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| STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE  DISTRICT COURT DIVISION  \_\_ SP \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| IN THE MATTER OF THE CHANGE OF NAME OF:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  TO:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | **ORDER GRANTING MOTION TO SEAL AND FOR EXEMPTION FROM NOTICE** |

THIS MATTER comes before the Court on Petitioner’s Motion to Seal and for Exemption from Notice (the “Motion”). For the reasons set forth below, and for good cause shown, this Motion is GRANTED.

1. Petitioner filed an Application for Adult Name Change in the above-captioned matter under N.C.G.S. Chapter 101.
2. Special Proceedings files are available to the public and are, or will be, readily available to the public due to the implementation of eCourts.
3. Without sealing, the information contained within the filings of the above-captioned matter will thus be readily available to the public due to the implementation of eCourts.
4. Whether to seal a record is in the discretion of the Court. The trial court may limit the public’s right to access to civil court proceedings and records when there is a compelling countervailing public interest and sealing of documents is required to protect such countervailing public interest.
5. The Motion requests that the above-captioned matter, including the Petition, Motions, any accompanying documents, and any Order be sealed and removed from public record. The Motion represents that the documents in question contain personally identifying information of a sensitive nature not otherwise available to the public.
6. The Motion further requests that Petitioner be exempt from the requirement of N.C.G.S § 101-2(a) to give ten days’ notice of the application to change Petitioner’s name by publication at the courthouse door
7. There are no adversarial parties or anyone contesting the sealing of these documents or the exemption from the notice requirement.
8. Without an Order to Seal and exemption from the notice requirement, Petitioner’s name change file and personal information will be available to the public through an easy internet search due to the implementation of eCourts. This widespread access greatly increases the potential of harm to Petitioner.
9. Documents filed in the courts of this State are “open to the inspection of the public,” except as prohibited by law. N.C.G.S. § 7A-109(a); *Virmani v. Presbyterian Health Servs. Corp.*, 350 N.C. 449, 463, 515 S.E.2d 675, 685 (1999). Nevertheless, “the trial court may limit [the public’s right to access to civil court proceedings and records] when there is a compelling countervailing public interest and . . . sealing of documents is required to protect such countervailing public interest.” *Doe v. Doe*, 823 S.E.2d 583, 591 (N.C. Ct. App. 2018) (quoting *Virmani*, 350 N.C. at 476, 515 S.E.2d at 693).
10. The party seeking to maintain materials under seal bears the burden of establishing the need for filing under seal and redactions of information sought to be sealed by a party should be as limited as practicable. “The determination of whether [documents] should be filed under seal is within the discretion of the trial court.” *Taylor v. Fernandes*, 2018 NCBC LEXIS 4, at \*4 (N.C. Super. Ct. Jan. 18, 2018) (citing *In re Investigation into Death of Cooper*, 200 N.C. App. 180, 186, 683 S.E.2d 418, 423 (2009)). Petitioner has met their burden.
11. The Court has reviewed the documents in question. The Court concludes that the nature of the filing is of a sensitive matter and there is no redacted version of these documents that can be made to remove the concern of harm to the Petitioner. The Court further concludes that there is a compelling countervailing public interest, as set forth in the Motion, and sealing of documents and exemption Petitioner from the notice requirement are required to protect such countervailing public interest. Accordingly, these documents shall remain under seal indefinitely pending further order of the Court.

THEREFORE, it is hereby ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED as follows:

1. The Motion is GRANTED.
2. This matter, and all documents filed in this matter, are hereby SEALED and shall remain under seal indefinitely pending further order of the Court.
3. Petitioner is exempt from the ten-day notice requirement of N.C.G.S § 101-2(a).

This the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

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District Court Judge Presiding