



OFFICE OF THE CLERK
WISCONSIN COURT OF APPEALS

110 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 215

P.O. BOX 1688

MADISON, WISCONSIN 53701-1688

Telephone (608) 266-1880

TTY: (800) 947-3529

Facsimile (608) 267-0640

Web Site: www.wicourts.gov

DISTRICT II

January 14, 2026

To:

Hon. Jerilyn M. Dietz
Circuit Court Judge
Electronic Notice

Devon M. Lee
Electronic Notice

Angela A.P. Linderud
Juvenile Clerk
Manitowoc County Courthouse
Electronic Notice

John Bilka
935 S. 8th. St., Ste. 202
Manitowoc, WI 54220-4549

T.D.W.

Peter J. Conrad
Electronic Notice

You are hereby notified that the Court has entered the following opinion and order:

2025AP2646-NM

Manitowoc County v. T.D.W. (L.C. #2024TP9)

Before Lazar, J.¹

Summary disposition orders 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).

T.D.W. appeals from an order terminating his parental rights to his daughter, A.M.W. T.D.W.'s appellate counsel filed a no-merit report pursuant to WIS. STAT. § 809.107(5m) and RULE 809.32. T.D.W. received a copy of the report, was advised of his right to file a response, and has elected not to do so. After reviewing the Record and counsel's report, we conclude that

¹ This appeal is decided by one judge pursuant to WIS. STAT. § 752.31(2)(e) (2023-24). All references to the Wisconsin Statutes are to the 2023-24 version.

there are no issues with arguable merit for appeal. Therefore, we summarily affirm the order.² WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

A.M.W. was taken into protective custody in October 2021, due to concerns of domestic violence and a lack of supervision. At the time, she was three years old and had spent much of her life in out-of-home placement.³ A.M.W. was subsequently found to be a child in need of protection or services.

In May 2024, Manitowoc County petitioned to terminate T.D.W.'s parental rights on grounds of abandonment, and that A.M.W. was a child in continuing need of protection or services. *See* WIS. STAT. § 48.415(1)(a) and (2)(a). A jury found that both grounds were proven, and the circuit court subsequently terminated T.D.W.'s parental rights after a dispositional hearing. This no-merit appeal follows.

The no-merit report addresses whether there was sufficient evidence to support the jury's verdict regarding the grounds for termination. When reviewing the sufficiency of the evidence, we must consider the evidence in a light most favorable to the jury's verdict. *Tammy W-G. v. Jacob T.*, 2011 WI 30, ¶39, 333 Wis.2d 273, 797 N.W.2d 854. Our review of the trial transcripts and exhibits persuades us that Manitowoc County produced ample evidence to prove that T.D.W. had abandoned A.M.W., and that A.M.W. was a child in continuing need of protection or services. *See* WIS. STAT. § 48.415(1)(a) and (2)(a).

² The order also terminated the parental rights of A.M.W.'s mother. Termination of the mother's parental rights is not the subject of this appeal.

³ A.M.W. was originally taken into protective custody in January 2019, due to concerns about domestic violence and her parents' inability to keep her safe. She was later reunified with her mother and formally placed in her care in August 2021.

The no-merit report also addresses whether the circuit court properly exercised its discretion at the dispositional hearing in terminating T.D.W.’s parental rights. The court’s determination of whether to terminate parental rights is discretionary. *State v. Margaret H.*, 2000 WI 42, ¶27, 234 Wis. 2d 606, 610 N.W.2d 475. Under WIS. STAT. § 48.426(2), the “best interests of the child” is the prevailing standard, and the court is required to consider the factors delineated in § 48.426(3) in making this determination. *Margaret H.*, 234 Wis. 2d 606, ¶¶34-35. Here, the court’s remarks reflect that it considered the appropriate factors. Those factors weighed in favor of a determination that it was in the best interests of A.M.W. to terminate T.D.W.’s parental rights.

Our independent review of the Record does not disclose any potentially meritorious issue for appeal. Because we conclude that there would be no arguable merit to any issue that could be raised on appeal, we accept the no-merit report and relieve Attorney Devon M. Lee of further representation in this matter.

Upon the foregoing reasons,

IT IS ORDERED that the order of the circuit court is summarily affirmed. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Attorney Devon M. Lee is relieved of further representation of T.D.W. in this matter. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.32(3).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this summary disposition order will not be published.

Samuel A. Christensen
Clerk of Court of Appeals