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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
WESTERN DIVISION

INZER ADVANCE DESIGNS, INC.,

Plaintiff,

Case No. 1:25-cv-00171

v.

Judge Jeffery P. Hopkins

APRIL MATHIS,

Defendant.

ORDER

Before the Court is the not-so-typical *pro se* motion. Motions to file amicus briefs are typically made on appeal. Other times, though rare, these requests are made at the trial level by non-parties in order to provide a unique perspective regarding matters of public interest in a case pending before the Court. The Court now is presented with the truly unusual case: a motion for leave to file an amicus brief at the trial-court level by an unrepresented non-party on behalf of another unrepresented party—the defendant in the case. On July 18, 2025, Mr. Gordon W. Watts (“Mr. Watts”), *pro se*, moved to appear as *amicus curiae* in support of Defendant April Mathis (“Defendant” or “Ms. Mathis”) also proceeding *pro se*. Doc. 8. Shortly thereafter, Plaintiff Inzer Advance Designs, Inc. (“Plaintiff”) responded in opposition to the motion. Doc. 9. For the reasons stated below, the Court **DENIES** the motion. Doc. 8.

I. BACKGROUND

This case arises from a patent infringement suit. Plaintiff designs and sells powerlifting equipment products across the country. Compl., Doc. 1, ¶ 9. The product most relevant here is the weightlifting wrap of which there are three versions: the wrist wrap, the elbow wrap,

and the knee wrap. *Id.* ¶ 17. The knee wrap, for example, is intended to support weightlifters performing physical activities such as squats, leg presses, and lunges by holding the knee in place. Doc. 1-1, PageID 22. On April 28, 2017, Plaintiff filed a patent application for the weightlifting wrap with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (the “Office”). *Id.*, PageID 13. About a year later, the Office issued Patent 9,895,594.¹ *Id.*

On March 18, 2025, Plaintiff initiated this action pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §§ 101 and 271 alleging patent infringement against Ms. Mathis. Compl., Doc. 1. According to the Complaint, Ms. Mathis sells weightlifting wraps on eBay that are substantially the same as Plaintiff’s wraps. *Id.* ¶ 31. On April 8, 2025, Ms. Mathis filed an answer and counterclaim. Doc. 6. Shortly after, Plaintiff filed a motion to strike the answer, dismiss the counterclaim, and instead refer the case to alternative dispute resolution. Doc. 7. Ms. Mathis failed to respond. On July 18, 2025, Mr. Watts filed a motion for leave to file an amicus brief (the “Motion”) as a “supporting answer” to the Complaint because Ms. Mathis was “overwhelmed” by the litigation. Doc. 8-1, PageID 109–10. Plaintiff objected stating that Mr. Watts raised irrelevant issues not currently pending before the Court. Doc. 9, PageID 133. The matter is now ripe for consideration.

II. LAW AND ANALYSIS

Though Mr. Watts’s efforts are noble, there is no occasion for his *amicus curiae* submission. To begin, federal district courts have broad discretion when deciding whether to admit an amicus brief. *See United States v. State of Mich.*, 940 F.2d 143, 165 (6th Cir. 1991). Because of its rarity, though, district courts tend to be more skeptical when amicus briefs are

¹ Plaintiff’s patent was issued on February 20, 2018. Doc. 1-1, PageID 13.

filed. As one district court noted, “the aid of *amicus curiae* may be less appropriate [at the district court] than at the appellate level where such participation has become standard procedure.” *Finkle v. Howard Cnty., Md.*, 12 F. Supp. 3d 780, 783 (D. Md. 2014) (cleaned up).

In fact, Rule 29 of the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure governs amicus filings in federal appellate courts. However, there is no analogous rule or established procedure applicable to federal district courts. *See Bounty Mins., LLC v. Chesapeake Expl., LLC*, 5:17-cv-1695, 2019 WL 7048981, at *10 (N.D. Ohio Dec. 23, 2019) (“The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure do not address motions for leave to appear as *amicus curiae* in a federal district court.”). Thus, the ultimate decision falls under the district court’s inherent authority. *League of Women Voters of Ohio v. LaRose*, 741 F. Supp. 3d 694, 725 (N.D. Ohio 2024); *Bounty Mins., LLC*, 2019 WL 7048981, at *10.

