

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS, EASTERN DIVISION

Justin Gibbs v. Abt Electronics, Inc. and Ricky Abt

Gibbs · No. No. 21 CV 6277 · Decided January 5, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois granted Abt Electronics, Inc. and Ricky Abt summary judgment on Justin Gibbs’s claims under Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Illinois Human Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1981, and the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act. The court held, among other things, that Gibbs failed to provide sufficient evidence supporting his discrimination, disability, retaliation, and related claims, and that many alleged discriminatory incidents were untimely or inadequately supported under Local Rule 56.1.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Georgia N. Alexakis
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
DECIDED	January 5, 2026
DOCKET	No. 21 CV 6277
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought claims under Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Illinois Human Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1981, and the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act. Defendants moved for summary judgment on all claims.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is appropriate when there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The nonmoving party must identify admissible evidence creating a genuine issue for trial, and unsupported or speculative assertions do not suffice.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; memorandum opinion and order from a federal district court with no reporter citation.

PARTIES

Justin Gibbs v. Abt Electronics, Inc., Ricky Abt

TOPICS

summary judgment

employment discrimination

hostile work environment

retaliation

ada / disability

PRACTICE AREAS

employment law

civil rights

disability discrimination

wage and hour

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether defendants were entitled to summary judgment on Gibbs's Title VII, § 1981, and IHRA discrimination claims.
2. Whether Gibbs produced evidence supporting an ADA disability or ADA disparate-treatment claim.
3. Whether Gibbs produced evidence of a hostile work environment based on race or disability.
4. Whether Gibbs produced evidence establishing causation for his Title VII, § 1981, IHRA, and ADA retaliation claims.
5. Whether Gibbs created a genuine dispute that automatic meal-break deductions violated the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act.

HOLDINGS

1. A party opposing summary judgment must controvert asserted facts with specific citations to admissible evidentiary material; unsupported, speculative, or conclusory assertions do not create a genuine dispute of material fact.
2. The court would consider only conduct occurring within the statutory period for Gibbs's discrimination claims because he failed to establish a continuing violation connecting earlier events to timely conduct.
3. Gibbs could not proceed on his ADA discrimination claims because he presented no evidence from which a jury could find that his vitiligo substantially limited a major life activity or otherwise qualified as an ADA disability.
4. Gibbs failed to create a genuine dispute that any challenged employment action was taken because of his race or otherwise constituted actionable discrimination.
5. Gibbs failed to establish a genuine dispute of material fact on his hostile-work-environment claims because he lacked evidence that the timely conduct was based on race or disability and was severe or pervasive.
6. Gibbs failed to establish a genuine dispute of material fact on his ADA, Title VII, § 1981, and IHRA retaliation claims because he presented no sufficient evidence of a causal connection between protected activity and the alleged adverse actions.
7. Gibbs failed to create a genuine dispute on his IWPCA claim because his argument was waived as cursory and unsupported and he did not establish that the meal-break deductions were unauthorized under the statute.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Summary judgment is appropriate if the movant shows that there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law.” (at 2)

“Suspicious timing alone, however, is generally insufficient to establish a retaliatory motivation.” (at 17)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Justin Gibbs, who is Black and has vitiligo, worked for Abt Electronics from February 2017 until his termination on April 18, 2020. He alleged racial and disability-related harassment, discriminatory scheduling and discipline, retaliation, and unlawful automatic meal-break deductions. Gibbs maintained a negative bonus-fund balance for an extended period based on learning letters concerning urine bottles, safety-training failures, and failure to wear steel-toed boots; Abt terminated him after an April 2020 incident involving his footwear, attitude, and conduct. The court concluded that Gibbs lacked admissible evidence connecting the challenged actions to race, disability, or protected retaliation, and that his wage claim was inadequately developed.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Gibbs sued his former employer and its owner in the Northern District of Illinois. After an earlier motion to dismiss and an amended complaint, defendants moved for summary judgment. The court granted the motion on all claims, vacated all pretrial and trial deadlines, and terminated the civil case.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Spurling v. C & M Fine Pack, Inc., 739 F.3d 1055, 1060 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986)
- Celotex Corp. v. Catrett, 477 U.S. 317, 323 (1986)
- Kreg Therapeutics, Inc. v. VitalGo, Inc., 919 F.3d 405, 415 (7th Cir. 2019)
- Schmidt v. Eagle Waste & Recycling, Inc., 599 F.3d 626, 630 (7th Cir. 2010)
- McGowan v. Deere & Co., 581 F.3d 575, 580 (7th Cir. 2009)
- Flannery v. Recording Indus. Ass'n of Am., 354 F.3d 632, 637 (7th Cir. 2004)
- Tinner v. United Ins. Co. of Am., 308 F.3d 697, 707-08 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Filipovic v. K & R Exp. Sys., Inc., 176 F.3d 390, 396 (7th Cir. 1999)
- Shipley v. Chicago Bd. of Election Commissioners, 947 F.3d 1056, 1063 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Kellogg v. Ball State Univ., 984 F.3d 525, 529 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Abrego v. Wilkie, 907 F.3d 1004, 1012 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Bagwe v. Sedgwick Claims Mgmt. Services, Inc., 811 F.3d 866, 879 n.39, 887-88 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Mlsna v. Union Pac. R.R. Co., 975 F.3d 629, 632-33 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Arce v. Aramark Corp., 239 F. Supp. 2d 153, 166-67 (D.P.R. 2003)

- Fee v. Mgmt. & Training Corp., No. 3:12-CV-00302-RCJ, 2012 WL 4792920, at *3 (D. Nev. Oct. 9, 2012)
- Estate of Perry v. Wenzel, 872 F.3d 439, 461 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Phillips v. Baxter, No. 23-1740, 2024 WL 1795859, at *2 (7th Cir. Apr. 25, 2024)
- Ani-Deng v. Jeffboat, LLC, 777 F.3d 452, 454 (7th Cir. 2015)
- Swanson v. Vill. of Flossmoor, 794 F.3d 820, 827 (7th Cir. 2015)
- Cole v. Bd. of Trustees of N. Illinois Univ., 838 F.3d 888, 896 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Hambrick v. Kijakazi, 79 F.4th 835, 842 (7th Cir. 2023)
- Brooks v. Avancez, 39 F.4th 424, 441 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Swidnicki v. Brunswick Corp., 23 F. Supp. 3d 921, 931 (N.D. Ill. 2014)
- McCann v. Badger Mining Corp., 965 F.3d 578, 589-90 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Lee v. Mostyn Law Firm, CIV.A. H-04-3473, 2006 WL 571859, at *5 (S.D. Tex. Mar. 6, 2006)
- Coleman v. Donahoe, 667 F.3d 835, 841 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Lesiv v. Illinois Cent. R.R. Co., 39 F.4th 903, 911 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Jokich v. Rush Univ. Med. Ctr., 42 F.4th 626, 634 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Parker v. Brooks Life Sci., Inc., 39 F.4th 931, 937 (7th Cir. 2022)

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