

**Unredacted Personally Identifiable Information in
Federal Court PACER Documents**

*Prepared for the
Judicial Conference of the United States Committee on
Court Administration and Case Management*

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Executive Summary

Background

Appellate Rule 25(a)(5), Bankruptcy Rule 9037, Civil Rule 5.2, and Criminal Rule 49.1 require parties and nonparties to redact certain personally identifiable information (PII) in documents they file with the federal courts, including Social Security numbers (SSNs), individual taxpayer identification numbers (ITINs), birthdates, minors' names, financial account numbers, and, in criminal filings, home addresses. The Judicial Conference Committee on Court Administration and Case Management (CACM) has also encouraged courts to redact the names of nongovernment parties in publicly available Social Security and immigration opinions and orders (including reports and recommendations) to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.

Committee Request

Following its December 2022 meeting, CACM asked the Federal Judicial Center (Center) to conduct the following research:

- Estimate the prevalence of unredacted SSNs, ITINs, birthdates, minors' names, financial account numbers, and, in criminal cases, individuals' home addresses in federal court documents available in the Public Access to Electronic Records (PACER) service.
- Determine whether unredacted PII is more common in particular types of court filings and proceedings, especially pro se filings, guardian ad litem documents, filings in Social Security actions, notices of removal from state court, and proof of claim filings in bankruptcy cases.
- Assess how often full nongovernment party names are included in opinions and other publicly available documents in Social Security and immigration cases.

Data and Methods

- To estimate the prevalence of PII in court documents, Center researchers used a combination of computational text mining methods and manual review. Center researchers analyzed nearly 4.7 million federal court PACER documents filed on 37 randomly selected days in 2022, including 138,132 court of appeals documents, 2,017,908 district court documents, and 2,518,202 bankruptcy court documents.
- To estimate the prevalence of full nongovernment party names in Social Security and immigration cases, Center researchers reviewed the case captions of 18,305 publicly available Social Security case documents and 7,503 immigration case documents. The documents represent all opinions, orders, judgments, and reports and recommendations published during the second half of 2023.

Key Findings

SSNs and ITINs

- Center researchers found 22,391 unredacted SSNs and ITINs belonging to approximately 8,300 individuals in 4,525 (0.10%) documents of the nearly 4.7 million documents analyzed.
- Center researchers found unredacted SSNs and ITINs in 0.17% of the court of appeals documents, 0.12% of the district court documents, and 0.07% of the bankruptcy court documents.
- A large number of SSNs and ITINs appeared in a small number of documents. For example, 45% of the SSNs and ITINs came from only 17 documents.
- Filers had attempted to redact a third of the SSNs and ITINs but were unsuccessful in fully concealing them.
- Seventy-two percent of the unredacted SSNs appeared to be noncompliant with the privacy rules, while 22% appeared to be exempt from the redaction requirement, and 6% belonged to pro se parties who waived the privacy protections by filing their own SSN in an unsealed document.
- Cases with documents containing unredacted SSNs often involved at least one pro se party. Pro se parties were involved in 70% of the bankruptcy adversary proceedings, 51% of appellate cases, 45% of civil cases, and 34% of bankruptcy court cases containing unredacted SSNs.
- Unredacted SSNs largely appeared within supporting materials that originated outside of the legal process and naturally contain sensitive personal information, most commonly filed as exhibits and appendices. Ancillary financial documents, such as tax records, financial records, bank statements, payroll records, and credit checks, accounted for about half of the documents that contained unredacted SSNs.

Birthdates, home addresses, and minors' names

- Center researchers found unredacted birthdates in 0.74% of the appeals court documents, 0.86% of the district court documents, and 0.09% of the bankruptcy court documents.
- To estimate the prevalence of unredacted home addresses, Center researchers drew random samples from the over half a million criminal documents in the original sample of 4.7 million documents. This analysis found unredacted home

addresses in 2.7% of the district court criminal case documents and 2.8% of the criminal appeals documents.

- To estimate the prevalence of unredacted minors' names, Center researchers used text mining techniques to identify documents most likely to contain minors' names. The researchers then manually reviewed that subset of documents for the presence of unredacted minors' names. Based on that analysis, at least 0.09% of the appeals court documents, 0.10% of the district court documents, and 0.01% of the bankruptcy court documents contained minors' names.
- Although Center researchers developed strategies and methods for identifying unredacted financial account numbers, they were unable to estimate their prevalence in the timeframe allotted to complete this study.

Nongovernment party names in Social Security and immigration cases

- Full nongovernment party names appeared in 71% of the district court Social Security documents and 96% of the appeals court Social Security documents Center researchers analyzed, which included opinions, orders, judgments, and reports and recommendations.
- Full nongovernment party names appeared in 94% of the district court civil immigration documents and 91% of the civil immigration appeals documents.

Introduction

In December 2007, the Judicial Conference of the United States (Judicial Conference) adopted a set of rules intended to protect personally identifiable information (PII) in case filings, including those that are publicly available on the internet.¹ Specifically, Appellate Rule 25(a)(5), Bankruptcy Rule 9037, Civil Rule 5.2, and Criminal Rule 49.1 require parties and nonparties to redact all but the last four digits of Social Security numbers (SSNs) and individual taxpayer identification numbers (ITINs), all but the year of birthdates, all but the initials of minors' names, and all but the last four digits of financial account numbers.² Criminal Rule 49.1 and Appellate Rule 25(a)(5) also require filers to redact all but the city and state of individuals' home addresses in criminal cases. Additionally, Civil Rule 5.2 restricts remote electronic access to documents in Social Security and immigration cases. This restriction, however, does not extend to dockets or opinions, orders, judgments, and other dispositions of the court. Since May 2018, the Judicial Conference Committee on Court Administration and Case Management (CACM) has suggested that courts redact all but the first name and last initial of nongovernment parties in opinions and orders in Social Security and immigration cases to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.³

CACM, in conjunction with the Judicial Conference Committee on the Rules of Practice and Procedure (Standing Committee), regularly considers privacy concerns in federal court filings, including possible amendments to the federal rules and Judicial Conference privacy policies.⁴ In response to Judicial Conference committee requests, the Federal Judicial Center (Center) completed empirical studies in 2010 and 2015 to assess the prevalence of unredacted SSNs in federal district and bankruptcy court records available through the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) service.⁵

¹ These rules were created in response to the E-Government Act of 2002, which required the federal judiciary to formulate rules "to protect privacy and security concerns relating to electronic filing of documents." See Pub. L. 107-347, § 205(c) (3).

² Fed. R. App. P. 25(a)(5); Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9037; Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2; Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1. Appendix A provides the text of the rules. Appendix B provides additional background on the federal privacy rules.

³ See 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>. See also 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>.

⁴ In 2009, the Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference directed the Standing Committee to report on the operation of the privacy rules. In March 2011, the Standing Committee's Privacy Subcommittee considered the findings of a 2010 Center study described below on unredacted Social Security numbers,⁴ conducted a mini conference at the Fordham School of Law, and reviewed surveys of judges, clerks of court, and assistant U.S. attorneys regarding their experiences with the operation of the privacy rules. While the Privacy Subcommittee found no general issues regarding the operation of the privacy rules, it recommended that "[t]o ensure continued effective implementation, every other year the [Center] should undertake a random review of court filings for unredacted personal identifier information." *Summary of the Report of the Judicial Conference Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure* (March 2011): https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/fr_import/ST03-2011.pdf.

⁵ See George W. Cort and Joe S. Cecil, *Social Security Numbers in Federal Court Documents*, Federal Judicial Center (April 5, 2010), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/social-security-numbers-federal-court-documents>; Joe S. Cecil,

Following its December 2022 meeting, CACM requested that the Center update its 2010 and 2015 studies. In addition to SSNs, the committee requested that the Center estimate the prevalence of other types of unredacted PII covered by the privacy rules, including ITINs, birthdates, minors' names, financial account numbers, and, in criminal cases, individuals' home addresses. The committee also expressed interest in learning whether unredacted PII was more common in particular types of filings and proceedings, especially pro se filings, guardian ad litem documents, filings in Social Security actions, notices of removal from state court, and proof of claim filings in bankruptcy cases. Lastly, the committee requested an analysis of how often full nongovernment party names are included in Social Security and immigration opinions, orders, judgments, and reports and recommendations, as well as practices adopted by courts to address the inclusion of this information.

This report summarizes the Center's research on these topics, portions of which have already been published on the Center's website or furnished to CACM as memoranda (see Attachments A-J).⁶ The first section of the report provides an overview of the methods used to search millions of court documents for unredacted PII and nongovernment party names. The second section presents estimates of the prevalence of unredacted SSNs, ITINs, birthdates, home addresses, and

George W. Cort, Ashley Mason Springer, and Vashty Gobinpersad, *Unredacted Social Security Numbers in Federal Court PACER Documents*, Federal Judicial Center (October 25, 2015), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/313365/unredacted-social-security-numbers-federal-court-pacer-documents>.

⁶ The Center conducted this research in stages. First, researchers examined unredacted SSNs, analyzing both their prevalence in PACER documents (Attachment A) and the context and cases in which they appeared (Attachments B and C). Researchers then examined the rate of redaction of nongovernment party names in Social Security and immigration case documents, and surveyed clerks of court about efforts to limit the release of this information (Attachment D). Additionally, researchers examined courts' use of the Administrative Office's EasyFix redaction software by examining Social Security and immigration opinions filed on the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) United States Courts Opinions document repository (Attachment E). Next, while one group of researchers searched PACER documents for unredacted dates of birth (Attachment F), another group documented district and bankruptcy local court rules governing the redaction of private information in federal court filings (Attachment G). Finally, one group of researchers searched for documents containing all but the initials of minors' names (Attachment H), and, in criminal case filings, all but the city and state of an individual's home address (Attachment I), while another group examined magistrate judges' reports and recommendations for the presence of unredacted nongovernment party names (Attachment J). See also Kristin A. Garri, Roy P. Germano, Jason A. Cantone, and Jana E. Laks, *Unredacted Social Security Numbers in Federal Court PACER Documents*, Federal Judicial Center (May 30, 2024), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/387587/unredacted-social-security-numbers-federal-court-pacer-documents>; Kristin A. Garri, *Supplemental Analysis of Unredacted Social Security Numbers in Federal Court PACER Documents*, Federal Judicial Center (August 4, 2025), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/394725/supplemental-analysis-unredacted-social-security-numbers-federal-court-pacer>; Jana E. Laks and Kristin A. Garri, *Redaction of Non-Government Party Names in Social Security and Immigration Case Documents*, Federal Judicial Center (February 4, 2025), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/391683/redaction-non-government-party-names-social-security-and-immigration-case-documents>; Marie Leary, *Review of Local District and Appellate Rules Governing Redaction of Private Information in Federal Court Filings*, Federal Judicial Center (August 4, 2025), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/394726/review-local-district-and-appellate-rules-governing-redaction-private-information>; Carly E. Giffin, *Review of Local Bankruptcy Rules, Orders, and Procedures Governing Redaction of Private Information in Federal Court Filings*, Federal Judicial Center (August 4, 2025), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/394727/review-local-bankruptcy-rules-orders-and-procedures-governing-redaction-private>.

minors' names in court documents.⁷ The third section presents estimates of the prevalence of full nongovernment party names in publicly available Social Security and immigration opinions, order, judgments, and reports and recommendations. This section also describes research on courts' rules and practices regarding the redaction of nongovernment party names in Social Security and immigration case documents, and courts' use of an automated redaction tool for Social Security and immigration opinions called EasyFix. The fourth section concludes with an overview of the Center's research on local rules related to redaction of PII.

1. Overview of Data and Methods

This section describes the methods and documents used to search for unredacted PII and nongovernment party names in federal court documents.

1.1. Documents and Methods for PII Searches

A. Sample Design

Tens of millions of documents, some containing hundreds of pages, are filed in the federal courts each year. Even with modern computing methods, it would not be feasible or practical to search such a large volume of text for unredacted PII. For this reason, it was necessary to draw a sample of court documents to examine. Earlier Center studies on the prevalence of unredacted SSNs in court documents assessed all filings from one or two discrete months.⁸ This study sought to increase representativeness of the sample by examining documents filed throughout the year.⁹ We first randomly selected a set of dates, then downloaded all documents filed on those dates.¹⁰ We set the number of sampled dates to 37, or about 10% of the total number of days in a year.¹¹ Because nearly all court documents are filed on nonholiday weekdays and filings are evenly distributed across quarters,¹² we randomly selected nine weekdays from each quarter in calendar year 2022 and one day from a list of all weekends and holidays in 2022.¹³ These procedures

⁷ Although Center researchers developed strategies and methods for identifying unredacted financial account numbers, they were unable to estimate their prevalence in the timeframe allotted to complete this study.

