

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF RHODE
ISLAND

Patricia Royal v. Pawtucket School Committee, by and through the
School Committee Chair, et al.

Royal v. Pawtucket School Committee, C.A. No. 25-cv-113-MRD-AEM (D.R.I. Jan. 16, 2026) · No. C.A. No.
25-cv-113-MRD-AEM · Decided January 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island denied Defendants’ motion to dismiss Patricia Royal’s Second Amended Complaint under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8. Although the complaint exceeded 140 pages and contained more than 1,000 paragraphs, the court held that it was sufficiently organized and understandable to provide fair notice of the claims and was not so unclear or convoluted as to warrant dismissal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Melissa R. DuBose
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island
DECIDED	January 16, 2026
DOCKET	C.A. No. 25-cv-113-MRD-AEM
DISPOSITION	denied
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8 to dismiss Plaintiff's Second Amended Complaint in its entirety because of its length and alleged prolixity. The district court denied the motion.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Whether a complaint violates Rule 8 is committed to the district court's discretion and is evaluated on a case-by-case basis using pragmatic factors, including the nature of the action, number of parties, redundancy, length, organization, prejudice, and burden.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown

TOPICS

- motions to dismiss
- pleadings
- civil procedure
- employment law

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

employment law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Second Amended Complaint violated Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8 because it was excessively lengthy, redundant, vague, conclusory, or confusing.
2. Whether dismissal under Rule 8 was warranted where the complaint's length and density did not prevent the court or defendants from discerning the basis of the claims.

HOLDINGS

1. The Second Amended Complaint did not constitute a gross violation of Rule 8 because, despite its extraordinary length and some dense, redundant, vague, or conclusory portions, it was sufficiently clear and organized for the court and defendants to discern the basis of the claims.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“To state a claim, Rule 8 requires only “a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief.”” (Order at 1)

“While the sections of the Second Amended Complaint explaining the bases of these claims are dense and drawn out, they are not difficult to understand.” (Order at 3)

“The Second Amended Complaint is not so unclear or convoluted that the basis of the claims cannot be discerned.” (Order at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff Patricia Royal's claims arose from her experience applying for and acting as Superintendent of the Pawtucket School District. Her Second Amended Complaint was more than 140 pages and contained over 1,000 paragraphs, asserted 15 counts, and named 15 defendants. Although the pleading was dense and included some potentially redundant, vague, or conclusory allegations, the court found it chronologically organized and sufficiently understandable to provide the defendants fair notice of the claims.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a Second Amended Complaint asserting 15 counts against 15 defendants, including state-law and federal claims against entities and state actors in individual and official capacities. Defendants moved to dismiss the pleading under Rule 8. The court reviewed the complaint in its entirety and denied the motion, directing the parties to proceed on the Second Amended Complaint.

DISPOSITION

denied

CASES CITED

- 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)
- 367 F.3d 61, 68 (1st Cir. 2004)
- 190 F.2d 760, 766 (1st Cir. 1951)
- 105 Fed. App'x 280, 281 (1st Cir. 2004) (per curiam)
- 8 F.3d 905, 908 (1st Cir. 1993)
- 2007 WL 1875794, at *1 (D.R.I. June 27, 2007)
- 2022 WL 2092505, at *1 (1st Cir. Feb. 14, 2022)
- 181 F.3d 79 (1st Cir. 1999) (unpublished table decision)
- 2009 WL 3200686, at *10-*11 (D.R.I. Oct. 6, 2009)

Retrieved from lawtools.ai · <https://lawtools.ai/cases/federal/united-states-district-court-for-the-district-of-rhode-island/2026/patricia-royal-v-pawtucket-school-committee-by-and-through-g850dcm0>