

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Miriam Maldonado v. Megdal Downey LLC

Maldonado v. Megdal Downey LLC · No. 2:25-cv-06635-WLH-MAR · Decided August 20, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of California ordered the plaintiff to show cause why the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over claims under California’s Unruh Civil Rights Act and related state-law claims. The court directed the plaintiff and counsel to identify the statutory damages sought and provide declarations addressing whether they qualify as high-frequency litigants, warning that failure to respond could result in dismissal of the state-law claims.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	August 20, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-06635-WLH-MAR
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court issued an order to show cause requiring Plaintiff to explain why the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the California Unruh Civil Rights Act claim and related state-law claims.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Supplemental jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1367 is discretionary; the court must consider the statutory grounds for declining jurisdiction and weigh judicial economy, convenience, fairness, and comity.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order; precedential status unknown and no reporter citation appears.

TOPICS

- subject matter jurisdiction
- civil procedure
- ada / disability
- public accommodations discrimination
- pleadings

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's Unruh Civil Rights Act claim and any related state-law claims.
2. What information Plaintiff and counsel must provide for the court to evaluate whether declining supplemental jurisdiction is warranted under 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c).

HOLDINGS

1. Supplemental jurisdiction over state-law claims is discretionary rather than a plaintiff's right, and the court may decline jurisdiction under the circumstances specified in 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c), while weighing judicial economy, convenience, fairness, and comity.
2. Plaintiff must show cause in writing why the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the Unruh Act claim and related state-law claims, identify the statutory damages sought, and provide declarations addressing the high-frequency-litigant criteria.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“a federal court should consider and weigh in each case, and at every stage of the litigation, the values of judicial economy, convenience, fairness, and comity.” (at 2)

“the Court finds it would be improper to allow Plaintiff [a high frequency litigant] to use federal court as an end-around to California’s pleading requirements.” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The complaint alleges a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and seeks injunctive relief. It also seeks damages under California's Unruh Civil Rights Act, apparently based on alleged disability-access barriers. The court noted California's statutory efforts to curb allegedly baseless or vexatious disability-access litigation, including heightened pleading requirements and a high-frequency litigant fee.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a complaint asserting an Americans with Disabilities Act claim for injunctive relief and an Unruh Civil Rights Act claim for damages. Before resolving supplemental jurisdiction, the court ordered Plaintiff and counsel to submit a written response and declarations addressing the statutory damages sought and whether they qualify as high-frequency litigants under California law.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Carnegie-Mellon Univ. v. Cohill, 484 U.S. 343, 350 (1988)
- Acri v. Varian Assocs., 114 F.3d 999, 1000 (9th Cir. 1997)
- Schutza v. Cuddeback, 262 F. Supp. 3d 1025, 1031 (S.D. Cal. 2017)

OPINION

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 9 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
10 11 MIRIAM MALDONADO Case No. 2:25-cv-06635-WLH-MAR Plaintiff(s), 12 v. 13
ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE MEGDAL DOWNEY LLC, et al. 14 WHY THE COURT
Defendant(s). SHOULD 15 EXERCISE 16 SUPPLEMENTAL JURISDICTION OVER THE 17
STATE LAW CLAIMS 18 19 The Complaint filed in this action asserts a claim for injunctive
relief arising 20 out of an alleged violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (the “ADA”)
and 21 claim for damages pursuant to California’s Unruh Civil Rights Act (the “Unruh 22 Act”),
Cal. Civ.

Code §§ 51-53. In the Complaint, Plaintiff requests the court 23 exercise supplemental jurisdiction
over the Unruh Act claim pursuant to 24 28 U.S.C. § 1367. 25 The United States Supreme Court
has recognized supplemental jurisdiction 26 “is a doctrine of discretion, not of plaintiff’s right, and
that district courts can 27 2 The supplemental jurisdiction statute codifies these principles.

After 3 establishing that supplemental jurisdiction encompasses “other claims” in the same 4 case
or controversy as a claim within the district courts’ original jurisdiction, 5 § 1367(a), the statute
confirms the discretionary nature of supplemental 6 jurisdiction by enumerating the circumstances
in which district courts can refuse 7 its exercise: 8 (c) The district courts may decline to exercise
supplemental jurisdiction over a claim under subsection (a) if -- 9 (1) the claim raises a novel or
complex issue of State law, 10 (2) the claim substantially predominates over the claim or claims 11
over which the district court has original jurisdiction, 12 (3) the district court has dismissed all
claims over which it has 13 original jurisdiction, or 14 (4) in exceptional circumstances, there are
other compelling reasons for declining jurisdiction.

