

COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO, EIGHTH APPELLATE DISTRICT,
CUYAHOGA COUNTY

Jones v. Ohio

Jones, 2026 Ohio 934 (Ohio Ct. App. 2026) · No. No. 115291 · Decided March 19, 2026

SUMMARY

The Eighth District Court of Appeals of Ohio affirmed the dismissal of Kenneth W. Jones’s complaint against the State of Ohio, Cuyahoga County, and the City of Cleveland. The court held that claims for monetary damages against the State belonged within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Ohio Court of Claims and that the County and City were protected by political-subdivision immunity; the remaining assignments of error were rejected or deemed moot.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eighth Appellate District, Cuyahoga County
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Mary J. Boyle; Mary J. Boyle, Presiding Judge; Anita Laster Mays, Judge; Kathleen Ann Keough, Judge
JURISDICTION	Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eighth Appellate District, Cuyahoga County
DECIDED	March 19, 2026
DOCKET	No. 115291
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff appealed the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas' dismissal of his complaint against the State of Ohio and Cuyahoga County under Civ.R. 12(B)(1) and Civ.R. 12(B)(6), and its grant of the City of Cleveland's Civ.R. 12(C) motion for judgment on the pleadings.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	De novo review applies to rulings on motions under Civ.R. 12(B)(1), Civ.R. 12(B)(6), and Civ.R. 12(C). The court affords no deference to the trial court and independently reviews the record.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	Kenneth W. Jones v. State of Ohio, Cuyahoga County, City of Cleveland

TOPICS

subject matter jurisdiction

motions to dismiss

motion for judgment on the pleadings

municipal liability

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PRACTICE AREAS

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the trial court had subject-matter jurisdiction over Jones's claim for money damages against the State of Ohio.
2. Whether Cuyahoga County and the City of Cleveland were immune from Jones's claims under Ohio's Political Subdivision Tort Liability Act.
3. Whether the trial court erred by dismissing the action without allowing discovery, applying joinder rules, addressing alleged constitutional violations, or separating principals from agents.
4. Whether the appellate court could disregard assignments of error that failed to comply with App.R. 16(A).

HOLDINGS

1. The Court of Claims has exclusive original jurisdiction over civil actions seeking money damages against the State of Ohio, so the common pleas court properly dismissed Jones's money-damages claims against the State for lack of subject-matter jurisdiction.
2. Cuyahoga County and the City of Cleveland were entitled to political-subdivision immunity because Jones did not establish that any exception in R.C. 2744.02(B) applied to his claims, and intentional tort claims are not covered by a specific exception.
3. The court could disregard assignments of error that failed to comply with App.R. 16(A), and the remaining assignments were properly disregarded because they either raised arguments for the first time on appeal, failed to demonstrate constitutional violations, or were rendered moot by the disposition of the fifth assignment.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Because Jones requested money damages from the State of Ohio in a civil action, we find the trial court correctly determined that it lacked subject-matter jurisdiction over his claims. Jones’s claims for money damages against the State belong in the Court of Claims.” (¶ 25)

“The process of determining whether a political subdivision is immune from liability involves a three-tiered analysis.” (¶ 26)

