

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

Naomi Garcia v. Chandler-Gilbert Community College, et al.

No. CV-22-02169-PHX-JJT (D. Ariz. Apr. 6, 2026) · No. No. CV-22-02169-PHX-JJT · Decided April 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Arizona grants Maricopa County Community College District’s motion for summary judgment in Naomi Garcia’s Title VII race-discrimination and retaliation action. The court concludes that Garcia established a prima facie case of race discrimination in some respects, including satisfactory performance and an adverse employment action, but failed to provide sufficient evidence that similarly situated employees outside her protected class were treated more favorably. The court denies the motion to strike as moot.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Arizona
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Arizona
DECIDED	April 6, 2026
DOCKET	No. CV-22-02169-PHX-JJT
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought Title VII claims for race discrimination and retaliation. Defendant moved for summary judgment and to strike Plaintiff's opposing statements of fact.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is appropriate when there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court views evidence and reasonable inferences in the light most favorable to the nonmoving party, but the nonmoving party must produce significant probative evidence and may not rely solely on pleadings or conclusory allegations.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

- title vii
- employment discrimination
- retaliation
- summary judgment
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- employment law
- civil rights
- civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff produced sufficient evidence to establish a prima facie Title VII race-discrimination claim.
2. Whether Plaintiff's resignation, offered as an alternative to termination and non-renewal, constituted an adverse employment action.
3. Whether Plaintiff established a prima facie Title VII retaliation claim based on protected activity, adverse action, and but-for causation.
4. Whether Plaintiff presented specific and substantial evidence that Defendant's stated, non-retaliatory reasons for non-renewal were pretextual.
5. Whether Plaintiff could pursue a distinct failure-to-hire claim that was not addressed in her EEOC charge.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiff failed to establish the fourth prima facie element because she did not produce sufficient evidence that similarly situated employees outside her protected class were treated more favorably, and she also lacked direct evidence of discriminatory animus.
2. Plaintiff's resignation constituted an involuntary termination and therefore qualified as an adverse employment action for purposes of the Title VII claims.
3. Plaintiff established a prima facie retaliation case sufficient to survive the initial stages of the McDonnell Douglas analysis because her December 2018 EEO reporting was protected activity, her non-renewal was an adverse employment action, and the timing and factual record created a minimal causal inference.
4. Plaintiff failed to present specific and substantial evidence that Defendant's legitimate, non-retaliatory reasons for non-renewal were pretextual.
5. Any distinct failure-to-hire claim was not actionable because Plaintiff failed to address Defendant's argument that the claim was absent from her EEOC charge.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The absence of alternatives to resignation, the urgency imposed on Plaintiff, and the swiftness in which her resignation occurred all demonstrate that it was involuntary and, accordingly, a termination that constitutes an adverse employment action.” (Section III.A.3)

“But even resolving that dispute in Plaintiff’s favor and assuming, for the moment, that Ms. Travis contemplated and decided non-renewal only after January 16, 2019, that timing is logical given that Plaintiff’s probationary period was approaching its inevitable end.” (Section III.B.5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Defendant hired Garcia as a part-time Academic Advisor in February 2017, promoted her to a full-time Student Services Analyst in September 2018 subject to a six-month probationary period, and did not select her for an interim supervisor's permanent Director position. Garcia complained about the hiring process, was verbally

