

COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

Tanhya Ranee Flores v. Hebert Aragon Nunez

No. 24-1037 · No. 24-1037 · Decided December 17, 2025

SUMMARY

The Iowa Court of Appeals dismissed as moot an appeal challenging a domestic-abuse protective order issued under Iowa Code chapter 236 because the order had expired. The court declined to apply either the collateral-consequences or public-importance exception to mootness, concluding that the appellant had not established specific continuing consequences and that the dispute did not satisfy the public-importance factors.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals of Iowa
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Ahlers, Judge; Tabor, C.J.; Ahlers, J.; Langholz, J.
JURISDICTION	Iowa Court of Appeals
DECIDED	December 17, 2025
DOCKET	24-1037
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Hebert Aragon Nunez appealed the Iowa District Court's issuance of a domestic-abuse protective order under Iowa Code chapter 236. During the appeal, the protective order expired, and the Court of Appeals considered whether the appeal remained justiciable under exceptions to the mootness doctrine.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed de novo whether the appeal was moot and whether an exception to the mootness doctrine applied. The underlying sufficiency challenge was not reached.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Iowa Court of Appeals opinion
PARTIES	Hebert Aragon Nunez v. Tanhya Ranee Flores

TOPICS

- domestic violence
- mootness
- appellate procedure
- family law procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the expiration of the chapter 236 protective order rendered Nunez's appeal moot.
2. Whether the collateral-consequences exception to mootness applied to the expired protective order.
3. Whether the public-importance exception to mootness applied to the chapter 236 appeal.

HOLDINGS

1. Because the challenged protective order had expired and no exception to the mootness doctrine applied, the appeal was moot and had to be dismissed.
2. The court declined to presume adverse collateral consequences for chapter 236 protective orders and rejected the exception because Nunez identified no specific consequence resulting from the expired order.
3. The public-importance exception did not apply because the dispute was private, a ruling would provide little guidance to public officials, the fact-specific issue was unlikely to recur, and the risk of appellate evasion could have been reduced through expedited briefing.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Courts exist to decide cases, not academic questions of law.” (2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The district court issued a domestic-abuse protective order under Iowa Code chapter 236 to protect Tanhya Ranee Flores from Hebert Aragon Nunez. The order expired while Nunez's appeal was pending. Nunez alleged additional facts to support collateral-consequences and public-importance exceptions to mootness, but those facts were unsubstantiated, outside the record, and not properly submitted or authenticated.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Iowa District Court for Cerro Gordo County issued a chapter 236 domestic-abuse protective order in favor of Tanhya Ranee Flores against Hebert Aragon Nunez. Nunez appealed, arguing that the evidence was insufficient to establish domestic-abuse assault. The Court of Appeals requested supplemental briefing on mootness, permitted Nunez to seek record supplementation regarding asserted exceptions, declined to consider his untimely and unauthenticated filing, rejected the asserted exceptions, and dismissed the appeal as moot.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Riley Drive Ent. I, Inc. v. Reynolds, 970 N.W.2d 289, 296, 298 (Iowa 2022)

- Homan v. Branstad, 864 N.W.2d 321, 328 (Iowa 2015)
- State v. Fetner, 959 N.W.2d 129, 135 (Iowa 2021)
- In re B.B., 826 N.W.2d 425, 429, 431 (Iowa 2013)
- In re J.G., No. 12-1220, 2013 WL 2107462, at *1–2 (Iowa Ct. App. May 15, 2013)
- State v. Johnson, No. 16-0976, 2017 WL 2684342, at *2–3 (Iowa Ct. App. June 21, 2017)
- T.F. v. C.G., No. 23-1761, 2025 WL 412059, at *2 (Iowa Ct. App. Feb. 5, 2025)

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