

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Belinda J. Rossetti v. Joshua D. Shapiro, et al.

Rossetti · No. 1:25-cv-00422 · Decided March 9, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania dismisses Belinda J. Rossetti’s pro se civil rights action with prejudice. The court concludes that Rossetti failed to file an amended complaint limited to a potential selective-enforcement claim under the Equal Protection Clause, despite being given leave and a deadline to do so. Applying the Poulis factors, the court determines that dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) and the court’s inherent authority is appropriate.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Julia K. Munley
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
DECIDED	March 9, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00422
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court dismissed plaintiff's civil-rights action with prejudice after she failed to file an amended complaint within the court-ordered deadline.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A dismissal for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with court orders is reviewed for abuse of discretion. The dismissal determination requires balancing the six Poulis factors.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Belinda J. Rossetti v. Joshua D. Shapiro, et al.

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- pleadings
- sanctions
- equal protection
- fourteenth amendment

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should be dismissed under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) and the court's inherent authority because plaintiff failed to comply with the order requiring an amended complaint.
2. Whether the Poulis factors supported dismissal with prejudice.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court may dismiss an action under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) and its inherent authority when a plaintiff fails to prosecute the case or comply with court orders.
2. Dismissal with prejudice was warranted after balancing the Poulis factors because plaintiff was personally responsible for the failure to amend, her conduct was dilatory and willful, monetary sanctions were ineffective, and the original complaint lacked sufficient merit, notwithstanding limited prejudice to defendants.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“If a plaintiff fails to prosecute a case or comply with court orders, district court judges are empowered to dismiss an action pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) and its own inherent authority to manage the docket for the orderly and expeditious disposition of cases.”

“There is no magic formula or mechanical calculation with regard to the Poulis analysis. In fact, no single factor is dispositive, and...not all of the Poulis factors need be satisfied in order to dismiss a complaint.”

“Because plaintiff has refused to allege facts to demonstrate that her case has merit, dismissal of this action with prejudice is the appropriate sanction.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Rossetti proceeded pro se and was given leave to amend her civil-rights complaint to allege only a selective-enforcement claim under the Equal Protection Clause. Despite being advised that failure to file a timely amended complaint would result in dismissal, she did not amend or request an extension, and the deadline expired.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The court previously adopted a magistrate judge's report and recommendation that plaintiff's pro se complaint be dismissed without prejudice, while allowing her approximately thirty days to file an amended complaint limited to a selective-enforcement claim under the Equal Protection Clause. Plaintiff neither filed an amended complaint nor sought an extension. After the deadline passed, the court dismissed the action with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) and its inherent docket-management authority.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- R & C Oilfield Servs. LLC v. Am. Wind Transp. Grp. LLC, 45 F.4th 655, 661 (3d Cir. 2022)
- Link v. Wabash R.R. Co., 370 U.S. 626, 630-31 (1962)
- Emerson v. Thiel Coll., 296 F.3d 184, 190 (3d Cir. 2002)
- Poulis v. State Farm Fire & Cas. Co., 747 F.2d 863, 868 (3d Cir. 1984)
- United States v. Brace, 1 F.4th 137, 144 (3d Cir. 2021)
- In re Asbestos Prods. Liab. Litig. (No. VI), 718 F.3d 236, 246 (3d Cir. 2013)
- Knoll v. City of Allentown, 707 F.3d 406, 409 (3d Cir. 2013)

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