

NONPRECEDENTIAL DISPOSITION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 June 30, 2026*

Decided July 1, 2026

Before

THOMAS L. KIRSCH II, *Circuit Judge*

JOHN Z. LEE, *Circuit Judge*

DORIS L. PRYOR, *Circuit Judge*

No. 24-3077

ARNEL ROBINSON,
Plaintiff-Appellant,

Appeal from the United States District
Court for the Central District of Illinois.

v.

No. 21-1295-CSB

WEXFORD HEALTH SOURCES, INC.,
et al.,
Defendants-Appellees.

Colin S. Bruce,
Chief Judge.

ORDER

Arnel Robinson sued prison officials and medical staff, alleging they violated his rights under the First and Eighth Amendments by acting with deliberate indifference to his chronic kidney disease and diabetes and retaliating against him because of his

* We have agreed to decide the case without oral argument because the briefs 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).

advocacy for other inmates. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The district court entered summary judgment for the defendants, and we affirm.

Robinson's allegations center on the treatment of his chronic kidney disease and diabetes while he was incarcerated at Illinois River Correctional Center. Robinson asserted that between August 2019 and July 2020 Brittany Miller, a nurse practitioner, and Dr. Kurt Osmundson did "nothing" to treat his medical conditions and did not provide him with medication adequate to treat his pain.

In August 2019, an off-site nephrologist diagnosed Robinson with stage three chronic kidney disease and ordered an ultrasound and medication changes. A few months after this visit, Robinson filed a grievance asserting that Miller and Dr. Osmundson failed to comply with the nephrologist's recommendations. He further alleged that the prison's warden, Cherryle Hinthorne, a prison counselor, Brian Piper, and a prison sergeant, Justin Howarter, were aware of his medical needs but did nothing to intervene. He also asserted that the officials' failure to act was due in part to an unconstitutional "practice of inadequate healthcare" maintained by Wexford Health Sources, Inc., the prison's contracted medical provider.

Then in December 2019, Robinson suffered a hypoglycemic episode in his cell and lost consciousness. He alleged that Sergeant Howarter found him on the floor but did not summon medical attention for him. Robinson averred that Sergeant Howarter's failure to act was in retaliation for Robinson's advocacy work on behalf of other inmates through his work as a law library clerk.

Robinson sued Miller, Dr. Osmundson, Hinthorne, Piper, Howarter, and Wexford under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The district court screened the complaint, *see* 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, and allowed Robinson to proceed on claims that: (1) Hinthorne, Piper, Howarter, Miller, and Dr. Osmundson acted with deliberate indifference to his serious medical needs in violation of the Eighth Amendment; (2) Howarter retaliated against Robinson in violation of his First Amendment rights; and (3) Wexford maintained a policy or practice that violated his rights under the Eighth Amendment, *see Monell v. Dep't of Soc. Servs. of City of N.Y.*, 436 U.S. 658 (1978).

Robinson filed several motions for recruitment of counsel. He argued that the medical issues were complex, he lacked legal knowledge, and he had limited ability to review the large record. The district court rejected his first five motions, explaining that lack of legal knowledge is not a sufficient reason to recruit counsel, and that Robinson

had been able to comply with court orders up to that point. But when the case reached discovery, and Robinson moved for counsel a sixth time, the court conditionally granted the motion, explaining that it would attempt to find a volunteer attorney. The court then contacted eleven local attorneys and sent a mass email to all members of the Seventh Circuit Bar Association, seeking a volunteer attorney. But when no attorney was willing to take Robinson's case, the district court vacated the order conditionally granting the motion for counsel. Robinson again moved for counsel, but the court denied the motion as futile, noting that it had attempted to recruit counsel to no avail.

The defendants then moved for summary judgment, and the district court granted the motions. The court determined that no reasonable juror could conclude that Miller and Dr. Osmundson provided Robinson with constitutionally deficient medical care, or that Wexford maintained a policy or practice that was the moving force behind any constitutional violation. The court also concluded that Hinthorne, Piper, and Howarter had no control over Robinson's medical treatment and were entitled to defer to the judgment of medical professionals.

Robinson appeals, primarily challenging the district court's handling of his motions to recruit counsel. In evaluating whether to recruit counsel, the district court must examine "whether the difficulty of the case—factually and legally—exceeds the particular plaintiff's capacity as a layperson to coherently present it." *Pruitt v. Mote*, 503 F.3d 647, 655 (7th Cir. 2007) (en banc). The district court complied with this requirement in denying Robinson's first five motions, explaining that Robinson had proven himself capable of responding to the court's instructions by meeting filing deadlines and successfully amending his complaint. When the district court later determined that the discovery process would exceed Robinson's capacity, the court granted the sixth motion for counsel but could not find a volunteer. Although Robinson insists that the court should have done more to find an attorney to take his case, the Constitution does not entitle civil litigants to counsel, nor are district courts required to search for pro bono counsel indefinitely. *Austin v. Hansen*, 139 F.4th 604, 607 (7th Cir. 2025) (citation omitted). The court made a reasonable effort to recruit counsel by contacting several local attorneys and reaching out to the Seventh Circuit bar association. *See id.* (discussing scarcity of pro bono attorneys in Central District of Illinois).

Robinson also briefly argues that the district court erred in granting summary judgment for the defendants, insisting that Howarter attempted to kill him and other unnamed persons retaliated against him. But these conclusory arguments, which do not

meaningfully engage with the district court's reasoning at summary judgment, are waived. *See Shipley v. Chi. Bd. of Election Comm'rs*, 947 F.3d 1056, 1062–63 (7th Cir. 2020) (“Arguments that are underdeveloped, cursory, and lack supporting authority are waived.”); *Cole v. Comm'r*, 637 F.3d 767, 772–73 (7th Cir. 2011) (explaining that briefs must contain more than generalized assertions of error); *see also* FED. R. APP.

P. 28(a)(8)(A) (explaining that brief must contain “appellant’s contentions and the reasons for them, with citations to the authorities and parts of the records on which appellant relies”).

AFFIRMED.