

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO
Judge Philip A. Brimmer

Civil Action No. 18-cv-00894-PAB

STACY DODD, SR,

Plaintiff,

v.

GEICO GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY,

Defendant.

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE

The Court takes up this matter *sua sponte* on plaintiff's complaint [Docket No. 1]. Plaintiff states that this Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this lawsuit pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332. Docket No. 1 at 2, ¶ 6.

In every case and at every stage of the proceeding, a federal court must satisfy itself as to its own jurisdiction, even if doing so requires *sua sponte* action. See *Citizens Concerned for Separation of Church & State v. City & County of Denver*, 628 F.2d 1289, 1297 (10th Cir. 1980). Absent an assurance that jurisdiction exists, a court may not proceed in a case. See *Cunningham v. BHP Petroleum Great Britain PLC*, 427 F.3d 1238, 1245 (10th Cir. 2005). Courts are well-advised to raise the issue of jurisdiction on their own, regardless of parties' apparent acquiescence. First, it is the Court's duty to do so. *Tuck v. United Servs. Auto. Ass'n*, 859 F.2d 842, 844 (10th Cir. 1988). Second, regarding subject matter jurisdiction, "the consent of the parties is irrelevant, principles of estoppel do not apply, and a party does not waive the

requirement by failing to challenge jurisdiction.” *Ins. Corp. of Ireland v. Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinee*, 456 U.S. 694, 702 (1982) (internal citations omitted). Finally, delay in addressing the issue only compounds the problem if, despite much time and expense having been dedicated to the case, a lack of jurisdiction causes it to be dismissed. See *U.S. Fire Ins. Co. v. Pinkard Constr. Co.*, No. 09-cv-00491-PAB-MJW, 2009 WL 2338116, at *3 (D. Colo. July 28, 2009).

“The party invoking federal jurisdiction bears the burden of establishing such jurisdiction as a threshold matter.” *Radil v. Sanborn W. Camps, Inc.*, 384 F.3d 1220, 1224 (10th Cir. 2004). Plaintiff asserts that this Court has diversity jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1332. Pursuant to that section, “district courts shall have original jurisdiction of all civil actions where the matter in controversy exceeds the sum or value of \$75,000, exclusive of interest and costs, and is between . . . citizens of different States.” 28 U.S.C. § 1332(a).

Plaintiff alleges that he “is a resident of the State of Colorado” and that defendant is “believed to be a foreign corporation licensed to conduct business in the State of Colorado.” Docket No. 1 at 1, ¶¶ 1-2. These allegations are insufficient to establish diversity for three reasons. First, domicile, not residency or mailing address, is determinative of citizenship. *Whitelock v. Leatherman*, 460 F.2d 507, 514 (10th Cir. 1972) (“[A]llegations of mere ‘residence’ may not be equated with ‘citizenship’ for the purposes of establishing diversity.”); see also *Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians v. Holyfield*, 490 U.S. 30, 48 (1989) (“‘Domicile’ is not necessarily synonymous with ‘residence,’ and one can reside in one place but be domiciled in another.” (citations

omitted)). The residency of plaintiff is therefore not relevant for purposes of diversity jurisdiction. Second, the Court reads plaintiff's averment that defendant is "believed to be a foreign corporation" to mean that plaintiff does not have affirmative knowledge of defendant's citizenship. Such unsupported allegations do not confer subject matter jurisdiction over this case. See *Yates v. Portofino Real Estate Props. Co., LLC*, No. 08-cv-00324-PAB-MJW, 2009 WL 2588833, at *3 (D. Colo. Aug. 17, 2009) (requiring plaintiff to "address the citizenship of each of [defendant's] members without resorting merely to their 'information and belief' as to the same"); *U.S. Fire Ins. Co.*, 2009 WL 2338116, at *3 (interpreting allegations based on "information and belief" to "mean that plaintiffs have no affirmative knowledge of a lack of diversity"). Finally, a corporation is "deemed to be a citizen of every State and foreign state by which it has been incorporated and of the State or foreign state where it has its principal place of business." 28 U.S.C. § 1332(c)(1). Plaintiff alleges that defendant is a "foreign corporation" licensed to conduct business in Colorado but fails to identify the location of defendant's principal place of business.

For these reasons, plaintiff's allegations are presently insufficient to allow the Court to determine the citizenship of the parties or whether the Court has jurisdiction. See *United States ex rel. General Rock & Sand Corp. v. Chuska Dev. Corp.*, 55 F.3d 1491, 1495 (10th Cir. 1995) ("The party seeking the exercise of jurisdiction in his favor must allege in his pleading the facts essential to show jurisdiction.") (citations and internal quotation marks omitted). Accordingly, it is

ORDERED that, on or before **5:00 p.m.** on **April 27, 2018**, plaintiff shall show

cause why this case should not be dismissed due to the Court's lack of subject matter jurisdiction.

DATED April 18, 2018.

BY THE COURT:

s/Philip A. Brimmer
PHILIP A. BRIMMER
United States District Judge