

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS, EASTERN DIVISION

Lizbeth Leyva-Quinto v. PowerVolt Group

Leyva-Quinto v. PowerVolt Group, No. 25 C 10700 (N.D. Ill. Mar. 17 2026) · No. No. 25 C 10700; 1:25-cv-10700 · Decided March 17, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois denied Plaintiff Lizbeth Leyva-Quinto’s request for reappointment of counsel and granted PowerVolt Group’s Rule 12(b)(6) motion. The court held that the plaintiff’s FMLA, Title VII, and Illinois Human Rights Act claims were barred by res judicata because a prior Illinois state-court action involving the same parties and operative facts had been dismissed with prejudice. The federal complaint was dismissed in its entirety with prejudice, and the civil case was terminated.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Charles P. Kocoras
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
DECIDED	March 17, 2026
DOCKET	No. 25 C 10700; 1:25-cv-10700
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought federal claims against her former employer for FMLA interference and retaliation, Title VII retaliation, and IHRA retaliation. Defendant moved to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), asserting in part that the claims were barred by res judicata because plaintiff had previously litigated the same claims in Illinois state court.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court accepts well-pleaded factual allegations as true and draws reasonable inferences in the plaintiff's favor. A motion to dismiss based on res judicata may be considered when the pleadings and materials properly available to the court establish the defense.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Lizbeth Leyva-Quinto v. PowerVolt Group

TOPICS

res judicata motions to dismiss civil procedure family and medical leave act title vii

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure employment law civil rights preclusion

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court could consider res judicata on a Rule 12(b)(6) motion when the defense was established by the pleadings and judicially noticeable state-court records.
2. Whether the Illinois state-court dismissal with prejudice had claim-preclusive effect despite the federal action having been filed before the state-court dismissal.
3. Whether the state-court judgment barred plaintiff's federal and state claims because the parties, causes of action, and operative facts were the same.
4. Whether plaintiff was entitled to reappointment of recruited counsel.

HOLDINGS

1. A Rule 12(b)(6) motion based on res judicata is proper when the pleadings and other materials properly available for review establish the validity of the affirmative defense.
2. The state-court dismissal with prejudice was a final adjudication on the merits for purposes of res judicata.
3. Res judicata barred plaintiff's FMLA, Title VII, and IHRA claims because the state-court action involved the same parties, the same cause of action arising from the same operative facts, and a final judgment on the merits.
4. The request for reappointment of recruited counsel was denied because plaintiff had demonstrated the ability to litigate the case herself and the case did not present novel or unusually difficult issues.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Nevertheless, a Rule 12(b)(6) motion based on an affirmative defense is proper when the pleadings and other materials available to the Court for review establish the validity of the affirmative defense." (at 5)

"If a plaintiff receives a final judgment on the merits of her case, the doctrine of res judicata prevents the plaintiff from relitigating claims that were or could have been litigated during an earlier proceeding." (at 6)

"In sum, because all the elements of res judicata are satisfied, the Illinois state court's October 8, 2025 order dismissing Plaintiff's action and complaint with prejudice bars this Court from entertaining her renewed

attempt to bring her claims in this second action where she had a full and fair opportunity to present her claims in the first action.” (at 10)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff worked for PowerVolt Group from January 2024 until January 2025. On January 3, 2025, she missed work because her child required urgent medical care and immediately notified her supervisor, but the absence was classified as a no-show. When she returned on January 6, 2025, she was told that she had been replaced and was no longer needed. She alleged that her termination followed her report of workplace harassment and use of family medical leave.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff previously filed an action against PowerVolt Group in the Circuit Court of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit of DuPage County, Illinois. The state court dismissed her second amended complaint in its entirety with prejudice on October 8, 2025. Plaintiff had filed this federal action on September 5, 2025, before the state-court dismissal. The federal court denied plaintiff's request for reappointment of counsel, granted defendant's Rule 12(b)(6) motion, and dismissed the federal complaint with prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Ennenga v. Starns, 677 F.3d 766, 773 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Gen. Elec. Cap. Corp. v. Lease Resolution Corp., 128 F.3d 1074, 1081 (7th Cir. 1997)
- Cameron v. Patterson, 2012 WL 1204638, at *3-4 (N.D. Ill. Apr. 10, 2012)
- Kaminski v. Elite Staffing, Inc., 23 F.4th 774, 776 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Bonnstetter v. City of Chicago, 811 F.3d 969, 973, 975 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)
- Gociman v. Loyola Univ. of Chi., 41 F.4th 873, 878 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Ebemeyer v. Brock, 11 F.4th 537, 542 n.4 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007)
- Pruitt v. Mote, 503 F.3d 647, 654-56 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Henderson v. Ghosh, 755 F.3d 559, 564 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Olson v. Morgan, 750 F.3d 708, 711 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Eagan v. Dempsey, 987 F.3d 667, 682 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Watts v. Kidman, 42 F.4th 755, 763-64 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Davila v. Teeling, 2017 WL 11317778, at *1 (E.D. Wis. 2017)
- Sapp v. Foxx, 106 F.4th 660, 664 (7th Cir. 2024)
- Muhammad v. Oliver, 547 F.3d 874, 878 (7th Cir. 2008)

- Carr v. Tillery, 591 F.3d 909, 913 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Bowers v. City of Chicago, 2024 WL 3888877, at *2 (N.D. Ill. 2024), aff'd, 2025 WL 1743506 (7th Cir. 2025)
- Brown v. Felsen, 442 U.S. 127, 131 (1979)
- Arizona v. California, 530 U.S. 392, 412 (2000)
- Palka v. City of Chicago, 662 F.3d 428, 437 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Walczak v. Chi. Bd. of Educ., 739 F.3d 1013, 1016 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Kremer v. Chem. Constr. Corp., 456 U.S. 461, 466 (1982)
- White v. Ill. State Police, 15 F.4th 801, 809 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Cooney v. Rossiter, 2012 IL 113227, ¶ 21
- River Park, Inc. v. City of Highland Park, 184 Ill. 2d 290, 311 (1998)
- DeLuna v. Treister, 185 Ill. 2d 565, 575, 579 (1999)
- Ward v. Decatur Mem'l Hosp., 2019 IL 123937, ¶ 50
- Svendsen v. Pritzker, 91 F.4th 876, 878 (7th Cir. 2024)
- Menominee Indian Tribe of Wis. v. EPA, 947 F.3d 1065, 1071 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Tafflin v. Levitt, 493 U.S. 455, 459 (1990)
- Dookeran v. County of Cook, Ill., 719 F.3d 570, 576 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Mathis v. N.Y. Life Ins. Co., 133 F.3d 546, 548 (7th Cir. 1998)
- Moore v. Ill. State Police, 90 F. App'x 964, 965 (7th Cir. 2004)
- Abu-Shawish v. United States, 898 F.3d 726, 738 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Luevano v. Wal-Mart, 722 F.3d 1014, 1025 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Hukic v. Aurora Loan Servs., 588 F.3d 420, 432 (7th Cir. 2009)

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