IN THE FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE
IN AND FOR NEW CASTLE COUNTY

M------ M------	)	
AND C-------- M------,	)	
Petitioners,	)	
	)	
v.	)	**File No.: 25-08--08TN**
	)	**Petition No.: 25-19652**
	)	
A----- T-----,	)	
Respondent.	)	

M---- R--------	)	
AND L---- R--------,	)	
Petitioners	)	
	)	
v.	)	**File No.: 25-08-06TN**
	)	**Petition No.: 25-19606**
	)	
A----- T-----,	)	
Respondent.	)	

E------- B-------	)	
AND D----- B-------,	)	
Petitioners,	)	
	)	
v.	)	**File No.: 25-08-07TN**
	)	**Petition No.: 25-19619**
	)	
A----- T-----,	)	
Respondent.	)	

IN THE INTEREST OF:
E1 T----- (D.O.B. --/--/2008)
M---- T----- (D.O.B. --/--/2012)
J---- T----- (D.O.B. --/--/2014)
E2 T----- (D.O.B. --/--/2016)
E3 T----- (D.O.B. --/--/2020)

CONSOLIDATED ORDER ON PETITIONS FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

Date Submitted: May 20, 2026

Date Decided: June 4, 2026

Jill Di Sciullo, Esq., and Deborah Spivack, Esq., *Attorneys for Petitioners (Guardians),* M------ M------, C-------- M------, M---- R--------, L---- R--------, E------- B-------, and D----- B----------

Megan Mahle, Esq., *Attorney for Father*, A----- T-----

Jonathan Harting, Esq., *Child Attorney* for E1 T-----, M---- T-----, and J---- T-----

Hirst, Judge

INTRODUCTION

Before the Court are consolidated Petitions for Termination of Parental Rights ("TPR") filed against A----- T----- ("Father") in the interest of E1 T----- (D.O.B. --/--/2008) ("E1"), M---- T----- (D.O.B. --/--/2012) ("M----"), J---- T----- (D.O.B. --/--/2014) ("J----"), E2 T----- (D.O.B. --/--/2016) ("E2"), and E3 T----- (DOB --/--/2020) ("E3") (collectively, "the children") by Petitioners M------ and C-------- M------ (the "M------s"), D----- and E------- B---------- (the "B-------s"), and M---- and L---- R-------- (the "R--------s") (collectively, the "Guardians"). The Guardians are represented by Jill Di Sciullo, Esq., and Deborah Spivack, Esq. Father is represented by Megan Mahle, Esq. Jonathan Harting, Esq., represents the best interests of E1 T-----, M---- T-----, and J---- T-----.

For the reasons set forth below, the Court **GRANTS** the Guardians' Petitions for Termination of Father's Parental Rights based on clear and convincing evidence that Father consents to termination as to E1[1], that Father's conviction for Unlawful Sexual Contact with a Child under 13 justifies termination as to the other children,[2] and that termination and transfer of rights is in the best interests of all the children.[3]

[1] *See* 13 *Del. C.* § 1103(a)(2). Father submitted his Affidavit of Consent to the termination of his parental rights on May 20, 2026.
[2] *See* 13 *Del. C.* § 1103(a)(4).
[3] *See* 13 *Del. C.* § 722(a).

PROCEDURAL HISTORY AND FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On September 27, 2023, the Family Court awarded the Guardians temporary guardianship of the children. Specifically, the M------s were granted temporary guardianship of E1 and E2. The R--------s were granted temporary guardianship of M---- and J----, and the B-------s were granted temporary guardianship of E3. At the time, A-- T----- ("Mother") was terminally ill with cancer and was unable to care for the children. Father, by contrast, was unable to care for the children because the Division of Family Services ("DFS") implemented a safety plan with Mother prohibiting him from contacting the children pending a police investigation into accusations that he had sexually abused E1 and physically abused all the children. Mother supported temporary guardianship with the respective Guardians, while Father opposed the Guardians in favor of collective placement with his mother, J----- T----- ("Paternal Grandmother"). The Court appointed Matthew Middleton, Esq., to represent Father in the guardianship matter, and Father filed a parallel Petition for Visitation.

Father was subsequently arrested on May 3, 2024, and charged with four counts of felony Unlawful Sexual Contact with a Child under 13, Sexual Abuse of a Child, four counts of Rape Second Degree without Consent, Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child, two counts of Dangerous Crime against a Minor under 14, two counts of Sexual Abuse of a Child by a Person in a Position of Trust First Degree, three counts of Rape Fourth Degree, Sexual Abuse of a Child by a Person in a Position of Trust Second Degree, Rape Second Degree of a Victim under 12, and Rape Third Degree of a Victim under 16.

Sadly, in the intervening months, Mother's health progressively declined, and she eventually passed away on ---- --, 2024. On October 3, 2024, the Court noted that Father had signed a conditional consent for each guardianship petition but declined to assent to the reasons stated for the guardianship, which included the sexual abuse of E1 and the physical abuse of all the children. In addition, Father wished to pursue visitation and other forms of contact before he would finalize his consent. Consequently, the Court scheduled a guardianship hearing on November 15, 2024. Because Father's

charges, including sexual allegations against one of the children, remained pending at the time of the guardianship hearing, Father eventually consented to the children's collective guardianships and simultaneously dismissed his Petition for Visitation.[4]

Two months later, Father pled *nolo contendere* to one count of felony Unlawful Sexual Contact with a Child under 13. His remaining charges were *nolle prosequi*'ed or dismissed on January 21, 2025. Father was sentenced on March 14, 2025, to eight (8) years at Level 5 suspended after two (2) years for six (6) years of Level III supervision with GPS. Father was also sentenced to a lifetime registration on the sex offender registry at Tier III (high risk). Additionally, Father was ordered to have no contact with E1, no contact with his other children unless permitted by Family Court, and no contact generally with *any* minor children.

On July 28, 2025, the Guardians filed their respective Petitions for Termination of Parental Rights ("TPR") along with parallel Petitions for Adoption of the children in their care. Because E1 was over 14 years old at the time of filing, she submitted her consent to the adoption on September 22, 2025.[5] On October 8, 2025, the Court appointed Father new counsel for the TPR proceeding, scheduled a case management conference ("CMC") for January 6, 2026, and set the case for trial for January 28, 2026. At the CMC, however, the Court granted a Motion to Withdraw filed by Father's appointed counsel, postponed the scheduled trial, and appointed Megan Mahle, Esq., to represent Father. Soon after, Father was released from his incarceration.

