

SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

**THE ESTATE OF EDWARD HENRY CLARK,
by and through GAYLE SHOTTS,
Personal Representative,**

Petitioner,

CASE NO: SC08-1774

v.

**OP WINTER HAVEN, INC.;;
RE WINTER HAVEN, INC.;;
TANDEM REGIONAL MANAGEMENT
OF FLORIDA, INC.;; TANDEM
HEALTH CARE, INC.;; GAIL WARD
a/k/a GAIL LURIE WARD;
NANCY C. THOMPSON;
MICHAEL BRADLEY;
and IRENA BLACKBURN
a/k/a IRENA TARRAN BLACKBURN
(as to TANDEM HEALTH CARE OF WINTER HAVEN),**

Respondents.

**PETITIONER'S SUPPLEMENTAL REPLY BRIEF ON THE
MERITS**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page(s)</u>
TABLE OF AUTHORITIES.....	iii
ARGUMENT.....	1
CONCLUSION.....	3
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE.....	3
CERTIFICATE OF FONT COMPLIANCE.....	4

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

<u>Case</u>	<u>Page(s)</u>
<i>Buckeye Check Cashing, Inc. v. Cardegna</i> , 546 U.S. 440, 126 S.Ct. 1204, (2006).....	2
<i>Prima Paint Corp. v. Flood & Conklin Mfg. Co.</i> , 388 U.S. 395, 87 S.Ct. 1801 (1967).....	2
<i>Rent-A-Center West, Inc. v. Jackson</i> , ____ U.S._____, 130 S. Ct. 2772 (June 21, 2010)	<i>passim</i>

ARGUMENT

The Respondents assert that the holding of *Rent-A-Center West, Inc. v. Jackson*, ___ U.S. ___, 130 S.Ct. 2772 (June 21, 2010), would require leaving the issue of the legality of the arbitration agreement to an arbitrator. The Respondents are in error.

In *Jackson*, Justice Scalia noted that the contract contained multiple arbitration agreements. *Id.* at 2777. In particular, there was a section providing for arbitration of all “past, present or future” disputes arising out of Jackson’s employment at Rent-A-Center. *Id.* There was another separate arbitration agreement in which, “[t]he Arbitrator...shall have exclusive authority to resolve any dispute relating to the...enforceability...of this Agreement including, but not limited to any claim that all or any part of this Agreement is void or voidable.” *Id.* Justice Scalia observed that the second provision, called the “delegation provision,” “is an agreement to arbitrate threshold issues concerning the arbitration agreement.” *Id.* The question presented in *Jackson* was thus not whether the first agreement to arbitrate “past, present or future” employment disputes was valid under §2 of the Federal Arbitration Act, but rather the question presented in *Jackson* was “whether the delegation provision is valid under §2.”

Justice Scalia, writing for the majority, held in *Jackson* that the latter arbitration agreement was severable as a matter of Federal law from the former arbitration agreement. *Id.* at 2778. Since Jackson’s challenge was to the former agreement and not the latter “delegation” agreement, his challenge was for an arbitrator, rather than the court. *Id.*

Unlike the contract in *Jackson*, the instant agreement does not contain a “delegation provision.” There is no evidence in the record of the parties’ intent to delegate arbitrability issues to the arbitrator. In the instant case, there is a single arbitration agreement. Accordingly, there is nothing to sever. Petitioner’s challenge is to the validity of the sole arbitration agreement. Thus, under *Buckeye Check Cashing, Inc. v. Cardegna*, 546 U.S. 440 (2006), as well as *Prima Paint Corp. v. Flood & Conklin Mfg. Co.*, 388 U.S. 395, 403-404 (1967), Petitioner’s challenge to the enforceability of the arbitration agreement is for the court to decide.

Justice Scalia stated in the opinion of the Court, that “if a party challenges the validity under §2 of the precise agreement to arbitrate at issue, the federal court must consider the challenge before ordering compliance with that agreement under §4.” *Rent-A-Center West, Inc.*, 130 S. Ct. at 2778. Here, Petitioner has challenged the precise agreement to

arbitrate at issue. Thus, the issue is for the court, and not the arbitrator as Respondent contends.

CONCLUSION

The Supreme Court's decision in *Jackson* does not control the outcome of the instant case. The parties in the instant case did not expressly agree to arbitrate the enforceability of the arbitration agreement. There is a single arbitration agreement. Petitioner's challenge was to that sole agreement, and is thus for the court, not the arbitrator.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the above has been sent by Hand Delivery Facsimile U.S. Mail to: **Antonio Cifuentes, Esq.**, Mancuso & Dias, P.A., 2002 N. Lois Ave., Suite 510, Tampa, Florida 33607, and **Sylvia H. Walbolt, Esq., Matthew J. Conigliaro, Esq., and Annette Marie Lang, Esq.**, Carlton Fields, P.A., P.O. Box 2861, St. Petersburg, FL 33731 this ____ day of August, 2010.

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing Motion complies Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure 9.210 requiring the font size of the type herein to be at least fourteen points if in Times New Roman format.

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