

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS DIVISION

Janice Parnell v. Republic Services of Indiana, Limited Partnership

Parnell · No. 1:24-cv-02115-TWP-MG · Decided March 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana granted Republic Services of Indiana, Limited Partnership's motion for summary judgment in Janice Parnell's Title VII action. The court held that several claims were barred because they were not included in Parnell's EEOC charge, and that her remaining claims concerning a performance improvement plan, denial of a telework day, monitoring, and ride-along opportunities failed for lack of administrative exhaustion, an actionable adverse employment action, or evidence supporting race discrimination. The court denied the motion to strike as moot.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Indianapolis Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Tanya Walton Pratt
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Indianapolis Division
DECIDED	March 16, 2026
DOCKET	1:24-cv-02115-TWP-MG
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought Title VII race-discrimination, failure-to-promote, hostile-work-environment, and retaliation claims against her employer. Defendant moved for summary judgment, and also moved to strike a response related to a motion to dismiss. The district court granted summary judgment for Defendant, denied the motion to strike as moot, dismissed the Title VII claims with prejudice, and ordered separate final judgment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is proper when the record shows no genuine dispute of material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court viewed the facts and reasonable inferences in the light most favorable to the nonmovant, but did not credit assertions

	contradicted by the record or rely on speculation, hearsay, or unsupported conclusory statements.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential district court order; no precedential designation is stated.
PARTIES	Janice Parnell v. Republic Services of Indiana, Limited Partnership

TOPICS

racial discrimination

title vii

hostile work environment

summary judgment

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

employment law

civil rights

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether claims based on denial of a merit-based pay increase, withheld commissions, sales leads allegedly given to Caucasian employees, failure to promote, and retaliation were barred because they were not included in or reasonably related to Parnell's EEOC charge.
2. Whether Parnell presented sufficient evidence to establish a Title VII race-discrimination claim based on placement on a performance improvement plan or denial of a single day of remote work.
3. Whether Parnell established that she suffered an actionable adverse employment action.
4. Whether Parnell identified admissible evidence showing that similarly situated employees outside her protected class were treated more favorably.
5. Whether placement on the performance improvement plan and public presentation of one month's loss of business constituted a severe or pervasive hostile work environment under Title VII.
6. Whether Parnell's unsupported factual assertions and hearsay proffers created a genuine dispute of material fact sufficient to defeat summary judgment.

HOLDINGS

1. Title VII claims based on denial of a merit-based pay increase, withheld commissions, sales leads allegedly given to Caucasian coworkers, failure to promote, and retaliation were barred because Parnell did not raise them in her EEOC charge and they did not describe the same conduct or implicate the same individuals as the charged claims.
2. Parnell failed to establish a prima facie case of race discrimination based on her placement on the performance improvement plan because she did not show that she was meeting Republic's legitimate performance expectations, suffered an actionable adverse employment action, or was treated less favorably than similarly situated employees outside her protected class.
3. The denial of a single day of remote work, under the circumstances presented, was not an actionable adverse employment action, and Parnell failed to show that the Caucasian employees permitted to work remotely were similarly situated.

4. Parnell's hostile-work-environment claim failed because placement on the performance improvement plan and the alleged public highlighting of one month's losses were neither objectively offensive nor severe or pervasive.
5. Unsupported speculation, hearsay, and conclusory assertions about what witnesses might say do not create a genuine dispute of material fact sufficient to defeat summary judgment.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“For the reasons discussed above, Republic's Motion for Summary Judgment (Dkt. 31) is GRANTED. Parnell's Title VII claims are dismissed with prejudice. In addition, the Motion to Strike Parnell's Response in Opposition to the Motion to Dismiss (Dkt. 25) is denied as moot. Final judgment shall issue separately.” (at 19)

“In much the same way that a court is not required to scour the record in search of evidence to defeat a motion for summary judgment, nor is it permitted to conduct a paper trial on the merits of [the] claim.” (at 6)

“A plaintiff's admission to the misconduct at issue prevents her from establishing that she was meeting her employer's legitimate expectations.” (at 11)

