

**NONPRECEDENTIAL DISPOSITION**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 February 22, 2023\*

Decided February 23, 2023

**Before**

DIANE S. SYKES, *Chief Judge*

DAVID F. HAMILTON, *Circuit Judge*

JOHN Z. LEE, *Circuit Judge*

No. 22-1414

DARLENE BARNES-ANNABI,  
*Plaintiff-Appellant,*

*v.*

IRIS Y. MARTINEZ, Clerk of the Circuit  
Court of Cook County,  
*Defendant-Appellee.*

Appeal from the United States District  
Court for the Northern District of Illinois,  
Eastern Division.

No. 21 C 1674

Gary Feinerman,  
*Judge.*

**ORDER**

Darlene Barnes-Annabi sued Iris Martinez in her official capacity as Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, asserting that the Clerk's Office violated various federal

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\* We have agreed to decide the case without oral argument because the briefs and the 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).

laws when employing Barnes-Annabi and ultimately firing her. The district judge dismissed her complaint, concluding that either sovereign immunity or claim preclusion barred her claims. Because Barnes-Annabi does not develop any arguments contesting that decision, we dismiss the appeal.

Barnes-Annabi worked for the Clerk's Office from 2010 to 2012. Between late 2011 and early 2012, Barnes-Annabi was demoted, fired, rehired, and fired again. Four lawsuits followed. First, in 2014, Barnes-Annabi filed two actions in the Northern District of Illinois alleging that the Clerk's Office discriminated against her (by demoting, underpaying, harassing, and firing her) based on race, color, national origin, religion, alleged disability, and sex. The complaints were consolidated into one case (14-cv-3100, "*Barnes II*"), which was later dismissed with prejudice for want of prosecution.

In 2015, Barnes-Annabi filed another lawsuit against the Clerk's Office (15-cv-9451, "*Barnes III*"), this time alleging that the Clerk discriminated against her (by paying her less and perpetrating harassment) on the basis of her national origin and ancestry, religion, disability, marital status, and status as the grantee of a domestic-violence order of protection. That case was later dismissed on the ground of claim preclusion.

Barnes-Annabi filed this lawsuit in 2021, asserting that, during her employment, she was harassed, demoted, and ultimately fired in 2012 because she was related to then-Clerk Dorothy Brown's campaign manager, because she had mental disabilities (depression, insomnia, and anxiety), and because she had filed a discrimination claim with the Illinois Department of Human Rights. In her pro se complaint, she invoked as grounds for relief the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101; the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 791; Title VII, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e; and 42 U.S.C. §§ 1981, 1983. Barnes-Annabi included with her complaint a new right-to-sue letter from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regarding her claim of discrimination based on mental disabilities. The defendants moved to dismiss the complaint.

After a hearing, the district judge orally dismissed Barnes-Annabi's suit. He first ruled that sovereign immunity barred the official-capacity claims under § 1981 and § 1983 because the clerk is a state official. He next determined that Barnes-Annabi's discrimination claim based on her relation to Dorothy Brown's campaign manager appeared to be precluded but noted that the defendants had not raised that affirmative defense. He thus dismissed the claim based on sovereign immunity and statute of limitations grounds. Finally, the judge concluded that claim preclusion barred all remaining claims because they arose from the same facts as those in *Barnes II* & *Barnes III*. Barnes-Annabi appeals.

To the extent that Barnes-Annabi contends that the recent right-to-sue letter pertaining to disability discrimination renewed her right to bring the claim, the argument is meritless. The requirement to exhaust administrative remedies is irrelevant to claim preclusion, the primary reason for the dismissal. Barnes-Annabi claimed disability discrimination in every prior suit against the Clerk's Office, and exhausting her administrative remedies after the fact does not create another chance to do so. *See Barr v. Board of Trustees of Western Illinois University*, 796 F.3d 837, 840 (7th Cir. 2015).

Otherwise, Barnes-Annabi does not provide any argument for vacating the dismissal, *see* FED. R. APP. P. 28(a)(8), so we must dismiss this appeal. *See Anderson v. Hardman*, 241 F.3d 544, 545–46 (7th Cir. 2001). Her brief discusses other orders in the case and refers to general pleading standards, but she does not mention statutes of limitations, sovereign immunity, or claim preclusion, let alone argue why they do not apply to her claims. We construe pro se arguments liberally, but we cannot glean any ground for reversal when the appellant does not engage with the district judge's ruling or develop any arguments. *See id.*; *Shipley v. Chicago Board of Election Commissioners*, 947 F.3d 1056, 1062–63 (7th Cir. 2020).

DISMISSED