⁸ The 2010 study examined records filed in November and December 2009; the 2015 study examined records filed in November 2013.

⁹ The ideal strategy for achieving a representative sample would be to randomly select a large number of documents (or cases) directly from a list of all documents (or cases) filed in a given year. Technical limitations, however, prevented us from taking that approach.

¹⁰ For the purposes of this study, we considered a document to be the entire contents of a single PDF filed with the court, even when multiple kinds of documents (e.g., exhibits) appeared within a given PDF. A PDF is not equivalent to a docket entry, as some docket entries contain multiple PDFs that can be downloaded individually.

¹¹ While the number of documents in the sample is substantial, the number of primary sampling units—37 days—is small from a statistical perspective. Although this may limit the representativeness of our sample, the approach improves on sampling methods used in prior Center studies.

¹² See Tim Reagan, et al., "Electronic Filing Times in Federal Courts," Federal Judicial Center (April 25, 2022), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/365889/electronic-filing-times-federal-courts>.

¹³ This study focused on documents from 2022 because research began in early 2023.

yielded a collection of nearly 4.7 million PACER documents, representing all publicly available documents filed in the federal district, bankruptcy, and appeals courts on the 37 days in calendar year 2022 that we randomly selected.¹⁴

B. Text Mining Programs

We used computational methods to assist in analyzing the nearly 4.7 million documents in the sample. This approach involved, first, using the Python programming language to convert the PDF files downloaded from PACER to plain text files. This step was critical, as many court filings exist as static-image PDFs that are not inherently searchable (e.g., PDFs created from scanned paper documents). Of the PDFs downloaded, we successfully converted 99.9% to searchable text.¹⁵ As shown in Table 1, the sample of searchable documents included 138,132 court of appeals documents, 2,017,908 district court documents, and 2,518,202 bankruptcy documents.

Table 1. Number of PACER Documents Analyzed, by Court Type

Court Type	Number of Documents
District Courts	2,017,908
<i>Civil Docket</i>	<i>1,429,939</i>
<i>Criminal Docket</i>	<i>484,203</i>
<i>Miscellaneous Docket</i>	<i>103,766</i>
Bankruptcy Courts	2,518,202
<i>Proofs of Claim</i>	<i>428,142</i>
<i>All Other Documents</i>	<i>2,090,060</i>
Appeals Courts	138,132
Total	4,674,242

We then wrote programs in the R programming language to mine the text files for patterns and keywords associated with SSNs, ITINs, birthdates, home addresses, and minors' names. These searches were tailored to each type of PII and designed to be overinclusive. We describe the

¹⁴ We analyzed all available PACER documents from the following days in 2022, which were selected at random: January 18, January 25, February 4, February 8, February 11, March 14, March 15, March 21, March 30, April 2, April 15, April 22, May 4, May 6, May 11, June 9, June 10, June 16, June 28, July 18, July 25, August 4, August 8, August 11, September 9, September 12, September 16, September 27, October 18, October 25, November 4, November 8, November 14, December 14, December 15, December 21, December 27.

¹⁵ We successfully converted 4,674,242 of the 4,681,055 PDFs we originally downloaded. Of the 6,813 PDFs that could not be converted to text, 6,456 (95%) were from appellate cases. This conversion rate is a substantial improvement from earlier Center studies: the 2015 SSN study was unable to convert 27,424 PDFs plus all PDFs from an entire bankruptcy court; the 2010 study did not attempt to convert any static-image PDFs to machine-readable text.

specific patterns, keywords, and approaches used to search for each type of PII when reporting estimates of prevalence.

When the various computer programs identified a potential instance of PII based on a matched pattern or keyword, they created a row in a spreadsheet. Each spreadsheet entry included the text of the potential instance of PII identified by the program. It also included a link that researchers could use to open the original PACER PDF.

C. Manual Review

The spreadsheets created by the text-mining programs were then reviewed by members of the research team. Two researchers independently inspected each entry and ascertained whether the text flagged by the program was a true instance of unredacted PII covered by the privacy rules. In many cases, researchers referenced the original PDF to view the number, date, address, or name in context. Whenever the two researchers assigned to a given spreadsheet disagreed about an entry, the disputed entry was closely reviewed by a senior member of the project team, who made a final determination.

The privacy rules identify various exemptions to the redaction requirement, which are listed below in Box 1. The rules also include an explicit waiver provision: a person waives the protection of the rule as to the person's own information by filing it without redaction and not under seal, which typically occurs when pro se litigants file documents with their own PII.¹⁶ Two researchers independently examined each instance of unredacted PII in the context of the documents, docket sheets, and cases in which they appeared to determine if the PII could have been exempt from the redaction requirement when filed.¹⁷ When an exemption applied, researchers noted the basis. Researchers also noted when unredacted PII belonged to a pro se party who filed the document and denoted these entries as having privacy protections waived. Whenever any two researchers disagreed, a senior member of the team made a final determination. If researchers could not identify a basis for exemption or waiver, the PII was counted as noncompliant with the privacy rules.

¹⁶ Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(g); Fed. R. Crim P. 49.1(h); Fed. R. Bank. P. 9037(g).

¹⁷ We interpreted the exemption provisions of the privacy rules broadly and generally counted unredacted PII as exempt if a filing party could have reasonably understood the rules as providing an exemption. We used an expansive understanding of the terms "official record" and "state-court proceedings" to include any document that appeared to be all or part of a record of any type of proceeding from a state court. We also interpreted the criminal rules as exempting PII appearing in nonfederal charging documents filed in criminal proceedings in federal court. Finally, we treated PII found in attachments to warrants and charging documents as exempt under the criminal rules.

Box 1. Exemptions to the Redaction Requirement

- Record of a state court proceeding
- Pro se party filing in a habeas corpus proceeding under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241, 2254, or 2255
- Criminal charging document/affidavit
- Criminal arrest/search warrant
- Criminal investigation or other document prepared prior to filing of criminal charge
- Non-attorney bankruptcy petition preparer (e.g., Bankruptcy Form 119) (SSN only)
- Filing in appeal of Railroad Retirement Board benefits decision (SSN only)
- Filing in civil social security case (i.e., action for benefits under the Social Security Act)
- Record of administrative agency proceeding (except in bankruptcy cases if record filed with proof of claim)
- Immigration case (i.e., action relating to immigration removal, relief from removal, benefits, or detention)
- Record of a court or tribunal, if that record was not subject to the redaction requirement when originally filed
- Documents filed under seal

1.2. Documents and Methods for Nongovernment Party Name Searches

We used a different set of documents to estimate the prevalence of unredacted nongovernment party names in Social Security and immigration cases. Because the universe of relevant Social Security and immigration case documents was more limited in scope, we were able to complete our research on unredacted party names without having to draw random samples or develop text-mining programs.

A. Defining the Relevant Set of Documents

Under the privacy rules, documents related to Social Security and immigration cases have a unique status. Civil Rule 5.2(c)(2) states that, in Social Security and immigration cases, any person may have remote electronic access to “the docket maintained by the court; and [] an opinion, order, judgment, or other disposition of the court, but not any other part of the case file or the administrative record.” In May 2023, CACM sent a memorandum 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” (emphasis added).¹⁸

We thus defined the relevant set of documents as publicly available opinions, orders, judgments, and reports and recommendations from Social Security and immigration cases. Social Security cases included cases filed in the district courts and courts of appeals related to Medicare Part A benefits, Black Lung claims, benefits for disabled individuals (DIWC/DIWW), Supplemental Security Income Disability (SSID) benefits, and retirement and survivor insurance (RSI).¹⁹ The relevant immigration cases included civil cases filed in the district courts and the courts of appeals involving deportation, naturalization, and immigrant detention.²⁰ We also included documents from criminal immigration appeals and administrative agency appeals in the event they were of interest to the committee.²¹

The analysis examined all relevant documents from Social Security and immigration cases that were terminated between June 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023. We selected this time period because CACM had issued its memorandum encouraging redaction of nongovernment party names in May 2023, and we began our research in early 2024. We examined a total of 25,808 documents: 18,305 from Social Security cases and 7,503 from immigration cases.

B. Manual Review

Researchers inspected the case captions of each of the 25,808 documents, noting whether the name of a nongovernment party had been printed in full or redacted in some form. When redactions had been made, researchers noted the redaction method used. For example, names were redacted by including only the party’s first name and last initial (as suggested by CACM), by including only the party’s first and last initials, by including only the party’s first initial and last name, and by using aliases, such as Jane Doe and John Doe.

¹⁸ 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>.

¹⁹ These cases are categorized, respectively, under nature of suit (NOS) codes 861, 862, 863, 864, and 865.

²⁰ These cases are categorized, respectively, under NOS codes 460, 462, and 463. They also involve cases categorized under NOS code 465, which pertains to other immigration actions not involving naturalization applications of petitions for Writs of Habeas Corpus.

²¹ Criminal immigration cases in district courts were not included in this sample, as restrictions on remote access only apply to civil immigration actions and immigration proceedings under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (*see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(c)(2); Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1(c)). However, data on criminal immigration appeals were initially included because it was unclear to researchers if appeals of decisions under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 would be categorized as civil or criminal appeals in PACER. These cases were ultimately identified in the civil appeals data. The Center decided to include in this report the results of the analysis of criminal appeals as it might still be of interest to the committee. Criminal immigration appeals pertain primarily to cases involving illegal entry and reentry, human smuggling, and fraud and misuse of visas and permits, categorized under nature of offense codes 8170, 8720, 8730, 8731, and 8740. Administrative agency appeals pertain to decisions by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) or Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS).

Each case caption was independently inspected by two members of the research team. If the two researchers disagreed about whether a redaction had been made or the redaction method used, the caption was examined by a senior member of the research team to make a final determination.

2. Unredacted Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in Federal Court Documents

This section reports the results of our searches for unredacted SSNs, ITINs, birthdates, home addresses, and minors' names. Before presenting estimates of the prevalence of each type of PII, we describe the patterns, keywords, and approaches used to conduct the respective searches. These descriptions provide essential context by defining what we counted and how reliably each type of PII could be identified algorithmically. SSNs, ITINs, and birthdates, for instance, were most amenable to computer-assisted searches because they tend to be written in structured formats, while we relied more extensively on manual review of smaller sets of documents to locate home addresses and minors' names.

2.1. Social Security and Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers

This section summarizes the methods and findings in *Unredacted Social Security Numbers in Federal Court PACER Documents* (Attachment A), *Supplemental Analysis of Unredacted Social Security Numbers in Federal Court PACER Documents* (Attachment B), and "Where Unredacted Social Security Numbers Appear in Public Case Records of the Federal Courts of Appeals and District Courts" (Attachment C).

Search Methods

To search for SSNs and ITINs, we wrote a program that extracted nine-digit numbers from our collection of nearly 4.7 million court documents. We then developed programs that flagged any numbers that appeared in the standard SSN and ITIN format (i.e., 123-45-6789) or near keywords suggesting that the number was an SSN or ITIN (e.g., "SSN," "Social Security Number," "ITIN," "Taxpayer Identification Number," "Tax ID").²² Two researchers independently inspected, in context, each of the entries flagged by the program to determine which were unredacted SSNs and ITINs.

²² We used pattern-matching and keyword searches to narrow down a list of 4.4 million nine-digit numbers found in the documents. We determined which patterns and keywords to use by inspecting over 120,000 nine-digit numbers in context. We ran multiple tests to validate our pattern-based and keyword-based predictions. For a complete list of keywords, see Appendix C.1. In addition to the standard SSN/ITIN format, our programs flagged numbers appearing in the standard format for Employer Identification Numbers (EINs) (i.e., 12-3456789) and alternative SSN/ITIN formats, such as 123 45 6789 and 123.45.6789. Although our pattern and keyword searches flagged EINs for manual review, we did not include them in the final counts of SSNs and ITINs.

