

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Natasha J. Ryan v. Mildred Spiro, et al.

Ryan v. Spiro, No. 2:25-cv-01245-DAD-SCR (E.D. Cal. Nov. 10, 2025) · No. No. 2:25-cv-01245-DAD-SCR ·
Decided November 10, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California screened Plaintiff Natasha J. Ryan’s first amended complaint and found it deficient under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8. The court concluded that claims concerning foster-care incidents from the 1990s appeared time-barred, while allegations concerning due process, equal protection, child custody, termination of parental rights, fraud, negligence, and RICO were conclusory or otherwise insufficient. The court granted Plaintiff 30 days to file a second amended complaint and alternatively permitted voluntary dismissal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sean C. Riordan
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	November 10, 2025
DOCKET	No. 2:25-cv-01245-DAD-SCR
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening of a pro se plaintiff’s first amended complaint under the in forma pauperis statute, with leave to file a second amended complaint.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), accepting well-pleaded factual allegations as true, construing them in the plaintiff’s favor, and applying the plausibility and pleading requirements of Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 8 and 9(b).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished, nonprecedential district court order

TOPICS

- pleadings
- civil procedure
- statute of limitations
- section 1983
- due process

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the first amended complaint complied with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8 and plausibly stated federal claims.
2. Whether claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 based on alleged foster-care incidents from the 1990s were barred by California's two-year statute of limitations.
3. Whether the allegations concerning due process, equal protection, retaliation, termination of parental rights, negligence, fraud, and RICO were sufficiently pleaded.
4. Whether the federal district court could issue a writ compelling state courts to adjudicate other cases.
5. Whether a state agency would be immune from suit under the Eleventh Amendment.

HOLDINGS

1. The first amended complaint failed to provide a short and plain statement of the claims showing that Plaintiff was entitled to relief and did not clearly identify the legal claims, supporting facts, or conduct attributable to each defendant.
2. Plaintiff's § 1983 claims based on alleged incidents occurring more than twenty-five years earlier were barred by the applicable statute of limitations, absent a sufficiently pleaded basis for tolling.
3. The amended complaint did not state plausible due process or equal protection claims because its allegations concerning placement on child-abuse databases, denial of hearings, child removal, adoption, and retention of parental rights were conclusory and lacked sufficient factual matter.
4. The court declined to reach the state-law negligence and fraud claims because no federal claim was adequately stated and, in any event, the allegations were conclusory; the fraud claim also failed to satisfy Rule 9(b)'s particularity requirement.
5. The amended complaint failed to state a RICO claim because it did not adequately allege conduct of an enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity or the required relatedness and continuity of predicate acts.
6. The court lacked authority to issue the requested writ compelling state courts to hear or adjudicate other cases because common-law writs of mandamus have been abolished in federal district courts.
7. To the extent Plaintiff sought to sue the California Department of Social Services, the agency would be protected by sovereign immunity under the Eleventh Amendment.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“To state a claim on which relief may be granted, the plaintiff must allege enough facts “to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.”” (at 5)

“Common law writs of mandamus have been “abolished” in federal district courts.” (at 6)

“An amended complaint must be complete in itself without reference to any prior pleading.” (at 7)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that she was in California foster care from approximately age four through age eighteen and that Mildred Spiro abused her while serving as a foster parent between 1989 and 1996. She also alleged misconduct by a foster parent and social worker, and asserted that her child was removed and adopted, that she was denied hearings or advocacy, and that her identity and legal proceedings were manipulated. The amended complaint sought monetary, declaratory, and injunctive relief and attempted to assert constitutional, state-law, and RICO claims.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff was granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis, and the court previously screened and found deficiencies in her original complaint. Plaintiff filed a first amended complaint asserting due process, equal protection, 42 U.S.C. § 1983, negligence, fraud, and RICO claims. The court found the amended pleading deficient, concluded that claims based on foster-care events in the 1990s appeared time-barred and that the remaining federal claims were inadequately pleaded, and granted a final opportunity to amend rather than recommending dismissal.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325, 327 (1989)
- *Von Saher v. Norton Simon Museum of Art at Pasadena*, 592 F.3d 954, 960 (9th Cir. 2010), cert. denied, 564 U.S. 1037 (2011)
- *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007)
- *Scheuer v. Rhodes*, 416 U.S. 232, 236 (1974)
- *Moss v. U.S. Secret Service*, 572 F.3d 962, 969 (9th Cir. 2009)
- *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555-57, 570 (2007)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- *Akhtar v. Mesa*, 698 F.3d 1202, 1212-13 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *Nance v. Ward*, 597 U.S. 159, 174 (2022)
- *Holt v. County of Orange*, 91 F.4th 1013, 1018 (9th Cir. 2024)
- *David v. Kaulukukui*, 38 F.4th 792, 799 (9th Cir. 2022)
- *Vess v. Ciba-Geigy Corp.*, 317 F.3d 1097, 1103 (9th Cir. 2003)
- *United States ex rel. Cafasso v. General Dynamics*, 637 F.3d 1047, 1055 (9th Cir. 2011)
- *Odom v. Microsoft Corp.*, 486 F.3d 541, 547 (9th Cir. 2007)
- *Turner v. Cook*, 362 F.3d 1219, 1229 (9th Cir. 2004)
- *McHenry v. Renne*, 84 F.3d 1172, 1177-80 (9th Cir. 1996)
- *Pacific Bell Tel. Co. v. Linkline Communications, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 438, 456 n.4 (2009)

