

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF  
INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS DIVISION

**Welby Thomas Cox, Jr. v. US Department of Justice, et al.**

Cox · No. 1:23-cv-01601-JPH-MJD · Decided May 27, 2026

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SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana denied Welby Thomas Cox Jr.'s Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 59(e) motion to alter or amend the judgment in his Administrative Procedure Act challenge to the Department of Justice's collection of a restitution debt. The court held that Cox had not shown a manifest error of law or fact, newly discovered evidence, or a violation of the Seventh Circuit's prior mandate. The court granted Cox's motion to proceed on appeal in forma pauperis while noting that he remains liable for appellate fees.

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA INDIANAPOLIS DIVISION ) WELBY THOMAS COX, JR. ) ) Plaintiff, ) ) v. ) No. 1:23-cv-01601-JPH-MJD ) US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, et al. ) ) Defendants. ) ORDER In March 2026, the Court granted Defendants' motion for summary judgment on Welby Cox's Administrative Procedure Act challenge to the Department of Justice's efforts to collect his restitution debt.

Dkt. 78; see dkt. 79 (final judgment). Mr. Cox has filed a motion to alter or amend the judgment under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 59(e). Dkt. 80. He argues that he was not notified of the deadline to response to the Department of Justice's motion for summary judgment and that the Court failed to adhere to the Seventh Circuit's mandate previously issued in this case.

Id. The Department of Justice responds that the Court committed no error. Dkt. 81. "Relief under Rule 59(e) is generally reserved for extraordinary cases." *Reilly v. Will Co. Sheriff's Off.*, 142 F.4th 924, 929 (7th Cir. 2025). "A Rule 59(e) motion can be granted only where the movant clearly establishes: (1) that the court committed a manifest error of law or fact, or (2) that newly discovered evidence precluded entry of judgment."

*Barrington Music Prods., Inc. v. Music & Arts Ctr.*, 924 F.3d 966, 968 (7th Cir. 2019). "Rule 59(e) does not provide a vehicle for a party to undo its own procedural failures, and it certainly does not allow a party to introduce new evidence or advance arguments that could and should have been presented to the district court prior to judgment." *Id.* Here, Mr. Cox argues that he was not informed of the summary judgment briefing schedule or the opportunity to respond to the Department of Justice's motion for summary judgment.

Dkt. 80 at 1. That deadline, however, was set by Court order, dkt. 44, and even if it had not been, Mr. Cox could have calculated the deadline under Local Rule 56-1, which requires a response brief "within 28 days after the movant serves" its summary judgment motion. Mr. Cox next contends that the Court misstated the year that he was sentenced and did not recognize some of his prior communications with the Department of Justice.

Dkt. 80 at 1–1. But the Court correctly identified the date of Mr. Cox's amended judgment, and none of the alleged facts that Mr. Cox identifies are relevant to the issues resolved in the summary judgment order. See dkt. 78; *Barrington Music Prods.*, 924 F.3d at 968.

Finally, Mr. Cox argues that the Court's summary judgment order failed to adhere to the Seventh Circuit's mandate in his earlier appeal in this case by granting summary judgment "on a perceived procedural default" rather than on the merits. Dkt. 80 at 2.

The Department of Justice was entitled to summary judgment in this case because it provided the notice required by the Treasury Offset Program. Dkt. 78 at 3–6. While the Court held that Mr. Cox waived any challenge to the notice's sufficiency under 31 U.S.C. § 3716, *id.* at 4, nothing in the Seventh Circuit's prior mandate prevented the application of ordinary waiver principles, dkt.

40 (remanding for adjudication of Mr. Cox's APA claim and finding other arguments waived). Mr. Cox's Rule 59(e) motion to alter or amend the judgment is therefore DENIED. Dkt. [80]. Mr. Cox has also filed a motion to proceed on appeal in forma pauperis. Dkt.

[83]; see dkt. 84. That motion is GRANTED. See *Thomas v. Zatecky*, 712 F.3d 1004, 1005 (7th Cir. 2013) ("[T]he possibility of litigating in forma pauperis—applies to 'any suit, action or proceeding, civil or criminal, or appeal therein.'"). While in forma pauperis status allows Mr. Cox to proceed without prepayment of fees, he remains liable for the fees. See *Rosas v. Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago*, 748 F. App'x 64, 65 (7th Cir.

2019) ("Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a), a district court may allow a litigant to proceed 'without prepayment of fees,'... but not without ever paying fees."). SO ORDERED. Date: 5/27/2026 Sema Pat nuck Hanlon James Patrick Hanlon United States District Judge Southern District of Indiana Distribution: WELBY THOMAS COX, JR. 415 NW 9th St. Richmond, IN 47374 All electronically registered counsel