

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF IDAHO

Sonna Griffiths, Jack Licha, Steven Elli, Pamela Hagen, Cynthia Wade, April Capello, Joseph Jordan, Donna Thomas, Julie Goodwin, Daniel Ferguson, and Sarah Speelman, et al. v. Kootenai Health, Inc.

Griffiths · No. Case Nos. 2:24-cv-00205-AKB, 2:24-cv-00378-AKB, 2:24-cv-00385-AKB, 2:24-cv-00389-AKB, 2:24-cv-00407-AKB, 2:24-cv-00411-AKB, 2:24-cv-00421-AKB, and 2:24-cv-00490-AKB · Decided March 25, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Idaho declined to exercise jurisdiction under the Class Action Fairness Act’s mandatory and discretionary home-state exceptions. The court found that the parties failed to provide competent evidence showing that the putative class included sufficient non-Idaho citizens, dismissed the consolidated class action without prejudice, denied the pending motion to dismiss as moot, and remanded one case that had been removed from state court.

CASE DETAILS

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COURT                 | United States District Court for the District of Idaho                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| WRITING FOR THE COURT | Amanda K. Brailsford                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| JURISDICTION          | United States District Court for the District of Idaho                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| DECIDED               | March 25, 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| DOCKET                | Case Nos. 2:24-cv-00205-AKB, 2:24-cv-00378-AKB, 2:24-cv-00385-AKB, 2:24-cv-00389-AKB, 2:24-cv-00407-AKB, 2:24-cv-00411-AKB, 2:24-cv-00421-AKB, and 2:24-cv-00490-AKB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| DISPOSITION           | other                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| PROCEDURAL POSTURE    | The district court sua sponte ordered the parties to show cause why it should not decline jurisdiction under the Class Action Fairness Act's home-state exceptions. After reviewing the parties' joint response, the court declined to exercise CAFA jurisdiction, dismissed the consolidated federal cases without prejudice, and severed and remanded the one case originally removed from state court. The defendant's pending motion to dismiss was denied as moot. |
| STANDARD OF REVIEW    | The court required the parties to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the action fell outside CAFA's mandatory and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                           | discretionary home-state exceptions after the court raised CAFA abstention sua sponte.                                                                                                    |
| <b>PRECEDENTIAL VALUE</b> | Unpublished district court memorandum decision and order; persuasive rather than binding outside the case.                                                                                |
| <b>PARTIES</b>            | Sonna Griffiths, Jack Licha, Steven Elli, Pamela Hagen, Cynthia Wade, April Capello, Joseph Jordan, Donna Thomas, Julie Goodwin, Daniel Ferguson, Sarah Speelman v. Kootenai Health, Inc. |

## TOPICS

class actions subject matter jurisdiction civil procedure motions to dismiss health law

## PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure class actions federal jurisdiction health law torts

## QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should decline to exercise CAFA jurisdiction under the mandatory home-state exception, 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(4)(B), because the parties failed to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the putative class was sufficiently non-Idaho-centered.
2. Whether the court should alternatively decline to exercise CAFA jurisdiction under the discretionary home-state exception, 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(3), based on the totality of the circumstances.
3. Whether the consolidated cases should be dismissed without prejudice or remanded, given that one consolidated case had been removed from state court.
4. Whether the pending motion to dismiss should be decided after the court declined to exercise CAFA jurisdiction.

## HOLDINGS

1. When the court raises CAFA abstention sua sponte and the parties seek to retain the federal forum, the parties must provide competent evidence sufficient to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the action falls outside the mandatory home-state exception. Mailing addresses and residence, without evidence of domicile, do not satisfy that burden.
2. Even if mandatory declination were not required, the court would decline CAFA jurisdiction under the discretionary home-state exception because the totality of the circumstances showed an Idaho-centered controversy.
3. When consolidated cases include both cases originally filed in federal court and a case removed from state court, the federal cases may be dismissed without prejudice after CAFA abstention, but the removed case must be severed and remanded to state court.

## KEY QUOTATIONS

*“On this record, the parties have not shown that one-third of the proposed class members are non-Idaho citizens, which is necessary to retain jurisdiction.” (Conclusion)*

*“But a response that relies exclusively on mailing data while simultaneously insisting that the data cannot establish citizenship does not satisfy the burden the OSC imposed to show by a preponderance of evidence that this Court has jurisdiction.” (Analysis § B)*

## FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The action arose from a reported cybersecurity incident involving Kootenai Health, an Idaho nonprofit healthcare provider headquartered in Coeur d'Alene. The complaint identified eight named plaintiffs alleged to be Idaho citizens and one alleged Washington citizen, and defined a nationwide class of persons whose personal information was compromised in the data breach. The claims were limited to state-law causes of action, including negligence, breach of implied contract, breach of fiduciary duty, invasion of privacy, and unjust enrichment. The record showed that most breach notices were sent to Idaho addresses, but the parties provided no competent evidence establishing the domicile or citizenship of absent class members.

## PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Multiple related putative class actions concerning a cybersecurity incident involving Kootenai Health were filed in the District of Idaho and consolidated. Plaintiffs filed a consolidated class action complaint asserting only state-law claims. Although Kootenai Health moved to dismiss under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 12(b)(1) and 12(b)(6), it did not challenge CAFA jurisdiction. The court issued an order to show cause regarding the CAFA home-state exceptions, concluded that the parties had not supplied competent evidence concerning class-member citizenship, and entered the present memorandum decision and order.

## DISPOSITION

other

## REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Sever Speelman v. Kootenai Health, Inc., Case No. 2:24-cv-00490-AKB, from the consolidated action for the limited purpose of remanding it to state court. Dismiss all other consolidated cases without prejudice, deny the pending motion to dismiss as moot, enter a separate judgment in each case not remanded, and close those cases.

## CASES CITED

- Adams v. W. Marine Prods., Inc., 958 F.3d 1216, 1220, 1223 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Serrano v. 180 Connect, Inc., 478 F.3d 1018, 1022-23 (9th Cir. 2007)
- Bey v. SolarWorld Indus. Am., Inc., 904 F. Supp. 2d 1096, 1101-03 (D. Or. 2012)
- Vitale v. D.R. Horton, Inc., No. CV 15-00312 DKW-KSC, 2016 WL 4203399, at \*1-2 (D. Haw. Aug. 9, 2016)
- Bendau v. Cerebral Med. Grp., No. 21-CV-09580-TLT, 2024 WL 3875774, at \*3-4 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 16, 2024)

- Dugas v. Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc., No. 3:16-cv-00014-GPC-BLM, 2017 WL 2813712, at \*1-2 (S.D. Cal. June 28, 2017)
- Lockhart v. El Centro Del Barrio, No. 5:23-CV-1156-JKP-ESC, 2024 WL 4601059, at \*3 (W.D. Tex. Oct. 25, 2024)
- Kanter v. Warner-Lambert Co., 265 F.3d 853, 857 (9th Cir. 2001)
- 527 Lincoln Place LLC v. Nat'l Grid USA, No. 23-CV-1708-NG-LB, 2025 WL 458253, at \*3-4 (E.D.N.Y. Feb. 11, 2025)
- Lockhart v. El Centro del Barrio, 779 F. Supp. 3d 895, 900 (W.D. Tex. 2025)

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