

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Moises Villalobos v. Valrod Ratavousian et al.

Villalobos v. Ratavousian · No. 2:25-cv-11001-JLS-AS · Decided December 4, 2025

SUMMARY

The Central District of California ordered Plaintiff Moises Villalobos to show cause why the court should not decline supplemental jurisdiction over state-law claims under 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c). The order also requires Plaintiff to identify the statutory damages sought and provide declarations addressing whether Plaintiff and counsel qualify as high-frequency litigants under California law, warning that failure to respond or an inadequate response may result in dismissal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Josephine L. Staton
JURISDICTION	U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	December 4, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-11001-JLS-AS
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	On the court's own motion, the district court issued an order to show cause why it should not decline supplemental jurisdiction over the plaintiff's state-law claims accompanying an Americans with Disabilities Act claim.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Discretionary review of whether to exercise supplemental jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential interlocutory order to show cause; no final merits determination.

TOPICS

- subject matter jurisdiction
- civil procedure
- public accommodations discrimination
- ada / disability
- pleadings

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should decline to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the plaintiff's California statutory and negligence claims under 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c).
2. What information plaintiff must provide to allow the court to evaluate the amount of statutory damages sought and whether plaintiff or plaintiff's counsel qualifies as a high-frequency litigant under California law.

HOLDINGS

1. The court did not make a final determination on supplemental jurisdiction but ordered plaintiff to show cause why the court should not decline to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the Unruh Act, Disabled Persons Act, Health and Safety Code, and negligence claims.
2. The plaintiff was required to respond within ten days, identify the statutory damages sought, and provide sworn declarations addressing whether plaintiff and counsel are high-frequency litigants; failure to respond could result in dismissal of the action without prejudice, and an inadequate response would result in dismissal of the state-law claims under § 1367(c).

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Accordingly, Plaintiff is ORDERED to show cause, in writing, no later than ten (10) days from the date of this Order, why the Court should not decline to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff’s Unruh Act, Disabled Persons Act, Health & Safety Code, and negligence claims.”

“Failure to respond may, without further warning, result in dismissal of the entire action without prejudice.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The complaint alleges a violation of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and seeks injunctive relief. It also seeks damages under California's Unruh Act, Disabled Persons Act, Health and Safety Code, and negligence law, apparently based on alleged construction-related accessibility violations. The court noted California's heightened pleading and filing restrictions for such claims and questioned whether exercising supplemental jurisdiction would allow those restrictions to be evaded.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a complaint asserting a claim for injunctive relief under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and claims for damages under California's Unruh Act, Disabled Persons Act, Health and Safety Code, and negligence law. The court ordered plaintiff to explain why supplemental jurisdiction should not be declined and required information concerning statutory damages and whether plaintiff and counsel are high-frequency litigants. The court warned that failure to respond could result in dismissal without prejudice and that an inadequate response would result in dismissal of the state-law claims under 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c).

DISPOSITION

CASES CITED

- Velez v. Il Fornaio (America) Corp., CV 3:18-1840 CAB (MDD), 2018 WL 6446169, at *6 (S.D. Cal. Dec. 10, 2018)
- City of Chicago v. International College of Surgeons, 522 U.S. 156, 173 (1997)
- Link v. Wabash Railroad Co., 370 U.S. 626, 629-33 (1962)
- Hells Canyon Preservation Council v. U.S. Forest Service, 403 F.3d 683, 689 (9th Cir. 2005)

OPINION

CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL MINUTES – GENERAL Case No. 2:25-cv-11001-JLS-AS Date: December 04, 2025 Title: Moises Villalobos v. Valrod Ratavousian et al Present: HONORABLE JOSEPHINE L. STATON, UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE Kelly Davis N/A Deputy Clerk Court Reporter ATTORNEYS PRESENT FOR PLAINTIFF: ATTORNEYS PRESENT FOR DEFENDANT: Not Present Not Present PROCEEDINGS: (IN CHAMBERS) ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE RE SUPPLEMENTAL JURISDICTION The Complaint filed in this action asserts a claim for injunctive relief arising out of an alleged violation of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and claims for damages pursuant to California’s Unruh Act, California’s Disabled Persons Act, the California Health & Safety Code, and negligence.

