

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Legend D. Brooks v. SGT. RUIZ, et al.

Brooks v. Ruiz · No. 2:21-cv-02010-AB-PD · Decided January 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of California accepts and adopts a magistrate judge’s report and recommendation concerning defendants’ motion to bifurcate administrative-exhaustion issues under the Prison Litigation Reform Act. The court finds that the plaintiff exhausted available administrative remedies as to Deputies Sanchez and Lass and Sergeant Ruiz, and denies the motion to bifurcate a bench trial on exhaustion issues.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Andre Birotte Jr.
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	January 13, 2026
DOCKET	2:21-cv-02010-AB-PD
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court reviewed Defendants' motion to bifurcate the administrative-remedy exhaustion issues for a hearing or bench trial, the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation, and Defendants' sealed objections. After conducting de novo review of the objected-to portions, the district court adopted the Report and Recommendation and denied the motion to bifurcate.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	De novo review of the portions of the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation to which objections were directed.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential district court order; precedential status not stated in the opinion.

TOPICS

- prisoners rights
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the administrative-remedy exhaustion issues should be bifurcated for a hearing or bench trial under the Prison Litigation Reform Act.
2. Whether Plaintiff exhausted available administrative remedies as to Defendants Sanchez, Lass, and Ruiz.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiff exhausted available administrative remedies as to Defendants Sanchez, Lass, and Ruiz.
2. The motion to bifurcate the bench trial on Prison Litigation Reform Act exhaustion issues was denied.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Court finds that Plaintiff has exhausted available administrative remedies as to Defendants Sanchez, Lass and Ruiz” (at 2)

“Defendants’ Motion to Bifurcate Bench Trial on Prison Litigation Reform Act exhaustion issues is Denied.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff brought a prisoner civil-rights action against Deputy Julian Sanchez, Deputy Darren W. Lass, Jr., and Sergeant Robert Ruiz. Defendants sought to bifurcate the administrative-remedy exhaustion issues for a hearing or bench trial under *Albino v. Baca*. The district court reviewed the record and sealed materials containing new evidence and found that Plaintiff had exhausted available administrative remedies as to the three named defendants.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Defendants Deputy Julian Sanchez, Deputy Darren W. Lass, Jr., and Sergeant Robert Ruiz moved to bifurcate the Prison Litigation Reform Act exhaustion issues for a hearing under *Albino v. Baca*. The magistrate judge issued a Report and Recommendation, and Defendants filed sealed objections containing new evidence. The district court conducted de novo review, accepted and adopted the magistrate judge's findings and recommendations, found that Plaintiff had exhausted available administrative remedies as to Sanchez, Lass, and Ruiz, and denied the motion.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Albino v. Baca*, 747 F.3d 1172 (9th Cir. 2014)

OPINION

Legend D. Brooks v. SGT. RUIZ, et al.

PER CURIAM.

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8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

9 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10 11 LEGEND D. BROOKS, Case No. 2:21-cv-02010-AB-PD 12 Plaintiff, ORDER
ACCEPTING REPORT

AND ADOPTING FINDINGS,

13 v.

CONCLUSIONS, AND

14 RECOMMENDATIONS OF

SGT. RUIZ, et al., UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE

15 JUDGE

Defendants. 16 17 18 Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636, the Court has reviewed the motion filed by 19
Defendants Deputy Julian Sanchez (“Sanchez”), Deputy Darren W. Lass, Jr. 20 (“Lass”), and
Sergeant Robert Ruiz (“Ruiz”) to bifurcate the administrative 21 remedy exhaustion issues for a
hearing under Albino v. Baca, 747 F.3d 1172 22 (9th Cir. 2014), the records on file herein, the
Report and Recommendation of 23 United States Magistrate Judge (the “Report”), and
Defendants’ Objections to 24 Report that are filed under seal. Dkt. Nos. 183, 187, 188, 192, 195,
196, 198. 25 The Court has conducted a de novo review of the portions of the Report 26 to which
the Objections were directed and has reviewed the materials filed 27 under seal, which contain
new evidence that Defendants did not submit with 28 ! || the motion to bifurcate. The Court
accepts the findings and recommendations 2 || of the Magistrate Judge and adopts them as its own
findings and conclusions. 3 || The Court finds that Plaintiff has exhausted available administrative
4 || remedies as to Defendants Sanchez, Lass and Ruiz 5 IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that
Defendants’ Motion to Bifurcate 6 | Bench Trial on Prison Litigation Reform Act exhaustion issues
is Denied. 7 g || DATED: January 13, 2026 : (nh □□ 10 HONORABLE ANDRE BIROTTE JR.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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