

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

MICHAEL E. CULLEN,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

v.

STATE FARM MUTUAL AUTOMOBILE
INSURANCE COMPANY

Defendant-Appellant.

: Case No. 2012-0535

:
:
:
: On Appeal from the Cuyahoga County
: Court of Appeals, Eighth Appellate District
: Court of Appeals Case No. CA-10-095925

**AMICI CURIAE BRIEF OF THE OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
OHIO ALLIANCE FOR CIVIL JUSTICE, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND AMERICAN TORT REFORM ASSOCIATION
IN SUPPORT OF DEFENDANT-APPELLANT**

Kurtis A. Tunnell (0038569)
Anne Marie Sferra (0030855)
BRICKER & ECKLER LLP
100 South Third Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Tel: (614) 227-2300
Fax: (614) 227-2390
ktunnell@bricker.com
asferra@bricker.com

Of Counsel for Ohio Alliance for Civil Justice

Robin S. Conrad (*admitted pro hac vice*)
NATIONAL CHAMBER LITIGATION CENTER, INC.
1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20062
Tel: (202) 463-5337
Fax: (202) 463-5346
rconrad@uschamber.com

*Of Counsel for the Chamber of Commerce
of the United States of America*

Victor E. Schwartz, Counsel of Record (0009240)
Mark A. Behrens (*admitted pro hac vice*)
Cary Silverman (*admitted pro hac vice*)
SHOOK, HARDY & BACON L.L.P.
1155 F Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20004
Tel: (202) 783-8400
Fax: (202) 783-4211
vschwartz@shb.com
mbehrens@shb.com
csilverman@shb.com

*Attorneys for Amici Curiae
Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Ohio Alliance
for Civil Justice, Chamber of Commerce of
the United States of America, and American
Tort Reform Association*

Mark A. Johnson, Counsel of Record
(0030768)

Joseph E. Ezzie (0075446)
Robert J. Tucker (0082205)
BAKER & HOSTETLER LLP
65 East State Street, Suite 2100
Columbus, OH 43215
Tel: (614) 228-1541
Fax: (614) 462-2616

Michael K. Farrell (0040941)
BAKER & HOSTETLER LLP
3200 East Ninth Street
Cleveland, OH 44114
Tel: (216) 621-0200
Fax: (216) 696-0740

*Attorneys for Appellant State Farm Mutual
Automobile Insurance Company*

Paul W. Flowers, Counsel of Record (0046625)
John P. Hurst (0010569)
W. Craig Bashein (0034591)
Terminal Tower, 35th Floor
50 Public Square
Cleveland, OH 44113
Tel: (216) 344-9393
Fax: (216) 344-9395

*Attorneys for Plaintiff-Appellee
Michael E. Cullen*

Thomas E. Szykowny, Counsel of Record
(0014603)

Michael Thomas (0000947)
VORYS, SATER, SEYMOUR AND PEASE LLP
52 E. Gay Street
P.O. Box 1008
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1008
Tel: (614) 464-5671
Fax: (614) 719-4990

*Attorneys for Amici Curiae National
Association of Mutual Insurance Cos.
and Ohio Insurance Institute*

Elizabeth B. Wright (0018456)
Brian A. Troyer, Counsel of Record (0059671)
THOMPSON HINE LLP
3900 Key Center
127 Public Square
Cleveland, OH 44114-1291
Tel: (216) 566-5716
Fax: (216) 566-8500

Stephanie M. Chmiel (0087555)
Thompson Hine LLP
41 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6101
Tel: (614) 469-3247
Fax: (614) 469-3361

*Attorneys for Amici Curiae
Washington Legal Foundation
and Ohio Chemistry Technology Council*

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INTEREST OF AMICI CURIAE

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce (“Ohio Chamber”), founded in 1893, is Ohio’s largest and most diverse statewide business advocacy organization. The Ohio Chamber works to promote and protect the interests of its 6,000 business members and the thousands of Ohioans they employ while building a more favorable business climate. The advocacy efforts of the Ohio Chamber are dedicated to the creation of a strong pro-jobs environment – an Ohio business climate responsive to expansion and growth.

