

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)

