

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Sylvia Sanchez, on behalf of minor R.L.Y. v. Commissioner of Social
Security

Sanchez v. Commissioner of Social Security · No. 1:25-cv-00861-HBK · Decided August 22, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California grants Sylvia Sanchez’s petition to be appointed guardian ad litem for minor plaintiff R.L.Y. in an action seeking judicial review of the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of disability benefits. The court finds that Sanchez is the minor’s grandmother and guardian, is familiar with the minor’s medical conditions, and presents no apparent conflict of interest.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Helena M. Barch-Kuchta
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	August 22, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00861-HBK
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff initiated an action seeking judicial review of a final decision of the Commissioner of Social Security and simultaneously petitioned for appointment of a guardian ad litem to represent the minor plaintiff.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; interlocutory procedural order appointing a guardian ad litem.

TOPICS

- guardian ad litem
- guardianship procedure
- civil procedure
- administrative law

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- Social Security benefits
- guardianship procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Sylvia Sanchez should be appointed guardian ad litem to represent minor plaintiff R.L.Y. in the Social Security action.
2. Whether the proposed guardian ad litem adequately satisfies the requirement to protect the minor's interests in the litigation.

HOLDINGS

1. The court granted the petition and appointed Sylvia Sanchez as guardian ad litem for R.L.Y., authorizing her to prosecute the action on the minor's behalf.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Appointment of a guardian ad litem is not a mere formality because the guardian “is authorized to act on behalf of his ward and may make all appropriate decisions in the course of specific litigation.””

“A “guardian ad litem need not possess any special qualifications,” but must “be truly dedicated to the best interests of the person on whose behalf he seeks to litigate.””

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The action seeks judicial review of a final decision denying R.L.Y.'s application for disability insurance benefits and Supplemental Security Income benefits under the Social Security Act. Sylvia Sanchez, the minor's grandmother and guardian, sought appointment as guardian ad litem. The court found that Sanchez was familiar with the minor's medical conditions and identified no apparent conflict of interest or other factor showing that appointment would not be in the minor's best interests.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Sylvia Sanchez filed the Social Security action on July 15, 2025, on behalf of minor R.L.Y. On the same day, she filed a petition seeking her appointment as guardian ad litem. The district court granted the petition and authorized Sanchez to prosecute the action on the minor's behalf.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- United States v. 30.64 Acres of Land, More or Less, Situated in Klickitat Cty., State of Wash., 795 F.2d 796, 805 (9th Cir. 1986)
- AT&T Mobility, LLC v. Yeager, 143 F. Supp. 3d 1042, 1053-54 (E.D. Cal. 2015)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 9 EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA 10 11 SYLVIA SANCHEZ, on behalf of minor Case No.: 1:25-cv-00861-HBK 12
R.L.Y., 13 Plaintiff, ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO 14 v. APPOINT GUARDIAN AD

LITEM 15 COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY, (Doc. No. 3) 16 Defendant. 17 18 19 On July 15, 2025, Sylvia Sanchez initiated this action on behalf of minor Plaintiff R.L.Y., 20 seeking judicial review of a final decision of the Commissioner of Social Security denying the 21 minor's application for disability insurance benefits and social security income benefits under the 22 Social Security Act.

(Doc. No. 1). On the same day, Sylvia Sanchez, through counsel, filed a 23 Petition for Appointment of Guardian Ad Litem. (Doc. No. 3, "Petition"). Petitioner seeks 24 appointment of Sylvia Sanchez as guardian ad litem for R.L.Y.

For the reasons set forth below, 25 the Court grants the Petition. 26 27 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 17 provides for a representative of a minor or an 28 incompetent person to sue or defend on a minor or an incompetent's behalf. Fed. R. Civ. P. 17(c). Similarly, this Court's Local Rule 202(a) in pertinent part, states: 2 Upon commencement of an action or upon initial appearance in defense of an action by or on behalf of a minor... the attorney representing the minor or 3 incompetent person shall present... a motion for the appointment of a guardian ad 4 litem by the Court, or... a showing satisfactory to the Court that no such appointment is necessary to ensure adequate representation of the minor or 5 incompetent person.

6 Appointment of a guardian ad litem is not a mere formality because the guardian "is 7 || authorized to act on behalf of his ward and may make all appropriate decisions in the course of 8 || specific litigation." *United States v. 30.64 Acres of Land, More or Less, Situated in Klickitat 9 Cty., State of Wash.*, 795 F.2d 796, 805 (9th Cir. 1986). A "guardian ad litem need not possess 10 || any special qualifications," but must "be truly dedicated to the best interests of the person on 11 || whose behalf he seeks to litigate." *AT&T Mobility, LLC v. Yeager*, 143 F.Supp.3d 1042, 1053- 12 || 54(E.D.

Cal. 2015) (citations omitted). The Court has considered the application of Sylvia 13 || Sanchez for appointment as guardian ad litem for R.L.Y., a minor. Sylvia Sanchez is not a party 14 || to the instant action. (See generally Doc. No. 1). She is the grandmother and guardian of R.L.Y. 15 and is familiar with the minor's medical conditions. (Doc No. 3 at 1-2).

The Court does not find 16 || any apparent conflict of interest or any other factors that demonstrate such appointment is not in 17 || the best interests of the minor Plaintiff. 18 Accordingly, it is ORDERED: 19 1. The Petition for Appointment of Guardian Ad Litem (Doc. No. 3) is GRANTED. 20 2. Sylvia Sanchez is appointed as guardian ad litem for R.L.Y. and is authorized to 21 prosecute this action on the minor's behalf.

22 |! Dated: __August 21, 2025 Mb». Th Bares Bact ☐☐ 4 HELENA M. BARCH-KUCHTA
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE 25 JUDGE 26 27 28

