

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

M.C. v. Kern High School District, et al.

M.C. v. Kern High School District · No. 1:25-cv-00436-CDB · Decided April 16, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California grants an ex parte application to appoint Jeaninne Cavazos as guardian ad litem for minor plaintiff M.C. The court finds that Cavazos is competent and qualified, has no adverse interest, and is authorized to prosecute the action on M.C.’s behalf.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	April 16, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00436-CDB
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Minor plaintiff filed an ex parte application under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 17(c) for appointment of her mother as guardian ad litem before defendants appeared.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The appointment of a guardian ad litem is committed to the sound discretion of the trial court.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; nonprecedential
PARTIES	M.C. v. Kern High School District, Dr. Michael Zufla, Does 1 through 10

TOPICS

- guardian ad litem
- guardianship procedure
- civil procedure
- civil rights
- ada / disability

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- civil rights
- disability discrimination

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should appoint Jeaninne Cavazos as guardian ad litem for minor plaintiff M.C. under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 17(c) and applicable California law.
2. Whether Cavazos had a conflict of interest or other disqualifying circumstance that would prevent her from adequately protecting M.C.'s interests.

HOLDINGS

1. A court must appoint a guardian ad litem or issue another appropriate protective order for an unrepresented minor, and the court may appoint a proposed representative when the representative is competent, dedicated to the minor's best interests, and does not have an impermissible conflict of interest.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A guardian ad litem is authorized to act on behalf of his ward and may make all appropriate decisions in the course of specific litigation.” (at 2)

“The guardian need not possess any special qualifications, but she must “be truly dedicated to the best interests of the person on whose behalf he seeks to litigate.”” (at 2)

“Jeaninne Cavazos is appointed to act as guardian ad litem for M.C. and is authorized to prosecute the action on M.C.'s behalf.” (at 5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

M.C. is a 14-year-old minor living in Bakersfield, California, with her mother, Jeaninne Cavazos. Cavazos represented that she was responsible and competent, had no adverse interest to M.C., and consented to serve as guardian ad litem. The record also showed that M.C. had no general guardian and that counsel had represented M.C. since June 2024 on a contingency basis without involvement from any defendant or insurer.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

M.C., a minor, brought an action seeking declaratory and injunctive relief and damages for alleged disability discrimination and related tort and civil-rights violations. Her mother, Jeaninne Cavazos, applied on April 14, 2025, to be appointed guardian ad litem. Although defendants had not appeared and the opposition period had not expired, the court ruled without awaiting opposition and granted the application.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- United States v. 30.64 Acres of Land, More or Less, Situated in Klickitat Cnty., State of Wash., 795 F.2d 796, 804-05 (9th Cir. 1986)
- AT&T Mobility, LLC v. Yeager, 143 F. Supp. 3d 1042, 1054 (E.D. Cal. 2015)
- Whitmore v. Arkansas, 495 U.S. 149, 163-64 (1990)

- Troxel v. Granville, 530 U.S. 57, 66 (2000)
- Molesky for J.M. v. Carillo, No. 1:22-cv-1567-ADA-CDB, 2022 WL 17584396, at *1 (E.D. Cal. Dec. 12, 2022)
- Williams v. Super. Ct. of San Diego, 147 Cal. App. 4th 36, 50 (2007)
- I.W. by & through Aguirre v. Clovis Unified Sch. Dist., No. 1:24-CV-01074-JLT-BAM, 2024 WL 4216753, at *1 (E.D. Cal. Sept. 17, 2024)

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