

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Maurice Daronte Davis, et al. v. Jeff Lynch, et al.

No. 2:24-cv-03275-EFB (PC), United States District Court for the Eastern District of California (November 19, 2025)

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California directs plaintiff Brandyn Howard to either submit a compliant application to proceed in forma pauperis or pay the required filing fees within thirty days. The court warns that failure to comply will result in a recommendation of dismissal and denies the plaintiffs’ motion to expedite ruling.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Edmund F. Brennan
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	November 19, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-03275-EFB (PC)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Two state prisoners proceeding pro se filed a civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. One plaintiff sought leave to proceed in forma pauperis, while the other had neither submitted an in forma pauperis affidavit nor paid the filing and administrative fees. The court addressed the second plaintiff's compliance and denied the plaintiffs' motion to expedite ruling.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential district court order
PARTIES	Maurice Daronte Davis, Brandyn Howard v. Jeff Lynch, et al.

TOPICS

- prisoners rights
- section 1983
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- Civil procedure
- Prisoner civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether a plaintiff in a joint prisoner action must independently qualify for in forma pauperis status and pay the filing fee in installments.
2. Whether plaintiff Howard should be given an opportunity to submit a proper in forma pauperis application or pay the required fees.
3. Whether plaintiffs' motion to expedite ruling should be granted before Howard complied with the filing-fee requirements.

HOLDINGS

1. When multiple prisoners proceed jointly in a federal lawsuit under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 20(a)(1) and seek in forma pauperis status under 28 U.S.C. § 1915, each prisoner must independently qualify for in forma pauperis status and pay the full filing fee in installments.
2. Howard must, within thirty days, either submit a properly completed prisoner in forma pauperis application with the required trust-account documentation or pay \$405.00 in fees; failure to comply will result in a recommendation that he be dismissed from the action.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A court may allow multiple prisoners to proceed in a federal lawsuit provided the standard of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 20(a)(1) is satisfied.” (at 1)

“However, if the joint-filing prisoners proceed in forma pauperis under 28 U.S.C. § 1915, each prisoner must qualify for in forma pauperis status and pay the full filing fee in installments.” (at 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Maurice Daronte Davis and Brandyn Howard, both state prisoners proceeding pro se, filed a joint civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Davis submitted an application to proceed in forma pauperis. Howard had not submitted an in forma pauperis affidavit or paid the \$350 filing fee and \$55 administrative fee.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed this § 1983 action. Plaintiff Maurice Daronte Davis submitted an application to proceed in forma pauperis, but plaintiff Brandyn Howard did not submit the required affidavit or pay the required fees. The court ordered Howard to submit a proper application or pay \$405.00 within thirty days and denied plaintiffs' motion to expedite ruling.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Johnson v. High Desert State Prison, 127 F.4th 123, 137 (9th Cir. 2025)

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