Accordingly, the Court ORDERS Plaintiff to show cause why the Court should not decline to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff’s Unruh Act, Disabled Persons Act, Health & Safety Code, and negligence claims. See 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c). “In 2012, in an attempt to deter baseless claims and vexatious litigation, California adopted heightened pleading requirements for disability discrimination lawsuits under the Unruh Act.” Velez v. Il Fornaio (America) Corp., CV 3:18-1840 CAB (MDD), 2018 WL 6446169, at *6 (S.D.

Cal. Dec. 10, 2018). These heightened pleading requirements apply to actions alleging a “construction-related accessibility claim,” which California law defines as “any civil claim in a civil action with respect to a place of public accommodation, including but not limited to, a claim brought under Section 51, 54, 54.1, or 55, based wholly or in part on an alleged violation of any construction-related accessibility standard.” Cal. Civ.

Code § 55.52(a)(1). Moreover, California imposes additional limitations on “high-frequency litigants,” defined as: A plaintiff who has filed 10 or more complaints alleging a construction-related accessibility violation within the 12-month period immediately

11001-JLS-AS Date: December 04, 2025 Title: Moises Villalobos v. Valrod Ratavousian et al preceding the filing of the current complaint alleging a construction-related accessibility violation.

Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 425.55(b)(1). The definition of “high-frequency litigant” also extends to attorneys. See Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 425.55(b)(2). “High frequency litigants” are subject to a special filing fee and further heightened pleading requirements. See Cal. Gov. Code § 70616.5; Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 425.50(a)(4)(A). By enacting restrictions on the filing of construction-related accessibility claims, California has expressed a desire to limit the financial burdens California’s businesses may face for claims for statutory damages under the Unruh Act.

Plaintiffs who file these actions in federal court evade these limits and pursue state law damages in a manner inconsistent with the state law’s requirements. In an action over which a district court possesses original jurisdiction, that court “shall have supplemental jurisdiction over all other claims that are so related to claims in the action within such original jurisdiction that they form part of the same case or controversy under Article III of the United States Constitution.” 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).

Even if supplemental jurisdiction exists, however, district courts have discretion to decline to exercise supplemental jurisdiction. 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c). Such discretion may be exercised “[d]epending on a host of factors” including “the circumstances of the particular case, the nature of the state law claims, the character of the governing state law, and the relationship between the state and federal claims.” *City of Chicago v. Int’l Coll. of Surgeons*, 522 U.S. 156, 173 (1997).

Accordingly, Plaintiff is ORDERED to show cause, in writing, no later than ten (10) days from the date of this Order, why the Court should not decline to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff’s Unruh Act, Disabled Persons Act, Health & Safety Code, and negligence claims.

In so responding, Plaintiff is further ORDERED to: (1) identify the amount of statutory damages Plaintiff seeks to recover; and (2) provide declarations from Plaintiff and Plaintiff’s counsel, signed under penalty of perjury, providing all facts necessary for the Court to determine if each is a “high-frequency litigant.” Failure to respond may, without further warning, result in dismissal of the entire action without prejudice.

Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b) (stating that dismissal is warranted “[i]f the plaintiff fails to ... comply with ... a court order”); see *Link v. Wabash R. Co.*, 370

CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL MINUTES – GENERAL Case No. 2:25-cv-11001-JLS-AS Date: December 04, 2025 Title: Moises Villalobos v. Valrod Ratavousian et al U.S. 626, 629-33 (1962) (holding that while Rule 41(b) explicitly authorizes motions to dismiss by defendants, it also permits the district court to dismiss sua sponte); see also *Hells Canyon Pres.*

Council v. U.S. Forest Serv., 403 F.3d 683, 689 (9th Cir. 2005). Further, an inadequate response will result in the Court declining to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's Unruh Act, Disabled Persons Act, Health & Safety Code, and negligence claims, and the dismissal of those claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c). Initials of Deputy Clerk: kd

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