

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**FILED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

OCT 18 2016

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

MOLLY C. DWYER, CLERK  
U.S. COURT OF APPEALS

EUGENE EVAN BAKER,

No. 13-56454

Plaintiff-Appellant,

D.C. No.

v.

2:10-cv-03996-SVW-AJW

LORETTA E. LYNCH, Attorney General;  
et al.,

MEMORANDUM\*

Defendants-Appellees.

Appeal from the United States District Court  
for the Central District of California  
Stephen V. Wilson, District Judge, Presiding

Argued and Submitted October 7, 2016  
Pasadena, California

Before: TROTT, OWENS, and FRIEDLAND, Circuit Judges.

Eugene Baker alleged in his first amended complaint that 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(9) violates his Second and Fourteenth Amendment rights. That federal statute prohibits anyone convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence from owning a firearm. Baker appeals the district court's order dismissing his case with prejudice. We affirm.

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\* This disposition is not appropriate for publication and is not precedent except as provided by Ninth Circuit Rule 36-3.

As a preliminary matter, the district court did not err by construing the parties' status briefs as a motion to dismiss and opposition. A district court may dismiss a complaint on its own initiative and motion as long as the plaintiff receives notice and an opportunity to respond in at least a written filing. *See Wong v. Bell*, 642 F.2d 359, 361–62 (9th Cir. 1981). Here, Defendants asked the district court to construe their briefing as a motion to dismiss, and the district court gave notice of its intent to do so. Baker also had an opportunity to submit a written opposition. He has not identified any argument he was unable to make or any other prejudice he suffered as a result of the procedures the district court followed.

Turning to the merits of Baker's claims, we review the district court's decision de novo. *See Skilstaf, Inc. v. CVS Caremark Corp.*, 669 F.3d 1005, 1014 (9th Cir. 2012) (reviewing de novo dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6)); *United States v. Chovan*, 735 F.3d 1127, 1131 (9th Cir. 2013) (reviewing de novo the constitutionality of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(9)).

First, the district court correctly dismissed Baker's Second Amendment claim. In *United States v. Chovan*, we upheld § 922(g)(9) against both facial and as-applied challenges under intermediate scrutiny. 735 F.3d at 1139–42. Baker's

allegations are not meaningfully different from those before us in that case. *See id.* at 1130–31, 1141–42.

Second, the district court did not err by dismissing Baker’s equal protection claim. Because Baker does not belong to a protected class, and because the right he identifies is protected by a separate constitutional provision, § 922(g)(9) may be upheld if it is rationally related to a legitimate government purpose. *See, e.g., Nordyke v. King*, 681 F.3d 1041, 1043 n.2 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc). Congress rationally attempted to prevent domestic gun violence by categorically prohibiting those convicted of certain domestic abuse crimes from buying guns. *Cf. Chovan*, 735 F.3d at 1139–42.

The district court dismissed Baker’s first amended complaint with prejudice. A district court’s decision not to allow an amendment is reviewed for an abuse of discretion. *Ariz. Students’ Ass’n v. Ariz. Bd. of Regents*, 824 F.3d 858, 871 (9th Cir. 2016). Normally amendments should be allowed freely when a viable case may be presented, but if previous amendments have foundered or if amendment otherwise appears futile, dismissal without leave to amend may be appropriate. *Cafasso, U.S. ex rel. v. Gen. Dynamics C4 Sys., Inc.*, 637 F.3d 1047, 1058 (9th Cir. 2011). In neither his briefing nor his counsel’s oral argument could Baker identify

factual allegations that would meaningfully differentiate his case from unsuccessful as-applied challenges to § 922(g)(9). *See, e.g., Chovan*, 735 F.3d at 1142. Amendment therefore would be futile.

The district court's order is **AFFIRMED**.

## United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Office of the Clerk  
95 Seventh Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

### Information Regarding Judgment and Post-Judgment Proceedings

#### Judgment

- This Court has filed and entered the attached judgment in your case. Fed. R. App. P. 36. Please note the filed date on the attached decision because all of the dates described below run from that date, not from the date you receive this notice.

#### Mandate (Fed. R. App. P. 41; 9th Cir. R. 41-1 & -2)

- The mandate will issue 7 days after the expiration of the time for filing a petition for rehearing or 7 days from the denial of a petition for rehearing, unless the Court directs otherwise. To file a motion to stay the mandate, file it electronically via the appellate ECF system or, if you are a pro se litigant or an attorney with an exemption from using appellate ECF, file one original motion on paper.

#### Petition for Panel Rehearing (Fed. R. App. P. 40; 9th Cir. R. 40-1)

#### Petition for Rehearing En Banc (Fed. R. App. P. 35; 9th Cir. R. 35-1 to -3)

#### (1) A. Purpose (Panel Rehearing):

- A party should seek panel rehearing only if one or more of the following grounds exist:
  - ▶ A material point of fact or law was overlooked in the decision;
  - ▶ A change in the law occurred after the case was submitted which appears to have been overlooked by the panel; or
  - ▶ An apparent conflict with another decision of the Court was not addressed in the opinion.
- Do not file a petition for panel rehearing merely to reargue the case.

