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**STATE OF IDAHO**  
County of Fremont

IN THE MATTERS OF

State v. Chad Guy Daybell

Case Number CR22-21-1623

State v. Lori Norene Vallow NKA Daybell

Case Number CR22-21-1624

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF  
MOTION TO INTERVENE  
MOTION TO UNSEAL ALL DOCUMENTS  
MOTION FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

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**STANDING**

The Intervenor, Lori A.G. Hellis, is a credentialed author who is writing a book about the Daybell case. Therefore, she is a media member and has standing to petition the court for intervenor status for the limited purpose of challenging the court's decisions for the wholesale sealing of documents and court proceedings in the above-captioned matter.

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**FACTS**

This matter came before the court when Defendants Chad and Lori Daybell were charged in case numbers CR22-20-0755, CR22-21-1623, CR33-20-0302, CR22-20-0838, and CR22-21-1624.

The sealing of court documents began almost immediately. The following entries in the court record indicate sealed documents or closed proceedings:

Case Number	Date	Entry
CR22-20-0838	7/10/20	Order to Seal Records
	12/17/20	Order to Seal Records
	12/18/20	Closed Hearing
	3/11/21	Order to Seal Records
	5/7/21	Order to Close Hearings and Seal Record
	6/18/21	Order to Seal
	6/28/21	Order to Seal
	6/25/21	Order Unsealing June 18, 2021 Orders
	7/29/21	Case Dismissed Without Prejudice
	CR22-21-1624	7/27/21
9/14/21		Order to Close Hearing and Seal Record
9/19/21		Order to Seal
10/21/21		Order to Close Hearing and Seal Record
11/26/21		Order to Seal
12/08/21		Order to Close a Portion of the Hearing and Seal Record
12/28/21		Order Authorizing Disclosure of Sealed Information
1/13/22		Order Sealing IDHW Competency Report
2/09/22		Order Close Hearing and Seal Record
2/11/22		Order to Seal
2/11/22		Order to Seal
2/16/22		Order to Seal
2/16/22		Order to Seal
3/02/22		Decision and Order (Sealed)
3/03/22		Order Sealing IDWH Competency Reports
3/11/22		Order to Seal
3/11/22		Order to Close Hearing and Seal Record
3/18/22		Order to Seal

	3/22/22	Order to Close Hearing and Seal Record
	4/01/22	Order to Seal
	4/06/22	Order to Close Hearing and Seal Record
CR22-20--755	12/17/20	Order to Seal Records
	3/11/21	Order to Seal Records
CR22-21-1623	7/15/21	Order Sealing ExParte Motion for Protective Order and Declaration in Support of ExParte Motion
	7/26/21	Objection to Protective Order – Under Seal
	7/26/21	Request for Discovery – Under Seal
	7/26/21	Motion to Oppose Use and Motion to Preserve Fingerprint Samples – Under Seal
	7/27/21	Order Sealing State’s Motion and Memorandum Objecting to the Entry of Appearance of Counsel and for a Finding of Conflict
	8/20/21	Objection to State’s Motion re Waiver of Conflict – Under Seal
	8/25/21	Motion for Intervention (Under Seal)
	8/26/21	Order to Close Hearing and Seal Record
	9/17/21	Order to Close Hearing and Seal Record
	9/20/21	Order to Seal Records
	9/20/21	Order on Sealed Motion to Intervene
	10/05/21	Order to Close a Portion of the Hearings and Seal Records and Exhibits
	12/08/21	Order to Close a Portion of the Hearing and Seal Record
	3/08/22	Order to Seal
	3/15/22	Order to Seal
	4/07/22	Order to Seal
	4/21/22	Order to Seal
	5/13/22	Order to Seal State’s Objection
	5/18/22	Order to Close Hearing and Seal Record
	5/20/22	Order to Seal State’s Supplemental Request for Discovery as to Defendant Chad Daybell’s Motions to Disqualify APA Smith, Wood, and/or Dismiss
	5/24/22	Order to Seal State’s Objections and Briefs in Response
	5/24/22	Order to Seal
	5/24/22	Order to Seal
	5/25/22	Order to Close Hearing and Seal Record
	5/25/22	Order to Seal
	5/25/22	Order to Seal
	6/01/22	Order to Seal
	6/06/22	Order to Seal
	6/06/22	Order to Seal



1 *plays a significant positive role in the functioning of the particular process in question.*” Press-  
2 Enterprise Co. v. Superior Court, 478 U.S. 1, 8 (1986) (citations omitted).