The Ohio Alliance for Civil Justice (“OACJ”) is a group of over 200 small and large businesses, trade and professional associations, professionals, non-profit organizations, local government associations, and others. The OACJ strongly supports laws that provide stability and predictability in the civil justice system, including class action litigation. OACJ members support a balanced civil justice system that not only awards fair compensation to injured persons, but also imposes safeguards to ensure that defendants are not unjustly penalized and plaintiffs are not unjustly enriched.

The Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America (“U.S. Chamber”) is the world’s largest federation of businesses and associations. The U.S. Chamber represents 300,000 direct members and indirectly represents an underlying membership of more than three million U.S. businesses and professional organizations of every size and in every economic sector and geographic region of the country. An important function of the U.S. Chamber is to represent the interests of its members in important matters before the courts, legislatures, and executive agencies. To that end, the Chamber regularly files *amicus curiae* briefs in cases that raise issues of vital concern to the nation’s business community.

Founded in 1986, the American Tort Reform Association (“ATRA”) is a broad-based coalition of more than 300 businesses, corporations, municipalities, associations, and professional firms that have pooled their resources to promote reform of the civil justice system with the goal of ensuring fairness, balance, and predictability in civil litigation. For more than a decade, ATRA has filed *amicus curiae* briefs in cases before state and federal courts that have addressed important liability issues.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE AND FACTS

Amici adopt Defendant-Appellant’s Statement of the Case and Statement of Facts as relevant to the legal arguments herein.

INTRODUCTION

The Eighth Appellate District’s ruling embraces a lax class certification standard that accepts the Plaintiff’s assertions as true and broadly rejects consideration of merits issues. In so doing, the appellate court continued a mistaken interpretation of law that the United States Supreme Court in *Wal-Mart Stores Inc. v. Dukes*, 131 S. Ct. 2541 (2011), and many other courts have since corrected. These decisions offer guidance for correcting the approach that the courts below and other Ohio courts have followed. The rulings of the courts below in this matter create a significant risk of certification of meritless class actions.

This Court should clarify that, in conducting a rigorous analysis of whether a proposed class meets the standards of Rule 23 of the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, Ohio courts must resolve factual and legal disputes touching upon the certification determination. This Rule 23 analysis may overlap with the merits of the plaintiff’s underlying claim. Where, as here, the appellate court simply accepted the Plaintiff’s theory as true, despite unambiguous contractual language that contradicted his assertions, class certification should be reversed.

Consideration of merits issues enmeshed in class certification is critical in deterring class action abuse. Once a court grants class certification, defendants faced with expensive and risky “bet-the-company” litigation often feel compelled to settle even the most tenuous claims. Clarifying that Ohio law is consistent with federal class certification jurisprudence would avoid creating an incentive for unwarranted forum shopping that would draw class actions to Ohio state courts.

ARGUMENT

PROPOSITION OF LAW: IN RULING ON CLASS CERTIFICATION, COURTS SHOULD EXAMINE MERITS ISSUES THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF OHIO RULE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE 23.

I. A MISINTERPRETATION OF LAW HAS LED TO CERTIFICATION OF MERITLESS CLASS ACTIONS

A. The Source of the Confusion

Prior to the United States Supreme Court’s 2011 ruling in *Wal-Mart Stores Inc. v. Dukes*, many courts considering class certification believed they could not inquire into the merits of a claim in determining whether a proposed class action met basic requirements of Rule 23. The source of this ostrich-like approach came from language in *Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin*, 417 U.S. 156 (1974), in which the Supreme Court stated, “We find nothing in either the language or history of Rule 23 that gives a court any authority to conduct a preliminary inquiry into the merits of a suit in order to determine whether it may be maintained as a class action.” *Id.* at 177.

The *Eisen* Court, however, was not deciding class certification, but considering which party should bear the cost of notice to the class. Typically, the plaintiff bears the costs of notice, but the trial court in *Eisen* had shifted ninety percent of the cost of providing notice to the 2.25 million potential claimants in that case to the defendants because the court found the plaintiffs

were likely to prevail on the merits. *See id.* at 166-67, 177. In this limited context, the Court held that a district court should not conduct an initial inquiry into the merits. *See id.* at 177-78.

