

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Darwin Boggs v. Hassan Ali Saleh

Boggs v. Saleh · No. 5:25-cv-00714-WLH-DTB · Decided April 7, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of California orders the plaintiff to show cause why the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over claims under California's Unruh Civil Rights Act and related state-law claims. The order discusses 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c), California's efforts to address abusive disability-access litigation, and the relevance of high-frequency litigant requirements. Plaintiff must respond within fourteen days and provide the amount of statutory damages sought and declarations addressing high-frequency litigant status.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	April 7, 2025
DOCKET	5:25-cv-00714-WLH-DTB
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court issued an order to show cause requiring Plaintiff to explain why the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over his state-law Unruh Civil Rights Act claim and any related state-law claims.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Supplemental jurisdiction is discretionary under 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c); the court must weigh judicial economy, convenience, fairness, and comity, along with the circumstances of the case, the nature of the state-law claims, the governing state law, and the relationship between the federal and state claims.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order to show cause; limited precedential value.

TOPICS

- subject matter jurisdiction
- civil procedure
- ada / disability
- public accommodations discrimination

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

disability-access litigation

supplemental jurisdiction

civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the district court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's Unruh Civil Rights Act claim and any related state-law claims.
2. What information Plaintiff and counsel must provide concerning the amount of statutory damages sought and their status as high-frequency litigants before the court decides whether to retain supplemental jurisdiction.

HOLDINGS

1. The court did not yet make a final determination whether to exercise supplemental jurisdiction; instead, it ordered Plaintiff to show cause why the court should retain jurisdiction and warned that failure to respond could result in dismissal of the state-law claims under 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c).

KEY QUOTATIONS

“is a doctrine of discretion, not of plaintiff’s right” (at 2)

“a federal court should consider and weigh in each case, and at every stage of the litigation, the values of judicial economy, convenience, fairness, and comity.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The complaint alleges a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and seeks injunctive relief. It also asserts a claim for damages under California's Unruh Civil Rights Act. The order addresses the California statutory framework governing construction-related disability-access claims and the state's efforts to deter allegedly baseless or vexatious litigation, including heightened pleading requirements and a high-frequency litigant fee.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a complaint asserting an Americans with Disabilities Act claim for injunctive relief and an Unruh Civil Rights Act claim for damages. Before deciding whether to retain the state-law claims, the district court ordered Plaintiff and counsel to provide information concerning the requested statutory damages and whether they qualified as high-frequency litigants under California law.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Carnegie-Mellon University v. Cohill, 484 U.S. 343, 350 (1988)
- Acri v. Varian Associates, Inc., 114 F.3d 999, 1000 (9th Cir. 1997)

- Schutza v. Cuddeback, 262 F. Supp. 3d 1025, 1031 (S.D. Cal. 2017)

OPINION

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 9 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
10 11 DARWIN BOGGS Case No. 5:25-cv-00714-WLH-DTB Plaintiff(s), 12 v. 13 ORDER TO
SHOW CAUSE HASSAN ALI SALEH, et al. 14 WHY THE COURT Defendant(s). SHOULD 15
EXERCISE 16 SUPPLEMENTAL JURISDICTION OVER THE 17 STATE LAW CLAIMS 18 19
The Complaint filed in this action asserts a claim for injunctive relief arising 20 out of an alleged
violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (the “ADA”) and 21 claim for damages pursuant
to California’s Unruh Civil Rights Act (the “Unruh 22 Act”), Cal. Civ.

Code §§ 51-53. In the Complaint, Plaintiff requests the court 23 exercise supplemental jurisdiction
over the Unruh Act claim pursuant to 24 28 U.S.C. § 1367. 25 The United States Supreme Court
has recognized supplemental jurisdiction 26 “is a doctrine of discretion, not of plaintiff’s right, and
that district courts can 27 2 The supplemental jurisdiction statute codifies these principles.

After 3 establishing that supplemental jurisdiction encompasses “other claims” in the same 4 case
or controversy as a claim within the district courts’ original jurisdiction, 5 § 1367(a), the statute
confirms the discretionary nature of supplemental 6 jurisdiction by enumerating the circumstances
in which district courts can refuse 7 its exercise: 8 (c) The district courts may decline to exercise
supplemental jurisdiction over a claim under subsection (a) if -- 9 (1) the claim raises a novel or
complex issue of State law, 10 (2) the claim substantially predominates over the claim or claims 11
over which the district court has original jurisdiction, 12 (3) the district court has dismissed all
claims over which it has 13 original jurisdiction, or 14 (4) in exceptional circumstances, there are
other compelling reasons for declining jurisdiction.