Results

Table 2 shows that of the nearly 4.7 million documents analyzed, 4,525 (0.10%) contained at least one unredacted SSN or ITIN. These 4,525 documents were filed in 3,901 docket entries in 3,521 cases. Table 2 also shows that unredacted SSNs and ITINs were not evenly distributed across the types of court. The percentage of documents with SSNs and ITINs was highest in the courts of appeals (0.17%), followed by the district courts (0.12%) and the bankruptcy courts (0.07%). Furthermore, in the district courts, SSNs and ITINs were about twice as prevalent in civil cases as they were in criminal cases. In the bankruptcy courts, they were nearly four times more prevalent in proof of claim registers than they were in the other bankruptcy case documents.

Table 2. Prevalence of Unredacted SSNs and ITINs

Court Type	Documents Analyzed	Documents with SSNs	% Documents with SSNs
District Courts	2,017,908	2,451	0.12%
<i>Civil Docket</i>	<i>1,429,939</i>	<i>1,993</i>	<i>0.14%</i>
<i>Criminal Docket</i>	<i>484,203</i>	<i>341</i>	<i>0.07%</i>
<i>Miscellaneous Docket</i>	<i>103,766</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>0.11%</i>
Bankruptcy Courts	2,518,202	1,840	0.07%
<i>Proofs of Claim</i>	<i>428,142</i>	<i>809</i>	<i>0.19%</i>
<i>All Other Documents</i>	<i>2,090,060</i>	<i>1,031</i>	<i>0.05%</i>
Appeals Courts	138,132	234	0.17%
Total	4,674,242	4,525	0.10%

Unredacted SSNs and ITINs appeared 22,391 times across the 4,525 documents.²³ By definition, ITINs always begin with the number 9 and SSNs never begin with the number 9. Only 400 of the 22,391 entries began with the number 9, suggesting that few of the numbers we found were ITINs. For simplicity, we henceforth refer to the 22,391 entries as “SSNs.”

As shown in Table 3, 72% of the 22,391 unredacted SSNs appeared to be noncompliant with the privacy rules, while 22% appeared to be exempt from the redaction requirement and 6% belonged to pro se parties who waived the privacy protections by filing their own SSN in an unsealed document. A smaller percentage of SSNs in the appeals court documents appeared to be noncompliant with the rules compared to SSNs in the district and bankruptcy court documents. This was due both to the higher percentage of exempt SSNs in the appeals courts and the higher

²³ The same SSN was sometimes printed multiple times across the documents. While it was difficult to get a precise count of the number of unique SSNs that appeared in the documents, we estimate that about 8,300 individuals were affected.

percentage of pro se parties who waived privacy protections by filing documents with their own SSNs. Nearly all SSNs filed in proof of claim documents were noncompliant.

Table 3. Percentage of SSNs Noncompliant, Exempt, and Protections Waived

Court Type	SSNs Found	% Noncompliant with rules	% Exempt from rules	% Protections waived
District Courts	15,935	75%	20%	5%
<i>Civil Docket</i>	14,030	76%	19%	6%
<i>Criminal Docket</i>	888	52%	45%	3%
<i>Miscellaneous Docket</i>	1,017	80%	18%	3%
Bankruptcy Courts	5,615	72%	24%	4%
<i>Proofs of Claim</i>	1,782	98%	1%	1%
<i>All Other Documents</i>	3,833	60%	35%	5%
Appeals Courts	841	38%	41%	20%
Total	22,391	72%	22%	6%

The most common basis for an exemption in the civil, bankruptcy, and appeals courts was that the SSN appeared in the record of a state court proceeding. This exemption applied 64% of the time in the civil filings, 72% of the time in the bankruptcy filings, and 38% of the time in the appeals court filings.²⁴ In both civil and appeals filings, other common reasons for exemption were that the SSN appeared in a pro se habeas corpus petition, the record of an administrative agency proceeding, or the record of an action for benefits under the Social Security Act. In the bankruptcy documents, some SSNs were also exempt because they belonged to non-attorney bankruptcy petition preparers. In the criminal filings, the most common basis for an exemption, applying 46% of the time, was that the SSN appeared in a document that was originally filed under seal. Another common exemption, applying 44% of the time, was that the SSN appeared in a criminal charging document, affidavit, arrest warrant, search warrant, or criminal investigation. Many of these SSNs (24%) were also exempt because they appeared in records of state court proceedings.²⁵

A large number of the SSNs appeared in a small number of documents. Forty-five percent of the 22,391 SSNs appeared in just 17 documents. About half of the 15,935 SSNs found in district court filings appeared in 10 civil case documents, and about a fifth of the 5,616 SSNs found in

²⁴ 1,688 of 2,624 exempt SSNs found in civil filings, 981 of 1,361 exempt SSNs found in bankruptcy and proof of claim filings, and 134 of 349 exempt SSNs found in court of appeals filings appeared in the record of a state court proceeding. Note that some SSNs were exempt for more than one reason.

²⁵ 185 of 401 exempt SSNs found in criminal filings appeared in documents filed under seal; 177 of 401 exempt SSNs found in criminal filings appeared in charging documents, affidavits, arrest warrants, search warrants, and criminal investigations; 95 of 401 exempt SSNs found in criminal filings appeared in the record of a state court proceeding. Note that some SSNs were exempt for more than one reason.

bankruptcy court filings appeared in just three documents. A single document filed in a district court case on the miscellaneous docket included 733 SSNs, and one document in a bankruptcy adversary proceeding contained 437 unredacted SSNs.²⁶

Table 4 shows that filers had attempted to redact about a third of the SSNs but were unsuccessful in fully concealing them. In one civil case, a party filed two documents that each contained 3,099 SSNs. The filer attempted to redact the SSNs by covering them with a black box. However, the SSNs could be revealed by selecting and deleting the black box or by highlighting the page and copying the underlying text into a word processor. These 6,198 improperly redacted SSNs accounted for 28% of the SSNs we found. An additional 1,471 improperly redacted SSNs appeared in 443 other documents, most of which were proofs of claim.

Table 4. *Improperly Redacted and Fully Unredacted SSNs*

	Number of SSNs
Improperly Redacted SSNs	7,669
<i>Outlier Civil Case</i>	<i>6,198</i>
<i>Other Civil Cases</i>	<i>129</i>
<i>Proofs of Claim</i>	<i>1,100</i>
<i>Bankruptcy Cases</i>	<i>241</i>
<i>Appeals Cases</i>	<i>1</i>
Fully Unredacted SSNs	14,722
Total	22,391

Excluding bankruptcy proofs of claim²⁷ and cases from the miscellaneous docket,²⁸ we found 19,590 unredacted SSNs in 2,724 cases. Table 5 shows that 1,038 of these 2,724 cases (38%) involved at least one pro se party. In bankruptcy adversary proceedings, 70% of cases with unredacted SSNs involved at least one pro se party. Furthermore, 51% of appellate cases, 45% of civil cases, and 34% of bankruptcy court cases containing unredacted SSNs involved a pro se party. This is not to suggest that unredacted SSNs are common in pro se cases, but rather that in the rare instances in which unredacted SSNs appeared in the documents, pro se parties were

²⁶ Cases on the miscellaneous docket are actions that do not qualify as civil cases in federal court, such as uncontested bankruptcy withdrawals or actions to enforce administrative subpoenas and summons heard by a magistrate judge, and those criminal matters not reportable by the federal courts to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, including petty offense cases presided over by magistrate judges, class A misdemeanor cases on the Central Violations Bureau (CVB) docket, and proceedings that are unrelated to the trial or disposition of a defendant for the offense charged, such as supervised release revocation hearings and remands for resentencing.

²⁷ Proofs of claim are filed by creditors or their attorneys and appear within the proof of claim register on the docket of a bankruptcy case; each bankruptcy case may contain multiple proofs of claim. There were 770 proofs of claim with 1,782 unredacted SSNs in 718 bankruptcy cases.

²⁸ We excluded one miscellaneous bankruptcy court case and 79 miscellaneous district court cases because the pro se status of parties could not be confirmed.

often involved. At the same time, SSNs found within cases with pro se parties were usually exempt from the redaction requirement or categorized as protections-waived. Specifically, 54% of 4,259 SSNs found in cases with at least one pro se party were categorized as exempt and 27% as protections-waived. By contrast, 16% of 15,331 SSNs found in cases without a pro se party were exempt, and 0.4% were protections-waived.²⁹

Table 5. Involvement of Pro Se Parties in Cases with Unredacted SSNs

Case Type	Cases with SSNs *	Cases with SSNs involving Pro Se Party	% Cases with SSNs involving Pro Se Party
Bankruptcy Adversary Proceedings	56	39	70%
Appeals	192	97	51%
District Court Civil	1,365	613	45%
Bankruptcy Court Cases	835	280	34%
District Court Criminal	276	9	3%
Total	2,724	1,038	38%

* See supra note 27 and 28.

Unredacted SSNs appeared more often in certain types of cases. In the district courts, 88% of the SSNs appeared in cases on the civil docket. Table 6 shows that civil rights cases, habeas corpus prisoner petitions, and personal injury torts were particularly affected. The case with 6,198 improperly redacted SSNs, for instance, was a civil rights case. We also found 1,981 SSNs in 400 habeas corpus prisoner petitions, most of which were exempt, and 1,801 SSNs in 199 personal injury cases, almost all of which were noncompliant with the rules. Slightly more than half of the SSNs found in personal injury cases appeared across 14 medical malpractice suits. With regard to civil appeals, nearly half (45%) of the 492 unredacted SSNs appeared in habeas corpus prisoner petitions, and 21% appeared in civil rights cases.

²⁹ The small number of protections-waived SSNs in cases with no pro se party were filed by individuals before they obtained an attorney or after they began to represent themselves.

Table 6. Unredacted SSNs in Civil Cases and Civil Appeals, by Nature of Suit

Nature of Suit Category	District Courts		Courts of Appeals	
	SSNs Found	Cases with SSNs	SSNs Found	Cases with SSNs
Civil Rights	7,453*	344	105	30
Habeas Corpus Prisoner Petitions	1,981	400	219	37
Personal Injury Torts	1,801	199	7	3
Contract	579	133	24	7
Labor	340	60	36	6
Other Categories	1,876	229	101	21
Total	14,030	1,365	492	104

* 6,198 SSNs appear across two documents in a single civil rights case

Unredacted SSNs did not appear to be overrepresented in Social Security cases or cases removed from state court. Only 5 of the 1,365 cases with SSNs on the civil docket were Social Security cases. In one case, 316 SSNs appeared in an administrative agency record and were exempt from redaction. An additional 15 SSNs appeared across the other four Social Security cases and were also exempt. Cases removed from state court represented 15% of civil cases and about half of all unredacted SSNs identified on the civil docket. This result was driven, however, by the civil rights case with 6,198 improperly redacted SSNs. When that case was excluded, only about 10% of the SSNs identified on the civil docket came from cases removed from state court.

Table 7. Unredacted SSNs in Criminal Cases and Criminal Appeals, by Nature of Offense

Nature of Offense Category	District Courts		Courts of Appeals	
	SSNs Found	Cases with SSNs	SSNs Found	Cases with SSNs
Property Offenses	243	64	18	13
Sex Offenses	209	18	38	8
Drug Offenses	179	91	27	17
Firearms and Explosives Offenses	104	53	36	10
Other Categories	153	50	9	4
Total	888	276	128	52

Table 7 shows that the SSNs found in the criminal documents were concentrated primarily in cases involving property, sex, drug, and firearms and explosives offenses. Many of these SSNs appeared in a relatively small number of cases. For instance, 190 of the 209 SSNs found in Sex Offense filings were in just 6 child sex abuse cases, all of which were exempt from the redaction requirement, and 159 of the 243 SSNs in Property Offense filings appeared across 26 fraud cases, almost all of which were noncompliant with the rules.