“Therefore, the trial court properly found that governmental immunity applies to the County and the City and dismissed Jones’s complaint.” (¶ 28)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Jones was prosecuted for his wife's murder approximately 38 years before this civil action; the aggravated-murder charges were ultimately dismissed. In March 2025, he sued the State of Ohio, Cuyahoga County, and the City of Cleveland based primarily on a 1987 death-certificate statement that his wife was "stabbed by husband." He alleged civil-rights violations, defamation, loss of consortium, conspiracy, criminal damaging to his vehicle, and public-records violations, and sought damages exceeding \$25 million.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Jones filed a pro se complaint seeking more than \$25 million in damages based on allegations including defamation, civil-rights violations, intentional torts, and public-records violations arising from a statement on his wife's 1987 death certificate. The State and County moved to dismiss, and the City moved for judgment on the pleadings. The trial court dismissed the claims against the State for lack of subject-matter jurisdiction and dismissed the claims against the County and City based on political-subdivision immunity. The appellate court affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Jones v. United States, 2003 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 28483 (N.D. Ohio Oct. 15, 2003)
- State ex rel. Everhart v. McIntosh, 2007-Ohio-4798, ¶ 8
- Jones v. United States, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 118578, *3-5 (N.D. Ohio Aug. 21, 2012)
- Jones v. United States, 949 F. Supp. 2d 50, 54 (D.D.C. 2013)
- In re Jones, 2020 U.S. App. LEXIS 39048 (6th Cir. Dec. 11, 2020)
- Jones v. United States, 2021 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 257313 (D.D.C. Oct. 25, 2021)
- Jones v. United States, 2022 U.S. App. LEXIS 28027 (D.C. Cir. Oct. 6, 2022)
- Morrison v. Steiner, 32 Ohio St.2d 86 (1972), paragraph one of the syllabus
- State v. Hudson, 2022-Ohio-1435, ¶ 22
- Pratts v. Hurley, 2004-Ohio-1980, ¶ 21
- State ex rel. Hanson v. Guernsey Cty. Bd. of Commrs., 65 Ohio St.3d 545, 548 (1992)
- Assn. for the Defense of the Washington Local School Dist. v. Kiger, 42 Ohio St.3d 116, 117 (1989)
- State ex rel. Williams Ford Sales, Inc. v. Connor, 72 Ohio St.3d 111, 113 (1995)
- State ex rel. Martines v. Cleveland City School Dist. Bd. of Edn., 70 Ohio St.3d 416 (1994)
- State ex rel. Midwest Pride IV, Inc. v. Pontious, 75 Ohio St.3d 565, 570 (1996)
- Lin v. Gatehouse Constr. Co., 84 Ohio App.3d 96, 99 (8th Dist. 1992)
- State ex rel. Ohio Civ. Serv. Emp. Assn. v. Ohio, 2016-Ohio-478, ¶ 12
- Groza-Vance v. Vance, 2005-Ohio-3815, ¶ 13 (10th Dist.)
- Perrysburg Twp. v. Rossford, 2004-Ohio-4362, ¶ 5
- Cincinnati v. Beretta U.S.A. Corp., 2002-Ohio-2480

- Martin v. Accel Schools Ohio, 2025-Ohio-3150, ¶ 15 (8th Dist.)
- Johnson v. Cleveland City School Dist., 2011-Ohio-2778, ¶ 53 (8th Dist.)
- Conley v. Shearer, 64 Ohio St.3d 284, 286 (1992)
- Boggs v. State, 8 Ohio St.3d 15, 16-17 (1983)
- Colbert v. Cleveland, 2003-Ohio-3319, ¶¶ 7-9
- Greene Cty. Agricultural Soc. v. Liming, 89 Ohio St.3d 551, 556-557 (2000)
- Cater v. Cleveland, 83 Ohio St.3d 24, 28 (1998)
- Yankovitz v. Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Auth., 2023-Ohio-2584, ¶ 39 (8th Dist.)
- Fried v. Friends Breakthrough Schools, 2020-Ohio-4215, ¶ 24 (8th Dist.)
- Wingfield v. Cleveland, 2014-Ohio-2772, ¶ 9 (8th Dist.)
- Walsh v. Mayfield, 2009-Ohio-2377, ¶ 12 (8th Dist.)
- Chase v. Brooklyn City School Dist., 141 Ohio App.3d 9, 19 (8th Dist. 2001)
- Hoffman v. Cheselka, 2020-Ohio-3594, ¶ 14 (8th Dist.)
- Cawley JV, L.L.C. v. Wall St. Recycling, L.L.C., 2015-Ohio-1846, ¶ 17
- Schade v. Carnegie Body Co., 70 Ohio St.2d 207, 210 (1982)