

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Calvary Chapel San Jose v. Santa Clara County

No. 23-cv-04277-VC, United States District Court for the Northern District of California (April 17, 2025)

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California denied Calvary Chapel San Jose’s motion to lift the stay. The court held that the related state-court proceeding bears upon the federal action, which concerns alleged First Amendment violations arising from County surveillance and enforcement of public health orders, and therefore ordered that the case remain stayed.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Vince Chhabria
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	April 17, 2025
DOCKET	23-cv-04277-VC
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs moved to lift a stay previously imposed while a related state-court case was pending.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Calvary Chapel San Jose v. Santa Clara County

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- first amendment
- free speech

PRACTICE AREAS

- Civil procedure
- Constitutional law
- Civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the district court should lift the stay while a related state-court case concerning the County's public health orders and enforcement efforts remains pending.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court may stay a case pending resolution of related proceedings that bear upon the case, even if the issues in the separate proceedings are not necessarily controlling of the federal action; because the related state case bears upon this action, the stay should remain in place.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A district court may stay a case pending resolution of related proceedings “which bear upon the case,” whether or not the issues in the separate proceedings are “necessarily controlling of the action before the district court.””

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Calvary Chapel challenges Santa Clara County's surveillance of it, alleging that the surveillance was conducted to gather evidence for an enforcement action and violated the First Amendment. A related state-court case concerns the County's public health orders and enforcement of those orders against Calvary Chapel.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

At an August 29, 2024 hearing, the district court ordered the case stayed pending adjudication of a related state-court case. The court denied plaintiffs' motion to lift the stay and continued the stay until the state case is resolved.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- In re PG&E Corp. Securities Litigation, 100 F.4th 1076, 1086 (9th Cir. 2024)
- Calvary Chapel San Jose v. Cody, 20-cv-3794, ECF No. 242-1 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 22, 2022)

OPINION

Calvary Chapel San Jose v. Santa Clara County
PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

CALVARY CHAPEL SAN JOSE, et al., Case No. 23-cv-04277-VC Plaintiffs,
ORDER DENYING MOTION TO LIFT

v. STAY SANTA CLARA COUNTY, et al., Re: Dkt. No. 89 Defendants. The motion to lift the stay is denied. As ordered at the August 29, 2024, hearing, the case will remain stayed pending adjudication of the state court case. A district court may stay a case pending resolution of related proceedings “which bear upon the case,” whether or not the issues in the separate proceedings are “necessarily controlling of the action before the district court.” In re PG&E Corp. Securities

Litigation, 100 F.4th 1076, 1086 (9th Cir. 2024). In defending that case, Calvary Chapel has repeatedly argued that the County's public health orders and enforcement of those orders against it violate the First Amendment. See generally *Calvary Chapel San Jose v. Cody*, 20-cv-3794, ECF No. 242-1 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 22, 2022) (documents from state case). Here, Calvary Chapel similarly asserts that the County violated its First Amendment rights by surveilling it for the purpose of gathering evidence for that enforcement action. So the state case clearly "bears upon" this one, making it more efficient to keep this case stayed until that one is resolved. IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: April 17, 2025

VINCE CHHABRIA

United States District Judge