In the years following *Eisen*, some courts took the Supreme Court's language out of context, expanding its meaning beyond the cost-of-notice issue, and applying it to Rule 23's core requirements. *See, e.g., Koch v. Stanard*, 962 F.2d 605, 607 (7th Cir. 1992); *In re Coordinated Pretrial Proceedings in Petroleum Prods. Antitrust Litig.*, 691 F.2d 1335, 1342 (9th Cir. 1982), *cert. denied sub nom. California v. Standard Oil Co. of California*, 464 U.S. 1068 (1984); *Shelter Realty Corp. v. Allied Maint. Corp.*, 574 F.2d 656, 661 n.15 (2d Cir. 1978); *Blackie v. Barrack*, 524 F.2d 891, 901 (9th Cir. 1975), *cert. denied*, 429 U.S. 816 (1976). These courts found they could not resolve disputes that overlapped with class certification requirements and had to assume that any facts a plaintiff alleged were true. They invoked *Eisen* as a justification for decisions either to ignore the evidence or refuse to weigh the evidence when granting class certification. These courts "simply accept[ed] the plaintiff's allegations and evidence no matter how weak, often citing *Eisen* without further explanation." Robert G. Bone & David S. Evans, *Class Certification and the Substantive Merits*, 51 Duke L.J. 1251, 1271 (2002). The result was that courts failed to screen out meritless class actions. *See F. Ehren Hartz, Certify Now, Worry Later: Arkansas's Flawed Approach to Class Certification*, 61 Ark. L. Rev. 707, 712 (2009).

The United States Supreme Court revisited the overlap of class certification and merits issues in *Coopers & Lybrand v. Livesay*, 437 U.S. 463 (1978), and *General Telephone Co. of Southwest v. Falcon*, 457 U.S. 147 (1982), but the Court's failure to expressly clarify the limited context of *Eisen* created more confusion. In *Coopers*, seemingly in response to the overbroad application of its language in *Eisen*, the Court noted that "[e]valuation of many of the questions entering into determination of class action questions is intimately involved with the merits of the

claims.” 437 U.S. at 469 n.12. In *Falcon*, the Court instructed that certification is proper only if “the trial court is satisfied, after a rigorous analysis, that the prerequisites of Rule 23(a) have been satisfied.” 457 U.S. at 161. The *Falcon* Court explained that such “rigorous analysis” will often entail some overlap with the merits of plaintiffs’ underlying claims, an analysis which the lower courts are directed to undertake as part of the class certification determination. *Id.* at 160-61 (finding that “the class determination generally involves considerations that are enmeshed in the factual and legal issues comprising the plaintiff’s cause of action”) (internal quotations and citation omitted).

The message of *Coopers* and *Falcon* went unheeded by many courts, which continued to view *Eisen* as broadly precluding consideration of merits issues bound with the class certification requirements of numerosity, commonality, typicality, and adequacy. *See, e.g., DG ex rel. Stricklin v. Devaughn*, 594 F.3d 1188, 1097 (10th Cir. 2010) (holding that a trial court should accept a plaintiff’s allegations as true at the certification stage); *Caridad v. Metro-North Commuter R.R.*, 191 F.3d 283, 293 (2d Cir. 1999) (“In deciding a certification motion, district courts must not consider or resolve the merits of the claims of the purported class.”).

Many federal courts eventually concluded that the *Eisen* language should not be followed. Several federal circuit courts clarified the plaintiff’s burden, and the trial court’s duty, to resolve disputed factual issues when necessary to resolve the class certification analysis. *See, e.g., In re Hydrogen Peroxide Antitrust Litig.*, 552 F.3d 305, 321-25 (3d Cir. 2009) (holding that a court may not certify a class action based merely on a “threshold showing,” legal and factual disputes relevant to certification “must be resolved” including conflicting expert testimony); *In re Initial Pub. Offerings Sec. Litig.*, 471 F.3d 24, 41 (2d Cir. 2006) (holding that the trial court may certify a class only after determining that each of the Rule 23 requirements has been met

and, to do so, must resolve factual disputes relevant to each Rule 23 requirement and that the obligation to make such determinations is not lessened by overlap between a Rule 23 requirement and a merits issue).

