

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

DeCheri Hafer v. United States, et al.

Hafer · No. 1:22-cv-00972-JLT-EPG · Decided January 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The document contains findings and recommendations by a United States magistrate judge recommending denial of Plaintiff DeCheri Hafer’s motion for default judgment. The court concluded that default judgment was unavailable because the case had been closed, judgment had been entered in favor of a defendant, and the plaintiff’s prior motion to reopen had been denied. The recommendations were issued with a thirty-day period for objections.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	United States Magistrate Judge
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	January 12, 2026
DOCKET	1:22-cv-00972-JLT-EPG
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved for default judgment in a previously closed Social Security benefits case after the court had dismissed her claims and denied her motion to reopen the case. The magistrate judge issued findings and recommendations that the motion for default judgment be denied.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	DeCheri Hafer v. United States, Social Security Administration

TOPICS

- default judgment
- default
- civil procedure
- subject matter jurisdiction

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- Social Security
- administrative law
- remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff was entitled to default judgment under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 55 when no clerk's entry of default had been entered and the case had been dismissed, closed, and not reopened.

HOLDINGS

1. Default judgment was not warranted because no entry of default had been made, the case had been dismissed and closed, and the court had denied Plaintiff's motion to reopen the case.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“As the case has been closed and not re-opened, there has been no failure of Defendant to plead or otherwise defend the case, and Plaintiff is not entitled to default judgment.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff brought claims against the Commissioner of Social Security, the Social Security Administration, and the United States arising from the denial of her Social Security benefits. The court dismissed the claims without prejudice for lack of subject matter jurisdiction, entered judgment in favor of the defendant, and closed the case. After the court denied Plaintiff's motion to reopen, Plaintiff sought default judgment on the ground that Defendants had not responded to her complaint.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed the action on July 22, 2022, challenging the denial of Social Security benefits. The Commissioner moved to dismiss under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 12(b)(1) and 12(b)(6); the district judge ultimately dismissed all claims without prejudice and closed the case on April 6, 2023. Plaintiff's motion to reopen the case was denied on August 20, 2025. She then filed the present motion for default judgment on December 29, 2025.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Wilkerson v. Wheeler, 772 F.3d 834, 838-39 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Baxter v. Sullivan, 923 F.2d 1391, 1394 (9th Cir. 1991)