UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY, PADUCAH DIVISION

Gale Carter, et al. v. Paschall Truck Lines, Inc., et al.

No. 5:18-cv-41-BJB · No. No. 5:18-cv-41-BJB · Decided February 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky granted final approval of a collective-action settlement resolving truck drivers' Fair Labor Standards Act claims against Paschall Truck Lines. The court approved service payments, attorneys' fees, litigation costs, settlement administration, and cy pres treatment of any unclaimed funds, entered final judgment, dismissed the action with prejudice as to the released claims, and retained jurisdiction to enforce the settlement.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky, Paducah Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Benjamin Beaton
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky, Paducah Division
DECIDED	February 13, 2026
DOCKET	No. 5:18-cv-41-BJB
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs in an FLSA collective action moved for final approval of an unopposed settlement. After a preliminary approval order, notice to collective members, and a final-fairness hearing, the court approved the settlement, entered final judgment, and dismissed the action with prejudice as to the released claims.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court evaluated the proposed settlement under Rule 41 and, alternatively, under settlement-review criteria drawn from class-action caselaw and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(e)(2).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Gale Carter, et al. v. Paschall Truck Lines, Inc., et al.

TOPICS

flsa | class actions | attorney fees | remedies | civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

employment law | civil procedure | remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court had authority or a sufficient basis to review and approve the settlement of an FLSA collective action.
2. Whether dismissal of the FLSA collective action was appropriate under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41.
3. Whether the proposed settlement was fair, reasonable, and adequate under the settlement-review criteria applied by courts in the Sixth Circuit.
4. Whether the proposed service awards, attorney fees, litigation costs, and cy pres distribution were permissible components of the settlement.

HOLDINGS

1. Dismissal of the action was appropriate under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41, and the parties could proceed with the agreed settlement and allocation of settlement funds.
2. The settlement was sufficiently fair, reasonable, and adequate to warrant final approval, including under the settlement-review standards commonly applied by courts in the Sixth Circuit.
3. The proposed $10,000 service award to Gale Carter and $500 service awards to four other plaintiffs were permissible because their efforts benefited the collective and did not create inequitable treatment.
4. The court retained continuing and exclusive jurisdiction over matters relating to the settlement and its administration, interpretation, enforcement, and consummation.

KEY QUOTATIONS

> *"So the Court has reviewed the substance of the proposed settlement and determined that, at a minimum, dismissal is appropriate under Rule 41."*

> *"Because this fully resolve the parties' dispute, this order and the proposed order attached and incorporated below, stands as a final judgment."*

> *"This Action is hereby dismissed on the merits and with prejudice as to the Released Claims"*

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Paschall Truck Lines allegedly misclassified truck drivers as independent contractors and failed to pay them the minimum wage. The settlement involved 1,056 opt-in drivers, none of whom opted out or objected, with payments of approximately $37 for each affected workweek and a gross settlement amount of $1,175,000. Named plaintiff Gale Carter contributed more than 100 hours to the litigation, and four other plaintiffs participated in remote depositions. The settlement also provided for attorney fees, litigation costs, service payments, and donation of any unclaimed funds to St. Christopher Truckers Development and Relief Fund.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The litigation concerned claims that Paschall Truck Lines misclassified truck drivers as independent contractors and failed to pay minimum wages. The court preliminarily approved the collective settlement in March 2025 and authorized notice. Following a July 29, 2025 final-fairness hearing, at which no objections were made and no collective members opted out, the court granted final approval, approved service awards, attorney fees, costs, and cy pres treatment of any remaining funds, and entered final judgment.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Maldonado v. WK Kellogg Co., No. 1:24-cv-90, 2025 WL 1427073, at *2, *4-5 (W.D. Mich. May 6, 2025)
- Mitcham v. Intrepid U.S.A., Inc., No. 3:17-cv-703, 2019 WL 5496023, at *2 (W.D. Ky. May 28, 2019)
- Askew v. Inter-Continental Hotels Corp., 620 F. Supp. 3d 635, 637-40 (W.D. Ky. 2022)
- Gilstrap v. Sushinati LLC, 734 F. Supp. 3d 710, 721, 724-26 (S.D. Ohio 2024)
- Phillips Petroleum Co. v. Shutts, 472 U.S. 797, 805 (1985)
- Steele v. Staffmark Investments, LLC, 172 F. Supp. 3d 1024, 1026 (W.D. Tenn. 2016)
- Mitchell v. Maurer, 293 U.S. 237, 244 (1934)
- Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Insurance Co., 511 U.S. 375, 381-82 (1994)
- Does 1-2 v. Déjà Vu Services, Inc., 925 F.3d 886, 894-95 (6th Cir. 2019)
- Hadix v. Johnson, 322 F.3d 895, 897 (6th Cir. 2003)
- In re Dry Max Pampers Litigation, 724 F.3d 713, 718, 722 (6th Cir. 2013)