

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS, SPRINGFIELD DIVISION

Charles Flynn v. JB Pritzker, et al.

Charles Flynn v. JB Pritzker, et al. · No. 3:26-cv-03103-MMM · Decided May 14, 2026

SUMMARY

The court screened a pro se prisoner’s complaint alleging that Illinois Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Prisoner Review Board violated his Fourteenth Amendment due process rights in handling his executive clemency petition. Relying on precedent holding that there is no federal liberty or property interest in obtaining executive clemency, the court dismissed the complaint with prejudice for failure to state a claim. Leave to replead was denied, and judgment was entered for the defendants.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois, Springfield Division
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois, Springfield Division
DECIDED	May 14, 2026
DOCKET	3:26-cv-03103-MMM
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening dismissal of a pro se incarcerated plaintiff’s complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	At screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court accepts factual allegations as true and liberally construes them in the plaintiff’s favor, but dismisses claims that are frivolous, malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek monetary relief from an immune defendant. Conclusory allegations must state a claim that is plausible on its face.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown
PARTIES	Charles Flynn v. JB Pritzker, Illinois Prisoner Review Board

TOPICS

- clemency
- procedural due process
- due process
- civil rights
- post-conviction relief

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether an Illinois prisoner has a Fourteenth Amendment liberty or property interest in obtaining executive clemency or in having the State follow its clemency procedures.
2. Whether the complaint stated a plausible federal due process claim based on the alleged mishandling of the clemency petition.

HOLDINGS

1. An Illinois prisoner has no Fourteenth Amendment property or liberty interest in obtaining a pardon or other executive clemency because Illinois leaves the decision whether to consider and grant clemency to the Governor's complete discretion.
2. A plaintiff has no federal due process right to require Illinois to follow its procedures for considering a clemency petition, and an alleged violation of state law is not, without more, a basis for a federal civil rights action.
3. The complaint and action must be dismissed with prejudice for failure to state a claim, and leave to replead must be denied because amendment would be futile.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“There is no Fourteenth Amendment property or liberty interest in obtaining a pardon in Illinois—no substantive entitlement, in other words—and so no ground for a claim of denial of due process.” (561 F.3d at 673)

“In other words, a plaintiff has no federal right to have Illinois follow its procedures on considering clemency petition.” (Order's analysis)

“There is no plausible basis for Plaintiff's claim because it is flatly foreclosed by binding precedent.” (Order ¶ 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Charles Flynn is incarcerated at Lawrence Correctional Center after being convicted of burglary by a jury. He petitioned for executive clemency and alleged that Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Prisoner Review Board denied him due process in handling the petition. He sought money damages for the alleged violation.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a complaint alleging that Illinois officials violated his Fourteenth Amendment due process rights in handling his petition for executive clemency. The district court screened the complaint, concluded that the claim was foreclosed because there is no federal liberty or property interest in obtaining Illinois executive clemency, and dismissed the action with prejudice for failure to state a claim. Leave to replead was denied as futile, and judgment was ordered for defendants.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Turley v. Rednour, 729 F.3d 645, 649 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Alexander v. United States, 721 F.3d 418, 422 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Bowens v. Quinn, 561 F.3d 671, 673, 675–76 (7th Cir. 2009)
- District Attorney's Office v. Osborne, 557 U.S. 52, 67–68 (2009)
- Ohio Adult Parole Authority v. Woodard, 523 U.S. 272, 283 (1998)
- Sandin v. Conner, 515 U.S. 472, 484 (1995)
- Connecticut Board of Pardons v. Dumschat, 452 U.S. 458, 464 (1981)
- Antia-Perea v. Holder, 768 F.3d 647, 660 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Guarjardo-Palma v. Martinson, 622 F.3d 801, 806 (7th Cir. 2010)