

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
FLORIDA, TAMPA DIVISION

Quintaurus L. Johnson v. Department of Juvenile Justice, Andrew
Correa, Matthew Clark, Rosa Ardito, Paul Sheffer and Sean Skillern

Johnson v. Department of Juvenile Justice · No. 8:24-CV-02195-WFJ-NHA · Decided February 19, 2026

SUMMARY

This order addresses multiple defendants’ motions for summary judgment in a pro se employment-retaliation action brought by a Florida Department of Juvenile Justice employee. The plaintiff asserted Title VII retaliation, retaliatory hostile work environment, retaliatory failure to promote, preliminary injunctive relief, a Florida Whistleblower Act claim, and First Amendment retaliation under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The court granted the defendants’ motions for summary judgment, after considering the parties’ evidence, discovery disputes, and briefing.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Tampa Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	William F. Jung
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Tampa Division
DECIDED	February 19, 2026
DOCKET	8:24-CV-02195-WFJ-NHA
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff, proceeding pro se, sued the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and five individual defendants in Florida state court asserting Title VII retaliation claims, a Title VII retaliatory hostile-work-environment claim, retaliatory failure to promote, a Florida Whistleblower Act claim, First Amendment retaliation under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, and a request for preliminary injunctive relief. Defendants removed the action to federal court and moved for summary judgment. The district court granted the motions, found the injunction request moot, entered final judgment for defendants, and closed the case.

STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is proper when there is no genuine dispute of material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court must view the evidence and draw reasonable inferences in favor of the nonmoving party, but unsupported allegations and conclusory assertions do not create a genuine dispute. Title VII and Florida Whistleblower Act retaliation claims were analyzed under the McDonnell Douglas burden-shifting framework and, alternatively, under the convincing-mosaic approach. The First Amendment retaliation claim was analyzed under the four-stage framework, with qualified immunity requiring defendants to show discretionary conduct and plaintiff to show a constitutional violation and clearly established law.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; persuasive only
PARTIES	Quintaurus L. Johnson v. Department of Juvenile Justice, Andrew Correa, Matthew Clark, Rosa Ardito, Paul Sheffer, Sean Skillern

TOPICS

summary judgment retaliation title vii section 1983 qualified immunity

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure employment law civil rights constitutional law disability discrimination retaliation whistleblower

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether DJJ was entitled to summary judgment on Johnson's Title VII retaliation claim.
2. Whether DJJ was entitled to summary judgment on Johnson's Title VII retaliatory hostile-work-environment claim.
3. Whether Johnson exhausted administrative remedies for his Title VII retaliatory failure-to-promote claim.
4. Whether DJJ was entitled to summary judgment on Johnson's Florida Whistleblower Act retaliation claim.
5. Whether the individual defendants were entitled to qualified immunity on Johnson's First Amendment retaliation claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
6. Whether Johnson's request for preliminary injunctive relief remained justiciable after summary judgment resolved all merits claims.

