

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Beagle Labs, Inc., et al. v. AppFolio, Inc.

Beagle Labs · No. 25-cv-10670-AMO · Decided December 19, 2025

SUMMARY

The court transfers Beagle Labs, Inc. and related plaintiffs’ action against AppFolio, Inc. from the Northern District of California to the Central District of California under 28 U.S.C. § 1404(a). The court finds that the transferee district is more convenient for the parties, witnesses, and litigation, has less congested dockets, and better serves the interests of justice. The court also orders AppFolio to maintain the status quo pending further order of the transferee court.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Araceli Martinez-Olguin
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	December 19, 2025
DOCKET	25-cv-10670-AMO
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The plaintiffs filed an action asserting tortious interference, false advertising, unfair competition, monopolization, defamation, trade libel, unjust enrichment, and declaratory-judgment claims in the Northern District of California. After the plaintiffs filed an ex parte motion for a temporary restraining order, the court ordered briefing on whether the case should be transferred under 28 U.S.C. § 1404(a).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A transfer under 28 U.S.C. § 1404(a) is committed to the district court's discretion and depends on the facts of the particular case. The court must first determine whether the action could have been brought in the proposed transferee district, then weigh private convenience factors and public-interest factors concerning the interests of justice.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district-court order with no reported citation

PARTIES

Beagle Labs, Inc., Beagle Technologies, Inc., Big Beagle, Inc., Rental Property Managers Association LLC, YRIG Risk Retention Group, Inc. v. AppFolio, Inc.

TOPICS

venue

civil procedure

commercial litigation

torts

injunctions

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

commercial litigation

torts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action could have been brought in the Central District of California for purposes of 28 U.S.C. § 1404(a).
2. Whether the convenience of the parties and witnesses and the interests of justice favored transferring the action from the Northern District of California to the Central District of California.
3. Whether Defendant should be required to maintain the status quo pending further order of the transferee court.

HOLDINGS

1. The action could properly have been filed in the Central District of California because AppFolio resides there for venue purposes based on its principal place of business in Santa Barbara County.
2. Transfer to the Central District of California was warranted because the applicable convenience and interests-of-justice factors, including the location of relevant witnesses and conduct, relative docket congestion, and protection against forum shopping, favored the Central District.
3. Defendant was required to continue maintaining the status quo pending further order of the Central District of California.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“For the convenience of parties and witnesses, in the interest of justice, a district court may transfer any civil action to any other district or division where it might have been brought or to any district or division to which all parties have consented.” (at 1)

“Because the overall balance of applicable factors supports continuing this litigation in the United States District Court for the Central District of California, this action is TRANSFERRED to that district.” (at 7)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

AppFolio's principal place of business and headquarters are in Santa Barbara County, within the Central District of California. AppFolio submitted evidence that most employees with knowledge of the alleged conduct, business strategies, statements, and policies were based at that headquarters, and that the challenged statements and business decisions originated there rather than in the Northern District. The plaintiffs were primarily entities

based outside the Northern District, although they alleged business contacts, customers, and effects in the Bay Area.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs commenced the action on December 15, 2025, and sought a temporary restraining order the same day. Following a status conference, the court directed the parties to brief transfer to the Central District of California. The court transferred the action and ordered Defendant to maintain the status quo pending further order of the transferee court.

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The action was transferred to the United States District Court for the Central District of California. Defendant shall maintain the status quo pending further order of the transferee court; any alleged failure to maintain the status quo through December 22, 2025 may be raised before that court.

