IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF
CROCKETT COUNTY, TEXAS
112TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

STANDING ORDER REGARDING PUBLIC ACCESS TO DFPS COURT RECORDS

On the 24th day of May, 2024, the Court considered the following and issues findings and orders related to pleadings, orders, and documents filed in a suit brought by the Department of Family and Protective Services, (hereinafter referred to as "DFPS") pursuant to Chapters 261, 262, and 264 of the Texas Family Code.

The Court finds that the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) generally requires that states preserve the confidentiality of all child abuse and neglect reports and records to protect the rights of the child and the child's parents or guardians. 42 U.S.C.A. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(viii).

The Court finds that the plain language of Texas Family Code 261.201 deems DFPS records of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect to be confidential and not subject to public release absent a court order following an in-camera inspection and a finding of necessity.

The Court finds that these pleadings, orders, and documents contain sensitive information regarding children who have been or may have been abused or neglected by parties responsible for their care.

The Court finds that these pleadings, orders, and documents contain sensitive information regarding family members, specifically regarding the parents of the children who may be alleged perpetrators of abuse or neglect.

The Court finds that because of the sensitive information contained within these pleadings, orders, and documents, it is necessary to restrict public access to these pleadings, orders, and documents.

The Court finds that restricting public access to these pleadings, orders, and documents would protect the privacy rights of both children and other family members, including the parents of the children.

The Court further finds that it has authority to control access to its own records.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that public access to pleadings, orders, and documents filed in a suit brought by DFPS pursuant to Chapters 261, 262, and 264 of the Texas Family Code are to be restricted and shall be maintained by the District Clerk of Crockett County as such. The Clerk of the Court shall not allow public access to these pleadings, orders, and documents other than to DFPS, the parties, their attorneys, the attorney ad litem and the guardian ad litem unless specifically permitted and ordered by this Court.

The Clerk is directed to:

a. Submit a copy of this order with the Office of Court Administration's Local Rules, Forms and Standing Orders website;

b. Cause a copy of this order to be provided to each attorney designated by this Court as attorney ad litem for children or parents; and
c. Send a copy of this order to the appropriate CASA agency for this Court.

SIGNED this 29th day of May, 2024.

JUDGE PRESIDING