

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Estate of Matthew Lee Richards v. Kern County Sheriff's Office, et
al.

No. 1:24-cv-01294-CDB, United States District Court for the Eastern District of California (November 24,
2025)

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California granted, as modified, Plaintiffs’ stipulated request for leave to file a first amended complaint. Plaintiffs were ordered to file the proposed amended complaint as a stand-alone docket entry within seven days, and Defendants were given 45 days after service to respond. The amendment would add five individual Kern County Sheriff’s Office personnel as defendants in a civil rights action arising from Matthew Lee Richards’s death by suicide while incarcerated.

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	November 24, 2025
DOCKET	1:24-cv-01294-CDB
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs and defendants jointly stipulated to plaintiffs' filing of a first amended complaint. The court granted leave to amend, with modifications to the filing deadline and response deadline.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

TOPICS

- motion to amend
- pleadings
- civil procedure
- section 1983

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether plaintiffs should be granted leave to file the proposed first amended complaint under the parties' stipulation.
2. What deadlines should govern filing the amended complaint and defendants' response.

HOLDINGS

1. Leave to amend was granted based on the parties' stipulated representations, the applicable amendment factors, and good cause.
2. Plaintiffs were required to file the proposed first amended complaint as a stand-alone docket entry within seven days of entry of the order, and defendants were required to respond within 45 days after service.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Matthew Lee Richards died by suicide while incarcerated at the Kern County Sheriff's Office, Mojave Substation Jail. His estate, through successors in interest Derrienne Richards and Robert Williams Richards, sued County of Kern and Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood, seeking damages under 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988. The proposed first amended complaint sought to add Lieutenant Zachary Bittle, Sergeant Jose Perez, Deputy Rodolfo Ramirez, Deputy Connor Bray, and Senior Deputy Marcus Kochanski as defendants.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs initiated the action on October 23, 2024, asserting claims under 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988 arising from Matthew Lee Richards's death by suicide while incarcerated. After the court entered a scheduling order and later extended the deadline to amend pleadings, the parties submitted a stipulation seeking leave for plaintiffs to file a proposed first amended complaint adding five individual defendants. The court granted the request as modified.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Western Shoshone Nat'l Council v. Molini, 951 F.2d 200, 204 (9th Cir. 1991), cert. denied, 506 U.S. 822 (1992)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 9 EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA 10 11 ESTATE OF MATTHEW LEE RICHARDS, Case No. 1:24-cv-01294-CDB
12 Plaintiff, ORDER ON STIPULATION GRANTING PLAINTIFFS LEAVE TO FILE FIRST 13
v. AMENDED COMPLAINT AS MODIFIED 14 KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, (Doc.
25) et al., 15 SEVEN (7)-DAY DEADLINE Defendants. 16 17 Plaintiffs Estate of Matthew Lee
Richards, by and through successors in interest, Derrienne 18 Richards and Robert Williams

Richards (collectively, “Plaintiffs”) initiated this action with the 19 filing of a complaint against Defendants County of Kern (erroneously sued as Kern County 20 Sheriff’s Office and Kern County) and Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood (collectively, 21 “Defendants”) on October 23, 2024.

(Doc. 1). Plaintiffs seek damages pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 22 1983 and 1988 arising from decedent Matthew Lee Richards’s death by suicide while incarcerated 23 at the Kern County Sheriff’s Office, Mojave Substation Jail. Id. On March 25, 2025, the Court 24 entered the operative scheduling order setting forth discovery, motion and pretrial and trial dates 25 and deadlines.

(Doc. 20). On October 7, 2025, the Court granted the parties’ stipulated request to 26 amend the scheduling order as modified to continue the deadline to amend pleadings from October 27 7, 2025, to November 21, 2025. (Doc. 24). 1 | first amended complaint (“FAC”), filed on November 21, 2025. (Doc. 25). Plaintiffs attach to their 2 | stipulated a copy of the proposed FAC.

(Doc. 25-2). The proposed FAC seeks to add the following 3 | individuals as named defendants: (1) Lieutenant Zachary Bittle; (2) Sergeant Jose Perez; (3) Deputy 4 | Rodolfo Ramirez; (4) Deputy Connor Bray; and (5) Senior Deputy Marcus Kochanski. (Doc. 25 5 | at 2).

The parties request that Plaintiffs be provided 15 days after issuance of this order within 6 | which to file the proposed FAC as a stand-alone docket entry, and Defendants be provided 45 days 7 | after service of the FAC within which to file a response. Id. {fj 2-4. 8 Having considered the parties’ stipulated representations and the factors enunciated in 9 | Western Shoshone Nat’l Council v. Molini, 951 F.2d 200, 204 (9th Cir.

1991), cert. denied, 506 10 | U.S. 822 (1992), the parties’ request for Plaintiffs to have leave to amend the complaint will be 11 || granted as modified below. 12 Conclusion and Order 13 In light of the parties’ representations and good cause appearing, IT IS HEREBY 14 | ORDERED: 15 1. Within seven (7) days from entry of this order, Plaintiffs SHALL FILE as a stand-alone 16 docket entry the first amended complaint proposed in the parties’ stipulation (Doc.

25-2); 17 and 18 2. Defendants shall respond to the first amended complaint within 45 days of its service. See 19 Fed. R. Civ. P. 15(a)(3). 20 | IT IS SOORDERED. | Dated: _ November 24, 2025 | hr 22 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE 23 24 25 26 27 28