

**COURT OF APPEALS
DECISION
DATED AND FILED**

August 27, 2026

Samuel A. Christensen
Clerk of Court of Appeals

NOTICE

This opinion is subject to further editing. If published, the official version will appear in the bound volume of the Official Reports.

A party may file with the Supreme Court a petition to review an adverse decision by the Court of Appeals. See WIS. STAT. § 808.10 and RULE 809.62.

**Appeal No. 2025AP1917
STATE OF WISCONSIN**

Cir. Ct. No. 2025CV1901

**IN COURT OF APPEALS
DISTRICT IV**

AHMAD M. SIAM,

PETITIONER-APPELLANT,

V.

SHANITA SALTON,

RESPONDENT-RESPONDENT.

APPEAL from an order of the circuit court for Dane County:
RYAN D. NILSESTUEN, Judge. *Affirmed.*

Before Graham, P.J., Blanchard, and Kloppenburg, JJ.

Per curiam opinions may not be cited in any court of this state as precedent or authority, except for the limited purposes specified in WIS. STAT. RULE 809.23(3).

¶1 PER CURIAM. Ahmad Siam, pro se, appeals a circuit court order denying his petition for a harassment injunction under WIS. STAT. § 813.125

(2023-24).¹ Siam argues that the court erred by denying him the opportunity to respond to testimony given by the respondent, Shanita Salton, and to present testimony by Siam's son in support of the petition. Siam also argues that the court improperly weighed Salton's testimony and that the court erred in denying a submission he made that was effectively a motion for reconsideration. Salton has not filed a response brief on appeal. Despite this omission, we conclude that the record demonstrates that the court did not err for any reason now argued by Siam. Accordingly, we affirm.

BACKGROUND

¶2 Siam commenced this action on June 10, 2025, by filing a petition for a harassment injunction. The circuit court appears to have treated Siam's petition as initiating two actions: one seeking an injunction on Siam's own behalf against Salton; and another seeking an injunction on behalf of Siam's daughter, whom we call A.B., against Salton's daughter, whom we call C.D. This appeal arises out of the court's denial of an injunction against Salton.

¶3 The petition alleged the following. On June 7, 2025, C.D. took A.B.'s phone and keys. C.D. returned these two items to A.B. only after Siam called the police and the police, in response, asked C.D. to return the items. On June 9, Salton came to the door of Siam's apartment, accompanied by C.D., and confronted Siam about the earlier incident. During this confrontation, Salton screamed at Siam and A.B., using profanities and threatening language, including

¹ All references to the Wisconsin Statutes are to the 2023-24 version.

that Salton would kill A.B. Salton pushed Siam in an attempt to enter Siam's apartment.

¶4 A circuit court commissioner appointed guardians ad litem (GALs) to represent both A.B. and C.D.

¶5 The circuit court held an evidentiary hearing addressing both injunction actions. At the hearing, Siam, A.B., C.D., and Salton testified, in that order. We do not need to summarize the hearing testimony in detail because it is not necessary to resolve the arguments that Siam makes on appeal. It is sufficient to note that the four witnesses testified to somewhat conflicting accounts regarding the pertinent interactions.

¶6 Siam's son (A.B.'s brother) was present at the hearing, and the GAL representing A.B. described the son to the circuit court as "a potential witness." However, during the hearing no one called for testimony by the son.

¶7 After Siam and A.B. testified, the circuit court noted that the son was "available to testify." But the GAL for A.B. told the court that the son's testimony would merely be "consistent with the testimony [the court had] already heard." After this, the court, without objection from Siam or any other party, said that it would next hear testimony from C.D. and Salton, without referencing an intent to take any additional evidence.

¶8 After all four witnesses testified, the circuit court informed the parties that the court had reached a decision. At that point, the GAL for A.B. asked to be allowed to introduce into evidence a police report purporting to corroborate the dates given by various witnesses regarding events described in their testimony. The court denied this request, explaining that nothing about the

dates would change the decision that the court already had in mind. No other party attempted to bring additional matters to the court's attention before or after the court explained its decision.

¶9 The circuit court determined that there were not sufficient grounds to grant either of the requested harassment injunctions. In making those rulings, the court assessed whether the evidence elicited at the hearing was sufficient to grant an injunction on either of two grounds: someone had engaged in or attempted to engage in “[s]triking, shoving, kicking or otherwise subjecting another person to physical contact” or “act[s] that would constitute abuse ..., sexual assault ..., or stalking”; or someone had “[e]ngag[ed] in a course of conduct or repeatedly commit[ed] acts which harass or intimidate another person and which serve no legitimate purpose.” See WIS. STAT. § 813.125(1)(am)4.a.-b. (defining “harassment”). Pertinent to this appeal, the court found that it was not credible that Salton threatened to kill A.B. The court further found that, while Salton’s confrontation with Siam became “heated,” it was not part of a course of conduct that could support an injunction.

