

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Sonia Sayyedalhosseini v. Los Rios Community College District

Sayyedalhosseini · No. 2:23-cv-1571-DJC-JDP (PS) · Decided December 19, 2025

SUMMARY

The document contains findings and recommendations on Sonia Sayyedalhosseini’s motion to strike portions of Los Rios Community College District’s answer in a Title VII retaliation action. The magistrate judge recommends granting the motion in part by striking the unclean-hands defense and deeming several other defenses withdrawn, while denying the motion in all other respects. The recommendations were issued for review by the assigned district judge.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jeremy D. Peterson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	December 19, 2025
DOCKET	2:23-cv-1571-DJC-JDP (PS)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(f) to strike portions of defendant's answer, including denials, affirmative defenses, and the jury demand. The magistrate judge issued findings and recommendations recommending that the motion be granted in part and denied in part.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(f), the court may strike an insufficient defense or redundant, immaterial, impertinent, or scandalous matter. A motion to strike is generally disfavored and is not the vehicle for resolving the merits or evidentiary weight of challenged allegations or defenses. An affirmative defense need only provide fair notice of the defense.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Sonia Sayyedalhosseini v. Los Rios Community College District

TOPICS

pleadings

affirmative defenses

civil procedure

retaliation

title vii

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

employment law

civil rights

Title VII retaliation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether portions of defendant's answer denying the accuracy, credibility, or probative value of an EEOC determination should be stricken.
2. Whether defendant's denials, asserted nonretaliatory reasons for termination, and characterization of the claims as limited to a particular EEOC charge should be stricken.
3. Whether defendant's affirmative defenses should be stricken under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(f) for insufficient notice or other pleading defects.
4. Whether defendant's jury demand and prayer for relief should be stricken.

HOLDINGS

1. A motion to strike is not an appropriate vehicle for resolving the evidentiary weight, credibility, factual disputes, or merits of challenged allegations and defenses; those issues should generally be left for adjudication on the merits.
2. An affirmative defense need only give the opposing party fair notice of the defense; a defense should not be stricken merely because its legal or factual correctness is disputed or because it may ultimately fail.
3. The unclean-hands defense should be stricken because it failed to identify the factual basis on which it rested.
4. The defenses asserting legitimate reasons for the employment decision and that the decision would have occurred absent retaliatory motive were sufficiently pleaded and should not be stricken.
5. The jury demand should not be stricken because any party may demand a jury trial under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The function of this rule “is to avoid the expenditure of time and money that must arise from litigating spurious issues by dispensing with those issues prior to trial” (at 1)

“If the court is in doubt as to whether the challenged matter may raise an issue of fact or law, the motion to strike should be denied, leaving an assessment of the sufficiency of the allegations for adjudication on the merits.” (at 2)

“In a Title VII retaliation action, the plaintiff must prove “that the unlawful retaliation would not have occurred in the absence of the alleged wrongful action or actions of the employer.”” (at 8)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that Los Rios Community College District unlawfully terminated her employment in retaliation for a discrimination complaint filed with the EEOC by plaintiff and her husband. Defendant's answer denied portions of the complaint, offered nonretaliatory reasons for the termination, asserted that the claims were limited to a specified EEOC charge, and pleaded twenty-three affirmative defenses. Plaintiff moved to strike those portions of the answer and defendant's jury demand and prayer for relief.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a Title VII retaliation action alleging that defendant terminated her employment in retaliation for an EEOC discrimination complaint filed by plaintiff and her husband. Defendant answered and asserted twenty-three affirmative defenses. Plaintiff moved to strike portions of the answer; defendant opposed and withdrew several defenses. The magistrate judge recommended striking the unclean-hands defense, deeming several other defenses withdrawn, and denying the motion in all other respects, subject to review by the assigned district judge under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

No remand was ordered. The recommendations were submitted to the assigned district judge under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1). Parties were given fourteen days after service to file objections.

CASES CITED

- Whittlestone, Inc. v. Handi-Craft Co., 618 F.3d 970, 973 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Fantasy, Inc. v. Fogerty, 984 F.2d 1524, 1527 (9th Cir. 1993)
- Champlaie v. BAC Home Loans Servicing, LP, 706 F. Supp. 2d 1029, 1039 (E.D. Cal. 2009)
- Wyshak v. City National Bank, 607 F.2d 824, 827 (9th Cir. 1979)
- Board of Trustees of the San Diego Electric Pension Trust v. Bigley Electric, Inc., No. 07-CV-634-IEG (LSP), 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 50892, at *7 (S.D. Cal. July 12, 2007)
- Xu v. City of Los Angeles, No. 2:23-cv-01575-FLA (SP), 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 212828, at *4 (C.D. Cal. Oct. 18, 2023)
- Jarrow Formulas, Inc. v. Nutrition Now, Inc., 304 F.3d 829, 835 (9th Cir. 2002)
- University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center v. Nassar, 570 U.S. 338, 360 (2013)
- Murphy v. Trader Joe's, No. 16-cv-02222-SI, 2017 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 7754, at *7-8 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 19, 2017)
- Turner v. Duncan, 158 F.3d 449, 455 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Martinez v. Yist, 951 F.2d 1153 (9th Cir. 1991)