

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

McDonald v. Jones

McDonald · No. 2:24-cv-2545-JDP (P) · Decided May 12, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California dismisses Jeffrey D. McDonald’s first amended complaint with leave to amend. The court holds that a pro se plaintiff cannot prosecute claims on behalf of other inmates and directs him either to file a second amended complaint or voluntarily dismiss the action. The court also recommends denying his motion for a preliminary injunction because he has not pleaded a colorable claim and therefore cannot show a likelihood of success on the merits.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jeremy D. Peterson, United States Magistrate Judge
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	May 12, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-2545-JDP (P)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff, a state inmate proceeding pro se, filed a first amended prisoner civil-rights complaint and a motion for preliminary injunction. The magistrate judge screened the complaint, dismissed it for failure to state a claim with leave to amend, and recommended denial of the motion for preliminary injunctive relief.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e), the court must screen an in forma pauperis complaint and dismiss claims that are frivolous, malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek monetary relief from an immune defendant. A complaint must contain sufficient factual matter to state a plausible claim under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2). Preliminary injunctive relief is evaluated under the four Winter factors, with a higher standard for mandatory injunctions.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district-court order and findings and recommendations

TOPICS

pleadings

injunctions

prisoners rights

civil rights

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

prisoner civil rights

constitutional law

equitable relief

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether a pro se prisoner may prosecute constitutional claims on behalf of other inmates or maintain a class action.
2. Whether the first amended complaint stated a cognizable claim under the pleading and prisoner-screening standards.
3. Whether plaintiff was entitled to preliminary injunctive relief when the complaint did not plead a colorable claim and plaintiff therefore could not show a likelihood of success on the merits.

HOLDINGS

1. A pro se plaintiff may prosecute only his own claims and may not bring claims on behalf of other inmates or prosecute a class action for them.
2. The first amended complaint failed to state a claim and was dismissed, but plaintiff was granted leave to amend.
3. Plaintiff's motion for preliminary injunctive relief was recommended for denial because he had not pleaded a colorable claim and therefore could not establish a likelihood of success on the merits.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"A complaint must contain a short and plain statement that plaintiff is entitled to relief, Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a) (2), and provide "enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face,"" (at 1)

"The complaint must be dismissed because plaintiff, proceeding pro se, can only prosecute claims on his own behalf." (at 3)

"A preliminary injunction is 'an extraordinary and drastic remedy, one that should not be granted unless the movant, by a clear showing, carries the burden of persuasion.'" (at 4)

"Nonetheless, "federal courts must not shrink from their obligation to enforce the constitutional rights of all persons, including prisoners," and must not "allow constitutional violations to continue simply because a remedy would involve intrusion into the realm of prison administration.'" (at 5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Jeffrey D. McDonald, a state inmate proceeding pro se, alleged that Sergeant M. Moreno retaliated against him and other inmates, chilled their ability to file grievances, and filed false Rules Violations Reports. He also

alleged discrimination based on race, religion, and sexual identity, and due-process violations arising from allegedly false reports that prolonged the incarceration of certain inmates. McDonald sought to represent thirty-eight other inmates and requested an injunction removing Moreno from work in the EI-unit at California Health Care Facility.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff attempted to bring constitutional claims on his own behalf and on behalf of thirty-eight other inmates. The court screened the first amended complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e), concluded that a pro se plaintiff cannot prosecute claims for other inmates, dismissed the complaint with leave to amend, and recommended denial of the preliminary-injunction motion. The matter was submitted to an assigned district judge for review under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009)
- Kobold v. Good Samaritan Reg'l Med. Ctr., 832 F.3d 1024, 1038 (9th Cir. 2016)
- Nagrampa v. MailCoups, Inc., 469 F.3d 1257, 1264 n.2 (9th Cir. 2006) (en banc)
- Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972) (per curiam)
- Hayes v. Idaho Corr. Ctr., 849 F.3d 1204, 1208 (9th Cir. 2017)
- Bruns v. Nat'l Credit Union Admin., 122 F.3d 1251, 1257 (9th Cir. 1997)
- Ivey v. Bd. of Regents, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)
- Simon v. Hartford Life, Inc., 546 F.3d 661, 664 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Welch v. Terhune, 11 F. App'x 747, 747 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Lacey v. Maricopa Cnty., 693 F.3d 896, 907 n.1 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc)
- Lopez v. Brewer, 680 F.3d 1068, 1072 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Mazurek v. Armstrong, 520 U.S. 968, 972 (1997) (per curiam)
- Winter v. Natural Res. Def. Council, Inc., 555 U.S. 7, 20, 24 (2008)
- Porretti v. Dzurenda, 11 F.4th 1037, 1047 (9th Cir. 2021)
- Hernandez v. Sessions, 872 F.3d 976, 999 (9th Cir. 2017)
- Marlyn Nutraceuticals, Inc. v. Mucos Pharma GmbH & Co., 571 F.3d 873, 879 (9th Cir. 2009)
- Gilmore v. People of the State of Cal., 220 F.3d 987, 999 (9th Cir. 2000)
- Thomas v. Chu, No. 3:20-cv-00245-GPC-BGS, 2020 WL 5408944, at *10 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 9, 2020)
- Turner v. Duncan, 158 F.3d 449, 455 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Martinez v. Yist, 951 F.2d 1153 (9th Cir. 1991)

