -- I don't
- 10 have the authority to prospectively rule on whether
- 11 you have to or not. But if certain individuals
- 12 were to come up and say, "Hey, I had my PPD
- 13 benefits cut off at retirement, I clearly fell
- 14 within this class and Liberty didn't pay, I think
- 15 I'm entitled to penalty and attorney fees," they
- 16 would have to come up, as I understand, because
- 17 it's never been defined as common fund. So I don't
- 18 think I have the jurisdiction to tell you that.
- 19 MR. JONES: It's very helpful, Your Honor.
- THE COURT: Okay, thank you. Okay.
- 21 Anything else?
- MR. LUCK: Just to be clear, two things,
- 23 Your Honor. I understood from your initial
- 24 comments that you are deciding our proposed orders?
- THE COURT: Yes.

1 MR. LUCK: Second thing is -- the final 2 thing would be we understand your concern about 3 prospective rulings, but based on all of this interchange, I think from a retroactive ruling, you 4 5 will probably find State Fund has been eminently reasonable in its efforts to get out in front and 6 7 remediate all of these problems. 8 THE COURT: Anyone else? Is there --9 speak now or forever hold your peace. Well, not 10 forever, that much has been made clear. Thank you. 11 I appreciate everyone's efforts in coming over 12 This is -- hopefully, we will get a detailed here. 13 minute entry out actually -- and then also what we 14 will do is, Kim, I'll order from the Court, it will 15 be the Court's request to do a final transcript. 16 think we do that on all common fund transcripts, so 17 the transcript will be posted online, as well. 18 Thank you, Your Honor. MR. LUCK: 19 THE COURT: All right, thanks, everyone. 20 (The time is 10:00 a.m.) 21 22

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1	STATE OF MONTANA)
2	:SS. County of Lewis and Clark)
3	
4	
5	I, Kimberly Johnson, a Registered
6	Professional Reporter and Notary Public in and for
7	the County of Lewis and Clark, do hereby certify:
8	
9	That the foregoing cause was taken before
10	me at the time and place herein named, that the
11	foregoing cause was reported by me, and that the
12	foregoing pages contain a true record of the
13	testimony to the best of my ability.
L 4	
15	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
16	hand this, day of, 2012.
L7	
18	
19	
20	Kimberly E. Johnson
21	Registered Professional Reporter Notary Public
22	My Commission Expires 3/19/2012
23	
24	
25	

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