

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Kimberly Mary Zapalac v. Commissioner of Social Security

Zapalac · No. 1:25-cv-01264-CDB (SS) · Decided September 26, 2025

SUMMARY

The court granted Kimberly Mary Zapalac’s application to proceed in forma pauperis in her action seeking judicial review of the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of disability benefits. The court found the complaint timely and cognizable under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) and directed the Clerk to issue a summons and related scheduling and reassignment documents.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	September 26, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-01264-CDB (SS)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff filed an action seeking judicial review of the Commissioner's final decision denying disability benefits and applied to proceed in forma pauperis. The district court granted the application, found the complaint cognizable and timely, and directed issuance of summons and case-management documents.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	For in forma pauperis screening, the court must dismiss a complaint that is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant. At this initial stage, the court determined that the complaint stated a cognizable claim for review of the Commissioner's decision.
PARTIES	Kimberly Mary Zapalac v. Commissioner of Social Security

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff satisfied the requirements to proceed in forma pauperis under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a).
2. Whether the complaint was subject to dismissal under the in forma pauperis screening requirements.
3. Whether the complaint timely and plausibly stated a claim for judicial review of the Commissioner's final Social Security decision.

4. Whether the court had jurisdiction over the action under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiff satisfied the requirements of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a) and was entitled to proceed in forma pauperis.
2. The complaint was not subject to dismissal at the initial screening stage because it stated a cognizable claim for review of the Commissioner's administrative decision.
3. The complaint was timely and the court had jurisdiction under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) because Plaintiff filed within the period stated in the Appeals Council's notice and alleged residence within the district.
4. The complaint satisfied the threshold pleading requirement for this Social Security action by stating a cognizable claim for review of the administrative decision.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“When a party seeks to proceed in forma pauperis, the Court is required to review the complaint and shall dismiss the complaint, or portion thereof, if it is “frivolous, malicious or fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or ... seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.” (1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff sought disability insurance benefits and supplemental income from the Social Security Administration. An Administrative Law Judge denied her claim, and the Appeals Council denied review on August 6, 2025. Plaintiff, who alleged residence in Tulare County, California, filed a federal complaint on September 24, 2025, seeking judicial review and applied to proceed without prepaying the filing fee.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Appeals Council denied Plaintiff's request for review on August 6, 2025, making the Administrative Law Judge's denial of benefits the Commissioner's final decision. Plaintiff filed this action on September 24, 2025, within the period allowed by the Appeals Council's notice, and submitted an application to proceed in forma pauperis. The court granted the application and ordered the Clerk to issue a summons, scheduling order, and consent or reassignment documents.

DISPOSITION

other