

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI, EASTERN DIVISION

Christine Poe, et al. v. Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar

Poe · No. 4:25-CV-1338-ACL · Decided January 22, 2026

SUMMARY

The court grants Defendant Fleming’s Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar’s motion to dismiss Plaintiffs’ Missouri Human Rights Act public-accommodation discrimination claims. The court concludes that Plaintiffs failed to allege exhaustion of administrative remedies and, alternatively, failed to plead that they belonged to a protected class or that protected-class status contributed to the alleged discrimination.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Abbie Crites-Leoni
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri
DECIDED	January 22, 2026
DOCKET	4:25-CV-1338-ACL
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) to dismiss plaintiffs' removed Missouri Human Rights Act public-accommodation discrimination action for failure to exhaust administrative remedies and failure to plead a claim.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court accepts factual allegations as true and construes them in the plaintiff's favor, but need not accept legal conclusions couched as factual allegations; the complaint must contain sufficient factual matter to state a facially plausible claim for relief.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; memorandum and order from a federal district court with no reporter or neutral citation identified.

TOPICS

- motions to dismiss
- exhaustion of remedies
- administrative law
- civil rights
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

administrative law

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint was subject to dismissal because plaintiffs failed to allege exhaustion of the Missouri Human Rights Act's administrative remedies.
2. Whether the complaint stated a Missouri Human Rights Act public-accommodation discrimination claim when it did not identify plaintiffs' protected-class status or allege facts showing that protected-class status was a contributing factor in the alleged discrimination.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint was subject to dismissal because plaintiffs failed to demonstrate that they exhausted the MHRA's mandatory administrative remedies before filing suit.
2. The complaint failed to state an MHRA discrimination claim because plaintiffs did not plead that they were members of a protected class or identify the race on which the alleged discrimination was based.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"To survive a motion to dismiss, 'a complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to 'state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.'"

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs Christine Poe and Dr. Leroy Scott alleged that they entered Fleming's Prime Steakhouse on October 7, 2023, to dine and that the restaurant refused to serve them and asked them to leave. They alleged that the refusal was not based on a legitimate reason but was instead based on unlawful race discrimination under the Missouri Human Rights Act. Their petition did not allege that they had filed a charge with the Missouri Commission on Human Rights, obtained a right-to-sue letter, or identify either plaintiff's race.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed a petition in the Circuit Court of St. Louis County, Missouri, alleging race discrimination in a public accommodation under the Missouri Human Rights Act. Defendant removed the action to the Eastern District of Missouri on September 5, 2025, based on diversity jurisdiction, and moved to dismiss. Plaintiffs did not respond, and the court granted the motion and dismissed the complaint.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Johnson v. McDonald Corp., 542 F. Supp. 3d 888, 890 (E.D. Mo. 2021)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)

- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Torti v. Hoag, 868 F.3d 666, 671 (8th Cir. 2017)
- Jeffery v. St. Louis Fire Dep't, 506 S.W.3d 394, 398 (Mo. App. 2016)
- Stuart v. Gen. Motors Corp., 217 F.3d 621, 630 (8th Cir. 2000)
- M.N. by & Through S.N. v. N. Kansas City Sch. Dist., 597 S.W.3d 786, 792 (Mo. Ct. App. 2020)
- Appleberry ex rel. R.M.A. v. Blue Springs R-IV Sch. Dist., 568 S.W.3d 420, 430 (Mo. banc 2019)

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