

July 29, 2025

**IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**

**DIVISION II**

In the Matter of the Marriage of:

FLAVIO FAUSTINO LEIJA,

Respondent,

and

ANGELA GARCIA-LEIJA,

Appellant.

No. 58824-2-II  
(consolidated with No. 59547-8-II)

UNPUBLISHED OPINION

GLASGOW, J.—Angela Garcia-Leija and Flavio Leija began marriage dissolution proceedings in 2019. Throughout these proceedings, Garcia-Leija failed to follow several court orders and repeatedly made allegations that Leija physically and sexually abused her and their children. The children denied these allegations and professionals involved in the case saw no basis for them. In July 2023, a court-appointed parenting coordinator restricted Garcia-Leija’s unsupervised contact with the minor children as permitted in the trial court’s order and subject to the court’s review. Before the trial court could evaluate the parenting coordinator’s restrictions, Garcia-Leija filed for a temporary domestic violence protection order against Leija on behalf of herself and the children. A different judge, unaware of the existing parenting restrictions on Garcia-Leija, granted the temporary protection order. Upon notification from Leija, the trial court judge for the dissolution proceedings quashed the temporary protection order pending a full hearing on

the issue. Before the hearing, Leija filed a motion for adequate cause to change the parenting plan and a motion to restrict abusive litigation from Garcia-Leija.

The court held a hearing and denied Garcia-Leija's petition for a domestic violence protection order because she did not introduce evidence of current violence or a threat of violence from Leija. Garcia-Leija did not respond to Leija's other motions. The trial court entered a temporary parenting plan incorporating the parenting coordinator's recommendations and restricted Garcia-Leija's future filings by mandating court approval of Garcia-Leija's new filings before requiring a response from Leija or a hearing. The court also entered an amended restraining order against Garcia-Leija.

Garcia-Leija appeals several of the trial court's orders, including the orders quashing the temporary domestic violence protection order, granting adequate cause to change the parenting plan, and restricting abusive litigation. Garcia-Leija also argues that the trial court was biased against her.

We hold that Garcia-Leija's appeal of the trial court's order quashing the temporary domestic violence protection order is not properly before us and is moot. We conclude that Garcia-Leija waived her arguments regarding the order finding adequate cause to change the parenting plan and the order restricting abusive litigation by failing to respond or object to Leija's motions at the trial court. And Garcia-Leija does not provide specific facts sufficient to demonstrate that the trial court was biased against her. Though Garcia-Leija seems to raise several other issues in this appeal, she fails to provide sufficient legal arguments and citations to the record for us to adequately assess her arguments. Accordingly, we affirm.

## FACTS<sup>1</sup>

### I. BACKGROUND

#### A. Marriage Dissolution, Trial, and Posttrial Hearings

Garcia-Leija and Leija have been embroiled in contentious marriage dissolution proceedings since 2019. At the time of the events underlying this appeal, the parties had two adult children and two minor children.

In 2021, the trial court held a five-day dissolution trial. The trial court also held more than thirty hearings before and after the trial. The court held Garcia-Leija in contempt multiple times throughout the proceedings for failing to follow court orders and, one on occasion, leaving the courtroom while screaming. Garcia-Leija also made several allegations that Leija physically abused her and sexually and physically abused the children, though the adult children denied these allegations. And after involvement of a Guardian ad Litem, a counselor who worked with the family, and other professionals, these allegations were repeatedly found to be baseless.

In January 2022, the trial court entered a final parenting plan for Leija and Garcia-Leija. The trial court included findings that Garcia-Leija used “conflict in a way that may cause serious damage to the psychological development” of the minor children. Clerk’s Papers (CP) at 436 (*Leija* II). The parenting plan required supervision for all of Garcia-Leija’s parenting time and outlined a scheme where Garcia-Leija could gain more parenting time upon recommendation from a court-appointed parenting coordinator. The parenting plan also required Garcia-Leija’s phone calls with

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<sup>1</sup> This is a consolidated appeal of case number 58824-2-II and case number 59547-8-II. We also granted a motion to transfer the record from case number 57487-0-II to this consolidated case. Because there are several sets of records and briefing associated with this case, we include the following case labels for citations: case number 57487-0-II (*Leija* I), case number 58824-2-II (*Leija* II), and case number 59547-8-II (*Leija* III).

the children to be recorded in part as a deterrent to help prevent her from discussing allegations of abuse against the father with the children.

In June 2022, the parenting coordinator for the parties recommended that Garcia-Leija resume unsupervised parenting time with the children and the trial court entered an amended final parenting plan reflecting this change.

