

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Linda Maria Pacheco v. Frank J. Bisignano, Commissioner of Social
Security

Pacheco v. Bisignano · No. 1:21-cv-00110-JLT-BAM · Decided January 5, 2026

SUMMARY

This document is a stipulation and proposed order in a Social Security action in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California. The parties agree to an award of \$7,500 in attorney fees and expenses under the Equal Access to Justice Act, with no costs under 28 U.S.C. § 1920. The stipulation addresses payment, Treasury Offset Program considerations, assignment of fees, and the preservation of potential attorney-fee claims under 42 U.S.C. § 406(b).

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
JURISDICTION	U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	January 5, 2026
DOCKET	1:21-cv-00110-JLT-BAM
DISPOSITION	approved
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The parties submitted a stipulation and proposed order seeking an award of attorney fees and expenses under the Equal Access to Justice Act after Plaintiff prevailed in the civil action.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Linda Maria Pacheco v. Frank J. Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

- attorney fees
- administrative law
- civil procedure
- remedies

PRACTICE AREAS

- Social Security
- administrative law
- attorney fees
- civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should approve the parties' stipulation awarding Plaintiff \$7,500 in attorney fees and expenses under the Equal Access to Justice Act.
2. Whether the EAJA award should be made to Plaintiff, subject to potential payment to Plaintiff's attorney after consideration of assignment, offset, and Anti-Assignment Act requirements.

HOLDINGS

1. The court approved an award of \$7,500 in attorney fees and expenses to Plaintiff under the Equal Access to Justice Act, subject to the terms of the parties' stipulation.
2. The EAJA award is payable to Plaintiff, but may be made payable to Plaintiff's attorney if the Commissioner confirms the assignment, determines that Plaintiff has no debt subject to Treasury Offset Program withholding, and waives the Anti-Assignment Act requirements.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"IT IS ORDERED that fees and expenses in the amount of SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND 00/100 (\$7,500.00) as authorized by the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA), 28 U.S.C. § 2412(d), be awarded subject to the terms of the Stipulation." (Proposed order, lines 6-9)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff prevailed in the underlying Social Security action. The parties stipulated that Plaintiff was eligible for an EAJA award, including that her net worth did not exceed \$2,000,000 when the action was filed. They agreed to a \$7,500 fee and expense award, with payment and any assignment to counsel subject to Treasury Offset Program and Anti-Assignment Act requirements.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The parties agreed that Plaintiff should receive \$7,500 in EAJA fees and expenses and no costs under 28 U.S.C. § 1920. The district court approved the stipulation and ordered the award subject to its terms.

DISPOSITION

approved

CASES CITED

- Astrue v. Ratliff, 560 U.S. 586, 589, 130 S. Ct. 2521, 2528-29 (2010)

OPINION

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Ste 100 4 Fresno, CA 93711 Telephone: 559-439-9700 5 Facsimile: 559-439-9723 6 Email:
info@jonathanpena.com Attorney for Plaintiff, Linda Maria Pacheco 7 8 9 UNITED STATES
DISTRICT COURT 10 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA FRESNO
DIVISION 11 12 Linda Maria Pacheco, Case No. 1:21-cv-00110-JLT-BAM 13 Plaintiff,

STIPULATION FOR THE AWARD 14 AND PAYMENT OF ATTORNEY v. FEES AND
EXPENSES PURSUANT 15 TO THE EQUAL ACCESS TO 16 Frank J. Bisignano1, JUSTICE
ACT; |PROPOSED| ORDER COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL 17 SECURITY, 18 Defendant.

19 IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED by and between the parties through their 20 undersigned
counsel, subject to the approval of the Court, that Plaintiff be awarded 21 attorney fees and
expenses in the amount of SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED 22 AND 00/100 (\$7,500.00)
under the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA), 28 U.S.C. 23 § 2412(d), and costs in the amount of
ZERO dollars (\$0.00) under 28 U.S.C. §1920.

