

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
WASHINGTON

Jane Doe 1, et al. v. Alondra Guzman

No. 2:25-cv-00431-RSL (W.D. Wash. Feb. 3, 2026) · No. 2:25-cv-00431-RSL · Decided February 3, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington denied Alondra Guzman’s motion to compel joinder of Washington and state agencies as necessary parties, to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over related state-law claims, or alternatively to stay the federal proceeding. The court held that complete relief could be obtained against Guzman individually, that supplemental jurisdiction could not be used to compel claims not brought in federal court, and that comity favored allowing the related state-court action to proceed. The court also found no sufficient basis for staying the federal § 1983 claims.

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 6 FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
WASHINGTON AT SEATTLE 7 8 JANE DOE 1, et al., CASE NO. 2:25-cv-00431-RSL 9
Plaintiffs, v. ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT’S 10 MOTION TO JOIN NECESSARY
PARTIES, EXERCISE 11 ALONDRA GUZMAN, SUPPLEMENTAL JURISDICTION, OR, IN
THE ALTERNATIVE STAY 12 Defendant. THIS LITIGATION 13 14 This matter comes before
the Court on “Defendant’s Motion to Compel Plaintiffs to 15 Join Necessary Parties and Exercise
Supplemental Jurisdiction.” Dkt.

22. Plaintiffs allege 16 that defendant Guzman, an employee and agent of the “State of
Washington, Department 17 for Child, Youth, and Families,” “deliberately, consciously, and/or
recklessly conducted an 18 investigation of child abuse and/or purposefully concealed exculpatory
evidence in the 19 legal removal process.” Dkt. 7 at ¶¶ 1 and 4. Plaintiffs seek an award of
damages for 20 constitutional and statutory violations under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

21 Defendant argues that the State of Washington, the Department of Social and 22 Health
Services, the Department of Child Protective Services, the Children’s 23 Administration, and the
Department of Children, Youth, and Families are necessary parties 24 under Fed. R. Civ. P. 19 and
must be joined as defendants in this litigation.

In addition, 25 defendant requests that the Court exercise supplemental jurisdiction over state law
claims 26 ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT’S MOTION TO JOIN 1 pending in Doe 1 v. State
of Washington, No. 25-2-07431-5 (King County Sup. Ct.). 2 Plaintiffs filed the state court lawsuit
less than a week before filing this lawsuit and named 3 the State of Washington and its

agencies/departments as defendants.¹ In the alternative, 4 defendant seeks a stay of this proceeding while the state court action is adjudicated.

5 A. Mandatory Joinder 6 Rule 19(a) states in relevant part: 7 (1) Required Party. A person who is subject to service of process and whose 8 joinder will not deprive the court of subject-matter jurisdiction must be 9 joined as a party if: 10 (A) in that person's absence, the court cannot accord complete relief 11 among existing parties; or 12 (B) that person claims an interest relating to the subject of the action and is so situated that disposing of the action in the person's absence 13 may: 14 (i) as a practical matter impair or impede the person's ability to 15 protect the interest; or 16 (ii) leave an existing party subject to a substantial risk of 17 incurring double, multiple, or otherwise inconsistent obligations because of the interest.

18 Mirroring the language of Rule 19(a)(1)(A), defendant asserts that, in the absence of 19 joinder, complete relief cannot be granted as between the existing parties. No support for 20 this assertion is provided. In this litigation, plaintiffs seek to recover damages for 21 violations of federal law from Ms. Guzman. Defendant does not identify any impediment 22 to obtaining that relief.

Rather, she argues that much of the evidence she will need to 23 defend herself is in the possession of her former employer, the Department of Children, 24 25 1 The Eleventh Amendment generally precludes an action against a state or its agencies in federal court. At the time the state court proceeding was filed, there was no indication that Congress had abrogated Washington's Eleventh 26 Amendment immunity in this case or that Washington or its agencies had expressly waived their immunity from suit in federal court.

ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT'S MOTION TO JOIN 1 Youth, and Families. Evidence is often found outside of a party's possession or control, 2 however, and can be obtained using the many discovery tools provided in the Federal 3 Rules of Civil Procedure. Ms. Guzman also points out that she was acting as an agent of 4 the Department of Children, Youth, and Families during the relevant period.

That fact 5 neither invalidates the claim against her or requires that the employer be named as a 6 defendant in this case. Under Washington law, a principal and an agent are jointly and 7 severally liable for damages arising from the agent's tortious conduct. *Finney v. Farmers 8 Ins. Co.*, 92 Wn.2d 748, 754 (1979).

