

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Matthew Beckett v. Dept. State Hospitals-Ash, et al.

Beckett · No. 2:25-cv-01862-VBF-JC · Decided January 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The Central District of California dismissed Matthew Beckett’s pro se civil rights action against the California Department of State Hospitals–Atascadero State Hospital and other defendants. The court adopted a magistrate judge’s prior determination that the complaint was deficient and dismissed the action based on Beckett’s failure to amend, comply with the court’s order, or otherwise prosecute the case. The dismissal was entered after consideration of the applicable failure-to-prosecute factors.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Valerie Baker Fairbank
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	January 13, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-01862-VBF-JC
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff filed a pro se civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and proceeded in forma pauperis. After a magistrate judge dismissed the complaint with leave to amend, plaintiff failed to amend, seek dismissal, state an intent to stand on the complaint, seek an extension, or object. The district court reviewed and adopted the magistrate judge's order and dismissed the action for failure to prosecute and failure to comply with a court order.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The district court reviewed the magistrate judge's nondispositive order dismissing the complaint with leave to amend and independently applied the factors governing sua sponte dismissal for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with court orders.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

PARTIES

Matthew Beckett v. Dept. State Hospitals-Ash, California Department of State Hospitals—Atascadero State Hospital, California Office of Patient Rights, Gavin Newsom, Other named defendants

TOPICS

civil procedure pleadings section 1983 eleventh amendment immunity

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure civil rights constitutional law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the district court could review and adopt the magistrate judge's order dismissing the complaint with leave to amend before dismissing the entire action.
2. Whether dismissal was warranted under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) and the court's inherent authority because plaintiff failed to comply with the order and unreasonably failed to prosecute.
3. Whether the magistrate judge's initial dismissal with leave to amend adequately notified plaintiff of the pleading deficiencies and provided an opportunity to amend effectively.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court must review the magistrate judge's prior order dismissing a complaint with leave to amend before dismissing the entire action; the court completed that review and adopted the October Order.
2. Dismissal was warranted because plaintiff unreasonably failed to prosecute and failed to comply with the court's order despite notice of the deficiencies, an opportunity to amend or otherwise respond, and a warning that noncompliance could result in dismissal.
3. The October Order adequately and properly notified plaintiff of the deficiencies in the complaint and afforded him an opportunity to amend effectively.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In determining whether to dismiss an action for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with court orders, a district court must consider several factors” (3)

“The Court has considered the five factors discussed above – the public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation, the Court’s interest in managing the docket, the risk of prejudice to the Defendants, the public policy favoring disposition of cases on their merits, and the availability of less drastic alternatives.” (4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Beckett filed a pro se § 1983 complaint against the California Department of State Hospitals—Atascadero State Hospital, the California Office of Patient Rights, Governor Gavin Newsom, and other individuals. The magistrate judge found that the complaint violated Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 8 and 10(b), was vague and

conclusory, and included claims barred at least in part by the Eleventh Amendment. After receiving an opportunity to amend or otherwise respond, Beckett took no qualifying action by the deadline.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Beckett filed the complaint on March 3, 2025. On October 7, 2025, the magistrate judge screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), identified pleading deficiencies and an Eleventh Amendment bar to at least one claim, and dismissed the complaint with leave to amend. Beckett did not file an amended complaint or otherwise comply with the October Order. The district court reviewed the October Order and dismissed the action.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Branch v. Umphenour, 936 F.3d 994, 1004 (9th Cir. 2019)
- Williams v. King, 875 F.3d 500, 504 (9th Cir. 2017)
- McKeever v. Block, 932 F.2d 795, 797-798 (9th Cir. 1991)
- Bastidas v. Chappell, 791 F.3d 1155, 1162 (9th Cir. 2015)
- Hunt v. Pliler, 384 F.3d 1118, 1124 (9th Cir. 2004)
- Link v. Wabash Railroad Co., 370 U.S. 626, 629-633 (1962)
- Ferdik v. Bonzelet, 963 F.2d 1258, 1260-1261 (9th Cir.), cert. denied, 506 U.S. 915 (1992)
- Edwards v. Marin Park, Inc., 356 F.3d 1058, 1065 (9th Cir. 2004)
- In re Eisen, 31 F.3d 1447, 1451 (9th Cir. 1994)
- Hernandez v. City of El Monte, 138 F.3d 393, 399 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Anderson v. Air West, Inc., 542 F.2d 522, 524 (9th Cir. 1976)
- Yourish v. California Amplifier, 191 F.3d 983, 989, 992 (9th Cir. 1999)