2026 IL App (1st) 252056-U

SECOND DIVISION
September 15, 2026

No. 1-25-2056

NOTICE: This order was filed under Supreme Court Rule 23 and is not precedent except in the limited circumstances allowed under Rule 23(e)(1).

IN THE
APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

MONROE CAPITAL LLC,	)	Appeal from the
	)	Circuit Court of
Plaintiff-Appellee,	)	Cook County.
	)	
v.	)	No. 25OP74833
	)	
AHMAD POPALYAR,	)	Honorable
	)	Dawn Gonzalez,
Defendant-Appellant.	)	Judge Presiding.

JUSTICE McBRIDE delivered the judgment of the court.
Presiding Justice D.B. Walker and Justice Van Tine concurred in the judgment.

ORDER

¶ 1 *Held*: Since Popalyar failed to present a complete and sufficient record on appeal, we presume the trial court properly entered the plenary order of protection.

¶ 2 This appeal arose following the entry of multiple orders of protection against defendant Ahmad Popalyar under the Workplace Violation Prevention Act (Act) (820 ILCS 275/1 *et seq.* (West 2024)). Plaintiff Monroe Capital LLC sought the orders of protection after Popalyar sent hundreds of emails threatening Monroe Capital's employees, owners, and families. The trial court subsequently entered a plenary order of protection against Popalyar. Popalyar appears *pro se* and appeals this order.

¶ 3 We recount the factual background only as necessary for the resolution of this appeal. In May 2025, Monroe Capital filed a petition for a "workplace violence/stalking no contact" order alleging that Popalyar had stalked and harassed Monroe Capital's employees, owners, and attorneys, including credible threats against employees and their families. Popalyar claimed he was owed money from Monroe Capital and "began a threatening and malicious course of cyber-harassment, specifically hundreds of emails" that endangered the well-being of Monroe Capital's employees, owners, and their families. Monroe Capital repeatedly asked Popalyar to cease these communications, but Popalyar continued to send the threatening emails. The trial court entered an emergency order of protection in May 2025, which was later extended in June and July 2025.

¶ 4 The court conducted a plenary hearing in September 2025. Following the hearing, the court entered a plenary order of protection prohibiting Popalyar from "threatening to commit violent acts or committing any violent acts directed towards *any* employee" of Monroe Capital. (Emphasis in original.) Popalyar was also prohibited from having any contact with any employee of Monroe Capital, including telephone calls, mail, and email, as well as any social media contact. Popalyar was prohibited from knowingly coming within 500 feet of any employee of Monroe Capital.

¶ 5 In October 2025, Popalyar filed a notice of appeal with a motion to reconsider or vacate the plenary order. Monroe Capital states that the court later modified the plenary order of protection in March 2026 after denying Popalyar's motion to reconsider. However, the record on appeal does not include any filings or orders after October 15, 2025. The last order set a hearing on Monroe Capital's motion for an indirect civil contempt finding against Popalyar for a date in January 2026. No report of the proceedings was included in the record on appeal.

¶ 6 On appeal, Popalyar argues that: (1) Monroe Capital used the Act "for an ulterior

financial purpose"; (2) the trial court abused its discretion in entering the order of protection; and (3) the order is "an unconstitutional restraint on trade." Monroe Capital responds that the record on appeal is incomplete and this court should dismiss the appeal. Specifically, Monroe Capital asserts that Popalyar failed to file the report of proceedings from the March 10, 2026 hearing on his motion to reconsider the plenary order of protection. Popalyar also failed to include the modified plenary order from March 10, 2026. Absent this portion of the record, Monroe Capital contends that this court cannot consider Popalyar's claims on appeal.

¶ 7 Popalyar's *pro se* status does not diminish his duty to comply with the appellate practice rules required of attorneys. Parties choosing to represent themselves must follow the same rules and standards as licensed attorneys. *Holzrichter v. Yorath*, 2013 IL App (1st) 110287, ¶ 78; see *Steinbrecher v. Steinbrecher*, 197 Ill. 2d 514, 528 (2001) ("*Pro se* litigants are presumed to have full knowledge of applicable court rules and procedures").

¶ 8 We first observe that Popalyar's opening brief fails to comply with Illinois Supreme Court Rule 341(h)(6), which requires the party to provide a statement of facts with the appropriate citations to the record. Ill. S. Ct. R. 341(h)(6) (eff. Oct. 1, 2020). His brief consists of five pages, plus an appendix. He sets forth a two-paragraph statement of facts without any citation to the record.

¶ 9 Popalyar also has not presented any developed arguments on appeal. He asserts three issues in his brief without citation to any authority or to the record. The lone citation is to an email exhibit in his appendix, but this exhibit does not include any stamps indicating it was included in the record on appeal. Popalyar briefly discusses each issue with general conclusions lacking any reasoned analysis.

¶ 10 Supreme Court Rule 341(h)(7) requires an appellant's brief to include: "Argument, which shall contain the contentions of the appellant and the reasons therefor, with citation of the authorities and the pages of the record relied on." Ill. S. Ct. R. 341(h)(7) (eff. Oct. 1, 2020). A reviewing court is entitled to have issues clearly defined with pertinent authority cited and cohesive arguments presented. See *id*. This court is not a repository into which the appellant may dump the burden of argument and research. *Lake County Grading Co., LLC v. Village of Antioch*, 2014 IL 115805, ¶ 36.