3 In Idaho, access to civil and criminal court proceedings is also broadly provided for in the  
4 state constitution. “Courts of justice shall be open to every person, and a speedy remedy afforded  
5 for every injury of person, property or character, and right and justice shall be administered without  
6 sale, denial, delay, or prejudice.” Idaho Const. art. I, § 18. In addition, Article I, Section 13 of the  
7 Idaho Constitution specifically ensures that criminal trials are to remain open: “In all criminal  
8 prosecutions, the party accused shall have the right to a speedy and public trial; to have the process  
9 of the court to compel the attendance of witnesses in his behalf, and to appear and defend in person  
10 and with counsel.”

11 There are no Idaho cases interpreting the “open court” provision of Article I, Section 18 of  
12 the Idaho Constitution other than to say that Idaho Code section 19-811 (which allows a criminal  
13 defendant to request that his preliminary hearing be closed) is not unconstitutional under Article  
14 I, Section 18 so long as the magistrate court issuing such closure order complies with the  
15 requirements of Press-Enterprise. See Cowles Publ’g, 118 Idaho at 761, 800 P.2d at 648. Instead,  
16 the few cases that address access to court proceedings rely on the rights of a criminal defendant to  
17 a public trial under the Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or on the qualified right of the  
18 media and public to access court proceedings under the First Amendment to the U.S.  
19 Constitution. *Id.*; see also *State v. Overline*, 154 Idaho 214, 217 n.2, 296 P.3d 420, 423 n.2 (*Id.*  
20 App. Ct. 2013) (“The press and the public also possess, via the First Amendment, an enforceable  
21 right to an open and public trial proceeding, which can be foreclosed over their objection only in  
22 *limited circumstances.*”) (Emphasis added ) (citing *Press-Enterprise*, 464 U.S. at 509–10).

1 Although Idaho courts have not explicitly recognized a constitutional right of access to court  
2 records, Idaho Courts Administrative Rule 32, promulgated by the Idaho Supreme Court and  
3 grounded in First Amendment principles, provides broad access rights and procedural protections  
4 for the public. State v. Allen, 156 Idaho 332, 336, 325 P.3d 673, 677 (Ct. App. 2014). That Rule  
5 provides: “The public has a right to examine and copy the judicial department’s declarations of  
6 law and public policy and to examine and copy the records of all proceedings open to the  
7 public.” I.C.A.R. 32(a). Idaho Code §74-101 et seq. memorializes Idaho’s Public Records Act.  
8 Noting in that act or its exemptions entitles the court to seal and thereby deny the public access to  
9 court records. The statute reads:

10 I.C.A.R. 32(i) Other Prohibitions or Limitations on Disclosure and Motions Regarding the  
11 Sealing of Records. Physical and electronic records may be disclosed, or temporarily or  
12 permanently sealed, or redacted by order of the court on a case-by-case basis.

13 (1) Any person or the court on its own motion may move to disclose, redact, seal or unseal a  
14 part or all of the records in any judicial proceeding. The court shall hold a hearing on the  
15 motion after the moving party gives notice of the hearing to all parties to the  
16 judicial proceeding and any other interested party designated by the court. The court may  
17 order that the record immediately be redacted or sealed pending the hearing if the court  
18 finds that doing so may be necessary to prevent harm to any person or persons. In ruling on  
19 whether specific records should be disclosed, redacted or sealed by order of the court, the  
20 court shall determine and make a finding of fact as to whether the interest in privacy or public  
21 disclosure predominates. If the court redacts or seals records to protect predominating

1 privacy interests, it must fashion the least restrictive exception from disclosure consistent  
2 with privacy interests.

