

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
VIRGINIA, RICHMOND DIVISION

Julian Barlog v. Desirre Ranallo, et al.

Barlog · No. 3:25CV801(RCY) · Decided January 14, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia grants Julian Barlog’s application to proceed in forma pauperis but dismisses his complaint without prejudice for lack of subject-matter jurisdiction. The court concludes that the allegations do not adequately establish complete diversity of citizenship or the required amount in controversy under 28 U.S.C. § 1332. The court further finds that amendment would be futile because Burford abstention would be appropriate in this dispute concerning parental rights and access to children.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Richmond Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Roderick C. Young
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Richmond Division
DECIDED	January 14, 2026
DOCKET	3:25CV801(RCY)
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff filed a proposed pro se complaint and an application to proceed in forma pauperis. After granting the IFP application, the district court conducted statutory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) and dismissed the action without prejudice for lack of subject matter jurisdiction.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	De novo jurisdictional review and mandatory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2); a pro se complaint must allege enough facts to state a plausible claim for relief.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court memorandum opinion
PARTIES	Julian Barlog v. Desirre Ranallo, John Doe

TOPICS

subject matter jurisdiction

family law

civil procedure

federalism

torts

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

family law

federalism

torts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint plausibly established complete diversity of citizenship for purposes of 28 U.S.C. § 1332.
2. Whether the complaint plausibly alleged that the amount in controversy exceeded \$75,000.
3. Whether the court was required to dismiss for lack of subject matter jurisdiction.
4. Whether leave to amend should be denied as futile because Burford abstention would apply to the dispute concerning parental rights and access to the parties' children.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint did not adequately establish complete diversity because it alleged only that the defendants were Virginia residents and did not plausibly establish that Ranallo was domiciled in Virginia rather than Alaska.
2. The complaint failed to plausibly allege that the amount in controversy exceeded \$75,000.
3. Because the complaint failed to establish complete diversity and the amount-in-controversy requirement, and no independent jurisdictional basis existed, the court lacked subject matter jurisdiction and was required to dismiss the action.
4. Leave to amend was denied as futile because, even if the jurisdictional allegations were corrected, Burford abstention would be appropriate.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A pro se complaint should survive only when a plaintiff has set forth “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.”” (Section II)

“Thus, he is asking the Court to invade the provenance of the states to resolve his dispute with his wife over the location of and access to their children.” (Section III)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Barlog alleged that Desirre Ranallo left Alaska with the parties' three minor daughters, later cut off his contact with them, and relocated with the children to Virginia without informing him. He alleged that John Doe assisted in concealing the children and that Ranallo made statements that Barlog had hit her. Barlog sought damages for interference with parental rights, conspiracy, defamation, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and concert of action.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On September 30, 2025, Barlog submitted an IFP application, proposed complaint, and motions for ADA accommodation and preliminary injunction. The court granted IFP status but, upon screening the complaint, found that the pleading failed to establish complete diversity or the amount-in-controversy requirement. The court further held that amendment would be futile because Burford abstention would apply, and dismissed the action without prejudice without reaching the pending motions.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Arbaugh v. Y & H Corp., 546 U.S. 500, 506 (2006)
- Miss. Band of Choctaw Indians v. Holyfield, 490 U.S. 30, 48 (1989)
- Mitchell v. United States, 88 U.S. 350, 353 (1874)
- Burford v. Sun Oil Co., 319 U.S. 315 (1943)
- Ankenbrandt v. Richards, 504 U.S. 689, 705–06 (1992)
- Laber v. Harvey, 438 F.3d 404, 426 (4th Cir. 2006)