CASES CITED

- Jones v. GNC Franchising, Inc., 211 F.3d 495, 498-99 (9th Cir. 2000)
- State of Cal. v. Bureau of Land Mgmt., 286 F. Supp. 3d 1054, 1059 (N.D. Cal. 2018)
- Decker Coal Co. v. Commonwealth Edison Co., 805 F.2d 834, 843 (9th Cir. 1986)
- In re Link_A_Media Devices Corp., 662 F.3d 1221, 1223 (Fed. Cir. 2011)
- Thomas v. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., No. 21-CV-02720-LB, 2021 WL 2434032, at *3 (N.D. Cal. June 15, 2021)
- Park v. Dole Fresh Vegetables, Inc., 964 F. Supp. 2d 1088, 1093, 1095 (N.D. Cal. 2013)
- Los Angeles Mem'l Coliseum Comm'n v. Nat'l Football League, 89 F.R.D. 497, 501 (C.D. Cal. 1981)
- Metz v. U.S. Life Ins. Co. in City of New York, 674 F. Supp. 2d 1141, 1147 (C.D. Cal. 2009)
- Bhd. of Maint. of Way Employes Div./IBT v. Union Pac. R.R. Co., 485 F. Supp. 3d 1048, 1062 (D. Neb. 2020)
- Hendricks v. StarKist Co., No. 13-CV-729 YGR, 2014 WL 1245880, at *3 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 25, 2014)
- Buzzballz, LLC v. MPL Brands NV, Inc., 741 F. Supp. 3d 889, 897 (D. Nev. 2024)
- Sunbeam Prods., Inc. v. Homedics, Inc., 587 F. Supp. 2d 1055, 1058 (W.D. Wis. 2008)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 5 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA 6 7
BEAGLE LABS, INC., et al., Case No. 25-cv-10670-AMO 8 Plaintiffs, ORDER
TRANSFERRING CASE & 9 v. MAINTAINING STATUS QUO 10 APPFOLIO, INC.,
Defendant. 11 12 13 On December 15, 2025, Beagle Labs, Inc., Beagle Technologies, Inc., Big

Beagle, Inc., 14 Rental Property Managers Association LLC, and YRIG Risk Retention Group, Inc. (collectively, 15 “Plaintiffs” or “Beagle”) commenced this action against Defendant AppFolio, Inc., asserting 16 claims for tortious interference with contractual relations, tortious interference with prospective 17 economic relations, false advertising, unfair competition, monopolization, defamation and trade 18 libel, unjust enrichment, and declaratory judgment.

Complaint (Dkt. No. 1). The same day, 19 Beagle filed an ex parte motion for a temporary restraining order, and the Court held a status 20 conference with the parties. Dkt. Nos. 4, 15. At the status conference, the Court directed the 21 parties to submit briefing on why the case should not be transferred, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 22 § 1404(a), to the United States District Court for the Central District of California.¹ Now before 23 the Court is the parties’ briefing on that issue.

For the reasons set forth below, this case is 24 TRANSFERRED to the United States District Court for the Central District of California. 25 Title 28 U.S.C. § 1404(a) provides that “[f]or the convenience of parties and witnesses, in 26 the interest of justice, a district court may transfer any civil action to any other district or division 27 1 where it might have been brought or to any district or division to which all parties have 2 consented.” 28 U.S.C. § 1404(a).

Transfer pursuant to Section 1404(a) lies within the discretion 3 of the district court and depends on the facts of each particular case. *Jones v. GNC Franchising, 4 Inc.*, 211 F.3d 495, 498 (9th Cir. 2000). The Court must first determine whether the case could 5 have been brought in the district where transfer is sought, i.e., where venue is proper, before 6 assessing the convenience of parties and witnesses and the interest of justice.

See *State of Cal. v. 7 Bureau of Land Mgmt.*, 286 F. Supp. 3d 1054, 1059 (N.D. Cal. 2018). In deciding whether 8 transfer is warranted, the Court must consider both public factors, which go to the interests of 9 justice, and private factors, which go to the convenience of the parties and witnesses. See *Decker 10 Coal Co. v. Commonwealth Edison Co.*, 805 F.2d 834, 843 (9th Cir.

