

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Joseph Moore v. Jeff Macomber, CDCR, Does 1–10, Dr. Sato

Case No. 3:25-cv-2980-AJB-BLM · No. 3:25-cv-2980-AJB-BLM · Decided February 4, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of California granted Joseph Moore’s motion to proceed in forma pauperis, assessed an initial partial filing fee, and screened the prisoner civil-rights complaint. The court dismissed without prejudice claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, the Eighth Amendment, and the Fourteenth Amendment for failure to state a claim or because of sovereign immunity. The court also denied the motion for a temporary restraining order as moot and granted 60 days to file an amended complaint.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Anthony J. Battaglia
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of California
DECIDED	February 4, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-cv-2980-AJB-BLM
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A prisoner proceeding pro se filed a civil-rights complaint alleging violations of the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, Eighth Amendment, and Fourteenth Amendment, together with motions to proceed in forma pauperis and for a temporary restraining order. The district court granted in forma pauperis status, screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A(b), dismissed the complaint without prejudice for failure to state a claim and immunity, denied the TRO motion without prejudice as moot, and granted leave to amend.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) plausibility standard in screening under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A(b), dismissing claims that were frivolous, malicious, failed to state a claim, or sought damages from immune defendants. The court also applied the Winter standard for preliminary injunctive relief and the mootness and personal-jurisdiction principles governing the TRO request.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Joseph Moore v. Jeff Macomber, CDCR, Does 1–10, Dr. Sato

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Moore stated ADA or Rehabilitation Act claims based on the alleged denial of permanent single-cell housing.
2. Whether the CDCR and officials sued only in their official capacities were proper defendants for Moore's claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
3. Whether Moore plausibly alleged an ongoing constitutional violation supporting prospective injunctive relief under the exception to Eleventh Amendment immunity.
4. Whether Moore stated Eighth Amendment or Fourteenth Amendment claims based on the attempted cellmate assignment and double-cell classification.
5. Whether the temporary restraining order should be denied as moot after dismissal of the complaint.

HOLDINGS

1. Moore failed to state ADA or Rehabilitation Act claims because she did not allege facts showing that the denial of a permanent single-cell classification or the attempted cellmate assignment occurred by reason of her disability.
2. The CDCR was not a proper defendant for Moore's Section 1983 claims because California and its agencies are immune from such suits in federal court absent waiver or a valid congressional abrogation.
3. Officials sued in their official capacities may be treated as persons for purposes of prospective injunctive relief, but Moore failed to plead a cognizable official-capacity claim because she did not identify the challenged policy adequately, establish the defendants' direct connection to its enforcement, or allege a continuing constitutional violation.
4. Moore failed to state Eighth or Fourteenth Amendment claims because she did not plausibly allege a constitutional deprivation, and the defendants were sued only in their official capacities.
5. The TRO motion was denied without prejudice as moot because dismissal of the complaint left the court without personal jurisdiction over a defendant against whom injunctive relief could issue.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The standard for determining whether Plaintiff has failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted under § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) is the same as the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) standard for failure to

state a claim.” (at 3)

“When sued for prospective injunctive relief, a state official in his official capacity is considered a ‘person’ for § 1983 purposes, and the Eleventh Amendment will not bar such relief.” (at 8)

“The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment requires states treat all similarly situated people equally.” (at 11)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Moore, a transgender woman incarcerated at R.J. Donovan Correctional Facility, had been housed in a single cell for approximately three years. She alleged that prison officials attempted on October 21, 2025, to assign her a cellmate and that officials continued a double-cell housing policy that harmed transgender inmates. She alleged that Dr. Sato knew of her anxiety, gender dysphoria, and hormone treatment but did not recommend single-cell housing. Moore did not allege that she was actually assigned a cellmate.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Moore filed the complaint and an in forma pauperis motion. She later filed a motion for a temporary restraining order concerning double-cell housing and related conditions. The court granted IFP status, assessed an initial partial filing fee, dismissed all claims without prejudice after screening, denied the TRO as moot, and allowed sixty days to file an amended complaint.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Andrews v. Cervantes*, 493 F.3d 1047, 1051 (9th Cir. 2007)
- *Escobedo v. Applebees*, 787 F.3d 1226, 1234 (9th Cir. 2015)
- *Bruce v. Samuels*, 577 U.S. 82, 84 (2016)
- *United States v. Wilson*, 631 F.2d 118, 119 (9th Cir. 1980)
- *Queen v. M/V Am. San Diego Marine Const. Corp.*, 708 F.2d 1483, 1491 (9th Cir. 1983)
- *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1126-27 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc)
- *Rhodes v. Robinson*, 621 F.3d 1002, 1004 (9th Cir. 2010)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- *Guinn v. Lovelock Corr. Ctr.*, 502 F.3d 1056, 1060 (9th Cir. 2007)
- *Lovell v. Chandler*, 303 F.3d 1039, 1052 (9th Cir. 2002)
- *Zukle v. Regents of the Univ. of Cal.*, 166 F.3d 1041, 1045 n.11 (9th Cir. 1999)
- *United States v. Georgia*, 546 U.S. 151, 153 (2006)
- *Will v. Mich. Dep't of State Police*, 491 U.S. 58, 70-71 & n.10 (1989)
- *Miranda B. v. Kitzhaber*, 328 F.3d 1181, 1187-88 (9th Cir. 2003)

