

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
WASHINGTON

United States v. Tammy Blakey, et al.

Blakey · No. C23-1910-RSM · Decided December 30, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington denies Tammy Blakey and Flying T Ranch, Inc.’s motion to amend their answers and affirmative defenses. The court finds undue delay and lack of diligence under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 16(b), concludes that amendment would also be improper under Rule 15, and denies the defendants’ untimely jury trial demand.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Washington
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Ricardo S. Martinez
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Washington
DECIDED	December 30, 2025
DOCKET	C23-1910-RSM
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved to amend their answers and affirmative defenses, modify the scheduling order, and demand a jury trial after the deadline for amended pleadings and the deadline for requesting a jury had passed.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A scheduling-order modification under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 16(b)(4) requires good cause and is reviewed under the district court's broad discretion, with diligence as the primary consideration. Leave to amend under Rule 15(a)(2) is generally granted freely, but denial is appropriate for undue delay, prejudice, bad faith, futility, or similar factors.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown

TOPICS

- motion to amend
- affirmative defenses
- waiver
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether defendants demonstrated good cause and diligence sufficient to modify the scheduling order and obtain leave to amend their answers and affirmative defenses after the deadline.
2. Whether defendants could demand a jury trial after the deadline for serving a jury demand had expired.

HOLDINGS

1. Defendants did not show good cause under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 16(b)(4) because they were not diligent in seeking amendment well over a year after the deadline, and the motion to amend was denied. The motion also would be denied under Rule 15(a)(2) because of undue delay and clear prejudice to the Government.
2. Defendants waived their right to a jury trial because the demand was not served and filed within the time required by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 38(b)(1) and (d). The court therefore denied the jury demand and retained the matter for a bench trial.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“This alone is dispositive and requires denying the instant Motion.” (at 3)

“A party waives a jury trial unless its demand is properly served and filed.” (at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Defendants Tammy Blakey and Flying T Ranch, Inc. filed their answers in February 2024, while the deadline to amend pleadings was April 18, 2024. The case experienced delays related to settlement and a government shutdown, but the amended-pleadings deadline was not changed, and fact-discovery deadlines later passed. Defendants moved more than a year after the amendment deadline to add or revise affirmative defenses and other responses, asserting that later discovery and a change in counsel revealed facts supporting the amendments. They also sought to demand a jury trial after the court had set the matter for a bench trial.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The United States filed this action on December 13, 2023. Defendants filed answers on February 13, 2024, and the amended-pleadings deadline was April 18, 2024; after no timely jury demand, the court set the matter for a bench trial. Defendants later moved to add affirmative defenses, amend denials and admissions, and demand a jury trial. The district court denied the motion, concluding that defendants had not acted diligently and that the requested amendments would cause undue delay and prejudice.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Eminence Capital, LLC v. Aspeon, Inc.*, 316 F.3d 1048, 1051 (9th Cir. 2003)
- *Allen v. City of Beverly Hills*, 911 F.2d 367, 373 (9th Cir. 1990)
- *Foman v. Davis*, 371 U.S. 178, 182 (1962)
- *Griggs v. Pace Am. Group, Inc.*, 170 F.3d 877, 880 (9th Cir. 1999)
- *DCD Programs, Ltd. v. Leighton*, 833 F.2d 183, 187 (9th Cir. 1987)
- *Richardson v. United States*, 841 F.2d 993, 999 (9th Cir. 1988)
- *Johnson*, 975 F.2d at 607, 609
- *Coleman v. Quaker Oats Co.*, 232 F.3d 1271, 1295 (9th Cir. 2000)
- *Acri v. Int'l Ass'n of Machinists & Aerospace Workers*, 781 F.2d 1393, 1398 (9th Cir. 1986)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 6 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 7 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE 8 9 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, Case No. C23-1910-RSM 10 Plaintiff,
ORDER DENYING DEFENDANTS' MOTION TO AMEND 11 v. TAMMY BLAKEY, et al., 12
Defendants. 13 14 This matter comes before the Court on the Motion to Amend the answers and
affirmative 15 defenses filed by Defendant Tammy Blakey and Defendant Flying T Ranch, Inc.
(collectively, 16 "Defendants").

Dkt. #26. The Government opposes. Dkt. #32. 17 This case began on December 13, 2023, and
amended pleadings were due by April 18, 18 2024. Dkts. #1, #10. After no timely demand for a
jury trial was made, the Court set this matter 19 for bench trial on March 21, 2024. Defendants
filed their Answers on February 13, 2024. Dkts. 20 #6, #7. Trial and related discovery dates were
delayed several times pending settlement and 21 government shutdown, but the amended
pleadings deadline was not changed.

Dkts. #12, #13, 22 #14, #15, #19, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25. 23 Defendants now seek to add several
affirmative defenses, amend defenses and 24 1 admissions, and demand a jury trial. Dkt. #26.
Defendants contend that certain responses by the Government "at or near the very end of the 'fact
discovery' window... give Defendants great 2 pause[.]" that "Defendants' counsel did not
substitute into this case until September of 2024," 3 and that "the case to date has been focused on
pursuing settlement" necessitate these late changes.