On March 4, 2026, the Court interviewed E1, M----, J----, and E2. Because M---- and J---- expressed adamant support for termination of Father's rights but hesitation and concern about adoption by the R--------s, the Court appointed Jonathan Harting, Esq., to represent their best interests. Following a pretrial conference on April 29, 2026, the Court further appointed Mr. Harting to represent E1's best interests and help her decide whether to proceed with TPR despite her upcoming 18th birthday in ------ 2026 or

[4] File No CN23-04468, Tab 35/36, November 18, 2024.
[5] Tab 3, Affidavit of Consent of a Child 14 Years of Age or Older.

wait a few months to seek adult adoption. Soon after, Mr. Harting confirmed that E1 wished to pursue the TPR.

The Court held the TPR trial on May 20, 2026. At the beginning of trial, Father voluntarily consented to terminate his parental rights with respect to E1, making her legally free to be adopted by the M------s shortly before her 18th birthday. Father, however, opposed termination as to the four younger children and argued that guardianship is a sufficient permanency goal that does not sever the legal relationship between him and his children. The Guardians and the child attorney, in contrast, supported TPR because the Court already had statutory grounds and termination was in the children's best interests. The Court heard testimony from Adoptions from the Heart Case Worker Amanda Alaberti, Cradle of Hope Adoption Worker Sabine Campbell, Nightlight Christian Adoption Home Study Coordinator Amy Eudy, C-------- M------, E------- B-------, L---- R--------, ---------- -- ---------- Chaplain S----- A-------, New Behavioral Network Parent Educator Darin Kellam, and Father.

TESTIMONY

Amanda Alaberti

Ms. Alaberti is a district supervisor for Adoptions from the Heart, an agency licensed in New York, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. She has been in her position for three years, and before that she was an adoption counselor with the same agency for twelve years. In her role, she completed a home study for the M------ family in Delaware and reviewed and approved the home studies for the R-------- and B------- families to ensure compliance with Delaware licensure requirements. For each family, she reviewed their backgrounds, criminal records, medical clearances, and other collateral sources of information. She also interviewed the prospective adoptive parents and the children.

Ms. Alaberti was initially contacted in February 2025 to begin the home study process for the M------s. She completed three comprehensive sessions with them and visited the home in May 2025. Ms. Alaberti reported that Mr. and Ms. M------ have been

married for 36 years. Mr. M------ works at --- ------ and Ms. M------ is a medical doctor and teacher. They have four adult children, including one who was adopted years ago. They became caregivers for E1 and E2 in August 2023 after they learned that A-- was sick and looking for a home for the children.

The M------s are loving caregivers who are physically, emotionally, and financially able to care for the girls. The family benefits from a strong church community and a close familial bond, and they are active in their larger community as well. The girls are up to date medically, and there are no concerns for the physical health of either the M------s or the girls. Ms. Alberti also reviewed documentation from the girls' therapists, who support the placement because of the enormous trauma and loss they have experienced. When she went to the home, Ms. Alaberti observed the girls to be well-adjusted in the care of the M------s. She found E2 to be an outgoing child who enjoys cheerleading and staying active. E1 is more reserved, but she enjoys art, drawing, and making jewelry with E2.

In her time with the family, Ms. Alaberti saw the girls coming out of their shells and showing their strong bond with the M------s. E1 clearly expressed to Ms. Alaberti that she wanted to be adopted and wanted that for her siblings, too. While E2 did not understand the language of legal adoption, she wanted to be part of the M------ family and to remain in contact with her siblings. The extended M------ family is also very involved with the girls, and the M------s' adult daughter and son-in-law are available as standby guardians should anything happen to them. In addition, the M------s, like the other Guardians, are very supportive of maintaining the sibling relationship between the children. They have weekly zoom calls and arrange summer and holiday vacations together. Because the girls are safe, happy, and thriving in the M------ home, Ms. Alaberti supports finalization through adoption.

Ms. Alaberti next discussed the B-------s, who seek adoption of five-year-old E3. They have three teenage boys and are a tight-knit family. Ms. B------- is Mother's cousin, and E3 was placed in their home in August 2023—when he was two-and-a-half years old—after Mother asked her cousin to care for him. Ms. Alaberti observed that D----- and

E------- treat E3 the same way they treat their biological sons. Because their children are a bit older that E3, there was a period of adjustment when E3 first arrived, but they are unquestionably well bonded now. Ms. Alaberti not only met the family virtually, but she also observed them together, reviewed records from the Cradle of Hope adoption agency, and determined that the B-------s are physically, emotionally, and financially able to care for E3. Under their care, E3 is involved in many community activities and maintains a strong connection with his biological siblings. As a result, Ms. Alaberti also supports E3's adoption with the B-------s.

Lastly, Ms. Alaberti reviewed and approved the R--------'s home study for M---- and J----. Mr. R-------- is the children's maternal grandfather, and L---- R-------- is their maternal step-grandmother. The R--------s have been married for more than 25 years and provide a loving, stable home filled with structure and consistency for the boys. The boys have been with the R--------s since August 2023. Based on her review of the home study and her interviews with the R--------s, they are also medically, emotionally, and financially able to provide care for them. Although there was a child protective investigation in ----- -------- involving J---- in March 2026, the concerns were unfounded. Instead, Ms. Alaberti's review found that the boys are stable, happy, well-bonded, and thriving in the R--------'s care. She supports adoption over guardianship because the children have been with their respective caregivers for three years and adoption offers more permanency and provides more security for the family as a whole. At the conclusion of her testimony, the Court accepted the M------, B-------, and R-------- home studies approved by Adoptions from the Heart.[6]

Sabine Campbell

Sabine Campbell works for Cradle of Hope as an adoption caseworker. She is a licensed master social worker ("LMSW") with many years of experience working in child welfare and five years of experience with Cradle of Hope. She was assigned to conduct

[6] Petitioner's Exhibits 1–3.

the home study for the B------- family. Her review included financial records, medical records, criminal records, and interviews with the family members. She spent more than five hours with the family between visits in April 2026 and May 2026. The B-------s have three children: J----- (18 years old and in college), J---- (16 years old and in tenth grade), and J--- (13 years old in seventh grade).