¶ 11 Supreme court rules pertaining to the content of briefs are mandatory, and failure to abide by them can result in dismissal of an appeal. *Northbrook Bank & Trust Co. v. 300 Level, Inc.*, 2015 IL App (1st) 142288, ¶ 13. Their purpose is to require parties to present clear and orderly arguments so that the reviewing court can properly ascertain and dispose of the issues involved. *Hall v. Naper Gold Hospitality, LLC*, 2012 IL App (2d) 111151, ¶ 7. The failure to elaborate on an argument, cite persuasive authority, or present a well-reasoned argument violates Rule 341(h)(7) and results in forfeiture. *Sakellariadis v. Campbell*, 391 Ill. App. 3d 795, 804 (2009).

¶ 12 Here, Popalyar's brief has not complied with any section of Rule 341 regarding the form and content of his brief. Popalyar has not presented a complete statement of facts or raised any argument with citations to the record and relevant authority. His arguments consist of conclusory statements and lack any coherent argument for our review.

¶ 13 We also note that Popalyar's brief does not contain a table of contents with page references to the record, which is a violation of Supreme Court Rule 342. See Ill. S. Ct. R. 342 (eff. Oct. 1, 2019) (an appellant's brief shall include in "an appendix, *** a complete table of contents, with page references, of the record on appeal").

¶ 14 It is well within this court's discretion to strike Popalyar's brief and dismiss this appeal

based on his failure to comply with the applicable rules of appellate procedure. *McCann v. Dart*, 2015 IL App (1st) 141291, ¶ 12. While Popalyar's claims fall well short of Rule 341, we decline to strike his brief but instead conclude that his arguments have been forfeited.

¶ 15 Popalyar also raises new claims in his reply brief that Monroe Capital's counsel engaged in misconduct before the trial court and asks for the first time that this court reverse the March 10, 2026 order. But he cannot avoid his forfeiture of these claims. Under Rule 341(h)(7), "[p]oints not argued are forfeited and shall not be raised in the reply brief." Ill. S. Ct. R. 341(h)(7). For these reasons, these new claims have been forfeited as well.

¶ 16 Even if Popalyar's brief complied with Rules 341 and 342, he failed to file a sufficient record on appeal to allow a thorough review of the issues on appeal. Supreme Court Rule 321 provides in relevant part that "[t]he record on appeal shall consist of the judgment appealed from, the notice of appeal, and the entire original common law record, unless the parties stipulate for, or the trial court, after notice and hearing, or the reviewing court, orders less." Ill. S. Ct. R. 321 (eff. Oct. 1, 2021).

¶ 17 It is the appellant's burden to provide a sufficiently complete record to support a claim of error. *Waukegan Hosp. Group, LLC v. Stretch's Sports Bar & Grill Corp.*, 2024 IL 129277, ¶ 20. When the record on appeal is incomplete, we presume that the order entered by the trial court was in conformity with law and had a sufficient factual basis. *Foutch v. O'Bryant*, 99 Ill. 2d 389, 391-92 (1984). Any doubts arising from the incompleteness of the record will be resolved against the appellant. *Foutch*, 99 Ill. 2d at 392.

¶ 18 Here, Popalyar filed an incomplete common law record that does not contain any filings or orders entered after October 15, 2025. Nor has Popalyar filed a report of proceedings or a bystander's report to allow this court to review any of the hearings related to the entry of the

plenary protective order. We note that both parties refer to proceedings from March 2026, including hearings and the entry of a modified protective order, but the record on appeal lacks any information related to these proceedings. Monroe Capital appended a copy of the March 10, 2026 order, as well as a transcript from March 27, 2026, to its brief, and Popalyar relies extensively on these documents in his reply brief. These documents, however, are not properly before the court. See Ill. S. Ct. Rs. 321 (eff. Oct. 1, 2021) (requiring any report of proceedings from the circuit court to be filed with the record on appeal), 323 (eff. July 1, 2017) (detailing the requirements for preparing, certifying, and filing the report of proceedings on appeal), 342 (requiring that an appellant's appendix contains only materials from the record).

¶ 19 If materials are not taken from the filed record, they generally may not be placed before the appellate court in an appendix and, thus, will be disregarded. *Oruta v. B.E.W. & Cont'l*, 2016 IL App (1st) 152735, ¶ 32; see *Waukegan Hosp. Group*, 2024 IL 129277, ¶ 20 (Generally, a party may not rely on matters outside the record to support its position on appeal). Since the materials from Monroe Capital's appendix are outside the filed record, we will disregard any argument from both parties relying on these documents.

¶ 20 Absent a complete record, we are unable to review whether the trial court erred in entering the plenary protective order. Since the burden is on Popalyar as the appellant to provide a complete record on appeal, we must presume that the trial court properly entered the order. Accordingly, we hold that no error occurred in the entry of the plenary order of protection.

¶ 21 Finally, Monroe Capital filed a motion to dismiss this appeal which was taken with the case. Since we have disposed of this appeal, the motion is now moot and not considered.

¶ 22 Based on the foregoing reasons, we affirm the decision of the circuit court of Cook County.

¶ 23 Affirmed.