¶10 After the circuit court issued a written order denying the injunctions, Siam filed a motion that requested, among other relief, that the court reconsider its decision. The court denied this motion without a hearing.

¶11 Siam appeals.

DISCUSSION

¶12 On appeal, Siam contends that he has identified errors by the circuit court that constituted “significant due process violations” that “deprived [Siam] of

a fair opportunity to present his case.” We are not persuaded that the court erred under pertinent legal standards.

¶13 Siam argues that the circuit court erred at the evidentiary hearing by declining to give him an opportunity to respond to testimony given by Salton and C.D. before the court explained its dispositive conclusions and adjourned the hearing. On a related point, Siam contends that the court erred by failing to hear testimony from his son. More specifically, despite the fact that the court never explicitly ruled that the son could not testify, we understand Siam to challenge the failure of the court to allow or call for additional testimony, including by the son, before it gave its rulings.

¶14 Whether a circuit court should permit additional testimony or argument by any party implicates the authority of a circuit court to manage its docket and courtroom. See **Parker v. Wisconsin Patients Comp. Fund**, 2009 WI App 42, ¶9, 317 Wis. 2d 460, 767 N.W.2d 272 (“Wisconsin circuit courts have inherent power, within the limits of their discretion, to control their dockets.”); **Rupert v. Home Mut. Ins. Co.**, 138 Wis. 2d 1, 7, 405 N.W.2d 661 (Ct. App. 1987) (recognizing that the circuit court had an “inherent discretionary power to control its docket with economy of time and effort”). This discretion extends to determining “how much time to allot to particular matters,” **Kohl v. DeWitt Ross & Stevens**, 2005 WI App 196, ¶25, 287 Wis. 2d 289, 704 N.W.2d 586, and also to controlling “the content, duration, and form of” arguments, see **State v. Marinez**, 2010 WI App 34, ¶23, 324 Wis. 2d 282, 781 N.W.2d 511. Related to this discretion, a circuit court has broad discretion in making evidentiary decisions. See **Martindale v. Ripp**, 2001 WI 113, ¶¶28-29, 246 Wis. 2d 67, 629 N.W.2d 698.

¶15 Siam, as the appellant, bears the burden to show that the circuit court erroneously exercised its discretion. See *Winters v. Winters*, 2005 WI App 94, ¶18, 281 Wis. 2d 798, 699 N.W.2d 229. We conclude that Siam does not meet this burden. The hearing transcript does not reflect any request by Siam to present additional evidence or make additional arguments once the court indicated that it was ready to explain its decisions. Moreover, at the outset of the hearing, the court helpfully provided the parties with a clear outline of how it planned to approach the hearing. None of the parties objected to that plan, and the court followed that plan. Specifically, the court estimated the length of time that it would make available for the hearing and explained that it intended to hear from Siam, A.B., C.D., and Salton, in that order. The court made no reference to the potential for additional witnesses.²

¶16 Under these circumstances, we see no basis to conclude that the circuit court unreasonably exercised its discretion in controlling the length of the hearing or the witnesses who testified. That is, Siam does not demonstrate how the court made an error of law, failed to base its decision on facts in the record, or failed to apply a “rational mental process” regarding the need for additional

² Siam states in his brief on appeal that the circuit court said to Siam that it would “come back to [Siam], for [Siam’s] response at the end.” However, we do not see any indication at the portion of hearing transcript cited by Siam, or anywhere else in the transcript, that the court said this to Siam. Siam notes that the GAL for A.B. understood that the court wanted to, in the GAL’s words as reflected in the transcript, “circle back for potential rebuttal.” But it is not clear from the transcript how the GAL came to this understanding, and in any event Siam does not establish that the court actually conveyed any such idea to the parties.

Similarly, Siam asserts that the court said at one point, “We’ll hear from your son after we finish [with other] testimony.” But no such statement appears in the transcript. Moreover, even if the court had made such statements, this would not establish that the court erroneously exercised its discretion if the court later determined that hearing additional argument from Siam or testimony from his son was not necessary, given the nature of the testimony that the court had heard.

testimony or argument. See *King v. King*, 224 Wis. 2d 235, 248, 590 N.W.2d 480 (1999) (“a discretionary determination must be the product of a rational mental process by which the facts of record and law relied upon are stated and are considered together for the purpose of achieving a reasoned and reasonable determination” (quoted source omitted)). To recap, the court laid out a plan for the hearing that Siam does not show was unreasonable or inappropriate, the court followed that plan, and at no point throughout the hearing was the court presented with an offer of proof regarding evidence from Siam’s son or an outline of what additional argument was necessary to rebut Salton or C.D.’s testimony. See WIS. STAT. § 901.03(1)(b) (requiring in part that an objection to an evidentiary ruling be based on an offer of proof making “the substance of the evidence ... known to the judge” unless that substance was “apparent from the context” of the offering parties’ questioning). It was only after the hearing that Siam, for the first time, contended that more evidence and argument were needed.

