

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Robert Cauley v. Auto Explosion, Inc.

Cauley v. Auto Explosion · No. 2:25-cv-4443-MEMF · Decided June 3, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of California ordered Robert Cauley to show cause why the court should not decline to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over his California state-law claims. The court directed Cauley and his counsel to provide information and declarations concerning statutory damages and whether they qualify as high-frequency litigants under California law.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Maame Ewusi-Mensah Frimpong
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	June 3, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-4443-MEMF
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court issued an order to show cause why it should not decline to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the plaintiff's California-law claims in an action asserting an ADA claim and related state-law claims.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; interlocutory district court order

TOPICS

- subject matter jurisdiction
- civil procedure
- ada / disability
- public accommodations discrimination
- architectural barriers

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- supplemental jurisdiction
- California disability-access litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the Unruh Act, California Disabled Persons Act, California Health and Safety Code, and negligence claims under 28 U.S.C. § 1367.
2. What information Cauley and his counsel must provide for the court to evaluate whether they are high-frequency litigants under California law.

HOLDINGS

1. The court did not resolve whether to exercise supplemental jurisdiction; instead, it ordered Cauley to show cause why the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the state-law claims.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“when deciding whether to exercise supplemental jurisdiction, ‘a federal court should consider and weigh in each case, and at every stage of the litigation, the values of judicial economy, convenience, fairness, and comity.’” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Cauley alleged that Auto Explosion, Inc., Esteban Pimentel, and Doe defendants violated the ADA through construction-related accessibility barriers. He also asserted California statutory and negligence claims seeking damages and injunctive relief. Because California imposes heightened pleading and disclosure requirements on certain construction-accessibility actions, the court sought information relevant to whether exercising supplemental jurisdiction over those state-law claims would be appropriate.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Robert Cauley filed a complaint on May 16, 2025, asserting an ADA injunctive-relief claim and claims under the California Unruh Civil Rights Act, California Disabled Persons Act, California Health and Safety Code, and negligence. The court directed Cauley and his counsel to provide information and declarations concerning statutory damages and whether they qualify as high-frequency litigants, warning that inadequate or untimely responses could result in declining supplemental jurisdiction over the state-law claims.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- City of Chicago v. International College of Surgeons, 522 U.S. 156, 173 (1997)
- Carnegie-Mellon University v. Cohill, 484 U.S. 343, 350 (1988)

OPINION

Robert Cauley v. Auto Explosion, Inc.

PER CURIAM.

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8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

9 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10 Case No.: 2:25-cv-4443-MEMF

