

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Zajonc v. T-Mobile US, Inc.

No. 3:25-cv-02860-JSC (N.D. Cal. June 2, 2025) · No. 3:25-cv-02860-JSC · Decided June 2, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California grants T-Mobile’s motion to dismiss a putative class action challenging the denial of a religious exemption to the company’s COVID-19 vaccination requirement. The court dismisses the FEHA and UCL claims with leave to amend because the complaint contains insufficient factual allegations, and dismisses the wrongful-termination claim without leave to amend. The court sets a deadline for an amended complaint and continues the initial case management conference.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jacqueline Scott Corley
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	June 2, 2025
DOCKET	3:25-cv-02860-JSC
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff filed a putative class action in Alameda County Superior Court. Defendant removed the action to federal court based on diversity jurisdiction and moved to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) and to strike certain allegations. The court granted the motion to dismiss, allowing amendment as to the FEHA and UCL claims but not as to the wrongful-termination claim.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim, the complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to state a claim for relief that is plausible on its face. Threadbare recitals of the elements supported by conclusory statements are insufficient.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order; no reporter citation or precedential designation appears in the source.

TOPICS

motions to dismiss

religious discrimination

employment discrimination

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civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

employment discrimination

civil procedure

consumer protection

religious discrimination

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint adequately pleaded a FEHA religious-discrimination claim based on T-Mobile's denial of a religious exemption to its COVID-19 vaccination requirement.
2. Whether the complaint adequately pleaded claims under the unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent prongs of California's Unfair Competition Law.
3. Whether the wrongful-termination claim should be dismissed where Plaintiff did not oppose dismissal.

HOLDINGS

1. A FEHA religious-discrimination claim must allege, among other things, that the plaintiff holds a bona fide religious belief that conflicts with an employment requirement. Plaintiff's conclusory allegations did not adequately plead such a claim, so the FEHA claim was dismissed with leave to amend.
2. Because Plaintiff's UCL unlawful-prong claim was predicated on the alleged FEHA violation, the failure of the FEHA claim required dismissal of the derivative UCL claim.
3. Plaintiff failed to state a UCL claim under the unfair prong because her allegations merely parroted statutory language and did not adequately identify a qualifying unfair business practice.
4. Plaintiff failed to state a UCL fraudulent-prong claim because she did not identify the allegedly false statements or otherwise plead facts showing that members of the public were likely to be deceived.
5. The wrongful-termination claim was dismissed without leave to amend because Plaintiff did not oppose dismissal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Threadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action, supported by mere conclusory statements, do not suffice.” (at 2)

“A business practice is fraudulent under the UCL if members of the public are likely to be deceived.” (at 3)

“To state a claim under either statute, Plaintiff must provide Defendant fair notice of the claims against it which requires more than simply reciting the statutory language.” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

T-Mobile required employees to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Paula Zajonc alleged that she sought a religious exemption, that T-Mobile denied the exemption under a common policy, and that her employment was terminated. She asserted FEHA religious-discrimination, UCL, and wrongful-termination claims, but pleaded

few facts concerning her religious belief, the requested exemption, T-Mobile's denial, or the allegedly false statements underlying the UCL claim.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Paula Zajonc sued T-Mobile in Alameda County Superior Court, asserting claims under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, California's Unfair Competition Law, and for wrongful termination in violation of public policy. T-Mobile removed the case to the Northern District of California and moved to dismiss for failure to state a claim and to strike certain allegations. The court vacated the hearing, granted the motion, dismissed the FEHA and UCL claims with leave to amend, and dismissed the wrongful-termination claim without leave to amend.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Bolden-Hardge v. Office of California State Controller, 63 F.4th 1215, 1222-23 (9th Cir. 2023)
- Heller v. EBB Auto Co., 8 F.3d 1433, 1438 (9th Cir. 1993)
- Friedman v. Southern California Permanente Medical Group, 102 Cal. App. 4th 39, 45 (2002)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Cel-Tech Communications, Inc. v. Los Angeles Cellular Telephone Co., 20 Cal. 4th 163, 180 (1999)
- Aleksick v. 7-Eleven, Inc., 205 Cal. App. 4th 1176, 1185 (2012)
- Landers v. Quality Communications, Inc., 771 F.3d 638, 644 (9th Cir. 2014), as amended (Jan. 26, 2015)
- Davis v. HSBC Bank Nevada, N.A., 691 F.3d 1152, 1169 (9th Cir. 2012)

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