- *Brown v. Cal. Dep't of Corr.*, 554 F.3d 747, 752 (9th Cir. 2009)
- *Dittman v. California*, 191 F.3d 1020, 1025-26 (9th Cir. 1999)
- *Flint v. Dennison*, 488 F.3d 816, 824-25 (9th Cir. 2007)
- *Hason v. Med. Bd. of Calif.*, 279 F.3d 1167, 1171 (9th Cir. 2002)
- *Kentucky v. Graham*, 473 U.S. 159, 167 n.14 (1985)
- *Hartmann v. California Dep't of Corr. & Rehab.*, 707 F.3d 1114, 1127 (9th Cir. 2013)
- *L.A. Cnty. Bar Ass'n v. March Fong Eu*, 979 F.2d 697, 704 (9th Cir. 1992)
- *Gillespie v. Civiletti*, 629 F.2d 637, 642 (9th Cir. 1980)
- *Merritt v. Cnty. of L.A.*, 875 F.2d 765, 768 (9th Cir. 1989)
- *Finefeuiaki v. Maui Police Dep't*, No. 18-CV-00325-JAO-KSC, 2018 WL 4839001, at *3 (D. Haw. Oct. 4, 2018)
- *Wakefield v. Thompson*, 177 F.3d 1160 (9th Cir. 1999)
- *Planned Parenthood of Idaho, Inc. v. Wasden*, 376 F.3d 908, 919 (9th Cir. 2004)
- *Green v. Mansour*, 474 U.S. 64, 73 (1985)
- *Trevino v. Gates*, 99 F.3d 911, 918 (9th Cir. 1996)
- *Rosati v. Igbinoso*, 791 F.3d 1037, 1039 (9th Cir. 2015)
- *Akhtar v. Mesa*, 698 F.3d 1202, 1212 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *Hallett v. Morgan*, 296 F.3d 732, 744 (9th Cir. 2002)
- *Johnson*, 217 F.3d at 731
- *Frost v. Agnos*, 152 F.3d 1124, 1128 (9th Cir. 1998)
- *City of Cleburne v. Cleburne Living Ctr.*, 473 U.S. 432, 439 (1985)
- *Lee v. City of Los Angeles*, 250 F.3d 668, 686 (9th Cir. 2001)
- *Maynard v. City of San Jose*, 37 F.3d 1396, 1404 (9th Cir. 1994)
- *Barren v. Harrington*, 152 F.3d 1193, 1194-95 (9th Cir. 1998)
- *Serrano v. Francis*, 345 F.3d 1071, 1082 (9th Cir. 2003)
- *Winter v. Nat. Res. Def. Council, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 7, 22 (2008)
- *Zepeda v. I.N.S.*, 753 F.2d 719, 727-28 (9th Cir. 1985)
- *Goggin v. Williams*, No. 25-cv-01873-RBM-DEB, 2025 WL 3034073, at *4 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 30, 2025)
- *Youssef v. Youssef*, No. 22-cv-1260-RBM-AGS, 2022 WL 5287776, at *3 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 6, 2022)
- *Herb Reed Enters., LLC v. Fla. Entm't Mgmt., Inc.*, 736 F.3d 1239, 1247 (9th Cir. 2013)
- *Pimental v. Dreyfus*, 670 F.3d 1096, 1111 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *Olajide v. Brown*, No. 18-cv-03991-CRB, 2018 WL 3328227, at *3 (N.D. Cal. July 6, 2018)
- *Hal Roach Studios, Inc. v. Richard Feiner & Co., Inc.*, 896 F.2d 1542, 1546 (9th Cir. 1990)
- *Lacey v. Maricopa Cnty.*, 693 F.3d 896, 928 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *Lira v. Herrera*, 427 F.3d 1164, 1169 (9th Cir. 2005)

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