

Seeking Federal Relief for Denial of Certification As a Write-In Candidate After Losing in State Court

Bonds v. Orr

(Robert M. Dow, Jr., N.D. Ill. 1:13-cv-2610)

A plaintiff wishing to be listed as a write-in candidate for a high school district board of education in Cook County, Illinois, filed a federal complaint in the Northern District of Illinois on April 8, 2013, the day before the election.¹ With her complaint, the plaintiff filed an application to proceed in forma pauperis.² She also filed the court's form motion for attorney assistance.³

Judge Robert M. Dow, Jr., received the complaint at approximately 1:00 p.m. and set the matter for hearing at 3:30, instructing the plaintiff to serve the complaint on the county clerk defendant.⁴ After the hearing, at which the plaintiff appeared pro se, Judge Dow determined that because the plaintiff had already unsuccessfully sought relief for her federal claims in state courts, federal relief from the federal district court was barred by the *Rooker-Feldman* doctrine, which states that among federal courts only the Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction over state court proceedings.⁵

1. [Complaint](#), *Bonds v. Orr*, No. 1:13-cv-2610 (N.D. Ill. Apr. 8, 2013), D.E. 1.

2. [In Forma Pauperis Application](#), *id.* (Apr. 8, 2013), D.E. 3.

3. [Attorney Assistance Motion](#), *id.* (Apr. 8, 2013), D.E. 4.

4. [Amended Minute Order](#), *id.* (Apr. 29, 2013), D.E. 13.

5. *Id.*; see [District of Columbia Court of Appeals v. Feldman](#), 460 U.S. 462 (1983); [Rooker v. Fidelity Trust Co.](#), 263 U.S. 413 (1923); see Martin A. Schwartz & Kathryn R. Urbonya, [Section 1983 Litigation](#) 14–17 (Federal Judicial Center 2d ed. 2008).