

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI, CENTRAL DIVISION

Debra Darrington, as next friend for M.R., et al., on behalf of
themselves and others similarly situated v. Missouri Department of
Mental Health, et al.

Darrington · No. 2:25-cv-04268-MDH · Decided June 22, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri partially granted and partially denied Plaintiffs’ motion for class certification in a challenge to delays in competency evaluations and restoration services provided by the Missouri Department of Mental Health. The Court certified Evaluation and Restoration Classes under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(a) and 23(b)(1)(A) and (2), using revised definitions requiring delays exceeding 90 days beyond a circuit court order. The Court appointed specified plaintiffs and counsel as class representatives and class counsel and ordered the parties to propose an amended scheduling order and preliminary-injunction dates.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Central Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Douglas Harpool
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Central Division
DECIDED	June 22, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-04268-MDH
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs moved for class certification under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23 in an action seeking declaratory and injunctive relief concerning allegedly delayed competency evaluations and restoration services for pretrial detainees. The district court granted the motion in part and denied it in part, certified revised Evaluation and Restoration Classes, appointed class representatives and class counsel, and directed the parties to propose an amended scheduling order and preliminary-injunction dates.

STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the Rule 23 requirement of a rigorous analysis of numerosity, commonality, typicality, and adequacy, while recognizing that district courts have broad discretion in determining whether class certification is appropriate.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district-court order; persuasive only
PARTIES	Debra Darrington, as next friend for M.R., et al., on behalf of themselves and others similarly situated v. Missouri Department of Mental Health, et al.

TOPICS

class actions civil procedure due process habeas corpus ada / disability

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights constitutional law criminal procedure health law remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the proposed Evaluation and Restoration Classes satisfied the numerosity, commonality, typicality, and adequacy requirements of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(a).
2. Whether the proposed classes satisfied Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(b)(1)(A) and (b)(2).
3. Whether the proposed class definitions should be revised to provide an administrable delay threshold and avoid requiring a determination of the constitutional merits as part of class membership.
4. Whether the court should certify classes of Missouri pretrial detainees awaiting competency evaluations or restoration services for more than 90 days beyond a state-court order.

HOLDINGS

1. The proposed Evaluation and Restoration Classes satisfied Rule 23(a)'s requirements of numerosity, commonality, typicality, and adequacy of representation.
2. Certification under Rule 23(b)(1)(A) was appropriate because individual adjudications could create varying or incompatible standards concerning the due process required in competency proceedings.
3. Certification under Rule 23(b)(2) was appropriate because defendants allegedly acted on grounds generally applicable to both classes and plaintiffs sought classwide declaratory and injunctive relief.
4. The court certified revised Evaluation and Restoration Classes consisting of Missouri pretrial detainees who had waited more than 90 days beyond a circuit-court order for competency evaluation or restoration services.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Rule 23(b)(1)(A) ‘takes in cases where the party is obliged by law to treat the members of the class alike . . . or where the party must treat all alike as a matter of practical necessity.’” (Discussion § II.A)

“The Court has adopted the 90-day period in the class definition because it is 150% of the state statutorily adopted limit for completion of the evaluation period.” (Discussion § III)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Missouri Department of Mental Health provides competency evaluation and restoration services to people charged with crimes in Missouri. Plaintiffs alleged that DMH systematically delayed court-ordered competency evaluations and restoration services, leaving pretrial detainees with serious mental illness in county or city jails for extended periods. The proposed class members included detainees waiting for competency evaluations or for court-ordered restoration treatment, with alleged delays exceeding Missouri statutory time periods. The court found that the named plaintiffs' prolonged waits were typical of the proposed classes and that DMH data showed hundreds of detainees awaiting restoration services.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed a putative class action against the Missouri Department of Mental Health and other defendants. Plaintiffs moved for class certification, and defendants opposed the motion, arguing that the proposed classes were not adequately defined or ascertainable and that plaintiffs lacked evidentiary support for Rule 23 requirements. The court found the Rule 23(a) and Rule 23(b)(1)(A) and (b)(2) requirements satisfied, revised the class definitions to use a 90-day delay threshold, and granted certification in part and denied it in part. Plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction remained pending for a later evidentiary hearing.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

No remand. The parties were ordered to file within 10 days a joint proposed amended scheduling order and proposed dates for a preliminary-injunction hearing to occur within 60 days.

CASES CITED

- State v. Tilden, 988 S.W.2d 568, 573 (Mo. Ct. App. 1999)
- Ebert v. Gen. Mills, Inc., 823 F.3d 472, 477 (8th Cir. 2016)
- In re St. Jude Med., Inc., 425 F.3d 1116, 1119 (8th Cir. 2005)
- Luiken v. Domino's Pizza, LLC, 705 F.3d 370, 372 (8th Cir. 2013)
- Avritt v. Reliastar Life Ins. Co., 615 F.3d 1023, 1029 (8th Cir. 2010)
- Claxton v. Kum & Go, L.C., No. 6:14-CV-03385-MDH, 2015 WL 3648776, at *3 (W.D. Mo. June 11, 2015)
- Comcast Corp. v. Behrend, 133 S. Ct. 1426, 1432 (2013)
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. Dukes, 564 U.S. 338, 350–51, 359 (2011)
- In re Checking Account Overdraft Litigation, 307 F.R.D. 656, 668 (S.D. Fla. 2015)
- Coley v. Clinton, 635 F.2d 1364, 1378 (8th Cir. 1980)
- In re Uponor, Inc., F1807 Plumbing Fittings Products Liab. Litig., 716 F.3d 1057, 1064 (8th Cir. 2013)

- Lane v. Lombardi, No. 2:12-CV-4219-NKL, 2012 WL 5462932, at *3 (W.D. Mo. Nov. 8, 2012)
- Paxton v. Union Nat'l Bank, 688 F.2d 552, 559, 561–62 (8th Cir. 1982)
- U.S. Fid. & Guar. Co. v. Lord, 585 F.2d 860, 873 (8th Cir. 1978)
- Amchem Prods., Inc. v. Windsor, 521 U.S. 591, 614 (1997)
- Terry ex rel. Terry v. Hill, 232 F. Supp. 2d 934, 935 (E.D. Ark. 2002)
- Jackson v. Indiana, 406 U.S. 715, 738 (1972)
- United States v. DeGarmo, 450 F.3d 360, 362–63 (8th Cir. 2006)

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