

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Raul Gonzales v. Ford Motor Co.

No. 2:25-cv-00523-WLH-JPR (C.D. Cal. Apr. 21, 2025) · No. 2:25-cv-00523-WLH-JPR · Decided April 21,
2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of California denied Plaintiff Raul Gonzales’s motion to remand his Song-Beverly Act and related consumer-protection action against Ford Motor Co. The court held that complete diversity of citizenship and the amount-in-controversy requirement were satisfied, including based on the vehicle’s cash price, mileage offset, and potential civil penalties. The court also rejected the argument that comity principles permitted discretionary remand and ordered the parties to meet and confer regarding a possible damages cap.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Wesley L. Hsu
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	April 21, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-00523-WLH-JPR
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved to remand a California state-law Song-Beverly Act and related consumer-protection action that Defendant removed based on diversity jurisdiction.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The removing defendant bears the burden of establishing federal jurisdiction. Removal statutes are strictly construed against removal jurisdiction, and doubts are resolved in favor of remand. When the amount in controversy is unclear from the complaint, the removing defendant must establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the jurisdictional threshold is satisfied.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential district court order; provided metadata lists precedential status as unknown.
PARTIES	Raul Gonzales v. Ford Motor Co.

TOPICS

subject matter jurisdiction civil procedure consumer protection federalism

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure removal and remand diversity jurisdiction consumer warranty litigation
consumer protection

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Defendant established complete diversity of citizenship for purposes of 28 U.S.C. § 1332.
2. Whether Defendant established by a preponderance of the evidence that the amount in controversy exceeded \$75,000.
3. Whether comity principles or public-policy concerns authorized the court to decline otherwise-satisfied diversity jurisdiction and remand the case.

HOLDINGS

1. Defendant established by a preponderance of the evidence that Plaintiff was a California citizen, and complete diversity of citizenship therefore existed for purposes of diversity jurisdiction.
2. Defendant established by a preponderance of the evidence that the amount in controversy exceeded \$75,000.
3. A federal court may not remand an action merely because the claims arise under state law or because comity principles favor state-court adjudication when diversity jurisdiction is otherwise satisfied.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Courts must ‘strictly construe the removal statute against removal jurisdiction,’ and any doubt about the right of removal is resolved in favor of remand.” (2)

“When a court has diversity jurisdiction over a case, exercise of that jurisdiction ‘is not discretionary.’” (9)

“Rather, federal courts ‘have a ‘virtually unflagging obligation . . . to exercise the jurisdiction given them.’” (10)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Gonzales purchased a Ford vehicle in California on or about May 23, 2022, under an installment sales contract with a total price of \$97,889.64. He alleged Song-Beverly Act warranty violations, fraudulent concealment, and a Consumers Legal Remedies Act violation based on a defective transmission and unsuccessful repair attempts. The purchase agreement and repair records listed California addresses for Gonzales and the relevant dealership or repair facilities.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed the action in the Los Angeles Superior Court on November 14, 2024. Ford was served on December 20, 2024, and timely removed the action to the Central District of California under 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b). Plaintiff moved to remand on March 18, 2025. The court denied the motion, vacated the scheduled hearing, and ordered the parties to meet and confer regarding a possible damages cap and remand stipulation.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The motion to remand was denied. The parties were ordered to meet and confer regarding a stipulation and proposed order capping Plaintiff's damages below the jurisdictional threshold and, within 30 days, to file either such a stipulation and proposed order or a joint report explaining the status of a trial.

CASES CITED

- Abrego Abrego v. The Dow Chemical Co., 443 F.3d 676, 682-83 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Gaus v. Miles, Inc., 980 F.2d 564, 566-67 (9th Cir. 1992)
- McNutt v. General Motors Acceptance Corp., 298 U.S. 178, 189 (1936)
- Owen Equipment & Erection Co. v. Kroger, 437 U.S. 365, 373 (1978)
- Munoz v. Small Business Administration, 644 F.2d 1361, 1365 (9th Cir. 1981)
- Kanter v. Warner-Lambert Co., 265 F.3d 853, 857 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Chavez v. JPMorgan Chase & Co., 888 F.3d 413, 414-16 (9th Cir. 2018)
- Gibson v. Chrysler Corp., 261 F.3d 927, 945 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Guglielmino v. McKee Foods Corp., 506 F.3d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 2007)
- St. Paul Mercury Indemnity Co. v. Red Cab Co., 303 U.S. 283, 288-89 (1938)
- Fritsch v. Swift Transportation Co. of Arizona, LLC, 899 F.3d 785, 793 (9th Cir. 2018)
- Jimenez v. General Motors, LLC, 2023 WL 6795274, at *3 (C.D. Cal. Oct. 13, 2023)
- Aceves v. Subaru of America, Inc., 2023 WL 5806144, at *2 (C.D. Cal. Sept. 7, 2023)
- Ghebrendrias v. FCA U.S. LLC, 2021 WL 5003352, at *3 (C.D. Cal. Oct. 28, 2021)
- El-Said v. BMW of North America, LLC, 2020 WL 1187171, at *3 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 11, 2020)
- Luna v. FCA U.S., LLC, 2021 WL 4893567, at *7-*9 (N.D. Cal. Oct. 20, 2021)
- Karapetyan v. Volkswagen Group of America, 2024 WL 3888904, at *2 (C.D. Cal. Aug. 21, 2024)
- Canesco v. Ford Motor Co., 570 F. Supp. 3d 872, 888, 901-03 (S.D. Cal. 2021)
- Alvarado v. FCA U.S., LLC, 2017 WL 2495495, at *4 (C.D. Cal. June 8, 2017)
- Lee v. FCA U.S., LLC, 2016 WL 11516754, at *2 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 7, 2016)
- Messih v. Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC, 2021 WL 2588977, at *4 (N.D. Cal. June 24, 2021)
- Brady v. AutoZone, Inc., 243 F. Supp. 2d 1004, 1010 (N.D. Cal. 2003)
- Ha Nguyen v. BMW of North America, LLC, 2021 WL 2411417, at *5 (S.D. Cal. June 14, 2021)

- *Carnegie-Mellon University v. Cohill*, 484 U.S. 343, 356 (1988)
- *Sorosky v. Burroughs Corp.*, 826 F.2d 794, 805 (9th Cir. 1987)
- *Petropolous v. FCA U.S., LLC*, 2017 WL 2889303, at *6-*7 (S.D. Cal. July 7, 2017)
- *Colorado River Water Conservation District v. United States*, 424 U.S. 800, 817 (1976)
- *González v. FCA U.S. LLC*, 2020 WL 1444941, at *3 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 24, 2020)
- *Grable & Sons Metal Products, Inc. v. Darue Engineering & Manufacturing*, 545 U.S. 308, 313 (2005)

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