15 16 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c). 17 Depending on a host of factors, then -- including the circumstances
of the 18 particular case, the nature of the state law claims, the character of the governing 19 state
law, and the relationship between the state and federal claims -- district 20 courts may decline to
exercise jurisdiction over supplemental state law claims. 21 The statute thereby reflects the
understanding that, when deciding whether to 22 exercise supplemental jurisdiction, “a federal
court should consider and weigh 23 in each case, and at every stage of the litigation, the values of
judicial economy, 24 convenience, fairness, and comity.” Id. at 173 (quoting Carnegie-Mellon
Univ.

25 v. Cohill, 484 U.S. 343, 350 (1988)); see also *Aciri v. Varian Assocs.*, 114 F.3d 26 999, 1000 (9th Cir. 1997) (recognizing district courts have discretion to decline 27 2 brought under the Unruh Act to combat the influx of baseless claims and 3 vexatious litigation in the disability access litigation sphere. Cal. Code Civ. Proc. 4 § 425.50.

The stricter pleading standard requires a plaintiff bringing construction- 5 access claims¹ to file a verified complaint alleging specific facts concerning the 6 plaintiff's claim, including the specific barriers encountered or how the plaintiff 7 was deterred and each date on which the plaintiff encountered each barrier or 8 was deterred. See *id.* § 425.50(a).

California also imposed a "high-frequency 9 litigant fee" in 2015 in response to the "special and unique circumstances" 10 presented by certain plaintiffs and law firms filing an outsized number of Unruh 11 Act lawsuits. Cal. Gov't Code § 70616.5. 12 In recognition of California's efforts to reduce the abuse of California's 13 disability access laws, district courts within the state have determined that the 14 interests of fairness and comity counsel against exercising supplemental jurisdiction 15 over construction-access claims brought under the Unruh Act.

See, e.g., *Schutz v. Cuddeback* 262 F. Supp. 3d 1025, 1031 (S.D. Cal. 2017) ("[T]he Court finds it 17 would be improper to allow Plaintiff [a high frequency litigant] to use federal court 18 as an end-around to California's pleading requirements.

Therefore, as a matter of 19 20 21 1 "Construction-related accessibility claim' means any civil claim in a civil action with respect to a place of public accommodation, including, but not limited to, a 22 claim brought under [Cal. Civ. Code] Section 51, 54, 54.1, or 55, based wholly or in part on an alleged violation of any construction-related accessibility standard, as 23 defined in paragraph (6)." Cal. Civ.

Code § 55.52(a)(1). "Construction-related accessibility standard' means a provision, standard, or regulation under state or 24 federal law requiring compliance with standards for making new construction and existing facilities accessible to persons with disabilities, including, but not 25 limited to, any provision, standard, or regulation set forth in Section 51, 54, 54.1, or 55 of this code, Section 19955.5 of the Health and Safety Code, the California 26 Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336; 27 I comity, and in aererence to Cahtromia § substantial interest 1n discouraging 2 unverified disability discrimination claims, the Court declines supplemental 3 jurisdiction over Plaintiff's Unruh Act claim.").

4 In light of the foregoing, the Court ORDERS Plaintiff to show cause in writing 5 why the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the Unruh Act claim 6 and any related state law claims. See 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c).

In responding to this 7 Order to Show Cause, Plaintiff shall identify the amount of statutory damages 8 || Plaintiff seeks to recover. Plaintiff and his or her counsel also shall support their || responses to the Order to Show Cause with declarations, signed under penalty 10|| of perjury, providing all facts necessary for the court to determine if they satisfy || the definition of a “high-frequency litigant” as provided by Cal. Code Civ.

Proc. § 425.55(b)(1) & (2). 13 Plaintiff shall file a Response to this Order to Show Cause within fourteen 14|| (14) days of this Order. Failure to timely or adequately respond to this Order to 15|| Show Cause may result in the court declining to exercise supplemental jurisdiction 16|| over the Unruh Act claim and any related state law claims and dismissing such 17|| claim or claims without further notice, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c).

The || Court may set a hearing on the Order to Show Cause after reviewing the 19|| parties’ responses, if necessary. 20 21 IT IS SO ORDERED. 22 24 ||Dated: August 20, 2025 25 26
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE 27 28