The same rule generally applies in the employment 9 context: "[a]n employee who tortiously causes injury to a third person may be held 10 personally liable to that person regardless of whether he or she committed the tort while 11 acting within the scope of employment." *Eastwood v. Horse Harbor Found., Inc.*, 170 12 Wn.2d 380, 400 (2010) (quoting 27 Am. Jur.

2d Employment Relationship § 409 (2004)). 13 While Ms. Guzman and/or her employer may have a claim for indemnification or 14 contribution against the other if they are found liable to plaintiffs, complete relief as 15 between the existing parties is available in this case. 16 Defendant also asserts that the rights of the defendants in both lawsuits will be 17 compromised because they will have to litigate the same facts and events in two different 18 jurisdictions, raising the potential of conflicting rulings and decisions.

The two lawsuits are 19 against different defendants and assert entirely different claims. There is no chance that 20 Ms. Guzman will be subjected to a verdict in the state court proceeding and no chance that 21 the State of Washington will be held liable here: thus, the risk of double recovery as the 22 cases currently stand is zero. If, however, the undersigned were to order plaintiffs to add 23 the State and its departments to this litigation as defendants, it would create duplicative 24 litigation of the state law claims and the state defendants might then face double or 25 inconsistent obligations.

26 ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT’S MOTION TO JOIN 1 There is no doubt that the two pending litigations arise out of a common nucleus of 2 operative facts and that their pursuit in two different jurisdictions will likely be inefficient. 3 These concerns do not justify compelled joinder, however, or stripping state law claims 4 from a state court that indisputably has jurisdiction over them.

If, as appears to be the case, 5 Ms. Guzman would like to have the claims asserted against her resolved alongside the 6 claims against the state defendants, she could attempt to negotiate an agreement with 7 plaintiffs to add the § 1983 claim to the state court litigation (and waive any right to 8 removal). 9 B. Supplemental Jurisdiction 10 Defendant cites 28 U.S.C. § 1367 as authority for forcing plaintiffs to pursue their 11 state law claims against the state defendants in this litigation.

Section 1367 allows a federal 12 court to assert supplemental jurisdiction over state law claims joined with the federal 13 claims if the state claims are “part of the same case or controversy” as the federal claims. 14 Plaintiffs have not appended state law claims to her federal claim, however, instead opting 15 to seek state law remedies in state court. Defendant offers no case law or authority 16 suggesting that supplemental jurisdiction can be exercised over claims that are not before 17 the federal court.

Nor were plaintiffs required to assert all of their claims in a single 18 lawsuit. Fed. R. Civ. P. 18(a) (authorizing, but not requiring, the joinder of claims). 19 Even if § 1367 could be interpreted to compel the joinder of claims so that 20 supplemental jurisdiction was an option, the Court would decline to exercise that authority 21 on comity grounds.

The King County Superior Court has original jurisdiction over the state law claims asserted in Doe 1 v. State of Washington, No. 25-2-07431-5. To wrest those claims from plaintiffs' jurisdiction of choice would not only do violence to the rule that plaintiffs are the master of their own complaint and may decide on what law to rely (The Fair v. Kohler Die & Specialty Co., 228 U.S. 22, 25 (1913); Newtok Vill. v. Patrick, 21 F.4th 608, 616 (9th Cir.

2021)), but would also interfere with our federal system in which ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT'S MOTION TO JOIN 1 state courts are permitted to try state cases free of federal interference, thereby respecting 2 state functions and legitimate judicial activities (Gilbertson v. Albright, 381 F.3d 965, 970 (9th Cir. 2004)). 4 C. Stay of Federal Proceeding 5 Relying on a case in which pendent state law claims against the defendant were 6 remanded to state court, Ms. Guzman argues that the Court should stay resolution of the 7 § 1983 asserted against her until the state law claims against her former employer have 8 been decided.

This case is distinguishable, however. Ms. Guzman is not a defendant in the 9 state court proceeding and the claims are entirely distinct (even though they arise out of the 10 same nucleus of operative facts). Defendant's vague assertion that "the results of the King 11 County Superior Court case may be informative" (Dkt. 22 at 9) is insufficient to justify a 12 stay.

13 14 For all of the foregoing reasons, defendant's motion (Dkt. 22) is DENIED. 15 16 Dated this 3rd day of February, 2026. 17 18 Robert S. Lasnik 19 United States District Judge 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT'S MOTION TO JOIN