

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
GEORGIA, MACON DIVISION

Christine Martindale v. Digital Trends LLC d/b/a Growth Lab

Martindale v. Digital Trends · No. 5:25-CV-396 (MTT) · Decided March 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The court granted Digital Trends LLC’s motion to compel arbitration and stay all proceedings in Christine Martindale’s employment-discrimination action. The court held that the arbitrator must decide whether claims asserted in Martindale’s second amended EEOC charge fall within the arbitration agreement, while claims covered by the agreement’s carveout were non-arbitrable. Because the arbitrable claims predominated and overlapped with the non-arbitrable claims, the court stayed the entire case pending resolution of arbitrability.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, Macon Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Marc T. Treadwell
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, Macon Division
DECIDED	March 12, 2026
DOCKET	5:25-CV-396 (MTT)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought employment-discrimination and retaliation claims, and Defendant moved to compel arbitration of some claims and stay all proceedings pending arbitration.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court enforced the parties' arbitration agreement according to its terms under the Federal Arbitration Act. Whether to stay non-arbitrable claims was reviewed under the court's discretionary authority, considering whether arbitrable claims predominated and whether the claims were factually intertwined.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Christine Martindale v. Digital Trends LLC d/b/a Growth Lab

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the arbitrability of claims asserted in Martindale's Second Amended EEOC Charge was delegated to an arbitrator under the employment agreement.
2. Whether the claims asserted in the Second Amended Charge had to be stayed under section 3 of the Federal Arbitration Act.
3. Whether the court should exercise its discretion to stay the non-arbitrable claims asserted in the First Amended Charge.

HOLDINGS

1. Because the employment agreement expressly provided that questions regarding arbitrability would be decided by the arbitrator, and the parties disputed whether the carveout covered the Second Amended Charge claims, the question of arbitrability was delegated to the arbitrator.
2. Claims asserted in the Second Amended Charge must be stayed pending resolution of their arbitrability by the arbitrator.
3. The court exercised its discretion to stay the non-arbitrable claims because the arbitrable claims predominated and the non-arbitrable claims were closely intertwined with the arbitrable claims.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"When the parties' contract delegates the arbitrability question to an arbitrator, a court may not override the contract." (at 3)

"For arbitrable issues, the language of Section 3 indicates that the stay is mandatory." (at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Martindale filed an initial EEOC charge alleging sex discrimination and retaliation, then entered into an employment agreement with Growth Lab containing an arbitration clause and a carveout for claims asserted in that charge. She later filed a Second Amended Charge adding pregnancy discrimination, retaliation, and failure-to-accommodate claims under Title VII's Pregnancy Discrimination Act and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. Her agreement delegated questions of arbitrability to an arbitrator and incorporated the AAA Employment Arbitration Rules.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Martindale filed a federal complaint on September 11, 2025, asserting six claims arising from her employment. Growth Lab moved to compel arbitration and stay the action. The court granted the motion, delegated

arbitrability of claims asserted in Martindale's Second Amended EEOC Charge to the arbitrator, and stayed all proceedings.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- U.S. Nutraceuticals, LLC v. Cyanotech Corp., 769 F.3d 1308, 1311 (11th Cir. 2014)
- Henry Schein, Inc. v. Archer & White Sales, Inc., 586 U.S. 63, 67-68 (2019)
- Klay v. All Defendants, 389 F.3d 1191, 1203-04 (11th Cir. 2004)
- Whisenhunt v. Ameracat, Inc., 731 F. Supp. 1279, 1298 (S.D. Ala. 2024)

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