

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Concerns Over Delays in Family Law Cases in the Greene County Circuit Clerk's Office

To the Citizens of Greene County, Missouri:

As family law attorneys practicing in Greene County, we are deeply concerned about the ongoing delays and inefficiencies within the Circuit Clerk's Office, which impact thousands of residents who rely on the Family Court system.

It has become increasingly apparent that the current Circuit Clerk does not prioritize family law cases. In 2024 our family court commissioners handled thousands of cases. Despite the high volume of matters requiring timely attention, the backlog of filings, motions, and judgments continues to grow, leaving many families in distress.

We feel compelled to bring this issue to the attention of Greene County residents, particularly as they consider future elections for the Circuit Clerk's position. When our clients' express frustration over these delays, we are left with no viable solutions to offer them.

To be clear, we do not fault the assistant clerks who work within the office. We believe they have either been inadequately trained or have received no training. This is not merely a staffing issue—resources from other divisions of the clerk's office could be allocated to assist with the backlog. Notably, these issues are not prevalent in criminal or other civil cases. The hiring of a temporary clerk also does not solve the problem. This has been an ongoing problem for more than two (2) years. The root of this problem is a failure of leadership, and that responsibility ultimately rests with the Circuit Clerk, Mr. Feemster.

The residents of Greene County deserve better. Family law cases affect parents, children, grandparents, and extended family members. Some cases involve significant financial assets, while others determine critical matters such as child support, custody, and safety. The consequences of these delays are severe—constitutional due process rights have been denied in multiple cases.

Children suffer when custodial parents do not receive child support due to unprocessed judgments. Families face financial hardship when property sales or business interests are hindered by delayed case resolutions. Victims seeking protection in dangerous situations may be left vulnerable when emergency motions are not addressed promptly.

While children do not vote or pay taxes, they are among the most vulnerable members of our community, and they bear the greatest burden of these administrative failures. The citizens of Greene County deserve a Circuit Clerk's Office that is responsive, efficient, and committed to the fair administration of justice.

Attached to this release is a comprehensive list of concerns provided by multiple attorneys, including general inefficiencies as well as specific case examples. These deficiencies impact all aspects of family law proceedings, from initial filings and court motions to final judgments after settlement or trial.

TO: Ashley Reynolds – KY 3 areynolds@ky3.com
Lauren Inman - KOLR 10 investigates@ozarksfirst.com
Jack McGee – Springfield Daily Citizen jmcgee@sgfcitizen.org
Steve Pokin Springfield Daily Citizen spokin@sgfcitizen.org
Marta Mieze Springfield News Leader mmieze@news-leader.com
Danette Proctor – Greene County Republican Chairwoman ddproctor@d-4investments.com
Lanae Gillespie - Greene County Democratic Chairwoman lanae.gillespie@gmail.com
Kathy Lloyd, Office of State Court’s Administrator (OSCA) Kathy.lloyd@courts.mo.gov

CC: Mr. Bryan Feemster, Circuit Clerk, bryan.feemster@courts.mo.gov

BCC: The Honorable Jerry Harmison, Presiding Judge - via email to his clerk

The Honorable Derek Ankrom - via email to his clerk

The Honorable Kaiti Greenwade - via email to her clerk

The Honorable Daniel Wichmer - via email to his clerk

The Honorable Todd Myers - via email to his clerk

The Honorable Joshua Christensen - via email to his clerk

The Honorable Nathan Taylor - via email to his clerk

The Honorable Philip Fuhrman - via email to his clerk

The Honorable Margaret Palmietto - via email to her clerk

The Honorable Andy Hosmer - via email to his clerk

The Honorable Kristen Poppen - via email to her clerk

The Honorable Jody Strickland - via email to her clerk

The Honorable Ron Carrier -via email to his clerk

The Honorable Kyle Kanable - via email to his clerk

The Honorable Susan Jensen - via email to her clerk

The Honorable Mark Millsap - via email to his clerk

The Honorable John Lukachick - via email to his clerk

The Honorable Kevin Austin- via email to his clerk

The Honorable Holly Clouse -via email to her clerk

Greene County Circuit Clerk, Bryan Feemster

1. Multiple instances of Judgments on settled cases being submitted and not entered by the Circuit Clerk for significant periods of time- in excess of several months from the date of the Judge's Signature.

