

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Ronald Stockton v. Centurion, Steven Wheeler, et al.

No. 1:24-CV-39, United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania (December 9, 2025)

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania dismissed Ronald Stockton’s pro se action for failure to prosecute after he failed to pay the filing fee or file an amended in forma pauperis motion as ordered. Applying the six-factor Poulis test, the court found that personal responsibility and the availability of alternative sanctions favored dismissal, while the remaining factors were neutral. The Clerk was directed to mark the case closed.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Susan Paradise Baxter
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania
DECIDED	December 9, 2025
DOCKET	1:24-CV-39
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A pro se prisoner plaintiff failed to either pay the filing fee or file an amended motion to proceed in forma pauperis after being ordered to do so. The district court dismissed the action for failure to prosecute.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the Third Circuit's six-factor balancing test for determining whether dismissal for failure to prosecute is appropriate.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court memorandum order; nonprecedential.
PARTIES	Ronald Stockton v. Centurion, Steven Wheeler, et al.

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- prisoners rights
- ada / disability

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- prisoner civil rights
- disability discrimination

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should be dismissed for failure to prosecute after the plaintiff failed to pay the filing fee or submit an amended motion to proceed in forma pauperis.
2. Whether the Poulis factors supported dismissal.

HOLDINGS

1. Dismissal was warranted because Stockton failed to comply with the order requiring him to resolve the filing-fee issue, and the Poulis factors did not weigh against dismissal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Not all of the six Poulis factors need to weigh in favor of dismissal before dismissal is warranted.”
(unpaginated memorandum order)

“Here, the bottom line is that without Mr. Stockton’s resolution of the filing fee, the case cannot proceed.”
(unpaginated memorandum order)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Stockton, proceeding pro se and incarcerated, did not comply with the court's order requiring him either to file an amended in forma pauperis motion showing imminent danger or to pay the filing fee. The order was mailed to his address of record, and no mail was returned in this docket. His complaint asserted claims involving retaliation, mental-health treatment, disability discrimination, alleged HIPAA violations, and other misconduct, but the court found the merits indeterminate at that early procedural stage.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Stockton initiated the action and moved to proceed in forma pauperis on February 13, 2024. On October 6, 2025, the court ordered him to file an amended in forma pauperis motion showing imminent danger or pay the full filing fee by November 6, 2025. He did neither, and the court applied the six-factor Poulis test and dismissed the case for failure to prosecute.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Anthony Hildebrand v. County of Allegheny, Hildebrand v. Allegheny County, 923 F.3d 128, 132 (3d Cir. 2019)
- Poulis v. State Farm Fire & Casualty Co., 747 F.2d 863, 868 (3d Cir. 1984)
- Briscoe v. Klaus, 538 F.3d 252, 258 (3d Cir. 2008)
- Emerson v. Thiel College, 296 F.3d 184, 191 (3d Cir. 2002)
- Hicks v. Feeney, 850 F.2d 152 (3d Cir. 1988)