15 16 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c). 17 Depending on a host of factors, then -- including the circumstances
of the 18 particular case, the nature of the state law claims, the character of the governing 19 state
law, and the relationship between the state and federal claims -- district 20 courts may decline to
exercise jurisdiction over supplemental state law claims. 21 The statute thereby reflects the
understanding that, when deciding whether to 22 exercise supplemental jurisdiction, “a federal
court should consider and weigh 23 in each case, and at every stage of the litigation, the values of
judicial economy, 24 convenience, fairness, and comity.” *Id.* at 173 (quoting Carnegie-Mellon
Univ.

25 v. Cohill, 484 U.S. 343, 350 (1988)); see also *Acri v. Varian Assocs.*, 114 F.3d 26 999, 1000
(9th Cir. 1997) (recognizing district courts have discretion to decline 27 2 brought under the Unruh
Act to combat the influx of baseless claims and 3 vexatious litigation in the disability access
litigation sphere. Cal. Code Civ. Proc. 4 § 425.50.

The stricter pleading standard requires a plaintiff bringing construction- 5 access claims¹ to file a verified complaint alleging specific facts concerning the 6 plaintiff's claim, including the specific barriers encountered or how the plaintiff 7 was deterred and each date on which the plaintiff encountered each barrier or 8 was deterred. See *id.* § 425.50(a).

California also imposed a “high-frequency 9 litigant fee” in 2015 in response to the “special and unique circumstances” 10 presented by certain plaintiffs and law firms filing an outsized number of Unruh 11 Act lawsuits. Cal. Gov't Code § 70616.5. 12 In recognition of California's efforts to reduce the abuse of California's 13 disability access laws, district courts within the state have determined that the 14 interests of fairness and comity counsel against exercising supplemental jurisdiction 15 over construction-access claims brought under the Unruh Act.

See, e.g., *Schutza 16 v. Cuddeback* 262 F. Supp. 3d 1025, 1031 (S.D. Cal. 2017) (“[T]he Court finds it 17 would be improper to allow Plaintiff [a high frequency litigant] to use federal court 18 as an end-around to California's pleading requirements.

Therefore, as a matter of 19 20 21 1 “Construction-related accessibility claim’ means any civil claim in a civil action with respect to a place of public accommodation, including, but not limited to, a 22 claim brought under [Cal. Civ. Code] Section 51, 54, 54.1, or 55, based wholly or in part on an alleged violation of any construction-related accessibility standard, as 23 defined in paragraph (6).” Cal. Civ.

Code § 55.52(a)(1). “Construction-related accessibility standard’ means a provision, standard, or regulation under state or 24 federal law requiring compliance with standards for making new construction and existing facilities accessible to persons with disabilities, including, but not 25 limited to, any provision, standard, or regulation set forth in Section 51, 54, 54.1, or 55 of this code, Section 19955.5 of the Health and Safety Code, the California 26 Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336; 27 I comity, and in aererence to Cahtromia § substantial interest 1n discouraging 2 unverified disability discrimination claims, the Court declines supplemental 3 jurisdiction over Plaintiff's Unruh Act claim.”).

4 In light of the foregoing, the Court ORDERS Plaintiff to show cause in writing 5 why the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the Unruh Act claim 6 and any related state law claims. See 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c).

In responding to this 7 Order to Show Cause, Plaintiff shall identify the amount of statutory damages 8 || Plaintiff seeks to recover. Plaintiff and his or her counsel also shall support their || responses to the Order to Show Cause with declarations, signed under penalty 10|| of perjury, providing all facts necessary for the court to determine if they satisfy || the definition of a “high-frequency litigant” as provided by Cal. Code Civ.

Proc. § 425.55(b)(1) & (2). 13 Plaintiff shall file a Response to this Order to Show Cause within fourteen 14|| (14) days of this Order. Failure to timely or adequately respond to this Order to 15|| Show Cause may result in the court declining to exercise supplemental jurisdiction 16|| over the Unruh Act claim and any related state law claims and dismissing such 17|| claim or claims without further notice, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c).

The || Court may set a hearing on the Order to Show Cause after reviewing the 19|| parties' responses, if necessary. 20 21 IT IS SO ORDERED. 22 24 ||Dated: April 7, 2025 25 26 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE 27 28