

SEP 09 2025

David J. Smith
Clerk

CONFIDENTIAL

Before the Chief Judge of the
Eleventh Judicial Circuit

Judicial Complaint Nos. 11-25-90158 and 11-25-90173

ORDER

An individual has filed two Complaints against a United States magistrate judge under the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act of 1980, 28 U.S.C. §§ 351–364, and the Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings of the Judicial Conference of the United States.

Background

The record establishes that Complainant filed a *pro se* employment-discrimination complaint against multiple defendants. After various proceedings, the Subject Judge entered an order granting a motion for partial summary judgment that the defendants had filed, and over Complainant's objections, the district judge adopted the report and recommendation. Afterward, Complainant filed multiple motions seeking various types of relief, including a motion to recuse the Subject Judge, and the defendants filed a

motion for sanctions against Complainant, arguing he had made multiple misrepresentations of case law to the court.

The Subject Judge issued an order denying Complainant's motions, staying all proceedings pending a hearing, and directing the parties to appear for a hearing on the defendants' motion for sanctions and another motion. The order also stated that there was reason to believe that Complainant may have used artificial intelligence to assist him with some of his filings because he had cited "[f]ake cases and fake quotes." The order required Complainant to attach to any paper filed with the court a signed declaration that disclosed the use of any artificial intelligence, identified the portion of the filing prepared by artificial intelligence, and certified that he had checked the accuracy of any such portion. The order stated that any paper submitted without the declaration would be stricken and that any misrepresentations to the court could result in sanctions up to and including dismissal.

Complainant filed a "Notice to Preserve Objections, Due Process Rights, and to Clarify Procedural Position" in which he objected to the requirement that he provide a declaration with each filing. The Subject Judge entered an order stating that Complainant openly defied a lawful court order by failing to attach the required declaration to his notice, and directing him to be prepared to discuss the matter at the upcoming hearing. After a hearing, the Subject Judge entered an order instructing the defendant to file a motion for monetary sanctions and a proposed order, stating that Complainant was "advised" that unless the district judge overruled

the prior order, he must attach the declaration to all filed papers, and staying all proceedings until further instruction from the court. The defendant then filed an amended motion to dismiss the case and for sanctions against Complainant. The case remains pending.

Complaint No. 11-25-90158

Complainant alleges the Subject Judge “violated the Code of Conduct for United States by displaying bias and the appearance of bias, improper alignment with defense counsel, coercive sanction threats, and unequal enforcement of requirements against a pro se litigant, as reflected on the record at [a certain] hearing.” He takes issue with the Subject Judge’s statement that his conduct “looks abusive,” statements “[f]loating specific high-dollar sanctions,” and adoption of the defense’s “framing” of an issue. He contends the statements show a pattern of “prejudgment,” coercion, and an appearance of bias and partiality.

Complainant asserts that, at the hearing, the Subject Judge “repeatedly acted as a de facto mouthpiece for Defendant’s counsel,” and “would restate, reframe, or otherwise reiterate the same argument” counsel made, “often using nearly identical language.” He states this created “the unmistakable appearance that the Court had adopted the defense’s framing wholesale, rather than independently evaluating the issues.” He contends the Subject Judge “consistently cut [him] off mid-sentence,” but allowed defense counsel to speak at length without interruption. Finally, he alleges the Subject Judge used “threatening language” towards him, “including repeated references to ‘dire consequences.’”

Complaint No. 11-25-90173

Complainant alleges the Subject Judge's order concerning sanctions "destroyed the appearance of impartiality," "coached" the defendant, and permitted a misrepresentation to be weaponized against him, which violated the Code of Conduct for United States Judges and a recusal statute. He contends the Subject Judge's order "functioned as a judicial roadmap" and gave the appearance that she was collaborating with the defendant. Complainant states the defendant falsely stated that the order constituted a "court-initiated Rule 11(c)(3) show cause directive," which was "factually and legally incorrect," and he complains that the Subject Judge "took no corrective action, thereby permitting the misuse of her order to pursue extreme and unsupported relief." He asserts the "incident reflects a broader pattern of conduct by [the Subject Judge] that has consistently disadvantaged" him. He reiterates his contentions that the Subject Judge repeatedly cut him off mid-sentence at a hearing, used threatening language, and issued rulings that "closely track Defendant's requests," and he states the Subject Judge issued an ambiguous directive concerning the use of artificial intelligence.

Discussion

Judicial-Conduct Rule 4(b)(1) provides in part that "[c]ognizable misconduct does not include an allegation that calls into question the correctness of a judge's ruling, including a failure to recuse." The Commentary on Rule 4 explains the rationale for this rule as follows:

Rule 4(b)(1) tracks the Act, 28 U.S.C. § 352(b)(1)(A)(ii), in excluding from the definition of misconduct allegations “[d]irectly related to the merits of a decision or procedural ruling.” This exclusion preserves the independence of judges in the exercise of judicial authority by ensuring that the complaint procedure is not used to collaterally call into question the substance of a judge’s decision or procedural ruling. Any allegation that calls into question the correctness of an official decision or procedural ruling of a judge — without more — is merits-related.

The Complaints fail to present a basis for a finding of misconduct. To the extent Complainant’s allegations concern the substance of the Subject Judge’s official actions, findings, rulings, and orders in the above-described case, the allegations are directly related to the merits of the Subject Judge’s decisions or procedural rulings. Judicial-Conduct Rule 11(c)(1)(B). Complainant’s remaining claims are based on allegations lacking sufficient evidence to raise an inference that the Subject Judge acted with an illicit or improper motive, was biased or otherwise not impartial, treated him in a demonstrably egregious and hostile manner, violated the Code of Conduct for United States Judges, or otherwise engaged in misconduct. Judicial-Conduct Rule 11(c)(1)(D). For these reasons, these Complaints are **DISMISSED**.

/s/ William H. Pryor Jr.
Chief Judge