

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

Larnell E. Hendrick v. Warden Roberts Dean, Jr., et al.

Hendrick · No. BAH-24-1214 · Decided January 20, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Maryland considers a self-represented inmate’s claims that correctional officials retaliated against him for filing grievances and violated his constitutional and state-law rights. The court dismisses claims against the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and claims against individual defendants in their official capacities on Eleventh Amendment grounds. It allows the retaliation, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and Maryland Declaration of Rights claims to proceed against the remaining defendants.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Maryland
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Brendan A. Hurson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Maryland
DECIDED	January 20, 2026
DOCKET	BAH-24-1214
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought a prisoner civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and asserted related state-law and Maryland Declaration of Rights claims. Defendants moved to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), alternatively referencing summary judgment without supporting argument or materials.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court accepts well-pleaded factual allegations as true, draws reasonable inferences in the plaintiff’s favor, and determines whether the allegations plausibly establish entitlement to relief. The court generally focuses on the complaint and may consider documents attached to the motion if they are integral to the complaint and authentic.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	persuasive
PARTIES	Larnell E. Hendrick v. Warden Roberts Dean, Jr., Lieutenant Bilal Ahmed, Dr. Jacqueline Moore, Captain Oluwole Olowe, Officer

Ogunduyile, Officer Ngome, Ayo Ogunmolasuyi, Candace Welds,
Captain Olanrewaju Owolabi, Officer Olusegun Akinwekomi,
Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

TOPICS

section 1983 prisoners rights first amendment motions to dismiss eleventh amendment immunity

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights constitutional law prisoner civil rights civil procedure torts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether claims against the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and individual defendants in their official capacities are barred by Eleventh Amendment immunity.
2. Whether Hendrick plausibly pleaded First Amendment retaliation based on grievances and other protected activity.
3. Whether the alleged conduct, considered collectively, constituted more than a de minimis inconvenience and would deter a person of ordinary firmness from exercising First Amendment rights.
4. Whether Hendrick sufficiently pleaded injuries to support a damages claim.
5. Whether Hendrick's intentional-infliction-of-emotional-distress and Maryland Declaration of Rights claims should be dismissed at the pleading stage.

HOLDINGS

1. The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the individual defendants sued in their official capacities are immune from Hendrick's federal claims and those claims must be dismissed.
2. Hendrick plausibly pleaded a First Amendment retaliation claim against all defendants except DPSCS.
3. A plaintiff need not prove that he personally stopped exercising First Amendment rights; it is sufficient at the pleading stage to allege conduct that would likely deter a person of ordinary firmness and that is more than a de minimis inconvenience.
4. Hendrick sufficiently pleaded injuries to allow his damages claim to proceed.
5. The intentional-infliction-of-emotional-distress and Maryland Declaration of Rights claims were not dismissed because defendants offered no more than conclusory arguments for dismissal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"officials may not retaliate against inmates for filing grievances." (Section III.B)

"the challenged conduct would 'likely deter a person of ordinary firmness from the exercise of First Amendment rights.'" (Section III.B)

"An action motivated by retaliation for the exercise of a constitutionally protected right is actionable, even if

the act, when taken for a different reason, might have been legitimate.” (Section III.B)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Hendrick, an inmate at Jessup Correctional Institution, alleged that prison officials retaliated against him for filing grievances and pursuing prior lawsuits. He claimed that officials threatened him, placed him in administrative segregation, double-celled him despite a prior single-cell arrangement, interfered with visitation and mail, and subjected him to a urinalysis. He also alleged intentional infliction of emotional distress, violations of the Maryland Declaration of Rights, and inadequate property-storage space.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Hendrick filed a verified complaint and later supplemented it with allegations concerning inadequate storage space. Defendants moved to dismiss all claims. The court treated the motion solely as a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, granted it in part as to claims against DPSCS and official-capacity claims, and denied it as to the remaining claims.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

No remand was ordered. Claims against DPSCS and claims against the individual defendants in their official capacities were dismissed. The remaining defendants were ordered to answer within 30 days, and counsel was to be appointed for Hendrick.

CASES CITED

- E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. v. Kolon Industries, Inc., 637 F.3d 435, 448 (4th Cir. 2011)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)
- Walters v. McMahan, 684 F.3d 435, 439 (4th Cir. 2012)
- E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. v. Kolon Industries, Inc., 637 F.3d 435, 440 (4th Cir. 2011)
- Secretary of State for Defence v. Trimble Navigation Ltd., 484 F.3d 700, 705 (4th Cir. 2007)
- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007)
- Weller v. Department of Social Services for City of Baltimore, 901 F.2d 387, 391 (4th Cir. 1990)
- Pennhurst State School & Hospital v. Halderman, 465 U.S. 89, 100 (1984)
- Brandon v. Holt, 469 U.S. 464, 471-72 (1985)
- Chris X v. Yes Care Health, Civ. No. BAH-23-2024, 2024 WL 3995166, at *6 (D. Md. Aug. 29, 2024)
- Clark v. Maryland Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services, 316 F. App'x 279, 282 (4th Cir. 2009)
- Shaw v. Foreman, 59 F.4th 121, 130 (4th Cir. 2023)
- Martin v. Duffy, 858 F.3d 239, 249 (4th Cir. 2017)

- *Constantine v. Rectors & Visitors of George Mason University*, 411 F.3d 479, 499-500 (4th Cir. 2005)
- *Snoeyenbos v. Curtis*, 60 F.4th 723, 730-31 (4th Cir. 2023)
- *Booker v. South Carolina Department of Corrections*, 855 F.3d 533, 544 (4th Cir. 2017)
- *Martin v. Duffy*, 977 F.3d 294, 304 (4th Cir. 2020)
- *ACLU of Maryland, Inc. v. Wicomico County, Maryland*, 999 F.2d 780, 786 (4th Cir. 1993)

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