

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
WISCONSIN

Somers v. Welker

No. 2:26-cv-0028-BHL (E.D. Wis. May 26, 2026) · No. 2:26-cv-0028-BHL · Decided May 26, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin revoked William J. Somers’s previously granted in forma pauperis status after reviewing discrepancies in his financial disclosures. The court found that Somers had sufficient income and assets to pay the filing fee, allowed him thirty days to do so, and warned that failure to pay would result in dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Brett H. Ludwig
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
DECIDED	May 26, 2026
DOCKET	2:26-cv-0028-BHL
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court reconsidered and revoked its prior order granting Plaintiff leave to proceed in forma pauperis after identifying inconsistencies in his financial disclosures and ordering him to explain them.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court evaluated the plaintiff's financial eligibility for in forma pauperis status based on his sworn financial disclosures, income, assets, and ability to pay the filing fee.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential district court order

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- sanctions

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- in forma pauperis proceedings
- sanctions

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Somers's financial circumstances justified continuing to proceed in forma pauperis.
2. Whether Somers's inconsistent financial disclosures warranted sanctions or dismissal.
3. Whether the court should revoke its prior order granting IFP status and require payment of the filing fee.

HOLDINGS

1. Somers's reported income and assets showed that he was able to pay the filing fee, so he was not entitled to continue proceeding in forma pauperis.
2. The court deemed the show-cause order satisfied because, based on Somers's explanations, it found that his prior misstatements resulted from negligence rather than willfulness; however, continued careless or misleading submissions could result in monetary sanctions and dismissal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“AI remains a tool, and the person who uses it remains responsible for the end product. AI is not a license to misrepresent facts or law.”

“Somers's income and assets make clear that he can afford this fee; he is not a “truly impoverished litigant[] who . . . would remain without legal remedy if [IFP] were not afforded to” him.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Somers filed several lawsuits within a four-month period and sought to proceed without prepaying filing fees. In his later sworn response, he acknowledged employment paying \$35 per hour, substantial annualized income, cryptocurrency and investment assets, and additional bank balances, while also reporting debts and living expenses. The court found that his prior omissions and inconsistent financial statements were negligent rather than willful, but concluded that his income and assets showed he could pay the \$405 filing fee.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Somers filed multiple federal lawsuits and sought in forma pauperis status in each. The court previously granted his IFP motions, but later ordered him to explain discrepancies in his reported income and assets. After considering his sworn response, the court deemed the show-cause order satisfied, revoked the prior IFP grant in this case, and gave Somers thirty days to pay the filing fee or face dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Somers v. Welker, Case No. 26-cv-0028-BHL
- Somers v. Western States Envelope & Label Inc., Case No. 26-cv-0058-BHL

- Somers v. Schotzko, Case No. 26-cv-0155-BHL
- Somers v. Village of Menomonee Falls, Case No. 26-cv-0182-BHL
- Somers v. U.S. Dep't of Labor, Case No. 26-cv-0653-BHL
- Brewster v. North Am. Van Lines, Inc., 461 F.2d 649, 651 (7th Cir. 1972)
- Jones v. Kankakee Cnty. Sheriff's Dept., 164 F.4th 967, 970 (7th Cir. 2026)

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