

26-5794

UNITED STATES
SUPREME COURT

ORIGINAL

James McDonald III, Pro Se Petitioner,

Lower Ct. No.: 25-000866-AV

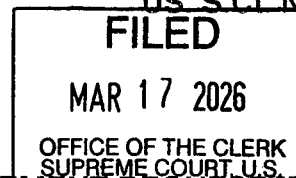
C.O.A No.: 377041

Mi. Sup. Ct. No.: 169126

US S.Ct. No.:

v.

People of The State of Michigan, Respondant



(ORAL ARGUEMENT REQUESTED)

PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI

Petitioner respectfully petitions for a writ of certiorari to review the judgment of the Michigan Supreme Court.

James McDonald III, Petitioner

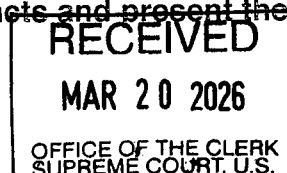
v.

State of Michigan, Respondant

On Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to the
United States Supreme Court

QUESTION PRESENTED

Whether a state court violates the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment when it adjudicates a civil action while denying a litigant discovery of material evidence in the possession of government officials—including police reports and dash-camera recordings—thereby depriving the litigant of a meaningful opportunity to investigate the facts and present the case.



LIST OF PARTIES

All parties appear in the caption of the case. Petitioner is James McDonald. Respondents are State of Michigan.

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Cases

- Mathews v. Eldridge
- Goldberg v. Kelly
- Draper v. Washington

Constitutional Provision

U.S. Const. amend. XIV

Statutes

28 U.S.C. §1257

OPINIONS BELOW

The 63rd district court decision is unpublished but reproduced in the appendix.

The 17th judicial trial court decision is unpublished but reproduced in the appendix.

The decision of the Michigan Court of Appeals denying relief is unpublished and included in the appendix.

The order of the Michigan Supreme Court denying leave to appeal is reproduced in the appendix.

JURISDICTION

The final order of the Michigan Supreme Court was entered on 12-19-2025.

Jurisdiction is invoked under 28 U.S.C. §1257(a), which authorizes review of final state court judgments presenting federal constitutional questions.

This petition is timely filed within ninety days of the entry of judgment.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION INVOLVED

The Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution provides in relevant part:

No State shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

This case arises from a civil dispute involving conduct by law enforcement officers. The factual circumstances surrounding the incident were documented by officers through police reports and dash-camera recordings.

During the proceedings, Petitioner sought discovery of these materials because they were directly relevant to the disputed facts and were necessary for the preparation of Petitioner's claims and defenses.

The requested materials were in the possession of government officials and constituted the most reliable evidence regarding the events in question.

Despite their relevance, the district court denied Petitioner's requests for discovery and proceeded to adjudicate the case without allowing access to the requested evidence. Trial court also denied Petitioner's requests for discovery.

Petitioner argued that denying discovery of such material evidence deprived him of a meaningful opportunity to present his case and therefore violated the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The district, and trial court nevertheless resolved the matter without permitting discovery.

Petitioner sought review in the Michigan Court of Appeals, which denied relief. Petitioner then sought review in the Michigan Supreme Court, which denied leave to appeal.

This petition follows.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE PETITION

I. The Decision Below Conflicts With Fundamental Due Process Principles.

Procedural due process requires that litigants be given a meaningful opportunity to present evidence and challenge opposing claims before a court resolves a dispute.

This Court has repeatedly recognized that fair procedures are necessary to prevent erroneous deprivation of rights.

In Mathews v. Eldridge, this Court explained that due process requires procedures that reduce the risk of erroneous decisions.

Similarly, in Goldberg v. Kelly, the Court emphasized that individuals must be given a meaningful opportunity to present evidence and arguments.

By denying discovery of police reports and dash-camera recordings central to the dispute, the court below deprived Petitioner of the ability to investigate the facts and challenge the narrative presented by government officials.

Such a procedure undermines the fairness required by the Due Process Clause.

II. The Issue Presented Is Recurring and Important.

Civil litigation involving government actors frequently depends on evidence generated by law enforcement officials, including police reports and dash-camera recordings.

When courts deny access to such evidence while simultaneously adjudicating the case, litigants are left without the ability to meaningfully investigate the facts or present their claims.

Guidance from this Court is necessary to clarify the constitutional limits on a court's discretion to deny discovery in cases involving evidence held by government actors.

III. The Decision Below Allowed Adjudication Without a Meaningful Opportunity to Be Heard.

The Due Process Clause guarantees more than a formal opportunity to appear in court; it guarantees a meaningful opportunity to develop and present evidence.

In this case, Petitioner was denied access to evidence that directly documented the events at issue. Without that evidence, Petitioner was unable to fully investigate the facts or present a complete case.

This denial deprived Petitioner of the meaningful opportunity to be heard required by the Constitution.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the petition for a writ of certiorari should be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

James McDonald III
Petitioner, Pro Se



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PROOF OF SERVICE

According to court rule, I the petitioner served by first class mail, this Writ of Certiorari upon all parties involved. I declare under the penalties of perjury that this proof of service has been examined by me and that its contents are true to the best of my information, knowledge, and belief.

