

## Judge will allow civil suit against Vectren

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A civil suit filed against Vectren can move forward on one part of a two-part complaint, a federal judge ruled this week.

The suit, filed in March 2015 by a group of 17 current and former Vectren employees, is at heart a dispute over retirement benefits.

All of the plaintiffs are former employees of Southern Indiana Gas and Electric, or SIGECO, which became a Vectren subsidiary in 2000.

As part of that transition, Vectren gave SIGECO employees an option of whether to continue with SIGECO's defined-benefit retirement plan or switch to Vectren's cash-balance plan.

The plaintiffs' complaint had two parts.

In Count 1, they alleged that Vectren misled them about the plans, causing them to choose the cash-balance plan when they would have done better to keep their SIGECO plan.

In Count 2, the plaintiffs alleged that Vectren illegally decreased their benefits

in violation of federal law.

Vectren responded by asking the court to enter a summary judgment in its favor. Vectren also argued that the six-year statute of limitations to file claims had run out.

Last week, attorneys for both sides met with U.S. District Court Judge Richard Young in Evansville to discuss the matter in open court. Young said at the time that he was seeking additional clarity because of the complexities of the case.

In an opinion issued Tuesday, Young ruled that Count 1 should be allowed to move forward and that Count 2 should be dismissed.

But in his ruling, Young also said "the statute of limitations argument is a close call," especially at this early stage of the case.

One of the plaintiffs' attorneys, Todd Barsumian, said the judge's ruling is a positive development for his clients.

"We certainly look at this as giving our clients a chance to have their rights vindicated."

Attorneys for Vectren could not be reached for comment.

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