

# **Before the Presiding Judges of the Administrative Judicial Regions**

## **Per Curiam Rule 12 Decision**

**APPEAL NO.:** 25-008

**RESPONDENT:** 231st District Court, Tarrant County

**DATE:** May 30, 2025

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE:** Judge Missy Medary, Chair; Judge Ben Woodward; Judge Alfonso Charles; Judge Robert Trapp; Judge Sid Harle

Petitioner sent to Respondent a sweeping, detailed Rule 12 request seeking records sent or received by certain judges over a four-year period and regarding various persons and cause numbers. Although Respondent's court coordinator informed Petitioner that Respondent would need an extension to search for responsive records, Respondent ultimately informed Petitioner it did not have any judicial records "per your request." In its petition for review, Petitioner argued that "[b]ased on prior communications with the court, I have reason to believe these records do exist" in part because "[m]y case involved extraordinary procedures that REQUIRE communications," including judicial disqualification, special assignment orders, mandamus proceedings, and emergency filings. Petitioner further elaborated that the requested records "would bring to light the procedural history" of her custody case and that it was "in the public's best interest that these records be released because they relate to the administration of justice in family law matters[.]" Petitioner requested expedited review of its petition, citing "the time-sensitive nature of these records, which directly impact pending legal matters[.]" Respondent did not reply to the petition.

As an initial matter, Petitioner's request for expedited review is denied. Next, a record created, produced, or filed in connection with any matter that is or has been before a court is not a judicial record. *See* Rule 12.2(d). Such records are case records. *See* Rule 12 Dec. No. 00-001. It appears to the special committee, based on the language of Petitioner's sweeping request and based on Petitioner's comments in its petition regarding the nature of the records sought, that the records in question are not in fact judicial records, but case records. Respondent, in its response to Petitioner's request, stated that the requested records were not judicial records. Because Respondent did not submit a reply to the petition, we direct the Respondent to confirm in writing to the special committee and the Petitioner that the Respondent does not have responsive *judicial records* to the request (i.e., records not related to Petitioner's case). If the Respondent confirms it does not have responsive judicial records, the appeal is dismissed. If Respondent confirms it has responsive judicial records that remain unreleased, Respondent should release them without delay or, alternatively, provide to the special committee within 10 days of the date of this opinion a basis for withholding them.