

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Dawson v. Napa County

No. 25-cv-01923-JSC (N.D. Cal. Aug. 1, 2025) · No. 25-cv-01923-JSC · Decided August 1, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California denied Amanda Jeane Dawson's administrative motion to reopen or reset deadlines, toll deadlines, compel production of records, obtain a protective order, and enjoin alleged retaliation. The court held that Dawson was not prejudiced because she remained able to amend her complaint by August 29, 2025, and that discovery and related relief were procedurally improper at the pleadings stage. The court also explained that Dawson could not represent a related plaintiff and could not obtain an injunction affecting ongoing state child-custody proceedings through the administrative motion.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jacqueline Scott Corley
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	August 1, 2025
DOCKET	25-cv-01923-JSC
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved for administrative relief to reopen and reset missed deadlines, toll pending deadlines, compel production of records, obtain a protective order, enjoin alleged retaliation, and obtain related relief. The district court denied the motion.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court evaluated the administrative motion under the applicable local rule and determined whether the requested extensions, tolling, discovery, protective order, and injunctive relief were procedurally proper and warranted.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order
PARTIES	Amanda Jeane Dawson v. Napa County, Napa County Child Welfare Services, Napa County Public Defender's Office, City of Napa

TOPICS

civil procedure

motions to dismiss

discovery dispute

injunctions

family law procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

family law

remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Dawson was entitled to reopen and reset missed deadlines when she still had an existing deadline to amend her complaint and had not shown prejudice.
2. Whether the court should toll deadlines and permit discovery or compel production of records while the case remained at the pleadings stage after dismissal under Rule 12.
3. Whether Dawson could obtain a protective order concerning communications with Erik Milner when she was not a licensed attorney and could not represent him.
4. Whether the court could grant an injunction against alleged retaliation and ongoing child-custody or related state proceedings through an administrative motion.

HOLDINGS

1. The court denied Dawson's request to reopen and reset all missed deadlines because she had not been prejudiced and still had until August 29, 2025 to file an amended complaint.
2. Discovery and related record-production relief were procedurally improper at the pleadings stage because the court had dismissed the complaint for failure to state a claim and no factual issues were presented by a Rule 12(b) motion.
3. The court denied the requested protective order because Dawson was not a licensed attorney and could not represent Milner in federal court.
4. The court denied Dawson's request to enjoin alleged retaliation and stated that it could not enjoin ongoing child-custody proceedings through the present administrative motion.
5. The court denied the administrative motion in its entirety and left August 29, 2025 as the deadline for Dawson to file an amended complaint.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“discovery at the pleadings stage is only appropriate where factual issues are raised by a Rule 12(b) motion.”
(at 2)

“because the Court granted the defendants’ motion to dismiss Ms. Dawson’s complaint, the “doors of discovery” have not been unlocked.” (at 2)

“federal courts sitting in equity cannot, absent exceptional circumstances, enjoin pending state criminal proceedings.” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Dawson sought relief based on alleged excusable neglect, medical disability, denial of access to records, and unconstitutional retaliation. She requested access to juvenile-dependency and criminal-court records, tolling of deadlines, a protective order concerning communications with Erik Milner, and an injunction against alleged retaliation by child-protective-services and law-enforcement personnel. The court noted that Dawson still had four weeks to amend her complaint after the prior dismissal order and that the complaint had been dismissed for failure to state a claim.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The court had previously granted defendants' motions to dismiss on July 25, 2025, while allowing Dawson until August 29, 2025, to amend her claims. Dawson then moved to reopen or extend deadlines and sought discovery, injunctive relief, and other administrative remedies. The court denied all requested relief and confirmed that August 29, 2025 remained the deadline for filing an amended complaint.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Wagh v. Metris Direct, Inc., 363 F.3d 821, 829 (9th Cir. 2003)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- ReadyLink Healthcare, Inc. v. State Comp. Ins. Fund, 754 F.3d 754, 758 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Younger v. Harris, 401 U.S. 37, 43-54 (1971)

OPINION

Dawson v. Napa County
PER CURIAM.

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4 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

5 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

6 7 AMANDA JEANE DAWSON, Case No. 25-cv-01923-JSC 8 Plaintiff,

ORDER RE: ADMINISTRATIVE

9 v. MOTION TO RESET DEADLINES

AND REQUEST FOR EQUITABLE

10 NAPA COUNTY, et al., TOLLING 11 Defendants. Re: Dkt. No. 46 12 13 Pending before the
Court is a motion for administrative relief. On July 26, 2025, “[p]ro se 14 Plaintiffs AMANDA
JEANE DAWSON and ERIK RANDALL MILNER respectfully move[d] 15 this Court to reopen
and reset all missed deadlines and toll all pending ones . . . on the grounds of 16 excusable neglect,
medical disability, denial of access to records, and unconstitutional retaliation 17 that obstructs
participation in judicial proceedings.” (Dkt. No. 46 at 1.) Napa County, Napa 18 County Child
Welfare Services, and Napa County Public Defender’s Office (“County 19 Defendants”) oppose

the motion. (Dkt. No. 47.) City of Napa also opposes the motion, although its opposition was not timely filed. (Dkt. No. 48); Civ. L. R. 7-11(b) (stating opposition “must be filed no later than 4 days after the [administrative] motion has been filed”). The Court begins with the requests as to Mr. Milner’s cases, 25-cv-3350 and 25-cv-3428. Those two cases were related to this action pursuant to Civil Local Rule 3-12, which permits the relation of cases when “[t]he actions concern substantially the same parties, property, transaction, or event” and “[i]t appears likely that there will be an unduly burdensome duplication of labor and expense or conflicting results if the cases are conducted before different Judges.” Although related, the cases remain separate actions. And it remains true that Ms. Dawson cannot act as Mr. Milner’s right to represent [Mr. Milner] in this Court. Only licensed attorneys may represent others in this Court.” (Case No. 25-cv-3428, Dkt. No. 9.) So, the Court disregards any requests in the present motion to reopen, toll, or extend deadlines in Mr. Milner’s case. Mr. Milner—or a licensed attorney representing Mr. Milner—must request such relief in Case Nos. 25-cv-3350 and/or 25-cv-3428. The Court turns to Ms. Dawson’s request as it relates to this case, 25-cv-01923. Ms. Dawson requests the following relief:

1. Reset and reopen all missed deadlines . . . ;

2. Toll all active deadlines until:
-Juvenile dependency records . . . are produced; -All criminal court records from August 31, 2023, to present are disclosed . . . ;

3. Issue an Order to Show Cause to compel Napa County and the Superior Court to explain the delay in producing records;

4. Grant a protective order allowing confidential legal communication between Amanda Dawson and Erik Milner;

5. Set a joint case management hearing to establish equitable deadlines;

6. Enjoin further retaliation by CPS and law enforcement pending resolution of these civil rights claims;

7. Allow leave to amend any complaints or motions once

withheld evidence is provided. (Dkt. No. 46 at 6.) The Court DENIES Ms. Dawson’s request to “[r]eset and reopen all missed deadlines.” Although Ms. Dawson missed the original deadline to oppose the motions to dismiss and the extended deadline the Court subsequently provided, (Dkt. No. 37), Ms. Dawson has not been prejudiced. In its July 25, 2025 order granting the motions to dismiss, the Court granted Ms. Dawson until August 29, 2025 to amend her claims against County Defendants and City of Napa. (Dkt. No. 45 at 13.) As of the date of this order, Ms. Dawson still has four weeks to file an amended complaint, so further extending this deadline is unnecessary. If Ms. Dawson files an amended complaint and County Defendants and/or City of Napa move to dismiss, Ms. Dawson may meet and confer with those defendants about an extended briefing schedule on such motions. The Court thus DENIES Ms. Dawson’s request for “a case management hearing to establish into account Ms. Dawson’s circumstances. The Court also DENIES Ms. Dawson’s request to toll deadlines until certain

transcripts 3 and other records are produced. Ms. Dawson essentially seeks discovery. However, “discovery at 4 the pleadings stage is only appropriate where factual issues are raised by a Rule 12(b) motion.” 5 *Wagh v. Metris Direct, Inc.*, 363 F.3d 821, 829 (9th Cir. 2003). At this point, there are no factual 6 issues: the Court accepted as true the allegations in Ms. Dawson’s complaint and determined those 7 allegations failed to state a claim. Put another way, because the Court granted the defendants’ 8 motion to dismiss Ms. Dawson’s complaint, the “doors of discovery” have not been unlocked. See 9 *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (cleaned up). So, it would be procedurally improper 10 to order discovery at this time. Accordingly, the Court DENIES Ms. Dawson’s corresponding 11 requests to “[i]ssue an Order to Show Cause to compel Napa County and the Superior Court to 12 explain the delay in producing records” and to “[a]llow leave to amend any complaints or motions 13 once withheld evidence is provided.” Although, as discussed above, Ms. Dawson has until August 14 29, 2025 to amend her complaint. 15 The Court DENIES Ms. Dawson’s request to “[g]rant a protective order allowing 16 confidential legal communication between Amanda Dawson and Erik Milner” because, as 17 discussed above, Ms. Dawson is not a licensed attorney and therefore cannot represent Mr. Milner. 18 Finally, the Court DENIES Ms. Dawson’s request to “[e]njoin further retaliation by CPS 19 and law enforcement pending resolution of these civil rights claims.” The Court understands this 20 request as related to Ms. Dawson’s assertion that “[g]overnment actors have delayed, obstructed, 21 and reversed reunification without legal authority.” (Dkt. No. 46 at 5.) Ms. Dawson may attempt 22 to allege as much in her amended complaint, but the Court cannot grant the requested relief 23 through the present administrative motion. Moreover, as the Court explained in a prior order: 24 “[F]ederal courts sitting in equity cannot, absent exceptional circumstances, enjoin pending state criminal proceedings.” 25 *ReadyLink Healthcare, Inc. v. State Comp. Ins. Fund*, 754 F.3d 754, 758 (9th Cir. 2014) (citing *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37, 43-54 26 (1971)). This principle has been extended “to civil enforcement actions akin to criminal proceedings, and to suits challenging the core 27 of the administration of a State’s judicial system.” *Id.* (cleaned up); allegedly abused by their parents). 2 (Dkt. No. 18.) To the extent Ms. Dawson asks the Court to enjoin ongoing child custody 3 proceedings, the Court cannot do so. 4 In sum, Ms. Dawson’s administrative motion is DENIED. August 29, 2025 remains the 5 deadline for Ms. Dawson to file an amended complaint in this action. If she files an amended 6 || complaint, Ms. Dawson may meet and confer with County Defendants and City of Napa about 7 || extending the briefing schedule if the defendants move to dismiss the amended complaint. As 8 || noted in the Court’s prior order, “[i]f Plaintiff does not file an amended complaint by [August 29, 9 || 2025], judgment will be entered in Defendants’ favor.” (Dkt. No. 45 at 13.) 10 This Order disposes of Docket No. 46. 11 IT IS SO ORDERED. e 12 Dated: August 1, 2025 ne 4

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IS United States District Judge 16 = 17 Z 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

