

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI

Clint Phillips, III v. United States

Phillips · No. No. 4:25-cv-01758-JMD · Decided May 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri grants Clint Phillips III leave to proceed in forma pauperis but denies his request to pay the filing fee in installments. The court dismisses his tort-based complaint against the United States as frivolous under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i), finding that the allegations lack an arguable basis in law or fact. The court also denies the remaining motions as moot and certifies that an appeal would not be taken in good faith.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri
DECIDED	May 13, 2026
DOCKET	No. 4:25-cv-01758-JMD
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se plaintiff filed tort and constitutional claims against the United States, moved to proceed in forma pauperis, sought to pay the filing fee in installments, and filed motions for appointed counsel and summary judgment. The district court screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i), the court must dismiss an in forma pauperis action that is frivolous. A complaint is frivolous when it lacks an arguable basis in law or fact, including when its factual allegations are clearly baseless, fantastic, or delusional.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Clint Phillips, III v. United States

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- motions to dismiss
- summary judgment
- injunctions

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint was frivolous and subject to dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i).
2. Whether Phillips should be granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis and permitted to pay the filing fee in installments.
3. Whether Phillips's motions for appointed counsel and summary judgment should be denied as moot after dismissal.
4. Whether the court should certify that an appeal from the dismissal would not be taken in good faith.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint was frivolous because it presented no viable legal theory and its factual allegations lacked any arguable basis in law or fact and were clearly baseless.
2. Phillips was granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis because the court found that he could not afford the filing fee.
3. The request to pay the filing fee in partial payments or installments was denied.
4. The court certified that an appeal from the dismissal would not be taken in good faith.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A complaint is frivolous when it “lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact.””

“The term “frivolous” encompasses “not only the inarguable legal conclusion, but also the fanciful factual allegation.””

“those claims whose factual contentions are clearly baseless”

“thoroughly convinced that there is no substantial question for review and that an appeal would be futile.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Phillips sued the United States based on asserted claims including false arrest, false imprisonment, malicious prosecution, libel, slander, tortious interference with contract, and alleged Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment violations. His complaint alleged that imposters were impersonating him and others at government facilities and military bases, and sought \$500 million and injunctive relief concerning alleged conspiracies involving government entities and other persons.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Phillips filed a complaint against the United States along with an application to proceed in forma pauperis and several motions. The court granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis, denied the request to pay the filing fee in installments, dismissed the complaint as frivolous, denied the remaining motions as moot, and certified that an appeal would not be taken in good faith.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319 (1989)
- Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S. 25 (1992)
- Higgins v. Steele, 195 F.2d 366 (8th Cir. 1952)

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