Table 8. Unredacted SSNs in Bankruptcy Cases and Proofs of Claim, by Filing Chapter

Original Filing Chapter	Bankruptcy Cases		Proofs of Claim	
	<i>SSNs Found</i>	<i>Cases with SSNs</i>	<i>SSNs Found</i>	<i>Proofs of Claim with SSNs</i>
Chapter 7	1,126	453	294	111
Chapter 11	715	63	130	41
Chapter 12	2	2	4	2
Chapter 13	1,136	317	1,354	616
Total	2,979	835	1,782	770

Table 8 shows that SSNs in the bankruptcy case documents appeared most often in Chapter 7 and Chapter 13 filings. Furthermore, three-quarters of the SSNs in proof of claim registers appeared in Chapter 13 filings. One form used by individuals filing under Chapter 7 and Chapter 13—Form 121—was of particular concern because it requires debtors to list in full any SSNs and ITINs they have ever used. Although Form 121 instructs debtors not to file it as part of their public case file, we found 54 unredacted SSNs associated with Form 121 across one proof of claim and 45 bankruptcy case documents.

Another 852 SSNs were identified in 56 adversary proceedings. One of the adversary proceedings contained 437 SSNs, all of which were exempt. Forty percent of the SSNs in adversary proceedings were found in cases involving dischargeability, recovery of money/property, and objection/revocation of discharge.

Table 9. Categories of Documents Containing Noncompliant and Protections-Waived SSNs

Document Type	% of Documents with SSNs*
Financial documents (e.g., financial records, bank statements, credit checks, tax documents, loan documents, employment/payroll documents)	48%
Medical records and other nonfinancial records (e.g., academic records, vital records, prison records, law enforcement records)	16%
Court documents (e.g., judgments, complaints, motions, transcripts, subpoenas, Notice of Electronic Filing, Proof of Claim, trustee correspondence)	14%
Bankruptcy forms (e.g., Form 106E/F/F, Form 121, Form 309, Notice of Bankruptcy Case)	6%
Insurance, unemployment, and disability records	4%
All other document types	11%

* Includes only documents with noncompliant and protections-waived SSNs

Table 9 shows the broad categories of documents that we found to contain SSNs, excluding SSNs determined to be exempt from the redaction requirement. Financial documents, such as financial records, bank statements, credit checks, medical bills, loan applications, tax filings, and paystubs, accounted for nearly half of the documents we found to contain noncompliant and protections-waived SSNs.³⁰ SSNs also commonly appeared in medical records and a variety of other nonfinancial records, such as academic records, vital records, incarceration records, and law enforcement records.³¹ Only 20% of the SSNs appeared in court documents and bankruptcy forms.³² The court documents that contained SSNs were sometimes older documents that had been attached as exhibits. In sum, unredacted SSNs largely appeared within supporting materials that originated outside of the legal process and naturally contain sensitive personal information.

SSNs could appear in either the text of the main document associated with a docket event (e.g., an actual complaint or motion) or an attachment related to/in support of the main document and docket event (e.g., an exhibit, appendix, or other attachment). Researchers used the document

³⁰ 1,568 of 3,269 documents with noncompliant and protections-waived SSNs were financial documents. Of the 1,568 financial documents, 638 were financial records (e.g., bank statements, medical bills, and credit checks), 349 were tax documents, 295 were payroll and employment documents, and 286 were loan documents.

³¹ 521 of the 3,269 documents with noncompliant and protections-waived SSNs were nonfinancial records: 167 pertained to medical records and 354 pertained to academic records, vital records, incarceration records, and law enforcement records.

³² 470 of the 3,269 documents with noncompliant and protections-waived SSNs were court documents, and 212 were bankruptcy forms.

description in the court’s operational database and docket text to distinguish documents filed as main documents in a docket event from documents filed as ancillary documents to that event. For example, a motion would likely be filed as a main document and an exhibit in support would be filed as a related ancillary document. This analysis, which excluded unredacted SSNs categorized as exempt, found that 99.6% of nonexempt SSNs in appellate cases, 89% of nonexempt SSNs in civil cases, and 78% of nonexempt SSNs in criminal cases appeared in ancillary documents. By contrast, 36% of nonexempt SSNs in bankruptcy cases and 40% of nonexempt SSNs in bankruptcy proofs of claim appeared in ancillary documents.

Table 10. SSNs Found in Exhibits and Appendices in District and Appeals Courts

Case Type	Total SSNs	SSNs in Exhibits/ Appendices	% SSNs in Exhibits/ Appendices
District Court Civil	14,030	13,921	99%
District Court Criminal	888	786	89%
Appeals	841	839	100%

A Center researcher then manually reviewed each of the unredacted SSNs (including exempt SSNs) found in the civil, criminal, and appellate filings to determine how often they appeared in the main document of a docketed event versus in attachments, exhibits, and appendices. This review, the results of which are summarized in Table 10, indicated that the SSNs almost always appeared in attachments, exhibits, and appendices rather than in the main document. While a manual review of unredacted SSNs in bankruptcy filings was not completed, we observed in a small random sample that even when bankruptcy documents had been filed as main documents, the SSNs were often contained in what would be considered supporting materials or exhibits. This was due in part to how certain events in bankruptcy cases were docketed. For instance, the proof of income event generally only contains pay stubs and tax documents. Although documents in these events were docketed as main documents, they could be characterized as ancillary documents. Thus, the rate of SSNs in main versus ancillary bankruptcy documents might be more similar to those found in the district and appellate documents than suggested by the operational database analysis.

2.2. Birthdates

This section summarizes the methods and findings in “Exploratory Analysis of Unredacted Birth Dates in Federal Court PACER Documents” (Attachment F).

Search Methods

To identify unredacted birthdates, we searched the text of the 4.7 million PACER documents for patterns that resembled dates. We defined a date as the combination of a month, a day, and a year. Dates could be fully written out (e.g., January 31, 1970) or abbreviated using any number

of conventions (e.g., Jan. 31, 1970, 01/31/1970, 1-31-70).³³ We then used a set of keywords to predict which of the dates found in the documents were most likely birthdates (e.g., “DOB,” “Date of Birth,” and “Birth Date”).³⁴ Two researchers then independently inspected the context surrounding each of the entries flagged by the prediction algorithm. In the most common circumstance, the month, day, and year of a person’s birth appeared in the document unredacted. In other circumstances, only the month and day appeared in the document. We counted the latter as an unredacted birthdate only if the year of birth could be inferred, as in “She celebrated her 38th birthday on March 5, 2021.” If the two researchers made different determinations, the disagreement was reconciled by a senior member of the research team.

Results

Table 11 shows the prevalence of unredacted birthdates. We identified unredacted birthdates in 20,731 of the nearly 4.7 million documents (0.44%). The percentage of documents with unredacted birthdates was highest in district court filings (0.86%) and court of appeals filings (0.74%) and lowest in bankruptcy court filings (0.09%).

³³ The following is an exhaustive list of the date formats we searched for (case insensitive): January 31, 1970; Jan. 31, 1970; Jan 31, 1970; 01/31/1970; 01/31/70; 1/31/1970; 1/31/70; 01-31-1970; 01-31-70; 1-31-1970; 1-31-70.

³⁴ Our initial search for date patterns returned 56 million hits. We manually reviewed thousands of randomly selected dates in context to understand how birthdates tended to appear in court documents. Through this review, we observed that birthdates generally appeared near a limited number of keywords. We flagged any date as a possible birthdate if it appeared within two lines of any of the following terms (case insensitive): “Date of birth,” “Birthdate,” “Birthday,” “Birth date,” “Birth day,” “born,” and “birth.” We also flagged any date as a possible birthdate if it appeared within two lines of the following abbreviations for the phrase “date of birth”: “DOB,” “D.O.B,” “d.o.b.,” “D/O/B,” “d/o/b.” Not included as a search term was “dob,” which likely lowered the reported prevalence rate.

Table 11. Prevalence of Unredacted Dates of Birth (DOBs)

Court Type	Documents Analyzed	Documents with DOBs	% Documents with DOBs
District Courts	2,017,908	17,320	0.86%
<i>Civil Docket</i>	1,429,939	13,105	0.92%
<i>Criminal Docket</i>	484,203	3,478	0.72%
<i>Miscellaneous Docket</i>	103,766	737	0.71%
Bankruptcy Courts	2,518,202	2,392	0.09%
<i>Proofs of Claim</i>	428,142	1,189	0.28%
<i>All Other Documents</i>	2,090,060	1,203	0.06%
Appeals Courts	138,132	1,019	0.74%
Total	4,674,242	20,731	0.44%

We found 111,496 unredacted birthdates in the documents. Table 12 shows that nearly three-quarters of the birthdates (82,111 of 111,496) appeared in civil filings. Based on a manual review of 6,402 randomly selected birthdates, we estimated that 54% of the unredacted birthdates were noncompliant with the privacy rules and 29% were exempt.³⁵ We also estimated that 17% belonged to people who waived privacy protections by filing their own birthdates. While most of the individuals who filed their own birthdate were pro se parties, some belonged to attorneys who filed their own birthdates in applications for admission to the court.

³⁵ We drew six random samples of 1,067 birthdates from each of the following document types, for a total of 6,402 dates: (1) civil documents, (2) criminal documents, (3) documents from the miscellaneous docket, (4) appeals documents, (5) proof of claims filings, and (6) bankruptcy documents other than proof of claims filings. Estimates for each sample have a margin of error not exceeding 3%.

Table 12. Percentage of Birthdates Noncompliant, Exempt, and Protections Waived

Court Type	DOBs Found *	% Noncompliant with rules	% Exempt from rules	% Protections waived
District Courts	99,247	53%	30%	17%
<i>Civil Docket</i>	82,113	53%	33%	14%
<i>Criminal Docket</i>	12,996	45%	15%	40%
<i>Miscellaneous Docket</i>	4,128	66%	29%	4%
Bankruptcy Courts	5,874	59%	36%	6%
<i>Proofs of Claim</i>	2,364	82%	17%	2%
<i>All Other Documents</i>	3,510	43%	48%	9%
Appeals Courts	6,375	60%	12%	28%
Total	111,496	54%	29%	17%

* Six random samples of 1,067 DOBs were examined to produce estimates of percent noncompliant, exempt, and protections-waived (margin of error +/-3%). See supra note 35.

Of the exempt birthdates in civil cases, we estimated that 89% were exempt because they appeared in the records of state court proceedings. Of exempt birthdates in criminal cases, we estimated that 88% were exempt because they appeared in charging documents, warrants, and criminal investigations. Moreover, we estimated that 40% of the unredacted birthdates in criminal filings did not violate the privacy rules because they belonged to individuals, including pro se parties, who filed their own birthdate. Many of these birthdates appeared in compassionate release motions filed by prisoners. Nearly all (99%) exempt birthdates in bankruptcy filings appeared in the records of state court proceedings. Of exempt birthdates in the appeals documents, 64% appeared in the records of state court proceedings.

2.3. Home Addresses in Criminal Cases

This section summarizes the methods and findings in “Exploratory Analysis of Unredacted Home Addresses in Federal Court PACER Criminal Proceedings Documents” (Attachment I).

Determining whether an address was a home address or some other type of address required more manual review, research, and interpretation than was needed in our analyses of SSNs and birthdates. For this reason, we reviewed random samples of 10,000 documents from our collection of 484,203 criminal district court documents and 10,000 documents from our collection of 41,326 criminal appeals court documents. The percentages we report in this section are estimates based on random samples rather than on the entire collection of documents that we analyzed in previous sections. Sample sizes of 10,000 documents were chosen to minimize the uncertainty of our estimates while also keeping the manual review process manageable.

Search Methods

To begin, we searched the documents for strings that contained the basic elements of street addresses.³⁶ We defined a street address as a house number, a street name, and a street suffix, such as “Avenue,” “Road,” and “Street.”³⁷ We then used keyword searches to exclude irrelevant strings that conformed to our address pattern³⁸ and nonresidential addresses associated with law firms, courthouses, and government buildings.³⁹ Two Center researchers independently examined each of the remaining text strings in context, reading sections of the documents to determine which were individuals’ home addresses. Researchers considered any residential street address with the city and state as a full address and any residential street address without a city and state as a partial address. Researchers also labeled more general references to blocks (e.g., “100 block of Main Street”) as partial addresses, whether or not the city and state were included. They counted the addresses of hotels, shelters, and reentry centers as home addresses only when a document suggested that a particular individual was residing there.⁴⁰ They did not count the addresses of prisons as home addresses due to the position of multiple circuits that “the domicile of the prisoner before he was imprisoned is presumed to remain his domicile while he is in prison.”⁴¹

³⁶ We considered searching for home addresses using a list of addresses, but to our knowledge, there is not a comprehensive list of home addresses in the United States that is readily available for research purposes. *See, e.g.,* U.S. Dep’t of Transp., National Address Database (NAD) Disclaimer, U.S. Dep’t of Transp., <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/open/gis/national-address-database/national-address-database-nad-disclaimer> (last visited Feb. 25, 2026).

