NOT FOR PUBLICATION

In the
United States Court of Appeals
For the Eleventh Circuit

No. 26-10430
Non-Argument Calendar

KATHLEEN ANN WATREL,

Plaintiff-Appellant,

versus

JUDGE W. COLLINS COOPER,
JUDGE MICHAEL KALIL,
CHARLIE COFER,
EMILY RUSE,
MARY HICKSON,
In their personal capacities, et al.,

Defendants-Appellees.

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Middle District of Florida
D.C. Docket No. 3:25-cv-00144-BJD-LLL

Before WILLIAM PRYOR, Chief Judge, and ABUDU and ANDERSON, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:

Kathleen Watrel appeals *pro se* the dismissal of her amended complaint and the denial of her post-judgment motion for recusal. We affirm.

Watrel filed a complaint against her ex-husband, Stephen Watrel; his employer, Coker Law P.A.; state court Judges W. Collins Cooper and Michael Kalil; a Florida public defender and two employees of his office; a Florida court employee; and an attorney, James Holland II, and his law firm, Holland Law LLC. The case was transferred to the district judge who was presiding over a related case Watrel had filed. The two actions were consolidated, and the district court directed Watrel to file an amended complaint for the consolidated actions. In her amended complaint, Watrel added Judges Mary Suzanne Bass and Eric Roberson, Brian Roberts, and Roberts and Reiter, P.A. She alleged that the defendants conspired to deprive her of her parental rights, due process, and equal protection in state court proceedings involving her divorce and her alleged alienation from her child, among other things.

The defendants moved to dismiss Watrel's amended complaint, which the district court granted. The district court ruled that the judges named in Watrel's amended complaint were entitled to judicial immunity because her allegations against them were based on her displeasure with their actions taken as state court judges.

Watrel moved for reconsideration under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 60(b). She also moved to recuse the district judge because a defendant donated money to an organization the judge also supported. She speculated that the judge was a friend of the defendant and must have been biased against her. The district court denied both motions.

Watrel challenges the ruling that the judges enjoy immunity. *See Sapuppo v. Allstate Floridian Ins. Co.*, 739 F.3d 678, 681 (11th Cir. 2014) (failure to plainly and prominently raise an issue on appeal by a *pro se* results in abandonment of that issue). But "[j]udges are entitled to absolute judicial immunity from damages for those acts taken while they are acting in their judicial capacity unless they acted in the clear absence of all jurisdiction." *Sibley v. Lando*, 437 F.3d 1067, 1070 (11th Cir. 2005) (quoting *Bolin v. Story*, 225 F.3d 1234, 1239 (11th Cir. 2000)) (internal quotation marks omitted). Because Watrel's claims against the judges related to actions taken in their capacity as state court judges, the district court did not err. *See id.*

Watrel also challenges the denial of her post-judgment motion for recusal. Two statutes govern recusal of federal judges. *See* 28 U.S.C. §§ 144, 455. Section 144 provides that a party may file an affidavit that the judge presiding over the matter "has a personal bias or prejudice either against him or in favor of any adverse party," and then the "judge shall proceed no further therein, but another judge shall be assigned to hear such proceeding." 28 U.S.C.

§ 144. "To warrant recusal under § 144, the moving party must allege facts that would convince a reasonable person that bias actually exists." *Christo v. Padgett*, 223 F.3d 1324, 1333 (11th Cir. 2000). Section 455(a) provides that a federal judge "shall disqualify himself in any proceeding in which h[er] impartiality might reasonably be questioned." 28 U.S.C. § 455(a). Section 455(b) provides that disqualification is also required if the judge "has a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party, or personal knowledge of disputed evidentiary facts concerning the proceeding" or "has served in governmental employment and in such capacity . . . expressed an opinion concerning the merits of the particular case in controversy." *Id.* § 455(b)(1), (3). Watrel offered no evidence of extrajudicial bias to satisfy either standard. *See Bolin*, 225 F.3d at 1239 ("[E]xcept where pervasive bias is shown, a judge's rulings in the same or a related case are not a sufficient basis for recusal.").

AFFIRMED.