

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
OHIO, EASTERN DIVISION

Aieshya Kay Bellamy v. Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina, et
al.

Bellamy · No. 4:25-CV-775 · Decided March 25, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio held that it lacked personal jurisdiction over Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina and the individual defendants in an employment discrimination action brought by Aieshya Kay Bellamy. The court also determined that venue was improper in Ohio and transferred the action to the District of South Carolina under 28 U.S.C. § 1406(a).

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Benita Y. Pearson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division
DECIDED	March 25, 2026
DOCKET	4:25-CV-775
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 12(b)(2) and 12(b)(3) to dismiss for lack of personal jurisdiction and improper venue, or alternatively to transfer the action under 28 U.S.C. § 1406(a).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(2) motion resolved on written submissions, the plaintiff bears the burden of making a prima facie showing of personal jurisdiction, with factual conflicts and reasonable inferences generally resolved in the plaintiff's favor. On a Rule 12(b)(3) motion, the plaintiff bears the burden of showing by a preponderance of the evidence that venue is proper; the court may consider facts outside the complaint and resolve factual conflicts in the plaintiff's favor.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE

unpublished district court memorandum opinion and order;
precedential status not indicated

TOPICS

personal jurisdiction

venue

civil procedure

employment discrimination

title vii

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court could exercise general or specific personal jurisdiction over the South Carolina corporate and individual defendants.
2. Whether plaintiff's remote work from Ohio, or contacts of Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina's affiliates and subsidiaries, established specific personal jurisdiction.
3. Whether venue was proper in the Northern District of Ohio under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) or Title VII's venue provision, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-5(f)(3).
4. Whether the action should be transferred to the District of South Carolina under 28 U.S.C. § 1406(a) rather than dismissed.

HOLDINGS

1. The court lacked general personal jurisdiction over all defendants because the record did not show that Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina or its affiliates and subsidiaries were incorporated or headquartered in Ohio, and the individual defendants were South Carolina residents.
2. Plaintiff failed to establish specific personal jurisdiction over Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina based on contacts of its affiliates and subsidiaries.
3. Plaintiff's remote work from Ohio did not establish specific personal jurisdiction over the defendants.
4. The court lacked personal jurisdiction over the individual defendants because plaintiff did not show that they purposefully availed themselves of Ohio law or engaged in the alleged discriminatory conduct in Ohio.
5. Venue was improper in the Northern District of Ohio.
6. When venue is improper, transfer to the District of South Carolina was appropriate in the interest of justice rather than dismissal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Although she worked remotely from her home in Ohio, for all intents and purposes, Plaintiff worked in South Carolina, the alleged discrimination occurred in South Carolina, and, as such, the District Court of South Carolina is the proper venue.”

“As in Carpenter, Plaintiff’s telework arrangement with Defendants constitutes a “unilateral decision” on her part that is insufficient to support specific personal jurisdiction.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, an African American woman, was hired by Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina in South Carolina in 2017 and later relocated to Ohio, where she worked remotely. She alleged race- and sex-based discrimination, retaliation after taking FMLA leave, hostile work environment, and constructive discharge arising principally from promotion decisions, work assignments, and comments by South Carolina-based supervisors and decision-makers. The employer, supervisors, customers, employment records, and alleged discriminatory decisions were primarily located in South Carolina, and plaintiff did not show that she provided services directly to Ohio-based customers or that the challenged decisions occurred in Ohio.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed an employment-discrimination action in the Northern District of Ohio under Title VII and Ohio law. Defendants, all South Carolina residents, moved to dismiss or transfer. The court concluded that it lacked personal jurisdiction over all defendants and that venue was improper, and transferred the action to the District of South Carolina under 28 U.S.C. § 1406(a).

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The action is to be transferred to the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1406(a).