Ms. Campbell interviewed the family members individually to assess their attitudes regarding adoption. Each of them supports adoption of E3. The B-------s are financially stable, capable of caring for E3, and the children are their priority. They also ensure that E3 has contact with his biological siblings. Ms. Campbell described E3 as the "light" of the family since his arrival two and a half years ago. The B-------s already consider him one of their own. He is well-adjusted in the B-------'s care, he is meeting his developmental milestones, and he is medically up to date. In addition, Mr. B------- coaches E3's little league team, and Ms. B------- volunteers at his school. As a result, Ms. Campbell "wholeheartedly" supports adoption of E3 with the B------- family. The Court accepted Ms. Campbell's home study.[7]

Amy Eudy

Amy Eudy is a social worker and has served as an adoption home study coordinator for Nightlight Christian Adoptions for 13 years. She completed the R--------s' home study, including a review of their criminal records, child abuse records, financial records, references, and medical clearances. She also reviewed physicals, letters from the children's therapists, and school records. As part of her assessment, Ms. Eudy met with the R--------s, M----, and J---- both separately and together. She completed her initial report on April 28, 2025, and an updated report on May 14, 2026.

The R--------s have been married for 23 years and have lived in ----- -------- for more than five years since they retired. Although L---- is 66 and M---- is 65, they passed their physicals, and Ms. Eudy has no concerns for their physical and mental health or

[7] Petitioner's Exhibit 4.

their ability to be adoptive parents. The children were placed in the R--------s' home in August 2023. The initial transition was rocky as M---- and J---- dealt with major changes, grief, and loss. M---- also experienced some bullying in school, and J---- has struggled with behavioral issues at home and in school. However, the R--------s have been very responsive, and they enrolled the boys in therapy to help them cope. Ms. Eudy found the family's interactions to be warm, caring, respectful, and positive. Between her first and second visit, she noticed that the kids seemed more comfortable at home and in school. M---- plays soccer at school and on a club team. J---- plays basketball year-round. The boys attend church programs and have friends through church and school. Every weekend, they have a zoom call with their other siblings, and they travel to Delaware for Christmas and in the summer.

Although there was a child-protective investigation in ----- -------- in March 2026 based on a report of physical discipline to J----, the investigation did not result in any substantiated findings. One of the concerns was that Mr. R-------- practiced "old school parenting." On one occasion, that outlook led him to physically discipline J----, but he has since enrolled in counseling and is learning new ways to parent the boys. In addition, the R--------s plan to participate in family therapy once they identify a new counselor for the boys. M---- misses his siblings and wishes to be closer to them, but both boys told Ms. Eudy that they feel safe in the R--------s' care and wish to stay with them. Consequently, Ms. Eudy supports adoption and believes the children are safe and well-adjusted in their home with the R--------s. The Court accepted the R--------'s home study.[8]

C-------- M------

C-------- M------ lives in Middletown, Delaware, with her husband M------, adult daughter L---, 17-year-old E1, and 8-year-old E2. E1 and E2 have been in her home

[8] Petitioner's Exhibit 5.

since September 2023. She has three other adult children who do not live at home, four grandchildren, and two more grandchildren on the way.

Between February 2023 and June 2023, prior to E1's disclosure and the girls' placement in her home, Ms. M------ tutored E1 many times per week through a homeschooling co-op program. She met Father a number of times while tutoring E1, but she did not recall any memorable interactions with Father during this time. After Mother became sick, she asked Ms. M------ to care for the girls. Upon their arrival in her home almost three years ago, E2 was up to date on her vaccines but malnourished, behind her grade level academically, and struggling with behavioral challenges. Initially, E2 would beat up M------ and C--------, but her violent tantrums have abated over time. E2 thought she had been kidnapped and did not understand why she was not with Mother. The M------s enrolled E2 in therapy and ensured that she talked to Mother every night on the phone. Mother even came to stay at the home for weeks at a time until she became too sick to travel. After Mother passed, Ms. M------ found that E2 did not need extra help to cope with the loss. During this same period of adjustment, E2 never indicated to Ms. M------ that she missed Father. The girls also had some limited contact with paternal relatives early on, but Ms. M------ ultimately stopped communicating with their paternal grandmother out of fear that images or information shared with her would make its way to Father.

E2 is now in 2nd grade at --- ---- --------- ------- where she has all As, is on honor roll, and is thriving. She receives mental health counseling for some ongoing behavioral challenges, attention deficit disorder ("ADD"), and obsessive-compulsive disorder ("OCD"). She is also prescribed Ritalin. E2 is an outgoing child with friends in the neighborhood. She participates in cheerleading, soccer, volleyball, bible club, and theater. Although Ms. M------ tried to maintain E2's connections with friends from her parents' neighborhood, none of those friends stayed in contact.

Likewise, E1 is doing well physically and mentally. She is up to date with her medical care and sees a mental health therapist. E1 joined the soccer team and swim team, and she has learned to drive (but not well, according to Ms. M------!). She is also

closely bonded with the M------ family. This summer, she will go to Guatemala with Ms. M------ and hopes to learn to swim different strokes to prepare for the school swim team. At the time of trial, she was also planning more immediately to take the train with L--- (the M------s' adult daughter at home) to spend a week with M------ (another of the M------s' adult children).

At first, E2 and E1 did not get along with each other, which Ms. M------ described as a "blood bath." Now, however, the girls interact well with each other and maintain a relationship with their siblings. Over the summer, the girls will visit their siblings and maternal grandmother, and they will also host all their siblings for a week at the house. At home, they are expected to do chores, maintain good behavior, and keep their rooms and bathrooms clean.

Lastly, Ms. M------ reported that her mental and physical health are good. Although she scaled back some of her activities when the children arrived in her home, they have all adjusted well and have not had to change too much of their lives. Because of their long-term commitment to the girls, the M------s are interested in adopting them.

E------- B-------

E------- B------- is Mother's first cousin, and Mr. R-------- is her uncle. They grew up as a tight-knit family and lived near each another in --------. She has been married to D----- B------- for 22 years and they have three boys.

E3 joined their household after E1 first reported her sexual abuse in July 2023, which led Mother to remove five of the children (including C----, who is now an adult) from Father's care. Previously, the children had been living with Father in Delaware, and Mother had been living with Maternal Grandmother in Westminster --------, while the parents went through the process of divorce. At some point, Father placed E3 in Paternal Grandmother's care. Following E1's disclosure, E3 was also placed in Maternal Grandmother's home along with the other five children. But Mother was very sick, and placing all six children together in Maternal Grandmother's home was chaotic. Ms. B------- first began visiting the home just to help out with the children, to take A-- to

chemotherapy, or to host the children at her house. When the children were all together during visits to Ms. B-------'s home, they would steal E3's food and toys, and they hoarded and hid snacks from her pantry. Eventually, DFS recommended the kids be separated and the B-------s agreed to take care of E3.

