

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
OHIO

David Goodykoontz v. State of Ohio, et al.

Goodykoontz · No. 1:25-cv-01724 · Decided December 10, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio dismissed pro se prisoner David Goodykoontz’s complaint under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A. The court held that allegations concerning inadequate or harmful treatment for Tourette syndrome did not plausibly establish deliberate indifference under the Eighth Amendment, and that the allegations of discrimination and denial of protective custody were conclusory. The court also certified that an appeal could not be taken in good faith.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Pamela A. Barker
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio
DECIDED	December 10, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-01724
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se prisoner civil-rights complaint screened before service under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A, the court must dismiss a complaint before service if it is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant. The failure-to-state-a-claim standard is the plausibility standard of Ashcroft v. Iqbal and Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, applied to pro se pleadings with liberal construction.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

- prisoners rights
- cruel and unusual punishment
- section 1983
- pleadings
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated a plausible Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim based on allegedly inadequate or harmful medical treatment.
2. Whether the complaint stated any other plausible federal claim based on conclusory allegations of discrimination or the warden's refusal to place plaintiff in protective custody.
3. Whether the complaint was subject to dismissal during statutory screening under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to state a plausible Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim because, even assuming an objectively serious medical need, the allegations did not plausibly show that any defendant possessed the required subjective state of mind or consciously disregarded a substantial risk of harm.
2. The complaint failed to state any other plausible federal claim because the allegations of discrimination and the warden's refusal to place plaintiff in protective custody were purely conclusory and did not satisfy basic pleading requirements.
3. The complaint was dismissed before service for failure to state a plausible claim upon which relief could be granted under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Deliberate indifference is characterized by obduracy or wantonness – it cannot be predicated on negligence, inadvertence, or good faith error.” (2)

“federal courts are generally reluctant to second guess medical judgments” (2)

“so woefully inadequate as to amount to no treatment at all.” (2)

“Pro se plaintiffs must still meet basic pleading requirements, and courts are not required to “conjure allegations” or create claims on their behalf.” (3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Goodykoontz alleged that defendants failed to properly treat his Tourette's syndrome while he was incarcerated in Ohio. He claimed that defendants prescribed antidepressants, including SSRIs and Wellbutrin, that were ineffective or worsened his tics, refused to change the medications, and failed to provide treatment for his verbal and physical tics. He also alleged that an unknown warden refused to allow him to enter protective custody, but provided no specific factual allegations connecting the defendants to an actionable constitutional violation.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

David Goodykoontz, an Ohio inmate proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis, filed a federal prisoner civil-rights complaint against the State of Ohio, Cuyahoga County, MetroHealth, and four unknown defendants. The

court screened the complaint under the statutory provisions applicable to in forma pauperis and prisoner actions and dismissed it for failure to state a plausible federal claim. The court also certified that any appeal could not be taken in good faith.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Hill v. Lappin, 630 F.3d 468, 470-71 (6th Cir. 2010)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662 (2009)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544 (2007)
- Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 828 (1994)
- Reilly v. Vadlamudi, 680 F.3d 617, 624 (6th Cir. 2012)
- Jones v. Muskegon Cty., 625 F.3d 935, 941 (6th Cir. 2010)
- Jennings v. Al-Dabagh, 97 F. App'x 548, 549-50 (6th Cir. 2004)
- Westlake v. Lucas, 537 F.2d 857, 860 n. 5 (6th Cir. 1976)
- Williams v. Curtin, 631 F.3d 380, 383 (6th Cir. 2011)
- Pilgrim v. Littlefield, 92 F.3d 413, 416 (6th Cir. 1996)
- Erwin v. Edwards, 22 F. App'x 579, 580 (6th Cir. 2001)
- Lillard v. Shelby County Bd. of Educ., 76 F.3d 716, 726 (6th Cir. 1996)