CASES CITED

- Welsh v. Gibbs, 631 F.2d 436, 438-39 (6th Cir. 1980)
- Weller v. Cromwell Oil Co., 504 F.2d 927, 930 (6th Cir. 1974)
- Theunissen v. Matthews, 935 F.2d 1454, 1458-59 (6th Cir. 1991)
- Air Products & Controls, Inc. v. Safetech International, Inc., 503 F.3d 544, 549-50 (6th Cir. 2007)
- American Greetings Corp. v. Cohn, 839 F.2d 1164, 1169 (6th Cir. 1988)
- Gronski v. InContact, Inc., 774 F. Supp. 3d 873, 880 (E.D. Mich. 2025)
- Kerry Steel, Inc. v. Paragon Industries, Inc., 106 F.3d 147, 149 (6th Cir. 1997)
- Tobien v. Nationwide General Insurance Co., 133 F.4th 613, 621 (6th Cir. 2025)
- Harrison Prosthetic Cradle Inc. v. Roe Dental Lab., Inc., 608 F. Supp. 3d 541, 546 (N.D. Ohio 2022)
- Audi AG & Volkswagen of America, Inc. v. Izumi, 204 F. Supp. 2d 1014, 1017 (E.D. Mich. 2002)
- IHF Ltd. v. Myra Bag, 391 F. Supp. 3d 760, 767 (N.D. Ohio 2019)
- Mid-West Materials, Inc. v. Tougher Industries, Inc., 484 F. Supp. 2d 726, 729-30 (N.D. Ohio 2007)

- *Calkins v. Danaher Corp.*, 739 F. Supp. 3d 615, 626 (N.D. Ohio 2024)
- *J.M. Smucker Co. v. Hormel Food Corp.*, 526 F. Supp. 3d 294, 300 (N.D. Ohio 2021)
- *Blessing v. Chandrasekhar*, 988 F.3d 889, 904 (6th Cir. 2021)
- *Walden v. Fiore*, *Walden v. Fiore*, 571 U.S. 277, 278, 284-85 (2014)
- *Ford Motor Co. v. Montana Eighth Judicial District Court*, 592 U.S. 351, 359-62 (2021)
- *Goodyear Dunlop Tires Operations, S.A. v. Brown*, 564 U.S. 915, 919, 924 (2011)
- *Flake v. Schrader-Bridgeport International, Inc.*, 538 F. App'x 604, 617 (6th Cir. 2013)
- *Bird v. Parsons*, 289 F.3d 865, 873, 875 (6th Cir. 2002)
- *Shaffer v. Heitner*, 433 U.S. 186, 204 (1977)
- *S. Machinery Co. v. Mohasco Industries, Inc.*, 401 F.2d 374, 381 (6th Cir. 1968)
- *Maclin v. Reliable Reports of Texas, Inc.*, 314 F. Supp. 3d 845, 849 (N.D. Ohio 2018)
- *Calphalon Corp. v. Rowlette*, 228 F.3d 718, 722 (6th Cir. 2000)
- *Sullivan v. LG Chem, Ltd.*, 79 F.4th 651, 671-72 (6th Cir. 2023)
- *Phillips v. Persons Services Corp.*, 2021 WL 5277481, at *4 (W.D. Tenn. Mar. 31, 2021)
- *MAG IAS Holdings, Inc. v. Schmückle*, 854 F.3d 894, 903 (6th Cir. 2017)
- *Burger King Corp. v. Rudzewicz*, *Burger King Corp. v. Rudzewicz*, 471 U.S. 462, 475, 478 (1985)
- *Hall v. Rag-O-Rama, LLC*, 359 F. Supp. 3d 499, 511 (E.D. Ky. 2019)
- *Winner v. Tryko Partners, LLC*, 333 F. Supp. 3d 250, 260 (W.D.N.Y. 2018)
- *Fields v. Sickel Cell Disease Association of America, Inc.*, 376 F. Supp. 3d 647, 653 (E.D.N.C. 2018), *aff'd*, 770 F. App'x 77 (4th Cir. 2019)
- *Perry v. National Association of Home Builders of United States*, 2020 WL 5759766, at *5 (D. Md. Sept. 28, 2020)