

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO

William Gardner v. State of New Mexico, et al.

No. 1:25-cv-00873-WJ-JHR (D.N.M. Dec. 5, 2025) · No. No. 1:25-cv-00873-WJ-JHR · Decided December 5, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of New Mexico dismissed William Gardner’s civil rights and state-law action without prejudice for lack of subject-matter jurisdiction. The court concluded that sovereign immunity barred claims against the State and state entities, the Ex parte Young exception did not apply, and the amended complaint failed to address potential Younger abstention and Rooker-Feldman jurisdictional defects. The court also denied Gardner’s motion to preserve evidence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of New Mexico
WRITING FOR THE COURT	William P. Johnson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of New Mexico
DECIDED	December 5, 2025
DOCKET	No. 1:25-cv-00873-WJ-JHR
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought civil-rights and state-law claims seeking injunctive and declaratory relief and compensatory and punitive damages. After the court issued an order to show cause identifying jurisdictional deficiencies and directing Plaintiff to file an amended complaint, Plaintiff filed an amended complaint but did not separately respond to the order to show cause. The court dismissed the action without prejudice for lack of subject-matter jurisdiction and denied Plaintiff's motion to preserve evidence.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Subject-matter jurisdiction may be considered sua sponte, and the party invoking federal jurisdiction bears the burden of alleging facts sufficient to establish it. Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(h) (3), the court must dismiss an action whenever it determines that subject-matter jurisdiction is lacking.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

PARTIES

William Gardner v. State of New Mexico, Thirteenth Judicial District Court, New Mexico General Services Risk Management Division, New Mexico Office of the Superintendent of Insurance, state officials, private attorney representing some of the State Defendants

TOPICS

subject matter jurisdiction

eleventh amendment immunity

sovereign immunity

section 1983

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

federal jurisdiction

constitutional law

sovereign immunity

remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court had subject-matter jurisdiction over Plaintiff's claims for monetary damages against the State of New Mexico, state entities, and state officials sued in their official capacities.
2. Whether the Ex parte Young exception supplied jurisdiction over Plaintiff's claims for injunctive relief.
3. Whether Plaintiff's amended complaint established federal subject-matter jurisdiction despite potential Younger abstention, Rooker-Feldman, and Anti-Injunction Act barriers.
4. Whether Plaintiff's motion to preserve evidence should be granted after dismissal of the action.

HOLDINGS

1. The court lacked jurisdiction over Plaintiff's claims for monetary damages against the State of New Mexico, the Thirteenth Judicial District Court, the New Mexico General Services Risk Management Division, the New Mexico Office of the Superintendent of Insurance, and individual defendants sued in their official capacities because Plaintiff did not show state consent to suit or valid congressional abrogation of sovereign immunity.
2. The Ex parte Young exception did not provide jurisdiction over claims against the State of New Mexico, the Thirteenth Judicial District Court, the New Mexico General Services Risk Management Division, or the New Mexico Office of the Superintendent of Insurance because those entities are not state officials. Plaintiff also failed to establish the exception as to the individual defendants because he did not identify relief that was properly characterized as prospective.
3. The court lacked subject-matter jurisdiction over the action and was required to dismiss it without prejudice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The Court dismisses this case without prejudice for lack of subject-matter jurisdiction."

"If the court determines at any time that it lacks subject-matter jurisdiction, the court must dismiss the action."

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff challenged events and rulings arising from several New Mexico criminal and civil proceedings, alleging due-process and other constitutional violations, civil-rights violations under 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1985, conspiracy, and violations of the New Mexico Civil Rights Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act. He named the State of New Mexico, state agencies and a judicial district court, state officials, and a private attorney as defendants. He sought to reverse state-court decisions and obtain injunctive, declaratory, compensatory, and punitive relief. The amended complaint did not establish that the relevant state proceedings were closed, did not identify prospective relief sufficient to invoke *Ex parte Young*, and did not show consent to suit or congressional abrogation of state sovereign immunity.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed his original complaint on September 8, 2025. Magistrate Judge Jerry H. Ritter issued an order to show cause identifying potential Eleventh Amendment, *Ex parte Young*, Younger, Rooker-Feldman, and Anti-Injunction Act jurisdictional problems and directed Plaintiff to show cause and amend. Plaintiff filed an amended complaint on October 20, 2025, but did not remedy the identified deficiencies. The district court concluded that Plaintiff had not established federal jurisdiction, dismissed the case without prejudice, and denied his motion for an order preserving evidence.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Levy v. Kansas Dept. of Social and Rehabilitation Services*, 789 F.3d 1164, 1169 (10th Cir.)
- *Ex parte Young*, 209 U.S. 123, 28 S.Ct. 441, 52 L.Ed. 714 (1908)
- *Muscogee (Creek) Nation v. Pruitt*, 669 F.3d 1159, 1166-67 (10th Cir.)
- *Turner v. National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.*, 561 F. App'x 661, 665 (10th Cir.)
- *Peterson v. Martinez*, 707 F.3d 1197, 1205 (10th Cir.)
- *Collins v. Daniels*, 916 F.3d 1302, 1315 (10th Cir.)
- *Ruiz v. McDonnell*, 299 F.3d 1173, 1181 (10th Cir.)
- *Quern v. Jordan*, 440 U.S. 332, 345 (1979)
- *Clark v. Haaland*, 2024 WL 4763759, *4 (10th Cir.)
- *Dutcher v. Matheson*, 733 F.3d 980, 985 (10th Cir.)
- *Evitt v. Durland*, 243 F.3d 388, *2 (10th Cir.)
- *Tuck v. United Servs. Auto. Ass'n*, 859 F.2d 842, 843 (10th Cir.)