

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA

George M. Mattox v. Cortez, et al.

Mattox · No. 2:24-cv-02359-JAD-MDC · Decided January 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Nevada dismissed George M. Mattox’s civil-rights action without prejudice after he failed to update his address and either pay the filing fee or submit an application to proceed in forma pauperis. Applying the Ninth Circuit’s dismissal-factor framework, the court directed the Clerk to enter judgment and close the case, while permitting Mattox to pursue his claims in a new action meeting those requirements.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Nevada
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Joie A. Dorsey
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Nevada
DECIDED	January 16, 2026
DOCKET	2:24-cv-02359-JAD-MDC
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court dismissed Mattox's civil-rights action without prejudice after he failed to comply with an order requiring him to update his address and either pay the filing fee or submit an application to proceed in forma pauperis.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the discretionary five-factor framework governing dismissal for failure to obey a court order or comply with local rules.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district-court order; nonprecedential
PARTIES	George M. Mattox v. Cortez, et al.

TOPICS

- sanctions
- civil procedure
- section 1983
- prisoners rights
- civil rights

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- civil rights
- prisoner civil rights
- sanctions
- remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should be dismissed without prejudice for Mattox's failure to obey the court's order to update his address and either pay the filing fee or seek in forma pauperis status.
2. Whether a second deadline or another lesser sanction would constitute a meaningful alternative to dismissal.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court may dismiss an action under its inherent docket-management authority when a party fails to obey a court order or comply with applicable local rules.
2. Dismissal was warranted because the public interest in expeditious resolution, the court's need to manage its docket, the presumption of prejudice from unreasonable delay, and the lack of a meaningful lesser alternative outweighed the policy favoring disposition on the merits.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“District courts have the inherent power to control their dockets and “[i]n the exercise of that power, they may impose sanctions including, where appropriate . . . dismissal” of a case.” (1)

“Courts “need not exhaust every sanction short of dismissal before finally dismissing a case, but must explore possible and meaningful alternatives.”” (2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

George Mattox brought a civil-rights action based on alleged constitutional violations suffered while incarcerated at Southern Desert Correctional Center. The court ordered him to update his address and either pay the \$405 filing fee or file an IFP application by January 9, 2026. Mattox did not respond, and mail from the court was returned as undeliverable.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Mattox filed a civil-rights lawsuit concerning alleged constitutional violations during his incarceration. The court ordered him to update his address and pay the filing fee or file an IFP application by January 9, 2026. He did not respond, and court mail was returned as undeliverable. The court weighed the Ninth Circuit's dismissal factors and dismissed the action without prejudice, directing the Clerk to enter judgment and close the case.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Thompson v. Hous. Auth. of City of L.A., 782 F.2d 829, 831 (9th Cir. 1986)
- Carey v. King, 856 F.2d 1439, 1440-41 (9th Cir. 1988)
- Malone v. U.S. Postal Serv., 833 F.2d 128, 130 (9th Cir. 1987)

- In re Phenylpropanolamine Prod. Liab. Litig., 460 F.3d 1217, 1226 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Anderson v. Air West, 542 F.2d 522, 524 (9th Cir. 1976)
- Yourish v. Cal. Amplifier, 191 F.3d 983, 992 (9th Cir. 1999)
- Pagtalunan v. Galaza, 291 F.3d 639, 643 & n.4 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Henderson v. Duncan, 779 F.2d 1421, 1424 (9th Cir. 1986)

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