3 (2) Before a court may enter an order redacting or sealing records, it must also make one or  
4 more of the following determinations in writing:

5 (A) That the documents or materials contain highly intimate facts or statements, the  
6 publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, or

7 (B) That the documents or materials contain facts or statements that the court finds  
8 might be libelous, or

9 (C) That the documents or materials contain facts or statements, the dissemination or  
10 publication of which may compromise the financial security of, or could reasonably result  
11 in economic or financial loss or harm to a person having an interest in the documents or  
12 materials, or compromise the security of personnel, records or public property of or used  
13 by the judicial department, or

14 (D) That the documents or materials contain facts or statements that might threaten or  
15 endanger the life or safety of individuals, or

16 (E) That it is necessary to temporarily seal or redact the documents or materials to  
17 preserve the right to a fair trial, or

18 (F) That the documents contain personal data identifiers that should have been redacted  
19 pursuant to Idaho Rule of Electronic Filing and Service 15, Idaho Rule of Civil Procedure  
20 2.6, or Idaho Rule of Family Law Procedure 218 in which case the court shall order that  
21 the documents be redacted in a manner consistent with the provisions of that rule.

## 22 23 **ARGUMENT**

24 1. A court's decision to seal documents and court proceedings should be made sparingly and  
25 with due consideration because such a decision hides critical information about the workings

1 of government and, specifically, the criminal justice system from the defendants, the victims,  
2 and the public. Proceedings conducted openly under the eye of the public discourage  
3 corruption, graft, bias, and prejudice. Without the disinfection of public scrutiny, the American  
4 courts simply become Star Chambers, filled with actions intended to please authorities rather  
5 than administer justice. In the case at hand, the public, including the victims, cannot ascertain  
6 that the case is progressing fairly because they have no access to half of the documents and  
7 proceedings conducted in this case. As a result, victims, defendants, and the public can have  
8 no confidence going forward that the case will be conducted fairly and transparently.

9 2. Idaho law requires pursuant to I.C.A.R 32(i)(1) that the court hold a hearing after the  
10 moving party gives notice of the hearing to all parties to the judicial proceeding *and any other*  
11 *interested party designated by the court* (italics added) to consider the sealing of documents.

12 The court's decision to close court proceedings and seal documents without court findings and  
13 without attempting to fashion the least restrictive alternative is unconstitutional, illegal, and  
14 counter to public policy. I.C.A.R 32(i)(2) requires:

15 (2) Before a court may enter an order redacting or sealing records, it must also  
16 make one or more of the following determinations in writing:

17 (A) That the documents or materials contain highly intimate facts  
18 or statements, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a  
19 reasonable person, or

20 (B) That the documents or materials contain facts or statements that  
21 the court finds might be libelous, or

22 (C) That the documents or materials contain facts or statements, the  
23 dissemination or publication of which may compromise the financial  
24 security of, or could reasonably result in economic or financial loss or harm  
25 to a person having an interest in the documents or materials, or



1                   compromise the security of personnel, records or public property of or  
2                   used by the judicial department, or

3                   (D) That the documents or materials contain facts or statements  
4                   that might threaten or endanger the life or safety of individuals, or

5                   (E) That it is necessary to temporarily seal or redact the documents or  
6                   materials to preserve the right to a fair trial, or

7                   (F) That the documents contain personal data identifiers that should have  
8                   been redacted pursuant to Idaho Rule of Electronic Filing and Service 15,  
9                   Idaho Rule of Civil Procedure 2.6, or Idaho Rule of Family Law Procedure  
10                  218 in which case the court shall order that the documents be redacted in  
11                  a manner consistent with the provisions of that rule.

12  
13                  The drafters intended the process to be onerous. The purpose of the specific  
14                  procedures outlined in the statute encourages the process to be used sparingly and with due  
15                  consideration.

16                  There is no indication that the court even considered the factors in I.C.A.R 32(i)(2)  
17                  because the court did not conduct a hearing as required by statute. Neither did he document  
18                  his findings on the record and in writing as the rule requires. There is no proof that the  
19                  court considered whether any exceptions to Rule 32 applied. In fact, there is no indication  
20                  that the documents or materials contain highly intimate facts or statements, the publication  
21                  of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. The documents may likely  
22                  contain facts or statements that defendants and/or the lawyers for the state and defense may  
23                  find embarrassing. No provision in the rule permits the court to consider that when deciding  
24                  which records to seal. There is also no indication that the documents or materials contain  
25                  facts or statements the court finds might be libelous. Likewise, there is no suggestion that

1 the documents or materials contain facts or statements, the dissemination or publication of  
2 which may compromise the financial security of, or could reasonably result in economic  
3 or financial loss or harm to a person having an interest in the documents or materials, or  
4 compromise the security of personnel, records or public property of or used by the judicial  
5 department. There has been no suggestion that the documents or materials contain facts or  
6 statements that might threaten or endanger the life or safety of individuals. The court has  
7 made a single finding that it is necessary to seal or redact the documents or materials to  
8 preserve the right to a fair trial. The court has never expressly indicated how the defendant's  
9 rights may be at risk and has never said his decision to seal the records is temporary.

