

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

Annette Lois Washington, Basil Clifton Washington v. State of Connecticut, et al.

Washington v. State of Connecticut · No. 3:26-CV-00234 (SFR) · Decided June 17, 2026

SUMMARY

The court held that the Washingtons did not properly remove several Connecticut foreclosure and summary process actions because they filed a notice of removal within an existing civil action, failed to pay the required fees, and improperly combined multiple cases and parties. In the alternative, the court concluded that removal would have been untimely and improper because the underlying state-court pleadings did not present federal questions. The court directed the Clerk to send the order to the relevant Connecticut state courts.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Connecticut
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sarah F. Russell
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Connecticut
DECIDED	June 17, 2026
DOCKET	3:26-CV-00234 (SFR)
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs filed a civil action and purported to remove several Connecticut foreclosure, summary process, and appellate matters into that action. Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation moved to remand.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- appellate procedure
- subject matter jurisdiction
- foreclosure
- eviction

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- removal and remand
- federal jurisdiction
- foreclosure
- eviction

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Washingtons' filing in an already-open federal civil action properly removed the identified state-court foreclosure, summary process, and appellate matters.
2. Whether the purported removals were untimely under 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b).
3. Whether federal-question jurisdiction existed where the underlying state complaints involved foreclosure and summary process and the asserted federal questions arose from the Washingtons' own federal complaint.
4. Whether the Washingtons could remove the state actions as Connecticut citizens based solely on diversity jurisdiction.

HOLDINGS

1. The Washingtons' filing did not effect removal because a notice of removal must initiate the removal of a particular state-court action in a properly opened federal matter; a state-court defendant may not use an existing civil action to combine multiple state cases or add numerous parties not present in those cases.
2. The purported removals were untimely because the notices were filed more than thirty days after service of the relevant state-court pleadings or summonses.
3. Federal-question removal was unavailable because the underlying state-court complaints were foreclosure and summary process pleadings, and the federal questions identified by the Washingtons arose from their own federal complaint rather than from the face of the state plaintiffs' properly pleaded complaints.
4. The Washingtons could not remove the state actions based solely on diversity jurisdiction because they were citizens of Connecticut and therefore were barred by the forum-defendant rule.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In a removal case, a state-court defendant seeking removal does not become the plaintiff in the federal case.” (Discussion)

“Moreover, such defendants may not unilaterally add dozens of additional parties or combine multiple state court cases into a single removed case in federal court—as the Washingtons purport to do.” (Discussion)

“State by Tong v. Exxon Mobil Corp., 83 F.4th 122, 132 (2d Cir. 2023)” (Discussion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Washingtons were defendants in Connecticut foreclosure and summary process proceedings. They filed a nearly 600-page federal complaint against numerous defendants and then attempted to use that existing civil action to remove three state trial-court matters and related appellate matters. They did not pay the required filing fees for multiple removals and named individuals in the purported notice who were not parties to the state actions; the attempted removal also occurred months or years after service in the underlying cases.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Washingtons filed a civil complaint in the District of Connecticut on February 18, 2026, and then filed a document styled as a notice of removal purporting to remove multiple state-court actions. They also filed removal notices in the state proceedings. Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation moved to remand. The district court held that the filing did not effect removal and alternatively concluded that any removed matters would have to be remanded because removal was procedurally defective, untimely, and unsupported by federal-question jurisdiction.

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The purportedly removed state-court matters were not actually removed. Alternatively, if they had been removed, they were to be remanded to state court. The Clerk was ordered to send the Order to the Connecticut Superior Court, Hartford Housing Session, the Connecticut Appellate Court, and the Connecticut Supreme Court.

CASES CITED

- Glob. Network Commc’ns, Inc. v. City of New York, 458 F.3d 150, 157 (2d Cir. 2006)
- Matheson v. Deutsche Bank Nat’l Tr. Co., 706 F. App’x 24, 26 (2d Cir. 2017)
- Triestman v. Fed. Bureau of Prisons, 470 F.3d 471, 474 (2d Cir. 2006) (per curiam)
- State by Tong v. Exxon Mobil Corp., 83 F.4th 122, 132 (2d Cir. 2023)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT -----
----- x ANNETTE LOIS WASHINGTON, BASIL CLIFTON:
WASHINGTON,: Plaintiffs,: 3:26-CV-00234 (SFR) v.: STATE OF CONNECTICUT, ET AL.,:
Defendants. x MEMORANDUM & ORDER Plaintiffs Annette and Basil Washington (“the Washingtons”) bring this civil action, which they have also styled as a “removal” of several foreclosure and eviction actions from state court, against dozens of Defendants.

