

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH
CAROLINA, AIKEN DIVISION

Donnell Mitchell v. Teamsters Local Union 509

Mitchell · No. 1:25-cv-13070-CMC · Decided April 22, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of South Carolina adopted a magistrate judge’s recommendation in part in an action brought by a pro se plaintiff against his union. The court dismissed the ADA, Title VII, NLRA, and hybrid duty-of-fair-representation claims, allowed the standalone duty-of-fair-representation claim to proceed, denied the plaintiff’s motion for judgment on the pleadings or summary judgment, and granted leave to amend.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of South Carolina, Aiken Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cameron McGowan Currie
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of South Carolina, Aiken Division
DECIDED	April 22, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-13070-CMC
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought claims under Title VII, the ADA, and the NLRA/LMRA, along with hybrid and standalone duty-of-fair-representation claims. The case was referred to a magistrate judge for pretrial proceedings. The district court reviewed the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation, Defendant's objections, Plaintiff's response, and Plaintiff's motion to amend.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The district court conducts de novo review of portions of a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation to which a specific objection is made, and reviews the remainder for clear error. On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court accepts well-pleaded allegations as true and dismisses only when the plaintiff cannot prove a set of facts entitling him to relief, while disregarding legal conclusions, unwarranted inferences, and unreasonable arguments.

TOPICS

motions to dismiss

motion to amend

motion for judgment on the pleadings

civil procedure

labor law

PRACTICE AREAS

labor law

employment law

civil procedure

civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff plausibly alleged a standalone duty-of-fair-representation claim against the union.
2. Whether Plaintiff's hybrid representation claim should be dismissed.
3. Whether Plaintiff's ADA, Title VII, and NLRA claims should be dismissed.
4. Whether Plaintiff was entitled to judgment on the pleadings or summary judgment at this stage.
5. Whether Plaintiff should be permitted to amend the complaint to focus on the standalone duty-of-fair-representation claim.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiff alleged sufficient facts to state a plausible standalone duty-of-fair-representation claim at the pleading stage, so Defendant's Rule 12(b)(6) motion was denied as to that claim.
2. The hybrid representation claim was dismissed.
3. The ADA, Title VII, and NLRA claims were dismissed.
4. Plaintiff's motion for judgment on the pleadings and summary judgment was denied as premature.
5. Plaintiff's motion to amend was granted, and the proposed amended complaint was deemed filed.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The Magistrate Judge makes only a recommendation to this court. The recommendation has no presumptive weight, and the responsibility to make a final determination remains with the court." (at 2)

"The court is charged with making a de novo determination of any portion of the Report and Recommendation of the Magistrate Judge to which a specific objection is made." (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, proceeding pro se, alleged that Teamsters Local Union 509 violated Title VII, the ADA, and the NLRA/LMRA and failed to provide fair representation. He alleged that his union representative had "ghosted" him, intentionally refused representation, and prevented contractual protections from being invoked. He also alleged that his employment became untenable because of ongoing retaliation and unchecked violations.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Defendant moved to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6). Plaintiff opposed, moved for judgment on the pleadings and summary judgment, and moved for sanctions. The magistrate judge recommended dismissing the ADA, Title VII, NLRA, and hybrid representation claims; allowing the standalone duty-of-fair-representation claim to proceed; and denying Plaintiff's dispositive and sanctions motions. The district court adopted the Report, denied dismissal of the standalone claim, granted dismissal of the other identified claims, denied Plaintiff's judgment-on-the-pleadings/summary-judgment motion as premature, granted leave to amend, and re-referred the matter for further pretrial proceedings.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The Clerk was directed to file the amended complaint as a separate docket entry. Defendant was directed to respond to the amended pleading within 14 days, and the matter was re-referred to the magistrate judge for further pretrial matters.

CASES CITED

- Roseboro v. Garrison, 528 F.2d 309 (4th Cir. 1975)
- Mathews v. Weber, 423 U.S. 261 (1976)
- Diamond v. Colonial Life & Accident Ins. Co., 416 F.3d 310, 315 (4th Cir. 2005)
- Edwards v. City of Goldsboro, 178 F.3d 231, 244 (4th Cir. 1999)
- Giarratano v. Johnson, 521 F.3d 298, 302 (4th Cir. 2008)
- Eastern Shore Mkts., Inc. v. J.D. Assocs. Ltd. P'ship., 213 F.3d 175, 180 (4th Cir. 2000)
- Philips v. Pitt County Memorial Hosp., 572 F.3d 176, 180 (4th Cir. 2009)
- Mylan Labs., Inc. v. Markari, 7 F.3d 1130, 1134 (4th Cir. 1993)