HOLDINGS

1. DJJ was entitled to summary judgment on the Title VII retaliation claim because, even assuming that some protected activity and materially adverse actions were shown, Johnson failed to establish causation beyond conclusory temporal-proximity assertions and failed to show that DJJ's legitimate, non-retaliatory reasons were pretextual.
2. DJJ was entitled to summary judgment on the retaliatory hostile-work-environment claim because, even considering the totality of alleged events, Johnson failed to provide evidence that the conduct was unjustified or retaliatory, and DJJ articulated legitimate, non-retaliatory reasons for the challenged interactions.
3. Johnson failed to exhaust administrative remedies for his Title VII retaliatory failure-to-promote claim because his 2022 EEOC charge did not allege facts concerning DJJ hiring practices or failures to promote.
4. DJJ was entitled to summary judgment on Johnson's Florida Whistleblower Act claim because, even assuming protected activity and adverse actions, Johnson failed to establish causation or refute DJJ's legitimate, non-retaliatory explanations.
5. The individual defendants were entitled to qualified immunity on Johnson's First Amendment retaliation claim because Johnson failed to show that their conduct was causally connected to protected speech and therefore failed to establish a constitutional violation.
6. Johnson's request for preliminary injunctive relief was moot because summary judgment resolved all claims and no live controversy remained for prospective interim relief.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The Clerk is DIRECTED to enter final summary judgment in favor of Defendants Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Andrew Correa, Matthew Clark, Rosa Ardito, Paul Sheffer, and Sean Skillern and against Plaintiff Quintaurus L. Johnson, and is DIRECTED to terminate all pending motions and deadlines and to close the case." (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Johnson has been employed by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice as a juvenile probation officer since 2015. After filing a 2019 sex-discrimination EEOC charge and a 2022 retaliation charge, he received counseling, performance evaluations, investigations, reprimands, and changes to his telework accommodation, which he characterized as retaliatory. He also filed numerous internal complaints concerning supervision, workplace conditions, disability accommodation, and alleged retaliation, as well as a 2025 charge with the Florida Commission on Human Relations. The defendants attributed the challenged employment actions to documented performance problems, disputed case visits, timesheet discrepancies, complaints from youths' families, overdue assignments, and workplace incidents.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Johnson filed four complaints, with the Third Amended Complaint serving as the operative pleading. The case was removed from Florida state court on September 17, 2024. After discovery disputes and sanctions proceedings, the defendants moved for summary judgment. The court allowed Johnson, who initially failed to

substantively respond, additional time to respond; after striking one response containing nonexistent citations, the court permitted refiling. The court granted summary judgment on Counts I, II, III, IV, and VII, found Count V moot, directed entry of final judgment, and closed the case.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Ellis v. England, 432 F.3d 1321, 1326 (11th Cir. 2005)
- Celotex Corp. v. Catrett, 477 U.S. 317, 322–23 (1986)
- Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986)
- Poer v. Jefferson County Commission, 100 F.4th 1325, 1335 (11th Cir. 2024)
- Fitzpatrick v. City of Atlanta, 2 F.3d 1112, 1115 (11th Cir. 1993)
- Cohen v. United American Bank of Central Florida, 83 F.3d 1347, 1349 (11th Cir. 1996)
- McGee v. Sentinel Offender Services, LLC, 719 F.3d 1236, 1242 (11th Cir. 2013)
- Adickes v. S.H. Kress & Co., 398 U.S. 144, 157–58 (1970)
- Jackson v. BellSouth Telecommunications, 372 F.3d 1250, 1280 (11th Cir. 2004)
- Brown v. Crawford, 906 F.2d 667, 670 (11th Cir. 1990)
- Horton v. Gilchrist, 128 F.4th 1221, 1226 (11th Cir. 2025)
- Smith v. School Board of Orange County, 487 F.3d 1361, 1368 (11th Cir. 2007)
- Couch v. Clark, 725 F. App'x 808 (11th Cir. 2018)
- Wilson v. B/E Aerospace, Inc., 376 F.3d 1079, 1085 (11th Cir. 2004)
- McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. Green, 411 U.S. 792 (1973)
- Young v. UPS, 575 U.S. 206, 213 (2015)
- Rosado v. Secretary, Department of the Navy, 127 F.4th 858, 876 (11th Cir. 2025)
- Berman v. Orkin Exterminating Co., 160 F.3d 697, 702 (11th Cir. 1998)
- Melton v. I-10 Truck Center Inc., No. 23-14175, 2026 WL 319183, at *3, *5 (11th Cir. Feb. 6, 2026)
- Berry v. Crestwood Healthcare LP, 84 F.4th 1300, 1310–11 (11th Cir. 2023)
- E.E.O.C. v. Total System Services, Inc., 221 F.3d 1171, 1174 (11th Cir. 2000)
- Vincent v. Jefferson County Board of Education, 152 F.4th 1339, 1353 (11th Cir. 2025)
- Tolar v. Marion Bank and Trust Co., 378 F. Supp. 3d 1103, 1122 (N.D. Ala. 2019)
- Johnson v. Booker T. Washington Broadcasting Service, Inc., 234 F.3d 501, 507 (11th Cir. 2000)
- Coutu v. Martin County Board of County Commissioners, 47 F.3d 1068, 1076 (11th Cir. 1995)
- Jeronimus v. Polk County Opportunity Council, Inc., 145 F. App'x 319, 326 (11th Cir. 2005)
- Duncan v. Madison County, 272 F. App'x 859, 863 (11th Cir. 2008)
- Harrison v. Belk, Inc., 748 F. App'x 936, 943 (11th Cir. 2018)
- Butler v. Alabama Department of Transportation, 536 F.3d 1209, 1213–14 (11th Cir. 2008)