24 25 1 Frank J. Bisignano became the Commissioner of Social Security on May 7, 26 2025.
Pursuant to Rule 25(d) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Frank J. Bisignano should be
substituted for Leland Dudek as the defendant in this suit. No 27 further action need be taken to
continue this suit by reason of the last sentence of section 205(g) of the Social Security Act, 42
U.S.C. § 405(g).

1 This amount represents compensation for all legal services rendered on behalf of 2 Plaintiff by
counsel in connection with this civil action, in accordance with 28 U.S.C. 3 §§ 1920, 2412(d). 4
Plaintiff was the prevailing party in this matter and Plaintiff is an individual 5 whose net worth
does not exceed \$2,000,000 at the time the civil action was filed.

6 After the Court issues an order for EAJA fees to Plaintiff, the government will 7 consider the
matter of Plaintiff's assignment of EAJA fees to Plaintiff's attorney. 8 Under *Astrue v. Ratliff*, 130
S. Ct. 2521, 2528-29 (2010), EAJA fees awarded by this 9 Court belong to the Plaintiff and are
subject to offset under the Treasury Offset Program 10 (31 U.S.C. § 3716(c)(3)(B) (2006)).

Any EAJA fees should therefore be awarded to 11 Plaintiff and not to Plaintiff's attorney. If, after
receiving the Court's EAJA fee order, 12 the Commissioner (1) determines that Plaintiff has
assigned his right to EAJA fees to 13 his attorney; (2) determines that Plaintiff does not owe a debt
that is subject to offset 14 under the Treasury Offset Program, and (3) agrees to waive the
requirements of the 15 16 Anti-Assignment Act, then the EAJA fees will be made payable to
Plaintiff's attorney, 17 JONATHAN O. PEÑA-MANCINAS at the firm, PEÑA & BROMBERG,
PC.

18 However, if there is a debt owed under the Treasury Offset Program, the Commissioner 19
cannot agree to waive the requirements of the Anti-Assignment Act, and the remaining 20 EAJA
fees after offset will be paid by a check or electronic fund transfer (EFT) made 21 out to Plaintiff,
but delivered to Plaintiff's attorney, JONATHAN O. PEÑA- 22 MANCINAS at the firm, PEÑA &
BROMBERG, PC.

23 This stipulation constitutes a compromise settlement of Plaintiff's request for 24 EAJA attorney
fees, and does not constitute an admission of liability on the part of 25 Defendant under the EAJA

or otherwise. Payment of the agreed amount shall constitute a complete release from, and bar to, any and all claims that Plaintiff and/or Counsel 1 including Counsel's firm may have relating to EAJA attorney fees in connection with 2 this action.

3 The parties further agree that the EAJA award is without prejudice to the right of 4 Plaintiff's attorney to seek attorney fees pursuant to Social Security Act § 206(b), 42 U.S.C. § 406(b), subject to the offset provisions of the EAJA. See 28 U.S.C. § 6241(c)(1) (2006). 7 Respectfully submitted, 8 9 Dated: December 31, 2025 /s/ Jonathan O. Peña 10 JONATHAN O. PEÑA 11 Attorney for Plaintiff 12 Dated: December 31, 2025 ERIC GRANT 13 United States Attorney 14 MATHEW W. PILE Head of Program Litigation 1 15 Law & Policy 16 Social Security Administration 17 By: *_Tina Naicker 18 Tina Naicker Special Assistant U.S. Attorney 19 Attorneys for Defendant 20 (*Permission to use electronic signature obtained via email on December 31, 2025).

21 22 23 24 25 26 27 [PROPOSED] ORDER 3 Based upon the parties' Stipulation for the Award and Payment of Equal Access 4 || to Justice Act Fees and Expenses (the "Stipulation"), IT IS ORDERED that fees and expenses in the amount of SEVEN THOUSAND 7 || FIVE HUNDRED AND 00/100 (\$7,500.00) as authorized by the Equal Access to 8 || Justice Act (EAJA), 28 U.S.C. § 2412(d), be awarded subject to the terms of the ° Stipulation.

10 IT IS SO ORDERED. 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 _4-