

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI, SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION

Fredric Darnell Travis v. Joplin Metro Credit Union et al.

Travis · No. 3:25-cv-05103-MDH · Decided March 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri denied Plaintiff Fredric Darnell Travis’s pro se motion to seal the case. Applying the common-law presumption of public access to judicial records, the Court found that Plaintiff had not provided a compelling reason for sealing the case, while noting that certain information may still be redacted under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Southwestern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Douglas Harpool
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Southwestern Division
DECIDED	March 16, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-cv-05103-MDH
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff, proceeding pro se, moved to seal the case. The district court denied the motion after the response period elapsed and the motion became ripe for adjudication.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The decision whether to seal a judicial record is committed to the trial court's sound discretion, considering the relevant facts and circumstances and balancing the interference with public access against the interests supporting confidentiality.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order; nonprecedential
PARTIES	Fredric Darnell Travis v. Joplin Metro Credit Union et al.

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- credit reporting
- consumer protection

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil procedure

Fair Credit Reporting Act

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the plaintiff established a compelling reason sufficient to overcome the common-law presumption of public access to judicial records and justify sealing the entire case.

HOLDINGS

1. A party seeking to seal judicial records must provide compelling reasons that outweigh the common-law right of public access; a conclusory assertion of confidential or proprietary information, without supporting context, is insufficient.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Generally speaking, there is a common-law right of access to judicial records, but that right is not absolute.” (511)

“The presumption of public access to judicial records may be overcome if the party seeking to keep the records under seal provides compelling reasons for doing so.” (511)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Travis sought to seal the entire case and requested a private evidentiary conference, asserting that confidential, proprietary, private, and restricted information would cause irreparable harm if publicly disclosed. He did not provide additional context or identify specific information justifying sealing, and the court noted that his only claim concerned the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Fredric Darnell Travis filed a pro se motion to seal the case. Defendant did not file suggestions in opposition, and the court denied the motion on the merits because Travis failed to identify a compelling reason to overcome the presumption of public access to judicial records.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Flynt v. Lombardi, 885 F.3d 508, 511 (8th Cir.)
- Nixon v. Warner Communications, Inc., 435 U.S. 589, 597-99 (1978)
- IDT Corp. v. eBay, 709 F.3d 1220, 1222-23 (8th Cir.)
- Wishah v. City of Country Club Hills, 2021 WL 3860328, at *2 (E.D. Mo. Aug. 30, 2021)
- In re Neal, 461 F.3d 1048, 1053 (8th Cir.)

OPINION

Travis

PER CURIAM.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE

WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION

FREDRIC DARNELL TRAVIS,)

) Plaintiff,)) vs.) Case No. 3:25-cv-05103-MDH) JOPLIN METRO CREDIT UNION et al.,))

Defendants.)

ORDER

Before the Court is Plaintiff's Pro Se Motion to Seal Case. (Doc. 4). Defendant has not filed Suggestions in Opposition and the time to do so has elapsed. Thus, the motion is now ripe for adjudication on the merits. For the reasons stated, Plaintiff's Motion is DENIED. "Generally speaking, there is a common-law right of access to judicial records, but that right is not absolute." *Flynt v. Lombardi*, 885 F.3d 508, 511 (8th Cir. 2018) (citing *Nixon v. Warner Commc'ns, Inc.*, 435 U.S. 589, 597–98 (1978), and *IDT Corp. v. eBay*, 709 F.3d 1220, 1222 (8th Cir. 2013)). "This right of access bolsters public confidence in the judicial system by allowing citizens to evaluate the reasonableness and fairness of judicial proceedings, and 'to keep a watchful eye on the workings of public agencies.'" *IDT Corp.*, 709 F.3d at 1222 (quoting *Nixon*, 435 U.S. at 598) (internal citation omitted). "The decision whether to seal a judicial record is left to the sound discretion of the trial court 'in light of the relevant facts and circumstances of the particular case.'" *Wishah v. City of Country Club Hills*, 2021 WL 3860328, at *2 (E.D. Mo. Aug. 30, 2021) (quoting *Nixon*, 435 U.S. at 599). "Where the common-law right of access is implicated, the court must consider the degree to which sealing a judicial record would interfere with the interests served by the common-law right of access and balance that interference against the salutary interests served by maintaining confidentially of the information sought to be sealed." *IDT Corp.*, 709 F.3d at 1223. "The presumption of public access to judicial records may be overcome if the party seeking to keep the records under seal provides compelling reasons for doing so." *Flynt*, 885 F.3d at 511 (citing *In re Neal*, 461 F.3d 1048, 1053 (8th Cir. 2006)). Here, Plaintiff fails to state any compelling reason as to why this case should be sealed. Plaintiff has included within his motion a "Notice of Statement of Indenture" requesting a private evidentiary conference regarding his motion to seal stating, "due to urgent and exigent circumstances and confidential trade secret, proprietary, private, special and restricted information/evidence in support of my special equitable cause, either of which if revealed in public, will cause irreparable harm to rights, property and interest." (Doc. 4-2). Plaintiff never expands nor provides this Court any context apart from that statement why sealing of this case is warranted. As Plaintiff's only claim is regarding the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Court cannot glean any compelling reason why the presumption of public access to judicial records should be overcome.¹ For the reasons stated, Plaintiff's Pro Se

Motion to Seal Case is DENIED.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated above, Plaintiff's Pro Se Motion to Seal Case is DENIED. IT IS SO ORDERED. Date: March 16, 2026 /s/ Douglas Harpool_____

DOUGLAS HARPOOL

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

1 Plaintiff may still redact certain information in conformity with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2.