

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS

Heidi Erickson v. Michael Inman, et al.

Case No. 4:25-cv-04136-SLD-RLH · No. 4:25-cv-04136-SLD-RLH · Decided January 27, 2026

SUMMARY

The order addresses Heidi Erickson’s motions for leave to amend, disability accommodations, reconsideration, and correction of an alleged error in a proposed amended complaint. The court grants leave to file the first amended complaint, denies leave to file a second amended complaint, and finds several other motions moot. Applying the screening standard under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), the court dismisses claims against numerous defendants and evaluates the claims against the remaining parties.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sara Darrow
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois
DECIDED	January 27, 2026
DOCKET	4:25-cv-04136-SLD-RLH
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	On review of a pro se plaintiff's motions for leave to amend, reconsideration, disability accommodations, and correction, the district court granted leave to file a first amended complaint, denied leave to file a second amended complaint, and conducted an in forma pauperis merits review under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii), the court applied the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) standard, accepting well-pleaded allegations as true and viewing them in the light most favorable to the plaintiff. Pro se pleadings were liberally construed, but the complaint still had to provide fair notice and allege a plausible claim.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Heidi Erickson v. Michael Inman, et al.

TOPICS

motion to amend

motions to dismiss

civil procedure

ada / disability

due process

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

constitutional law

disability discrimination

municipal law

mental health law

animal law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Erickson showed excusable neglect and substantial injustice sufficient to permit filing her first amended complaint one day after the deadline.
2. Whether leave should be granted to file a substantially longer second amended complaint filed nearly one month after the amendment deadline.
3. Whether the First Amended Complaint stated plausible claims under the ADA, the Fourth Amendment, procedural due process, Illinois replevin law, and Illinois false-imprisonment law.
4. Whether claims against defendants not adequately connected to alleged wrongdoing, immune defendants, non-suable governmental subdivisions, and claims lacking a private right of action should be dismissed at the screening stage.

HOLDINGS

1. A one-day late amendment may be accepted where the plaintiff demonstrates excusable neglect and denying the extension would create substantial injustice.
2. Leave to file a second amended complaint was properly denied where the proposed pleading was even longer and more confusing than the previously dismissed complaint and the plaintiff failed to show excusable neglect for the nearly one-month delay.
3. An IFP complaint must be dismissed to the extent it fails to state a plausible claim or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant, applying the Rule 12(b)(6) standard.
4. A plaintiff cannot state a claim merely by listing a defendant in the caption or by relying on conclusory allegations without personal involvement.
5. Civil conspiracy is a theory of liability rather than a standalone § 1983 claim or standalone Illinois civil-conspiracy claim; a plaintiff must allege an agreement, membership in the agreement, and an act in furtherance that caused injury.
6. Erickson plausibly stated an Illinois replevin claim concerning her service dog and cats against McDonough County, which she alleged was holding the animals.
7. The amended complaint plausibly alleged ADA claims against the City for disability discrimination and failure to accommodate in the zoning appeals process, and against Lake Behavioral Hospital for disability discrimination.
8. The amended complaint plausibly alleged Fourth Amendment claims based on the May 2, 2025 search, seizure of animals, excessive force, and seizure of Erickson through arrest and involuntary commitment.

9. The amended complaint plausibly alleged that city and individual defendants deprived Erickson of due process by failing to provide notice concerning seized property and by failing to accommodate her participation in an adjudicative zoning hearing.
10. Erickson plausibly stated an Illinois false-imprisonment claim against Herrick, Clemens, and Lake Behavioral Hospital, but not against Marcedo.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“For claims brought via 42 U.S.C. § 1983, conspiracy is merely a theory of liability. It is not a standalone claim” (Discussion § IV.b.ii.1.c)

“due process requires them to take reasonable steps to give notice that the property has been taken so the owner can pursue available remedies for its return.” (Discussion § IV.b.ii.7.c)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Erickson alleged that city and county officials, police officers, animal-control personnel, and private parties searched her home, seized her service dog and cats, arrested her, and caused her involuntary confinement after a search warrant was obtained based on allegedly false statements and omissions. She further alleged that the City restricted access to her home for property-code violations and failed to accommodate her disabilities during a zoning appeal hearing. The amended complaint asserted constitutional, statutory, and state-law claims arising from those events.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Erickson filed an approximately 245-page complaint asserting more than thirty claims against more than fifty defendants. The court dismissed that complaint on October 3, 2025, for failure to comply with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2), while granting leave to amend. Erickson filed her proposed first amended complaint one day after the extended deadline and later sought leave to file a second amended complaint. The court allowed the first amended complaint based on excusable neglect, denied the second amendment, and dismissed numerous claims and defendants after screening, while permitting specified replevin, ADA, Fourth Amendment, false-imprisonment, and due-process claims to proceed.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Raymond v. Ameritech Corp., 442 F.3d 600, 606 (7th Cir. 2006)
- Coleman v. Lab. & Indus. Rev. Comm'n of Wis., 860 F.3d 461, 468 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Arnett v. Webster, 658 F.3d 742, 751 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007)
- Collins v. Kibort, 143 F.3d 331, 334 (7th Cir. 1998)

- Monell v. Dep't of Soc. Servs. of N.Y., 436 U.S. 658 (1978)
- Cefalu v. Village of Elk Grove, 211 F.3d 416, 423 (7th Cir. 2000)
- Niehus v. Liberio, 973 F.2d 526, 531-32 (7th Cir. 1992)
- Beaman v. Freesmeyer, 776 F.3d 500, 510 (7th Cir. 2015)
- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 556-57 (2007)
- Tri-Corp Hous. Inc. v. Bauman, 826 F.3d 446, 449 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Wis. Cmty. Servs., Inc. v. City of Milwaukee, 465 F.3d 737, 750 (7th Cir. 2006)
- People v. Fitzpatrick, 986 N.E.2d 1163, 1167 (Ill. 2013)
- Greenpoint Tactical Income Fund LLC v. Pettigrew, 38 F.4th 555, 567 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Siebert v. Severino, 256 F.3d 648, 656-58 (7th Cir. 2001)
- Stainback v. Dixon, 569 F.3d 767, 772 (7th Cir. 2009)
- Yang v. Hardin, 37 F.3d 282, 285 (7th Cir. 1994)
- Torres v. Madrid, 592 U.S. 306, 312 (2021)
- Bruce v. Guernsey, 777 F.3d 872, 875 (7th Cir. 2015)
- City of West Covina v. Perkins, 525 U.S. 234, 240 (1999)
- River Park, Inc. v. City of Highland Park, 23 F.3d 164, 166 (7th Cir. 1994)
- Coniston Corp. v. Village of Hoffman Estates, 844 F.2d 461, 468 (7th Cir. 1988)
- Neita v. City of Chicago, 148 F.4th 916, 939 (7th Cir. 2025)
- Meerbrey v. Marshall Field & Co., 564 N.E.2d 1222, 1231 (Ill. 1990)
- Chapa v. Adams, 168 F.3d 1036, 1038 (7th Cir. 1999)
- United States ex rel. Presser v. Acacia Mental Health Clinic, LLC, 836 F.3d 770, 776 (7th Cir. 2016)

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