#### B. Purpose (Rehearing En Banc)

- A party should seek en banc rehearing only if one or more of the following grounds exist:

- ▶ Consideration by the full Court is necessary to secure or maintain uniformity of the Court's decisions; or
- ▶ The proceeding involves a question of exceptional importance; or
- ▶ The opinion directly conflicts with an existing opinion by another court of appeals or the Supreme Court and substantially affects a rule of national application in which there is an overriding need for national uniformity.

**(2) Deadlines for Filing:**

- A petition for rehearing may be filed within 14 days after entry of judgment. Fed. R. App. P. 40(a)(1).
- If the United States or an agency or officer thereof is a party in a civil case, the time for filing a petition for rehearing is 45 days after entry of judgment. Fed. R. App. P. 40(a)(1).
- If the mandate has issued, the petition for rehearing should be accompanied by a motion to recall the mandate.
- *See* Advisory Note to 9th Cir. R. 40-1 (petitions must be received on the due date).
- An order to publish a previously unpublished memorandum disposition extends the time to file a petition for rehearing to 14 days after the date of the order of publication or, in all civil cases in which the United States or an agency or officer thereof is a party, 45 days after the date of the order of publication. 9th Cir. R. 40-2.

**(3) Statement of Counsel**

- A petition should contain an introduction stating that, in counsel's judgment, one or more of the situations described in the "purpose" section above exist. The points to be raised must be stated clearly.

**(4) Form & Number of Copies (9th Cir. R. 40-1; Fed. R. App. P. 32(c)(2))**

- The petition shall not exceed 15 pages unless it complies with the alternative length limitations of 4,200 words or 390 lines of text.
- The petition must be accompanied by a copy of the panel's decision being challenged.
- An answer, when ordered by the Court, shall comply with the same length limitations as the petition.
- If a pro se litigant elects to file a form brief pursuant to Circuit Rule 28-1, a petition for panel rehearing or for rehearing en banc need not comply with Fed. R. App. P. 32.

- The petition or answer must be accompanied by a Certificate of Compliance found at Form 11, available on our website at [www.ca9.uscourts.gov](http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov) under *Forms*.
- You may file a petition electronically via the appellate ECF system. No paper copies are required unless the Court orders otherwise. If you are a pro se litigant or an attorney exempted from using the appellate ECF system, file one original petition on paper. No additional paper copies are required unless the Court orders otherwise.

### **Bill of Costs (Fed. R. App. P. 39, 9th Cir. R. 39-1)**

- The Bill of Costs must be filed within 14 days after entry of judgment.
- See Form 10 for additional information, available on our website at [www.ca9.uscourts.gov](http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov) under *Forms*.

### **Attorneys Fees**

- Ninth Circuit Rule 39-1 describes the content and due dates for attorneys fees applications.
- All relevant forms are available on our website at [www.ca9.uscourts.gov](http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov) under *Forms* or by telephoning (415) 355-7806.

### **Petition for a Writ of Certiorari**

- Please refer to the Rules of the United States Supreme Court at [www.supremecourt.gov](http://www.supremecourt.gov)

### **Counsel Listing in Published Opinions**

- Please check counsel listing on the attached decision.
- If there are any errors in a published opinion, please send a letter **in writing within 10 days** to:
  - ▶ Thomson Reuters; 610 Opperman Drive; PO Box 64526; St. Paul, MN 55164-0526 (Attn: Jean Green, Senior Publications Coordinator);
  - ▶ and electronically file a copy of the letter via the appellate ECF system by using “File Correspondence to Court,” or if you are an attorney exempted from using the appellate ECF system, mail the Court one copy of the letter.

United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

BILL OF COSTS

This form is available as a fillable version at:

http://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/uploads/forms/Form%2010%20-%20Bill%20of%20Costs.pdf.

Note: If you wish to file a bill of costs, it MUST be submitted on this form and filed, with the clerk, with proof of service, within 14 days of the date of entry of judgment, and in accordance with 9th Circuit Rule 39-1. A late bill of costs must be accompanied by a motion showing good cause. Please refer to FRAP 39, 28 U.S.C. § 1920, and 9th Circuit Rule 39-1 when preparing your bill of costs.

Form fields for case name, v., 9th Cir. No.

The Clerk is requested to tax the following costs against:

Table with columns: Cost Taxable under FRAP 39, 28 U.S.C. § 1920, 9th Cir. R. 39-1; REQUESTED (Each Column Must Be Completed); ALLOWED (To Be Completed by the Clerk). Rows include Excerpt of Record, Opening Brief, Answering Brief, Reply Brief, Other\*\*, and TOTAL.

\* Costs per page: May not exceed .10 or actual cost, whichever is less. 9th Circuit Rule 39-1.

\*\* Other: Any other requests must be accompanied by a statement explaining why the item(s) should be taxed pursuant to 9th Circuit Rule 39-1. Additional items without such supporting statements will not be considered.

Attorneys' fees cannot be requested on this form.

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**Form 10. Bill of Costs - Continued**

I, , swear under penalty of perjury that the services for which costs are taxed were actually and necessarily performed, and that the requested costs were actually expended as listed.

Signature

("s/" plus attorney's name if submitted electronically)

Date

Name of Counsel:

Attorney for:

*(To Be Completed by the Clerk)*

Date

Costs are taxed in the amount of \$

Clerk of Court

By: , Deputy Clerk