

**IN THE
CIRCUIT COURT FOR BALTIMORE CITY
Administrative Order No. 2025-40**

WHEREAS, on June 2, 2025, in light of the Maryland Judiciary’s Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure’s (“Rules Committee”) consideration of proposed changes to the Maryland Rules to establish a clear process for the circuit courts to efficiently manage the high volume of similarly situated cases under the Maryland Child Victims Act (“CVA cases” or “actions”)¹, the undersigned issued Administrative Order 2025-37, attached here as Exhibit 1, which imposed a temporary stay on proceedings in all CVA cases in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the temporary stay was to promote judicial efficiency and ensure the fair and orderly adjudication of CVA cases; and

WHEREAS, upon consideration of the proposed amendments to Rule 2-327 and Rule 16-302 and the deliberations at the September 4, 2025 meeting of the Rules Committee, the wording of the proposed rules appears to preserve the administrative judges’ discretion in managing these types of cases within their jurisdiction. In light of the importance of advancing these matters, this Court has categorized and specially assigned cases for pretrial management to designated judges, including the undersigned, and concludes that the continuance of the temporary stay is no longer warranted;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is this 17th day of October 2025, hereby

¹ For purposes of this Order, the term “CVA cases” is defined to include civil tort actions filed on or after October 1, 2023 against any defendant which allege child sexual abuse pursuant to Md. Code, Courts & Judicial Proceedings § 5-117, including cases listed in the attached Exhibit 2, and any such cases filed after the issuance of this Order.

ORDERED that the temporary stay imposed on June 2, 2025, on all CVA cases filed in this Court, including those attached as Exhibit 2, is hereby **LIFTED**, effective the 24th day of October 2025; and it is further

ORDERED that all CVA cases in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City (“Court”) shall proceed in accordance with the terms and deadlines defined in this Administrative Order (“Order”).

I. Application

This Order applies to all CVA cases filed in this Court as of the date of this Order, including those listed in the attached Exhibit 2, and any future CVA cases filed in this Court or transferred to this Court pursuant to the procedure set out in Maryland Rules 2-327 and 16-302.

Cases that are subject to a bankruptcy stay are not required to follow this schedule; however, such cases are subject to having status conferences and to appointment of liaison counsel and a steering committee.

The Clerk of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City shall docket this Order in all CVA cases, including those listed in the attached Exhibit 2, and shall docket this Order in each future CVA case filed.

II. Assignment of Cases

All CVA cases in this Court shall be grouped as follows, and are hereby specially assigned to the judge designated below for pretrial purposes only:

<u>Case grouping</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Specially assigned to</u>
State	Cases filed against the State of Maryland or its agencies.	Hon. Shannon E. Avery
City	Cases filed against the City of Baltimore or its agencies.	Hon. Audrey J.S. Carrión
Bankruptcy	Cases filed against religious institutions involved in the <i>In re: Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore</i> matter	Hon. Lawrence P. Fletcher-Hill

	pending before the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maryland (Case No. 23-16969-MMH).	
Religious – non-bankruptcy	Cases filed against religious institutions, including schools, which are not involved in the bankruptcy matter.	Hon. Jeffrey Geller ²
Secular private schools	Cases filed against non-religious private schools.	Hon. Barry G. Williams
Out of jurisdiction Boards of Education	Cases filed against public school systems outside of Baltimore City.	Hon. Charles H. Dorsey III
Boy Scouts of America	Cases filed against the Boy Scouts of America.	Hon. Jeannie J. Hong
Healthcare	Cases filed against healthcare institutions.	Hon. Kendra Ausby
Other ³	Cases that do not fall under one of the aforementioned categories.	Hon. John S. Nugent

The cases in each of the above categories (“case groupings”) are hereby specially assigned to the respective judicial officers listed above for pretrial purposes only. A list of the cases assigned to each case grouping is attached as Exhibit 3. With the exception of the “Other” case grouping, each case grouping may have its own Steering Committee. These case groupings may be modified by further order issued by the undersigned. Where a case falls into multiple of the above categories, the Court has assigned the case to just one case grouping.

All CVA cases shall be deemed to have been specially assigned to their respective judge (the “specially assigned judge”) on the date of issuance of this Order, regardless of any previously issued orders in individual cases. This Order supersedes any previous special assignment orders and any previously issued scheduling orders in CVA cases.

² Two particular cases in the “religious – non-bankruptcy” grouping are specially assigned to The Honorable John S. Nugent and are labeled as such in the attached Exhibit 3. All other cases in this grouping are specially assigned to The Honorable Jeffrey Geller.

