

TEXAS COURT OF APPEALS, THIRD DISTRICT, AT AUSTIN

In re James Robert Lawson, IV

No. 03-25-00670-CV · No. 03-25-00670-CV · Decided April 23, 2026

SUMMARY

The Texas Court of Appeals, Third District, conditionally granted James Robert Lawson IV’s petition for writ of habeas corpus. The court held that a state trial court’s capias order issued after removal to federal court and before remand was void because removal deprived the state court of jurisdiction, and it ordered the trial court to vacate the order.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Texas Court of Appeals, Third District, at Austin
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Chari L. Kelly; Justices Triana, Kelly, and Theofanis
JURISDICTION	Texas Court of Appeals, Third District, at Austin
DECIDED	April 23, 2026
DOCKET	03-25-00670-CV
DISPOSITION	writ_granted
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Original proceeding for writ of habeas corpus challenging a trial court capias order issued in a child-support enforcement proceeding after removal of the underlying matter to federal district court and before remand.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed whether the trial court acted beyond its jurisdiction after removal; an order issued without jurisdiction is void, and extraordinary relief is available without a showing that the relator lacks an adequate appellate remedy.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	James Robert Lawson, IV v. Brittney Williams

TOPICS

- family law procedure
- child support
- writ of certiorari
- appellate procedure
- federalism

PRACTICE AREAS

- family law
- appellate procedure
- civil procedure
- remedies
- federalism

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the state trial court had jurisdiction to issue a capias order after the underlying matter had been removed to federal district court and before remand.
2. Whether habeas relief was appropriate to invalidate the capias order issued without jurisdiction.

HOLDINGS

1. After a notice of removal is filed, 28 U.S.C. § 1446(d) prohibits the state court from proceeding further unless and until the case is remanded; an order issued during that period is void.
2. Habeas relief is appropriate when a trial court issues an order beyond its jurisdiction, and the relator need not show the absence of an adequate appellate remedy.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Once a notice of removal is filed, . . . [t]he state court ‘loses all jurisdiction over the case, and, being without jurisdiction, its subsequent proceedings and judgment are not simply erroneous, but absolutely void.’” (2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

James Lawson and Brittney Williams were divorced in 2017 and have one child. Williams later obtained temporary orders requiring Lawson to pay \$735 per month in child support and limiting his possession of the child. After Williams filed an enforcement motion alleging a missed support payment and noncompliance with record-production orders, Lawson removed the matter to federal court two days before the scheduled hearing, but the state trial court issued a capias order when he did not appear.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Brittney Williams filed a motion to enforce child-support and related orders and expressly sought contempt with confinement. After James Lawson filed a notice of removal to federal court, the trial court nevertheless issued a capias order on August 29, 2025. Lawson sought habeas relief in the court of appeals, which stayed the underlying proceedings; the federal district court later remanded the case, and the court of appeals conditionally granted relief.

DISPOSITION

writ_granted

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The district court must vacate its August 29, 2025 capias order and any related orders. The writ will issue only if the district court fails to do so. The stay issued September 10, 2025, is lifted.

CASES CITED

- Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Juan, Puerto Rico v. Acevedo Feliciano, 589 U.S. 57, 63-64 (2020)

- Kern v. Huidekoper, 103 U.S. 485, 493 (1880)
- Meyerland Co. v. F.D.I.C., 848 S.W.2d 82, 83 (Tex. 1993)
- In re Southwestern Bell Tel. Co., 35 S.W.3d 602, 605 (Tex. 2000)
- In re Dickason, 987 S.W.2d 570, 571 (Tex. 1998)
- Board of Disciplinary Appeals v. McFall, 888 S.W.2d 471, 472 (Tex. 1994)
- In re Vaishangi, Inc., 442 S.W.3d 256, 261 (Tex. 2014)

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