³⁷ Our search parameters allowed street names to contain between two and four words (case insensitive), as in 123 Main Street, 123 West Main Street, and 123 Old West Main Street. Street names could also include numbers written as numerals or words—for example, 300 9th Avenue and 300 Ninth Avenue. Cardinal directions could appear interchangeably as initials or words, as in 98 S. Market Blvd. and 98 South Market Blvd. Street suffixes were also case insensitive and could appear spelled out or abbreviated, with or without a period (e.g., Street, St., St). The full list of street suffixes and abbreviations we used were as follows: Street, St, Avenue, Ave, Road, Rd, Boulevard, Blvd, Drive, Dr, Lane, Ln, Way, Circle, Cir, Court, Ct, Terrace, Terr, Place, Pl, Highway, Hwy, Parkway, Pkwy, Crescent. Suffixes could appear fully capitalized.

³⁸ After inspecting hundreds of addresses in context, we found that certain strings that conformed to our search patterns were actually Supreme Court case citations (e.g., “137 S. Ct.”) or irregular sentence fragments that included the terms “Court” (e.g., “7 As the Court”) and “Cir” (e.g., “39 and 11th Cir”). *See* Appendix C.2 for a full list of terms we used to filter out Supreme Court case citations and sentence fragments.

³⁹ After inspecting hundreds of addresses in context, we determined that we could use a limited set of keywords to effectively filter out nonresidential addresses associated with law firms, courthouses, and government buildings. *See* Appendix C.3 for a full list of the keywords used.

Once we had a final list of unredacted home addresses, two Center researchers independently analyzed the document in which each home address was found. If an address was exempt from the rules, researchers noted the reason. They also noted when unrepresented litigants filed their own home addresses, suggesting a waiver of privacy protections. If the two researchers made different determinations, the disagreement was reconciled by a senior member of the research team.

Results

Table 13 shows the number of documents that contained individuals' home addresses, disaggregated by court type. Having found unredacted home addresses in 267 of the 10,000 district court documents and 276 of the 10,000 appeals court documents, we estimate that 2.7% of the district court documents and 2.8% of the appeals court documents contained unredacted home addresses. Eighty-nine percent of these documents contained at least one full address. The remainder contained only partial addresses.

Table 13. Prevalence of Unredacted Home Addresses in Criminal Documents

Court Type	Documents Analyzed	Documents with Home Addresses	% Documents with Home Addresses
District Courts	10,000	267	2.7%
Appeals Courts	10,000	276	2.8%

Prevalence estimated from random samples of documents (margin of error +/-0.3%)

From our manual review of the documents, we observed that unredacted home addresses often appeared in the context of property forfeitures, exhibit lists, evidence lists, and discovery indices. These documents might specify where assets or financial records were located, where law enforcement conducted surveillance, where crimes occurred, and where items such as firearms and narcotics were seized. Home addresses also commonly appeared in transcripts from trials and hearings; for example, in the context of attorneys describing the facts of cases, or law enforcement officers testifying about the steps in an investigation. We also observed home addresses in Certificates of Service and below the signature line in letters of support submitted by defendants' family members and friends. We observed the home addresses of pro se litigants in case captions alongside attorneys' addresses and below their signatures in documents they filed with the court.

Seventy percent of documents with unredacted home addresses contained one unique address, and 23% contained between two and four different addresses. In the rare instances in which more

⁴⁰ For example, we counted the address of a men's shelter because a booking arrest report listed it as the defendant's address at the time of arrest. Had the address of the men's shelter appeared in a context that did not reference a particular individual, we would not have counted it.

⁴¹ *Sullivan v. Freeman*, 944 F.2d 334 (7th Cir. 1991); see also *Stifel v. Hopkins*, 477 F.2d 1116 (6th Cir. 1973); *Hall v. Curran*, 599 F.3d 70 (1st Cir. 2010).

than a few different home addresses appeared in a document, the addresses tended to appear listed in forms, spreadsheets, or logs. For example, we found 14 different addresses in a document that contained numerous search warrant applications, 25 different addresses in a discovery index that listed various financial and property records, and 64 different addresses in an exhibit that listed properties that were advertised on a real estate company’s website.

Table 14. Percentage of Home Addresses Noncompliant, Exempt, and Protections Waived

Court Type	Home Addresses Found	% Noncompliant with rules	% Exempt from rules	% Protections waived
District Courts	756	63%	32%	5%
Appeals Courts	1,766	78%	14%	8%

In total, we found 756 unredacted home addresses in the district court documents and 1,766 in the appeals court documents. Table 14 shows that 63% of the home addresses found in the district court documents and 78% of the home addresses found in the appeals court documents appeared to be noncompliant with the privacy rules. Of the 32% of district court addresses that were exempt, almost all appeared in charging documents and affidavits, arrest and search warrants, and criminal investigations or other documents prepared prior to filing of a criminal charge. Of the 14% of appeals court addresses that were exempt, about a third appeared in state court documents, and the remainder appeared in charging documents, affidavits, warrants, and investigations.

2.4. Minors’ Names

This section summarizes the methods and findings in “Exploratory Analysis of Unredacted Minors’ Names in Federal Court PACER Documents” (Attachment H).

In contrast to our searches for SSNs, birthdates, and home addresses, we were unable to use pattern matching and keyword proximity analyses to reliably distinguish minors’ names from the multitude of adults’ names contained in court documents.⁴² In the absence of a reliable, automated method for identifying the unredacted names of minors, we designed a more targeted search strategy involving a smaller set of specific document types and more extensive manual review. The percentages reported in this section should therefore be interpreted as floor estimates because we did not analyze the full set of 4.7 million documents used in the earlier studies of SSNs and dates of birth, nor did we select the smaller sets of documents at random from the full set, as we did in the study of home addresses. Instead, we used nonrandom selection methods to focus on specific document types that we surmised might contain minors’ names. Consequently,

⁴² We initially attempted to search the 4.7 million documents for minors’ names by cross-referencing lists of baby names published by the Social Security Administration. After isolating the many names that appeared in court documents, we attempted to use context to predict which names might belong to minors. For example, if words such as “minor,” “child,” “son,” or “daughter” appeared near a name, we flagged it for manual review. This approach failed, however, because the keywords did not effectively isolate minors’ names from adults’ names.

the reported percentages are conservative figures that likely underestimate the actual prevalence of unredacted minors' names in court documents.

Search Methods

To estimate the minimum percentage of minors' names in court documents, we conducted three targeted searches that involved subsets of the 4.7 million PACER documents. First, we used the list of birthdates we created for our date of birth analysis to flag any documents containing birthdates belonging to minors at the time the document was filed.⁴³ Two Center researchers then independently reviewed each of the birthdates in context and noted when a minor's unredacted name also appeared in the document. Because we compared the birthdates of the named individuals to the document file dates, we are confident that the unredacted names we found using this method belonged to individuals who were minors at the time the respective documents were filed with the courts.

Second, we searched the 4.7 million court documents for the phrases "Next Friend" and "Guardian ad Litem."⁴⁴ Our search returned 18,370 instances of these terms. Two Center researchers then independently inspected the documents in which these terms appeared to determine if an unredacted minor name was present.⁴⁵ Many instances resembled the following fictional examples: "Jane Brown, a minor by and through her father and next friend, Edward Brown" and "Ashley Smith, Guardian Ad Litem for Sarah Johnson, Minor." When we encountered phrases like these, we counted the names "Jane Brown" and "Sarah Johnson" as unredacted minors' names because the documents identified them as such.⁴⁶ However, generally no information was available in these documents about the actual age of the minor. For this reason, especially when documents were initially filed in state court and then later filed (sometimes years later) as an exhibit in a federal case, we are less confident that the unredacted

⁴³ Any birthdate after December 31, 2004, would have belonged to someone under 18 in 2022, as would many 2004 birthdates, depending on the file date of the document.

⁴⁴ We encountered numerous unredacted minors' names in context while conducting our searches for SSNs and birthdates. We observed that those names often appeared near the phrases "Next Friend" and "Guardian ad Litem."

⁴⁵ Our initial search for the two phrases "Next Friend" and "Guardian Ad Litem" turned up 30,917 hits. We then wrote an algorithm that identified when initials appeared in context near either phrase and removed those hits under the assumption that initials represented a redaction. We considered a string of letters initials if they appeared in the following formats: A.A., A. A., A.A.A., or A. A. A. We did not remove hits if the initials could be state abbreviations (e.g., N.Y., W.V.) or if they could be abbreviations for United States (as in U.S., U.S.C., U.S.P.). We also did not remove hits with initials commonly associated with court name abbreviations (e.g., D.D.C., S.D., N.D.) and law firm names (e.g., L.L.C., P.L.C., L.P.). Researchers manually inspected the remaining 18,370 entries.

⁴⁶ Without the phrase "a minor," it would not be clear in these examples if Jane Brown and Sarah Johnson were minors. Instead, it could be that Jane Brown's father was the "next friend" because Jane was an incapacitated adult or currently housed in a carceral setting. *See, e.g., Fed. R. Civ. P. 25(b)*, which states, "If a party becomes incompetent, the court may, on motion, permit the action to be continued by or against the party's representative." Similarly, *Fed. R. Civ. P. 17(c)(2)* provides that, "A minor or an incompetent person who does not have a duly appointed representative may sue by a next friend or by a guardian ad litem." In some cases, courts permit a "next friend" to proceed on behalf of an incarcerated individual unable to seek relief on their own. *See Ford v. Haley*, 195 F.3d 603, 624 (11th Cir. 1999).

names found using this method always belonged to individuals who were minors at the time their respective documents were filed in federal court.⁴⁷

Third, we searched the 2,090,060 bankruptcy case documents, excluding proofs of claim, for Bankruptcy Form 106J. A section of Form 106J asks debtors to state if they have dependents and, if so, to provide the relationship between the dependent and the debtor, the dependent's age, and whether the dependent lives with the debtor. Although the form instructs debtors not to state the names of their dependents on their form, some list them anyway. Our search returned 55,552 Form 106Js. We then randomly selected 10,000 of these forms, which two Center researchers independently reviewed for the existence of unredacted minors' names. For all three search methods, if the two researchers made different determinations, the disagreement was reconciled by a senior member of the research team.

Results

Table 15 reports the number of documents we found with minors' names. The counts are disaggregated by type of court and which of the three search methods identified the document. If the same document was identified using multiple methods, we only counted it once.⁴⁸ Overall, we identified 2,325 documents from our targeted samples that contained at least one unredacted name identified as belonging to a minor.

⁴⁷ The privacy rules require the "party or nonparty making the filing" to redact the name of "an individual known to be a minor." The emphasis is on the filer's knowledge of an individual's status at the time a document is filed, not when the document was created. Based on this language, filing an older document that names someone who was a minor at the time but is now an adult would appear not to violate the rules.

⁴⁸ Some documents were identified both with the birthdate method and with the next friend and guardian ad litem search terms. We counted these documents once and include them only in the birthdate method column.

*Table 15. Number of Documents with
Unredacted Minors' Names, by Search Method*

Court Type	Date of birth search	Next Friend/ Guardian Ad Litem search	Form 106J search	All search methods combined
District Courts	654	1,326	-	1,980
<i>Civil Docket</i>	552	1,311	-	1,863
<i>Criminal Docket</i>	90	8	-	98
<i>Miscellaneous Docket</i>	12	7	-	19
Bankruptcy Courts	121	80	13	214
<i>Proofs of Claim</i>	50	6	-	56
<i>All Other Documents</i>	71	74	13	158
Appeals Courts	51	80	-	131
Total	826	1,486	13	2,325

We observed that minors' names connected to birthdates often appeared in medical records, psychological evaluations, school records, and authorizations to obtain and release information about a minor. Notably, one case mainly involving unredacted medical records, included an unredacted minor victim's name 4,750 times.⁴⁹ In a different case, an unredacted minor's name appeared 72 times across various documents, mostly psychological evaluations and diagnoses.⁵⁰

We observed that minors' names connected to language noting a Next Friend or Guardian Ad Litem tended to appear in the federal case captions and in federal and state case names cited in court documents. Cited case names appeared in court documents, such as in briefs and opinions to support legal arguments or provide established legal principles. However, they also appeared in documents filed by, or on behalf of, experts to show they were qualified. These documents could include long lists of prior trial testimony and depositions. For instance, one expert provided a record of 188 cases in which the expert earlier provided depositions or expert assistance. The record included 22 case names in which the minors' names were properly redacted and 8 case names in which at least one minor's name was left unredacted.