Other federal circuits similarly clarified that *Eisen* did not provide support for refusing to resolve merits issues that are necessary ingredients of the findings required by Rule 23. *See, e.g., Unger v. Amedisys Inc.*, 401 F.3d 316, 321 (5th Cir. 2005) (“The plain text of Rule 23 requires the court to ‘find,’ not merely assume, the facts favoring class certification.”); *Gariety v. Grant Thornton LLP*, 368 F.3d 356, 365 (4th Cir. 2004) (concluding that “by accepting the plaintiffs’ allegations for purposes of certifying a class in this case, the district court failed to comply adequately with the procedural requirements of Rule 23”); *Szabo v. Bridgeport Machs., Inc.*, 249 F.3d 672, 676 (7th Cir. 2001) (“[A] judge should make whatever factual and legal inquiries are necessary under Rule 23, [even if] the judge must make a preliminary inquiry into the merits”); *see also* Linda S. Mullenix, *Dropping the Spear: The Case for Enhanced Summary Judgment Prior to Class Certification*, 43 Akron L. Rev. 1197, 1224-29 (2010) (finding that several federal appellate circuits had “embraced more stringent merit-based evaluations of class certification requirements” in the five years preceding *Duke*).

The result was a “muddled body of case law” with courts in disagreement over “how closely they can examine the evidence and scrutinize the factual merits at the certification stage.” *Bone & Evans, supra*, at 1270. For years, commentators had suggested that “[i]t is time to reexamine the *Eisen* rule.” *Id.* at 1253.

B. The U.S. Supreme Court Corrected Misapplication of *Eisen* in *Dukes*

In 2011, the United States Supreme Court undertook just such a reevaluation of *Eisen* in *Wal-Mart Stores Inc. v. Dukes*, rejecting *Eisen*’s overbroad application to preclude consideration of merits issues relating to class certification. The Court in *Dukes* found that contrary to the

views of some courts, “Rule 23 does not set forth a mere pleading standard.” 131 S. Ct. at 2551. A party seeking class certification “must affirmatively demonstrate his compliance with the Rule—that is, he must be prepared to prove that there are *in fact* sufficiently numerous parties, common questions of law or facts, etc.” *Id.* (emphasis in original). Thus, plaintiffs cannot obtain certification simply by relying on the allegations of their complaint or by making a perfunctory evidentiary showing. Instead, courts must examine all the evidence bearing on certification, including expert testimony, and must resolve factual disputes bearing on the Rule 23 requirements.

Quoting from its decision in *Falcon*, the Court recognized that “it sometimes may be necessary for the court to probe behind the pleadings” in order to properly evaluate whether class certification is appropriate. *Id.*, quoting *Falcon*, 457 U.S. at 160. Furthermore, the Court reemphasized the need for the trial court to conduct a “rigorous analysis” as part of the class certification determination. *Id.*, quoting *Falcon*, 457 U.S. at 161. As the Court understood, “[f]requently that ‘rigorous analysis’ will entail some overlap with the merits of the plaintiff’s underlying claim. That cannot be helped.” *Id.*

The *Dukes* Court squarely addressed *Eisen*, recognizing that its opinion in that case had led some lower courts to “mistakenly” conclude that they could not inquire into the merits issues impacting the appropriateness of class certification. *Id.* at 2552 n.6. It found that to the extent that the oft quoted language in *Eisen* goes beyond consideration of the merits for any pretrial

purpose outside the shifting of notice costs “it is the purest dictum and is contradicted by our other cases.” *Id.*¹

The Supreme Court’s own review of the evidence in *Dukes* exemplifies the type of “rigorous analysis” courts must undertake. The Court carefully examined the statistical, sociological, and anecdotal evidence offered by plaintiffs to try to prove that Wal-Mart operated under a “general policy of discrimination.” *See id.* at 2253-57. The Court concluded that, given the absence of evidence of a pattern or practice of discrimination, the proposed class action lacked the commonality – “the glue” – necessary to hold the class together. *Id.* at 2552-54.