In March 2023, the trial court held a hearing in part because Garcia-Leija filed a professional complaint against the parenting coordinator without first meeting with him, which violated an order from the court. Despite the violation, at the end of this hearing, the trial court granted Garcia-Leija's request for more parenting time. But the trial court expressed concern about the lack of a parenting coordinator given several prior occasions where Garcia-Leija violated court orders. The trial court stated,

[W]hat you need to do is like be super extra careful . . . I've got this huge bias on this side about your behavior when I make a ruling. So, make sure you realize . . . my lens has been so skewed over the duration of this case. And I've tried really hard, just like I'm doing today to provide you this parenting time. . . . But then, you continue to do little things, like fire your parent coordinator.

Suppl. Verbatim Rep. of Proc. (VRP) at 97-98 (*Leija I*).

In May 2023, the trial court appointed a new parenting coordinator. The order appointing the parenting coordinator stated that she could make decisions to avoid parental conflict in "temporary variation from the existing parenting plan." CP at 482 (*Leija II*). Additionally, the order stated that the parenting coordinator's "decisions are effective when made and will continue in effect unless modified or set aside by a court of competent jurisdiction." *Id.*

On July 31, 2023, the parenting coordinator emailed the parties and their attorneys informing them that she was concerned about the minor children's behavior since they resumed

unsupervised visits with Garcia-Leija. For example, the children's relationship with their therapist "deteriorated completely." CP at 360 (*Leija II*). One of the children was verbally aggressive with the therapist, stating that she did not trust anyone and demanded to know the names of the judge and the parenting coordinator for her parents' legal proceedings. The same child also became verbally and physically aggressive with other members of her family, particularly after Leija took away an unauthorized phone that Garcia-Leija had given the minor children in violation of the parenting plan. In her email, the parenting coordinator listed "Binding Recommendations" for the parties, which included resuming professional supervision for the minor children's visits with Garcia-Leija and suspending overnight visits until Garcia-Leija participated in sanctioned parental coaching. CP at 556 (*Leija II*).

On August 14, Garcia-Leija filed a motion with the trial court objecting to the parenting coordinator's recommendations. The trial court set a hearing for Garcia-Leija's motion on September 6.

B. Domestic Violence Protection Order

In the meantime, on August 28, 2023, Garcia-Leija filed a pro se petition for a domestic violence protection order against Leija. Garcia-Leija requested protection for herself, her two minor children, and both of her adult children as "vulnerable adults." Garcia-Leija requested a temporary order immediately protecting her and the children without prior notice to Leija. Garcia-Leija did not fully disclose in her petition the limitations that had been imposed on her residential time and visitation with her minor children. She did not state that her visits had to be supervised at that time.

The same day, a different judge granted Garcia-Leija's temporary domestic violence protection order and scheduled a hearing for September 11. The temporary domestic violence protection order included Garcia-Leija and her two minor children, but not the adult children. It stated that Leija could not harm or contact the protected parties, and it granted Garcia-Leija temporary care and custody of the minor children. The temporary domestic violence protection order also stated that it was "effective until the end of the hearing listed above." CP at 38 (boldface omitted) (*Leija II*). When the judge granted the order, she was seemingly not aware of the existing limitations on Garcia-Leija's visitation with her minor children or her upcoming hearing with the trial court.

Leija's counsel learned of the domestic violence protection order and emailed the trial court, asking for the order to be quashed because Garcia-Leija could not have custody of the children under the trial court's orders in the dissolution case. The judge who granted the order conferred with the trial court judge in the dissolution matter. On August 31, the trial court judge in the dissolution entered an order quashing the temporary domestic violence protection order.

At a hearing on September 11, a commissioner scheduled the protection order hearing for September 13 with the dissolution trial court judge, who already had a hearing on the parenting coordinator's recommendations that day. Garcia-Leija objected to the matter being heard by the trial court judge in the dissolution.

C. September 13 Hearing

On September 13, the trial court judge for the dissolution acknowledged that it always intended that the parenting coordinator could make the kinds of changes and restrictions that Garcia-Leija challenged. After discussing the ways that Garcia-Leija's petition for the domestic

violence protection order was inconsistent with the orders in the dissolution case, the trial court adopted all of the parenting coordinator's recommendations and set a hearing date for October 11 about changing the parenting plan. The trial court told Garcia-Leija that she could present evidence regarding the protection order during that hearing.

After the September 13 hearing, the trial court signed an order "[t]erminating" Garcia-Leija's protection order. CP at 180 (*Leija II*). However, the order stated that the matter had been terminated on August 31, the day the trial court quashed the temporary protection order, and would "[b]e [h]eard [a]gain" on October 11. *Id.*

Garcia-Leija filed a motion to reinstate the temporary protection order until the October 11 hearing, which the trial court denied. Leija filed a motion for adequate cause to modify the parenting plan and a motion to restrict Garcia-Leija's abusive litigation.

