

OHIO COURT OF APPEALS, SEVENTH APPELLATE DISTRICT

In re R.H.

2026-Ohio-2177 · No. 26 HA 0003 · Decided June 10, 2026

SUMMARY

The Seventh District Court of Appeals of Ohio affirmed the termination of the mother's parental rights and the award of permanent custody of R.H. to the Harrison County Department of Job and Family Services. The court held that the trial court's incorrect statement regarding reasonable reunification efforts was harmless because such efforts were not required under the applicable statutes and prior termination of parental rights. The court also concluded that the permanent-custody decision was supported by clear and convincing evidence and was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Ohio Court of Appeals, Seventh Appellate District
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Mark A. Hanni; Cheryl L. Waite; Carol Ann Robb
JURISDICTION	Ohio Court of Appeals, Seventh Appellate District, Harrison County
DECIDED	June 10, 2026
DOCKET	26 HA 0003
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Mother appealed the juvenile court's judgment granting the Harrison County Department of Job and Family Services permanent custody of R.H. and terminating mother's and father's parental rights.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The appellate court reviewed the termination judgment under the manifest-weight-of-the-evidence standard, considering the evidence, reasonable inferences, witness credibility, and the presumption favoring the trial court's factual findings.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published
PARTIES	Mother v. Harrison County Department of Job and Family Services

TOPICS

- termination of parental rights
- parental rights
- family law procedure
- appellate procedure
- standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the juvenile court erred by finding or stating that the agency had made reasonable efforts toward reunification when mother was not provided a case plan or visitation.
2. Whether the juvenile court's grant of permanent custody to the agency and termination of mother's parental rights was against the manifest weight of the evidence or an abuse of discretion.

HOLDINGS

1. The reasonable-efforts determination required by R.C. 2151.419(A)(1) does not apply to a hearing on a motion for permanent custody under R.C. 2151.413 and R.C. 2151.414. Because mother's parental rights had previously been involuntarily terminated as to siblings, the agency was also exempt from reasonable-efforts requirements under R.C. 2151.419(A)(2)(e) at the relevant earlier stage.
2. The judgment granting permanent custody to the agency and terminating mother's parental rights was supported by clear and convincing evidence and was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.
3. The court could not consider arguments concerning father's termination because father did not appeal and appellate counsel represented only mother.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“By its plain terms, the statute does not apply to motions for permanent custody brought pursuant to R.C. 2151.413, or to hearings held on such motions pursuant to R.C. 2151.414.” (¶ 21)

“Based on all of the above, the trial court’s judgment granting the agency’s motion for permanent custody and terminating mother’s parental rights was supported by clear and convincing evidence and not against the manifest weight of the evidence.” (¶ 50)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

R.H. was born in October 2025 and was removed from his parents' care shortly afterward because of concerns about mother's caregiving and father's history of sexual offenses against children. Mother previously had parental rights involuntarily terminated as to three other children after failing to protect at least one child from father, whom she later married while that prior appeal was pending. In the present case, mother continued to have contact with father despite stating that she intended to divorce him and obtain a restraining order, and the child remained in foster care with caregivers willing to adopt.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The agency filed a dependency complaint and motion for emergency shelter care three days after the child's birth. The juvenile court adjudicated the child dependent, denied mother's visitation motion, and later granted the agency permanent custody while terminating both parents' parental rights. Mother timely appealed; father did not appeal.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- In re Murray, 52 Ohio St.3d 155, 157 (1990)
- Stanley v. Illinois, 405 U.S. 645, 651 (1972)
- In re Smith, 77 Ohio App.3d 1, 16, 601 N.E.2d 45, 54 (1991)
- In re Hayes, 79 Ohio St.3d 46, 48 (1997)
- In re Sims, 2002-Ohio-3458, ¶ 23 (7th Dist.)
- In re C.F., 2007-Ohio-1104, ¶¶ 41-43
- In re A.C., 2004-Ohio-5531, ¶ 30
- In re Z.C., 2023-Ohio-4703, ¶ 14
- Eastley v. Volkman, 2012-Ohio-2179, ¶¶ 20-21
- Seasons Coal Co., Inc. v. Cleveland, 10 Ohio St.3d 77, 80, 461 N.E.2d 1273 (1984)

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