

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
WISCONSIN

**Sarah Beil v. Pierce County, Janelle Wolf, Sgt. Eric Van Nocker, and
Judge Elizabeth Rohl**

Beil v. Pierce County · No. 26-cv-398-jdp · Decided May 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin dismissed Sarah Beil’s pro se lawsuit seeking a stay of ongoing Pierce County family-court custody proceedings. The court held that federal intervention was unavailable under Younger abstention principles and directed the clerk to enter judgment and close the case.

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN SARAH BEIL, Plaintiff, v. OPINION and ORDER PIERCE COUNTY, JANELLE WOLF 26-cv-398-jdp SGT. ERIC VAN NOCKER, and JUDGE ELIZABETH ROHL, Defendants. Plaintiff Sarah Beil, proceeding without counsel, has filed this lawsuit seeking a stay of Pierce County family court cases involving child custody, No. 2025JC46–2025JC48, contending that the state court has “lost competency to proceed due to a Structural Sequence Error and a coordinated effort to block Plaintiff’s access to the court.” Dkt.

1. Although Beil has paid the entire filing fee, this court retains the inherent authority to screen all complaints to ensure that they state a claim for which relief may be afforded and are not frivolous. *Rowe v. Shake*, 196 F.3d 778, 783 (7th Cir. 1999). I will dismiss this case because this federal court cannot grant Beil the relief that she seeks; this federal court cannot intervene in ongoing state family-court proceedings.

See *J.B. v. Woodard*, 997 F.3d 714, 722 (7th Cir. 2021) (citing *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37 (1971) (federal courts cannot adjudicate claims that take aim at a contested and ongoing family court custody dispute)). Beil’s recourse is in the state-court system, whether by seeking relief in the Pierce County circuit court or in the court of appeals. When a plaintiff proceeds without counsel, the court of appeals has cautioned against dismissing her case without giving her a chance to amend the complaint.

Felton v. City of Chicago, 827 F.3d 632, 636 (7th Cir. 2016). But dismissal of this lawsuit is appropriate because there isn’t any reason to think that Beil could amend her complaint to obtain the relief that she seeks. ORDER IT IS ORDERED that: 1. This case is DISMISSED. 2.

The clerk of court is directed to enter judgment accordingly and close the case. Entered May 12, 2026. BY THE COURT: /s/ _____ JAMES D. PETERSON District Judge

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