³ For cases in the “Other” case grouping, all provisions of this Order involving Steering Committees and Liaison Counsel do not apply. This includes, but is not limited to, Sections IV and V of this Order. Cases in the “Other” category involve various types of defendants with differing interests and considerations and will thus be handled individually rather than as a group.

III. Anonymity

If consented to by all defendants to an action, a plaintiff in a CVA case who seeks to proceed anonymously or under pseudonym may initiate an action and file a complaint anonymously or under pseudonym, rather than the person's legal name, and proceed on the Court's public docket anonymously or under pseudonym. The parties shall clearly identify the joint agreement in a complaint or in a joint stipulation.

If all defendants do not consent, then a plaintiff in a CVA case who seeks to proceed anonymously or under pseudonym shall file a motion to proceed anonymously or under pseudonym.

Nothing in this Order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect any previously issued order granting a plaintiff in a CVA case the right to proceed anonymously or under pseudonym, nor shall this Order be construed to prejudice the right of any defendant to challenge such an order.

If a defendant consents to anonymity, it retains all rights to conduct full discovery, investigate, and otherwise prepare its defenses that would exist in the absence of this Order, including the right to disclose a plaintiff's legal name and information to its insurer in providing notice of the claim, to third parties and its agencies in seeking and obtaining discovery materials, and to expert witnesses, so long as the persons provided with this information agree to maintain its confidentiality.

Within 14 days of receiving an appearance by a defendant in the matter, or for cases where a defendant has already filed an appearance, within 14 days of the issuance of this Order, a plaintiff who files a complaint anonymously or under pseudonym, unless a protective order has

been issued, shall provide to defense counsel (or, if the defendant appears self-represented, to the defendant) the plaintiff's name (including maiden name, if any), date of birth, the last four digits of their social security number, parents' and/or guardians' names, current address, and address at the time of the alleged abuse, if known.

A plaintiff's identifying information shall be omitted or redacted in any filings with the Court, pursuant to Maryland Rule 1-322.1. The filing party shall serve unredacted copies of such filings on all parties to the action, subject to the provisions of Maryland Rule 1-322.1(d)(1)-(5). All transmissions of restricted information shall comply with Maryland Rule 20-201.1.

IV. Steering Committees

For those cases that are grouped into categories, Steering Committees may be convened by the specially assigned judge presiding over each case grouping. Each Steering Committee will consist of the specially assigned judge, a Plaintiffs' Liaison Counsel, and a Defense Liaison Counsel. Liaison counsel will be selected by the specially assigned judge in cooperation with counsel. The purpose of the Liaison Counsel and Steering Committees is to allow the parties to obtain reasonably necessary documents and information without imposing undue burdens to permit the parties to evaluate the cases, reach early settlements, and prepare unsettled cases for trial. The Steering Committee will handle critical tasks, including scheduling fact and expert discovery, setting deadlines for dispositive and other pretrial motions, disseminating information about pretrial matters to non-liaison counsel and parties, and potentially negotiating settlement.

V. Liaison Counsel

Plaintiffs' Liaison Counsel and Defense Liaison Counsel (collectively, "Liaison Counsel") shall be appointed to act on behalf of all plaintiffs' counsel and defendants' counsel in a particular case grouping. The appointment of Liaison Counsel will facilitate communications

among the Court and counsel, minimize duplication of effort, allow for coordination of joint efforts, and provide for the efficient progress and management of this litigation.

Parties and counsel for the plaintiff(s) and defendant(s) in each case grouping may convene a Liaison Committee to decide upon and recommend to the specially assigned judge a proposed Plaintiff's Liaison Counsel and Defense Liaison Counsel, respectively. The judge will then finalize the selection of Liaison Counsel. If needed, the Court, in coordination with the Liaison Committee, shall appoint a successor Liaison Counsel.

a. Responsibilities and Duties

Subject to the right of any party to present individual positions or divergent positions or to take individual actions, Liaison Counsel are vested by the Court with the following responsibilities and duties:

- i. to coordinate the briefing and argument of motions;
- ii. to coordinate the conduct of discovery procedures, including but not limited to coordination of the preparation of joint written interrogatories, joint requests to admit, and joint requests for the production of documents, where applicable;
- iii. to coordinate the entry of a stipulated protective order governing the confidentiality of discovery material;
- iv. to coordinate the examination of witnesses in depositions;
- v. to coordinate the selection of counsel to act as spokespersons at pretrial and status conferences; and
- vi. to call meetings of counsel for plaintiffs and defendants respectively for the purpose of proposing joint actions, including but not limited to responses to questions and

suggestions of the Court or of adversaries with regard to orders, schedules, briefs, and stipulations of the facts.