“Summary judgment is the 'put up or shut up' moment in a lawsuit, when a party must show what evidence it has that would convince a trier of fact to accept its version of events.” (at 15)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Janice Parnell, a Black woman, worked for Republic Services beginning in 2016 and was promoted to Account Manager in 2021. In June 2023, Republic placed her on a performance improvement plan based on admitted discrepancies in mileage reporting, late expense reports, recording of sales activity, and customer-service problems; she completed the plan and remained employed. Republic denied her request to work remotely for one day after a car accident, while allowing certain Caucasian coworkers to work remotely during COVID-19 or family medical emergencies. Parnell filed an EEOC charge alleging discrimination relating to the performance plan, remote-work denial, ride-alongs or shadowing, post-plan monitoring, an internal investigation, and a hostile work environment, but did not identify the later-asserted pay, commission, sales-lead, failure-to-promote, or retaliation claims.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Parnell initiated the federal action against Republic Services and initially named Keenan Gibbons, whom she later voluntarily dismissed. After discovery, Republic moved for summary judgment. The court held that several claims were not exhausted through the EEOC charge and that the remaining claims failed on the merits because Parnell lacked admissible evidence establishing a prima facie case, an adverse employment action, similarly situated comparators, or a severe and pervasive hostile work environment.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Zerante v. DeLuca, 555 F.3d 582, 584 (7th Cir. 2009)
- Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 255 (1986)
- Leroy Palmer v. Craig Franz, Palmer v. Franz, 928 F.3d 560, 563 (7th Cir. 2019)
- Greer v. Board of Education, 267 F.3d 723, 727 (7th Cir. 2001)
- Frakes v. Peoria School District No. 150, 872 F.3d 545, 549 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp., 475 U.S. 574, 587 (1986)
- Hemsworth v. Quotesmith.com, Inc., 476 F.3d 487, 489-90 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Dorsey v. Morgan Stanley, 507 F.3d 624, 627 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Sink v. Knox County Hospital, 900 F. Supp. 1065, 1072 (S.D. Ind. 1995)
- Ritchie v. Glidden Co., 242 F.3d 713, 723 (7th Cir. 2001)
- Chiaramonte v. Fashion Bed Group, Inc., 129 F.3d 391, 395 (7th Cir. 1997)
- Reynolds v. Tangherlini, 737 F.3d 1093, 1099-1100 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Stewart v. Henderson, 207 F.3d 374, 376 (7th Cir. 2000)
- Ortiz v. Werner Enterprises, Inc., 834 F.3d 760, 765 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Monroe v. Indiana Department of Transportation, 871 F.3d 495, 504 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Alexander v. Casino Queen, Inc., 739 F.3d 972, 979 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Rhodes v. Illinois Department of Transportation, 359 F.3d 498, 504 (7th Cir. 2004)
- Teruggi v. CIT Group/Capital Finance, Inc., 709 F.3d 654, 660 (7th Cir. 2013)
- David v. Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 508, 846 F.3d 216, 224 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Fane v. Locke Reynolds LLP, 480 F.3d 534, 538 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Ferrill v. Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District, 860 F.3d 494, 500 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Rapier v. Capital One Auto Finance, Inc., No. 1:07-cv-0798, 2009 WL 48147, at *6 (S.D. Ind. Jan. 6, 2009)
- Tomanovich v. City of Indianapolis, 457 F.3d 656, 666 (7th Cir. 2006)
- Tedrow v. Franklin Township Community School Corp., 674 F. Supp. 3d 494, 516 (S.D. Ind. 2023)
- Thomas v. JBS Green Bar, Inc., 120 F.4th 1335, 1336-37 (7th Cir. 2024)
- Muldrow v. St. Louis, 601 U.S. 346, 355 (2024)
- Arnold v. United Airlines, Inc., 142 F.4th 460, 470-71 & n.23 (7th Cir. 2025)
- Anderson v. Amazon.com, Inc., No. 23-cv-8347 (AS), 2024 WL 2801986, at *11 (S.D.N.Y. May 31, 2024)
- Circle City Broadcasting I LLC v. AT&T Services, 99 F.4th 378, 384 (7th Cir. 2024)
- White v. City of Chicago, 829 F.3d 837, 841 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Herzog v. Graphic Packaging International, Inc., 742 F.3d 802, 806 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Koszola v. Board of Education, 385 F.3d 1104, 1111 (7th Cir. 2004)
- Dale v. Chicago Tribune Co., 797 F.2d 458, 464 (7th Cir. 1986)
- Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc., 510 U.S. 17, 21 (1993)
- Lambert v. Peri Formworks Systems, Inc., 723 F.3d 863, 868 (7th Cir. 2013)

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