

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Megan Elizabeth Waugh v. Commissioner of Social Security

Waugh v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 1:26-cv-00086-CDB (SS) (E.D. Cal. Jan. 7, 2026) · No. 1:26-cv-00086-CDB (SS) · Decided January 7, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California grants Megan Elizabeth Waugh’s application to proceed in forma pauperis in an action seeking review of the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of disability benefits. The court finds that the complaint is timely, states a cognizable claim, and invokes jurisdiction under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). The clerk is directed to issue a summons, scheduling order, and consent or reassignment documents.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	January 7, 2026
DOCKET	1:26-cv-00086-CDB (SS)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff filed an action under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) seeking judicial review of the Commissioner's final decision denying disability benefits and sought leave to proceed in forma pauperis. The court granted the application, found the complaint timely and cognizable, and directed issuance of summons and case-management documents.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), the district court may review the Commissioner's final decision on the administrative record and may affirm, modify, reverse, or remand it. The merits standard of review was not reached in this order.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; nonprecedential
PARTIES	Megan Elizabeth Waugh v. Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

- judicial review of agency action
- administrative law
- subject matter jurisdiction
- pleadings
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security

Administrative Law

Federal Civil Procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff satisfied the financial requirements to proceed in forma pauperis under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a).
2. Whether the complaint was timely and within the district court's jurisdiction under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).
3. Whether the complaint stated a cognizable claim for judicial review of the Commissioner's decision.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiff satisfied the requirements of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a) and was permitted to commence the action without prepayment of the filing fee.
2. The complaint was timely, and the court had jurisdiction under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), because Plaintiff filed within the Appeals Council's stated appeal period and alleged residence within the district.
3. The complaint stated a cognizable claim for review of the administrative decision denying Social Security benefits and supplemental income.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Court may authorize the commencement of an action without prepayment of fees “by a person who submits an affidavit that includes a statement of all assets such [person] possesses [and] that the person is unable to pay such fees or give security therefor.”” (at 1)

“Plaintiff's complaint states a cognizable claim for review of the administrative decision denying Social Security benefits and supplemental income.” (at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Commissioner denied Plaintiff's claim for disability insurance benefits and supplemental income. The Appeals Council denied review on November 14, 2025, and allowed 60 days plus five days for mailing to seek judicial review. Plaintiff, who alleged residence in Bakersfield, California, filed the complaint on January 6, 2026, and submitted a financial affidavit seeking in forma pauperis status.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Administrative Law Judge denied Plaintiff's claim for benefits. On November 14, 2025, the Appeals Council denied Plaintiff's request for review. Plaintiff filed this action on January 6, 2026, and submitted an application to proceed in forma pauperis. The district court granted the application and ordered the Clerk to issue a summons, scheduling order, and consent or reassignment documents.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S. 25, 32-33 (1992)
- Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N.A., 534 U.S. 506, 512 (2002)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009)
- Ivey v. Board of Regents, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 556, 570 (2007)
- Lopez v. Smith, 203 F.3d 1122, 1127-28 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc)

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