As noted by the Sixth Circuit, amicus briefs should not be admitted to “provide a highly partisan account of the facts, but rather to aid the court in resolving doubtful issues of law.” *State of Mich.*, 940 F.2d 143 at 165. What matters most is whether the information provided is “useful, or otherwise necessary to the administration of justice.” *Id.* And importantly, “an amicus ought to add something distinctive to the presentation of the issues, rather than serving as a mere conduit for the views of one of the parties.” 16AA C. Wright & A. Miller, *Federal Practice and Procedure* § 3975 (5th ed. 2025).

First, according to Mr. Watts, this action is a matter of “great public importance” because the parties to the suit are “legendary world-record holders” in powerlifting. Doc. 8-1, PageID 110. The Court disagrees. Typically, matters of great public importance deal with “highly emotional” issues and matters related to public policy. *See United States v. Windsor*, 570 U.S. 744, 807 (2013). Conversely, the current case is a patent infringement suit. In this

case, the factfinder must decide whether Ms. Mathis sold weightlifting wraps on eBay that are substantially similar to the wrist, elbow, and knee wraps sold by Plaintiff in violation of Plaintiff's patent. Though interesting, the issues presented in this case and the "legendary world-records" allegedly held by the parties do not present matters of great public importance.

Second, Mr. Watts asserts that he has a direct interest in the outcome of the case. For explanation, he states that he is an advocate for positive community relations and has a good friendship with Ms. Mathis since she "used to lift in his former gym." Doc. 8-1, PageID 110. In addition, he states that his amicus brief is necessary because Ms. Mathis is "overwhelmed with filings" as she is not a lawyer; she has a full-time job which provides little time for legal research; and her family members have incurred health and financial difficulties, which impacts her ability to properly litigate this matter. *Id.* In addition, Mr. Watts filed the amicus brief as a "supporting answer" to the Complaint because Ms. Mathis is "overwhelmed" by the litigation. *Id.* He further states that Ms. Mathis made "two or three good defenses" in her answer but failed to "acknowledge" other design features that would be helpful to her case. *Id.* at PageID 111. All these statements confirm that Mr. Watts proposes to "provide a highly partisan account of the facts," rather than "aid[ing] the Court in resolving doubtful issues of law." *State of Mich.*, 940 F.2d 143 at 165.

Finally, Mr. Watts states that his amicus brief provides helpful information to assist the Court in its decision making. The Court disagrees. The information provided in an amicus brief must be useful. *Id.* Here, Mr. Watts describes himself as an "an amateur powerlifter" that can assist the court with understandings of "copyright" issues that the "parties have overlooked." Doc. 8-1, PageID 109, 111. Not only does Mr. Watts describe himself as a non-expert on the matter, but additionally, the issues presented before the Court concern *patent*

law, not copyright law. Patents protect technical inventions; while copyrights protect creative works such as art, books, and music. Importantly, “[t]he two areas of the law, naturally, are not identical twins.” *Sony Corp. of Am. v. Universal City Studios, Inc.*, 464 U.S. 417, 439 n. 19 (1984). Therefore, the Court is not convinced that Mr. Watts can aid the Court in resolving the legal questions before it.

III. CONCLUSION

After careful consideration, the Court **DENIES** the Motion for leave to file amicus brief filed by Mr. Gordon Watts. Doc. 8.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

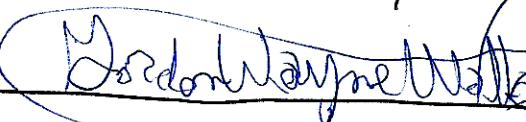
January 27, 2026


Jeffery P. Hopkins
United States District Judge

Received by U.S. RS mail "in box"
on SAT 31 Jan 2026

by the ~~undersigned~~ undersigned,

Gordon Wayne Watts


Gordon Wayne Watts