warned after reporting a student's concerning behavior, and later reported race discrimination and retaliation to the employer's EEO office. After receiving notice of Garcia's EEO complaints, her supervisor requested non-renewal of her probationary employment; Garcia was given the choice of termination or resignation and resigned immediately, stating that the resignation was involuntary. The employer's EEO investigation found the complaints unsubstantiated.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed suit after receiving an EEOC right-to-sue notice, alleging Title VII race discrimination and retaliation. The court previously ruled that conduct before June 9, 2018 was time-barred under Title VII. Defendant moved for summary judgment; the court granted the motion, denied the motion to strike as moot, directed entry of judgment for Defendant, and ordered the case closed.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Celotex Corp. v. Catrett, 477 U.S. 317, 322-23 (1986)
- Fresno Motors, LLC v. Mercedes Benz USA, LLC, 771 F.3d 1119, 1125 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 248, 255-57 (1986)
- Torres v. City of Madera, 648 F.3d 1119, 1123 (9th Cir. 2011)
- Nissan Fire & Marine Insurance Co. v. Fritz Cos., 210 F.3d 1099, 1102-03 (9th Cir. 2000)
- Taylor v. List, 880 F.2d 1040, 1045 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Costa v. Desert Palace, 299 F.3d 838, 854-55 (9th Cir. 2002), aff'd, 539 U.S. 90 (2003)
- McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. Green, 411 U.S. 792, 802 (1973)
- Cornwell v. Electra Central Credit Union, 439 F.3d 1018, 1028 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Wallis v. J.R. Simplot Co., 26 F.3d 885, 889 (9th Cir. 1994)
- Davis v. Team Electric Co., 520 F.3d 1080, 1089 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Brooks v. City of San Mateo, 229 F.3d 917, 928 (9th Cir. 2000)
- Jadwin v. County of Kern, 610 F. Supp. 2d 1129, 1171 (E.D. Cal. 2009)
- Muldrow v. City of St. Louis, 601 U.S. 346, 357 (2024)
- Gildersleeve v. City of Sacramento, No. 2:22-cv-02145-JAM-AC, 2025 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 144069, at *6 (E.D. Cal. July 28, 2025)
- Knappenberger v. City of Phoenix, 566 F.3d 936, 941 (9th Cir. 2009)
- Draper v. Coeur Rochester, Inc., 147 F.3d 1104, 1110 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Pennsylvania State Police v. Suders, 542 U.S. 129, 143 (2004)
- Lui v. DeJoy, 129 F.4th 770, 777-79 (9th Cir. 2025)
- Paananen v. Cellco Partnership, No. C08-1042 RSM, 2009 WL 3327227, at *6 (W.D. Wash. Oct. 8, 2009)
- Coghlan v. American Seafoods Co. LLC, 413 F.3d 1090, 1095 (9th Cir. 2005)

- *Hittle v. City of Stockton, California*, 101 F.4th 1000, 1013 (9th Cir. 2024), cert. denied, 145 S. Ct. 759 (2025)
- *Dominguez-Curry v. Nevada Transportation Department*, 424 F.3d 1027, 1038 (9th Cir. 2005)
- *Chuang v. University of California Davis, Board of Trustees*, 225 F.3d 1115, 1128 (9th Cir. 2000)
- *Cordova v. State Farm Insurance Cos.*, 124 F.3d 1145, 1149 (9th Cir. 1997)
- *Lindahl v. Air France*, 930 F.2d 1434, 1439 (9th Cir. 1991)
- *McIver v. Bridgestone Americas, Inc.*, 42 F.4th 398, 413 (4th Cir. 2022) (Motz, J., concurring)
- *Curry v. Devereux Foundation*, 541 F. Supp. 3d 555, 558 (E.D. Pa. 2021)
- *Hashimoto v. Dalton*, 118 F.3d 671, 680 (9th Cir. 1997)
- *Cohen v. Fred Meyer, Inc.*, 686 F.2d 793, 796 (9th Cir. 1982)
- *Alozie v. Arizona Board of Regents*, 562 F. Supp. 3d 203, 214 (D. Ariz. 2021)
- *Cozzi v. County of Marin*, 787 F. Supp. 2d 1047, 1069 (N.D. Cal. 2011)
- *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 590 U.S. 644, 656 (2020)
- *Cloud v. Brennan*, 436 F. Supp. 3d 1290, 1301 (N.D. Cal. 2020)
- *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Tesla, Inc.*, 727 F. Supp. 3d 875, 895 (N.D. Cal. 2024)
- *Stegall v. Citadel Broadcasting Co.*, 350 F.3d 1061, 1066, 1070-71 (9th Cir. 2003), as amended (Jan. 6, 2004)
- *Payne v. Norwest Corp.*, 113 F.3d 1079, 1080 (9th Cir. 1997)
- *Reynaga v. Roseburg Forest Products*, 847 F.3d 678, 694-95 (9th Cir. 2017)
- *Dawson v. Entek International*, 630 F.3d 928, 937 (9th Cir. 2011)
- *New Leaf Publishing, Inc. v. Top Innovations LLC*, No. 2:24-cv-04676-MEMF-SSC, 2025 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 208363, at *5 (C.D. Cal. Oct. 21, 2025)
- *Karthaus v. Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District*, 647 F. Supp. 3d 992, 1008 (D. Or. 2022)
- *DeWitz v. Teleguam Holdings, LLC*, No. 1:11-CV-00036, 2014 WL 3028660, at *4 (D. Guam July 3, 2014)
- *Chowdada v. Judge Technical Services, Inc.*, No. 4:18-CV-00655-JAR, 2021 WL 168742, at *3 (E.D. Mo. Jan. 19, 2021)
- *Johnson v. Macy*, 145 F. Supp. 3d 907, 918 (C.D. Cal. 2015)

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