

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Timothy Bumb v. Steven Gobin

Bumb · No. 25-cv-04729-SVK · Decided November 7, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California conditionally grants Fennemore LLP’s motion to withdraw as counsel for defendant Steven Gobin. The court requires counsel to continue accepting service until Gobin files a pro se appearance or obtains substitute counsel, and directs Fennemore to assist Gobin with electronic filing registration if he proceeds pro se.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Susan Van Keulen
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	November 7, 2025
DOCKET	25-cv-04729-SVK
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant's counsel moved to withdraw as counsel of record. The court conditionally granted the motion.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A decision whether to permit counsel to withdraw is reviewed under the trial court's sound discretion.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- motions to dismiss

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- legal ethics and professional responsibility

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should permit defendant's counsel to withdraw when the client consents and intends to proceed pro se.

2. What conditions were necessary to protect the parties and administration of justice upon withdrawal of counsel.

HOLDINGS

1. The court conditionally granted Fennemore LLP's motion to withdraw because defendant consented to withdrawal, intended to proceed pro se, and the early stage of the case weighed in favor of withdrawal, subject to specified conditions.
2. Fennemore was required to continue accepting service of papers for forwarding purposes until Gobin filed a notice of appearance pro se or substituted new counsel, and to assist Gobin in registering his email with the court's ECF system.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Counsel may not withdraw from an action until relieved by order of Court after written notice has been given reasonably in advance to the client and to all other parties who have appeared in the case.” (at 1)

“The decision to permit counsel to withdraw is within the sound discretion of the trial court.” (at 1)

“Fennemore shall “continue to accept service of papers for forwarding purposes until Mr. Gobin files a notice of appearance pro se or substitutes new counsel” pursuant to Civ. L.R. 11-5(b).” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Fennemore LLP represented defendant Steven Gobin and moved to withdraw as counsel of record. Gobin stated that he intended to represent himself and consented to the withdrawal. Because the case was at an early stage and Gobin resided in Idaho, the court required continued forwarding of service and assistance with electronic filing registration to limit prejudice.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The action was pending at an early stage, with no answer filed and discovery scheduled to close on June 1, 2026. Defendant Steven Gobin consented to Fennemore LLP's withdrawal and indicated that he intended to proceed pro se. Plaintiff filed a partial non-opposition requesting that Gobin immediately appear pro se and provide an email address for service of papers.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Robinson v. Delgado, No. 02-cv-1538-NJV, 2010 WL 3259384, at *1-*2 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 18, 2010)
- LaGrand v. Stewart, 133 F.3d 1253, 1269 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Williams v. County of Fresno, 562 F. Supp. 3d 1032, 1035 (E.D. Cal. 2021)

OPINION

Bumb

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3

4 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

5 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

6 7 TIMOTHY BUMB, Case No. 25-cv-04729-SVK 8 Plaintiff,

ORDER CONDITIONALLY

9 v. GRANTING FENNEMORE LLP'S

MOTION TO WITHDRAW

10 STEVEN GOBIN,

Re: Dkt. No. 25 11 Defendant. 12 On October 22, 2025, Defendant's counsel, Fennemore, LLP ("Fennemore") filed a motion 13 to withdraw as counsel of record. Dkt. 25 (the "Motion"). Having considered the Motion and 14 supporting declarations, the relevant law and the record in this case, the Court finds the Motion 15 suitable for determination without oral argument (see Civ. L.R. 7-1(b) and CONDITIONALLY 16 GRANTS the Motion. 17 "Counsel may not withdraw from an action until relieved by order of Court after written 18 notice has been given reasonably in advance to the client and to all other parties who have 19 appeared in the case ." Civil Local Rule 11-5(b). "The decision to permit counsel to withdraw is 20 within the sound discretion of the trial court." Robinson v. Delgado, No. 02-cv-1538-NJV, 2010 21 WL 3259384, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 18, 2010) (citing LaGrand v. Stewart, 133 F.3d 1253, 1269 22 (9th Cir.1998)). In ruling on such a motion, courts consider: "(1) the reasons why withdrawal is 23 sought; (2) the prejudice withdrawal may cause to other litigants; (3) the harm withdrawal might 24 cause to the administration of justice; and (4) the degree to which withdrawal will delay the 25 resolution of the case." Williams v. Cnty. of Fresno, 562 F. Supp. 3d 1032, 1035 (E.D. Cal. 2021); 26 see also Robinson, 2010 WL 3259384, at *2 (same). 27 Here, Fennemore's Motion is supported by a declaration from Defendant, Steven Gobin, 1 it means to represent [him]self," intends "to move forward as a pro se litigant" and thus 2 "consent[s] to[] Fennemore's withdrawal." Dkt. 25-1, ¶ 2. This weighs in favor of granting 3 withdrawal, (see Cal. R. Prof. Conduct 1.16(b)(6)), although "the consent of the client is not 4 dispositive." Robinson, 2010 WL 3259384, at *2. The early stage of the proceedings (no answer 5 has been filed, and discovery does not close until June 1, 2026) also weighs in favor of 6 withdrawal. However, Plaintiff filed a partial non-opposition, requesting that "Mr. Gobin 7 immediately appears pro se and provides an e-mail address for service of papers." Dkt. 27 at 2. 8 Given the fully briefed motion pending before the Court and Mr. Gobin's residence in Idaho, the 9 Court finds that registration of Mr. Gobin for e-filing will serve to limit prejudice to both Parties if 10 withdrawal of counsel is granted. 11 Accordingly, the Court CONDITIONALLY GRANTS the Motion. Fennemore shall 12 "continue to accept service of papers for forwarding purposes until Mr. Gobin files a notice of 13 appearance pro se or substitutes new counsel" pursuant to Civ. L.R. 11-5(b). Moreover, if Mr. 14 Gobin wishes to

