

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
OHIO, EASTERN DIVISION

Nathaniel Darrell Taylor v. Sheila Turner-McCall, et al.

Taylor · No. 1:25 CV 2508 · Decided January 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio dismissed Nathaniel Darrell Taylor’s pro se civil rights action against state and local judicial, prosecutorial, and law-enforcement defendants. The court held that the complaint failed to satisfy basic pleading requirements and that Taylor’s arguments, which reflected sovereign-citizen ideology concerning driver’s-license and statutory obligations, were frivolous and lacked an arguable basis in law. The court also denied Taylor’s second motion for a temporary restraining order and certified that an appeal could not be taken in good faith.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Patricia A. Gaughan
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division
DECIDED	January 6, 2026
DOCKET	1:25 CV 2508
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A pro se plaintiff filed a fee-paid civil rights action seeking injunctive and monetary relief, along with two motions for temporary restraining orders. The district court denied the second temporary-restraining-order motion and dismissed the action sua sponte under Apple v. Glenn.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court liberally construed the pro se complaint and applied the limited sua sponte screening standard under Apple v. Glenn, permitting dismissal of a fee-paid, nonprisoner complaint that is totally implausible, attenuated, unsubstantial, frivolous, devoid of merit, or lacking an arguable basis in law, including where subject-matter jurisdiction is absent.

TOPICS

pleadings

civil procedure

subject matter jurisdiction

section 1983

injunctions

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

constitutional law

federal courts

injunctive relief

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint satisfied minimum pleading requirements by providing defendants fair notice of the legal claims and factual grounds supporting them.
2. Whether the complaint's sovereign-citizen theories had an arguable basis in law or were frivolous under the court's sua sponte screening authority.
3. Whether the second motion for a temporary restraining order should be granted.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to satisfy basic pleading requirements because it contained no factual allegations, did not identify specific legal claims or constitutional rights, and did not provide defendants fair notice of the claims and grounds for relief.
2. The complaint was frivolous and lacked an arguable basis in law because the plaintiff's sovereign-citizen assertions did not exempt him from complying with federal, state, or local laws, including driver-licensing requirements.
3. The second motion for a temporary restraining order was denied because it concerned events unrelated to the complaint and there was no indication that any defendant was involved.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Plaintiff's rhetoric fails to establish a viable legal claim with an arguable basis in law, and is "totally implausible, attenuated, unsubstantial, frivolous, devoid of merit, or no longer open to discussion"" (at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Taylor received a traffic citation in Cleveland in October 2024 for driving on a suspended or revoked license. He asserted that he had relinquished his driver's license and identification documents and that declarations of nonconsent and sovereign status exempted him from federal, state, and local laws. He sought injunctive and monetary relief, including protection from detention, and claimed that a UCC-1 financing statement created a \$77 million lien against each defendant.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Taylor filed a complaint against state and local judicial, prosecutorial, law-enforcement, and governmental defendants, asserting violations of 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1985 and 18 U.S.C. §§ 241, 242, and 4. The complaint

contained no factual allegations or specific constitutional claims and was supported by exhibits concerning a traffic citation and sovereign-citizen theories. The court previously denied the first motion for a temporary restraining order, denied the second motion because it concerned unrelated events involving no apparent defendant, and dismissed the action as insufficiently pleaded and frivolous.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Spotts v. United States, 429 F.3d 248, 250 (6th Cir. 2005)
- Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972)
- Apple v. Glenn, 183 F.3d 477, 479-80 (6th Cir. 1999)
- Hagans v. Lavine, 415 U.S. 528, 536-37 (1974)
- Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319 (1989)
- Sistrunk v. City of Strongsville, 99 F.3d 194, 197 (6th Cir. 1996)
- Lawler v. Marshall, 898 F.2d 1196 (6th Cir. 1990)
- Laster v. Pramstaller, No. 08-CV-10898, 2008 WL 1901250, at *2 (E.D. Mich. Apr. 25, 2008)
- Windsor v. Colorado Dep't of Corr., 9 F. App'x 967, 968 (10th Cir. 2001)
- Bassett v. National Collegiate Athletic Ass'n, 528 F.3d 426, 437 (6th Cir. 2008)
- Dunn v. Post, No. 21-1412, 2022 WL 1297586, at *2 (6th Cir. Jan. 27, 2022)
- United States v. Warfield, 404 F. App'x 994, 996 (6th Cir. 2011)
- Joyce-Simpson v. AT&T Mobility, No. 1:23 CV 1216, 2023 WL 8248061, at *3 (W.D. Tenn. Nov. 7, 2023)
- Burnett v. Michigan, No. 1:24-CV-55, 2024 WL 3721741, at *6-7 (W.D. Mich. June 18, 2024)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO EASTERN DIVISION Nathaniel Darrell Taylor,) CASE NO. 1:25 CV 2508) Plaintiff,) JUDGE PATRICIA A. GAUGHAN) v.)) Memorandum of Opinion and Order Judge Sheila Turner-McCall, et al.,)) Defendants.) INTRODUCTION Pro se Plaintiff Nathaniel Darrell Taylor filed this civil rights action against Cleveland Municipal Court Judge Sheila Turner-McCall, Prosecutor Isaiah Pinckney, III, Officer Matthew France #1924, Officer Lombardo #9333, Prosecutor Aimee Fanter, City of Cleveland, Cleveland Municipal Court, Cuyahoga County, the State of Ohio, and the Cleveland Police Department.