Liaison Counsel are authorized to receive orders, notices, correspondence and telephone calls from the Court, and the Clerk of the Court on behalf of all defendants and plaintiffs, respectively, and shall be responsible for notifying all counsel of all communications received from the Court. Except as otherwise set forth in this Order, Liaison Counsel may not be used by any party for service of papers, orders, notices or correspondence to other counsel.

Notwithstanding the appointment of Liaison Counsel, each party's counsel shall have the right to participate in all proceedings before the Court.

Liaison Counsel shall not have the right to bind any party except Liaison Counsel's own respective client(s) as to any matter without the consent of counsel for any other party.

b. Reimbursement of Expenses

Liaison Counsel shall be reimbursed for their necessary and reasonable out-of-pocket expenses actually incurred in performing their tasks pursuant to this Order and shall keep records of such expenses in reasonable detail for examination by counsel. The reimbursement for such expenses shall be periodic, but not less than every six months by counsel for plaintiffs and defendants, respectively, in order to allow for the resolution of expenses at the end of litigation. Liaison Counsel shall be paid by each plaintiff's and defendant's counsel on an equitable basis to be agreed upon by the parties or fixed by the Court with each plaintiff and defendant having to pay a proportionate share of the out-of-pocket costs incurred by its respective Liaison Counsel, as indicated below.

Reimbursable expenses shall not include billable hourly rates or in any way account for the time spent by attorneys, paralegals, or any other person performing tasks pursuant to this

Order unless agreed upon by the parties and are limited to only the actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Liaison Counsel and/or their respective firms. Such costs include, but are not limited to, copying fees, filing fees, costs associated with establishing telephonic or general conferences, and similar expenses that apply to general matters.

Liaison Counsels' invoices for expenses incurred as Liaison Counsel pursuant to this Order, to the extent they exist, shall be due and payable when submitted.

VI. Scheduling

a. Proposed schedule

CVA actions shall be adjudicated in a timely fashion. All parties shall comply with the following schedule:

Special assignment of case	Special assignment shall be deemed to have taken place on the date of the issuance of this Order. See Exhibit 3 for a list of cases specially assigned to each case grouping.
First pretrial conference (PTC 1) ⁴	Within 30 days of the date of special assignment or on a date selected by the specially assigned judge. The purpose of this PTC is for the parties to meet and consider the appropriateness of establishing a Steering Committee and appointing Liaison Counsel and to identify service issues.
Selection of Liaison Counsel	Within 30 days of PTC 1 or on a date selected by the specially assigned judge, parties and counsel shall meet and confer to select their proposed Plaintiff's Liaison Counsel and Defense Liaison Counsel, if needed.

⁴ Status and pretrial conferences for each case grouping where Liaison Counsel and Steering Committee have been established shall be conducted jointly.

Submission of Liaison Counsel to the specially assigned judge	Within 45 days of PTC 1 or on a date selected by the specially assigned judge.
Second pretrial conference (PTC 2) ³	Within 30 days of the Court's receipt of both sides' proposed Liaison Counsel, if applicable or on a date selected by the specially assigned judge. If the parties have decided not to establish Liaison Counsel and a Steering Committee, no PTC 2 is to take place.
Submission of joint proposed scheduling order	No later than 10 days before PTC 2, or, if no second PTC is to take place, no later than 10 days after PTC 1.
Status conferences (SC) ³	Every 60 days, starting after the PTC(s) have taken place.
Conclusion of discovery	Within 6 months of the PTC(s) or on a date selected by the specially assigned judge.
Alternative dispute resolution	The parties may request a 45-day stay of further deadlines to engage in alternative dispute resolution, if they so choose (see below "Alternative Dispute Resolution").
Deadline to file dispositive motions, motions to exclude expert witnesses, and/or <i>Daubert/Rochkind</i> motions	Within 90 days of conclusion of discovery.
Deadline to file responses to dispositive motions, motions to exclude expert witnesses, and/or <i>Daubert/Rochkind</i> motions	Within 30 days of filing of the motion.
Deadline to file replies to responses to dispositive motions, motions to exclude expert witnesses, and/or <i>Daubert/Rochkind</i> motions	Within 14 days following a response to the motion. No sur-replies shall be permitted.
Ruling on dispositive motions, motions to exclude expert witnesses, and/or <i>Daubert/Rochkind</i> motions	Within 30 days after a hearing is held on the motion or on a date selected by the specially assigned judge.

