

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

M.R.Z. v. Commissioner of Social Security

No. 3:25-cv-02757-LJC (N.D. Cal. Oct. 22, 2025) · No. 3:25-cv-02757-LJC · Decided October 22, 2025

SUMMARY

This document is a motion to stay proceedings and accompanying order in M.R.Z. v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 3:25-cv-02757-LJC, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. The court granted the motion because Department of Justice attorneys handling Social Security litigation were unavailable during a lapse in federal appropriations. The case is stayed until appropriations are restored or Congress enacts a continuing resolution, after which the defendant must notify the court within three days.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Lisa J. Cisneros
DECIDED	October 22, 2025
DOCKET	3:25-cv-02757-LJC
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved to stay pending deadlines related to EAJA fees while Department of Justice attorneys were unavailable because of a lapse in federal appropriations.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court exercises broad discretionary authority to stay proceedings and requires the party requesting a stay to show that the circumstances justify the stay.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; limited persuasive value
PARTIES	M.R.Z. v. Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

- appropriations
- civil procedure
- federal spending

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- federal appropriations
- Social Security litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should stay pending proceedings and deadlines related to EAJA fees during the lapse in federal appropriations.
2. Whether the stay should remain in effect until Congress restored Department of Justice appropriations or enacted a continuing resolution.

HOLDINGS

1. A stay was warranted because the government essentially could not participate in the litigation while Department of Justice funding was unavailable.
2. The matter was stayed until Congress restored appropriations to the Department of Justice or enacted a continuing resolution, and Defendant was required to file notice within three days of either event.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Good cause being shown, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Plaintiff’s motion to stay is GRANTED. This matter is STAYED until Congress has restored appropriations to the Department of Justice or Congress enacts a continuing resolution.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Department of Justice attorneys handling Social Security litigation were out of the office because of a lapse in federal government appropriations. The parties had stipulated to a remand but had not resolved Plaintiff’s claim for EAJA fees, leaving deadlines related to those fees pending. Plaintiff asserted that the government could not effectively participate in the litigation until funding was restored.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff and Defendant had stipulated to a remand but had not negotiated EAJA fees. Plaintiff sought a stay of deadlines until Congress restored appropriations to the Department of Justice or enacted a continuing resolution. The district court granted the motion and ordered Defendant to notify the court within three days after funding was restored or a continuing resolution was enacted.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Clinton v. Jones, 520 U.S. 681, 706 (1997)
- Landis v. North American Co., 299 U.S. 248, 254 (1936)
- Nken v. Holder, 556 U.S. 418, 433-34 (2009)
- Dependable Highway Exp., Inc. v. Navigators Ins. Co., 498 F.3d 1059, 1066-67 (9th Cir. 2007)
- Young v. .N.S., 208 F.3d 1116, 1119 (9th Cir. 2000)

OPINION

Ruskofsky-Zuccato

PER CURIAM.

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7 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

8 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

9) CASE NO. 3:25-cv-02757-LJC

10 M.R.Z.,)

) 11 Plaintiff,)

12 v.)) MOTION TO STAY PROCEEDINGS; ORDER

)

13 COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY)

) 14 Defendant.)) 15 _____) 16 17 18 19 Plaintiff hereby
moves for a stay of pending deadlines in the above-captioned case. 20 21 1. United States
Department of Justice attorneys who handle Social Security litigation 22 are currently out of the
office due to a lapse in federal government appropriations. 23 2. Absent an appropriation,
Department of Justice attorneys are prohibited from 24 working, even on a voluntary basis, except
in very limited circumstances, including “emergencies 25 involving the safety of human life or the
protection of property.” 31 U.S.C. § 1342. 26 3. Although we have stipulated to a remand, we have
not yet negotiated EAJA fees. 27 Undersigned counsel for Plaintiff, therefore, requests a stay of all
pending deadlines related to 28 EAJA fees until Congress has restored appropriations to the
Department of Justice. 1 4. If this motion for a stay is granted, Plaintiff requests that, at that point,
all current 2 || deadlines be extended commensurate with the duration of the lapse in
appropriations. 3 5. A district court “has broad discretion to stay proceedings as an incident to its
power 4 control its own docket.” Clinton v. Jones, 520 U.S. 681, 706 (1997), citing Landis v.
North 5 || America Co., 299 U.S. 248, 254 (1936). A stay is discretionary and the “party requesting
a stay 6 || bears the burden of showing that the circumstances justify an exercise of that
discretion.” Nken v. 7 || Holder, 556 U.S. 418, 433-34 (2009). “Generally, stays should not be
indefinite in nature.” 8 || Dependable Highway Exp., Inc. v. Navigators Ins. Co., 498 F.3d 1059,
1066-67 (9th Cir. 2007). 9 Instead, district courts should “balance the length of any stay against
the strength of the 10 || justification given for it.” Young v. .N.S., 208 F.3d 1116, 1119 (9th Cir.
2000) (discussing that if 11 stay is especially long or its term is indefinite, a greater showing is
required to justify it). 12 6. Here, a stay of proceedings is warranted in this matter because the
government 13 || essentially cannot participate in the litigation of the case until funding is restored.

14

15 ORDER

16 Good cause being shown, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Plaintiff's motion to stay is 17 ||
GRANTED. This matter is STAYED until Congress has restored appropriations to the Department
18 of Justice or Congress enacts a continuing resolution. 19 Within three (3) days of the
restoration of appropriations or enactment of a continuing 20 resolution, Defendant shall file a
notice thereof with the Court. At that time, the Court will set a 21 || status conference to discuss
whether modification to the scheduling order will be necessary. 22 23 IT IS SO ORDERED. "4
Dated: October 22, 2025 □

UN Aj . LISA J. CISNEROS

D STATES DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

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MOTION TO STAY PROCEEDINGS 3:25-ev-02757-LIC