The Complaint is difficult to decipher. It contains no factual allegations and Plaintiff's legal claims are stated only as violations of 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983, 1985 and 18 U.S.C. §§ 241, 242, 4, with no mention of any particular constitutional rights he believes to have been violated by the Defendants. Plaintiff seeks injunctive and monetary relief. BACKGROUND Plaintiff attaches

numerous documents which suggest he relinquished his driver's license and all other state and federal identification materials on the erroneous belief that it would exempt him from complying with federal, state, or local laws and ordinances.

He drafted a document he titles as an "Affidavit of Jurisdictional Challenge, Status Declaration, and Emergency Demand for Dismissal for Want of Jurisdiction" in which he claims he is not a "person" as defined by any corporate statute" but instead is a "living breathing man." He states he does "not consent to being subjected to artificial constructs, agencies, policies or statutes created without [his] knowing, willing, and deliberate consent." (Doc.

No. 1-9 at PageID #: 32). He states that "All instruments presumed to bind [him] - including State ID, Driver's License, Social Security Applications and contracts issued by coercion, fraud, or non-disclosure - have been formally rescinded, revoked, and returned." (Doc. No. 1-9 at PageID #: 32). He claims that his "lawful identity and status have been authenticated through the Secretary of State of Ohio, including my original Certificate of Live Birth, bearing the red number, which now stands as sovereign proof of identity...." (Doc.

No. 1-9 at PageID #: 32). Plaintiff received a traffic citation in the City of Cleveland in October 2024 for driving on a suspended or revoked license. He states that Cleveland Municipal Court Judge Sheila Turner-McCall "threaten[ed] to incarcerate [him] unless [he] submit[ted] to commercial identification and enter into forced contract." (Doc. No. 1-9 at PageID #: 32).

The case was set for trial in November 2025. Plaintiff does not indicate the outcome of that proceeding. He indicates he filed a UCC-1 financing statement which he claims establishes a commercial lien in the amount of \$77,000,000.00 against each of the Defendants. (Doc. No. 1-12 at PageID #: 71). He asks this Court to issue a temporary restraining order but does not specify from what he -2- would like the Defendants restrained.

He also indicates that he would like "emergency protective designation and immunity from local detainment." (Doc. No. 1 at PageID #:2). In addition to the relief requested in his Complaint, Plaintiff filed two Motions for Temporary Restraining Orders (Doc. Nos. 3, 7).

The Court previously denied his first Motion for Temporary Restraining Order. Therein, Plaintiff asked the Court to restrain the traffic court from conducting the trial, and grant him unlimited protected status so that law enforcement could never engage him, stop him, or detain him for any reason. (Doc. No. 3). His second Motion focuses on events that transpired after he filed this action and which appear to be wholly unrelated to any of the events in the Complaint.

There is no indication that any of the Defendants was involved in the events described in this second Motion. Accordingly, Plaintiff's second Motion for Temporary Restraining Order (Doc. No. 7) is denied. STANDARD OF REVIEW The Court is required to construe Plaintiff's pro se Complaint liberally and to hold it to a less stringent standard than one drafted by an attorney.

Spotts v. United States, 429 F.3d 248, 250 (6th Cir. 2005) (citing *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972)). Pursuant to *Apple v. Glenn*, 183 F.3d 477, 479 (6th Cir. 1999) (per curiam), district courts are permitted to conduct a limited screening procedure and to dismiss, sua sponte, a fee-paid complaint filed by a non-prisoner if it appears that the allegations are “totally implausible, attenuated, unsubstantial, frivolous, devoid of merit, or no longer open to discussion.” *Apple*, 183 F.3d at 479 (citing *Hagans v. Lavine*, 415 U.S. 528, 536-37 (1974)).

