

NONPRECEDENTIAL DISPOSITION

To be cited only in accordance with FED. R. APP. P. 32.1

United States Court of Appeals**For the Seventh Circuit****Chicago, Illinois 60604**

Submitted April 15, 2025*

Decided April 16, 2025

BeforeTHOMAS L. KIRSCH II, *Circuit Judge*JOHN Z. LEE, *Circuit Judge*NANCY L. MALDONADO, *Circuit Judge*

No. 24-3244

THOMAS E. CAMARDA,
*Plaintiff-Appellant,**v.*ELIZABETH M. WHITEHORN, et al.,
*Defendants-Appellees.*Appeal from the United States District
Court for the Northern District of Illinois,
Western Division.

No. 24 CV 50466

Iain D. Johnston,
*Judge.***ORDER**

Thomas Camarda appeals the judgment dismissing his complaint (under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, challenging a state court's child-support order) for lack of subject

* The appellees were not served with process and are not participating in this appeal. We have agreed to decide the case without oral argument because the brief and record adequately present the facts and legal arguments, and oral argument would not significantly aid the court. FED. R. APP. P. 34(a)(2)(C).

matter jurisdiction. The district court concluded that it lacked subject matter jurisdiction under the domestic-relations exception. We affirm.

Camarda brought this suit in federal court against the director of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (“DHFS”) and two DHFS employees who oversaw his child-support case. The previous year, an Illinois state court had ordered Camarda to pay child support to his ex-partner. *See Bieber v. Camarda*, No. 2022-D-051802 (Ill. Cir. Ct. Aug. 25, 2023). In an amended complaint, he alleged that the defendants, in their individual capacities, unlawfully seized his property by garnishing and levying his bank accounts; deprived him of due process when they failed to provide notice or a hearing before collecting his funds; fined him beyond constitutional limitations; and retaliated against him for asserting his constitutional rights. He also asserted numerous state-law claims, including intentional infliction of emotional distress, unjust enrichment, and unlawful conversion of property. He sought damages for financial harm, injunctive relief to avoid the levies, and declaratory relief to prevent future collection attempts by DHFS officials.

The district court screened the amended complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) and dismissed it for both lack of jurisdiction and failure to state a claim. The court explained that the domestic-relations exception to federal jurisdiction stripped it of jurisdiction to address Camarda’s claims concerning the state child-support proceedings. Regardless, the court added, Camarda insufficiently alleged that the defendants personally caused or participated in any constitutional violation. The court relinquished supplemental jurisdiction over the remaining state-law claims. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c)(3).

Camarda filed two post-judgment motions (one for reconsideration and one to clarify the judgment), arguing that the court overlooked evidence of the defendants’ interference in his child-support case. The court denied both motions because Camarda did not identify any reason to disturb its conclusion that it lacked jurisdiction or that he failed to state a claim.

On appeal, Camarda challenges the dismissal of his amended complaint but does not engage with the district court’s ruling that it lacked jurisdiction under the domestic-relations exception. Under this exception, federal courts avoid deciding cases involving particular domestic relations matters, *see Marshall v. Marshall*, 547 U.S. 293, 307–08 (2006), such as a decree of child support, *see Friedlander v. Friedlander*, 149 F.3d 739, 740 (7th Cir. 1998). State courts, which have developed procedures tailored to core domestic relations matters, are presumed to be more proficient at handling such matters.

See Ankenbrandt v. Richards, 504 U.S. 689, 703–04 (1992); *Struck v. Cook Cnty. Pub. Guardian*, 508 F.3d 858, 860 (7th Cir. 2007). We agree with the district court that the exception applies here, given that the relief Camarda seeks—damages for financial harm caused by the defendants’ collection of child support; injunctive relief to prevent DHFS from collecting child support; and declaratory relief to prevent future enforcement of the state-court proceedings—would encroach on the state court’s adjudication of family law matters. *See Struck*, 508 F.3d at 859–60.

We close with two points. First, Camarda has filed over 100 motions and supplemental filings in our court, even after we warned him—in four separate orders in late 2024 and early 2025—that the barrage of filings could result in sanctions, revocation of his electronic filing privileges, and submission without action from the court. App. Doc. 45, 55, 64, 86; *see also Support Sys. Int’l, Inc. v. Mack*, 45 F.3d 185, 186 (7th Cir. 1995); Cir. Operating Proc. R. 1(c)(8). Camarda is ordered to show cause within 14 days why we should not impose sanctions, including fines and a filing bar under *Mack*, 45 F.3d at 186, for his continued frivolous litigation after these warnings. Second, the district court did not specify whether it dismissed Camarda’s claims with or without prejudice. Because a dismissal for lack of jurisdiction is not on the merits, we modify the judgment to reflect a dismissal without prejudice. *See MAO-MSO Recovery II, LLC v. State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co.*, 935 F.3d 573, 581 (7th Cir. 2019).

As modified, the judgment is AFFIRMED.