

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA

Otis Holland v. John Henley, et al.

Holland · No. 2:25-cv-00379-RFB-MDC · Decided November 26, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Nevada partially grants and partially denies Respondents’ motion to seal the case in a habeas corpus action. The Court also grants nunc pro tunc Respondents’ motions for extensions of time and allows 45 days after entry of the order to respond to the petition.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Nevada
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Richard F. Boulware, II
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Nevada
DECIDED	November 26, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-00379-RFB-MDC
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner initiated a federal habeas corpus action under 28 U.S.C. § 2254. Respondents moved to seal the entire case and sought extensions of time to respond to the petition.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A motion to seal judicial records is evaluated under the public-access presumption and requires a showing of compelling reasons for sealing records. Local Rule IA 1-4 permits the court to modify, dispense with, or waive local rules sua sponte or on motion when the interests of justice so require. Requests for extensions of time are evaluated for good cause.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

- federal habeas corpus
- civil procedure
- pleadings

PRACTICE AREAS

federal habeas corpus

judicial records and sealing

public access to court filings

redaction of minor-identifying information

extensions of time

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Respondents demonstrated compelling reasons to seal the entire habeas case and all documents filed in it.
2. What filing and redaction procedures should govern state-court records and other documents containing information concerning minors.
3. Whether Respondents established good cause for additional extensions of time to answer or otherwise respond to the habeas petition.

HOLDINGS

1. Respondents did not demonstrate compelling reasons to seal the entire case, the entire state-court record, or all current and future filings. The motion to seal was therefore granted in part and denied in part.
2. Documents filed under seal in state court must be filed under seal in this case; documents filed unsealed in state court must be filed unsealed and with the same redaction status as in state court; documents not filed in state court must comply with the District of Nevada's local sealing and redaction rules.
3. Respondents' motions for extensions of time were granted nunc pro tunc, and Respondents were given 45 days after entry of the order to file an answer or other response to the petition.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“While there is a strong presumption in favor of public access to judicial filings and while courts prefer that the public retain access them, see Nixon v. Warner Commc’ns, Inc., 435 U.S. 589, 597 (1978), a court may seal its records if a party demonstrates “compelling reasons” to do so.” (at 2)

“Respondents do not make a showing of compelling reasons to file the entire state court record under seal, much less to file “all documents” under seal.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The habeas action concerns a former pastor who allegedly sexually assaulted several minors. Respondents represented that the state-court record contains the names, birthdates, addresses, and other identifying information of minor victims, potential victims, and minor witnesses. Respondents sought to file the entire case record and all current and future documents unredacted and under seal.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Otis Holland filed a habeas petition and supporting exhibits on February 28, 2025. Respondents moved to seal the case because the state-court record allegedly contains identifying information concerning minor victims and witnesses, and they separately sought extensions of time to answer. The court granted the sealing motion in part and denied it in part, and granted the extension motions nunc pro tunc, allowing Respondents 45 days after entry of the order to answer or otherwise respond.

- *Nixon v. Warner Communications, Inc.*, 435 U.S. 589, 597-98 (1978)
- *Kamakana v. City & County of Honolulu*, 447 F.3d 1172, 1178-79 (9th Cir. 2006)

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