

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Kmaal M. Lawrence v. Edward Borla, et al.

No. 25-cv-06137-TLT (N.D. Cal. Dec. 3, 2025) · No. 3:25-cv-06137 · Decided December 4, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California screens a prisoner’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint alleging that double-celling in an allegedly undersized cell violates the Eighth Amendment. The court dismisses the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as immune from damages claims, permits the Eighth Amendment claim to proceed against Edward Borla and Jefferey Macomber, and orders service. The court denies without prejudice the plaintiff’s motion for a preliminary injunction.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Ina-L. Thompson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	December 4, 2025
DOCKET	3:25-cv-06137
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Prisoner civil rights complaint screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; liberal construction of pro se pleadings; preliminary injunction standard from Winter v. Natural Res. Defense Council, Inc.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

- prisoners rights
- cruel and unusual punishment
- civil rights
- section 1983
- sovereign immunity
- injunctions
- pleadings
- service of process
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil rights
- prisoners' rights
- constitutional law
- civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint states a cognizable Eighth Amendment claim against defendants Borla and Macomber for inadequate living space
2. Whether defendant CDCR should be dismissed on Eleventh Amendment immunity grounds
3. Whether plaintiff is entitled to a preliminary injunction

HOLDINGS

1. CDCR is dismissed as a defendant because it is an agency of the state and therefore has Eleventh Amendment immunity from suit for damages.
2. Liberally construed, plaintiff has stated an Eighth Amendment claim against defendants Borla and Macomber for inadequate living space.
3. Plaintiff's motion for preliminary injunction is denied because plaintiff has not shown likelihood of success on the merits, likelihood of irreparable harm, that the balance of equities tips in his favor, or that an injunction would serve the public interest.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"While the Constitution does not mandate comfortable prisons, it does require that prisoners have the 'minimal civilized measure of life's necessities.' Rhodes v. Chapman, 452 U.S. 337, 347 (1981)."

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, a prisoner at Correctional Training Facility, alleged that defendants (CTF Warden Edward Borla and CDCR Secretary Jefferey Macomber) violated his Eighth Amendment rights by housing him in an unconstitutionally small double cell (19 square feet of personal space) with another prisoner since May 7, 2024. He alleged the rooms were not built for double-celling. He also filed a motion for preliminary injunction alleging retaliation for filing the suit.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff, a prisoner, filed a pro se civil rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The court conducted mandatory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- United States v. Qazi, 975 F.3d 989 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89 (2007)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544 (2007)
- West v. Atkins, 487 U.S. 42 (1988)

- Leadsinger, Inc. v. BMG Music Pub., 512 F.3d 522 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Rhodes v. Chapman, 452 U.S. 337 (1981)
- Winter v. Natural Res. Defense Council, Inc., 555 U.S. 7 (2008)
- Caribbean Marine Servs. Co., Inc. v. Baldrige, 844 F.2d 668 (9th Cir. 1988)
- Rhodes v. Robinson, 408 F.3d 559 (9th Cir. 2005)
- Woods v. Carey, 684 F.3d 934 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Albino v. Baca, 747 F.3d 1162 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Wyatt v. Terhune, 315 F.3d 1108 (9th Cir. 2003)

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