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FIRST CIRCUIT
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Dkt. 11 OGD

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

STATE OF HAWAII

LIANE ONO, individually, and as Next
Friend of [REDACTED]

Plaintiff,

vs.

IWAO SUZUKI; JOHN DOES 1-10; JANE
DOES 1-10; DOE CORPORATIONS 1-10;
DOE PARTNERSHIPS 1-10; DOE NON-
PROFIT ENTITIES 1-10; and DOE
GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES 1-10,

Defendants.

Case No. 1CC101001142 (TRT)
(Other Non-Vehicle Tort)

ORDER GRANTING IN PART AND
DENYING IN PART PUBLIC FIRST LAW
CENTER'S NON-HEARING MOTION TO
UNSEAL, filed on February 13, 2026 as
Dkt. 7

Judge: Hon. Taryn R. Tomasa
Trial: None

**ORDER GRANTING IN PART AND DENYING IN PART PUBLIC
FIRST LAW CENTER'S NON-HEARING MOTION
TO UNSEAL, filed on February 13, 2026 as Dkt. 7**

On May 25, 2010, Plaintiff filed an "Ex Parte Motion for Filing Documents Under 'Doe' Designations and to Place Records and Files Under Seal" ("Ex Parte Motion") asking to seal the Complaint and Summons and "any and all documents thereafter under 'DOE' designations and under seal" on grounds that the Plaintiff is presently eight (8) years of age, has claims that are sensitive in nature when viewed in light of the circumstances of the claims, and [a] right to privacy."

Plaintiff's Ex Parte Motion was granted on May 26, 2010, stating that "Plaintiff shall be allowed to file [the Ex Parte Motion] under seal and file [the] Complaint and Summons and all

subsequent pleadings under ‘DOE’ designations under seal pending settlement negotiations among the parties.”

On June 8, 2010, a “Notice of Dismissal with Prejudice as to All Claims and All Parties” was filed, and the case was terminated.

On February 13, 2026, the Court received Public First Law Center’s “Non-Hearing Motion to Unseal” (Dkt. 7) (“Motion”). No opposition was filed in response to said Motion.

Pursuant to the Hawai‘i Constitution, Article 1, Section 4, the public holds a qualified constitutional right to access a civil case file’s record. Additionally, Rule 10.10 of the Hawai‘i Court Records Rules (“HCRR”) states that a record shall be made “available for inspection and copying within a reasonable time” upon receipt of the request for an accessible record. Nevertheless, if the request is for a confidential record and the requestor does not have a right to access it, the Clerk shall notify the requestor that a court order is needed, in which case the requestor may move the Court for access.

The presumption of public access, however, may be overcome if procedural and substantive requirements are met. See State v. Rogan, 156 Hawai‘i 233, 243 (2025). The procedural requirements are “(1) those objecting to sealing must be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard; and (2) the reasons that support sealing must be articulated in findings.” Id. The substantive test requires the court to examine whether “(1) the sealing serves a compelling interest that overcomes the right of public access to the records; (2) there is a substantial probability that this interest would be harmed absent the closure or sealing; and (3) there are no alternatives to closure or sealing that would adequately protect the compelling interest.” Id. at 243.

Here, the record does not expressly demonstrate whether the requisite findings necessary to seal a judicial record in its entirety were met. The Court notes, however, that a compelling interest exists in protecting Plaintiff’s privacy because Plaintiff was a minor when the Complaint was filed. Nevertheless, upon careful consideration, this compelling interest may be preserved by redacting Plaintiff’s identifying information from the record, as unsealing and failing to redact would compromise Plaintiff’s interest in privacy and bring harm to Plaintiff.

Thus, the Court, having reviewed and considered the aforementioned filings and for good cause appearing thereof, hereby grants the Motion in part and denies in part. The Court shall upload a redacted version of each docket.

DATED: Honolulu, Hawai‘i, June 24, 2026.

/s/ Taryn R. Tomasa



JUDGE OF THE ABOVE-ENTITLED COURT