Dismissal on a sua sponte basis is also authorized where the asserted claims lack an arguable basis in law, or if the district court lacks -3- subject matter jurisdiction over the matter. *Id.* at 480; see also *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319 (1989); *Sistrunk v. City of Strongsville*, 99 F.3d 194, 197 (6th Cir.1996); *Lawler v. Marshall*, 898 F.2d 1196 (6th Cir.1990).

DISCUSSION As an initial matter, Plaintiff did not allege any facts in his Complaint and did not include any specific legal claims. The Court can get a general idea of what may have prompted the filing of this Complaint from the exhibits Plaintiff attached to his pleading.

However, neither the Court nor the Defendants are obligated to search through the Complaint and its numerous exhibits in order to glean a clear and succinct statement of each claim for relief. It is Plaintiff’s responsibility to edit and organize his claims and supporting allegations into a manageable format. *Laster v. Pramstaller*, No. 08–CV–10898, 2008 WL 1901250, at *2 (E.D.

Mich. April 25, 2008) (citing *Windsor v. Colorado Dep’t. of Corr.*, 9 Fed. App’x. 967, 968 (10th Cir. 2001) (quotation marks omitted)). To meet minimum pleading requirements, the Complaint must give the Defendants fair notice of what the Plaintiff’s legal claims are and the factual grounds upon which they rest. *Bassett v. National Collegiate Athletic Ass’n*, 528 F.3d 426, 437 (6th Cir.

2008). The Complaint, as written, does not meet these basic pleading requirements. Furthermore, the Complaint lacks an arguable basis in law and is totally frivolous and devoid of merit. Plaintiff claims in an “Affidavit of Status, Identity, and Non-Consent” that he is not “an entity, franchise, U.S. citizen, resident alien, artificial construct, trust or vessel subject to statutory obligations or administrative jurisdiction of the State of Ohio or the corporate United States.” (Doc.

No. 1-9 at PageID #: 29). He also states that he does “not consent to -4- being subjected to artificial constructs, agencies, policies or statutes created without [his] knowing, willing, and deliberate consent.” (Doc. No. 1-9 at PageID #: 32). It appears that Plaintiff believes that by making these statements and renouncing his driver’s license, he can exempt himself from complying with any federal, state, or local laws and ordinances, including those laws that require a valid driver’s license to operate a motor vehicle.

While Plaintiff does not specifically identify himself as a sovereign citizen in his filings, his arguments bear the hallmark of sovereign citizen ideology. Federal courts, including the United

States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, have routinely dismissed these sovereign citizen arguments as frivolous and a waste of court resources. See *Dunn v. Post*, No. 21-1412, 2022 WL 1297586, at *2 (6th Cir.

Jan. 27, 2022)(rejecting sovereign citizen arguments and stating that there is no constitutional right to drive without a valid state-issued driver's license); *United States v. Warfield*, 404 F. App'x 994, 996 (6th Cir. 2011)(no constitutional right to drive without a valid state-issued driver's license); *Joyce-Simpson v. AT&T Mobility*, No. 1:23 CV 1216, 2023 WL 8248061, at *3 (W.D.

Tenn. Nov. 7, 2023)(rejecting sovereign citizen arguments as frivolous); *Burnett v. Michigan*, No. 1:24-CV-55, 2024 WL 3721741, at *6-7 (W.D. Mich. June 18, 2024)(“[The] complaint is based upon the meritless rhetoric espoused by sovereign citizens. This Court has no jurisdiction for fictitious claims which are not based in law, but based in the fantasies of the sovereign citizen movement.”).

Plaintiff's rhetoric fails to establish a viable legal claim with an arguable basis in law, and is “totally implausible, attenuated, unsubstantial, frivolous, devoid of merit, or no longer open to discussion” *Apple*, 183 F.3d at 479. This action must be dismissed. -5- CONCLUSION Accordingly, this action is dismissed pursuant to *Apple v. Glenn*, 183 F.3d 477, 479 (6th Cir.

1999). The Court certifies, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3), that an appeal from this decision could not be taken in good faith. IT IS SO ORDERED. PATRICIA A. GAUGHAN United States District Court Judge -6-