

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF IDAHO

Jacob S. Davis v. Rebecca Strauss, Pasley S. Holmes, Kristina Peralas, and Kristin Sepeda

Case No. 1:26-cv-00105-AKB · No. 1:26-cv-00105-AKB · Decided June 25, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Idaho conducts initial screening of Jacob S. Davis’s amended prisoner civil-rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A. The court permits access-to-courts claims against prison officials Holmes and Sepeda concerning interference with Davis’s state post-conviction proceedings, but rejects claims concerning an Arizona conditions-of-confinement lawsuit, a pardon application, alleged retaliation, and violations of state law or prison policies. The court also denies Davis’s motion for a preliminary injunction.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Idaho
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Amanda K. Brailsford
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Idaho
DECIDED	June 25, 2026
DOCKET	1:26-cv-00105-AKB
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Initial screening of a prisoner’s amended civil-rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A(b), together with consideration of the plaintiff’s motion for a preliminary injunction.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A(b), the Court must dismiss claims that are frivolous or malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek monetary relief from an immune defendant. The Court applied the Rule 8 and plausibility standards of Ashcroft v. Iqbal and Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, liberally construed the pro se pleading, and applied the Winter factors to the preliminary-injunction motion.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

TOPICS

- section 1983
- prisoners rights
- civil rights
- injunctions
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

prisoner litigation

constitutional law

federal civil procedure

preliminary injunctions

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Davis plausibly stated access-to-courts claims under the First and Fourteenth Amendments based on Holmes's and Sepeda's alleged refusal to allow him to submit evidence in his state post-conviction proceeding.
2. Whether Davis plausibly stated access-to-courts claims based on restrictions affecting his Arizona conditions-of-confinement litigation.
3. Whether interference with a prisoner's pardon application supports an access-to-courts claim.
4. Whether the alleged reduction in computer-lab access after Davis filed a lawsuit plausibly stated a First Amendment retaliation claim.
5. Whether alleged violations of Idaho law, the Idaho Constitution, or IDOC policies supported federal or state-law claims.
6. Whether Davis was entitled to a preliminary injunction.

HOLDINGS

1. Davis plausibly stated access-to-courts claims against Holmes and Sepeda because he alleged that they prevented him from submitting evidence supporting a nonfrivolous actual-innocence claim in his state post-conviction proceeding and that the proceeding was dismissed with prejudice as a result.
2. Davis failed to state an access-to-courts claim based on limits on his access to electronic materials for his Arizona conditions-of-confinement litigation.
3. Restrictions allegedly preventing Davis from preparing or supporting a pardon application did not state a constitutional access-to-courts claim.
4. Davis failed to state a retaliation claim based solely on the allegation that his computer-lab access was reduced after he filed a lawsuit.
5. Davis was not entitled to a preliminary injunction because he failed to show a likelihood of success on the merits or future irreparable harm.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"To state a viable access-to-courts claim, a plaintiff must plausibly allege that he suffered an actual injury as a result of the defendant's actions." (Section 3.B)

"A complaint alleging a denial of access to the courts must plausibly allege that the plaintiff suffered, or will suffer, the loss of a past or present litigating opportunity." (Section 3.B)

"This is nothing more than a timing allegation and, as such, is not enough to state a plausible retaliation claim." (Section 3.C)

“Plaintiff may proceed on his access-to-courts claims, against Defendants Holmes and Sepeda, based on these Defendants’ alleged refusal to allow Plaintiff to submit evidence along with his response to the state court’s notice of intent to dismiss his post-conviction petition.” (Order ¶ 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Davis is an Idaho prisoner who alleged that prison access-to-courts personnel restricted his ability to access electronic legal materials, including materials relevant to civil-rights litigation, state post-conviction proceedings, and a pardon application. He alleged that Holmes and Sepeda refused to allow him to submit evidence supporting his response to an Idaho state court’s notice of intent to dismiss his post-conviction petition, and that the petition was later dismissed with prejudice. He also alleged reduced computer-lab access, restrictions on printing and software, retaliation after filing a lawsuit, and interference with his pardon application.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Clerk conditionally filed Jacob S. Davis’s complaint because he was incarcerated and sought to proceed in forma pauperis. After the Court directed him to amend, Davis filed an Amended Complaint alleging denial of access to courts, retaliation, and violations of state law and prison policies. The Court permitted only access-to-courts claims against Holmes and Sepeda arising from the alleged refusal to allow Davis to submit evidence in his state post-conviction proceeding, dismissed all other claims and terminated Strauss and Perales, and denied the motion for a preliminary injunction.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- State v. Davis, No. 50110, 2024 WL 3024665, at *1 (Idaho Ct. App. June 17, 2024)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 677-79 (2009)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555-56 (2007)
- Jackson v. Arizona, 885 F.2d 639, 640 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Lopez v. Smith, 203 F.3d 1122, 1130 (9th Cir. 2000)
- Crumpton v. Gates, 947 F.2d 1418, 1420 (9th Cir. 1991)
- Johnson v. Duffy, 588 F.2d 740, 743 (9th Cir. 1978)
- Taylor v. List, 880 F.2d 1040, 1045 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Starr v. Baca, 652 F.3d 1202, 1205-09 (9th Cir. 2011)
- Hansen v. Black, 885 F.2d 642, 646 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Bounds v. Smith, 430 U.S. 817, 821 (1977)
- Lewis v. Casey, 518 U.S. 343, 349, 351, 354-55, 360 (1996)
- Lindquist v. Idaho State Bd. of Corr., 776 F.2d 851, 858 (9th Cir. 1985)

