

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Dillan Roth v. Exact Sciences Corporation and Kevin Conroy

Roth v. Exact Sciences Corp., C.A. No. 22-263 Erie (W.D. Pa. 2026) · No. C.A. No. 22-263 Erie; 1:22-cv-00263
· Decided March 31, 2026

SUMMARY

The opinion addresses defendants’ motion for summary judgment in an employment action brought under Title VII, the FMLA, and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. The plaintiff alleged religious discrimination and failure to accommodate arising from Exact Sciences Corporation’s COVID-19 vaccination requirement, as well as retaliation and related claims. Based on the excerpt, the court found genuine issues of material fact concerning whether the plaintiff’s objections were religious in nature and sincerely held.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania
DECIDED	March 31, 2026
DOCKET	C.A. No. 22-263 Erie; 1:22-cv-00263
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought Title VII, PHRA, and FMLA claims arising from the denial of a religious exemption from the employer's COVID-19 vaccination policy, his termination, and alleged retaliation. After discovery, defendants moved for summary judgment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is appropriate where the record shows no genuine dispute of material fact and the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court applied the McDonnell Douglas burden-shifting framework to the Title VII, PHRA, and FMLA retaliation claims.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court memorandum opinion; persuasive value only
PARTIES	Dillan Roth v. Exact Sciences Corporation, Kevin Conroy

TOPICS

religious discrimination

title vii

family and medical leave act

retaliation

employment discrimination

PRACTICE AREAS

employment law

civil rights

health law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Roth's objections to the COVID-19 vaccination requirement constituted religious beliefs and were sincerely held for purposes of Title VII and the PHRA.
2. Whether Exact Sciences offered Roth a reasonable religious accommodation or whether allowing him to remain unvaccinated in his healthcare-facility-based role would impose an undue hardship.
3. Whether Roth established Title VII and PHRA retaliation claims based on his religious-exemption request and complaints concerning Conroy's conduct.
4. Whether Roth established an FMLA retaliation claim based on his termination while on parental leave.
5. Whether Roth established an FMLA interference claim by showing that he was denied FMLA benefits.
6. Whether Conroy could be liable for aiding and abetting under the PHRA absent an underlying unlawful discrimination or retaliation violation by Exact Sciences.

HOLDINGS

1. Roth's expressed beliefs concerning biblical bodily stewardship, the purported use of fetal-cell lines, and his Christian and Baptist faith were sufficient to create genuine disputes of material fact regarding whether his opposition to vaccination was religious in nature and sincerely held. Those issues could not be resolved on summary judgment because they required credibility determinations.
2. Exact Sciences was entitled to summary judgment because allowing Roth to remain unvaccinated in his role visiting healthcare facilities would impose an undue hardship on the company.
3. Roth failed to establish Title VII and PHRA retaliation because he did not produce evidence that Exact Sciences' stated reason for termination—failure to comply with the vaccination requirement—was a pretext for retaliation.
4. Roth failed to establish FMLA retaliation because he produced no evidence that his parental leave motivated his termination or that defendants' stated reason was pretextual.
5. Roth's FMLA interference claim failed because the FMLA does not protect an employee from termination for a reason unrelated to exercising FMLA rights, and Exact Sciences terminated Roth for failure to comply with its vaccination requirement.
6. Conroy could not be liable for aiding and abetting under the PHRA because Roth failed to establish an underlying unlawful discrimination or retaliation violation by Exact Sciences.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In short, the employer satisfies its Title VII religious accommodation obligation when it offers any reasonable accommodation.” (15)

“The undue hardship inquiry must focus on the circumstances as they existed at the time ESC considered and denied Plaintiff’s preferred accommodation to remain in his PMR role unvaccinated.” (18)

