

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
TENNESSEE, GREENEVILLE DIVISION

Troy J. Fox, et al. v. Cocke County, Tennessee, et al.

Case No. 2:24-CV-88 · No. 2:24-CV-88 · Decided May 11, 2026

SUMMARY

This Report and Recommendation addresses a joint motion to approve a settlement for the benefit of a minor in an action alleging civil rights and state-law violations. The court recommends approval of a \$60,000 settlement, including attorney fees and expenses, direct payments to the plaintiffs' counsel, and a structured annuity benefiting the minor child. The magistrate judge concludes that the settlement is fair, reasonable, and in the minor's best interest.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, Greeneville Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cynthia Richardson Wyrick, United States Magistrate Judge
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, Greeneville Division
DECIDED	May 11, 2026
DOCKET	2:24-CV-88
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The parties jointly moved for approval of a settlement benefiting a minor plaintiff. The motion was referred to the magistrate judge under 28 U.S.C. § 636 for a report and recommendation, and the court held a statutory hearing concerning the proposed settlement.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The magistrate judge reviewed the proposed settlement for fairness, reasonableness, and consistency with the best interests of the minor. Objections to the report and recommendation are subject to district-court review under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1) and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 72(b).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential report and recommendation; not a final district-court disposition in the provided text.

PARTIES

Troy J. Fox, Jeanene Fox, R.F., a minor v. Cocke County, Tennessee,
Town of Parrottsville, other defendants

TOPICS

guardianship procedure

section 1983

attorney fees

civil procedure

remedies

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

minor settlement approval

guardianship

attorney fees

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the proposed \$60,000 settlement of the minor plaintiff's civil-rights and state-law claims was fair and reasonable.
2. Whether approval of the proposed settlement was in the best interests of the minor plaintiff under the applicable Tennessee statutes.
3. Whether the proposed allocation of settlement proceeds among attorney fees, litigation expenses, immediate payments, and a structured annuity should be approved.

HOLDINGS

1. The proposed settlement was fair and reasonable and in the best interest of the minor plaintiff; the magistrate judge therefore recommended granting the joint motion and binding the parties to the settlement terms.
2. The court recommended approval of the proposed distribution, including \$22,200 in attorney fees, \$4,862.75 in litigation-expense reimbursement, \$5,637.25 to the guardians for the minor's care, and the remaining settlement benefits provided through immediate payments and a structured annuity.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“the Court finds the settlement agreement to be fair and reasonable and in the best interest of the minor plaintiff.”

“the undersigned RECOMMENDS that the Joint Motion to Approve Settlement for Benefit of Minor [Doc. 74] be GRANTED, and that the parties be bound by the terms set forth therein”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

R.F. was identified as the only child and next of kin of the decedent, who was unmarried and left no assets. Plaintiffs Troy and Jeanene Fox, the decedent's parents and R.F.'s grandparents, acted as the minor's lawful guardians and testified that their only financial assistance in raising R.F. came from a Social Security Administration payment. The proposed settlement required defendants to pay \$60,000, including immediate payments, attorney fees and expenses, and a structured annuity intended to provide future payments to R.F.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs asserted claims on behalf of minor R.F. under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and state law. The parties reached a \$60,000 settlement, filed a joint motion and supporting memorandum, and appeared at a hearing on May 6, 2026. The magistrate judge recommended that the motion and proposed settlement be approved, subject to the district court's consideration of objections and adoption of the recommendation.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- United States v. Branch, 537 F.3d 582 (6th Cir. 2008)
- Thomas v. Arn, 474 U.S. 140, 155 (1985)
- Mira v. Marshall, 806 F.2d 636, 637 (6th Cir. 1986)
- Smith v. Detroit Federation of Teachers, 829 F.2d 1370, 1373 (6th Cir. 1987)