



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 28, 2026

To:

Hon. Jerilyn M. Dietz
Circuit Court Judge
Electronic Notice

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

Peter J. Conrad
Electronic Notice

Steven Zaleski
Electronic Notice

John Bilka
Electronic Notice

A.A.M.

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

2025AP2787-NM Manitowoc County v. A.A.M. (L.C. #2024TP8)
2025AP2788-NM Manitowoc County v. A.A.M. (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).

In these consolidated cases, A.A.M. appeals from orders terminating her parental rights to her children, A.M.W. and T.D.W., Jr. ("T.J."). A.A.M.'s appellate counsel filed a no-merit report pursuant to WIS. STAT. § 809.107(5m) and RULE 809.32. A.A.M. received a copy of the report, was advised of her right to file a response, and has elected not to do so. After reviewing

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.

the Records and counsel's report, we conclude that there are no issues with arguable merit for appeal. Therefore, we summarily affirm the orders.² WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

A.M.W. and T.J. were taken into protective custody in October 2021 due to concerns of domestic violence and a lack of supervision. They were subsequently found to be children in need of protection or services.

In May 2024, Manitowoc County petitioned to terminate A.A.M.'s parental rights on the ground that A.M.W. and T.J. were children in continuing need of protection or services. *See* WIS. STAT. § 48.415(2)(a). A jury found the ground proven, and the circuit court subsequently terminated A.A.M.'s parental rights after a dispositional hearing. These no-merit appeals follow.

The no-merit report addresses whether there was sufficient evidence to support the jury's verdict regarding the ground 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 A.M.W. and T.J. were children in continuing need of protection or services. *See* WIS. STAT. § 48.415(2)(a).

The no-merit report also addresses whether the circuit court properly exercised its discretion at the dispositional hearing in terminating A.A.M.'s parental rights. The court's determination of whether to terminate parental rights is discretionary. *State v. Margaret H.*,

² The orders also terminated the parental rights of A.M.W.'s and T.J.'s father. Termination of the father's parental rights is not the subject of these appeals.

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. and T.J. to terminate A.A.M.’s parental rights.

Finally, the no-merit report addresses several other issues, including: (1) whether the circuit court had competency to enter the termination orders; (2) whether the court properly resolved certain objections at trial; and (3) whether A.A.M. received ineffective assistance of trial counsel. We agree that these issues do not have arguable merit for appeal, and accordingly, we will not discuss them further.

Our independent review of the Records 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 Steven Zaleski of further representation in these matters.

Upon the foregoing reasons,

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

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Attorney Steven Zaleski is relieved of further representation of A.A.M. in these matters. *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