- *Krug v. Lewis*, 852 F.2d 571 (Table), 1988 WL 74699, at *1 (9th Cir. July 6, 1988)
- *Daniels v. Williams*, 474 U.S. 327, 333 (1986)
- *Silva v. Di Vittorio*, 658 F.3d 1090, 1103 (9th Cir. 2011)
- *Coleman v. Tollefson*, 575 U.S. 532 (2015)
- *Christopher v. Harbury*, 536 U.S. 403, 413-17 (2002)
- *Phillips v. Hust*, 477 F.3d 1070, 1077 (9th Cir. 2007)
- *Hust v. Phillips*, 555 U.S. 1150 (2009)
- *Tahoe-Sierra Preservation Council, Inc. v. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency*, 216 F.3d 764, 784-85 (9th Cir. 2000)
- *Rhodes v. Robinson*, 408 F.3d 559, 567-68 (9th Cir. 2005)
- *Rizzo v. Dawson*, 778 F.2d 527, 532 (9th Cir. 1985)
- *Wood v. Yordy*, 753 F.3d 899, 905 (9th Cir. 2014)
- *Pratt v. Rowland*, 65 F.3d 802, 806-08 (9th Cir. 1995)
- *Mendocino Environmental Center v. Mendocino County*, 192 F.3d 1283, 1300 (9th Cir. 1999)
- *Davis v. Goord*, 320 F.3d 346, 353 (2d Cir. 2003)
- *Morris v. Powell*, 449 F.3d 682, 686 (5th Cir. 2006)
- *Hartman v. Moore*, 547 U.S. 250, 259 (2006)
- *Huskey v. City of San Jose*, 204 F.3d 893, 899 (9th Cir. 2000)
- *Walker v. Sumner*, 14 F.3d 1415, 1420 (9th Cir. 1994)
- *Sandin v. Conner*, 515 U.S. 472 (1995)
- *Huron Valley Hospital v. City of Pontiac*, 887 F.2d 710, 714 (6th Cir. 1989)
- *Baker v. McCollan*, 443 U.S. 137, 146 (1979)
- *Lowrey v. Walton County Sheriff's Department*, No. 3:07-CV-121-CDL, 2008 WL 660332, at *3 (M.D. Ga. Mar. 5, 2008)
- *Hill v. County of Benewah*, No. 2:18-CV-00320-DCN, 2020 WL 1049905, at *7 (D. Idaho Mar. 4, 2020)
- *Amoco Production Co. v. Gambell*, 480 U.S. 531, 542 (1987)
- *Sierra On-Line v. Phoenix Software*, 739 F.2d 1415, 1422 (9th Cir. 1984)
- *Winter v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 7, 20, 22, 24 (2008)
- *Cassim v. Bowen*, 824 F.2d 791, 795 (9th Cir. 1987)
- *Garcia v. Google, Inc.*, 786 F.3d 733, 740 (9th Cir. 2015) (en banc)
- *International Molders' and Allied Workers' Local Union No. 164 v. Nelson*, 799 F.2d 547, 551 (9th Cir. 1986)
- *Dymo Industries, Inc. v. Tapeprinter, Inc.*, 326 F.2d 141, 143 (4th Cir. 1964)
- *Bradley v. Pittsburgh Board of Education*, 910 F.2d 1172, 1176 (3d Cir. 1990)
- *Goldie's Bookstore Inc. v. Superior Court*, 739 F.2d 466, 472 (9th Cir. 1984)
- *Caribbean Marine Services Co. v. Baldrige*, 844 F.2d 668, 674 (9th Cir. 1988)
- *Dominion Video Satellite, Inc. v. Echostar Satellite Corp.*, 269 F.3d 1149, 1154 (10th Cir. 2001)
- *Forsyth v. Humana, Inc.*, 114 F.3d 1467, 1474 (9th Cir. 1997)

- Lacey v. Maricopa County, 693 F.3d 896 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc)
- Hal Roach Studios, Inc. v. Richard Feiner & Co., Inc., 896 F.2d 1542, 1546 (9th Cir. 1990)

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