

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

SHANTELL D. NEWMAN, :  
 :  
 Plaintiff, :  
 :  
 v. : Civil Action No. 22-085-RGA  
 :  
 ANTHONY S. FAUCI, et al., :  
 :  
 Defendants. :

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Shantell D. Newman, Wilmington, Delaware. Pro Se Plaintiff.

**MEMORANDUM OPINION**

April 8, 2022  
Wilmington, Delaware

  
**ANDREWS, U.S. District Judge:**

Plaintiff Shantell Newman appears *pro se* and has been granted leave to proceed *in forma pauperis*. (D.I. 4). She commenced this action on the basis of a federal question, a federal defendant, and violations of the Moroccan-American Treaty of Peace and Friendship, the “Nuremberg Code,” and of Human Rights. (D.I. 2 at 3). The Court proceeds to screen the Complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

### **BACKGROUND**

The following facts are taken from the Complaint and assumed to be true for purposes of screening the Complaint. See *Umland v. PLANCO Fin. Servs., Inc.*, 542 F.3d 59, 64 (3d Cir. 2008). Plaintiff sues Defendants Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., Bill and Melinda Gates, and the “Biden Administration.” While not a model of clarity, it seems she takes exception to a COVID vaccination mandate, asks that it stop, and seeks 1.5 million dollars in damages.

### **SCREENING OF COMPLAINT**

A federal court may properly dismiss an action *sua sponte* under the screening provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B) if “the action is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.” *Ball v. Famiglio*, 726 F.3d 448, 452 (3d Cir. 2013). See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) (*in forma pauperis* actions). The Court must accept all factual allegations in a complaint as true and take them in the light most favorable to a *pro se* plaintiff. *Phillips v. County of Allegheny*, 515 F.3d 224, 229 (3d Cir. 2008); *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 93 (2007). Because Plaintiff proceeds *pro se*, her pleading is liberally construed and her Complaint, “however inartfully pleaded, must be

held to less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers.” *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. at 94.

A complaint is not automatically frivolous because it fails to state a claim. See *Dooley v. Wetzel*, 957 F.3d. 366, 374 (3d Cir. 2020). “Rather, a claim is frivolous only where it depends ‘on an “indisputably meritless legal theory” or a “clearly baseless” or “fantastic or delusional” factual scenario.’” *Id.*

The legal standard for dismissing a complaint for failure to state a claim pursuant to § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) and § 1915A(b)(1) is identical to the legal standard used when ruling on Rule 12(b)(6) motions. *Tourscher v. McCullough*, 184 F.3d 236, 240 (3d Cir. 1999). However, before dismissing a complaint or claims for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted pursuant to the screening provisions of 28 U.S.C. §§1915 and 1915A, the Court must grant Plaintiff leave to amend her complaint unless amendment would be inequitable or futile. See *Grayson v. Mayview State Hosp.*, 293 F.3d 103, 114 (3d Cir. 2002).

A well-pleaded complaint must contain more than mere labels and conclusions. See *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662 (2009); *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544 (2007). A plaintiff must plead facts sufficient to show that a claim has substantive plausibility. See *Johnson v. City of Shelby*, 574 U.S. 10 (2014). A complaint may not be dismissed, however, for imperfect statements of the legal theory supporting the claim asserted. See *id.* at 11.

A court reviewing the sufficiency of a complaint must take three steps: (1) take note of the elements the plaintiff must plead to state a claim; (2) identify allegations that, because they are no more than conclusions, are not entitled to the assumption of truth;

and (3) when there are well-pleaded factual allegations, assume their veracity and then determine whether they plausibly give rise to an entitlement to relief. *Connelly v. Lane Constr. Corp.*, 809 F.3d 780, 787 (3d Cir. 2016). Elements are sufficiently alleged when the facts in the complaint “show” that the plaintiff is entitled to relief. *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 679 (quoting Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2)). Deciding whether a claim is plausible will be a “context-specific task that requires the reviewing court to draw on its judicial experience and common sense.” *Id.*

### **DISCUSSION**

There are no allegations that Plaintiff is a federal worker or that any federal mandate requiring vaccines applies to her. Bill and Melinda Gates are not federal actors and, therefore, the claim against them is not cognizable. See *Bivens v. Six Unknown Named Agents of Federal Bureau of Narcotics*, 403 U.S. 388, 389 (1971) (where a litigant sue federal actors for damages on constitutional grounds, the claim is governed by *Bivens*). Moreover, the Biden Administration, which I take to mean the executive branch of the U.S. Government, has sovereign immunity. See *United States v. Mitchell*, 445 U.S. 535, 538 (1980) (it is well established that an action against the United States cannot be maintained unless the United States waives its sovereign immunity). Finally, the Complaint contains no plausible allegations supporting a request for relief against Dr. Fauci.

### **CONCLUSION**

For the above reasons, the Court will dismiss the Complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i). Amendment is futile.

An appropriate Order will be entered.