C. Ohio Courts Are Among Those That Have Misapplied *Eisen* to Preclude Consideration of Merits Issues in Class Certification

Ohio courts, under the mistaken impression that they were following the same standard as the federal courts, are among those that have applied an overbroad interpretation of *Eisen*. This uncritical approach bears a significant risk of certifying class actions that fail to meet the basic requirements of Rule 23.

In *Ojalvo v. Board of Trustees of Ohio State Univ.*, 12 Ohio St. 3d 230, 233, 466 N.E.2d 875 (1984), the trial court found that the alleged breach of an employment contract, which

¹ The Supreme Court’s disapproval of the way courts had construed *Eisen* resembles the Court’s decision in *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544 (2007). In *Twombly*, a class action, the Court “retired” the language from a decision that suggested there may be a more lenient pleading standard, *Conley v. Gibson*, 355 U.S. 41 (1957), “as an incomplete, negative gloss on an accepted pleading standard: once a claim has been stated adequately, it may be supported by showing any set of facts consistent with the allegations in the complaint.” 550 U.S. at 563; *see also Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662 (2009) (*Twombly* standard applies to all civil actions). Ohio courts have applied the “plausibility” pleading standard of *Twombly* and *Iqbal*. *See DiGiorgio v. City of Cleveland*, 8th Dist., No. 95945, 2011-Ohio-5878, ¶ 41; *Boske v. Massillon City Sch. Dist.*, 5th Dist., No. 2010-CA-00120, 2011-Ohio-580, ¶¶ 14-15. Thus, just as *Twombly* made clear the rigorous pleading requirements of Fed. R. Civ. P. 8 and 12 by laying to rest language from an earlier decision that suggested some leniency, *Dukes* supports more rigorous class certification requirements under Rule 23 than some earlier Court language might have suggested.

formed the basis of the class action, probably did not exist. This Court reversed the trial court's rejection of class certification, finding that the trial court's consideration of whether the plaintiffs experienced a common breach of their employment contracts was "an attempt to merge an improper analysis of the merits of the claim with the proper test of commonality under Civ. R. 23(A)(2)." *Id.* Citing *Eisen*, the Court ruled that "narrow issues of commonality" do not involve consideration of the actual merits of the case. *Id.*

As State Farm observed, long after *Falcon*, many Ohio courts have continued to follow *Eisen* and *Ojalvo*. See Memorandum in Support of Jurisdiction (citing *Lucio v. Safe Auto Ins. Co.*, 183 Ohio App. 3d 849, 2009-Ohio-4816, 919 N.E.2d 260, ¶ 15 (7th Dist.)). There are other examples. See, e.g., *Hill v. Moneytree of Ohio Inc.*, 9th Dist. No. 08CA009410, 2009-Ohio-4614, ¶¶ 12-13 (quoting at length from *Eisen* to conclude that "[c]onsideration of the merits of the dispute is inappropriate in determining class certification" and finding "it was an abuse of discretion for the trial court to make any merit findings"); *Setliff v. Morris Pontiac, Inc.*, 9th Dist. No. 08CA009364, 2009-Ohio-400, ¶ 6 (citing *Ojalvo* to find that "[w]hen a trial court considers a motion to certify a class, it accepts as true the allegations in the complaint, without considering the merits of those allegations and claims"); *Nagel v. Huntington Nat'l Bank*, 179 Ohio App. 3d 126, 2008-Ohio-5741, 900 N.E.2d 1060, ¶ 10 (8th Dist.) (citing *Ojalvo* to find that "[w]hen a trial court considers a motion to certify a class, it must assume the truth of the allegations in the complaint, without considering the merits of those allegations and claims" and stating that "[a]ny doubts a trial court may have as to whether the elements of [the] class certification have been met should be resolved in favor of upholding the class * * *").

