

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
TENNESSEE

Trinika McFarland v. Federal Express Corporate Services

McFarland · No. 2:23-cv-02739-BCL-atc · Decided June 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee granted Federal Express’s motion for summary judgment in Trinika McFarland’s employment-discrimination and retaliation action. The court held that all claims except the Title VII claim were barred by a contractual six-month limitations period, and it held that the Title VII discrimination and retaliation claims failed for lack of supporting evidence. The court directed the clerk to close the case.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Brian C. Lea
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee
DECIDED	June 12, 2026
DOCKET	2:23-cv-02739-BCL-atc
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant moved for summary judgment in an employment-discrimination and retaliation action removed from Tennessee state court. Plaintiff, who was represented by counsel, filed no opposition. The district court granted the motion and directed the clerk to close the case.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is appropriate under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 56 when the movant shows that there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and that the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court considers the record and draws reasonable inferences in favor of the nonmoving party.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; nonprecedential
PARTIES	Trinika McFarland v. Federal Express Corporate Services

TOPICS

employment discrimination

retaliation

summary judgment

statute of limitations

employment contracts

PRACTICE AREAS

employment law

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether McFarland's non-Title VII claims were barred by the six-month limitations period in her employment contract.
2. Whether McFarland presented sufficient evidence of a prima facie Title VII discrimination claim under the McDonnell Douglas framework.
3. Whether McFarland exhausted a Title VII claim based directly on sexual orientation.
4. Whether McFarland presented sufficient evidence of causation and pretext to establish a Title VII retaliation claim.

HOLDINGS

1. The six-month contractual limitations provision was enforceable and barred McFarland's claims other than her Title VII claim because she filed suit more than six months after her termination.
2. McFarland failed to establish a prima facie Title VII discrimination claim because she did not show that a similarly situated employee outside her protected class was treated more favorably, and she presented no evidence that FedEx's stated reason for termination was pretextual.
3. Any Title VII claim based distinctly on sexual orientation failed because McFarland did not present that claim to the EEOC and therefore failed to exhaust administrative remedies.
4. McFarland failed to establish a prima facie Title VII retaliation claim because she did not present evidence of a causal connection between protected activity and her termination, and temporal proximity alone was insufficient to establish causation or pretext.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“For the foregoing reasons, the Court GRANTS Defendant’s Motion for Summary Judgment.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

McFarland, an African-American woman and homosexual, worked for FedEx as a Ramp Agent beginning in 1999. After a January 12, 2022 altercation with coworker Andrew Christopher, two witnesses corroborated Christopher's allegation that McFarland shoved him. FedEx suspended McFarland, demoted her for violating its Acceptable Conduct Policy, and, after a three-tiered internal appeal, terminated her on April 18, 2022. She filed an EEOC and Tennessee Human Rights Commission charge initially alleging race discrimination and later adding sex discrimination, then sued alleging race, sexual-orientation, sex, disability, discrimination, retaliation, and related state-law claims.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

McFarland sued in the Circuit Court of Shelby County, Tennessee, on October 11, 2023. Federal Express removed the action on November 20, 2023. After several judicial recusals and transfers, Federal Express moved for summary judgment on January 20, 2026. The district court granted the motion on June 12, 2026.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Burgess v. Fischer, 735 F.3d 462, 471 (6th Cir. 2013)
- Ord. United Com. Travelers Am. v. Wolfe, 331 U.S. 586, 608 (1947)
- Thurman v. DaimlerChrysler, Inc., 397 F.3d 352, 355-56, 358 (6th Cir. 2004)
- Tompkins v. Fed. Express Corp., No. 2:09CV02073-JPM-DKV, 2010 WL 1780232, at *2 (W.D. Tenn. Apr. 30, 2010)
- Skaan v. Federal Express Corp., 2012 WL 6212891, at *9 (Tenn. App. 2012)
- Evans v. FedEx Exp., 2014 WL 309351 (Tenn. App. 2014)
- Logan v. MGM Grand Detroit Casino, 939 F.3d 824 (6th Cir. 2019)
- Boone v. Town of Collierville, 593 S.W.3d 156, 163 (Tenn. App. 2019)
- Russ v. Memphis Light Gas & Water Div., 720 F. App'x 229, 236 (6th Cir. 2017)
- Ames v. Ohio Dep't of Youth Services, 605 U.S. 303, 306, 308-09 (2025)
- McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. Green, 411 U.S. 792, 802-05 (1973)
- Thurman v. Yellow Freight Sys. Inc., 90 F.3d 1160, 1166 (6th Cir. 1996)
- Dickens v. Interstate Brands Corp., 384 F. App'x 465, 468 (6th Cir. 2010)
- Wingo v. Mich. Bell Tel. Co., 815 F. App'x 43, 46 (6th Cir. 2020)
- Alexander v. Univ. of Memphis, 2021 WL 2579973 (6th Cir. June 7, 2021)

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