

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Eric Heilner, et al. v. Attorney General of the Commonwealth of
Pennsylvania, et al.

Heilner · No. 1:25-CV-01043 · Decided December 1, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania dismissed without prejudice claims brought by several plaintiffs and granted Plaintiff Rivera leave to proceed in forma pauperis subject to payment of the filing fee under 28 U.S.C. § 1915. The court deemed the complaint filed but dismissed it without prejudice under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii), denied class certification, and permitted the plaintiffs to file an amended complaint by January 2, 2026. The order also directed the Clerk to obtain trust account information and provide Plaintiff Heilner with the correct in forma pauperis application.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jennifer P. Wilson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
DECIDED	December 1, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-CV-01043
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs filed a civil-rights complaint and sought class certification. The district court addressed applications to proceed in forma pauperis, screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii), dismissed the complaint without prejudice, denied class certification, and permitted an amended complaint.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Statutory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii)
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order; precedential status is not stated in the opinion.

TOPICS

- prisoners rights
- section 1983
- class actions
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

prisoner litigation

in forma pauperis proceedings

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint should be dismissed without prejudice under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii).
2. Whether the claims of Dantzler-Harris, Cunagin, Zernicke, and Settle should be dismissed under 28 U.S.C. § 1914.
3. Whether Rivera should be permitted to proceed in forma pauperis subject to payment of the statutory filing fee.
4. Whether plaintiffs' request for class certification should be denied.
5. Whether plaintiffs should be permitted to file an amended complaint.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint was dismissed without prejudice pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii).
2. The claims raised by Dantzler-Harris, Cunagin, Zernicke, and Settle were dismissed without prejudice pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1914.
3. Rivera's application to proceed in forma pauperis was granted, but Rivera remains responsible for the full \$350 filing fee, payable through the statutory inmate-account deduction procedure.
4. Plaintiffs' request for class certification was denied.
5. Plaintiffs were permitted to file an amended complaint by January 2, 2026; if no amended complaint or notice of intent to stand on the complaint is filed, the case will be closed.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The plaintiffs filed a civil-rights complaint against the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other defendants. Several plaintiffs sought to proceed without prepayment of fees, and the filing reflects that Rivera submitted an in forma pauperis application while Heilner was directed to submit the correct application. Plaintiffs also requested class certification.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs commenced this action by filing a complaint. Plaintiff Rivera was granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis but was ordered to pay the full filing fee through statutory deductions. The court dismissed certain plaintiffs' claims under 28 U.S.C. § 1914 and dismissed the complaint without prejudice under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii), while allowing plaintiffs to amend by January 2, 2026.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Weber v. McGrogan, 939 F.3d 232, 241 (3d Cir. 2019)

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