Trial	A date for trial shall be selected, if necessary, within 90 days of the ruling on dispositive motions.
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b. *Scheduling Orders*

Following the pretrial conference(s) in each CVA case, the specially assigned judge presiding over the case shall issue a scheduling order that follows the terms and deadlines defined in this Order.

c. *Modification of Scheduling Orders*

If the parties believe the schedule provided by the scheduling order is not feasible, the parties shall confer as early as possible and, if possible, present any proposed modification jointly. As to minor matters that do not involve the filing of motions, the parties may vary a deadline to a minor extent by agreement so long as the variance does not affect the overall schedule. For example, the parties may agree to complete a deposition after a discovery deadline or to permit disclosure of a particular expert witness a few days after a deadline. Such agreements among counsel, however, shall not affect the overall schedule, and the Court will not modify the scheduling order because the parties have agreed to such variances on earlier deadlines.

d. *Preparation for Pretrial and Status Conferences*

Counsel for all parties shall consult prior to any pretrial or status conference on all issues likely to be addressed at the conference, including but not limited to: (1) resolution of the case in whole or in part through mediation or ADR; (2) outstanding issues relating to insurance coverage; (3) outstanding discovery issues, including the voluntary informal exchange of information for settlement purposes; (4) adoption of a confidentiality order; (5) scheduling; (6) anticipated use of experts; and (7) anticipated requests to obtain records from earlier cases

related to the allegations in the case at hand. While the parties are not required to file written statements before the pretrial or status conference addressing the matters in Md. Rule 2-504.2(b), the parties shall submit a joint written statement five days before any pretrial or status conference on all issues likely to be addressed at the conference, including the issues identified above.

All counsel who are required to appear before the specially assigned judge shall be fully familiar with the case, fully prepared to discuss pending matters competently, authorized to enter into substantive and procedural agreements on behalf of their clients, and authorized to enter into a disposition of the case.

e. Dispositive motions.

Without leave of the Court granted in advance, the primary memorandum in support of any dispositive motion or any opposition to the motion, shall be limited to thirty pages, excluding any supporting affidavits and exhibits. Any reply memorandum shall be limited to fifteen pages, excluding any supporting affidavits and exhibits. No sur-replies shall be permitted.

VII. Alternative Dispute Resolution

If prior to the resolution of dispositive motions, the parties to any CVA action wish to discuss settlement without litigating the action simultaneously, the parties may file a joint stipulation with the Court notifying the Court of their intention to do so. The filing of such a stipulation shall automatically suspend all case deadlines by 45 days from the date of filing. The parties' stipulation shall include an amended schedule agreed upon by the parties for any Court deadlines affected by the temporary adjournment. This amended schedule shall be automatically effective if it is agreed upon by all parties. At the conclusion of the 45 days, the suspension of deadlines shall be automatically lifted, and the parties shall resume the case according to the amended scheduling order.

The Court also will consider a joint request for referral to early mediation through the Court's Civil ADR Office pursuant to Title 17, Chapter 200 of the Maryland Rules. The maximum number of hours of required participation by the parties in the early mediation is 2 hours and shall be completed prior to the second pretrial conference. The mediation will be coordinated by Brian Finnell, Director of Civil ADR, and any questions shall be referred to brian.finnell@mdcourts.gov. A referral to early mediation shall not delay the overall schedule set forth above.

VIII. Effective Date

This Order is effective the 24th day of October, 2025, and will remain in effect until otherwise ordered by this Court.

/s/
Audrey J.S. Carrión, Administrative Judge
Circuit Court for Baltimore City

CLERK TO SEND COPIES TO:

All counsel of record in CVA cases pending before the Circuit Court for Baltimore City.

COPIES SENT ELECTRONICALLY TO:

The Honorable John S. Nugent, Judge in Charge of the Civil Division

The Honorable Shannon E. Avery

The Honorable Lawrence P. Fletcher-Hill

The Honorable Jeffrey Geller

The Honorable Barry G. Williams

The Honorable Charles H. Dorsey III

The Honorable Jeannie J. Hong

The Honorable Kendra Ausby

The Honorable Michelle Harner, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maryland

Xavier A. Conaway, Clerk, Circuit Court for Baltimore City