E3 was two and a half years old when he joined their family in August 2025, but he did not act like a typical toddler. Ms. B------- described him as "like furniture." He did not cry, ask for anything, or make noise. He was not potty trained, did not make any sound at night, and was fearful of sudden movements. He had no health insurance, and he was not up to date on his vaccines. However, he quickly bonded with Ms. B-------. She went to work quickly getting him registered with Medicaid, re-enrolled in speech therapy, engaged with a behavioral therapist, and set up with medical appointments to get him back on track with his immunizations. E3 saw a trauma/play therapist for one year. Since then, he has made substantial progress with his behavior and speech. Sometimes, he still has difficulty expressing himself, but he talks much more now and is doing well. E3 is enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program, he is meeting his developmental markers, he is well adjusted, and he is ready for kindergarten in the fall. Ms. B-------'s other children adjusted quickly to having E3 at home, and she described them as having a special relationship with E3. E3 is now like a "little celebrity" because he goes to all of the football games and community events.

E3 sees his family as "the brothers he lives with" and "the brothers he does not live with" (including M---- and J----). Although E3 is close with Ms. B-------'s three children, she has also made it a priority to include his biological siblings in activities. J---- and M---- will go to their lake house over the summer, and she also arranges for holiday and summer visits with all of the siblings. Ms. B------- talks to E3 about Mother and his family members, and she tries to encourage him to participate on weekly zoom calls. However, E3 considers the B-------s his parents. He does not know who his biological father is and does not understand the concept of adoption, given his age. Moreover, Father never reached out to the B-------s directly before or after a no-contact order was imposed regarding the children. Mr. B-------, however, reached out to Father

two times to let him know that E3 was okay. Father never provided financial support and never sent a card, birthday present, or any other type of acknowledgement before he was criminally prohibited from doing so. Similarly, at first, the B-------s maintained contact with Paternal Grandmother, but she later cut ties with them. Now, contact with Father's family is limited to occasional cards exchanged with a paternal aunt. Ms. B------- is committed to explaining the adoption status in a developmentally appropriate way as E3 grows up. She recognizes that E3 gets upset when people use his last name of "T----" because he insists his last name is "B-------." Although this process has been stressful, Ms. and Mr. B------- are in good physical and mental health. They are committed to adopting E3 because they already consider him their son. Ms. B------- is staunchly committed to maintaining contact between the siblings. When E3 is older, she would be supportive of contact with Father if it is appropriate.

L---- R--------

L---- R-------- is the step-maternal grandmother of the children. She has been married to M---- R-------- for 23 years, and they have lived in --------, ----- -------- for the past nine years of their retirement. In 2023, after E1 disclosed sexual abuse and Mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer, Ms. R-------- traveled to -------- to help care for the children. They had a family planning meeting with Mother to determine placement for each child. At the time, M---- was 11 and J---- was 8, and the R--------s agreed to care for them. When the boys arrived in August 2023, they were underweight, short for their age, and struggling emotionally. They were defiant, did not respect adults, acted like they were in charge, and had attachment issues. M---- had low self-esteem and worried he would be in trouble if he dropped anything. J---- displayed anger and tantrums.

The R--------s enrolled the boys in therapy shortly after their arrival in October 2023, but the therapist left the practice. They started with their next set of therapists in March 2024, but M----'s therapist left her practice in November 2025, and J----'s left in April 2026. Consequently, Ms. R-------- scheduled an intake with a new therapist for the boys in June 2026.

It took time for the boys to understand that they were not equal to adults and to understand why they were with the R--------s. Rather, they only knew that Mother was sick and Father could not care for them. They had contact with Mother on the phone every day until she passed away. However, the boys never asked to speak with Father. Similarly, Father never reached out even before the no-contact order was put in place. Initially, the boys had some contact with Paternal Grandmother through video calls, letters, and cards. They were very close and had previously lived with her for ten years. However, at the end of 2023, Paternal Grandmother cut off contact with the children, indicating it was not in her best interest. She now only occasionally sends a birthday card, a letter, or a Christmas gift.

Adjusting to the R--------s' home has been a rocky process. J---- remains prone to sudden, angry tantrums, and he can be triggered when his grades are less than A's, when he loses at a game, when he does not want to do something, or when someone hurts one of his friends. Mr. R--------, who is generally very patient, struggled to help J----. He admitted that he lost patience with J---- and struck him in the face last year. At one point, in a moment of frustration, Mr. R-------- also told the boys that, if they did not want to live with the R--------s, they could go live with Father. The conflict between Mr. R-------- and J---- also affected M----, who tends to shut down when people yell. Mr. R-------- recognized that he needed to change, so he began seeing a therapist weekly.

The R--------s have since made adjustments, including learning not to yell when they are frustrated at the boys or to physically touch the children unless it is to hug or kiss them. The boys are now more receptive and do chores without hesitation. The R----------s pray together every morning with the boys, and they enjoy spending time together as a family. They also take the children camping and fishing, play board games together, and participate in other outdoor activities.

With respect to J----, Ms. R-------- has been working hard to find strategies to help him heal, including sending him to his room for five minutes to punch a pillow when he becomes angry. From 2023 to 2024, J---- had tantrums two times per week. The year after, the tantrums slowed down, and he earned a "student of the month" distinction. In

September 2025, J---- was doing so well he was recommended for a young astronauts program. After a negative report from school, however, he was removed from the program, and his frustration led him to act up again for a time. J---- is now on medication, and he has been stable since approximately March of this year. Academically, he is on honor roll. He participates in basketball at school and through a summer and winter program. He has many friends from church, and his health is good. Although he has some good friends in ----- --------, he has no friends with whom he keeps in contact in Delaware.

M----, similarly, had a slow adjustment to the R--------s home, but he has since made a lot of progress. He still has a lot of grief and guilt about his mother's death, but he will not open up about it. Sometimes, he feels like no one listens to him, although he will not reveal what bothers him. Early on, he was very defiant and disrespectful, but that has improved. Although M---- struggled academically when he first arrived, he has proven to be a gifted student. He has been placed in advanced math and science classes. He enjoys participating in soccer and science projects. In fact, he placed second in his district and received an award for engineering. M---- has a strong community of friends through church, and he enjoys sleepovers on weekends. His grades, however, have made him anxious. Recently, he was prescribed a low dose of Prozac, and the R--------s have seen a huge improvement. M---- is now more confident and more able to value himself. He is looking forward to trying out for the high school volleyball team, and he plans to practice two times per week over the summer. He is also generally healthy and up to date with his immunizations, and he wears braces.

M---- and J---- are close with each other. They are eager for calls with their siblings and look forward to seeing them in person over the summer. M---- struggles with being separated from his siblings, especially E3, because he cared for E3 when Mother left the home. However, the boys maintain that they do not want to have contact or be with Father. Instead, both boys support terminating Father's parental rights.

Ms. R-------- noted a huge improvement with the boys over the past few years. It took some time for her and her husband to adjust from retirement—where their primary

role as grandparents was to visit and spoil the children—they have acclimated to raising these two boys. They are physically, financially, and emotionally able to be an adoptive resource for them.

S----- A-------

S----- A------- is the ---------- -- ---------- Chaplain at ------ -- ----- ---------- ----------. He met Father about two years ago when Father was first incarcerated. Since then, they have met regularly, both individually and in group chapel services. Their meetings are spiritual in nature, and Chaplain A-------'s role has been to offer support because incarceration can be very difficult. Since Father's release, he has attended Chaplain A---------'s church weekly and engaged in a reentry group for men who are transitioning back into the community. When Father attends church, another person is with him at all times, and he has complied with what is required of him. However, Chaplain A------- acknowledged that he is not familiar with Father's sentencing order.

Chaplain A------- described Father as different from "the average person" he sees because he does not struggle with addiction. Instead, Father's issue was "relational in nature."[9] Chaplain A------- is aware that Father is a convicted sex offender for sexually abusing his daughter. But he noted that Father denied abusing his child, and he expressed that it was not his role as chaplain "to judge." Chaplain A------- also conceded that Father has not taken accountability or admitted to the charges.

Darin Kellam

Darin Kellam has worked for New Behavioral Network for over fourteen years, educating parents, teaching a 24/7 dad group, and working as a family interventionist. He confirmed that Father completed the Principles of Positive Parenting class through a referral from DFS and demonstrated that he had learned and accepted the content.[10] Mr. Kellam testified, however, that he has had no communication with Father since he

[9] TPR Hearing at 3:08:54–3:09:12 p.m., May 20, 2026 (audio).
[10] Respondent's Exhibit 1, PPP Certificate.

completed the course in 2023, and he was not aware of Father's subsequent criminal conviction. He only learned on the day of trial that Father cannot be around children for another six years.

A----- T----- ("Father")

Father currently resides in a church ministry home, and he is receiving help from ---------- ------ Church to identify independent housing. Prior to his conviction, he had a career as a freelance videographer, which he hopes to re-launch in the near future. Since his release from his incarceration, he described being in a rigorous spiritually based program where he attends church twice on Sundays, volunteers to transport members of his ministry, engages in bible studies, and leads sermons.

Father contests having his parental rights terminated in the four younger children because he wants to "provide the greatest scope for their healing opportunities."[11] He testified that Mother's death was a profound loss, and his "complex legal crisis" created a lot of separation anxiety for the children.[12] He believes E2 still wants contact based on what she reported a few years ago from clinical sessions with her therapist. He sees a lot of unfinished grief and emotion and feels that he should be available as a resource for his children, with therapeutic contact coordinated by a clinical supervisor.

Father painted an idyllic picture of his life with the children. He described their family life as having a strong spiritual foundation, and he recalled family outings, outdoor activities, and mentoring. In his view, their home was a "hub" for the neighborhood kids, the family had a strong bond, and they ate family dinners every night.[13] E1 and E2 shared one room, and M---- and J---- shared another. They also had a strong support system from extended family, their church, and their homeschool community. Paternal Grandmother was closely involved with the children and helped with homeschooling and childcare duties.

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[11] TPR Hearing at 3:27:21–3:27:25 p.m., May 20, 2026 (audio).
[12] *Id.* at 3:27:55–3:28:27 p.m.
[13] *Id.* at 3:32:49–3:33:19 p.m.

Mother's departure from the home triggered what Father characterized as an acute, unexpected crisis. But he stepped in to arrange therapists, a family interventionist, Christian counselors, medical care, and educational services for the children. E1 went into an "emotional paralysis" after she learned of Mother's medical condition, and she would not leave her bedroom.[14] Therefore, he found a psychiatrist for her, as well as psychological help for the other children both at school and outside of school. He enrolled the children in mainstream school, which was an adjustment for all of them. He also enrolled the girls in a Christian soccer club, E1 in gymnastics, and the boys in soccer and flag football. Over the summer, they were enrolled in summer camp and vacation bible school.

Father maintained he was close with all of the children, gave them each individual attention, supported them emotionally, involved them in sports and other outdoor activities, and played with them. As a working single father, he conceded it was a lot to manage. While he was juggling everything, he realized it would be better for Paternal Grandmother to care for E3. E3 had delayed speech, and Father arranged for a paternal aunt to provide E3 with speech therapy. He picked up a part time job at a local organic market. He also secured a job at ----- --- ----- ---- for $75,000 but was "tragically" arrested just a few days before he could start that job.[15]

Father testified that, after the children were removed from his care, he tried to make contact, but his communications were ignored. But he conceded that he only attempted to contact the DFS case worker, believing that it was safer than reaching out to the Guardians. He felt that he was cut out of conversations about where the children would go after the family was separated. He also did not provide any financial support for his children because he thought that would be a violation of the no-contact order.

Following his conviction, which he described as a "profound legal crisis," Father made many changes.[16] He testified that his physical health is better than before, and he

[14] *Id.* at 3:36:27–3:36:40 p.m.
[15] *Id.* at 4:00:34–4:00:52 p.m.
[16] *Id.* at 3:52:35–3:52:45 p.m.

runs four days a week. His mental health has improved because he sees a Christian counselor at --- --- ---------- ------ on a weekly basis. He also sees ----- ------- once per week for "cognitive . . . problem solving."[17] Father maintains he is compliant with the terms of his probation. He completed an anger management program on April 13, 2024,[18] and, on February 11, 2025, a Kingdom Leadership virtual course on managing family relationships.[19]

Father acknowledges he cannot have contact with any children for the next 6 years, can never contact E1, and cannot contact any of his own children until modified by the Family Court. He is registered as a Tier III sex offender, and he is on a GPS tracker for the duration of his probation for the next six years. While he is not at this time proposing to "be a father that the children live with," he seeks "a restorative path forward."[20] Further, despite agreeing that taking accountability is a step toward healing, he believes that he did not cause his family's separation and the children's behavioral struggles, which instead resulted from a variety of external factors, including the children's previous homeschooling and his "legal crisis."[21]

