

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
TENNESSEE, NASHVILLE DIVISION

Lathan Word v. Sumner County Sheriff's Dept., et al.

Word · No. 3:26-cv-00002 · Decided April 9, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee denied Lathan Word’s second motion for a preliminary injunction, motion for an emergency protective order, and motion for leave to amend. The court concluded that Word had not shown an irreparable injury attributable to the named defendants and had not submitted a proposed amended complaint as required by local rules. The court also ordered the parties to report the status of related state criminal proceedings because the claims could implicate Heck v. Humphrey and potential sanctions for misstatements.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, Nashville Division
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, Nashville Division
DECIDED	April 9, 2026
DOCKET	3:26-cv-00002
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved for a second preliminary injunction, an emergency protective order, and leave to amend his complaint. The district court denied all three motions and ordered the parties to provide information concerning related state criminal proceedings.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Preliminary-injunction requests are evaluated under the four-factor test addressing irreparable harm, likelihood of success on the merits, the balance of the equities, and the public interest. A preliminary injunction may be denied solely for failure to establish irreparable injury. A motion to amend must comply with the applicable local-rule requirements.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential district court memorandum opinion and order
PARTIES	Lathan Word v. Sumner County Sheriff's Dept., et al.

TOPICS

injunctions

motion to amend

section 1983

sanctions

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

civil procedure

injunctive relief

pleading and amendment

criminal-procedure-related civil litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Word was entitled to a preliminary injunction or emergency protective order without alleging or presenting evidence of an ongoing irreparable injury caused by a named defendant.
2. Whether Word could obtain leave to amend when he failed to attach a signed proposed amended complaint and instead attached a table of authorities and constitutional violations.
3. Whether the court should require the parties to clarify the status of related state criminal proceedings because ongoing prosecution could implicate *Heck v. Humphrey* and potentially expose a party to sanctions for deliberate misstatements.

HOLDINGS

1. A plaintiff seeking preliminary injunctive relief must establish an injury that is certain and immediate rather than speculative or theoretical, and the court may deny relief solely for failure to show irreparable injury. Word failed to allege or substantiate an ongoing irreparable injury caused by any named defendant, so both requests for injunctive relief were denied.
2. A motion to amend a pleading must include a signed proposed amended pleading as an appended exhibit, and an amended pleading must restate the entirety of the pleading with the amendments incorporated. Because Word submitted no proposed amended complaint, his motion for leave to amend was denied without prejudice.
3. The parties were required to notify the court of the current status of Word's related state criminal proceedings and their status when the federal complaint was filed.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"To merit a preliminary injunction, an injury must be both certain and immediate, not speculative or theoretical."

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Word's civil-rights claims arose from his arrest on January 4, 2025. He asserted that his later incarceration for contempt demonstrated ongoing retaliation, but identified a non-defendant judge as the person who made the contempt finding and did not allege that any named defendant caused it. Word also represented that his criminal charges had been dismissed, while later filings and the state court's online records indicated that related charges might still be pending.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Word filed a pro se civil-rights complaint arising from his January 4, 2025 arrest. While the action was pending, he filed the three motions addressed in this memorandum opinion and order. The court denied the requests for preliminary injunctive relief, denied leave to amend without prejudice, and directed the parties to notify the court about the status of related state criminal proceedings.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- D.T. v. Sumner Cnty. Schs., 942 F.3d 324, 326 (6th Cir. 2019)
- Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. 477, 486-87 (1994)

OPINION

Word

PER CURIAM.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE

NASHVILLE DIVISION

LATHAN WORD,)

) Plaintiff,)) v.) No. 3:26-cv-00002)

SUMNER COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.,)

et al.,)) Defendants.)

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

Lathan Word filed a pro se complaint alleging violations of his civil rights stemming from Word's arrest on January 4, 2025. (Doc. No. 1). Now before the Court are Word's second Motion for Preliminary Injunction (Doc. No. 25), Motion for Emergency Protective Order (Doc. No. 26), and Motion for Leave to Amend Prior Motion and Complaint (Doc. No. 33). As explained below, Word's motions will be denied. Additionally, the parties will be ordered to notify the Court regarding the status of Word's state criminal prosecution.

I. MOTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

Word's second Motion for Preliminary Injunction (Doc. No. 25), and Motion for Emergency Protective Order (Doc. No. 26) both seek preliminary injunctive relief on the same basis. Ordinarily, Courts look to four factors in assessing whether to grant a preliminary injunction: "(1) whether the party moving for the injunction is facing immediate, irreparable harm, (2) the likelihood that the movant will succeed on the merits, (3) the balance of the equities, and (4) the public interest." D.T. v. Sumner Cnty. Schs., 942 F.3d 324, 326 (6th Cir. 2019). However, "a plaintiff must present the existence of an irreparable injury to get a preliminary injunction.

Thus, a district court is well within its province when it denies a preliminary injunction based solely on the lack of an irreparable injury.” (Id.) (citation and quotation marks omitted; emphasis in original). “To merit a preliminary injunction, an injury must be both certain and immediate, not speculative or theoretical.” (Id.) Here, Word asserts that his recent incarceration for contempt of court in Sumner County demonstrates ongoing retaliation. (Doc. No. 25 at 2–3; Doc. No. 26 at 2). However, Word does not allege, let alone present evidence, that any Defendant was responsible for the finding of contempt of court. On the contrary, Word asserts that non-Defendant Judge Dee Gay made the finding. (Doc. No. 25 at 2). Because Word has not alleged ongoing irreparable injury based on unlawful conduct by the named Defendants, his Motion for Preliminary Injunction (Doc. No. 25) and Motion for Emergency Protective Order (Doc. No. 26) will be denied.

II. MOTION FOR LEAVE TO AMEND

“A motion to amend a pleading must . . . include as an appended exhibit the signed proposed amended pleading.” M.D. Tenn. L.R. 15.01(a)(1). “Amended pleadings must restate the entirety of the pleading with amendments incorporated, rather than merely reciting the amended sections.” M.D. Tenn. L.R. 15.01(b). Here, Word’s Motion for Leave to Amend does not include a proposed amended complaint. Instead, Word attached a “Table of Authorities and Constitutional Violations in Support of Plaintiff’s Claims and Pending Motions.” (Doc. No. 33-1). Accordingly, the Motion for Leave to Amend (Doc. No. 33) will be denied without prejudice. If Word seeks to file an amended complaint, he must comply with the Court’s local rules.

III. STATE CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

In his Complaint, Word alleges that all criminal charges stemming from his arrest on January 4, 2025, had been dismissed. (See Doc. No. 1 at 6) (alleging that “all criminal charges against Plaintiff’ had been dismissed and that “Plaintiff obtained a Certificate of Dismissal / Deletion, confirming that the alleged offenses lacked legal and factual basis”). However, in his Motion for Preliminary Injunction (Doc. No. 25) and related filings, Plaintiff refers to ongoing state criminal proceedings. Additionally Court notes that the Sumner County online courts record system indicates that Word faces pending charges for Resisting a Stop, Arrest, or Search and other offenses, with the violation date listed as January 4, 2025. *State v. Word*, No. 83CC1-2025-CR-409 (Sumner Cnty. Cir. Ct.).¹ If Word faces ongoing state criminal prosecution related to the events of January 4, 2025, then some or all of his claims may be barred by *Heck v. Humphrey*, 512 U.S. 477, 486–87 (1994). Additionally, if Word made deliberate misstatements in his Complaint or other filings regarding the status of his state criminal proceedings, he may be subject to sanctions. See, e.g., Fed. R. Civ. P. 11(b)(3), (c). Accordingly, the parties will be directed to notify the Court regarding the current status of Word’s state criminal proceedings related to his arrest on January 4, 2025, as well as the status of those proceedings on January 2, 2026, when Word filed his Complaint in this action. (See Doc. No. 1 at 9). ¹ Available by search at <https://sumner.tncrtinfo.com/cmCaseList.aspx> (Last visited Mar. 25, 2026).

IV. CONCLUSION

Word's Motion for Preliminary Injunction (Doc. No. 25), Motion for Emergency Protective Order (Doc. No. 26), and Motion for Leave to Amend (Doc. No. 33) are DENIED. The parties SHALL notify the Court on or before May 1, 2026, regarding the current status of Word's state criminal proceedings related to his arrest on January 4, 2025, as well as the status of those proceedings on January 2, 2026. IT IS SO ORDERED. Wau. E2ushea antl Coeslintt
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE