



## Michigan Supreme Court

State Court Administrative Office  
Michigan Hall of Justice  
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Chad C. Schmucker  
State Court Administrator

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 8, 2013

TO: Chief Circuit Court Judges  
Circuit Court Administrators  
County Clerks

FROM: Chad C. Schmucker, State Court Administrator

RE: Internet Dissemination of Personal Protection Order Information

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In an effort to better serve our communities across the state, courts have pioneered transparency in government by providing online access to circuit court records of all varieties. Access to court records, registers of action, and hearing schedules can all be very beneficial to the public and is largely encouraged. However, there can be some unintended consequences to such transparency, especially in highly sensitive areas such as domestic violence and/or stalking.

As transparency and improved access remain court goals, it is important that we not unknowingly or unintentionally release victims' personally identifiable information through the Internet, recognizing that this information is easily accessed and that access to such information could be dangerous to victims. Additionally, it has been brought to our attention that current federal law prohibits providing information over the Internet about personal protection orders (PPO) that would be likely to reveal the identity or location of the petitioner ("PPO Information").

18 USC 2265(d)(3) states:

A State, Indian tribe, or territory shall not make available publicly on the Internet any information regarding the registration, filing of a petition for, or issuance of a protection order, restraining order or injunction, restraining order, or injunction in either the issuing or enforcing State, tribal or territorial jurisdiction, if such publication would be likely to publicly reveal the identity or location of the party protected under such order. A State, Indian tribe, or territory may share court-generated and law enforcement-generated information contained in secure, governmental registries for protection order enforcement purposes.

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Please review your court's online services to ensure that you are not providing PPO Information over the Internet. It may be a matter of flagging case types PP, PH, and PJ within your system so they are not revealed or altering hearing information to conceal an identity. Please be aware this law affects any online service that allows the viewing of petitions, registers of action, or hearing information that provides identifying information or addresses over the Internet.