DISCUSSION

I. *Termination of Parental Rights and Statutory Grounds*

Enshrined in the Constitution is the recognition that parents have fundamental rights and liberties to the care, custody, and control of their children.[22] Such rights may not be abrogated unless justified by "the most compelling reasons," meaning that intervention is "necessary to correct or protect a child from circumstances which directly threaten or affect the minor's physical or emotional health. The State and its agencies

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[17] *Id.* at 4:03:37–4:03:55 p.m.
[18] Respondent's Exhibit 2.
[19] Respondent's Exhibit 3.
[20] TPR Hearing at 4:12:04–4:12:20 p.m., May 20, 2026 (audio).
[21] *Id.* at 4:13:16–4:14:13 p.m.
[22] *Santosky v. Kramer*, 455 U.S. 745, 753 (1982); *see also Troxel v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57, 65 (2000) (plurality opinion).

are not in the business of determining or otherwise interfering with the parent-child relationship on any less substantial grounds."[23]

Termination of parental rights is one of the most consequential decisions the Family Court can make. Under 13 *Del. C.* § 1108, the Court must undertake a two-step inquiry. First, the Court must assess whether there is clear and convincing evidence that statutory grounds exist for termination.[24] If at least one of the enumerated grounds is present, the Court must then find by clear and convincing evidence that termination of parental rights is in the best interests of the child, considering the factors set forth in 13 *Del. C.* § 722.[25]

Here, the parties agree that the statutory grounds to terminate have already been established. First, Father voluntarily consents to terminate his parental rights in E1 under 13 *Del. C.* § 1103(a)(1). Father also concedes that statutory grounds exist under 13 *Del. C.* § 1103(a)(4) because of his felony conviction for Unlawful Sexual Contact of a Child under 13 where E1 was the victim. Therefore, the only question before the Court is whether there is clear and convincing evidence that it is in the best interest of the children for Father's rights to be terminated.

II. *Best Interests of the Children*

In making a best-interests determination, the Court must consider all relevant factors, including those set forth in 13 *Del. C.* § 722(a). The relevant factors are addressed in turn below.

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[23] *In re Burns,* 519 A.2d 638, 645 (Del. 1986) (quoting *Daber v. Div. of Child Protective Servs.*, 470 A.2d 723, 726 (Del. 1983)).
[24] *Mitchell v. Thayer*, 312 A.3d 693, 699 (Del. 2024). The Supreme Court has described the clear and convincing standard of proof as "evidence that 'produces in the mind of the trier of face an abiding conviction that the truth of [the] factual contentions [is] highly probable.'" *Hudak v. Procek*, 806 A.2d 140, 147 (Del. 2002) (alterations in original).
[25] 13 *Del. C.* § 1108; *see also Whitmore v. Robinson,* 223 A.3d 417, 424 (Del. 2019).

1. The wishes of the child's parent or parents as to his or her custody and residential arrangements;

Sadly, Mother is deceased. Father opposes termination of his parental rights except as to E1. He consented to guardianship of the other children, but he hopes to one day be able to have therapeutic contact with them to help them heal from the family's traumatic fracture. Therefore, this factor weighs in favor of granting the TPR Petition as to E1, and against granting it as to the other children.

2. The wishes of the child as to his or her custodian(s) and residential arrangements;

Other than E3, due to his age, all of the children have adamantly expressed support for termination of Father's parental rights. They wish to be legally freed for adoption, as they said repeatedly during the Child Interview on March 4, 2026. As noted in the March 10, 2026, Letter Order following the interview with E1, M----, J----, and E2, "the Court was very impressed by these four children, especially given the losses, adjustments, and hardships they have endured. They were thoughtful, engaged, and articulate in expressing their wishes regarding termination of parental rights and adoption."[26] At the time of trial, Mr. Harting confirmed that E1, M---- and J---- continued unwaveringly to support terminating Father's parental rights. With respect to E3, the Court heard testimony from Ms. Alaberti, Ms. Campbell, and Ms. B------- about E3's attachment to the B------- family. He is an inextricable part of that family, resists being called by his legal last name of T-----, and he does not have any recollection of any caregivers before living with the B-------s. Moreover, none of the children have asked for contact or a relationship with Father in at least the last couple of years. Given that the children have been with their respective guardians for almost three years and adamantly wish to be adopted, this factor weighs heavily in favor of termination of parental rights.

[26] Tab 13, March 10, 2026 Order.

3. The interaction and interrelationship of the child with his or her parents, grandparents, siblings, persons cohabitating in the relationship of husband and wife with a parent of the child, any other residents of the household or persons who may significantly affect the child's best interest;

Indisputably, the children all have close relationships with each other. The Guardians fully understand the importance of this sibling bond and have worked diligently to maintain it, despite the three separate placements, through weekly zoom calls, holiday visits, and summer vacations together. M----, in particular, misses being close to his siblings. However, the Guardians are committed to fostering these relationships between the siblings and their extended maternal family.

In addition to the close ties between the siblings as a group, the children all have strong relationships within their respective Guardians' homes. E1 and E2 have grown close despite initial interactions in the M------s' home that Ms. M------ described as a "blood bath." The girls are now clearly enmeshed in the M------ family and have loving relationships with each other, with C-------- and M------ M------, and with the M------s' adult children. E1 and E2 see Ms. and Mr. M------ as sources of safety and comfort and wish to be considered part of their legal family. Equally, C-------- and M------ have changed their lives to make E1 and E2 vital members of their family.

Like E1 and E2, M---- and J---- have strong relationships with their guardians, Mr. and Ms. R--------. Although they experienced an initial period of difficult adjustment, the children feel loved and nurtured by the R--------s. The ----- -------- child-protective investigation of an incident in September 2025 between Maternal Grandfather and J---- did not produce evidence that J---- was abused.[27] However, Maternal Grandfather admitted that he slapped J---- on his face on one occasion after J----'s behavior escalated and he threatened Maternal Grandfather. Soon after, Maternal Grandfather apologized to J----, and J---- apologized in return. Maternal Grandfather expressed

[27] Petitioner's Exhibit 5, at 13.

remorse and has undergone additional training on how to care for children with traumatic histories.[28] In addition, Ms. R--------'s testimony described the significant changes the couple have undertaken to make M---- and J---- feel part of their immediate family. Since then, they have committed to helping the boys heal and flourish.[29] Although the R--------s had to adjust from their formerly relaxed, retired lifestyle in ----- ----------, they have since created an active, structured, and nurturing home to help care for the boys.

