

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)