The case before this Court demonstrates precisely what is at stake if Ohio courts continue to preclude consideration of merits issues that bear upon determining whether a class satisfies the

fundamental requirements of Rule 23, in contravention of mainstream federal class action jurisprudence. Here, the Eighth District Court of Appeals affirmed a class of 100,000 State Farm policyholders who had windshield repairs under their insurance policies over a period of twenty years. The foundation of the common issue defined by the Plaintiff is his assertion that State Farm's policies provided insureds with a right to obtain a cash payment for the entire value of the windshield (less the applicable deductible), to have the windshield repaired, and to keep the remaining money.

Although State Farm argued that the plain language of the policies in place during the relevant time period contradicted these assertions and did not extend a "pay-out" option to policyholders, the Eighth District simply "believed" the Plaintiff's "theory of the case" for purposes of class certification. Op. at ¶ 21. The Plaintiff also asserted that the insurance policies required any windshield repair to restore the windshield to its pre-loss condition, without analysis of the language of those policies. The Eighth District found this claim "dubious," Op. at ¶ 56, but avoided ruling on the meaning of the policy language. The Eighth District admonished State Farm for contending that the trial court did not conduct a "rigorous analysis" when it adopted wholesale the Plaintiff's proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. Op. at ¶ 53. Yet, the appellate court then recognized that the trial court "used much of the language in Cullen's proposed findings of facts and conclusions of law," only its opinion was more concise. Op. at ¶ 54. The court found that the trial court waded "too far into the merits of the case" when it found a cash pay-out option was available under the policy. Op. at ¶ 55. The appellate court refused, however, to consider whether the unambiguous policy language said otherwise. "This goes to the heart of the merits of the case and is inappropriate at this point. Class certification does not address the merits of the claim." *Id.*

This language in the Eighth District’s opinion, and its general approach to class certification, while not citing *Eisen* or *Ojalvo*, takes the “no consideration of the merits approach” that many courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, have subsequently rejected or abandoned. Curiously, the court relied on *Dukes* for its basic recitation of the predominance standard, ¶ 18, cited to *Falcon* in discussing the commonality requirement, ¶ 26, and again invoked *Dukes* on the inappropriateness of class certification when there is a need for individual monetary damage awards, ¶ 48. Yet, the court sidestepped a core holding of *Falcon* and *Dukes* – that a rigorous analysis of class certification may require the court to “probe behind the pleadings” and will “frequently * * * entail some overlap with the merits of the plaintiff’s underlying claim” to ensure the prerequisites of Rule 23 have been satisfied. *Dukes*, 131 S. Ct. at 2551, citing *Falcon*, 457 U.S. at 160-61.

**II. WHETHER COURTS MAY LOOK BEYOND THE PLEADINGS
WHEN DECIDING THE CRUCIAL ISSUE OF CLASS
CERTIFICATION HAS SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Class certification transforms one case into a lawsuit involving thousands, a hundred thousand, as in the case before this Court, or, as in *Dukes*, millions of potential claimants. Classwide damages can reach into the billion-dollar range. As the United States Supreme Court has observed, “Certification of a large class may so increase the defendant’s potential damages liability and litigation costs that he may feel it economically prudent to settle and to abandon a meritorious defense.” *Livesay*, 437 U.S. at 476. “The risk of facing an all-or-nothing verdict presents too high a risk, even when the probability of an adverse judgment is low.” *Castano v. American Tobacco Co.*, 84 F.3d 734, 744 (5th Cir. 1996).

Judges have recognized that “the sheer size and complexity of the action, the added time, expense and effort needed to defend it as a class suit may force the defendant, despite the doubtful merit of the claims, to settle rather than to pursue the long and costly litigation route