One example: Judgment submitted on 08/09/2024.
 Judgment "Accepted for Filing" on 08/19/2024
 Judgment signed by Judge on 08/26/2024
 Judgment entered on record on 09/18/2024

2. Multiple instances of Motions filed 7 days in advance or on a Motion to Shorten Time, and the Motion filed not being posted before the time of hearing on the same.
3. When trying to reach the Clerk's by phone and choose an extension the last few days, will ring back to the switchboard. The switchboards response is that the clerk was "short staffed" and unable to answer calls.
4. Family Access Cases- Failure to Accept filings after State Statutory deadlines for hearings and remedies. Delayed Service of Process of non-filing party. Denial of Parenting Rights.
5. Motions to Prevent Relocation- Failure to Accept filings after State Statutory deadlines for hearings and remedies. Delayed Service of Process of non-filing party. Loss of Jurisdiction.
6. Dissolutions "accepted" and docketed 10 or more days after filing, yet Satisfaction of Judgment "accepted" and docketed same day as filings. Clerk choosing which cases have priority, not first to file. Docketing a Satisfaction of a money judgment is largely a perfunctory process, while initiating a new case is more time intensive. The Clerk is "cherry picking" their work, choosing what is easy, rather than processing items in the order received.
7. Constitutional Violations of Due Process where Statutory Violations of required timelines are ignored.
8. Constitutional Violations of Due Process where Statute of Limitations are passed due to the Circuit Clerk procedures.
9. Discrimination present where the Circuit Clerk is directing staff to process cases with funds before cases filed with fee waivers. Disparity affecting the Pro Se litigant's access to justice.
10. An unacceptable number of filings submitted and not accepted for a month or weeks thereafter.

11. Daily instances of Motions filed 7 days in advance or on a Motion to Shorten Time, and the Motion filed is not being posted before the time of the hearing on the same. Cases not docketed prevent the court from ruling on said motions.
12. Responsive Pleadings such as Answers not docketed, so not shown timely filed.
13. Appeal Deadlines and Notice requirements to request a New Trial have passed due to not docketing Judgments; no notice to litigants of Judgments being signed. Months passed between Judge's signature and Clerk Docketing Judgments.
14. Despite multiple communications and phone calls from legal counsel, the Circuit Clerk's Office has refused to correct erroneous docket entries.
15. Willful refusal of the Circuit Clerk to show professional respect to the Judges and Commissioners in Greene County, Missouri.
16. Complaints regarding the Greene County Circuit Clerk include, but not limited to, Ignorance of the Law, Attitude and Behavior that refuses to change policy and procedures, Refusal to accept responsibility, Refusal to accept suggestions made by other officials, Refusal to Prioritize the work according to Missouri Statutes and Constitutional timelines. Refusal to reallocate staff. Inability to train staff. While fully staffed, not competent to provide effective leadership, training or retention of staff.
17. Training incompetency - Petitions are wrongfully rejected, Rejections are posted 2-3 weeks after filing, Petitions are accepted 5 weeks after filing, Attorney of Record not entered on Petitions and Answers, Summons not issued after written requests.
18. Refusal to allow all divisions of the office to be a bit backed up, while allowing the Family Court Division to be severely backed up. Circuit Clerk stating no concern of posts made 28 or more days late "that's how I prioritize it", "your suggestions for improvement may work, but that's not how I choose to do that".
19. Staff not trained to list the attorney of record for responsive pleadings. Therefore, the attorney is not listed, and as a result their client, is denied notice of any legal action filed on the case. Court dates missed, court orders not received, motions filed by opposing counsel not received, cases placed on dismissal dockets without notice of counsel, deadlines to reply to filings missed.
20. Answer filed in case and subsequently the attorney filing the Answer not being listed as an attorney of record and therefore, not receiving filings submitted by opposing counsel, not receiving hearing dates, not receiving hearing dates, not receiving Orders issued by the Court.
21. Critical Benchmarks for filing and processing cases are not met.

