

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF KANSAS

Angeliina Lawson v. Eric Godderz, et al.

Lawson · No. 25-1179-JWB · Decided May 21, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Kansas adopted a magistrate judge’s Report and Recommendation and dismissed Angeliina Lawson’s complaint. The court held that the federal RICO, § 1983, and ADA claims failed to state a claim, that official-capacity monetary claims were alternatively barred by the Eleventh Amendment, and that Younger abstention applied to requested equitable relief affecting ongoing state custody proceedings. The court declined supplemental jurisdiction over the remaining Kansas-law claims and struck Plaintiff’s duplicative motion to strike.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Kansas
WRITING FOR THE COURT	John W. Broomes
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Kansas
DECIDED	May 21, 2026
DOCKET	25-1179-JWB
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff objected to a magistrate judge's report and recommendation recommending dismissal of her complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii). The district court reviewed the properly objected-to portions de novo, adopted the report and recommendation to the extent described in the order, dismissed the complaint, and struck Plaintiff's duplicative motion to strike.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 72(b)(3), the district judge reviews de novo any part of a magistrate judge's disposition to which a proper objection is made. Pro se filings are liberally construed, but the court may not supply additional factual allegations or construct a legal theory for the litigant.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court memorandum and order; precedential status not indicated
PARTIES	Angeliina Lawson v. Eric Godderz, et al.

TOPICS

family law procedure child custody civil procedure section 1983 ada / disability

PRACTICE AREAS

family law civil procedure civil rights constitutional law ADA / disability remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the district court should abstain under *Younger* from adjudicating Plaintiff's requested equitable relief that would interfere with ongoing state custody proceedings.
2. Whether Plaintiff stated civil RICO claims under 18 U.S.C. § 1962(c) and § 1962(d).
3. Whether Plaintiff stated a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for due process, equal protection, or First Amendment retaliation.
4. Whether Plaintiff stated a Title II ADA discrimination or retaliation claim.
5. Whether official-capacity claims for monetary relief against Kansas state officials were barred by the Eleventh Amendment.
6. Whether the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's remaining Kansas-law claims after dismissing the federal claims.

HOLDINGS

1. The court abstained from ruling on Plaintiff's claims for equitable relief seeking restoration of custody and parental rights because the state custody proceedings were ongoing, implicated important state interests, and provided an adequate forum for federal claims; the requested relief would directly interfere with those proceedings.
2. Plaintiff failed to state claims under 18 U.S.C. § 1962(c) and § 1962(d), and Counts I and II were dismissed.
3. Plaintiff failed to state a § 1983 claim because she alleged no facts establishing a constitutional violation and did not adequately allege that the private defendants acted under color of state law; Count III was dismissed.
4. Plaintiff failed to state a Title II ADA discrimination or retaliation claim, and Count IV was dismissed.
5. Claims for monetary relief against Kansas state officials sued in their official capacities were alternatively dismissed as barred by the Eleventh Amendment.
6. After dismissing all federal claims, the court declined to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the remaining Kansas-law claims and dismissed Count V without prejudice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"In other words, if Younger is satisfied, that does not automatically strip a federal court of jurisdiction; rather, it counsels that the court ought to abstain from ruling on it." (at 4)

