

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Chavez v. Gamboa

Chavez · No. 1:22-cv-00920-JLT-SKO (HC) · Decided November 10, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California expanded the record in a federal habeas corpus proceeding concerning Petitioner Ulises Chavez’s claim for equitable tolling. The court granted Chavez’s request for an evidentiary hearing, concluding that further factual development regarding his alleged mental impairment was necessary.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sheila K. Oberto
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	November 10, 2025
DOCKET	1:22-cv-00920-JLT-SKO (HC)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner sought further factual development and an evidentiary hearing in connection with his federal habeas petition and claim for equitable tolling after the Ninth Circuit remanded the case for further factual development.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Ulises Chavez v. Martin Gamboa

TOPICS

- federal habeas corpus
- post-conviction relief
- evidence
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- Federal habeas corpus
- Post-conviction relief
- Equitable tolling
- Evidentiary hearings

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the habeas record should be expanded for further factual development concerning Petitioner's alleged mental impairment and equitable-tolling claim.
2. Whether Petitioner was entitled to an evidentiary hearing to present factual, legal, and scientific evidence regarding his alleged mental impairment.

HOLDINGS

1. The record should be expanded to permit the parties to provide further factual development concerning Petitioner's alleged mental impairment.
2. Petitioner's request for an evidentiary hearing was granted because further factual development and a full hearing were necessary to enable the parties to present all relevant, available material concerning the equitable-tolling claim.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“a condition so severe that he was either ‘unable rationally or factually to personally understand the need to timely file,’ or he was ‘unable personally to prepare a habeas petition and effectuate its filing’” (at 1)

“Although Respondent has submitted substantial relevant evidence, the Court agrees that further factual development of the record and a full evidentiary hearing are necessary to enable the parties to present all relevant, available material.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Petitioner, a state prisoner, asserts that mental impairment affected his ability to timely file his federal habeas petition and seeks equitable tolling. Respondent submitted psychological evaluations, prison mental-health records, education and programming records, communication records, grievance and inmate-request records, and state-court appeal records. Petitioner's counsel represented that the legal team had not completed reviewing the voluminous records and that the existing record was inadequate to determine Petitioner's mental capacity during the relevant period.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Chavez is a state prisoner proceeding under 28 U.S.C. § 2254. On May 27, 2025, the Ninth Circuit remanded the case for further factual development concerning equitable tolling. The district court directed additional briefing, received sealed briefing and evidentiary materials from Respondent, and then granted Petitioner's request for an evidentiary hearing and expanded the record because the existing record was insufficiently developed to resolve Petitioner's mental capacity during the relevant period.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The record is expanded for further factual development, and an evidentiary hearing is granted. A scheduling order will follow.

CASES CITED

- Bills v. Clark, 628 F.3d 1092, 1099-1100 (9th Cir. 2010)

OPINION

Gamboa

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

9 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10 11 ULISES CHAVEZ,) Case No.: 1:22-cv-00920-JLT-SKO (HC)) 12 Petitioner,) ORDER
EXPANDING RECORD AND

) GRANTING PETITIONER’S REQUEST FOR

13 v.) EVIDENTIARY HEARING

14 MARTIN GAMBOA,)

) 15 Respondent.)) 16) 17 18 Petitioner is a state prisoner proceeding with a petition for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 19 U.S.C. § 2254. 20 On May 27, 2025, the Ninth Circuit remanded the case for further factual development of 21 Petitioner’s claim for equitable tolling. (Doc. 28.) On June 24, 2025, the Court issued an order 22 directing the parties to submit further briefing on the issue of equitable tolling. (Doc. 31.) On

23 September 12, 2025, Respondent submitted briefing under seal. In addition, Respondent submitted

24 evidence in the form of exhibits including: two psychological evaluations conducted on Petitioner in 25 2008, prior to Petitioner’s trial; Petitioner’s mental health records from CDCR from the period of

26 December 2010 through March 2023; his education and programming records while in prison; his

27 record of effective communications with prison staff; records of Petitioner’s inmate requests and 28 grievances; and records of his appeals in state court. (Doc. 35.) 1 Based on these records, Respondent contends Petitioner should not be granted equitable tolling 2 because he was not suffering “a condition so severe that he was either ‘unable rationally or factually to 3 personally understand the need to timely file,’ or he was ‘unable personally to prepare a habeas 4 petition and effectuate its filing’ and (2) that the impairment made it impossible under the totality of 5 the circumstances to meet the filing deadline, whether of his own accord or with assistance, despite 6 due diligence.” (Doc. 35 at 8 (quoting Bills v. Clark, 628 F.3d 1092, 1099-1100 (9th Cir. 2010)). 7 Respondent further contends that even assuming an extraordinary circumstance existed, it did not 8 cause the untimely filing. 9 On November 7, 2025, Petitioner submitted briefing under seal.

Counsel for Petitioner states 10 Petitioner's legal team has not completed review of the records obtained to date, given the volume of 11 material. Counsel states that the record at present is insufficiently developed to render a decision on 12 Petitioner's mental capacity during the relevant time period. Counsel seeks additional time to complete 13 an investigation into the facts of Petitioner's mental deficiencies and an evidentiary hearing to present 14 the factual, legal and scientific bases of Petitioner's claims of mental impairment. Although 15 Respondent has submitted substantial relevant evidence, the Court agrees that further factual 16 development of the record and a full evidentiary hearing are necessary to enable the parties to present 17 all relevant, available material.

18 ORDER

19 Accordingly, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED: 20 1) The record is EXPANDED to permit the parties to provide further factual development of 21 Petitioner's alleged mental impairment; and 22 2) Petitioner's request for evidentiary hearing is GRANTED. Scheduling order will follow. 23 24 IT IS SO ORDERED. 25 Dated: November 7, 2025 /s/ Sheila K. Oberto .

26 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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