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United States District Court  
Northern District of California

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
SAN JOSE DIVISION**

DOROTHY CATHERINE BRAGA, by and through the Conservator of her Person and her Estate, Mary Ann Warren, the Public Guardian of the County of Santa Clara,

Plaintiffs,

v.

STEPHEN JOSEPH BRAGA,

Defendant.

Case No. 21-cv-06331-BLF

**ORDER GRANTING DEFENDANT’S APPLICATION TO PROCEED IN FORMA PAUPERIS; AND ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE WHY CASE SHOULD NOT BE REMANDED FOR LACK OF SUBJECT MATTER JURISDICTION**

On August 16, 2021, Defendant Stephen Joseph Braga filed a Notice of Removal, purporting to remove this probate action from the Santa Clara County Superior Court. Defendant also filed an application to proceed in district court *in forma pauperis* (“IFP”). The case action was reassigned to the undersigned judge on August 27, 2021.

Defendant’s application to proceed IFP is GRANTED.

Defendant is ORDERED TO SHOW CAUSE, in writing and on or before September 22, 2021, why this action should not be remanded to the Santa Clara County Superior Court for lack of federal subject matter jurisdiction. Based on the document attached to the Notice of Removal, titled “Notice of Hearing – Guardianship or Conservatorship,” it appears that this probate action involves a petition to quiet title to real property brought by Plaintiff Dorothy C. Braga, by and through the Conservator of her Person and her Estate, Mary Ann Warren, the Public Guardian of the County of Santa Clara. “The probate exception to federal jurisdiction reserves probate matters to state probate courts and precludes federal courts from disposing of property in the custody of a

1 state court.” *Goncalves By & Through Goncalves v. Rady Children’s Hosp. San Diego*, 865 F.3d  
2 1237, 1251 (9th Cir. 2017) (citing *Marshall v. Marshall*, 547 U.S. 293, 311 (2006)). The present  
3 action appears to fall squarely within this exception to federal jurisdiction. The Court notes that  
4 Defendant refers to numerous federal statutes in the Notice of Removal. The relevance of those  
5 statutes to the probate matter is unclear. Even if one or more of those federal statutes could be  
6 raised as a defense to the probate action, “[f]ederal jurisdiction cannot be predicated on an actual  
7 or anticipated defense.” *Vaden v. Discover Bank*, 556 U.S. 49, 60 (2009).

8 If Defendant fails to respond to the Order to Show Cause, or does respond but fails to  
9 establish a basis for federal subject matter jurisdiction over this state probate action, the action will  
10 be remanded to the Santa Clara County Superior Court.

11 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

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13 Dated: September 8, 2021

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15 BETH LABSON FREEMAN  
16 United States District Judge  
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United States District Court  
Northern District of California