4 Id. at 3, 5-6. Defendants also argue that it was "[n]ot until the end of May 2025 at the end of the
5 exchange of documentary discovery from the United States did certain facts become clear 6
supporting the additional affirmative defenses." Id. at 6. 7 The Government contends that "every
new affirmative defense save one could have been 8 asserted in Defendants' original answer
because they are not based on new information." Dkt.

9 #32 at 3. The "one," the Government argues, "incorrectly characterizes a Memorandum for 10
Record produced by the United States" and Defendants did not serve their discovery requests 11

until March 25, 2025. Id. at 4.

The Government further points out that the settlement stay “lasted 12 only about five months,” argues that the “new denials are patently based on changes to 13 Defendants’ legal strategy, not new information,” and that “Defendants fail to explain how they 14 have less information now than when they filed their answer.” Id. at 5. 15 A “court should freely give leave [to amend] when justice so requires,” Fed.

R. Civ. P. 16 15(a)(2). Courts apply this policy with “extreme liberality.” *Eminence Capital, LLC v. Aspeon, Inc.*, 316 F.3d 1048, 1051 (9th Cir. 2003). Five factors are commonly used to assess the propriety 18 of granting leave to amend: (1) bad faith, (2) undue delay, (3) prejudice to the opposing party, (4) 19 futility of amendment, and (5) whether plaintiff has previously amended the complaint.

Allen v. City of Beverly Hills, 911 F.2d 367, 373 (9th Cir. 1990); *Foman v. Davis*, 371 U.S. 178, 182 21 (1962). In conducting this five-factor analysis, the court must grant all inferences in favor of 22 allowing amendment. *Griggs v. Pace Am. Group, Inc.*, 170 F.3d 877, 880 (9th Cir. 1999).

In 23 addition, the court must be mindful of the fact that, for each of these factors, the party opposing 24 1 amendment has the burden of showing that amendment is not warranted. *DCD Programs, Ltd. v. Leighton*, 833 F.2d 183, 187 (9th Cir. 1987); see also *Richardson v. United States*, 841 F.2d 2 993, 999 (9th Cir. 1988). 3 A scheduling order “may be modified only for good cause and with the judge’s consent.” 4 Fed.

R. Civ. P. 16(b)(4). The decision to modify a scheduling order is within the broad discretion 5 of the district court. *Johnson*, 975 F.2d at 607. “Rule 16(b)’s ‘good cause’ standard primarily 6 considers the diligence of the party seeking amendment.” Id. at 609. If a party has acted diligently 7 yet still cannot reasonably meet the scheduling deadlines, the court may allow modification of the 8 schedule.

Id. However, “if that party was not diligent, the inquiry should end” and the motion to 9 modify should not be granted. Id. Local Civil Rule 16(m) states that “this rule will be strictly 10 enforced” in order to “accomplish effective pretrial procedures and avoid wasting the time of the 11 parties, counsel, and the court.” While prejudice to the party opposing the modification may 12 provide additional reasons for denying the motion, it is not required to deny a motion to amend 13 under Rule 16(b).

Coleman v. Quaker Oats Co., 232 F.3d 1271, 1295 (9th Cir. 2000). 14 Here, Defendants seek to amend pleadings well over a year past the deadline and longer 15 still since originally filing them. Defendants contend that “there is still ample time[,]” but fact 16 discovery deadlines have passed, and trial is scheduled for mere months from now. Dkt. #36 at 17 10.

Defendants' contention that that "[g]ood cause exists" because "discovery is far from over, 18 and there is no unfair surprise or prejudice to" the Government is unconvincing. Id. at 9. Overall, 19 the Court agrees with the Government that Defendants sat on the facts giving rise to these 20 amendments for months, and their suggested reasons for delay are either irrelevant or simply 21 demonstrate undue delay by Defendants.

Considering all of the briefing and the record, the Court 22 finds that Defendants have not been diligent in filing a Motion that requires amending the 23 scheduling order. See *Acri v. Int'l Ass'n of Machinists & Aerospace Workers*, 781 F.2d 1393, 24 1 1398 (9th Cir. 1986) (holding that "late amendments to assert new theories are not reviewed favorably when the facts and the theory have been known to the party seeking amendment").

2 This alone is dispositive and requires denying the instant Motion. Even under a Rule 15 standard, 3 the Court would deny the Motion due to Defendants' undue delay and the clear prejudice to the 4 Government. Accordingly, the Court will deny Defendants' Motion. 5 On the jury trial demand, a party must serve such demand "no later than 14 days after the 6 last pleading directed to the issue is served[.]" Fed.

R. Civ. P. 38(b)(1). "A party waives a jury 7 trial unless its demand is properly served and filed." Id. at 38(d). Because the Court denies this 8 Motion, Defendants' demand for a jury trial was due over a year ago, thus the Court set a bench 9 trial in this Matter.

Accordingly, the Court will deny Defendants' jury trial demand. 10 Given all of the above, and having reviewed the relevant briefing and the remainder of 11 the record, the Court hereby finds and ORDERS that Defendants' Motion to Amend the Answer 12 and Affirmative Defenses, Dkt. #26, is DENIED. 13 14 DATED this 30th day of December, 2025. 15 A 16 17 RICARDO S. MARTINEZ UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE 18 19 20 21 22 23 24