

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Kuang-Bao Paul Ou-Young v. Patrick D. Robbins, et al.

Ou-Young · No. 25-cv-08983-CRB · Decided January 14, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California denied two identical ex parte motions by pro se plaintiff Kuang-Bao Paul Ou-Young to disqualify the judge under 28 U.S.C. § 455(a). The court held that the plaintiff’s disagreement with a prior judicial ruling did not establish that the Court’s impartiality might reasonably be questioned, noting that judicial rulings alone almost never support recusal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Charles R. Breyer
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	January 14, 2026
DOCKET	25-cv-08983-CRB
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff filed two identical ex parte motions seeking disqualification of the district court under 28 U.S.C. § 455(a).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Disqualification under 28 U.S.C. § 455(a) is evaluated under an objective standard: whether a reasonable, well-informed, thoughtful person with knowledge of all the facts would conclude that the judge's impartiality might reasonably be questioned.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential district court order; no reporter citation appears in the source.
PARTIES	Kuang-Bao Paul Ou-Young v. Patrick D. Robbins, et al.

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- civil rights

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Court's prior judicial ruling concerning judicial immunity created a reasonable basis to question the Court's impartiality under 28 U.S.C. § 455(a).
2. Whether the ex parte motions complied with the requirements of Civil Local Rules 3-14 and 7-10.

HOLDINGS

1. Recusal was not required because no reasonable, well-informed, thoughtful observer with knowledge of the facts would conclude that the Court's impartiality might reasonably be questioned based solely on its prior judicial ruling.
2. The motions did not comply with the cited local-rule requirements because Civil Local Rule 3-14 concerns motions under 28 U.S.C. § 144, and Civil Local Rule 7-10 requires an ex parte motion to cite authority permitting ex parte relief, which the motions did not do.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Disqualification is appropriate if “a reasonable person with knowledge of all the facts would conclude that the judge’s impartiality might reasonably be questioned.”” (1)

““Accordingly, recusal will be justified either by actual bias or the appearance of bias.”” (1)

““judicial rulings alone almost never constitute a valid basis for a bias or partiality motion.”” (2)

“Because Ou-Young has not satisfied the requirements for disqualification under section 455, the motions are DENIED.” (2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Ou-Young sought disqualification based primarily on the Court's 2022 ruling that judges are immune for acts that are judicial in nature and its dismissal of a complaint with leave to amend subject to judicial-immunity principles. He also made arguments concerning Civil Local Rule 5-1(b). The Court determined that its prior judicial ruling did not provide a basis for a reasonable person to question its impartiality.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Pro se Plaintiff Kuang-Bao Paul Ou-Young filed two identical ex parte motions to disqualify the Court. The Court denied both motions, concluding that Plaintiff failed to satisfy the requirements for disqualification under 28 U.S.C. § 455.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Yagman v. Republic Ins., 987 F.2d 622, 626 (9th Cir. 1993)
- In re Yagman, 796 F.2d 1165, 1179 (9th Cir. 1986)
- Clemens v. U.S. Dist. Ct. for Cent. Dist. of Cal., 428 F.3d 1175, 1178 (9th Cir. 2005)
- In re Mason, 916 F.2d 384, 385 (7th Cir. 1990)
- Liteky v. United States, 510 U.S. 540, 555 (1994)
- United States v. Johnson, 610 F.3d 1138, 1148 (9th Cir. 2010)

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