22. The Greene County Circuit Clerk is exposing the State of Missouri, Greene County, City of Springfield, Judges, Commissioners, and legal counsel to potential lawsuits for Constitutional violations, Due Process violations, Financial Damages, Malpractice, Discrimination, Prejudicial treatment of Litigants, Misuse of Public Funds, Lack of confidence to the office and damaged public opinion of our judiciary process.
23. Concerns above require an audit with the OSCA Supervisor. Where there are unconstitutional and unacceptable processes by the Greene County Circuit Clerk there are likely related Financial Misconduct of County/State Tax Payor Funds that require a full audit of the office of the Greene County Circuit Clerk.

Specific Examples of Constitution Violations- Due Process Violations-Prejudicial Treatment- Failed Access to Justice Concerns:

24. 2431-DR01262 Ty Blue v. Samantha Blue –

- a. Petition filed 9-04-2024 with no filing fee due to “Proc In Forma Pauperis” filing. [Docketed on 10-07-2024 “accepted”].
- b. Other party filed 2431-DR01243 Samantha Blue v. Ty Blue – Filed 09-04-2024 after Mr. Blue’s filing. [Docketed on 09-26-2024 “accepted” a MONTH Before other petition was accepted due to filing fee involved].
- c. Clerk’s reasoning is that cases with fees must be processed first and prior to cases without fees because the Financial Division of the clerk’s office cannot get behind.
- d. Pro Se Litigant denied Due Process, denied access to justice and was prejudiced due to his financial ability.

25. 2331-DR01148 Emily Humphreys v. James Humphreys –

- a. Stipulated Judgment signed by all parties and all counsel of record filed 8-15-24. [Docketed on 8-19-2024 with error entry that a document clearly filed was missing].
- b. File not processed from the Clerk to the Duty Judge for 4 MONTHS, signed by Judge 12-18-2024 and a week later Judgment docketed on 12-26-2024.
- c. Child Support delayed and now in contempt, financial and property agreements in contempt prior to judgment being processed. Financial loss to both parties.

26. 2231-DR01851 Jeffrey Werkmann v. Charity Stapp-

- a. Motion for Civil Contempt filed on May 29, 2024, with a proposed Order to Show Cause.

- b. Amended Motion for Contempt filed on July 2024, with a proposed Order to Show Cause.
- c. Said Amended Motion for Contempt did not get accepted until August 12, 2024- a full month later.
- d. On or about October 23, 2024, our office received a message from the Clerks stating that we needed to change the signature line of the Proposed Order to Show Cause. We did so and e-filed the corrected version.
- e. On or about November 21, 2024, our office received ANOTHER message from the Clerks stating that we needed to change the signature line of the Proposed Order to Show Cause. Call on November 22, 2024 to clerk and informed them that we had e-filed the corrected version as requested on October 23, 2024.
- f. The corrected order was accepted on November 22, 2024 and was not signed until December 9, 2024.
- g. So in summary, we filed a Motion for Contempt in MAY and didn't get an Order to Show Cause until DECEMBER.

27. 2231-DR01626 and 2231-DR01626-01- Matthew Duncan v. Rose Weber-

- a. Motion for Contempt and Motion to Modify, along with a Motion for Preliminary Injunction and for a Motion for EMERGENCY Temporary Custody were filed on September 4, 2024.
- b. On September 26, 2024, the Motion to Modify and Emergency Motions were accepted (but not the Motion for Contempt.)
- c. On October 1, 2024, the Motion for Contempt was rejected for missing a Confidential Filing Sheet. This is understandable; however, it was almost a month after filing and now we have lost the filing date that was the same as the Motion to Modify. We resubmitted and requested on the same day.
- d. On November 7, 2024, the Motion for Contempt was finally accepted. (Over two months later) A court date was scheduled for this matter, which could have been avoided and saved everyone time and money if the case was accepted and set concurrently with the Modification case.

Brennan Roub

Byrd D. S.

Yalson

Jessica Martin

R. Fey

Sam Mc

Long Long

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

Melissa Bader

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]