“When all federal claims are dismissed, “the court may, and usually should, decline to exercise jurisdiction over any remaining state claims.”” (at 8)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Lawson brought a federal action arising from ongoing state custody and divorce proceedings involving her minor child. She named numerous private actors, judicial officers, attorneys, court-appointed professionals, public officials, court staff, and entities, alleging that they formed an enterprise to deprive her of custody, retaliate against protected ADA activity, conceal abuse, and divert financial resources. She asserted civil RICO, 42 U.S.C. § 1983, Title II ADA, and Kansas-law claims, seeking damages, injunctive relief, restoration of parental rights, and a criminal-investigation referral. The state custody proceedings remained ongoing and on appeal.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Lawson filed the action on August 15, 2025, and filed a supplement on August 20, 2025. Magistrate Judge Teresa J. James issued a report and recommendation on March 12, 2026, recommending dismissal because the federal claims failed to state a claim and supplemental jurisdiction over the state-law claims should be declined. Lawson filed objections on March 19, 2026, and a duplicative motion to strike. The district court rejected the objections, adopted the report and recommendation as described, dismissed the federal claims, declined supplemental jurisdiction over the state-law claims, and closed the case.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Lawson v. Godderz et al., Case No. 25-2199-JWB
- Lawson v. Bolton et al., Case No. 25-2251-JWB
- Lawson v. Kansas et al., Case No. 25-2171-JWB
- Lawson v. Lawson, Case No. 25-4045-JWB
- Meeker v. Kercher, 782 F.2d 153, 154 (10th Cir. 1986)
- Yang v. Archuleta, 525 F.3d 925, 927 n.1 (10th Cir. 2008)
- Williams v. United States, No. 19-2476-JAR-JPO, 2019 WL 6167514, at *1 (D. Kan. Nov. 20, 2019)
- United States v. One Parcel of Real Prop., 73 F.3d 1057, 1060 (10th Cir. 1996)
- Summers v. Utah, 927 F.2d 1165, 1167 (10th Cir. 1991)
- Thomas v. Arn, 474 U.S. 140, 150 (1985)
- United States v. Pinson, 585 F.3d 972, 975 (10th Cir. 2009)
- Sprint Commc'ns, Inc. v. Jacobs, 571 U.S. 69, 73 (2013)
- Thompson v. Romeo, 728 F. App'x 796, 798 (10th Cir. 2018) (unpublished)
- Alfaro v. Cnty. of Arapahoe, 766 F. App'x 657, 661 (10th Cir. 2019) (unpublished)

- *Travelers Cas. Ins. Co. of Am. v. A-Quality Auto Sales, Inc.*, 98 F.4th 1307, 1317 (10th Cir. 2024)
- *Wiland v. Stitt*, No. 24-5116, 2025 WL 369223, at *1 (10th Cir. Feb. 3, 2025) (unpublished)
- *Tal v. Hogan*, 453 F.3d 1244, 1261 (10th Cir. 2006)
- *Burdett v. Harrah's Kansas Casino Corp.*, 260 F. Supp. 2d 1109, 1122 (D. Kan. 2003)
- *Flagg Bros. v. Brooks*, 436 U.S. 149, 155-57 (1978)
- *Weaver v. Boyles*, 172 F. Supp. 2d 1333, 1342 (D. Kan. 2001), *aff'd*, 26 F. App'x 908 (10th Cir. 2002)
- *Gallagher v. Neil Young Freedom Concert*, 49 F.3d 1442, 1447 (10th Cir. 1995)
- *McNeal v. Henry*, No. 17-CV-04008-DDC-KGS, 2017 WL 2345625, at *4 (D. Kan. May 30, 2017)
- *Wilson v. Hous. Auth. of Silver Lake, Kansas*, No. 19-cv-4026-HLT-ADM, 2019 WL 2943054, at *2 (D. Kan. May 30, 2019)
- *Est. of Beauford v. Mesa Cnty., Colorado*, 35 F.4th 1248, 1275 (10th Cir. 2022)
- *Allen v. St. Francis Ministries*, No. 23-1166-DDC-GEB, 2024 WL 2831606, at *3 (D. Kan. June 4, 2024)
- *Brooks v. Kobach*, No. 25-cv-3054-JWL, 2025 WL 1100048, at *3 (D. Kan. Apr. 14, 2025)
- *Roubideaux-Davis v. Klenda*, No. 24-3167-JWL, 2024 WL 4381227, at *2 (D. Kan. Oct. 2, 2024)
- *Schroeder v. Kochanowski*, 311 F. Supp. 2d 1241, 1256 (D. Kan. 2004)
- *Smith v. City of Enid ex rel. Enid City Comm'n*, 149 F.3d 1151, 1156 (10th Cir. 1998)