For the reasons below, I conclude that the cases were never actually removed from state court. In the alternative, even had the cases been removed, removal would be improper and the matters remanded to state court. I. BACKGROUND On February 18, 2026, the Washingtons filed a nearly 600-page Complaint in this action, including a 107-page affidavit and 461 pages of exhibits, against nearly 70 named Defendants and 100 John Doe Defendants.

They list a dozen counts in the Complaint, which in the aggregate allege that the state of Connecticut, various judges, the Housing, Appellate, and Supreme Courts of the state of Connecticut, a number of lawyers and law firms, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation,

the Town of Manchester, and others conspired to violate the Washingtons' rights in several eviction and foreclosure proceedings.

On February 20, 2026, the Washingtons filed a document titled "Notice of Removal" in this case, ECF No. 4, purporting to remove three foreclosure and summary process actions from state court on the basis of federal question jurisdiction. See *Nationstar Mortg. LLC v. Washington*, No. HHD-CV17-6076206-S (Conn. Super. Ct. Feb. 20, 2026); *Fed. Home Loan Mortg. Corp. v. Washington*, HFH-CV25-6035877-S (Conn.

Super. Ct. Feb. 20, 2026); *Fed. Home Loan Mortg. Corp. v. Washington*, HFH-CV25-6035878-S (Conn. Super. Ct. Feb. 20, 2026). On the same day, the Washingtons filed in each of those three state court cases pending in Superior Court a document titled "Notice of Removal to United States District Court."¹ The Washingtons also filed similar notices in matters that appear to be pending in the Connecticut Appellate Court and the Connecticut Supreme Court.

See *Fed. Home Loan Mortg. Corp. v. Washington*, AC 49418 (Conn. App. Ct. Feb. 20, 2026); *Nationstar Mortg., LLC v. Washington et al.*, Mot SC 250166 (Conn. Feb. 20, 2026). The "Notice of Removal" filed by the Washingtons in the present case also purported to remove two other housing actions from state court, which do not appear on the state court website, and any subsequent appeals in all five cases.

See ECF No. 4, at 4 (purporting to remove "the prior docketed matters of HFH-CV22-6021815-S and HFH-CV22-6021816-S and the resulting Appellate Matters brought before the Appellate and Supreme Courts of Connecticut."). ¹ I can take judicial notice of filings in state court actions. See *Glob. Network Commc'ns, Inc. v. City of New York*, 458 F.3d 150, 157 (2d Cir.

2006) ("A court may take judicial notice of a document filed in another court not for the truth of the matters asserted in the other litigation, but rather to establish the fact of such litigation and related filings.") (citations and internal quotation marks omitted).

The Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, the plaintiff in the foreclosure action, filed a Motion to Remand to State Court on February 25, 2026. See ECF No. 11. The Washingtons responded with an Objection, ECF No. 17, and a Motion to Strike the Motion for Remand, ECF No. 28.

The Washingtons have also filed a number of other motions and documents that are not relevant to the present ruling. See ECF Nos. 12-16; 18; 20-24; 26-31. At the outset, I note that "[p]ro se submissions are reviewed with special solicitude, and 'must be construed liberally and interpreted to raise the strongest arguments that they suggest.'" *Matheson v. Deutsche Bank Nat'l Tr.*

Co., 706 F. App'x 24, 26 (2d Cir. 2017) (quoting *Triestman v. Fed. Bureau of Prisons*, 470 F.3d 471, 474 (2d Cir. 2006) (per curiam)). II. DISCUSSION Although the Washingtons informed the

state court in their foreclosure and eviction actions that those cases had been removed to federal court, the “Notice of Removal” in this case was not proper and did not actually operate to remove those cases to this Court.

As an initial matter, this action was initiated by a Complaint, ECF No. 1, accompanied by a filing fee, in which Plaintiffs Annette and Basil Washington accuse numerous individual and organizational defendants of committing a variety of allegedly illegal and improper activities. This action is therefore filed as a civil action. A notice of removal requires a “short and plain statement of the grounds for removal” and generally must be accompanied by “a copy of all process, pleadings, and orders served upon [the] defendant or defendants” in the state court action.

28 U.S.C. § 1446(a). In a removal case, a state-court defendant seeking removal does not become the plaintiff in the federal case. Moreover, such defendants may not unilaterally add dozens of additional parties or combine multiple state court cases into a single removed case in federal court—as the Washingtons purport to do.

