

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
WISCONSIN

Remo Harrison Daniels v. Natalie Parsons

Daniels v. Parsons, Case No. 25-cv-901-pp (E.D. Wis. Feb. 6, 2026) · No. 25-cv-901-pp · Decided February 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin denied without prejudice Remo Harrison Daniels’s motion to appoint counsel in his 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action alleging deliberate indifference to threats of self-harm. The court found that Daniels had made a reasonable effort to obtain counsel but was capable of litigating the relatively straightforward claim at that stage, while allowing him to renew the motion if the case later became too difficult to handle without counsel.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
DECIDED	February 6, 2026
DOCKET	25-cv-901-pp
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff, an incarcerated pro se litigant proceeding under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, moved for appointment of counsel after the court screened his complaint and allowed him to proceed on an Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The district court exercises discretion under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(1). Appointment of counsel requires consideration of whether the indigent plaintiff made a reasonable attempt to obtain counsel and, given the difficulty of the case, appears competent to litigate it himself; the court may also consider the claim's merits and what is at stake.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; persuasive rather than binding outside the case
PARTIES	Remo Harrison Daniels v. Natalie Parsons

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- prisoners rights
- section 1983

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

prisoner civil rights

appointment of counsel

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should recruit counsel for an indigent incarcerated plaintiff under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e) (1).
2. Whether Daniels satisfied the Seventh Circuit's two-part test for appointment of counsel by showing both a reasonable effort to obtain counsel and an inability to litigate the case competently without counsel.

HOLDINGS

1. Daniels satisfied the first prong because he made a reasonable, good-faith effort to obtain counsel and submitted letters from lawyers who declined representation.
2. Appointment of counsel was not warranted at this stage because Daniels's claim was not complex and his clear and concise filings showed that he could represent himself competently.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In exercising its discretion, the court must consider two things: “(1) ‘has the indigent plaintiff made a reasonable attempt to obtain counsel or been effectively precluded from doing so,’ and (2) ‘given the difficulty of the case, does the plaintiff appear competent to litigate it himself?’””

“Because the plaintiff can represent himself at this stage, the court will deny his motion to appoint counsel.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Daniels is incarcerated at Columbia Correctional Institution and alleged that prison officials were deliberately indifferent to threats of self-harm made on April 17, 2025. He stated that he had a learning disorder, a fourth-grade reading level, mental-health conditions, limited law-library access, and limited legal knowledge. He also represented that he had contacted more than fifteen lawyers and received declinations. The court concluded that his filings demonstrated an ability to conduct discovery, respond to summary judgment, and clearly describe the events underlying his claim.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Daniels alleged that prison officials ignored threats that he would harm himself. The court previously screened the complaint and permitted an Eighth Amendment claim against Natalie Parsons to proceed. Daniels then moved for appointment of counsel; the court found that he had made a reasonable effort to obtain counsel but was competent to litigate the relatively simple claim at that stage, and denied the motion without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Navejar v. Iyola, 718 F.3d 692, 696 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Ray v. Wexford Health Sources, Inc., 706 F.3d 864, 866-67 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Henderson v. Ghosh, 755 F.3d 559, 564 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Olson v. Morgan, 750 F.3d 708, 711 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Eagan v. Dempsey, 987 F.3d 667, 682 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Pruitt v. Mote, 503 F.3d 647, 654-55 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Watts v. Kidman, 42 F.4th 755, 763-64 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Pickett v. Chi. Transit Authority, 930 F.3d 869, 871 (7th Cir. 2019)
- Pennewell v. Parish, 923 F.3d 486, 490-91 (7th Cir. 2019)
- Daniels v. York, Case No. 17-cv-680-pp (E.D. Wis.), Dkt. No. 134