Finally, of the 10,000 Form 106J filings we examined, only 13 contained the unredacted names of dependents alongside age information indicating that the name belonged to a minor at the time of filing. We found four additional dependents' names in the 106J forms we reviewed, but they did not include age information or otherwise identify the person as a minor. Consequently, we could not determine whether these names belonged to minor children or dependent adults.

⁴⁹ We determined that each instance of this minor's name was exempt from redaction because it appeared as part of an official state court record.

⁵⁰ We determined that all instances of this minor's name were likely noncompliant with the rules.

Table 16. Minimum Percentage of Court Documents with Unredacted Minors' Names

Court Type	Number of Documents in Full Sample	Minimum Number of Documents with Minors' Names	Minimum % of Documents with Minors' Names
District Courts	2,017,908	1,980	0.10%
Civil Docket	1,429,939	1,863	0.13%
Criminal Docket	484,203	98	0.02%
Miscellaneous Docket	103,766	19	0.02%
Bankruptcy Courts	2,518,202	214	0.01%
Proofs of Claim	428,142	56	0.01%
All Other Documents	2,090,060	158	0.01%
Appeals Courts	138,132	131	0.09%
Total	4,674,242	2,325	0.05%

Table 16 lists the minimum percentage of documents from our full set of 4.7 million documents containing the unredacted name of a person identified as a minor in some manner, either by way of a birthdate or words suggesting that they were a minor. As mentioned, these percentages should be interpreted as minimums because we used nonrandom selection methods to focus on specific document types, leaving many other types of documents unanalyzed. Table 16 indicates that the extent of unredacted minor names was not zero and could be similar to the proportion of documents with unredacted SSNs. Recall that of the nearly 4.7 million court documents we analyzed, 0.10% contained unredacted SSNs. The civil docket and courts of appeals were most affected, with 0.14% and 0.17% containing unredacted SSNs. Similarly, this analysis indicates that at least 0.13% of civil documents and 0.09% of appeals documents contained the unredacted name of a person identified as a minor.

Table 17. Percentage of Minors' Names Noncompliant and Exempt

Court Type	Minors' Names Found	% Noncompliant with rules	% Exempt from rules
District Courts	11,318	45%	55%
<i>Civil Docket</i>	10,874	43%	57%
<i>Criminal Docket</i>	401	83%	17%
<i>Miscellaneous Docket</i>	43	60%	40%
Bankruptcy Courts	446	61%	39%
<i>Proofs of Claim</i>	114	52%	48%
<i>All Other Documents</i>	332	64%	36%
Appeals Courts	546	82%	18%
Total	12,310	47%	53%

Using the three search methods, we found 12,310 instances in which minors' names appeared without redaction. Table 17 shows that about half of instances with an unredacted name appeared to be noncompliant with the privacy rules and about half appeared to be exempt.⁵¹ Across all instances of identified minors' names, the most common reason for exemption was that the unredacted name appeared in the record of a state court proceeding. This reason applied to 99% of the exempt names. The remaining 1% of exempt names appeared in the records of administrative agency proceedings, criminal investigations, civil immigration cases, criminal warrants, and criminal charging documents.

3. Nongovernment Party Names in Social Security and Immigration Cases

This section summarizes the methods and findings in *Redaction of Nongovernment Party Names in Social Security and Immigration Case Documents* (Attachment D) and "Redaction of Nongovernment Party Names in Reports and Recommendations Filed in Social Security and Immigration Cases" (Attachment J) and combines results of the two analyses when appropriate. It reports estimates of the prevalence of full nongovernment party names in 25,808 documents from Social Security and immigration cases terminated between June 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023. It also presents research we conducted to understand courts' rules and practices regarding the redaction of nongovernment party names in Social Security and immigration case documents, and courts' use of an automated redaction tool for Social Security and immigration opinions called EasyFix.

⁵¹ We assumed for the purposes of this study that minors cannot waive their privacy protections.

3.1. Nongovernment Party Names in Social Security and Immigration Cases

Table 18 shows the prevalence of full nongovernment party names in the case captions of the 25,808 Social Security and immigration opinions, orders, judgments, and reports and recommendations we analyzed. Full party names were common, especially in the courts of appeals and in the district court immigration case documents. Full party names appeared least often in district court Social Security cases: 71% of the time compared to 91–96% in the other cases we examined. When a nongovernment party name was redacted in district court Social Security cases, the most common method was to use the party’s first name and last initial, as recommended by CACM. This method was used in 4,756 of the 5,203 (91%) district court Social Security case documents in which nongovernment party names had been redacted.

Table 18. Prevalence of Full Nongovernment Party Names in Social Security and Immigration Case Documents

Case Type	Documents Analyzed	Documents with Full Party Name	% with Full Party Name
District Courts			
Social Security	17,718	12,515	71%
Immigration (Civil)	2,804	2,625	94%
Appeals Courts			
Social Security	587	566	96%
Immigration (Civil)	90	82	91%
Immigration (Criminal)*	475	455	96%
Immigration (Adm. Agency)*	4,134	3,974	96%
Total	25,808	20,217	78%

* See *supra* note 21.

Table 19 shows that redaction of nongovernment party names in Social Security case documents varied by document type. Full party names were included in half of the Social Security opinions, about two-thirds of orders and reports and recommendations, and four-fifths of judgments.

Table 19. Prevalence of Full Nongovernment Party Names in District Court Social Security Case Documents, by Document Type

Document Type	Documents Analyzed	Documents with Full Party Name	% with Full Party Name
Order	7,595	5,098	67%
Judgment	7,510	5,983	80%
Opinion	1,705	847	50%
Report and Recommendation	908	587	65%
Total	17,718	12,515	71%

The percentage of unredacted nongovernment party names in immigration case documents was lowest in reports and recommendations (81%) compared to all other types of documents (92–96%).

3.2. Survey of Court Rules and Practices

In June 2024, we emailed the clerks of court of the 106 district courts and regional courts of appeals⁵² to ask for information about any local rules, standing orders, or established court practices regarding the redaction of nongovernment party names in opinions in Social Security and immigration cases.⁵³ Based on this information, 27 district courts and 1 court of appeals had redaction policies for Social Security cases. Nine district courts and 1 court of appeals had redaction policies for immigration cases. Eighteen of the policies for Social Security cases and 4 that covered immigration cases mirrored CACM’s recommendation to use only the first name and last initial of the nongovernment party in opinions. Five additional courts had a rule, order, or practice that allowed parties to request that nongovernment party names be redacted in Social Security and immigration cases. All local rules and orders were adopted or entered between 2018 and 2024, presumably in response to the committee’s 2018 memorandum. At least one of the court practices was initiated in 2018, but we do not know when other less formally documented policies were adopted.

3.3. Estimating Use of EasyFix Software to Redact Party Names

This section summarizes the methods and findings in *Suppression of Case and Party Names*

⁵² Social Security and immigration cases do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

⁵³ Eighty-seven of 106 courts responded to our email. For the 19 courts that did not respond, we searched court websites—both external and, when available, internal—for local rules, general orders, and informal operating procedures related to the redaction of nongovernment party names in Social Security and immigration cases. See Appendix C.4 for the list of questions we asked in our email.

in Social Security and Immigration Opinions Extracted to U.S. Government Publishing Office United States Courts Opinions Document Repository (Attachment E).

Opinions from Social Security and immigration cases remain widely available to the public through the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) United States Courts Opinions document repository on GovInfo.⁵⁴ Opinions available on GovInfo often appear in internet search engine results and may reveal sensitive information about individuals involved in Social Security and immigration cases.

In 2020, CACM asked the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AO) to address this privacy concern by developing a way for courts to suppress case name and party names in Social Security and immigration opinions transferred to the GPO for inclusion on GovInfo. In response, the AO developed a software tool called EasyFix. When implemented in the Case Management/Electronic Case Filing system (CM/ECF), EasyFix automatically replaces the case and party name metadata in Social Security and immigration opinions with the word “Unavailable.”⁵⁵

To estimate the extent to which courts have used EasyFix, we identified 51,496 Social Security and immigration opinions published on GovInfo from January 1, 2021, through February 25, 2025. We then manually inspected the case and party names of each opinion and counted any opinion with case and party names listed as “Unavailable” as an instance in which EasyFix may have been used.

Table 20. Social Security and Immigration Opinions on GovInfo with Case/Party Name "Unavailable"

Case Type	Opinions Analyzed	Case/Party Name “Unavailable”	% Case/Party Name “Unavailable”
District Courts			
Social Security	47,989	21,928	46%
Immigration (Civil)	2,530	1,180	47%
Appeals Courts			
Social Security	775	62	8%
Immigration (Civil)	202	8	4%
Total	51,496	23,178	45%

⁵⁴ The GovInfo United States Courts Opinions collection can be found at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/uscourts/>.

⁵⁵ Memorandum from Jason P. Edwards, Chief, Court Services Office, to Clerks of Court, U.S. Cts., CM/ECF Fix Now Available for Social Security and Immigration Opinions Feed (Action Requested) (December 11, 2020), <https://jnet.ao.dcn/sites/default/files/pdf/OCP-CSO-20-049.pdf>

Table 20 shows the number and percentage of opinions in which “Unavailable” appeared in place of the party and case names. Our review suggests that nearly half of the district court opinions may have been redacted with EasyFix. “Unavailable” appeared in place of the case and party names in a much smaller proportion of appeals court opinions, suggesting that EasyFix has not been widely adopted in the courts of appeals.

4. Local Rule Variations

This section summarizes the findings in *Review of Local District and Appellate Rules Governing Redaction of Private Information in Federal Court Filings* and *Review of Local Bankruptcy Rules, Orders, and Procedures Governing Redaction of Private Information in Federal Court Filings* (Attachment G).

Local court rules governing practice and procedure may supplement federal rule requirements as long as they remain consistent with applicable Acts of Congress and Federal Rules of Practice and Procedure.⁵⁶ Although a comprehensive analysis of local rules is beyond the scope of this report, we briefly outline the prevalence of local privacy rules in the district courts, courts of appeals, and bankruptcy courts.

Forty-three district courts have adopted a standalone rule that requires the redaction of specific types of PII from documents filed with the court. Not all of these rules mirror the federal rules. For example, 13 of the 43 districts require the redaction of PII not enumerated in the federal privacy rules, such as passport numbers, driver’s license numbers, the names of crime victims, and home addresses in civil cases. Meanwhile, 23 of the 43 districts omit one or more of the PII listed in the federal rules. For example, 18 of these districts do not list ITINs among the PII that must be redacted from documents filed with the court.

Of the 13 circuit courts of appeals, 9 have a standalone local privacy rule. Of these, 3 circuits have rules aligned with the federal rules. Three other circuits include PII not enumerated in the federal rules (e.g., home addresses for civil and bankruptcy cases), while 5 circuits omit PII specified in the federal rules (e.g., 4 circuits do not list ITINs).

Seventy-eight bankruptcy courts have a local rule or procedure addressing the redaction of PII. Twenty-two bankruptcy courts refer to the bankruptcy privacy rule, either explicitly or by reference. As with the district and circuit court local rules, bankruptcy court local rules may require redaction of additional types of PII (e.g., home addresses and driver’s license numbers) or omit types of PII listed in the federal rules (e.g., ITINs).

⁵⁶ A court’s authority to prescribe local rules is governed by both statute and the Federal Rules of Practice and Procedure. *See* 28 U.S.C. §§ 2071(a)-(b); Fed. R. App. P. 47; Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9029; Fed. R. Civ. P. 83; Fed. R. Crim. P. 57.