10 The public's First Amendment right to access public records regarding this case has  
11 clearly been violated. The court decided to seal documents without a hearing, without  
12 notifying interested parties, and without making written findings necessary to seal. Further,  
13 the court made no effort to avoid sealing by using a less restrictive method such as  
14 redaction. The rule is clear that even when documents contain personal data identifiers, the  
15 remedy is redaction pursuant to Idaho Rule of Electronic Filing and Service 15, Idaho Rule  
16 of Civil Procedure 2.6, or Idaho Rule of Family Law Procedure 218, not wholesale  
17 sealing.

18 The court's decisions violate Idaho Statutes and rules, including Title 74 Chapter 1  
19 of the Public Records Act, codified at IS 74-102, and Idaho Court Administrative Rule  
20 32(i)(1). To date, the court has not published any public findings indicating what privacy  
21 interest is being protected, how that privacy right predominates the public's right to  
22 disclosure, or what alternatives to wholesale sealing were considered.

1 Further, the court has not, under the “Press-Enterprise test,” considered “*whether*  
2 *the place and process have historically been open to the press and general public*” and  
3 “*whether public access plays a significant positive role in the functioning of the particular*  
4 *process in question.*” Press-Enterprise Co. v. Superior Court, 478 U.S. 1, 8 (1986)  
5 (citations omitted). Of course, pretrial public access always plays a significant role in  
6 assuring that defendants receive fair trials and competent representation. In fact, public  
7 access is at the very heart of it.

- 8 3. Neither the court nor the litigants have provided evidence that actual damage or prejudice  
9 will occur if the sealed documents and proceedings are unsealed. The state’s motions to  
10 seal simply state that the intention is to limit undue prejudicial publicity. The fact that the  
11 media are interested in the case and desire to report on it is not sufficient to prove that the  
12 defendants will be unduly prejudiced by releasing pretrial documents or opening pretrial  
13 proceedings, especially when venue has already been changed to a larger population center  
14 to facilitate finding an unbiased jury. The court has chosen to deny access to entire  
15 documents and proceedings rather than, as required, to examine whether there is a less  
16 restrictive alternative, such as redacting sensitive information.

17 This is a death penalty case. This court has previously pointed out that such cases  
18 are different and require higher care and scrutiny. Nowhere is that truer than in the case of  
19 sealed documents and proceedings. How can the public or the victims be assured that such  
20 a sensitive matter is being prosecuted appropriately and fairly without access to the  
21 proceedings and documents? Moreover, that higher level of care requires that the court take  
22 the time to fashion a less restrictive way to balance the rights of the defendants and the  
23 rights of the public.



1 The court is legally bound to find the least restrictive treatment of the information that has  
2 to date, been sealed. The remedy will require time and attention. First, the court must redact  
3 all sensitive individual patient health information and all personal data identifiers pursuant  
4 to Idaho Rule of Electronic Filing and Service 15, Idaho Rule of Civil Procedure 2.6, or  
5 Idaho Rule of Family Law Procedure 218. The court should further redact the names of  
6 minors and any other documents pursuant to I.C.A.R. 32(g). If closed hearings contain  
7 protected information, the recordings or transcripts of those hearings should be  
8 appropriately reviewed and redacted. Once the redactions are completed, the court should  
9 immediately order all documents and recordings of proceedings unsealed.

10 In the future, every time the court considers the sealing of a document or the closure  
11 of a proceeding, the court should be required to notify all interested parties, then hold a  
12 scheduled hearing in advance, and make written findings regarding the reasons the record  
13 must be sealed or the hearing must be closed. Rule 32 contains a provision for the  
14 temporary protection of documents until a hearing can be conducted.

15 Respectfully Submitted July 29, 2022.

16 Lori A.G. Hellis  
17 Proposed Intervenor

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23 ///

**CERTIFICATE**

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2 I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 30th day of July 2022, a copy of the preceding was served as

3 follows:

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