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David J. Smith
Clerk

CONFIDENTIAL

Before the Chief Judge of the
Eleventh Judicial Circuit

Judicial Complaint No. 11-26-90108

ORDER

An individual has filed a Complaint against a United States district 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.

As an initial matter, after Complainant filed his Complaint, he filed three supplements. The filing of the supplements is permitted. *See* 11th Cir. JCDR 6.7.

Background

The record establishes that Complainant filed a civil complaint against a company and a motion for the clerk's entry of default. The defendant moved to dismiss the case. The Subject Judge granted the motion to dismiss and denied Complainant's motion for entry of default. The docket reflects that Complainant's address was corrected after issuance of the orders.

Complaint

Complainant alleges a “pattern of administrative and notice issues” in the case, including inconsistencies in service of documents, failure to correct his mailing address, delayed receipt of filings, and failure to ensure he had consistent access to court filings. He “contends these issues collectively impacted the fairness and accessibility of the proceedings,” gave an advantage to the defendant, and implicated the Code of Conduct for United States Judges. He attached documents to his Complaint.

Supplements

In his first supplemental filing, Complainant alleges that court staff members failed to exhibit professionalism, treated him with hostility, and were discourteous to him. In the second, he does not raise any specific allegations against the Subject Judge. In the third, he states that the “negligence, incompetence, discrimination, and retaliation by non-judicial court staff operating under [the Subject Judge’s] authority deprived me of meaningful access to the courts and materially affected the outcome of my case.” He attached documents to his second and third supplemental filings.

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 Complaint fails 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, violated the Code of Conduct for United States Judges, or otherwise engaged in misconduct. Judicial-Conduct Rule 11(c)(1)(D). For these reasons, this Complaint is **DISMISSED**.

/s/ William H. Pryor Jr.
Chief Judge