Appendix A. Federal Rules of Procedure Protecting Individual Privacy

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure Rule 5.2—Privacy Protection for Filings Made with the Court

(a) REDACTED FILINGS. Unless the court orders otherwise, in an electronic or paper filing with the court that contains an individual’s social-security number, taxpayer-identification number, or birth date, the name of an individual known to be a minor, or a financial-account number, a party or nonparty making the filing may include only:

- (1) the last four digits of the social-security number and taxpayer-identification number;
- (2) the year of the individual’s birth;
- (3) the minor’s initials; and
- (4) the last four digits of the financial-account number.

(b) EXEMPTIONS FROM THE REDACTION REQUIREMENT. The redaction requirement does not apply to the following:

- (1) a financial-account number that identifies the property allegedly subject to forfeiture in a forfeiture proceeding;
- (2) the record of an administrative or agency proceeding;
- (3) the official record of a state-court proceeding;
- (4) the record of a court or tribunal, if that record was not subject to the redaction requirement when originally filed;
- (5) a filing covered by Rule 5.2(c) or (d); and
- (6) a pro se filing in an action brought under 28 U.S.C. §§2241, 2254, or 2255.

(c) LIMITATIONS ON REMOTE ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC FILES; SOCIAL-SECURITY APPEALS AND IMMIGRATION CASES. Unless the court orders otherwise, in an action for benefits under the Social Security Act, and in an action or proceeding relating to an order of removal, to relief from removal, or to immigration benefits or detention, access to an electronic file is authorized as follows:

- (1) the parties and their attorneys may have remote electronic access to any part of the case file, including the administrative record;
- (2) any other person may have electronic access to the full record at the courthouse, but may have remote electronic access only to:

(A) the docket maintained by the court; and

(B) an opinion, order, judgment, or other disposition of the court, but not any other part of the case file or the administrative record.

(d) **FILINGS MADE UNDER SEAL.** The court may order that a filing be made under seal without redaction. The court may later unseal the filing or order the person who made the filing to file a redacted version for the public record.

(e) **PROTECTIVE ORDERS.** For good cause, the court may by order in a case:

(1) require redaction of additional information; or

(2) limit or prohibit a nonparty's remote electronic access to a document filed with the court.

(f) **OPTION FOR ADDITIONAL UNREDACTED FILING UNDER SEAL.** A person making a redacted filing may also file an unredacted copy under seal. The court must retain the unredacted copy as part of the record.

(g) **OPTION FOR FILING A REFERENCE LIST.** A filing that contains redacted information may be filed together with a reference list that identifies each item of redacted information and specifies an appropriate identifier that uniquely corresponds to each item listed. The list must be filed under seal and may be amended as of right. Any reference in the case to a listed identifier will be construed to refer to the corresponding item of information.

(h) **WAIVER OF PROTECTION OF IDENTIFIERS.** A person waives the protection of Rule 5.2(a) as to the person's own information by filing it without redaction and not under seal.

Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure Rule 49.1—Privacy Protection for Filings Made with the Court

(a) **REDACTED FILINGS.** Unless the court orders otherwise, in an electronic or paper filing with the court that contains an individual's social-security number, taxpayer-identification number, or birth date, the name of an individual known to be a minor, a financial-account number, or the home address of an individual, a party or nonparty making the filing may include only:

(1) the last four digits of the social-security number and taxpayer-identification number;

(2) the year of the individual's birth;

(3) the minor's initials;

(4) the last four digits of the financial-account number; and

(5) the city and state of the home address.

(b) EXEMPTIONS FROM THE REDACTION REQUIREMENT. The redaction requirement does not apply to the following:

(1) a financial-account number or real property address that identifies the property allegedly subject to forfeiture in a forfeiture proceeding;

(2) the record of an administrative or agency proceeding;

(3) the official record of a state-court proceeding;

(4) the record of a court or tribunal, if that record was not subject to the redaction requirement when originally filed;

(5) a filing covered by Rule 49.1(d);

(6) a pro se filing in an action brought under 28 U.S.C. §§2241, 2254, or 2255;

(7) a court filing that is related to a criminal matter or investigation and that is prepared before the filing of a criminal charge or is not filed as part of any docketed criminal case;

(8) an arrest or search warrant; and

(9) a charging document and an affidavit filed in support of any charging document.

(c) IMMIGRATION CASES. A filing in an action brought under 28 U.S.C. §2241 that relates to the petitioner's immigration rights is governed by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2.

(d) FILINGS MADE UNDER SEAL. The court may order that a filing be made under seal without redaction. The court may later unseal the filing or order the person who made the filing to file a redacted version for the public record.

(e) PROTECTIVE ORDERS. For good cause, the court may by order in a case:

(1) require redaction of additional information; or

(2) limit or prohibit a nonparty's remote electronic access to a document filed with the court.

(f) OPTION FOR ADDITIONAL UNREDACTED FILING UNDER SEAL. A person making a redacted filing may also file an unredacted copy under seal. The court must retain the unredacted copy as part of the record.

(g) OPTION FOR FILING A REFERENCE LIST. A filing that contains redacted information may be filed together with a reference list that identifies each item of redacted information and specifies an appropriate identifier that uniquely corresponds to each item listed. The list must be filed under seal and may be amended as of right. Any reference in the case to a listed identifier will be construed to refer to the corresponding item of information.

(h) **WAIVER OF PROTECTION OF IDENTIFIERS.** A person waives the protection of Rule 49.1(a) as to the person's own information by filing it without redaction and not under seal.

Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure Rule 9037—Privacy Protection for Filings Made with the Court

(a) **REDACTED FILINGS.** Unless the court orders otherwise, in an electronic or paper filing made with the court that contains an individual's social-security number, taxpayer-identification number, or birth date, the name of an individual, other than the debtor, known to be and identified as a minor, or a financial-account number, a party or nonparty making the filing may include only:

- (1) the last four digits of the social-security number and taxpayer-identification number;
- (2) the year of the individual's birth;
- (3) the minor's initials; and
- (4) the last four digits of the financial-account number.

(b) **EXEMPTIONS FROM THE REDACTION REQUIREMENT.** The redaction requirement does not apply to the following:

- (1) a financial-account number that identifies the property allegedly subject to forfeiture in a forfeiture proceeding;
- (2) the record of an administrative or agency proceeding unless filed with a proof of claim;
- (3) the official record of a state-court proceeding;
- (4) the record of a court or tribunal, if that record was not subject to the redaction requirement when originally filed;
- (5) a filing covered by subdivision (c) of this rule; and
- (6) a filing that is subject to §110 of the Code.

(c) **FILINGS MADE UNDER SEAL.** The court may order that a filing be made under seal without redaction. The court may later unseal the filing or order the entity that made the filing to file a redacted version for the public record.

(d) **PROTECTIVE ORDERS.** For cause, the court may by order in a case under the Code:

- (1) require redaction of additional information; or

(2) limit or prohibit a nonparty's remote electronic access to a document filed with the court.

(e) **OPTION FOR ADDITIONAL UNREDACTED FILING UNDER SEAL.** An entity making a redacted filing may also file an unredacted copy under seal. The court must retain the unredacted copy as part of the record.

(f) **OPTION FOR FILING A REFERENCE LIST.** A filing that contains redacted information may be filed together with a reference list that identifies each item of redacted information and specifies an appropriate identifier that uniquely corresponds to each item listed. The list must be filed under seal and may be amended as of right. Any reference in the case to a listed identifier will be construed to refer to the corresponding item of information.

(g) **WAIVER OF PROTECTION OF IDENTIFIERS.** An entity waives the protection of subdivision (a) as to the entity's own information by filing it without redaction and not under seal.

(h) **MOTION TO REDACT A PREVIOUSLY FILED DOCUMENT**

(1) *Content of the Motion; Service.* Unless the court orders otherwise, if an entity seeks to redact from a previously filed document information that is protected under subdivision (a), the entity must:

(A) file a motion to redact identifying the proposed redactions;

(B) attach to the motion the proposed redacted document;

(C) include in the motion the docket or proof-of-claim number of the previously filed document; and

(D) serve the motion and attachment on the debtor, debtor's attorney, trustee (if any), United States trustee, filer of the unredacted document, and any individual whose personal identifying information is to be redacted.

(2) *Restricting Public Access to the Unredacted Document; Docketing the Redacted Document.* The court must promptly restrict public access to the motion and the unredacted document pending its ruling on the motion. If the court grants it, the court must docket the redacted document. The restrictions on public access to the motion and unredacted document remain in effect until a further court order. If the court denies it, the restrictions must be lifted, unless the court orders otherwise.

Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure Rule 25(a)(5)—Filing and Service

(a) FILING.

(5) *Privacy Protection.* An appeal in a case whose privacy protection was governed by Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure 9037, Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2, or Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 49.1 is governed by the same rule on appeal. In all other proceedings, privacy protection is governed by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2, except that Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 49.1 governs when an extraordinary writ is sought in a criminal case. The provisions on remote electronic access in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2(c)(1) and (2) apply in a petition for review of a benefits decision of the Railroad Retirement Board under the Railroad Retirement Act.

Appendix B. Background on the Federal Privacy Rules

The Federal Privacy Rules

In response to the E-Government Act of 2002, which directed the U.S. Supreme Court to formulate rules “to protect privacy and security concerns relating to electronic filing of documents and the public availability . . . of documents filed electronically,”⁵⁷ the Judicial Conference of the United States (Judicial Conference) adopted a set of privacy rules effective December 1, 2007. These rules also codified earlier privacy policies on electronic case files, including those adopted by the Judicial Conference in September 2001.⁵⁸ The resulting “privacy rules”—Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure 25(a)(5), Bankruptcy Procedure 9037, Civil Procedure 5.2, and Criminal Procedure 49.1—require the redaction of specified categories of personally identifiable information (PII) from court filings.⁵⁹ As legal scholars have noted, these rules seek to balance two core values: the public’s right to access court records and the protection of individuals’ sensitive PII.⁶⁰

The Judicial Conference policy and federal rules emphasize this balance, recognizing that “documents in case files generally should be made available electronically to the same extent they are available at the courthouse, provided that certain “personal data identifiers” are not included in the public file.”⁶¹ Accordingly, the privacy rules require redaction of specific PII (e.g. Social Security numbers (SSNs)), prescribe how such information must be redacted (e.g., only the last four digits of SSNs are allowed), and identify limited exemptions from the redaction requirement (e.g., the official record of a state-court proceeding).⁶²

⁵⁷ Pub. L. 107-347, § 205(c) (3).

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Fed.R.Civ. P. 5.2 advisory committee’s note (“The rule is derived from and implements the policy adopted by the Judicial Conference in September 2001 to address the privacy concerns resulting from public access to electronic case files.”) This same language is also included in the advisory committee’s notes to Fed.R. Crim. P. 49.1 and Fed. R. Bank. P. 9037. The privacy policy was updated in March 2008. See Privacy Policy for Electronic Case Files, <https://www.uscourts.gov/privacy-policy-electronic-case-files>. See also Guide to Judiciary Policy, vol. 10, ch. 3. § 310.20 (b)(2): <https://jnet.ao.dcn/policy-guidance/guide-judiciary-policy/volume-10-public-access-and-records/ch-3-privacy>; Bankruptcy Code § 107(c).

⁵⁹ See Fed. R. App. P. 25(a)(5); Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9037; Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2; Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1.

⁶⁰ See, e.g., David S. Ardia, Privacy and Court Records: Online Access and the Loss of Practical Obscurity, 2017 U.ILL. L. R. 4, 1386 (2017).

⁶¹ See, e.g., Fed.R.Civ. P. 5.2 advisory committee’s note. The same language is also included in the advisory committee’s notes to Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1 and Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9037.

⁶² See Fed. R. App. P. 25(a)(5); Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9037; Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2; Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1. The privacy rules also make clear that redaction is not the only tool for protecting PII. However, considerations of alternate methods such as filing unredacted copies under seal, protective orders, or reference lists are outside the scope of this project.

