

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS

Charles Carpenter v. United States Postal Service, Lisa Pittman, and
Joseph Junti

Carpenter · No. 26-cv-00217-JPG · Decided April 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois dismissed Charles Carpenter’s employment-related action against the United States Postal Service and two employees without prejudice for lack of subject matter jurisdiction. The court held that the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act barred judicial review of alleged interference with or delay in workers’ compensation benefits proceedings, and denied Carpenter’s motion to proceed in forma pauperis.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
WRITING FOR THE COURT	J. Phil Gilbert
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
DECIDED	April 16, 2026
DOCKET	26-cv-00217-JPG
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The court considered Plaintiff’s response to an order to show cause why the case should not be dismissed for lack of subject matter jurisdiction and sua sponte dismissed the action.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court independently considered whether it had subject matter jurisdiction over the complaint.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Charles Carpenter v. United States Postal Service, Lisa Pittman, Joseph Junti

TOPICS

- subject matter jurisdiction
- federal employment law
- administrative law
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court had subject matter jurisdiction over allegations that Postal Service employees interfered with the plaintiff's FECA and OWCP proceedings.
2. Whether the plaintiff's response should be considered despite its failure to comply with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11(a)'s signature requirement.

HOLDINGS

1. The court lacked subject matter jurisdiction because adjudicating Carpenter's allegations would require judicial inquiry into the Secretary of Labor's administration of FECA benefits, which 5 U.S.C. § 8128(b) makes final and not subject to review by a court.
2. The court did not require Carpenter to correct the signature deficiency under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11(a) because dismissal for lack of subject matter jurisdiction was required.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The statute explicitly provides that the system it creates is the exclusive remedy for federal employees, and it denies federal courts the jurisdiction to review the final decisions of the Secretary of Labor in applying the Act.” (at 1)

“The action of the Secretary or his designee in allowing or denying a payment under this subchapter is—(1) final and conclusive for all purposes and with respect to all questions of law and fact; and (2) not subject to review by another official of the United States or by a court by mandamus or otherwise.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Carpenter alleged that Lisa Pittman falsely told medical staff that his injury did not occur on the job and that Joseph Junti attempted to obstruct his Office of Workers' Compensation Programs benefits. He claimed that their conduct caused delays and denial of federal workers' compensation benefits. Although he did not expressly challenge an OWCP benefits determination, resolving his allegations would require inquiry into whether the Secretary of Labor wrongfully delayed or denied benefits or improperly conducted the proceedings.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Carpenter filed an employment-related complaint on February 26, 2026, alleging that Postal Service employees interfered with his federal workers' compensation claim. On March 13, 2026, the court found that the allegations did not state a claim under a federal employment discrimination statute and ordered Carpenter to show cause why the case should not be dismissed for lack of jurisdiction. After Carpenter filed an unsigned response asserting that the case involved administration of a FECA claim, the court denied in forma pauperis status and dismissed the case without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Kyle v. Brennan, No. 17 C 7646, 2018 WL 3232794 (N.D. Ill. July 2, 2018)
- Czerkies v. U.S. Dep't of Lab., 73 F.3d 1435, 1437–43 (7th Cir. 1996)

OPINION

Carpenter

PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

CHARLES CARPENTER,

Plaintiff, v. Case No. 26-cv-00217-JPG

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE,

LISA PITTMAN, and

JOSEPH JUNTI,

Defendants.

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

This case is before the Court on Plaintiff Charles Carpenter's Response to Order to Show Cause (Doc. 7). Plaintiff filed his initial complaint on February 26, 2026. In his complaint, he attempted to bring an employment discrimination claim for manager misconduct. To support his claim, he alleged: (1) Defendant Lisa Pittman ("Pittman") lied to medical staff by saying that his injury did not happen on the job; and (2) Defendant Joe Junti ("Junti") tried to obstruct his Office of Workers' Compensation Programs ("OWCP") benefits. In a Memorandum and Order, entered March 13, 2026, the Court found that these allegations are not sufficient to state a claim under any federal employment discrimination statute. It ordered Plaintiff to show cause on or before April 13, 2026, why it should not dismiss this case for lack of jurisdiction. Plaintiff filed a response on April 10, 2026. He asks the Court not to dismiss this case because it involves the handling, interference, and administration of a federal workers' compensation claim under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act ("FECA"). Before the Court reaches the merits of Plaintiff's argument, it must point out a glaring deficiency in his response: it does not contain a signature. Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11(a) requires that documents be signed by an attorney representing the party or, if the party is unrepresented, personally by the party herself. Generally, this Court must strike documents that fail to comply with Rule 11(a)'s signature requirement if the deficiency is not promptly corrected. However, the Court will not require any correction here because it must dismiss this case for lack of subject matter jurisdiction. The FECA establishes a worker's compensation program for federal employees. The Act provides: a) The United States

shall pay compensation as specified by this subchapter for the disability or death of an employee resulting from personal injury sustained while in the performance of his duty, unless the injury or death is—

- (1) caused by willful misconduct of the employee;
- (2) caused by the employee's intention to bring about the injury or death of himself or of another; or
- (3) proximately caused by the intoxication of the injured employee.

5 U.S.C. § 8102(a). “The statute explicitly provides that the system it creates is the exclusive remedy for federal employees, and it denies federal courts the jurisdiction to review the final decisions of the Secretary of Labor in applying the Act.”¹ *Kyle v. Brennan*, No. 17 C 7646, 2018 WL 3232794 (N.D. Ill. July 2, 2018); see also 5 U.S.C. § 8128(b) (“The action of the Secretary or his designee in allowing or denying a payment under this subchapter is—(1) final and conclusive for all purposes and with respect to all questions of law and fact; and (2) not subject to review by another official of the United States or by a court by mandamus or otherwise.”). The OWCP is responsible for administering the FECA. See 20 C.F.R. § 10.1. ¹ There is an exception for constitutional claims, see *Czerkies v. U.S. Dep’t of Lab.*, 73 F.3d 1435, 1437–43 (7th Cir. 1996), but Plaintiff does not assert any. ² Plaintiff alleges that two United States Postal Service employees, Pittman and Junti, interfered with his OWCP proceedings. He states that their interference caused delays and denial of benefits. Plaintiff does not explicitly challenge benefits determinations of the OWCP, but his allegations would require the Court to inquire into whether the Secretary of Labor wrongfully delayed or denied him benefits or otherwise improperly conducted the proceedings. This inquiry is exactly what 5 U.S.C. § 8128(b) prohibits. Accordingly, the Court has no subject matter Jurisdiction over Plaintiffs claim. For the foregoing reasons, the Court DENIES Plaintiff Charles Carpenter’s Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis (Doc. 4), DISMISSES this case without prejudice, and DIRECTS the Clerk of Court to enter judgment accordingly. IT IS SO ORDERED. of (Ab LY bait DATED: April 16, 2026

J.PHILGILBERT

United States District Judge