1986). Such factors may 11 include: (1) the location where the relevant agreements were negotiated and executed; (2) the state 12 that is most familiar with the governing law; (3) the plaintiff’s choice of forum; (4) the parties’ 13 respective contacts with the forum; (5) the contacts relating to the plaintiff’s cause of action in the 14 chosen forum; (6) the differences in the costs of litigation in the two forums; (7) the availability of 15 compulsory process to compel attendance of unwilling non-party witnesses; (8) the ease of access 16 to sources of proof; (9) the presence of a forum selection clause; and (10) the relevant public 17 policy of the forum state, if any.

Jones, 211 F.3d at 498-99. Courts may also consider “the 18 administrative difficulties flowing from court congestion.” *Decker Coal Co.*, 805 F.2d at 843 19 (internal quotations and citations omitted). 20 Turning to the preliminary issue of whether this action could have been brought in the

21 United States District Court for Central District of California, Defendant has its principal place of 22 business in Goleta, California.

Complaint (“Compl.”) (Dkt. No. 1) ¶ 17. Goleta is located in 23 Santa Barbara County, which lies within the Central District. Declaration of Sean Saxena 24 (“Saxena Decl.”) (Dkt. No. 21-1) ¶ 3. This action, therefore, could have been properly filed there. 25 See 28 U.S.C. 1391(b)(1) (“A civil action may be brought in a judicial district in which any 26 defendant resides, if all defendants are residents of the State in which the district is located[.]”).

27 Moving next to the convenience of the parties and witnesses, Beagle’s choice of forum, the 1 the chosen forum, and the burden on party and non-party witnesses all favor transfer. With respect 2 to its decision to file in this district, Beagle asserts that its choice of forum deserves great 3 deference, because “Beagle Technologies, Inc., was based in the Bay Area for much of the 4 relevant time Period[.]” and “[t]he Beagle Entities’ parent is based in San Francisco and has deep 5 ties to the Bay Area.” Pls.’ Br.

(Dkt. No. 22) at 4. The allegations in the operative complaint are 6 to the contrary: “Plaintiff Beagle Labs, Inc. is a Delaware corporation with principal places of 7 business in Chicago and Dallas.” Compl. ¶ 12. “Plaintiff Beagle Technologies, Inc. is a Delaware 8 corporation.” Id. ¶ 13. “Plaintiff Big Beagle, Inc. is a Delaware corporation with a principal place 9 of business in South Salt Lake.” Id. ¶ 14. “Plaintiff Rental Property Managers Association LLC 10 is an Alabama limited liability company in Alabama.” Id. ¶ 15. “Plaintiff YRIG Risk Retention 11 Group, Inc. is an Alabama corporation with a principal place of business in Alabama.” Id. ¶ 16.

12 Where, as here, “a plaintiff brings its charges in a venue that is not its home forum... that choice 13 of forum is entitled to less deference.” In re Link_A_Media Devices Corp., 662 F.3d 1221, 1223 14 (Fed. Cir. 2011) (citations omitted); see also Thomas v. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., No. 15 21-CV-02720-LB, 2021 WL 2434032, at *3 (N.D. Cal. June 15, 2021) (“If the operative facts 16 have not occurred within the forum and the forum has no interest in the parties or subject matter, 17 the plaintiff’s choice is entitled only minimal consideration.”) (internal quotations and citation 18 omitted).

Accordingly, Beagle’s choice of forum is entitled to little weight. This factor thus 19 weighs in favor of transfer. 20 As to the parties’ respective contacts with the forum and the contacts relating to Beagle’s 21 causes of action in the chosen forum, Beagle alleges that “[m]aterial negotiations, 22 communications, and misrepresentations were carried out and received by persons located in this 23 District[.]” that “AppFolio’s implementation of the complained-of conduct, customer effects, and 24 injury was also felt by Plaintiffs in this District[.]” and that “Beagle has many customers in the 25 San Francisco Bay Area, including its largest customer, who is an AppFolio user and whose 26 access to Beagle would be cut off by AppFolio’s intended blocking.” Compl ¶ 21.

