

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA

Charles M. McDaniel v. Troy Hershberger, Sickafoose, Wright, and
Acevado

McDaniel · No. 3:26-CV-639-JD-JEM · Decided May 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana dismissed Charles M. McDaniel’s prisoner civil-rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. The court held that his claims concerning disciplinary sanctions and loss of earned credit time could not proceed under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 because success would undermine the disciplinary finding, and that amendment would be futile.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jon E. DeGuilio
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
DECIDED	May 13, 2026
DOCKET	3:26-CV-639-JD-JEM
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening of a pro se prisoner's complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the prisoner's complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and was required to dismiss it if it was frivolous or malicious, failed to state a claim, or sought monetary relief from an immune defendant.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district court opinion with no reporter citation
PARTIES	Charles M. McDaniel v. Troy Hershberger, Sickafoose, Wright, Acevado

TOPICS

- section 1983
- federal habeas corpus
- prisoners rights
- civil procedure
- pleadings

PRACTICE AREAS

- Prisoner civil rights
- Federal habeas corpus
- Civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether McDaniel could pursue under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 claims challenging disciplinary proceedings that resulted in the loss of earned credit time when success would undermine the disciplinary finding.
2. Whether the complaint should be dismissed under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A rather than amended.

HOLDINGS

1. A prisoner cannot proceed under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 on claims challenging a disciplinary proceeding resulting in the loss of earned credit time until the disciplinary proceeding has been overturned, when success on the civil claims would undermine the disciplinary finding of guilt.
2. The complaint was subject to dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A because it failed to state a cognizable claim under § 1983.
3. Leave to amend was denied because amendment would be futile.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Habeas corpus is the exclusive civil remedy for a state prisoner seeking to challenge the fact or duration of his custody, and such relief cannot be pursued under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.”

“For these reasons, this case is DISMISSED under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

McDaniel was disciplined at the Allen County Jail for consensual sexual activity. He alleges that the discipline resulted in the loss of earned credit time and other sanctions. His complaint challenged how and why he was disciplined and sought relief that would undermine the disciplinary finding of guilt.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

McDaniel, an incarcerated pro se plaintiff, filed a complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 concerning discipline imposed at the Allen County Jail. The district court screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, concluded that his claims were not cognizable under § 1983 because success would undermine the disciplinary finding and because he was challenging the loss of earned credit time, and dismissed the action. The court also concluded that amendment would be futile.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007)
- Edwards v. Balisok, 520 U.S. 641, 643 (1997)
- Preiser v. Rodriguez, 411 U.S. 475, 488 (1973)
- Abu-Shawish v. United States, 898 F.3d 726, 738 (7th Cir. 2018)

- Russell v. Zimmer, Inc., 82 F.4th 564, 572 (7th Cir. 2023)

OPINION

McDaniel

PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

SOUTH BEND DIVISION

CHARLES M MCDANIEL,

Plaintiff,

v. CAUSE NO. 3:26-CV-639-JD-JEM

TROY HERSHBERGER, SICKAFOOSE,

WRIGHT, and ACEVADO, Defendants.

OPINION AND ORDER

Charles M McDaniel, a prisoner without a lawyer, filed a complaint raising claims about how and why he was disciplined at the Allen County Jail. ECF 1. “A document filed pro se is to be liberally construed, and a pro se complaint, however inartfully pleaded, must be held to less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers.” *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007) (quotation marks and citations omitted). Nevertheless, under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court must review the merits of a prisoner complaint and dismiss it if the action is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief against a defendant who is immune from such relief. McDaniel alleges he was disciplined for consensual sexual activity at the Allen County Jail and punished with the loss of good time as well as other sanctions. He attempts to raise several claims arguing he was improperly punished, but because he lost earned credit time, he cannot proceed on these claims until his disciplinary proceeding is overturned because finding for him in this case would undermine the disciplinary finding of his guilt. See *Edwards v. Balisok*, 520 U.S. 641, 643 (1997). Habeas corpus is the exclusive civil remedy for a state prisoner seeking to challenge the fact or duration of his custody, and such relief cannot be pursued under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. *Preiser v. Rodriguez*, 411 U.S. 475, 488 (1973). “The usual standard in civil cases is to allow defective pleadings to be corrected, especially in early stages, at least where amendment would not be futile.” *Abu-Shawish v. United States*, 898 F.3d 726, 738 (7th Cir. 2018). “District courts, however, have broad discretion to deny leave to amend a complaint where the amendment would be futile.” *Russell v. Zimmer, Inc.*, 82 F.4th 564, 572 (7th Cir. 2023). For the reasons previously explained, such is the case here. For these reasons, this case is DISMISSED under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. SO ORDERED on May 13, 2026

/s/JON E. DEGUILIO

JUDGE

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

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