D. October 11 Hearing

At the hearing on October 11, the trial court began by stating it would hear "whatever evidence that [Garcia-Leija] wanted to present" about the protection order. VRP at 61 (*Leija II*). Garcia-Leija gave an opening statement about why she required a protection order. The trial court clarified that it had already heard and ruled on Garcia-Leija's domestic violence allegations in prior pleadings and hearings, so to receive a protection order she would need to provide "current and new" information. VRP at 86 (*Leija II*). The trial court also explained that a domestic violence protection order requires "a showing of fear of violence, because violence . . . has occurred upon you or a threat of violence has occurred upon you." VRP at 88-89 (*Leija II*).

Garcia-Leija called her therapist to testify at this hearing. The therapist testified that Garcia-Leija "feels she's at extreme risk because she has an extreme case of post traumatic stress

disorder from prior threats or relationship issues when they were married and they have been triggered by what has happened since.” VRP at 98 (*Leija II*). However, when the trial court asked the therapist if Garcia-Leija was currently at extreme risk, the therapist said no. The therapist explained that Garcia-Leija’s “extreme risk is based on her memories and triggers of prior risks.” VRP at 100 (*Leija II*). But when the trial court again asked the therapist if she had any “knowledge of any -- any behavior that’s occurred against [Garcia-Leija] that has caused extreme risk to her health and safety of body, besides what’s mentally occurring with her,” the therapist replied, “[c]urrently, no.” *Id.* The trial court also accepted a letter from Garcia-Leija’s physical therapist as evidence over Leija’s counsel’s objection. The trial court explained that it accepted the letter because it was trying “to give as much leeway as I can so that [Garcia-Leija] feels heard.” VRP at 103 (*Leija II*). The trial court ultimately concluded that Garcia-Leija had not met her burden to demonstrate a need for a domestic violence protection order and denied her petition.

The trial court postponed its full hearing on Leija’s motion for adequate cause to change the parenting plan until Garcia-Leija could review the paperwork and respond—though Garcia-Leija caused this delay by improperly refusing service. The trial court also ordered that Garcia-Leija could not have any contact with her children until further court order. The trial court told Garcia-Leija to file her response to Leija’s motions by October 30.

E. November 8 Hearing

Garcia-Leija did not file any response to Leija’s motion for adequate cause to change the parenting plan or motion to restrict abusive litigation before the November 8 hearing. Instead, at the hearing, Garcia-Leija asked to read a letter to the court, and Leija’s counsel objected. The trial court offered to let Garcia-Leija file a copy of the letter with the court and set a future hearing date



to address its contents, explaining that Leija's counsel needed time to read and prepare potential responses to the letter.

Garcia-Leija then told the trial court,

[T]here's no reason for me to have confidence in Your Honor's and this Court's ability to abide by laws and act in the best interest of children.

I am removing myself from this case. I have no faith in the Court and I have no faith that it will ever restore my parenting rights. So, I'm gonna give up. You and your team have won.

VRP at 14 (*Leija* III). Garcia-Leija went on to make several arguments and allegations that Leija and the trial court had violated the law. The trial court interrupted Garcia-Leija to deny one of her comments, and Garcia-Leija left the hearing.

The trial court then granted Leija's motion to restrict abusive litigation. The trial court's order prohibited Garcia-Leija from filing anything without pre-filing approval from the trial court. Under the order, the trial court judge would review Garcia-Leija's pleadings and sign a show cause order before requiring a response from Leija or a hearing.

The trial court concluded that Leija had demonstrated adequate cause to change the final parenting plan. The trial court signed a temporary plan incorporating the parenting coordinator's recommendations.

Per Leija's request, the trial court also amended an existing restraining order against Garcia-Leija. The restraining order prohibited Garcia-Leija from entering the home, workplace, or school of Leija and the children outside of scheduled parenting time. The restraining order also prohibited Garcia-Leija from contacting the children's school or extracurricular activities and required a third party for supervised visits.

In her notices of appeal, Garcia-Leija designated several of the trial courts orders: (1) the order quashing the temporary domestic violence protection order against Leija, (2) the order terminating the domestic violence protection order until a hearing, (3) the order restricting abusive litigation, (4) the order granting Leija's motion to find adequate cause to change the parenting plan, (5) the temporary parenting plan, and (6) the restraining order against Garcia-Leija.

### ANALYSIS

Garcia-Leija broadly asks us to reverse all of the trial court's orders in this case going back to 2020. Generally, we only review trial court decisions or parts of decisions that are designated in the appellant's notices of appeal. RAP 2.4(a). However, RAP 2.4(b) provides that appellate courts "will review a trial court order or ruling not designated in the notice, including an appealable order, if (1) the order or ruling prejudicially affects the decision designated in the notice, and (2) the order is entered, or the ruling is made, before the appellate court accepts review." Garcia-Leija has not explained how the orders not designated in her notices prejudicially affect the designated orders, so we decline to address any undesignated orders in this appeal.