It also asserts 27 that “AppFolio directed its tortious interference and unfair competition to citizens of this venue— 1 conduct directed at the group impacts the parent and those effects are felt [in the SF Bay Area,]” 2 that “Beagle has several active listings for job postings for San Francisco[,]” and that “AppFolio 3 explicitly indicates the ‘Bay Area’ as one of five ‘Hubs’ where ‘current and future team members 4 can collaborate, connect, and make a lasting impact.” Pls.’ Br. at 3-5.

5 However, AppFolio’s Senior Director of Insurance, Sean Saxena, declares that its 6 “executive team is based in its Santa Barbara County headquarters, which houses the highest 7 concentration of AppFolio employees[,]” and “[a]s a result, nearly all of AppFolio’s employees 8 with personal knowledge of the conduct, business strategies, statements, and policies alleged in 9 Plaintiffs’ complaint and application for a temporary restraining order are based in the Santa 10 Barbara County headquarters.” Saxena Decl. ¶¶ 4, 5.

Saxena further declares that [a]ny broadly 11 disseminated, customer-facing statements made by AppFolio regarding Plaintiffs would have been 12 issued from the Santa Barbara County headquarters[,]” that “[a]ny statements by AppFolio that 13 Plaintiffs allege were defamation or threats would have been issued from Santa Barbara County 14 headquarters[,]” and that “none of the statements about which Beagle complains were made in the 15 Northern District, and none of the relevant business decisions or policies were made in the 16 Northern District.” Id. ¶ 6.

These sworn facts establish that, at least for the parties and party 17 affiliated witnesses, the Central District of California is the more convenient forum. See *Park v. 18 Dole Fresh Vegetables, Inc.*, 964 F. Supp. 2d 1088, 1095 (N.D. Cal. 2013) (explaining that 19 “litigation costs are reduced when venue is located near the most witnesses expected to testify”).

20 Turning to the convenience of non-party witnesses, the Court likewise finds the Central 21 District to be the more convenient forum. Although “[t]he convenience of witnesses is said to be 22 the most important factor in passing on a transfer motion[,]” *Los Angeles Mem’l Coliseum 23 Comm’n v. Nat’l Football League*, 89 F.R.D. 497, 501 (C.D. Cal. 1981) (citation omitted), “[t]he 24 convenience of non-party witnesses is a more important factor than the convenience of party 25 witnesses.” *Metz v. U.S. Life Ins.*

Co. in City of New York, 674 F. Supp. 2d 1141, 1147 (C.D. Cal. 26 2009) (citation omitted). While AppFolio does not specifically identify any non-party witnesses, 27 the Court nonetheless finds that the Central District is a more convenient forum. AppFolio has 1 Beagle’s contention that “the nature of the matters is distinct,” allowing two separate suits to 2 proceed in two different parts of the state imposes a substantial burden on non-party witnesses, 2 3 including the Beagle customers that reside in this district, such that litigating in the same locale, 4 i.e., the Central District, is more convenient, irrespective of whether one action proceeds in state 5 court and the other moves forward in federal court. 3 See *Bhd. of Maint. of Way Employes Div./IBT 6 v. Union Pac.*

R.R. Co., 485 F. Supp. 3d 1048, 1062 (D. Neb. 2020) (finding that convenience to 7 witnesses slightly favored transfer because “[t]o the extent any witnesses [we]re involved, those 8 same witnesses w[ould] presumably also be involved in the currently pending D.C. case, and 9 litigating at least two cases in conjunction with one another will reduce the hassle for witnesses.”).

10 That Beagle’s parent corporation is located in this district does not compel a different conclusion. 11 Beagle’s parent corporation is more akin to a “party witness[s] or witness[] employed by a party,” 12 that “can be compelled by the parties to testify regardless of where the litigation will occur.” 13 *Hendricks v. StarKist Co.*, No. 13-CV-729 YGR, 2014 WL 1245880, at *3 (N.D.

