

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Stacey Lee et al. v. M. Power Auto Group

No. 5:25-cv-02565-SSS-MARx, United States District Court for the Central District of California (November 19, 2025)

SUMMARY

The court dismissed the action without prejudice after the plaintiffs failed to comply with an order requiring them to submit completed in forma pauperis requests or pay the filing fee and to file an amended complaint addressing equitable tolling. Applying the factors governing dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b), the court concluded that four of the five factors favored dismissal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sunshine S. Sykes
JURISDICTION	United States District Court
DECIDED	November 19, 2025
DOCKET	5:25-cv-02565-SSS-MARx
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court dismissed the action sua sponte without prejudice after Plaintiffs failed to comply with an order requiring completed in forma pauperis requests or payment of the filing fee and an amended complaint.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) for failure to comply with a court order is an exercise of the district court's inherent authority and requires consideration of five dismissal factors.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Stacey Lee et al. v. M. Power Auto Group

TOPICS

- sanctions
- civil procedure
- truth in lending
- statute of limitations

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

consumer protection

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should be dismissed without prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) because Plaintiffs failed to comply with the court's order.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court may dismiss an action without prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) when a plaintiff fails to comply with a court order, after considering the five dismissal factors: the public interest in expeditious resolution, the court's need to manage its docket, prejudice to defendants, the policy favoring disposition on the merits, and the availability of less drastic alternatives. Because four of the five factors favored dismissal, the action was dismissed without prejudice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A district court has the inherent power under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) to dismiss an action for failure to comply with the court’s order.”

“[I]n order for a court to dismiss a case as a sanction, the district court must consider five factors: ‘(1) the public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation; (2) the court’s need to manage its docket; (3) the risk of prejudice to the defendants; (4) the public policy favoring disposition of cases on their merits; and (5) the availability of less drastic alternatives.’” (191 F.3d at 986)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs alleged violations of the Truth in Lending Act. The court ordered them to complete their IFP applications or pay the filing fee and to amend their complaint to explain the basis for equitable tolling of the statute of limitations. More than 30 days after the order, Plaintiffs had not filed completed IFP requests, paid the filing fee, or filed an amended complaint.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed a Truth in Lending Act complaint and a request to proceed in forma pauperis on September 29, 2025. The court postponed ruling on the IFP request and ordered Plaintiffs within 30 days to submit completed IFP requests or pay the filing fee and to file an amended complaint addressing equitable tolling. Plaintiffs did none of these things, despite the court's warning that noncompliance would result in dismissal without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Agnew v. Moody, 330 F.2d 868, 871 (9th Cir. 1964)

- *Link v. Wabash R. Co.*, 370 U.S. 626, 631 (1962)
- *Yourish v. California Amplifier*, 191 F.3d 983, 986, 990 (9th Cir. 1999)
- *Hernandez v. City of El Monte*, 138 F.3d 393, 399 (9th Cir. 1998)
- *Pagtalunan v. Galaza*, 291 F.3d 639, 642 (9th Cir. 2002)
- *In re Eisen*, 31 F.3d 1447, 1452-53 (9th Cir. 1994)
- *In re Phenylpropanolamine (PPA) Products Liability Litigation*, 460 F.3d 1217, 1228-29 (9th Cir. 2006)

OPINION

Stacey Lee, et al. v. M. Power Auto Group

PER CURIAM.

CIVIL MINUTES – GENERAL

Case No. 5:25-cv-02565-SSS-MARx Date: November 19, 2025 Title Stacey Lee, et al. v. M. Power Auto Group Present: The Honorable: SUNSHINE S. SYKES, UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE Irene Vazquez Not Reported Deputy Clerk Court Reporter / Recorder Attorneys Present for Plaintiffs: Attorneys Present for Defendant: None Present None Present Proceedings (In Chambers): Order Dismissing Action Without Prejudice On September 29, 2025, Plaintiffs filed a Complaint and a Request to Proceed In Forma Pauperis (“IFP request”). [Dkts. 1-2]. Plaintiffs alleged violations of the Truth in Lending Act. [Dkt. 1]. On October 15, 2025, the Court postponed a ruling on the IFP request and ordered Plaintiffs to provide more information within 30 days. [Dkt. 7]. The Court ordered Plaintiffs to file completed IFP requests or, in the alternative, pay the filing fee. *Id.* The Court also ordered Plaintiffs to file an Amended Complaint to explain what basis they had for equitable tolling of the statute of limitations. *Id.* The court warned Plaintiffs that the failure to comply with the order within 30 days would lead to the dismissal of this action without prejudice. *Id.* As of this date, more than 30 days later, Plaintiffs have not filed IFP Requests, paid the filing fee, or filed an Amended Complaint. A district court has the inherent power under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) to dismiss an action for failure to comply with the court’s order. *Agnew v. Moody*, 330 F.2d 868, 871 (9th Cir. 1964) (citing *Link v. Wabash R. Co.*, 370 U.S. 626, 631 (1962)). “[I]n order for a court to dismiss a case as a sanction, the district court must consider five factors: ‘(1) the public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation; (2) the court’s need to manage its docket; (3) the risk of prejudice to the defendants; (4) the public policy favoring disposition of cases on their merits; and (5) the availability of less drastic alternatives.’” *Yourish v. California Amplifier*, 191 F.3d 983, 986 (9th Cir. 1999) (quoting *Hernandez v. City of El Monte*, 138 F.3d 393, 399 (9th Cir. 1998)).

CIVIL MINUTES – GENERAL

Case No. 5:25-cv-02565-SSS-MARx Date: November 19, 2025 Title Stacey Lee, et al. v. M. Power Auto Group Here, the first, second, third, and fifth factors weigh in favor of dismissal. See *Yourish*, 191 F.3d at 990 (“[T]he public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation always favors dismissal.”); *Pagtalunan v. Galaza*, 291 F.3d 639, 642 (9th Cir. 2002) (“The trial judge is in

the best position to determine whether the delay in a particular case interferes with docket management and the public interest. Arguably, [the] petition has consumed some of the court's time that could have been devoted to other cases on the docket."); *In re Eisen*, 31 F.3d 1447, 1452-53 (9th Cir. 1994) (recognizing that the law presumes injury to the defendants from unreasonable delay); *In re Phenylpropanolamine (PPA) Products Liability Litigation*, 460 F.3d 1217, 1229 (9th Cir. 2006) ("Warning that failure to obey a court order will result in dismissal can itself meet the 'consideration of alternatives' requirement."). Although the fourth factor, the public policy favoring disposition of the case on the merits, weighs against dismissal, "this factor lends little support to a party whose responsibility it is to move a case toward disposition on the merits but whose conduct impedes progress in that direction." *Products Liability Litigation*, 460 F.3d at 1228. In sum, four of the five factors weigh in favor of dismissal. Accordingly, this action is dismissed without prejudice. IT IS SO ORDERED.