The privacy rules also make clear that the responsibility to redact rests with counsel and the filing party and not with the court or clerk. The rules explicitly state that clerks are not required to review filings for compliance.⁶³

Redaction Requirements

Each of the four federal privacy rules requires the redaction of specific categories of PII from court filings. These include the redaction of an individual's SSN, individual taxpayer identification number, and financial account number each to the last four digits; the name of an individual known to be a minor to initials; and an individual's birthdate to only the year.⁶⁴ In addition, Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1(a)(5) requires redaction of an individual's home address to only the city and state. Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 25(a)(5) ensures the continuity of the privacy rules, clarifying that the federal civil, criminal, and bankruptcy rules also apply to appellate court filings.⁶⁵

The advisory committee notes to the privacy rules recognize that other types of sensitive information not specifically listed (e.g., driver's license numbers) may also warrant protection. Thus, while the privacy rules provide a baseline for uniform protection of specified PII, they also permit courts to adopt broader protections. In fact, our analyses of local court rules found that some courts do protect more PII than what is enumerated in the federal rules.⁶⁶

⁶³ See, e.g., Fed.R.Civ. P. 5.2 advisory committee's note ("The clerk is not required to review documents filed with the court for compliance with this rule. The responsibility to redact filings rests with counsel and the party or nonparty making the filing."). The same language is also included in the advisory committee's note to Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1. The advisory committee's note to Fed. R. Bank. P. 9037 states, "The clerk is not required to review documents filed with the court for compliance with this rule. As subdivision (a) recognizes, the responsibility to redact filings rests with counsel, parties, and others who make filings with the court." In addition, Fed. R. Bank. 2037 was amended in 2019 to add subsection (h), which establishes a procedure for seeking redaction of previously filed documents (see Fed. R. Bank. P. 9037 advisory committee's note).

⁶⁴ Fed R. App. P. 25(a)(5); Fed. R. Bank. P. 9037; Fed R. Civ. P. 5.2; Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1.

⁶⁵ Fed R. App. P. 25(a)(5) (Adding that "the provisions on remote electronic access in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2(c)(1) and (2) apply in a petition for review of a benefits decision of the Railroad Retirement Board under the Railroad Retirement Act."). The advisory committee's note clarifies that, "With one exception, all other cases—such as cases involving the review or enforcement of an agency order, the review of a decision of the tax court, or the consideration of a petition for an extraordinary writ—will be governed by Civil Rule 5.2. The only exception is when an extraordinary writ is sought in a criminal case—that is, a case in which the related trial-court proceeding is governed by Criminal Rule 49.1. In such a case, Criminal Rule 49.1 will govern in the court of appeals as well."

⁶⁶ Marie Leary, *Review of Local District and Appellate Rules Governing Redaction of Private Information in Federal Court Filings*, Federal Judicial Center (August 4, 2025), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/394726/review-local-district-and-appellate-rules-governing-redaction-private-information>; Carly E. Giffin, *Review of Local Bankruptcy Rules, Orders, and Procedures Governing Redaction of Private Information in Federal Court Filings*, Federal Judicial Center (August 4, 2025), <https://www.fjc.gov/content/394727/review-local-bankruptcy-rules-orders-and-procedures-governing-redaction-private>.

Exemptions from the Redaction Requirements

The privacy rules identify specific categories of documents that are exempt from the redaction requirements. The bankruptcy, civil, and criminal privacy rules include the same baseline exemptions: redaction is not required for a financial account number that identifies the property allegedly subject to forfeiture in a forfeiture proceeding, the record of an administrative or agency proceeding,⁶⁷ the official record of a state-court proceeding, or the record of a court or tribunal, if that record was not subject to the redaction requirement when originally filed.⁶⁸ The requirements also do not apply to filings made under seal without redaction.⁶⁹ As with the redaction requirements themselves, the exemptions provided for by the civil, criminal, and bankruptcy rules apply to appellate filings.⁷⁰

There are additional exemptions specific to certain types of proceedings and documents within each federal rule. Under Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(c)(2), for Social Security and immigration cases, remote electronic access is allowed only for “the docket maintained by the court; and [] an opinion, order, judgment, or other disposition of the court.”⁷¹ Fed.R. Civ. P. 5.2(b)(5) explicitly exempts these cases from the redaction requirement.⁷² Further, Fed. R. App. P. 25(a)(5) specifically notes that these provisions also apply for a petition for review of a benefits decision of the Railroad Retirement Board under the Railroad Retirement Act.⁷³

The civil and criminal privacy rules also exempt pro se filings in habeas corpus proceedings brought under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241, 2254, or 2255.⁷⁴

The criminal privacy rule includes three additional exemptions: a court filing that is related to a criminal matter or investigation which is either prepared before the filing of a criminal charge or

⁶⁷ The bankruptcy rule specifies that the administrative or agency record exemption does not apply when the filing is provided with a proof of claim.

⁶⁸ Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(b); Fed. R. Bank. P. 9037(b); Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1(b).

⁶⁹ The federal rules cross-reference the respective rule for “filings made under seal”: Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(d); Fed. R. Bank. P. 9037(c); Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1(d).

⁷⁰ Fed. R. App. P. 25(a)(5) (this includes the exception from the federal civil rules applying for extraordinary writs sought in a criminal case, as described in the rules).

⁷¹ Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(c)(2). Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(c) applies to “an action for benefits under the Social Security Act, and in an action or proceeding relating to an order of removal, to relief from removal, or to immigration benefits or detention”.

⁷² Further, Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1(c) clarifies that, a filing in an action brought under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241 that relates to the petitioner’s immigration rights is governed by Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2.”.

⁷³ Fed. R. App. P. 25(a)(5).

⁷⁴ Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(b)(6); Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1(b)(6). After initial publication of these rules, they were revised to exempt only pro se filings under the three specified habeas corpus provisions.

is not filed as part of any docketed criminal case; an arrest or search warrant; and a charging document and/or an affidavit filed in support of any charging document.⁷⁵

Finally, the bankruptcy privacy rule exempts filings subject to §110 of the Bankruptcy Code, which addresses penalties for individuals who negligently or fraudulently prepare bankruptcy petitions.⁷⁶

Waiver of Privacy Protections

The privacy rules include an explicit waiver provision: a person waives the protection of the rule as to the person's own information by filing it without redaction and not under seal.⁷⁷ The advisory committee notes suggests that "One may wish to waive the protection if it is determined that the costs of redaction outweigh the benefits to privacy."⁷⁸ That said, the rules allow individuals to seek relief from the court if they mistakenly file their own unredacted PII.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1(b)(7-9).

⁷⁶ Fed. R. Bank. P. 9037(b)(6).

⁷⁷ Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(g); Fed. R. Crim P. 49.1(h); Fed. R. Bank. P. 9037(g).

⁷⁸ See Fed. R. Civ. P. 5.2(g) advisory committee's note; Fed. R. Crim P. 49.1(h) advisory committee's note; Fed. R. Bank. P. 9037(g) advisory committee's note.

⁷⁹ *Id.*

Appendix C. Additional Methodological Details

1. Keywords used to flag potential tax identification numbers

We flagged numbers appearing within eight characters of the following keywords: “EIN,” “Employer Identification,” “Employer Identification No,” “Employer ID,” “Employer I.D.,” “Employer ID,” “Employer I.D.,” “Employer Identification Number,” “Employer Number,” “Employer ID Number,” “Employee Identification Number,” “Tax ID,” “Tax I.D.,” “tax identification number,” “tax identification,” “tax identification no,” “Tax ID#,” “Tax#,” “Tax ID Number,” “Tax I.D. Number,” “Tx ID,” “Tx I.D.,” “TaxID,” “Tax. ID,” “TaxID,” “Tax ID,” “Tax I.D.,” “Taxpayer ID,” “Taxpayer I.D.,” “Taxpayer ID No,” “Taxpayer ID Number,” “Taxpayer I.D. Number,” “Taxpayer ID#,” “Taxpayer ID,” “Taxpayer I.D.,” “Taxpayer Number,” “Taxpayer No,” “Taxpayer Identification,” “Taxpayer Identification Number,” “Taxpayer Identification Number (US),” “IRS,” “IRS No,” “IRS Number,” “Internal Revenue Service,” “Internal Revenue Service Number,” “I.R.S.,” “I.R.S. Number,” “I.R.S. No,” “FEIN,” “ITIN,” “EID,” “TID,” “ATIN,” “PTIN,” “TIN,” “FIN,” “SSI,” “S.S.I.,” “SSI Number,” “SSI No,” “S.S.I. Number,” “SSI ID,” “SS Number,” “SS No,” “S.S. No,” “S.S. NUMBER,” “SS#,” “SS Nbr,” “SSA,” “SSA Number,” “Social Security,” “Social Security No,” “Social Security Number,” “social security account number,” “social security acct no,” “social security account no,” “SSN,” “SSN/SIN,” “*SSN,” “(SSN),” “[SSN,” “SS,” “SS,” “(SSN,” “8.8.N,” “soc. sec. no,” “SOC.SEC,” “soc sec,” “soc. sec,” “socsec,” “SOC.”

2. Keywords used to filter out Supreme Court case citations and sentence fragments when searching home addresses

We omitted hits that contained any of the following strings: “The Court”, “the Court”, “A Court”, “a Court”, “to Court”, “in Court”, “of Court”, “this Court”, “This Court”, “that Court”, “That Court”, “District Court”, “Supreme Court”, “in Federal Court”, “S. Ct.,” “S. Ct”, “S Ct”, “First Cir”, “Second Cir”, “Third Cir”, “Fourth Cir”, “Fifth Cir”, “Sixth Cir”, “Seventh Cir”, “Eighth Cir”, “Ninth Cir”, “Tenth Cir”, “Eleventh Cir”, “1st Cir”, “2nd Cir”, “3rd Cir”, “4th Cir”, “5th Cir”, “6th Cir”, “7th Cir”, “8th Cir”, “9th Cir”, “10th Cir”, “11th Cir”, “1 st Cir”, “2 nd Cir”, “3 rd Cir”, “4 th Cir”, “5 th Cir”, “6 th Cir”, “7 th Cir”, “8 th Cir”, “9 th Cir”, “10 th Cir”, “11 th Cir”, “00 AM in”, “30 AM in”, “00 PM in”, “30 PM in”.

3. Keywords used to filter out non-residential addresses associated with law firms, courthouses, and government buildings

We filtered out addresses that appear within two lines of any of the following terms: “& Associates”, “Address of Business”, “Appeals Bureau”, “Attorney”, “Attorney's Office”, “Bar #”, “Bar No”, “Bar Number”, “Business Address”, “Clerk of Court”, “Clerk of the Court”, “Clerk's Office”, “Consul General of Mexico”, “Counsel for”, “Court House”, “Court Reporter”, “Court of Appeals”, “Courthouse”, “Courtroom Services”, “Criminal Division”, “Defendant's attorney”, “Defendant's counsel”, “Defender's Office”, “Department of Justice”, “District Clerk”, “District Court”, “Eastern Division”, “Esq.”, “Federal Bldg”, “Federal Building”, “Federal Defender”, “Federal Defenders Organization”, “Federal Office Building”, “Federal

Public Defender”, “Henry Building”, “LLC”, “LLP”, “Law Firm”, “Law Group”, “Law Office”, “Law, PA”, “Law, PC”, “Litigation Division”, “Mail Stop”, “Magistrate Court”, “Marshal Service”, “Marshals Service”, “Medical Center”, “Office of the Clerk”, “Office of the Public Defender”, “P.A.”, “P.C.”, “P.L.C.”, “P.L.L.C.”, “P.L.L.P.”, “PLLC”, “PLL P”, “P. O. BOX”, “P. O. Box”, “PO BOX”, “P.O. BOX”, “P.O. Box”, “P.o, Box”, “Post Office Box”, “Pretrial Services”, “Probation Office”, “Probation Officer”, “Prosecutor's Office”, “Realtime Reporter”, “Russell Building”, “Service Center”, “Services Center”, “State Court”, “Ste.”, “Suite”, “Superior Court”, “T-Mobile Wireless”, “U.S. Atty”, “United States District Judge”, “United States Magistrate Judge”, “Veteran’s Affairs”, “Western Division”.

4. Survey of Court Policies and Practices

Our survey of clerks of court included three questions:

- Does your court have a local rule, standing order, or established court practice about the redaction of the name of non-government parties in opinions in Social Security and/or immigration cases? (This might include, e.g., requiring reference to such parties solely by first name and last initial.) YES or NO
- If your court has a local rule or standing order, could you please provide a link or attachment?
- If your court has established a related practice other than by local rule or standing order, could you please briefly describe it?