The Court was informed by the Clerk’s Office that the Clerk explained to the Washingtons before they filed their “Notice of Removal” that removal of an action from state court requires the opening of a new matter in federal court and the payment of a filing fee. See 28 U.S.C. § 1914. Nevertheless, the Washingtons informed the Clerk that they wished for their “Notice of Removal” to be docketed in the present case.

Under these circumstances, I conclude that the Washingtons have not initiated a proper removal of the various state court cases pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1446. The Washingtons did not pay the required filing fees to remove multiple actions to federal court and have named numerous individuals in the “Notice of Removal” that are not parties to the state court actions.

Given these circumstances, I conclude that no state court actions have actually been removed by the Washingtons to federal court. Moreover, even if the Washingtons had paid the relevant filing fees and removed the state court actions to this Court, remand of the actions would be required.

First, 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b) requires that a “notice of removal of a civil action or proceeding shall be filed within 30 days after the receipt by the [state court] defendant... of a copy of the initial pleading setting forth the claim for relief... or within 30 days after the service of summons upon the [state court] defendant, whichever period is shorter” in the state court action.

28 U.S.C. § 1446(b). The “Notice of Removal” was filed in the present case on February 20, 2026. The Washingtons were served in the state foreclosure case on February 28, 2017, many years before they filed the “Notice of Removal.” See *Nationstar Mortg. LLC v. Washington*, No. HHD-CV17-6076206-S (Conn. Super. Ct. Mar. 8, 2017) (return of service).

The Washingtons were served in the summary process cases on September 14, 2025 and September 24, 2025, approximately six months prior to the purported removal in this case. See *Fed. Home Loan Mortg. Corp. v. Washington*, HFH-CV25-6035877-S (Conn. Super. Ct. Oct. 3, 2025) (return of service); *Fed. Home Loan Mortg. Corp. v. Washington*, HFH-CV25-6035878-S (Conn.

Super. Ct. Oct. 3, 2025) (return of service). The “Notice of Removal” was thus untimely as to all three pending state court actions. Additionally, the Washingtons claim federal question jurisdiction as the basis for removal. Federal question removal “exists only when a federal question is presented on the face of the plaintiff’s properly pleaded complaint and cannot be triggered on the basis of a federal defense.” See *State by Tong v. Exxon Mobil Corp.*, 83 F.4th 122, 132 (2d Cir.

2023) (internal quotation marks and citation omitted). Here, the underlying state court complaints are foreclosure and summary process cases, and the only federal questions raised relate to the Washingtons’ own Complaint in this civil action.

In addition, the Washingtons, who are defendants in the state actions, are citizens of Connecticut and therefore, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1441(b)(2), may not remove based solely on diversity jurisdiction. Thus, these actions may not proceed in federal court. III. CONCLUSION For the foregoing reasons, the Washingtons’ “Notice of Removal,” filed in a civil action that they had previously initiated in this Court, did not actually remove any state court actions to this Court.

In the alternative, even had the state court actions been removed, this Court would remand the actions to state court. As noted above, the Washingtons have filed a “Notice of Removal to United States District Court” in three pending cases in Connecticut Superior Court and in two pending matters in the Connecticut Appellate and Supreme Courts. See *Nationstar Mortg.*

LLC v. Washington, No. HHD-CV17-6076206-S (Conn. Super. Ct. Feb. 20, 2026); *Fed. Home Loan Mortg. Corp. v. Washington*, HFH-CV25-6035877-S (Conn. Super. Ct. Feb. 20, 2026); *Fed. Home Loan Mortg. Corp. v. Washington*, HFH-CV25-6035878-S (Conn. Super. Ct. Feb. 20, 2026); *Fed. Home Loan Mortg. Corp. v. Washington*, AC 49418 (Conn. App. Ct. Feb. 20, 2026); *Nationstar Mortg., LLC v. Washington et al.*, Mot SC 250166 (Conn.

Feb. 20, 2026). This Order shall provide notice to the state courts that these cases were not properly removed to federal court. The Clerk of Court is hereby ordered to send a copy of this Order to the Connecticut Superior Court, Hartford Housing Session, the Connecticut Appellate Court, and the Connecticut Supreme Court. SO ORDERED. New Haven, Connecticut June 17, 2026 /s/Sarah F. Russell SARAH F. RUSSELL United States District Judge