Similarly, E3 has an immeasurably strong bond with the B------- family and their three children. He is an integral part of the family and was described as their fourth child, without any legal or other distinction. Because E3 joined the family at two and a half, he knows of no other caregivers.

In contrast, none of the children has any contact with their paternal relatives. Understandably, Father has had no recent contact because he is prohibited from doing so as a condition of his criminal sentence. But even before he was arrested and all contact was prohibited by first DFS and then the Court, Father made minimal efforts to reach out to the children or the Guardians (notwithstanding no prohibition on contacting the guardians directly). Father testified that he only tried to contact the children through DFS, rather than communicating with the Guardians directly. What is more, after Father's arrest, his side of the family retreated from contact with the children. Therefore, based on the strong relationships the children have with their Guardians and each other and the nonexistent relationships the children have with Father and paternal relatives, this factor weighs strongly in favor of termination of parental rights.

4. The children's adjustment to their home, school, and community;

The children's lives have improved dramatically since coming to live with the Guardians nearly three years ago. Before, the children lived in a chaotic household, where they were homeschooled, isolated, and they raised concern for physical abuse of all the children and chronic sexual abuse of E1. In 2023, Mother separated from Father,

[28] *Id.*
[29] *Id*. at 14.

and he tried to juggle caring for the children while maintaining a freelance job. The children struggled to adjust to traditional schooling after being homeschooled for many years, and they received psychological and Christian counseling. Paternal Grandmother provided some help and eventually took E3 to her home because it was too difficult for Father to manage all the children in one location. But while Father described an idyllic situation of the children having neighborhood friends, family dinners, numerous outdoor activities, and close bonds, the abuse and trauma they endured undercut his whitewashed depiction. They were separated from Father because of his repugnant conduct toward E1 in particular. After E1's disclosure, while Mother was ill but still alive, she intentionally arranged for the children to be placed with their respective Guardians.

E1 and E2

E2 and E1 were placed with the M------s, who had known E1 through Ms. M------'s tutoring. The transition was at first difficult. E2 arrived underweight, and both girls had significant challenges, which led the M------s to enroll them in mental health therapy. E1 was very guarded and mistrustful. E2 thought she had been kidnapped and may have initially missed Father. E2 also displayed challenging behaviors including destruction of property, tantrums, and disrespect.

After nearly three years, however, the girls are well adjusted to their home and are treated like full members of the family. Over time, E1 became more trusting, and her behavior improved. She is thriving in her home-school program, and she participates in swimming and soccer. She is learning to drive and plans to go on a summer trip with Ms. M------ to Guatemala. E1 is an extraordinarily resilient child, and it is clear that, with the love and support she receives from the M------ family, she is beginning to heal.

E2, likewise, is thriving at home and academically in 2nd grade at --- ---- --------- ------. She has an active social life, and she participates in cheerleading, soccer, volleyball, bible club, and a school play. Miraculously, the M------s can keep up with all of their activities without fail and wish to be an adoptive resource for them.

M---- and J----

M---- and J---- had significant difficulty adjusting to the R--------s' home when they first arrived in August 2023. They were underweight, defiant, and disrespectful of adults. But with the benefit of patience, mental health therapy, and time, they have adapted to living with their grandparents as their primary caregivers. At first, M---- struggled with school, bullying, and anxiety. The R--------s have since engaged with his academic needs, and he has been discharged from speech therapy and been stepped down from an IEP to a 504 Plan for extra time on testing and preferential seating.[30] He is now excelling in school, where he won second place in a science contest, plays soccer, and is preparing for high school volleyball.

Similarly, J----'s behaviors were challenging for a long time. Mr. R--------, in particular, recognized that "old school" parenting would not work for a child who had suffered so much trauma, grief, and loss. As a result, the family is working together to support J----'s adjustment. J---- is now an excellent student, and he enjoys playing basketball year-round. He also has a 504 Plan in school, and accommodations that help him to be successful.[31] The R--------s pray together every day with the children, and they take them camping, fishing, and on other outings. Although they stay quite busy, it is clear to the Court that the R--------s have changed their lives to foster a loving environment for the boys.

E3

When E3 first came to the B-------s' home, he was "furniture." He didn't move, cry, talk, or interact. He is now fully integrated into the family and is making great progress. He attends preschool, enjoys time with his big brothers, and is considered a "little celebrity" in his community. In addition to family vacations together and plenty of time spent as a family, Mr. B------- coaches E3's little league team, and Ms. B------- volunteers

[30] Petitioner's Exhibit 5, at 7–8.
[31] *Id*. at 8.

for his school. Notably, E3 has lived the majority of his life with the B------- family and received enduring love, consistency, and a strong community in their care.

* * *

The children's collective adjustment to their Guardians' homes and communities is nothing short of remarkable compared with the chaos and abuse they experienced in Father's care and the maladaptive behaviors they displayed when they first arrived in the Guardians' care. Consequently, this factor weighs heavily in favor of termination of parental rights.

5. The mental and physical health of all individuals involved;

As underscored above, the children experienced profound loss and trauma prior to their placement with the Guardians. All are physically healthy and, fortunately, they are on a path to healing thanks not only to their newfound stability, but also to their professional mental health counselors. Likewise, the Guardians are all mentally and physically healthy, and the home studies identified no concerns with their ability to care for the children.

Although Father contended that the ages of the M------s and R--------s could be a concern for permanency, the Court sees no issue with them as long-term caregivers for three reasons. First, Father ultimately consented to their guardianships even though their ages were known factors at the time of those petitions. They have all managed to provide excellent day-to-day care for the children as guardians, and the care they will provide as adoptive parents will not be meaningfully different. Second, the M------s and R--------s submitted to physical examinations, after which medical professionals certified that they were capable of providing care for the children. The Court heard no evidence suggesting a reason to question the expertise of those providers. Third, while no one can ever know what the future holds for a person's life or health, these are exceptional caregivers, and there are no alternative permanency options for the children.

In contrast, although Father may be physically healthy, it is not clear that he is mentally healthy. Despite allegations of sexual abuse of at least one child and physical

abuse of all the children, Father has not taken accountability for his actions in fracturing his family. He is undergoing Christian counseling and receives spiritual guidance. Nevertheless, he denied being the cause of his family's separation. It is difficult to reconcile Father's claim that he receives adequate mental health treatment with his refusal to take responsibility for his role in rupturing his family unit. However, the Court finds this factor neutral because no evidence identified specific mental or physical health concerns and Father's lack of accountability is more appropriately considered under factor (6).

