



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee on Court Administration and Case Management

FROM: Kristin Garri, Senior Research Associate/Data Operations Manager  
Jana Laks, Research Analyst

DATE: January 8, 2026

RE: Redaction of Nongovernment Party Names in Reports and Recommendations Filed in Social Security and Immigration Cases

On May 1, 2023, the chair of the Committee on Court Administration and Case Management (CACM) sent a memorandum<sup>1</sup> to the courts specifically “[encouraging] courts to consider adopting a local practice of using only the first name and last initial of any nongovernment parties in opinions and orders (including reports and recommendations) in Social Security and immigration cases.” The committee sent a similar memorandum sharing suggested practices to protect personal information in 2018<sup>2</sup>, though it did not explicitly reference nongovernment party names in Reports and Recommendations (R&Rs) until the 2023 memo.

To assess courts’ implementation of the suggested guidance for redacting party names in Social Security and civil immigration cases, researchers at the Federal Judicial Center (Center) identified, downloaded, coded, and analyzed the 955 publicly available R&Rs in the 8,170 Social Security and 6,244 civil immigration cases which terminated in the district courts between June 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum from Hon. Gregory Van Tatenhove, Chair, Comm. on Ct. Admin. & Case Mgmt., to Chief Judges & Clerks, U.S. Cts., Suggested Practices to Protect Personal Information in Court Filings and Opinions (Information) (May 1, 2023), <https://jnet.ao.dcn/sites/default/files/pdf/DIR23-045.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum from Hon. Wm. Terrell Hodges, Chair, Comm. on Ct. Admin. & Case Mgmt., to Chief Judges & Clerks, U.S. Cts., Privacy Concern Regarding Social Security and Immigration Opinions (Information) (May 1, 2018) <https://jnet.ao.dcn/sites/default/files/pdf/DIR18-056.pdf>.

The 8,170 Social Security cases were of any of the following natures of suit (NOS):

<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description<sup>3</sup></b>
861	HIA (1395ff)	Action filed with regard to social security benefits associated with Health Insurance Part A Medicare.
862	Black Lung (923)	Action filed with regard to social security benefits provided for those who contracted Black Lung or their beneficiaries.
863	DIWC/DIWW (405(g))	Action filed with regard to social security benefits provided to disabled individuals: worker or child, or widow.
864	SSID Title XVI	Action filed with regard to social security benefits provided to Supplemental Security Income Disability under Title XVI.
865	RSI (405(g))	Action filed with regard to social security benefits provided for Retirement, Survivor Insurance under 42 U.S.C. § 405.

The 6,244 civil immigration cases were of any of the following NOS:

<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
460	Deportation Action	Deportation Action filed under the Immigration Acts (Habeas Corpus & Review) 8:1101/18:1546
462	Naturalization Application Action	Naturalization Application Action seeking review of denial of an application for naturalization [8 U.S.C. § 1447(b)] or alleging failure to make a determination regarding an application for naturalization [8 U.S.C. § 1421(c)]
463	Detainee Immigration Habeas Petition	Alien Detainee Immigration habeas petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. All cases filed with this nature of suit code are restricted to case participants and public terminals. Petition is filed by an alien detainee.
465	Other Immigration Action	Other Immigration Actions Action (Immigration-related) that do not involve Naturalization Applications or petitions for Writ of Habeas Corpus, such as complaints alleging failure to adjudicate an application to adjust immigration status to permanent resident

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/nos\\_code\\_descriptions\\_updated\\_v.2\\_4-07-22.pdf](https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/nos_code_descriptions_updated_v.2_4-07-22.pdf).

The 955 R&Rs were filed in 903 Social Security cases and 42 civil immigration cases in 67 of the 94 district courts. More than one R&R was filed in 9 cases.

Two researchers independently reviewed the case caption of each R&R to determine whether the name of a nongovernment party was redacted and, if so, the manner in which it was redacted (e.g., initials only; first name and last initial). About two-thirds (65%, 587) of the R&Rs filed in Social Security cases contained the full nongovernment party name (Table 1). Of the 35% that were redacted, nearly all (304, about 95%) included only the first name and last initial of the nongovernment party, mirroring the committee’s suggestion. Over 80% (38) of the R&Rs filed in civil immigration cases contained the full nongovernment party name. Five of the eight redacted R&Rs (10.6%) were redacted using initials, and the other 3 were redacted to the first name and last initial (6.4%).

**Table 1: Redaction of Nongovernment Party Names in Reports and Recommendations, by Case Type**

	Social Security R&Rs		Immigration R&Rs	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Unredacted</i>	587	65%	38	80.9%
<i>First Name, Last Initial</i>	304	33.5%	3	6.4%
<i>Initials Only</i>	5	0.6%	5	10.6%
<i>Two Names; Guardian Unredacted OBO, Redacted Dependent</i>	8	0.9%	0	0%
<i>Two Names; Guardian First Name or First Name and Last Initial OBO, Redacted Dependent</i>	4	0.4%	0	0%
<b><i>Total Reports and Recommendations</i></b>	<b>908</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 1 compares the redaction rate of nongovernment party names in R&Rs with the redaction rate in other types of documents in Social Security cases, as found in the Center’s 2024 study of unredacted nongovernment party names in Social Security and immigration case documents.<sup>4</sup> The redaction rate of R&Rs was similar to that of orders (32.9%), lower than that of opinions (50.3%), and higher than that of judgments (20.3%).

<sup>4</sup> Jana E. Laks & Kristin A. Garri, Federal Judicial Center, Redaction of Non-Government Party Names in Social Security and Immigration Case Documents (2024), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/391683/redaction-non-government-party-names-social-security-and-immigration-case-documents>.

**Figure 1: Redaction of Nongovernment Party Names in Social Security Filings in District Courts, by Document Type**

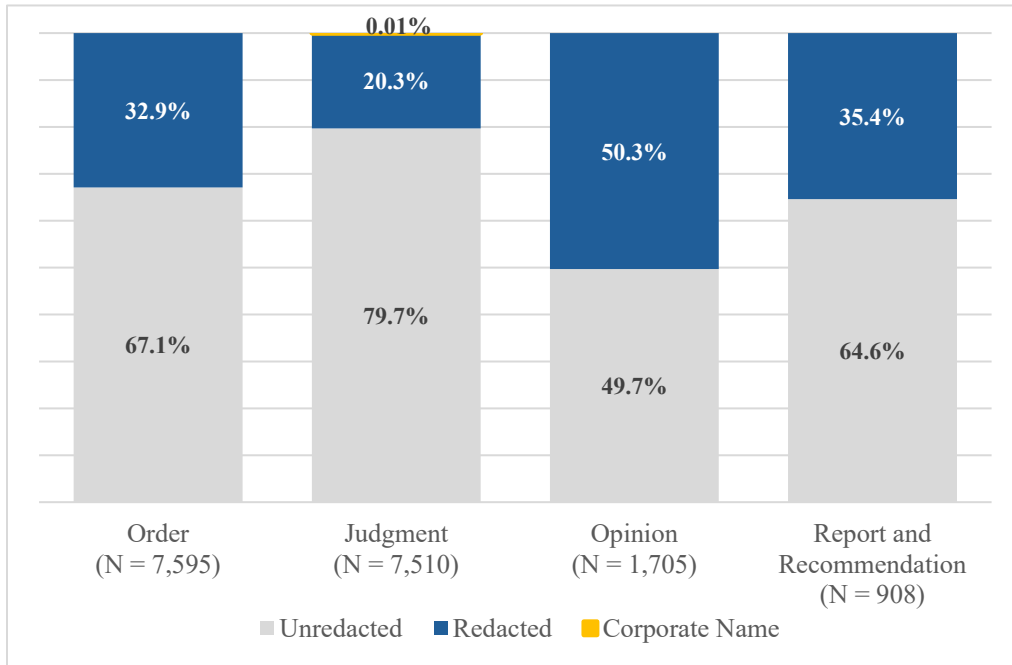
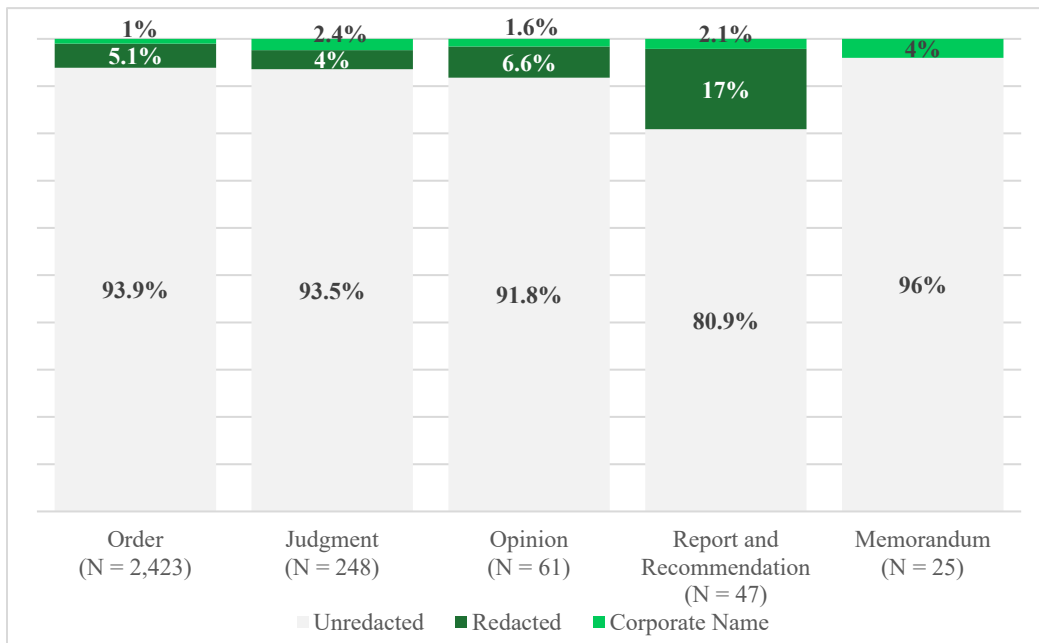


Figure 2 compares the redaction rate of nongovernment party names in R&Rs with the rate in other types of documents in civil immigration cases. The redaction rate of R&Rs (17%) was higher than the rate of all other types of documents, which ranged from 0% (memorandum) to 6.6% (opinion).

**Figure 2: Redaction of Nongovernment Party Names in Civil Immigration Filings in District Courts, by Document Type**



As shown in Table 2, the Social Security R&Rs in this study’s sample were filed in 60 districts. In 17 of these districts (28.3%), nongovernment party names were redacted in all the R&Rs. Conversely, in 26 districts (43.3%), nongovernment party names were not redacted in any of the R&Rs. The civil immigration R&Rs were filed in 19 districts. Only one of these districts (5.3%) redacted nongovernment party name in all the R&Rs; conversely, 16 of the districts (84.2%) did not redact any of the R&Rs.

**Table 2: Redaction of Nongovernment Party Names in Reports and Recommendations, by Mean Redaction Across District**

	Districts with Social Security R&Rs		Districts with Immigration R&Rs	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<i>District Redacted All Names</i>	17	28.3%	1	5.3%
<i>District Redacted More Than Half of Names</i>	6	10%	1	5.3%
<i>District Redacted Exactly Half of Names</i>	1	1.7%	0	0%
<i>District Redacted Less Than Half of Name</i>	10	16.7%	1	5.3%
<i>District Did Not Redact Any Names</i>	26	43.3%	16	84.2%
<b><i>Total Districts with Sampled Documents</i></b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: R&Rs which listed corporations as a nongovernment party name are not included in this table.

There was not a clear pattern to redaction actions by districts in which both Social Security and immigration R&Rs were filed. Twelve districts filed both Social Security and immigration R&Rs in the second half of 2023. Four districts (33.3%) did not redact any nongovernment party names in either type of case. Four other districts (33.3%) did not redact any names in R&Rs in civil immigration cases and redacted names in less than half of the R&Rs filed in Social Security cases. The remaining 4 districts redacted R&Rs differently from the above 8 districts and at different rates across social security cases and immigration cases.

Redaction rates do not vary greatly across the Nature of Suit codes within the Social Security cases in the sample. Aside from a relatively small number (11) of R&Rs filed in Social Security cases relating to Health Insurance Part A – Medicare (HIA), none of which contained a redacted nongovernment party name, the redaction rate ranged from a high of 37.4%, in actions regarding benefits provided to disabled individuals (DIWX/DIWW), to a low of 25.9%, in actions regarding benefits provided for Retirement, Survivor Insurance (RSI). Thirty-four percent of R&Rs filed in actions related to benefits provided for Supplemental Security Income Disability (SSID) contained redacted nongovernment party names. See Table 3.

**Table 3: Redaction of Nongovernment Party Names  
in Social Security Case Reports and Recommendations, by Nature of Suit Title**

Nature of Suit Title	Unredacted Reports and Recommendations		Redacted Reports and Recommendations		Total Reports and Recommendations	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<i>HIA (139ff)</i>	11	100%	0	0%	<b>11</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
<i>DIWC/DIWW (405(g))</i>	300	62.6%	179	37.4%	<b>479</b>	<b>52.8%</b>
<i>SSID Title XVI</i>	256	65.5%	135	34.5%	<b>391</b>	<b>43.1%</b>
<i>RSI (405(g))</i>	20	74.1%	7	25.9%	<b>27</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>587</b>	<b>64.6%</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>35.4%</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The number of R&Rs for each NOS present in the sample of civil immigration cases was too small to support meaningful conclusions.