

Syllabus

NOTE: Where it is feasible, a syllabus (headnote) will be released, as is being done in connection with this case, at the time the opinion is issued. The syllabus constitutes no part of the opinion of the Court but has been prepared by the Reporter of Decisions for the convenience of the reader. See *United States v. Detroit Timber & Lumber Co.*, 200 U. S. 321, 337.

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Syllabus

MID-CON FREIGHT SYSTEMS, INC., ET AL. *v.* MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ET AL.

CERTIORARI TO THE COURT OF APPEALS OF MICHIGAN

No. 03–1234. Argued April 26, 2005—Decided June 20, 2005

Federal law requires most interstate truckers to obtain a permit (Federal Permit) that reflects compliance with certain federal requirements. The 1965 version of the law authorized States to require proof that a truck operator had such a permit. By 1991, 39 States demanded such proof, requiring a \$10 per truck registration fee (State Registration) and giving each trucker a stamp to affix to a multistate “bingo card” carried in the vehicle. Finding this scheme inefficient and burdensome, Congress created the current Single State Registration System (SSRS), which allows a trucking company to fill out one set of forms in one State (base State), thereby registering its Federal Permit in every participating State through which its trucks travel. 49 U. S. C. §14504(c). The base State can demand proof of the Federal Permit, proof of insurance, the name of an agent to receive service of process, and a fee equal to the sum of the individual state fees. §§14504(c)(2)(A)(i)–(iv). The SSRS prohibits a State from imposing any additional “State registration requirement.” §14504(b). Michigan Comp. Laws Ann. §478.2(2) imposes an annual \$100 fee on each Michigan license-plated truck operating entirely in interstate commerce. Petitioner interstate trucking companies subject to §478.2(2) sought to have it invalidated, but the Michigan Court of Claims refused. The State Court of Appeals affirmed, holding that, because the fee is imposed for the administration of the State’s Motor Carrier Act and for enforcement of state safety regulations, it is not a “registration requirement” pre-empted by §14504(b).

Held: Section §14504 does not pre-empt Michigan’s \$100 fee. Pp. 5–13.

(a) Reference to text, historical context, and purpose disclose that the words “State registration requirement” in §14504(b)’s second sentence apply only to those state requirements concerning SSRS regis-

Syllabus

tration. Statutory language makes clear that the federal provision reaches no further. The subsection's first sentence uses the words "State registration" to refer only to state systems seeking evidence that a trucker has complied with the specific SSRS obligations enumerated in §§14504(c)(2)(A)(i)–(iv). No language in the second sentence suggests that the same words should be given a different, broader meaning there. Nor does any language elsewhere in the statute suggest that "State registration requirement" refers to *any* kind of State Registration whatsoever that might affect interstate carriers, or to those state requirements imposed by reason of a motor carrier's operation in interstate commerce. The implementing regulations also do not support a broader meaning. Historical context confirms this reading. Congress enacted §14504 to simplify the "bingo card" system, which placed no constraints on any state filings or fees other than those concerning Federal Permit and insurance requirements. In creating the SSRS, Congress gave no indication that the pre-emptive scope of the new scheme would be any broader than that of the old. Finally, nothing in the statute's basic purposes or objectives—improving the "bingo card" system's efficiency and simplifying a uniform scheme for providing States with certain vital information—either requires a broader reading of the statutory term or impliedly pre-empts non-SSRS-related state rules. Pp. 5–11.

(b) Section 478.2(2)'s requirements do not concern the SSRS's subject matter. First, the Michigan statute makes no reference to evidence of a Federal Permit, an insurance requirement, or an agent for receiving service of process. Nor do any state rules related to the fee appear to require the filing of information on these matters. In addition, because Michigan imposed its separate fee before the SSRS existed and before it began to participate in the "bingo card" system, the fee does not represent an effort to circumvent the limitations imposed in connection with federal laws governing State Registration of Federal Permits. Finally, petitioners have failed to show that Michigan rules do not allow a Michigan-plated interstate truck choosing Michigan as its base State to comply with the SSRS requirements even if it does not comply with §478.2(2). The fact that Michigan appears to forgive the State's \$10 SSRS fee for trucks that comply with §478.2(2) can be seen as an effort to provide a modest, administratively efficient recompense to those motor carriers that choose Michigan as their base State, but such a subsidiary connection cannot transform the State's fee into a requirement concerning the SSRS statute's subject matter. Pp. 11–13.

255 Mich. App. 589, 662 N. W. 2d 784, affirmed.

BREYER, J., delivered the opinion of the Court, in which STEVENS,

Syllabus

SCALIA, SOUTER, THOMAS, and GINSBURG, JJ., joined. KENNEDY, J., filed a dissenting opinion, in which REHNQUIST, C. J., and O’CONNOR, J., joined.