

SUPERIOR COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

A.M.L. v. J.R.

2026 Pa. Super. 23 · No. 1585 MDA 2024 · Decided February 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The Pennsylvania Superior Court reversed a three-year final sexual violence protective order issued under the Protection of Victims of Sexual Violence or Intimidation Act. The court held that the evidence did not establish that A.M.L. was at a continued risk of harm from J.R., given that they had one encounter, lived on opposite sides of the country, and had no continuing relationship or contact. The court distinguished precedent involving repeated or likely future encounters between the parties.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Superior Court of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Kunselman, J.; Dubow, J.; Beck, J.
JURISDICTION	Pennsylvania Superior Court
DECIDED	February 6, 2026
DOCKET	1585 MDA 2024
DISPOSITION	vacated
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	J.R. appealed from a three-year final sexual violence protective order entered under Pennsylvania's Protection of Victims of Sexual Violence or Intimidation Act.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The grant of an SVPO is reviewed for abuse of discretion or error of law. Issues involving statutory interpretation or other questions of law are reviewed de novo under a plenary scope of review.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published and precedential
PARTIES	J.R. v. A.M.L.

TOPICS

- appellate procedure
- standard of review
- statutory interpretation
- remedies
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- protective orders
- statutory interpretation
- appellate procedure
- remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether A.M.L. proved by a preponderance of the evidence that she was at a continued risk of harm from J.R. sufficient to support a final sexual violence protective order under 42 Pa.C.S.A. § 62A06(a).
2. Whether the possibility of a future encounter between the parties was sufficiently probable, on an objective basis, to establish a continued risk of harm under the PVSVIA.

HOLDINGS

1. A plaintiff seeking relief under the PVSVIA must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that she is at a continued risk of harm from the defendant; the occurrence of sexual violence or intimidation alone does not establish entitlement to an SVPO.
2. The evidence did not establish by a preponderance of the evidence that A.M.L. was at a continued risk of harm from J.R. because the parties lived on opposite sides of the country, had no ongoing connections or contact, and were highly unlikely to encounter each other again.
3. The trial court erred as a matter of law by finding that A.M.L. proved a continued risk of harm, and the final SVPO was vacated.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The undisputed facts, using an objective standard, do not establish that it is more likely than not that she is at a continued risk of harm from J.R.” (19)

“Under the facts presented here, we find that the trial court erred as a matter of law by concluding that the evidence established a continued risk of harm.” (19)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

A.M.L., a New Jersey resident, met J.R., a California resident, in State College, Pennsylvania, on April 21, 2024. During consensual intercourse at J.R.'s hotel room, A.M.L. withdrew consent, but J.R. proceeded to ejaculate; the parties then separated, and J.R. returned to California. Apart from two text messages initiated by A.M.L. at police direction and J.R.'s response, the parties had no further contact, had no mutual friends or social-media connection, and did not live, work, or attend school together. A.M.L. testified that she feared randomly encountering J.R. in the Philadelphia area because she visited her boyfriend and J.R. had family in southeastern Pennsylvania.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A.M.L. petitioned the Centre County Court of Common Pleas for a sexual violence protective order after a sexual encounter with J.R. The trial court held a hearing, deferred judgment for briefing, and entered a three-year final SVPO. J.R. timely appealed, arguing that A.M.L. failed to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that she was at a continued risk of future harm or encounter.

DISPOSITION

vacated

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

No remand; the order was vacated and jurisdiction was relinquished.

CASES CITED

- K.N.B. v. M.D., 259 A.3d 341 (Pa. 2021)
- Heidel v. Fowler, 325 A.3d 816, 820 (Pa. Super. 2024)
- In re Adoption of B.G.S., 245 A.3d 700, 704 (Pa. Super. 2021)
- E.A.M. v. A.M.D. III, 173 A.3d 313, 320-21 (Pa. Super. 2017)
- A.M.D. on Behalf of A.D. v. T.A.B., 178 A.3d 889, 895 (Pa. Super. 2018)
- Weatherholtz v. McKelvey, ___ A.3d ___, 2025 WL 3683086 (Pa. Dec. 16, 2025)
- Denton v. Delauter, 2025 WL 2682668 (Pa. Super. 2025) (non-precedential decision)
- C.J.B. obo R.N. v. S.W., 307 A.3d 644 (Table), 2023 WL 6564933 (Pa. Super. 2023) (non-precedential decision)