11 ROBERT CAULEY,

12 Plaintiff, ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE WHY THE

COURT SHOULD NOT DECLINE TO

13 v. EXERCISE SUPPLEMENTAL

JURISDICTION OV ER PLAINTIFF'S

14 STATE LAW CLAIMS

AUTO EXPLOSION, INC.; ESTEBAN

15 PIMENTEL; and DOES 1 to 10, 16 Defendants. 17 18 19 20 On May 16, 2025, Robert Cauley
filed a Complaint against Auto Explosion, Inc.; Esteban 21 Pimentel; and Does 1 to 10
("Defendants") asserting: (1) a claim for injunctive relief arising out of 22 an alleged violation of
the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), 42 U.S.C. §§ 12010–12213; 23 (2) a claim for
damages pursuant to California's Unruh Civil Rights Act ("Unruh Act"), Cal. Civ. 24 Code §§ 51–
52, et seq.; (3) a claim for damages pursuant to the California Disabled Persons Act, 25 Cal. Civ.
Code §§ 54, et seq.; (4) a claim for damages and injunctive relief based on California 26 Health
and Safety Code § 19955, et seq.; (5) a claim for damages for negligence. ECF No. 1. The 27
Complaint alleges that this Court has jurisdiction over the ADA claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§
1331 28 1 and 1343, and that the state law claims are brought "pursuant to pendant [sic]
jurisdiction." Id. at ¶¶ 2 6–7. 3 Principles of pendent jurisdiction have been codified in the
supplemental jurisdiction statute, 4 28 U.S.C. § 1367. The supplemental jurisdiction statute
"reflects the understanding that, when 5 deciding whether to exercise supplemental jurisdiction, 'a
federal court should consider and weigh in 6 each case, and at every stage of the litigation, the
values of judicial economy, convenience, fairness, 7 and comity.'" City of Chicago v. Int'l Coll. of
Surgeons, 522 U.S. 156, 173 (1997) (emphasis added) 8 (quoting Carnegie-Mellon Univ. v. Cohill,
484 U.S. 343, 350 (1988)). 9 California law sets forth a heightened pleading standard for a limited
group of lawsuits 10 brought under the Unruh Act. See Cal. Civ. Proc. Code §§ 425.55(a)(2) & (3).
The stricter pleading 11 standard requires certain plaintiffs bringing construction-access claims
like the one in the instant 12 case to file a verified complaint alleging specific facts concerning the
plaintiff's claim, including the 13 specific barriers encountered or how the plaintiff was deterred
and each date on which the plaintiff 14 encountered each barrier or was deterred. See Cal. Civ.
Proc. Code § 425.50(a). A "high-frequency 15 litigant fee" is also imposed on certain plaintiffs
and law firms bringing these claims. See Cal. Gov't 16 Code § 70616.5. A "high-frequency
litigant" is "a plaintiff who has filed 10 or more complaints 17 alleging a construction-related
accessibility violation within the 12-month period immediately 18 preceding the filing of the
current complaint alleging a construction-related accessibility violation" 19 and "an attorney who

has represented as attorney of record 10 or more high-frequency litigant 20 plaintiffs in actions that were resolved within the 12-month period immediately preceding the filing 21 of the current complaint alleging a construction-related accessibility violation.” Cal. Civ. Proc. Code 22 §§ 425.55(b)(1) & (2). High frequency litigants are also required to state: (1) whether the complaint 23 is filed by, or on behalf of, a high-frequency litigant; (2) in the case of a high-frequency litigant who 24 is a plaintiff, the number of complaints alleging construction-related accessibility claim filed by the 25 high-frequency litigant during the 12 months prior to filing the instant complaint; (3) the reason the 26 individual was in the geographic area of the defendant’s business; and (4) the reason why the 27 individual desired to access the defendant’s business.” See id. § 425.50(a)(4) (A). 28 I In light of the foregoing, the Court orders Cauley to show cause in writing why the Court 2 | should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the Unruh Act claim, the California Disabled Persons 3 || Act claim, the California Health and Safety Code claim, and the negligence claim. See 28 U.S.C. § 4 | 1367(c). In responding to this Order to Show Cause: 5 1. Cauley shall identify the amount of statutory damages Cauley seeks to recover. 6 2. Cauley and his counsel shall also support their responses to the Order to Show Cause with 7 declarations, signed under penalty of perjury, providing all facts necessary for the Court to 8 determine if they satisfy the definition of a “high-frequency litigant” as provided by 9 California Code of Civil Procedure §§ 425.55(b)(1) & (2). This includes, but is not limited 10 to: 11 a. the number of construction-related accessibility claims filed by Cauley in the twelve 12 months preceding the filing of the present claim; and 13 b. the number of construction-related accessibility claims in which Cauley’s counsel has 14 represented high-frequency litigant plaintiffs in the twelve months preceding the 15 filing of the present claim. 16 Cauley shall file a Response to this Order to Show Cause by no later than fourteen days from 17 || the date of this order. The failure to timely or adequately respond to this Order to Show Cause may, 18 || without further warning, result in the Court declining to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the 19 | Unruh Act claim, the California Disabled Persons Act claim, the California Health and Safety Code 20 || claim, and the negligence claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c). 21 22 IT IS SO ORDERED. 23 24 ~ 25 Dated: June 3, 2025

26 MAAME EWUSI-MENSAH FRIMPONG

27 United States District Judge 28