

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

Antonio Michael Lans v. State of New Jersey, et al.

Lans · No. Civil Action No. 24-6172 (ZNQ) (JTQ) · Decided December 4, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey granted defendants’ motion to dismiss Antonio Michael Lans’s amended complaint challenging state-court child-support proceedings and related enforcement actions. The court held that claims against state entities were barred by Eleventh Amendment immunity, claims against individual defendants were barred by judicial or quasi-judicial immunity where applicable, and claims seeking review of state-court judgments were barred by the Rooker-Feldman doctrine. The amended complaint was dismissed without prejudice and without further leave to amend.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Zahid N. Quraishi
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
DECIDED	December 4, 2025
DOCKET	Civil Action No. 24-6172 (ZNQ) (JTQ)
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(1) to dismiss Plaintiff's amended complaint. The court granted the motion, dismissed the amended complaint without prejudice, and denied further leave to amend as futile.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a facial Rule 12(b)(1) challenge, the court considers the complaint and documents referenced or attached to it in the light most favorable to the plaintiff. On a factual Rule 12(b)(1) challenge, the plaintiff bears the burden of establishing jurisdiction, the court may weigh evidence, and the allegations receive no presumptive truthfulness.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished and nonprecedential district-court opinion
PARTIES	Antonio Michael Lans v. State of New Jersey, New Jersey Office of the Attorney General, State of New Jersey Judiciary, Middlesex Vicinage Probation Division, Child Support Enforcement Unit, Hon. Deborah J. Venezia, P.J.F.P., Hon. Daniel H. Brown, Hon. Barbara

Clarke Stolte, James Lubrich, James Newterwitz, Elena Calingasan, Christopher Czapek, Michael Barry, Blanca Martinez, Gerhard Baumer, Ken Bijlani, New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development, Office of Child Support Services, Patricia Risch

TOPICS

subject matter jurisdiction

motions to dismiss

eleventh amendment immunity

child support

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

civil procedure

family law

constitutional law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Eleventh Amendment barred Plaintiff's claims against New Jersey, state agencies, the New Jersey Attorney General, the New Jersey Superior Court, and other state entities.
2. Whether the Eleventh Amendment barred claims for damages against individual defendants in their official capacities.
3. Whether judicial or quasi-judicial immunity barred claims for damages against the individual defendants in their personal capacities.
4. Whether the Rooker-Feldman doctrine deprived the federal district court of subject-matter jurisdiction over claims seeking relief from or review of final New Jersey state-court child-support judgments.
5. Whether Younger abstention deprived the court of jurisdiction over claims concerning ongoing state-court proceedings.

HOLDINGS

1. The Eleventh Amendment barred Plaintiff's claims against the State of New Jersey and the state-entity defendants because they were immune arms of the State, and no congressional abrogation or statutory waiver applied.
2. The Eleventh Amendment barred Plaintiff's claims for monetary damages against the individual defendants in their official capacities.
3. The personal-capacity damages claims were barred by judicial or quasi-judicial immunity.
4. The court lacked subject-matter jurisdiction over claims seeking relief from, or requiring review and rejection of, final New Jersey state-court child-support judgments.
5. To the extent Plaintiff's claims concerned ongoing state-court proceedings, the court lacked jurisdiction under the Younger abstention doctrine.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Rooker-Feldman doctrine deprives federal district courts of jurisdiction over lawsuits that essentially seek appellate review of state- court judgments.” (§ IV.B)

