

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Page v. Wallace

Page v. Wallace · No. 1:25-cv-00718-SKO (HC) · Decided June 13, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California recommends dismissal without prejudice of Sammie L. Page’s 28 U.S.C. § 2241 petition challenging ongoing recommitment proceedings under California’s Sexually Violent Predators Act. The court concludes that the petition largely relitigates previously rejected claims and that Younger abstention applies to the remaining claims because related state proceedings are ongoing and provide an adequate opportunity to raise constitutional issues.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sheila K. Oberto
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	June 13, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00718-SKO (HC)
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner filed a federal habeas petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 challenging his ongoing civil recommitment proceedings under California's Sexually Violent Predators Act. A magistrate judge recommended dismissal without prejudice under the Younger abstention doctrine and directed that the matter be assigned to a district judge for review.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The recommendation was subject to review by a district judge under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and (C) and Local Rule 304. The habeas claims were evaluated under the abuse-of-the-writ doctrine and Younger abstention principles.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Sammie L. Page v. Janine Wallace

TOPICS

federal habeas corpus

comity

civil procedure

due process

post-conviction relief

PRACTICE AREAS

federal habeas corpus

constitutional law

civil procedure

post-conviction relief

federalism

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Page's renewed challenges to the validity of his ongoing commitment were barred as an abuse of the writ under 28 U.S.C. § 2244(a).
2. Whether Younger abstention required dismissal of Page's constitutional challenges to ongoing California SVPA recommitment proceedings.
3. Whether the record showed an exception to Younger abstention based on bad faith, harassment, or a statute flagrantly and patently violative of constitutional prohibitions.

HOLDINGS

1. The petition's repeated challenges to claims previously litigated and dismissed in *Page v. King* constituted an abuse of the writ under 28 U.S.C. § 2244(a).
2. Younger abstention applied because the California SVPA recommitment proceedings were judicial in nature, involved important state interests, and provided Page an adequate opportunity to raise his constitutional claims.
3. No Younger exception was shown because Page did not establish bad faith, harassment, or that the SVPA was flagrantly and patently unconstitutional.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Younger abstention is required when: (1) state proceedings, judicial in nature, are pending; (2) the state proceedings involve important state interests; and (3) the state proceedings afford adequate opportunity to raise the constitutional issue.” (at 6)

“Under the rationale of Younger, the petition must be dismissed without prejudice to refiling after SVPA recommitment proceedings challenged herein, including appeal, are completed.” (at 7)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Page was convicted of multiple sexually violent offenses and was civilly committed in 2004 under California's SVPA after a jury found him to be a sexually violent predator. Before his initial commitment expired, the State initiated recommitment proceedings; although probable cause was found in 2006, the state proceedings remained pending for years, with numerous continuances and motions. At the time of this action, Alameda County Superior Court had scheduled additional hearings and an SVP jury trial for October 27, 2025. Page's federal petition challenged the ongoing commitment and recommitment proceedings, including the adequacy of probable cause and the performance of counsel.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Page was civilly committed under California's SVPA after a jury found him to be a sexually violent predator, and later recommitment proceedings remained pending in Alameda County Superior Court. He had previously raised related federal constitutional challenges, which were dismissed or rejected, including in *Page v. King*. In this action, he again challenged the validity of his commitment, alleged ineffective assistance of counsel and due-process and equal-protection violations, and challenged the handling of motions in the state proceedings. The magistrate judge concluded that some claims constituted an abuse of the writ and that the remaining claims required abstention because the state recommitment proceedings were ongoing.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Page v. King*, C 13-5352 WHA (PR), 2015 WL 5569434, at *1-4 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 21, 2015)
- *Orozco v. Superior Court*, 11 Cal. Rptr. 3d 573, 578-79 (Cal. Ct. App. 2004)
- *Seeboth v. Allenby*, 789 F.3d 1099, 1101 (9th Cir. 2015)
- *People v. Page*, 2005 WL 1492388, at *3-5 (Cal. Ct. App. June 24, 2005)
- *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37, 43-54 (1971)
- *Middlesex County Ethics Comm. v. Garden State Bar Ass'n*, 457 U.S. 423, 432 (1982)
- *Dubinka v. Judges of the Superior Court*, 23 F.3d 218, 223 (9th Cir. 1994)
- *Carden v. Montana*, 626 F.2d 82, 84 (9th Cir. 1980)
- *Page v. Lockyer*, No. C 03-2282 VRW (PR) (N.D. Cal. May 28, 2003)
- *Page v. Lockyer*, No. C 03-2364 VRW (PR) (N.D. Cal. June 6, 2003)
- *Page v. Lockyer*, No. C 03-4797 VRW (PR) (N.D. Cal. May 26, 2005)
- *Page v. Lockyer*, 200 F. App'x 727, 727-29 (9th Cir. 2009)
- *Page v. King*, No. C 12-3721 WHA (PR)
- *Page v. King*, Case No. 1:16-cv-00522-AWI-JLT (E.D. Cal. Sept. 28, 2020)
- *Wilkerson v. Wheeler*, 772 F.3d 834, 838-39 (9th Cir. 2014)