- *Ceus v. City of Tampa*, 803 F. App'x 235, 245 (11th Cir. 2020)
- *Word v. AT&T*, 576 F. App'x 908, 914 (11th Cir. 2014)
- *Muhammad v. Audio Visual Services Group*, 380 F. App'x 864, 873 (11th Cir. 2010)
- *Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway Co. v. White*, 548 U.S. 53, 68 (2006)
- *Crawford v. Carroll*, 529 F.3d 961, 973–74 nn.13 (11th Cir. 2008)
- *Rainey v. Holder*, 412 F. App'x 235, 238 (11th Cir. 2011)
- *Davis v. Town of Lake Park*, 245 F.3d 1232, 1240 (11th Cir. 2001)
- *Thomas v. Cooper Lighting, Inc.*, 506 F.3d 1361, 1364 (11th Cir. 2007)
- *Clark County School District v. Breeden*, 532 U.S. 268, 273 (2001)
- *Higdon v. Jackson*, 393 F.3d 1211, 1220 (11th Cir. 2004)
- *Perryman v. Johnson Products Co.*, 698 F.2d 1138, 1142 (11th Cir. 1983)
- *Flowers v. Troup County, Georgia, School District*, 803 F.3d 1327, 1338 (11th Cir. 2015)
- *Nix v. WLCY Radio/Rahall Communications*, 738 F.2d 1181, 1187 (11th Cir. 1984)
- *Debe v. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.*, 860 F. App'x 637, 639–40 (11th Cir. 2021)
- *Shotz v. City of Plantation, Florida*, 344 F.3d 1161, 1180 n.30 (11th Cir. 2003)
- *Curet v. Ulta Salon, Cosmetics & Fragrance, Inc.*, No. 8:21-cv-1801-VMC-TGW, 2022 WL 4464751, at *6 (M.D. Fla. Sept. 26, 2022)
- *Gregory v. Georgia Department of Human Resources*, 355 F.3d 1277, 1279–80 (11th Cir. 2004)
- *Patterson v. Georgia Pacific, LLC*, 38 F.4th 1336, 1345 (11th Cir. 2022)
- *Buckley v. Secretary of Army*, 97 F.4th 784, 799 (11th Cir. 2024)
- *Monaghan v. Worldpay US, Inc.*, 955 F.3d 855, 862–63 (11th Cir. 2020)
- *Ray v. City of Tallahassee*, 664 F. App'x 816, 818 (11th Cir. 2016)
- *McAlpin v. Town of Sneads*, 61 F.4th 916, 927 (11th Cir. 2023)
- *Harlow v. Fitzgerald*, 457 U.S. 800, 818 (1982)
- *Loftus v. Clark-Moore*, 690 F.3d 1200, 1204 (11th Cir. 2012)
- *Robinson v. Sauls*, 46 F.4th 1332, 1340–41 (11th Cir. 2022)
- *Holloman ex rel. Holloman v. Harland*, 370 F.3d 1252, 1264 (11th Cir. 2004)
- *Lindke v. Freed*, 601 U.S. 187, 196–97 (2024)
- *Stavropoulos v. Firestone*, 361 F.3d 610, 618–19 (11th Cir. 2004)
- *Moss v. City of Pembroke Pines*, 782 F.3d 613, 617–18 (11th Cir. 2015)
- *Bell v. Sheriff of Broward County*, 6 F.4th 1374, 1377 (11th Cir. 2021)
- *University of Texas v. Camenisch*, 451 U.S. 390, 395 (1981)