

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mayfield v. Reardon

SJC-13868 · No. SJC-13868 · Decided April 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court affirmed the denial of Holly Mayfield’s petition for extraordinary relief under G. L. c. 211, § 3. The court held that Mayfield had adequate alternative remedies through ordinary appellate procedures, including seeking a ruling on her pending postjudgment motion in the Probate and Family Court and appealing any adverse decision. The court also concluded that S.J.C. Rule 2:21 did not apply because Mayfield challenged a final judgment.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts
JURISDICTION	Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court
DECIDED	April 13, 2026
DOCKET	SJC-13868
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal from a single justice's denial without a hearing of a petition under G. L. c. 211, § 3, seeking extraordinary relief in connection with a divorce proceeding.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The full court reviews only whether the single justice abused his or her discretion when exercising discretion not to reach the merits of a G. L. c. 211, § 3 petition because the petitioner had an adequate alternative remedy.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts.
PARTIES	Holly Mayfield v. Joseph Reardon, George Asack, Jr., Irena Wallach Inman, a justice of the Probate and Family Court Department

TOPICS

- writ of certiorari
- appellate procedure
- standard of review
- family law procedure
- divorce

PRACTICE AREAS

- family law
- appellate procedure
- civil procedure
- remedies
- guardianships

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the single justice abused his discretion by denying Mayfield's G. L. c. 211, § 3 petition on the ground that she had an adequate alternative remedy in the ordinary course of appeal.
2. Whether S.J.C. Rule 2:21 governed Mayfield's appeal from the single justice's judgment.
3. Whether the availability of a postjudgment motion seeking a ruling on the unresolved September 2024 motion, followed by an appeal from any adverse ruling, supplied an adequate alternative remedy.

HOLDINGS

1. S.J.C. Rule 2:21 does not apply when the appellant challenges a final judgment.
2. A petitioner is not entitled to extraordinary relief when an adequate alternative remedy exists in the ordinary course of appeal.
3. The single justice did not err or abuse his discretion in denying Mayfield's petition because she had adequate alternative remedies in the ordinary course of appeal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In cases such as this one, where the single justice exercises discretion not to reach the merits of a petition, . . . the full court asks only whether the single justice abused his or her discretion in making that decision” (quotation and citation omitted).” (at 2)

“The single justice is not required to become involved if the petitioner has an adequate alternative remedy” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Mayfield was the defendant in a divorce proceeding brought by Reardon, which had been consolidated with a complaint for separate support. A judgment of divorce nisi entered on September 12, 2024, and the Probate and Family Court later amended the judgment to provide for a special master to assist in placing the former marital home for sale. Mayfield challenged the appointment of a guardian ad litem and her obligation to pay part of the guardian's fees, and asserted that the Probate and Family Court had not ruled on an earlier motion raising those issues.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Mayfield was the defendant in Reardon's divorce proceeding in the Probate and Family Court. After a judgment of divorce nisi and a later amended judgment concerning sale of the marital home, Mayfield filed postjudgment motions challenging, among other things, the appointment of a guardian ad litem and payment of guardian fees. She petitioned a single justice of the Supreme Judicial Court under G. L. c. 211, § 3, seeking relief from the amended judgment, recusal, transfer, a stay, direct appellate review, and fees. The single justice denied the petition because Mayfield had an adequate alternative remedy in the ordinary course of appeal and denied reconsideration. The full court affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Kim v. Newton Hous. Auth., 493 Mass. 1029, 1030 (2024)
- Goodwin v. Commonwealth, 483 Mass. 1011, 1012 (2019)
- Boone v. Commonwealth, 494 Mass. 1011, 1012-1013 (2024)
- Commonwealth v. Fontanez, 482 Mass. 22, 24 (2019)
- Aktas v. Aktas, 481 Mass. 1018, 1019 (2018)
- Lasher v. Leslie-Lasher, 474 Mass. 1003, 1004 (2016)
- Skandha v. Clerk of the Superior Court for Civil Business in Suffolk County, 472 Mass. 1017, 1019 (2015)

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