“The fact that Plaintiff was on FMLA leave at the time of his termination had no bearing on ESC’s decision and did not prevent ESC from terminating him for unrelated reasons.” (25)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Roth worked as a Professional Medical Representative for Exact Sciences, visiting approximately 40 healthcare facilities weekly and interacting with healthcare providers and patients. In 2021, Exact Sciences adopted a COVID-19 vaccination requirement for employees working onsite or visiting healthcare facilities, while offering an exemption process for qualifying religious and medical reasons. Roth requested a religious exemption based on Christian and Baptist beliefs concerning bodily stewardship, vaccines, and fetal-cell research, but also expressed secular and medical objections to vaccination. Exact Sciences denied the exemption, offered vaccination, consideration for an alternative role, or resignation with severance, and terminated Roth after he selected the severance option.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Roth filed an amended complaint asserting five counts: religious discrimination under Title VII and the PHRA; Title VII and PHRA retaliation; FMLA violation; FMLA retaliation and discrimination; and PHRA aiding and abetting against Conroy. Following discovery, defendants moved for summary judgment. The court granted summary judgment for defendants on all claims.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Atkinson v. Lafayette College, 460 F.3d 447, 454 n.6 (3d Cir. 2006)
- Smith v. City of Atlantic City, 138 F.4th 759, 774 (3d Cir. 2025)
- Webb v. City of Philadelphia, 562 F.3d 256, 259 (3d Cir. 2009)
- Fallon v. Mercy Catholic Medical Center, 877 F.3d 487, 491 (3d Cir. 2017)
- Africa v. Pennsylvania, 662 F.2d 1025, 1032 (3d Cir. 1981)
- Blackwell v. Lehigh Valley Health Network, 2023 WL 362392, at *5 (E.D. Pa. Jan. 23, 2023)
- Gray v. Main Line Hospitals, Inc., 717 F. Supp. 3d 437, 444, 446-49 (E.D. Pa. 2024)
- Bushra v. Main Line Health, Inc., 709 F. Supp. 3d 164, 174-75 (E.D. Pa. 2023)
- Shields v. Main Line Hospitals, Inc., 700 F. Supp. 3d 265, 270-74 (E.D. Pa. 2023)
- Shelton v. University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey, 223 F.3d 220, 225 (3d Cir. 2000)
- Ansonia Board of Education v. Philbrook, 479 U.S. 60, 68-69 (1986)
- Groff v. DeJoy, 600 U.S. 447, 468, 470-71 (2023)
- EEOC v. GEO Group, Inc., 616 F.3d 265, 273 (3d Cir. 2010)

- McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. Green, 411 U.S. 792, 802, 804 (1973)
- Neidigh v. Select Specialty Hospital, 664 F. App'x 217, 220 (3d Cir. 2016)
- Selvato v. SEPTA, 658 F. App'x 52, 56 (3d Cir. 2016)
- Nelson v. Upsala College, 51 F.3d 383, 386 (3d Cir. 1995)
- Moore v. City of Philadelphia, 461 F.3d 331, 340-42 (3d Cir. 2006)
- Moody v. Atlantic City Board of Education, 870 F.3d 206, 221 (3d Cir. 2017)
- Fasold v. Justice, 409 F.3d 178, 190 (3d Cir. 2005)
- Lichtenstein v. University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, 691 F.3d 294, 302 (3d Cir. 2012)
- Ross v. Gilhuly, 755 F.3d 185, 191-92 (3d Cir. 2014)
- Sarnowski v. Air Brooke Limousine, Inc., 510 F.3d 398, 403 (3d Cir. 2007)
- Johnson v. Resources for Human Development, Inc., 789 F. Supp. 2d 595, 606 (E.D. Pa. 2011)
- McIlmail v. Pennsylvania, 381 F. Supp. 3d 393, 415 (E.D. Pa. 2019)
- Brzozowski v. Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, 165 F. Supp. 3d 251, 263 (E.D. Pa. 2016)
- Stepp v. Fairpoint Communications, Inc., 2007 WL 4248559, at *9 (W.D. Pa. Nov. 30, 2007)
- Kaniuka v. Good Shepherd Home, 2006 WL 2380387, at *10 (E.D. Pa. Aug. 15, 2006)

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