

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**FILED**

**MAR - 2 2010**

**Clerk, U.S. District and  
Bankruptcy Courts**

Lawrence Howard, )  
)  
Plaintiff, )  
)  
v. )  
)  
Michael Bell *et al.*, )  
)  
Defendants. )

Civil Action No. **10 0333**

MEMORANDUM OPINION

This matter is before the Court on plaintiff's *pro se* complaint and application to proceed *in forma pauperis*. The Court will grant plaintiff's application and dismiss the complaint for lack of subject matter jurisdiction.

The subject matter jurisdiction of the federal district courts is limited and is set forth generally at 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1332. Under those statutes, federal jurisdiction is available only when a "federal question" is presented or the parties are of diverse citizenship and the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000. A party seeking relief in the district court must at least plead facts that bring the suit within the court's jurisdiction. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a). Failure to plead such facts warrants dismissal of the action. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(h)(3).

Plaintiff, a District of Columbia resident, sues District of Columbia-based Washington Gas and a Washington Gas Specialist for allegedly denying services to him because of overdue payments, which he contests. Plaintiff seeks the restoration of services. The complaint neither presents a federal question nor provides a basis for diversity jurisdiction because the parties are not of diverse citizenship and no amount in controversy pleaded. Plaintiff's recourse lies, if at

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all, in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Accordingly, the complaint will be dismissed. A separate Order accompanies this Memorandum Opinion.

Date: February 19, 2010

  
United States District Judge