6. Past and present compliance by both parents with their rights and responsibilities to their child under §701 of this title;

The Guardians have cared for the children for the past three years without any financial or other support from Father. Even before he was barred from having direct contact with the children, Father admitted he did not contact them or provide any support for their caregivers. More significantly, Father has not complied with his responsibilities to his children. Although he completed the PPP (Positive Parenting Program) class,[32] an anger management course,[33] and a Christian counseling course,[34] he violated the most basic tenet of parenting—to not harm one's own child. A conviction for sexually abusing his oldest daughter demonstrates that he has not complied with his responsibilities as a parent. Father, however, characterizes his conviction for Unlawful Sexual Contact < 13 as a "profound legal crisis." The passage of time has not cured his devastating lack of accountability.

Even beyond the previous betrayal of his responsibility to his children, Father is now prohibited from having any contact with them unless modified by the Family Court. No petition for visitation is before the Court, yet Father's suggested roadmap for the children relies on therapeutic contact. This Court is certainly under no obligation to

[32] Father's Exhibit 1, Completion Certificate of PPP Parenting Modules on September 14, 2023.
[33] Father's Exhibit 2, The Anger Management Training Institute 16 Hour Anger Management and Counseling Workshop, April 13, 2024.
[34] Father's Exhibit 3, Certificate of Completion Kingdom Leadership, February 11, 2025.

permit such contact and sees no reason to do so given that Father has not begun to take responsibility for his actions or the trauma he inflicted on his children. Moreover, as a high-risk Tier III sex offender with a lifetime registration requirement, Father faces a rebuttable presumption against any future award of custody, residential placement, or unsupervised visitation.[35] He cannot yet overcome that presumption because he has not successfully completed an intensive counseling program designed specifically for sex offenders. Father is thus barred from contact based independently on his criminal sentence, two statutory presumptions he cannot yet rebut,[36] and the fact that a relationship with him would be detrimental to the children's best interests. In the absence of any foreseeable path to rebuilding healthy relationships, it is not clear how preventing adoption in order to preserve that possibility would serve the children's best interests. Consequently, this factor weighs in favor of terminating parental rights.

7. Evidence of domestic violence as provided in Chapter 7A of this title; and

Under 13 *Del. C.* § 706A(a), before determining the custody and residential arrangements of the children, the Court must consider all evidence of past or present acts of domestic violence, whether or not committed in the presence of the children. Based on his criminal conviction, Father is also a "perpetrator of domestic violence,"[37] and he has not completed the required program specifically designed for perpetrators of family violence.[38] As such, this factor weighs in favor of granting the TPR petition.

8. The criminal history of any party or any other resident of the household including whether the criminal history contains pleas of guilty or no contest or a conviction or a conviction of a criminal offense.

Father's singular conviction of Unlawful Sexual Contact with a Child under 13, based on his no-contest plea, is not only grounds for termination, but also salient as to

[35] *See* 13 *Del. C.* §§ 723A, 724A.
[36] *See* 13 *Del. C.* § 705A and 13 *Del. C.* § 724A
[37] *See* 13 *Del. C.* § 703A(b).
[38] *See* 13 *Del. C.* § 705A.

the best-interest analysis. Other than spiritual counseling and compliance with probation, Father has done very little to acknowledge, treat, or remediate the actions that led to his conviction, splintered his family's relationship, and inflicted lasting trauma on his children. Even in Father's Affidavit of Consent to Terminate Parental Rights, Father maintained his factual innocence regarding the allegations of unfitness, sexual abuse, and neglect. He further noted that he "entered [his] no contest plea to prioritize the stability of [his] household during [his] children's time of greatest vulnerability, choosing to protect their ecological health over [his] own legal vindication."[39] The underlying charges are extremely damaging to the children's best interests, safety, and well-being.

By contrast, none of the Guardians has any relevant criminal history. Consequently, this factor weighs heavily in favor of termination of parental rights.

Position of the Child Attorney

The Child Attorney representing E1, M----, and J---- supports the TPR Petition due to Father's criminal convictions and the best interest factors outlined above.

III. Conclusion

In considering the factors in 13 *Del. C.* § 722, "[t]he amount of weight given to one factor or combination of factors will be different in any given proceeding. It is quite possible that the weight of one factor will counterbalance the combined weight of all other factors and be outcome determinative in some situations."[40] Here, considering the evidence presented at trial, the position of the Child Attorney, the undisputed statutory grounds for termination (under 13 *Del. C.* § 1103(a)(1) as to E1 and § 1103(a)(4) as to the other children), and best-interest factors (1) (as to E1), (2), (3), (4), (6), (7), and (8), the Court finds clear and convincing evidence that it is in the children's best interests to terminate Father's parental rights. In particular, factors (2) and (8) are dispositive in this

[39] Consent to Terminate and Transfer Parental Rights, Supplemental Affidavit, May 20, 2026.
[40] *Fisher v. Fisher*, 691 A.2d 619, 623 (Del. 1997).

case. The children's clear and articulated wishes to be adopted by their Guardians swayed the Court more than any of the other factors. Moreover, Father's relationship with the children may never fully recover unless and until he acknowledges the conviction for Unlawful Sexual Abuse of his own child. His criminal conviction destroyed his family, resulted in lasting trauma to his children, and placed him on the sex offender registry for the rest of his life, making factor (8) a compelling justification for terminating parental rights.

Most significantly, while the Court acknowledges that terminating Father's parental rights will also sever the siblings' legal relationships with each other, it is clear that these children have an enduring bond with one another that will survive the transition. Although these children have experienced unimaginable, heart-wrenching challenges and losses in their lives, they all feel safe, loved, and secure with their respective guardians. Permanency comes in many forms. Here, permanency in the form of adoption is the most protective and least restrictive alternative. It is the Court's hope that these extraordinary children will continue to heal, dream, and experience happiness and joy. Termination of Father's parental rights legally frees them to be adopted by their equally remarkable Guardians.

Therefore, the Court **GRANTS** the Guardians' collective Petitions for Termination of Father's Parental Rights in E1, M----, J----, E2, and E3 T-----. With deep appreciation for their efforts, the Court discharges the Child Attorney, Jonathan Harting, Esq., and Father's Attorney, Megan Mahle, Esq.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

/ Eliza M. Hirst /

ELIZA M. HIRST, JUDGE

Date Written Order Issued: June 4, 2026
Date E-mailed/mailed: June 4, 2026