“Insofar as the Court finds further amendment futile, the Amended Complaint will be DISMISSED without prejudice and without further leave to amend.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff and his former wife divorced in 1997 and had two children. Plaintiff alleged that he was enrolled in New Jersey's child-support system, ordered to pay \$1,200 per month with cost-of-living increases, and required to pay support after the children's eighteenth birthdays. He filed motions in New Jersey Superior Court in 2013 and 2019 seeking financial relief; one motion resulted in emancipation of the children, but both requests for financial relief were denied. In federal court, he challenged the state-court proceedings and sought cancellation of support obligations and arrears, restoration of his passport, and removal of child-support information from credit reports.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed this federal action on May 14, 2024, challenging New Jersey state-court child-support proceedings and seeking relief including cancellation of child-support arrears and reinstatement of his passport. The court previously dismissed the original complaint for failure to comply with Rule 8 and because claims seeking relief from final state-court judgments were barred by Rooker-Feldman. Plaintiff filed an amended complaint asserting twenty-eight causes of action, after which Defendants moved to dismiss. The court granted the motion and dismissed the amended complaint without further leave to amend.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Ballentine v. United States, 486 F.3d 806 (3d Cir. 2007)
- Arbaugh v. Y&H Corp., 546 U.S. 500 (2006)
- Group Against Smog & Pollution, Inc. v. Shenango Inc., 810 F.3d 116 (3d Cir. 2016)
- Mazo v. Way, 551 F. Supp. 3d 478 (D.N.J. 2021)
- Constitution Party of Pennsylvania v. Aichele, 757 F.3d 347 (3d Cir. 2014)
- CAN v. United States, 535 F.3d 132 (3d Cir. 2008)
- Mortenson v. First Federal Savings & Loan Ass'n, 549 F.2d 884 (3d Cir. 1977)
- Haybarger v. Lawrence County Adult Probation and Parole, 551 F.3d 193 (3d Cir. 2008)
- Maliandi v. Montclair State University, 845 F.3d 77 (3d Cir. 2016)
- Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc. v. Hess, 297 F.3d 310 (3d Cir. 2002)
- Johnson v. State of New Jersey, 869 F. Supp. 289 (D.N.J. 1994)
- Tucker v. City of Philadelphia, 679 F. Supp. 127 (D.N.J. 2023)

- Gattuso v. New Jersey Department of Human Services, 881 F. Supp. 639 (D.N.J. 2012)
- Quern v. Jordan, 440 U.S. 332 (1979)
- Saint-Jean v. County of Bergen, 509 F. Supp. 3d 87 (D.N.J. 2020)
- Hyatt v. County of Passaic, 340 F. App'x 833 (3d Cir. 2009)
- Beckett v. Vega, Civ. No. 05-3443, 2006 WL 1320043 (D.N.J. May 11, 2006)
- Torres v. Velasquez, Civ. No. 17-1685, 2017 WL 572053 (D.N.J. Nov. 28, 2017)
- MCI Telecommunication Corp. v. Bell Atlantic-Pennsylvania, 271 F.3d 491 (3d Cir. 2001)
- Figueroa v. Blackburn, 208 F.3d 435 (3d Cir. 2000)
- Gallas v. Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, 211 F.3d 760 (3d Cir. 2000)
- Rashduni v. Dente, Civ. No. 16-240, 2016 WL 4035437 (D.N.J. July 26, 2016)
- Russell v. Richardson, 905 F.3d 239 (3d Cir. 2018)
- MCI Telecommunication Corp. v. Bell Atlantic-Pennsylvania, 271 F.3d 491 (3d Cir. 2001)
- FOCUS v. Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, 75 F.3d 834 (3d Cir. 1996)
- Lane v. New Jersey, 725 F. App'x 185 (3d Cir. 2018)
- Great Western Mining & Mineral Co. v. Fox Rothschild LLP, 615 F.3d 159 (3d Cir. 2010)
- Exxon Mobil Corp. v. Saudi Basic Industries Corp., 544 U.S. 280 (2005)
- Younger v. Harris, 401 U.S. 37 (1971)
- Frederick of Family Gonora v. Risch, Civ. No. 23-893, 2023 WL 8271932 (D.N.J. Nov. 30, 2023)
- Adams v. Gould, Inc., 739 F.2d 858 (3d Cir. 1984)
- Massarsky v. General Motors Corp., 706 F.2d 111 (3d Cir. 1983)