

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Saidawi v. San Joaquin General Hospital

No. 2:24-cv-02783-SCR (E.D. Cal. May 5, 2025) · No. 2:24-cv-02783-SCR · Decided May 6, 2025

SUMMARY

The court denied San Joaquin General Hospital’s motion to strike references to the plaintiff’s caregiving responsibilities and his request for punitive damages from the complaint. The court held that the allegations concerning the plaintiff’s mother provided relevant context for his Title VII discrimination and retaliation claims. The court also struck the plaintiff’s unauthorized surreply and denied the hospital’s alternative request to seal it as moot.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sean C. Riordan
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	May 6, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-02783-SCR
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(f) to strike allegations concerning Plaintiff's caregiving responsibilities and his request for punitive damages. Defendant also moved to strike, or alternatively seal, Plaintiff's unauthorized surreply.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A motion to strike under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(f) is committed to the district court's discretion and may be used to remove insufficient defenses or redundant, immaterial, impertinent, or scandalous matter. Rule 12(f) does not authorize dismissal of a damages claim merely because the damages are allegedly unavailable as a matter of law.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential district court order
PARTIES	San Joaquin General Hospital v. Sameer Saidawi

TOPICS

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether allegations concerning Plaintiff's elderly mother's medical needs and his caregiving responsibilities were immaterial to his Title VII discrimination and retaliation claims and therefore subject to being stricken under Rule 12(f).
2. Whether Plaintiff's request for punitive damages could be stricken under Rule 12(f) because Defendant asserted that it was a public entity immune from punitive damages.
3. Whether Plaintiff's unauthorized surreply should be stricken and whether the request to seal that surreply remained necessary.

HOLDINGS

1. The allegations concerning Plaintiff's elderly mother's medical needs and his caregiving responsibilities were relevant context for his Title VII retaliation theory because they explained why the alleged schedule changes and refusal to provide part-time work could interfere with his familial obligations and pressure him to resign. The allegations therefore were not immaterial under Rule 12(f).
2. The court denied the motion to strike Plaintiff's request for punitive damages because Rule 12(f) does not authorize a district court to dismiss a damages claim on the ground that the requested damages are legally unavailable.
3. The court struck Plaintiff's surreply because Plaintiff was not authorized to file it.
4. The request to seal the surreply was denied as moot because the surreply was stricken from the record.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A motion to strike allows a court to strike “from any pleading any insufficient defense or any redundant, immaterial, impertinent, or scandalous matter.”” (Opinion at 2)

“The Ninth Circuit has specifically held that Rule 12(f) “does not authorize a district court to dismiss a claim for damages on the basis it is precluded as a matter of law.”” (Opinion at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that Defendant disciplined him based on the way he speaks, which he attributed to his Jordanian national origin, and that Defendant retaliated after he complained of discrimination. The alleged retaliation included changing his schedule from three twelve-hour days to five eight-hour days and refusing to move him to part-time employment with benefits. Plaintiff alleged that the schedule changes interfered with his care of his elderly, medically fragile mother and were intended to force him to resign. He also alleged that employees raised work-related issues in public settings to provoke further accusations of workplace hostility.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed the action pro se on October 9, 2024, asserting Title VII national-origin discrimination and retaliation claims arising from workplace discipline, scheduling changes, and alleged efforts to force his resignation. Defendant filed motions to strike portions of the Complaint and to strike or seal Plaintiff's surreply. The court denied the motion to strike the Complaint, granted the motion to strike the surreply, and denied the sealing request as moot.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Whittlestone, Inc. v. Handi-Craft Co., 618 F.3d 970, 973-74 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Fantasy, Inc. v. Fogerty, 984 F.2d 1524, 1527 (9th Cir. 1993)
- Sidney-Vinstein v. A.H. Robins Co., 697 F.2d 880, 885 (9th Cir. 1983)
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control v. Alco Pacific, Inc., 217 F. Supp. 2d 1028, 1032-33 (C.D. Cal. 2002)
- Provenz v. Miller, 102 F.3d 1478, 1493 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Black v. TIC Investment Corp., 900 F.2d 112, 116 (7th Cir. 1990)
- Fogerty v. Fantasy, 510 U.S. 517, 114 (1994)
- Rees v. PNC Bank, N.A., 308 F.R.D. 266, 272-73 (N.D. Cal. 2015)