Cal. Mar. 25, 14 2014). Accordingly, the convenience to non-party witnesses, as well as the parties and party 15 affiliated witnesses, favor transfer. 16 /// 17 /// 18 /// 19 /// 20 /// 21 /// 22 2 It also imposes burdens on the parties and party affiliated witnesses, further supporting transfer. 23 See *Buzzballz, LLC v. MPL Brands NV, Inc.*, 741 F. Supp. 3d 889, 897 (D.

Nev. 2024) (finding the “costs of bringing two parties to a district in which no one is truly at home: double the car rentals, 24 hotels, and plane tickets” supported transfer). 25 3 The Court thus does not reach the question of whether the pendency of the state court litigation also supports transfer under the first-to-file doctrine. With respect to AppFolio’s argument that 26 “Central District residents have a stronger interest in claims against Central-District-based AppFolio than residents here have in claims brought by out-of-state entities,” Def.’s Br. at 6, the 27 Court finds it unpersuasive.

The only case AppFolio cites in support – *Walters v. Famous 1 Transfer* also serves the interests of justice. As AppFolio points out, “[d]ockets in the 2 || Northern District of California are considerably more congested than in the Central District[.]” 3 Def.’s Br. at 6. Data published as of June 30, 2025 confirms this: 4 Northern District of CA | Central District of CA 10 See June 30, 2025 Fed.

Ct. Mgmt. Statistics, Comparison of Districts Within the Ninth Circuit, 11 https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/document/fcms_na_distcomparison0630.2025.pdf, 12 || at9.). Additionally, AppFolio highlights that “[c]aseloads are up 43% over the prior 5 13 year in the Northern District, compared to an increase of just 6% in the Central District.” *Id.* The 14 || relative congestion of the two districts thus favors transfer.

Cf. *Sunbeam Prods., Inc. v. Homedics, 3 15 Inc.*, 587 F. Supp. 2d 1055, 1058 (W.D. Wis. 2008) (denying transfer where proposed transferee a 16 || court had a longer median time from filing to trial, making for a delay, which “would substantially 3 17 diminish the value of plaintiffs patent and be highly prejudicial to its rights[.]”). 18 Transfer also protects against forum shopping.

Beagle contends it is “not fleeing 19 || unfavorable precedent nor chasing favorable law.” Pls.’ Br. at 5. The Court disagrees. In its 20 || motion for a temporary restraining order, Beagle cites, in addition to a Ninth Circuit decision, an 21 unpublished order from this Court in connection with the proposition that “[t]he Ninth Circuit has 22 || made clear that data blocking and targeting a competitor in precisely the way AppFolio plans to do 23 || is unlawful.” Dkt.

No. 4 at 2. Given Beagle’s heavy reliance on this Court’s order its motion, it 24 appears that Beagle strategically filed in this district, which bears a minimal connection to this 25 controversy as discussed above, hoping that a Northern District court would be more likely than a 26 || court in the Central District to follow an in-district unpublished order.

Thus, while “[n]o single 27 factor is dispositive” in the transfer analysis, *Park*, 964 F. Supp. 2d at 1093 (internal quotations 28 and citation omitted), the apparent forum shopping by Beagle strongly favors transfer. 1 Because the overall balance of applicable factors supports continuing this litigation in the 2 United States District Court for the Central District of California, this action is TRANSFERRED 3 || to that district.

Defendant SHALL continue to maintain status quo pending further order of the 4 || transferee court. To the extent Beagle contends that Defendant has failed to maintain status quo 5 through December 22, 2025, as it agreed on the record during the status conference held 6 December 15, 2025, it may raise that issue to the transferee court. 7 IT IS SO ORDERED. 8 Dated: December 19, 2025 9 □ □ _— 10. 11 ARACELI MARTINEZ-OLGUIN United States District Judge 12 13 © 15 16 = 17 Z 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28