¶17 For similar reasons, Siam forfeited any objection that the circuit court erroneously prevented Siam from presenting additional evidence or argument. See *State v. Counihan*, 2020 WI 12, ¶25, 390 Wis. 2d 172, 938 N.W.2d 530 (“forfeiture” generally applies to failure to make timely assertion of a right). Such an objection was not timely presented to the court, preventing the court from efficiently addressing it. See *id.*, ¶¶26-27 (one purpose of the forfeiture rule is “to enable the circuit court to avoid or correct any error as it comes up, with minimal disruption of the judicial process and maximum efficiency”).

¶18 Beyond all that, even now on appeal, Siam does not attempt to describe what relevant, admissible evidence the son had to give that would not have been merely cumulative and that would have made a material difference to the circuit court’s dispositive rulings. At one point in his brief on appeal, Siam

appears to suggest that his son’s potential testimony or some other evidence could have corroborated his testimony that Salton threatened to kill A.B., but Siam provides no support for these assertions based on any part of the record on appeal. See ***State v. Aderhold***, 91 Wis. 2d 306, 314, 284 N.W.2d 108 (Ct. App. 1979) (court of appeals is “limited to the record, and [is] bound by the record”).

¶19 We understand Siam to separately argue that the circuit court erred by declining to admit a police report that the GAL for A.B. offered for the limited purpose of corroborating testimony regarding the date on which Salton confronted Siam. As noted, the court denied admission of the police report on the ground that nothing about that particular detail would have mattered to the court’s assessment of the evidence. Siam does not establish that the court’s reasoning on this topic was unreasonable under the highly deferential standard of review that applies to evidentiary rulings. See ***Martindale***, 246 Wis. 2d 67, ¶¶28-29.

¶20 Siam further contends that the circuit court should have given more weight to testimony by Salton that she called Siam and A.B. “lying ass bitches” to their faces during their confrontation. Siam argues that this evidence should have caused the court to assess Salton as having little or no credibility as a witness. As noted above, the court appeared to credit Salton’s testimony that she did not in fact threaten to kill A.B. Siam fails to explain why the court could not credit some or all of Salton’s testimony. For example, Siam does not explain why the court could not consider Salton’s admission to a fact that could be unfavorable to her as a factor that served to bolster her credibility. More generally, Siam ignores the legal rule that circuit courts are generally responsible for assessing and weighing the credibility of witnesses. See ***Welytok v. Ziolkowski***, 2008 WI App 67, ¶28, 312 Wis. 2d 435, 752 N.W.2d 359. Siam does not identify a basis for this court to

overturn any aspect of how the court appeared to weigh Salton’s testimony under this deferential standard.

¶21 Siam also contends that the circuit court erred in denying the motion that he filed after the hearing. This motion advanced some of the arguments that Siam now makes on appeal, namely that he was improperly denied the opportunity to present additional evidence and argument, including testimony from his son.

¶22 The circuit court construed the motion as one for reconsideration, and Siam does not develop an argument that this was not, in substance, a motion for reconsideration. See *Koepsell’s Olde Popcorn Wagons, Inc. v. Koepsell’s Festival Popcorn Wagons, Ltd.*, 2004 WI App 129, ¶44, 275 Wis. 2d 397, 685 N.W.2d 853 (“To prevail on a motion for reconsideration, the movant must present either newly discovered evidence or establish a manifest error of law or fact.”).³ The court noted that Siam’s reconsideration motion sought an opportunity to present additional evidence, but the court concluded that it had “heard sufficient credible testimony” regarding the requested injunctions. Implied in this reasoning is the court’s determination that Siam’s motion for reconsideration did not identify evidence or argument that could have represented additional relevant, material information for the court’s consideration to avoid a manifest error of law or fact. That is, the court appears to have concluded that Siam’s motion did not allege the existence of previously unheard evidence or argument that established that the circuit court had made a manifest error of law or fact. See *id.*

³ Siam’s post-hearing motion also requested “relief pending appeal,” but he does not advance an argument on appeal, supported by pertinent legal standards relating to such relief, that the circuit court erred in failing to grant any form of relief while this appeal remained pending.

¶23 We conclude that Siam fails to show that the circuit court’s reasoning in rejecting his post-hearing motion was erroneous under the standards articulated in *Koepsell’s Olde Popcorn Wagons*.

CONCLUSION

¶24 For all of these reasons, we affirm the decision of the circuit court dismissing Siam’s petition for an injunction and the court’s denial of Siam’s filing that the court treated as a motion for reconsideration.

By the Court.—Order affirmed.

This opinion will not be published. See WIS. STAT. RULE 809.23(1)(b)5.