required for review of the class action certification.” *General Motors Corp. v. City of New York*, 501 F.2d 639, 657-58 (2d Cir. 1974) (Mansfield, J., concurring in granting of interlocutory appeal of grant of class certification); *see also* Bruce Hoffman, *Remarks, Panel 7: Class Actions as an Alternative to Regulation: The Unique Challenges Presented by Multiple Enforcers and Follow-On Lawsuits*, 18 Geo. 17 J. Legal Ethics 1311, 1329 (2005) (“Following certification, class actions often head straight down the settlement path because of the very high cost for everybody concerned, courts, defendants, plaintiffs of litigating a class action * * *.”) (panel discussion statement of Bruce Hoffman, then Deputy Director of the Federal Trade Commission’s Bureau of Competition). Indeed, Judge Friendly called settlements induced by a small probability of an immense judgment in a class action “blackmail settlements.” Henry J. Friendly, *Federal Jurisdiction: A General View* 120 (1973). Defendants have settled tenuous claims as a result of class certification. *See, e.g., In re “Agent Orange” Prod. Liab. Litig. MDL No. 381*, 818 F.2d 145, 151 (2d Cir. 1987) (affirming \$180 million class settlement even though it was clear that the trial court “viewed the plaintiffs’ case as so weak as to be virtually baseless” and granted summary judgment against the plaintiffs who opted out of the class action), *cert. denied sub nom. Pinkney v. Dow Chem. Co.*, 484 U.S. 1004 (1988).

Given the high probability of post-certification settlement, overbroad application of *Eisen* to preclude consideration of the merits creates a substantial risk of erroneous class certification that will rarely be corrected and invites frivolous and weak class action suits. *See* Bone & Evans, *supra*, at 1252. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that this Court instruct trial courts, when evaluating class certification, to consider the factual and legal merit of assertions that are directly relevant to the Rule 23 determination. *See* Bartlett H. McGuire, *The Death*

Knell for Eisen: Why the Class Action Analysis Should Include an Assessment of the Merits, 168 F.R.D. 366 (1996).

The need to consider aspects of the merits of a claim in assessing class certification is illustrated by *In re Rhone-Poulenc Rorer Inc.*, 51 F.3d 1293 (7th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 516 U.S. 867 (1995), where Judge Richard Posner granted a writ of mandamus ordering a trial court to decertify a nationwide class action brought on behalf of hemophiliacs who alleged that manufacturers of blood solids were responsible for their infection with the AIDS virus. The court wisely understood that if the class were not decertified the defendants would face irreparable harm because of “the sheer *magnitude* of the risk to which the class action, in contrast to the individual actions pending or likely, expose[d] them.” *Id.* at 1297-98. If the class had not been certified, the court explained, the defendants would face a few hundred claims, and trials held prior to certification suggested the defendants would prevail in most of these cases. In contrast, class certification would suddenly result in the defendants facing thousands of plaintiffs, enormous potential liability, and bankruptcy. In this situation, “[t]hey may not wish to roll these dice. That is putting it mildly. They will be under intense pressure to settle.” *Id.* at 1298. The court found that the defendants should not be required to “stake their companies on the outcome of a single jury trial, or be forced by fear of the risk of bankruptcy to settle even if they have no legal liability * * * *.” *Id.* at 1299.

In sum, the United States Supreme Court has now clarified in *Dukes* that it is not only permissible, but necessary, for trial courts to decide disputed issues that are enmeshed in evaluating whether a proposed class meets Rule 23’s due process safeguards. Rule 23 of the Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23, the federal rule governing class actions, are virtually identical. Ohio courts consider federal authority to be an “appropriate

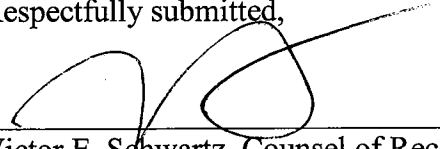
aid” to interpreting the Ohio rule. *See State ex rel. Davis v. Public Employees Ret. Bd.*, 111 Ohio St. 3d 118, 2006-Ohio-5339, 855 N.E.2d 444, ¶ 28 (2006). Clarifying that Ohio courts no longer follow the mistaken view stemming from *Eisen* that broadly precludes consideration of merits issues would ensure consistency with federal class certification jurisprudence, as Ohio’s sister courts have recognized. *See, e.g., State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co. v. Reyher*, 266 P.3d 383, 388-89 (Colo. 2012) (en banc) (finding the court of appeals erred when it “accepted at face value Plaintiffs’ allegations” regarding State Farm’s business practices and found that the trial court properly analyzed the practice at issue, which was necessary to determine “whether common issues predominate over individual issues * * * or otherwise impermissibly prejudge the merits of the case”); *Price v. Martin*, 79 So. 2d 960, 966-72 (La. 2011) (relying on *Dukes* to find that trial court confused the plaintiffs’ obligation to show significant proof of common causation, an issue central to class certification, with a merits determination).

