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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

LUIS VILLEGAS,

 Plaintiff,

 v.

D. ROBERTS, *et al.*,

 Defendants.

Case No. 1:17-cv-01326-AWI-JDP

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO
DISMISS CASE FOR PLAINTIFF’S
FAILURES TO PROSECUTE AND TO
COMPLY WITH COURT ORDERS

OBJECTIONS, IF ANY, DUE IN FOURTEEN
DAYS

Plaintiff Luis Villegas is a state prisoner proceeding without counsel in this civil rights action brought under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. On March 5, 2019, defendant Medina moved for summary judgment on the ground that plaintiff failed to exhaust his administrative remedies before filing suit. ECF No. 28. Plaintiff had twenty-one days to oppose defendant’s motion under Local Rule 230(1), but he failed to do so. Instead of opposing defendant’s motion, plaintiff moved for the appointment of counsel. ECF No. 31. On April 3, 2019, the court denied plaintiff’s motion and ordered him to respond to defendant’s motion for summary judgment within twenty-one days. ECF No. 32. Plaintiff failed to respond, thereby disobeying the court’s order.

The court may dismiss a case for plaintiff’s failure to prosecute or failure to comply with a

1 court order. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b); *Hells Canyon Pres. Council v. U.S. Forest Serv.*, 403 F.3d
2 683, 689 (9th Cir. 2005). Involuntary dismissal is a harsh penalty, but a district court has duties
3 to resolve disputes expeditiously and to avoid needless burden for the parties. *See*
4 Fed. R. Civ. P. 1; *Pagtalunan v. Galaza*, 291 F.3d 639, 642 (9th Cir. 2002).

5 In considering whether to dismiss a case for failure to prosecute, a court ordinarily
6 considers five factors: “(1) the public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation; (2) the
7 court’s need to manage its docket; (3) the risk of prejudice to the defendants; (4) the public policy
8 favoring disposition of cases on their merits and (5) the availability of less drastic sanctions.”
9 *Omstead v. Dell, Inc.*, 594 F.3d 1081, 1084 (9th Cir. 2010) (quoting *Henderson v. Duncan*, 779
10 F.2d 1421, 1423 (9th Cir.1986)). These heuristic factors merely guide the court’s inquiry; they
11 are not conditions precedent for dismissal. *See In re Phenylpropanolamine (PPA) Products*
12 *Liability Litig.*, 460 F.3d 1217, 1226 (9th Cir. 2006).

13 “The public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation always favors dismissal.”
14 *Pagtalunan v. Galaza*, 291 F.3d 639, 642 (9th Cir. 2002) (quoting *Yourish v. California*
15 *Amplifier*, 191 F.3d 983, 990 (9th Cir. 1999)). Accordingly, this factor weighs in favor of
16 dismissal.

17 Turning to the risk of prejudice, pendency of a lawsuit, on its own, is not sufficiently
18 prejudicial to warrant dismissal. *Id.* (citing *Yourish*, 191 F.3d at 991). However, delay inherently
19 increases the risk that witnesses’ memories will fade and evidence will become stale, *id.* at 643,
20 and it is plaintiff’s failure to prosecute this case that is causing delay. Therefore, the third factor
21 weighs in favor of dismissal.

22 As for the availability of lesser sanctions, at this stage in the proceedings there is little
23 available to the court that would constitute a satisfactory lesser sanction while protecting the court
24 from further unnecessary expenditure of its scarce resources. Monetary sanctions are of little use,
25 considering plaintiff’s apparent inability to pay the filing fee, and—given the stage of these
26 proceedings—the preclusion of evidence or witnesses is not available. Accordingly, the fourth
27 factor also weighs in favor of dismissal.

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1 Finally, because public policy favors disposition on the merits, this factor weighs against
2 dismissal. *Id.*

3 After weighing the factors, including the court's need to manage its docket, the court finds
4 that dismissal is appropriate. The court recommends dismissal without prejudice.

5 **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

6 The court recommends that the case be dismissed for plaintiff's failures to prosecute and
7 comply with court orders. The undersigned submits these findings and recommendations to the
8 U.S. district judge presiding over the case under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Local Rule 304.
9 Within 14 days of the service of the findings and recommendations, the parties may file written
10 objections to the findings and recommendations with the court and serve a copy on all parties.
11 The document containing the objections must be captioned "Objections to Magistrate Judge's
12 Findings and Recommendations." The presiding district judge will then review the findings and
13 recommendations under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C). The parties' failure to file objections within
14 the specified time may waive their rights on appeal. *See Wilkerson v. Wheeler*, 772 F.3d 834, 839
15 (9th Cir. 2014).

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17 IT IS SO ORDERED.

18 Dated: May 13, 2019

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20 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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22 No. 203
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