

**NONPRECEDENTIAL DISPOSITION**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 May 19, 2025\*

Decided May 19, 2025

**Before**DIANE S. SYKES, *Chief Judge*THOMAS L. KIRSCH II, *Circuit Judge*NANCY L. MALDONADO, *Circuit Judge*

No. 24-2718

ANJELICA R. JAMES,  
*Plaintiff-Appellant,**v.*TERRENCE V. SHARKEY and SARAH  
DONOVAN,  
*Defendants-Appellees.*Appeal from the United States District  
Court for the Northern District of  
Illinois, Eastern Division.

No. 1:24-cv-03751

Georgia N. Alexakis,  
*Judge.***ORDER**

Anjelica James appeals the judgment dismissing her suit against a guardian ad litem and a juvenile court judge for alleged violations of her and her child's constitutional rights. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The district judge dismissed her claims on

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\* 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).

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grounds that she could not represent her son in court and that both defendants are immune from suit. We affirm.

James brought this wide-ranging civil rights suit on behalf of herself and her minor child against her child's guardian ad litem, Sarah Donovan, and a juvenile court judge, Terrence Sharkey. James alleged that Sharkey charged her with contempt of court and subjected her to arbitrary civil infractions, in violation of her First and Fourth Amendment rights; and imposed legal representation on her and ignored her right to face her accuser because the "People of Illinois" is a legal fiction, in violation of her Sixth Amendment rights. She also alleged that Sharkey and Donovan removed her son from her custody without notice or an opportunity to be heard, in violation of her and her son's Fifth Amendment rights.

Judge Harjani granted James leave to proceed in forma pauperis but dismissed the complaint without prejudice under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). As a threshold matter, the judge explained that James could not appear on her child's behalf; claims brought on his behalf had to be made with the assistance of counsel. And the judge dismissed James's personal claims because both Sharkey and Donovan had absolute immunity from § 1983 suits for actions taken in a judicial capacity or at the court's direction.

James amended her complaint, and Judge Alexakis (to whom the case was reassigned) dismissed it with prejudice, determining that it suffered the "same defects" as her first complaint.

On appeal, James first contends that she should be able to represent her minor child's interests. But nonlawyers are prohibited from representing another person, and that rule extends to a parent attempting to represent her minor child pro se. *Elustra v. Mineo*, 595 F.3d 699, 705 (7th Cir. 2010).

James also argues that Sharkey and Donovan are not immune from suit. But judges and guardians ad litem are entitled to absolute immunity from suit for actions taken in their official capacities. See *Stump v. Sparkman*, 435 U.S. 349, 355–56 (1978) (judges); *Cooney v. Rossiter*, 583 F.3d 967, 970 (7th Cir. 2009) (guardians ad litem). As Judge Alexakis pointed out, James's amended complaint took issue with the conduct of Sharkey and Donovan "during juvenile court proceedings"—that is, conduct the two defendants performed in their official capacities. Even if we credit James's allegations in her appellate brief—that Sharkey wrongly apprehended James for "asserting her rights" and arbitrarily removed her child from her custody without due process, and that

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Donovan facilitated her child's removal and placement "in dilapidated, crime infested conditions" — as consistent with her amended complaint, *see Smith v. Knox Cnty. Jail*, 666 F.3d 1037, 1039 (7th Cir. 2012), James still fails to explain how these actions exceeded the bounds of the defendants' official roles.

AFFIRMED

# UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SEVENTH CIRCUIT

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## FINAL JUDGMENT

May 19, 2025

Before  
DIANE S. SYKES, *Chief Judge*  
THOMAS L. KIRSCH II, *Circuit Judge*  
NANCY L. MALDONADO, *Circuit Judge*

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Court of Appeals for the  
Seventh Circuit

No. 24-2718	ANJELICA R. JAMES, Plaintiff - Appellant  v.  TERRENCE V. SHARKEY and SARAH DONOVAN, Defendants - Appellees
<b>Originating Case Information:</b>	
District Court No: 1:24-cv-03751 Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division District Judge Georgia N. Alexakis	

The judgment of the District Court is **AFFIRMED** in accordance with the decision of this court entered on this date.

Handwritten signature of Christopher Conway in cursive.

Clerk of Court