If key questions going to the heart of the Plaintiff’s claims are off the table, and the Plaintiff’s assertions are unquestionably accepted as true for purposes of class certification, Ohio courts may become known to businesses for placing inordinate pressure to settle weak or frivolous claims filed as putative class actions. Following the sound principles set forth in *Dukes* would deter class action abuse by removing an incentive for unwarranted forum shopping that would draw spurious class actions to Ohio state courts.

CONCLUSION

For these reasons, *amici* urge this Court to reverse the decision below.

Respectfully submitted,



Victor E. Schwartz, Counsel of Record (0009240)
Mark A. Behrens (*admitted pro hac vice*)
Cary Silverman (*admitted pro hac vice*)
SHOOK, HARDY & BACON L.L.P.
1155 F Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20004
Tel: (202) 783-8400
Fax: (202) 783-4211
vschwartz@shb.com
mbehrens@shb.com
csilverman@shb.com

*Attorneys for Amici Curiae Ohio Chamber of
Commerce, Ohio Alliance for Civil Justice,
Chamber of Commerce of the United States of
America, and American Tort Reform Association*

Kurtis A. Tunnell (0038569)
Anne Marie Sferra (0030855)
BRICKER & ECKLER LLP
100 South Third Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Tel: (614) 227-2300
Fax: (614) 227-2390
ktunnell@bricker.com
asferra@bricker.com

Of Counsel for Ohio Alliance for Civil Justice

Robin S. Conrad (*admitted pro hac vice*)
NATIONAL CHAMBER LITIGATION CENTER, INC.
1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20062
Tel: (202) 463-5337
Fax: (202) 463-5346
rconrad@uschamber.com

*Of Counsel for the Chamber of Commerce
of the United States of America*

Dated: August 16, 2012

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I served two copies of the foregoing Brief of *Amici Curiae* upon counsel by depositing a copy in a first-class postage-prepaid envelope into a depository under the exclusive care and custody of the U.S. Postal Service on August 16, 2012, addressed to the following:

Mark A. Johnson, Counsel of Record
(0030768)
Joseph E. Ezzie (0075446)
Robert J. Tucker (0082205)
BAKER & HOSTETLER LLP
65 East State Street, Suite 2100
Columbus, OH 43215

Michael K. Farrell (0040941)
BAKER & HOSTETLER LLP
3200 East Ninth Street
Cleveland, OH 44114

*Attorneys for Appellant State Farm
Mutual Automobile Insurance Company*

Paul W. Flowers, Counsel of Record
(0046625)
John P. Hurst (0010569)
W. Craig Bashein (0034591)
Terminal Tower, 35th Floor
50 Public Square
Cleveland, OH 44113

*Attorneys for Plaintiff-Appellee
Michael E. Cullen*

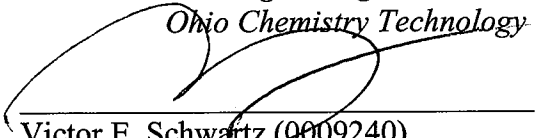
Thomas E. Szykowny, Counsel of
Record (0014603)
Michael Thomas (0000947)
VORYS, SATER, SEYMOUR AND PEASE
LLP
52 E. Gay Street
P.O. Box 1008
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1008

*Attorneys for Amici Curiae National
Association of Mutual Insurance Co.
and Ohio Insurance Institute*

Elizabeth B. Wright (0018456)
Brian A. Troyer, Counsel of Record
(0059671)
THOMPSON HINE LLP
3900 Key Center
127 Public Square
Cleveland, OH 44114-1291

Stephanie M. Chmiel (0087555)
Thompson Hine LLP
41 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6101
Phone: 614-469-3247
Facsimile: 614-469-3361
Stephanie.Chmiel@thompsonhine.com

*Attorneys for Amici Curiae
Washington Legal Foundation and
Ohio Chemistry Technology Council*


Victor E. Schwartz (0009240)