

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

A.A.B. v. City of Porterville

A.A.B. · No. 1:25-cv-00261-EPG · Decided April 23, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California partially approves the parties’ proposed stipulated protective order. The Court limits confidential information to specified categories, including medical records, personal information, records identifying the minor plaintiff, law-enforcement personnel records, third-party reports, and internal-affairs investigations, and clarifies that court practices and rules govern where they conflict with the order.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	April 23, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00261-EPG
DISPOSITION	approved
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The court considered the parties' proposed stipulated protective order during discovery in a civil-rights action.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the proposed stipulated protective order for compliance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c) and Local Rule 141(c)(1).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order; precedential status unknown

TOPICS

- discovery dispute
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- Civil procedure
- Discovery

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the proposed stipulated protective order adequately described the types of information eligible for protection under Local Rule 141(c)(1).
2. Whether the protective order could bind the court or its personnel or override the court's established practices and rules.

HOLDINGS

1. The parties may not define confidential information solely by reference to their own determination that information qualifies for protection under Rule 26(c); the protective order must describe in general terms the types of information eligible for protection as required by Local Rule 141(c)(1).
2. A protective order may not bind the court or court personnel, and the court's established practices and rules govern to the extent of any conflict with the protective order.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A protective order may not bind the Court or its personnel.” (at 1)

“A description of the types of information eligible for protection under the order, with the description provided in general terms sufficient to reveal the nature of the information (e.g., customer list, formula for soda, diary of a troubled child).” (at 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The parties proposed defining confidential information as information or tangible things that qualify for protection under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c). The proposed order also identified specific categories of information, including the minor plaintiff's medical records, personal identifying and financial information, information revealing the minor's identity, law-enforcement personnel records, third-party reports, and internal-affairs investigations.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The parties submitted a proposed stipulated protective order under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c) and Eastern District of California Local Rule 141. The court found the proposed order acceptable in most respects but approved it only in part, limiting the definition of confidential information and clarifying that court practices and rules control.

DISPOSITION

approved

CASES CITED

- Rangel v. Forest River, Inc., No. EDCV 17-0613 JFW (SS), 2017 WL 2825922, at *2 (C.D. Cal. June 29, 2017)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 8 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
9 10 A.A.B., a minor, by and through his Case No. 1:25-cv-00261-EPG guardian ad litem, Dnieper
Vegavillalobos, 11 Plaintiff, 12 ORDER APPROVING, IN PART, PROPOSED v. STIPULATED
PROTECTIVE ORDER 13 CITY OF PORTERVILLE, et al., (ECF No. 16) 14 Defendants. 15 16
This matter is before the Court on the parties’ proposed stipulated protective order.

(ECF 17 No. 16). Upon review, the Court will approve, in part, the proposed protective order. 18
The Court finds the proposed protective order acceptable in most respects. However, the 19 parties
define confidential information to mean “information (regardless of how it is generated, 20 stored
or maintained) or tangible things that qualify for protection under Federal Rule of Civil 21
Procedure 26(c).” (ECF No. 16, p. 1).

Such a definition improperly allows the parties to deem 22 information confidential so long as
they themselves believe that it qualifies for protection without 23 ever disclosing the types of
information at issue contrary to Local Rule 141(c)(1), which requires 24 as follows: “A description
of the types of information eligible for protection under the order, with 25 the description provided
in general terms sufficient to reveal the nature of the information (e.g., 26 customer list, formula
for soda, diary of a troubled child).” 27 However, the parties elsewhere identify “types of
information they believe to be eligible 28 for protection,” which include the following: 1 e
Medical records of the minor Plaintiff A.A.B.; 2 e Personal information of parties in this litigation
or third parties, including but not limited to social security numbers, home addresses, phone
numbers, 3 and financial records; 4 e Information that reveals the identity—including the name
and/or image— of the minor Plaintiff A.A.B. or otherwise invades his anonymity in this 5
litigation[;] 6 e Personnel records of law enforcement officers; 7 e Reports pertaining to third
parties not involved in this litigation; and g e Internal affairs/professional standards investigations.

(ECF No. 16, pp. 1-2). 9 The Court will limit the parties’ definition of confidential information to
such information. 10 Additionally, the Court notes that “a protective order may not bind the Court
or its 11 personnel.” *Rangel v. Forest River, Inc.*, No. EDCV 17-0613 JFW (SS), 2017 WL
2825922, at *2 12 (C.D. Cal. June 29, 2017).

Thus, to the extent that any part of the protective order conflicts with 13 the Court’s established
practices or Rules, the Court’s established practices or Rules will govern. 14 Accordingly, IT IS
ORDERED that the parties’ proposed stipulated protective order (ECF IS | No. 16) is approved, in
part, as explained above. 16 17 | TPIS SO ORDERED. | Dated: _ April 23, 2025 [Jee hey 19
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28