

May 18, 2026

The Federal Court Sent Your Case to Arbitration. Does It Keep the Case for Post-Arbitration Proceedings?

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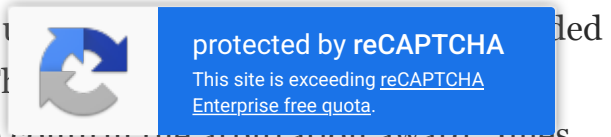
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A federal court sends your case to arbitration. But who later decides the fate of the arbitration award—the same federal judge or a new state court? The U.S. Supreme Court has now answered that question: the same federal judge who sent the case to arbitration continues to have jurisdiction to confirm or vacate the resulting arbitration award. The Court’s decision, issued on May 14, 2026, and titled *Jules v. Andre Balazs Properties*, 608 U.S. ___ (2026), resolves a previous split among federal appellate courts on this issue.

Background

The underlying dispute concerned the termination of plaintiff Adrian Jules’s employment by the Chateau Marmont Hotel in Los Angeles. Jules sued his former employer in federal district court, alleging employment discrimination. The employer moved under Section 3 of the Federal Arbitration Act (FAA) to stay the case pending arbitration, citing an arbitration agreement that Jules had signed when he was hired. The district court held that the arbitration agreement covered Jules’s claims and stayed the case. Jules then commenced arbitration and won. The district court awarded Jules’s former employer \$34,500 in sanctions. The employer then moved under FAA Section 9 to confirm the arbitration award. Jules



filed a cross-motion under FAA Section 10 to vacate the award and argued that under the Supreme Court’s previous decision in *Badgerow v. Walters*, 596 U.S. 1 (2022), the district court lacked jurisdiction to confirm the arbitration award because it did not have an independent basis (i.e., a basis outside of the FAA) for federal jurisdiction.

Under *Badgerow*, a federal court cannot hear a motion to confirm or vacate an arbitral award under FAA Sections 9 and 10 if that motion does not present, on its face, an independent basis for federal jurisdiction. That is because although the FAA is a federal statute, it does not itself confer federal jurisdiction.

The Supreme Court’s Holding

The Supreme Court held that the same jurisdiction that had allowed the district court to determine whether Jules’s claims were subject to arbitration also allowed it to decide the employer’s motion to confirm the arbitration award. In *Badgerow*, the motions to confirm or vacate were not filed in an already-existing action. Rather, they were the first and only thing that had happened in federal court. By contrast, Jules’s employer brought its motion to confirm in an *existing* federal action that Jules had filed. The district court had jurisdiction over Jules’s federal employment claims when it stayed those claims pending arbitration. As the Supreme Court put it, “[t]he court had federal question subject matter jurisdiction and...never lost it.”

Practical Impact

The decision yields several key takeaways for parties and counsel, including the following:

- If a federal court stays a case pending arbitration under FAA Section 3, that same federal court retains jurisdiction to confirm or vacate the arbitration award. Parties do not need to file a separate state-court action to enforce or challenge the award.
- The decision limits jurisdictional gamesmanship. A party cannot defeat federal jurisdiction over confirmation or vacatur proceedings simply by arguing that the post-award motions themselves lack an independent basis for federal

jurisdiction.

- The ruling reinforces the FAA’s efficiency goals by keeping the entire dispute within a single federal proceeding (from the initial lawsuit, through the stay and arbitration, to confirmation or vacatur of the award and any appeal of the court’s arbitrability decision) thereby avoiding duplicative filings, parallel proceedings, and inconsistent results.

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