

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF UTAH,
CENTRAL DIVISION

Tyler Brandon Defa v. Duchesne County, et al.

Defa v. Duchesne County · No. 2:25-cv-00528-TS-CMR · Decided May 1, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Utah denied pro se Plaintiff Tyler Brandon Defa’s motion to stay his civil action against Duchesne County and other defendants. The court concluded that the plaintiff’s reliance on a pending Utah state criminal case was moot after the Utah Supreme Court denied certiorari and that his incarceration, indigence, and limited resources did not provide sufficient grounds for a stay. The motion was denied without prejudice.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Utah, Central Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cecilia M. Romero
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Utah, Central Division
DECIDED	May 1, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-00528-TS-CMR
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved to stay this federal civil-rights action pending his incarceration-related difficulties and proceedings in a state criminal case. The district court denied the motion without prejudice.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The decision whether to stay proceedings is committed to the court’s judgment and discretion, requiring a balance of competing interests.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Tyler Brandon Defa v. Duchesne County, et al.

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- section 1983
- criminal procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- civil rights
- federal courts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff demonstrated sufficient grounds for a stay based on his incarceration, limited resources, indigency, and mail delays.
2. Whether the pendency of Plaintiff's state criminal case warranted a stay under the Colorado River abstention doctrine or the court's inherent authority to stay proceedings.

HOLDINGS

1. The request for a stay based on the pendency of Plaintiff's state criminal case was moot because the Utah Supreme Court had denied a writ of certiorari in that case.
2. General assertions that incarceration, indigency, limited resources, and delayed mail require more time or resources do not, without sufficient supporting information, establish grounds for staying the action.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Reaching such a determination as to whether or not to stay a matter “calls for the exercise of judgment, which must weigh competing interests and maintain an even balance.”” (Legal Standard)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleges that a confrontation at a public saloon resulted in his arrest, incarceration, and prosecution, and he asserts eleven causes of action arising from those events. While incarcerated in Montana, Plaintiff sought a stay based on limited resources, indigency, delays in receiving mail, and a then-pending state criminal matter. The Utah Supreme Court denied a writ of certiorari in that state matter while the federal motion was pending.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed the action on July 1, 2025, alleging eleven causes of action arising from a confrontation, arrest, incarceration, and prosecution. After entry of a scheduling order, Plaintiff moved for a stay. While the motion was pending, the Utah Supreme Court denied a writ of certiorari in Plaintiff's state criminal case. The court denied the stay without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Pet Milk Co. v. Ritter, 323 F.2d 586, 588 (10th Cir. 1963)
- Matrix Grp., LLC v. Innerlight Holdings, Inc., 2012 WL 5397118, at *4–5 (D. Utah Nov. 5, 2012)
- Landis v. North American Co., 299 U.S. 248, 254 (1936)
- Gale v. Brinker International Payroll Co., 2010 WL 3835215, at *1 (D. Utah Sept. 29, 2010)
- Sykes v. LivaNova Deutschland GMBH, 2018 WL 286791, at *1 (D. Colo. Jan. 4, 2018)
- St. Louis Baptist Temple, Inc. v. Fed. Deposit Ins. Corp., 605 F.2d 1169, 1172 (10th Cir. 1979)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF UTAH, CENTRAL DIVISION
DEFA, MEMORANDUM DECISION AND ORDER DENYING [22] PLAINTIFF’S Plaintiff,
MOTION TO STAY vs. Case No. 2:25-cv-00528-TS-CMR DUCHESNE COUNTY, et al., District
Judge Ted Stewart Defendants. Chief Magistrate Judge Cecilia M. Romero This matter was
referred to the undersigned pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(A) (ECF 13).

Before the court is pro se Plaintiff Tyler Brandon Defa’s (Plaintiff) Motion to Stay (Motion) (ECF 22) and Defendants’ Response (ECF 23). Having carefully considered the relevant filings, the court finds that oral argument is not necessary and decides this matter on the written memoranda. See DUCivR 7-1(g).

For the reasons set forth below, the court DENIES the Motion. I. BACKGROUND Plaintiff alleges he was involved in a confrontation at a “public saloon” (ECF 1 ¶ 10), which led to Plaintiff’s arrest, incarceration, and prosecution (id. ¶¶ 12–22). Plaintiff brings eleven causes of action against Defendants, all arising from the confrontation and the subsequent events (see id.).

Plaintiff filed this action on July 1, 2025, and the court entered its Scheduling Order on November 13, 2025 (ECF 19). On December 1, 2025, Plaintiff filed the present Motion requesting a stay of the case (ECF 22). In support, Plaintiff provides two arguments: (1) exceptional circumstances are present as he is currently incarcerated in Montana, causing him to be limited in resources (id. at 1); and (2) he currently has a case pending adjudication before the Utah Supreme Court (id. at 2).

Defendants object, asserting that vague assertions of needing more time or resources do not demonstrate good cause for a stay, and Plaintiff has not shown a basis for a stay under the Colorado River abstention doctrine (ECF 23 at 2–3). II. LEGAL STANDARD The court has inherent power to stay proceedings in matters pending before it. *Pet Milk Co. v. Ritter*, 323 F.2d 586, 588 (10th Cir.

1963). This includes discretion to stay discovery pending resolution of a motion to dismiss. See *Matrix Grp., LLC v. Innerlight Holdings, Inc.*, 2012 WL 5397118, at *4–5 (D. Utah Nov. 5, 2012). Reaching such a determination as to whether or not to stay a matter “calls for the exercise of judgment, which must weigh competing interests and maintain an even balance.” *Landis v. North American Co.*, 299 U.S. 248, 254 (1936).

In exercising this judgment, courts in this circuit have applied a variety of factors. See e.g., *Gale v. Brinker International Payroll Co.*, 2010 WL 3835215, *1 (D. Utah Sept. 29, 2010); *Sykes v. LivaNova Deutschland GMBH*, 2018 WL 286791, at *1 (D. Colo. Jan. 4, 2018). These include: (1) whether a stay would promote judicial economy; (2) whether a stay would avoid confusion and inconsistent results; (3) the interests and burdens on the parties; (4) the interests of others, such as

nonparties or the public, in staying or proceeding with the case, and (5) the impact to the court of staying a matter.

Id. III. DISCUSSION As a preliminary matter, on December 5, 2025, the Utah Supreme Court denied a writ of certiorari in Plaintiff's state criminal case.¹ Accordingly, Plaintiff's reliance on the pendency of his state criminal case for a stay is now moot. ¹ The court takes judicial notice of the Plaintiff's state court proceedings finding that they directly relate to the issues under consideration.

St. Louis Baptist Temple, Inc. v. Fed. Deposit Ins. Corp., 605 F.2d 1169, 1172 (10th Cir. 1979) (finding that federal courts, when appropriate, can recognize proceedings in other courts, whether within or outside the federal system, if those proceedings are directly related to the issues under consideration). While the court is cognizant of Plaintiffs pro se status and his current incarceration, the Motion does not provide the court with sufficient information to adequately weigh the factors enumerated above.

Plaintiff merely indicates that he has limited resources, is indigent, and his mail is held for an excessive amount of time (ECF 22 at 1). Liberally construing the Motion, Plaintiff's current incarceration only provides information regarding factor three, namely, the current burdens on Plaintiff.

Therefore, the court agrees with Defendants that Plaintiffs vague assertions of needing more time or resources are not sufficient to warrant a stay. IV. CONCLUSION The court therefore DENIES the Motion to Stay without prejudice (ECF 22). DATED this 1 May 2026. Magistrate Judge Cecilia M. Romero United States District Court for the District of Utah