Additionally, appellants must provide "argument in support of the issues presented for review, together with citations to legal authority and references to relevant parts of the record." RAP 10.3(a)(6). This court "need not consider arguments that are unsupported by pertinent authority, references to the record, or meaningful analysis." *Cook v. Brateng*, 158 Wn. App. 777, 794, 262 P.3d 1228 (2010). Though we acknowledge the challenges associated with self-representation, we hold pro se litigants to the same standards as attorneys. *Winter v. Dep't of Soc. & Health Servs.*, 12 Wn. App. 2d 815, 844, 460 P.3d 667 (2020).

Garcia-Leija makes a number of factual assertions in her briefs, including that Leija and his attorney conspired with Clark County officials, law enforcement, and the trial court judge. Many of Garcia-Leija's assertions do not include citations to specific sections of the record. We decline to consider Garcia-Leija's unsupported factual assertions on appeal. *See* RAP 10.3(a)(6). Additionally, Garcia-Leija often makes assertions without record citations, instead stating that evidence is available upon request under RAP 9.11, the rule governing consideration of additional evidence on appeal. However, Garcia-Leija fails to address or satisfy the factors in RAP 9.11(a) that would permit this court to consider additional evidence outside of the record. Thus, to the extent Garcia-Leija asks us to consider evidence outside the record, we deny that request.

#### I. TEMPORARY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTION ORDER

Garcia-Leija appeals the trial court's orders quashing and terminating her temporary domestic violence protection order against Leija until a hearing. Garcia-Leija asks this court to reinstate the temporary domestic violence protection order.

Because these orders were not final judgments, they are not properly before us on appeal. RAP 2.2(a)(1). Moreover, by its plain terms, the temporary domestic violence protection order would have expired upon the hearing on September 13, regardless of whether the trial court entered the order quashing it on August 31. Appellate courts generally consider appeals of expired domestic violence protection orders moot. *See, e.g., Blackmon v. Blackmon*, 155 Wn. App. 715, 717, 230 P.3d 233 (2010). Garcia-Leija has not explained how this issue would satisfy an exception to the mootness doctrine. Thus, mootness is an independent reason for us to decline to reach this issue.

## II. ORDER RESTRICTING ABUSIVE LITIGATION

Garcia-Leija argues that the trial court's order restricting abusive litigation prevented her from having fair access to the law. Garcia-Leija also argues that the order was unsupported by sufficient evidence. Leija contends that Garcia-Leija waived any challenge to the trial court's order restricting abusive litigation because she did not file a response to Leija's motion.

This court "may refuse to review any claim of error that was not raised in the trial court." RAP 2.5(a). An exception is made if the error is a "manifest error affecting a constitutional right." RAP 2.5(a)(3).

Here, Garcia-Leija did not file a response to Leija's motion to impose pre-filing restrictions on her even though the trial court delayed hearing Leija's motion to give Garcia-Leija more time to respond. And in her comments to the trial court at the November 8 hearing, Garcia-Leija did not specifically address or object to the motion. To the extent that Garcia-Leija raises any constitutional concerns regarding the order restricting abusive litigation, she fails to explain which rights were violated and why the order constituted manifest error. Thus, this issue is waived and we decline to consider it.

## III. ORDER ON ADEQUATE CAUSE AND TEMPORARY PARENTING PLAN

Garcia-Leija designates both the trial court's order finding adequate cause to change the final parenting plan and the November 8 temporary parenting plan in her notices of appeal. In her briefing, she does not specify which parts of these orders she is appealing. Broadly, Garcia-Leija states that the trial court "signed an order removing all Ms. Garcia-Leija's parenting rights under Mr. Leija's unsubstantiated allegations that harm had come to the children due to Ms. Garcia-Leija." Am. Br. of Appellant at 24-25 (*Leija II*).

We acknowledge that Garcia-Leija is frustrated with the conditions of the parenting plan, particularly the trial court's limitation of her time with her minor children. However, beyond her claims of judicial bias that are addressed below, Garcia-Leija does not sufficiently outline how she believes the trial court erred when entering the temporary parenting plan or the order showing adequate cause to change the final parenting plan. To the extent Garcia-Leija claims that the facts the trial court relied on that were detrimental to her were not true, she does not provide adequate citations to the record allowing us to review these claims. *See* RAP 10.3(a)(6).

Additionally, Garcia-Leija did not file a response to Leija's motion for adequate cause to change the final parenting plan below, and she has not specifically identified how the order constituted a manifest constitutional error. Thus, she has waived this issue by failing to articulate an objection below.

#### IV. RESTRAINING ORDER

Finally, Garcia-Leija designates the November 8, 2023, restraining order against her in her notices of appeal. In her briefing, she argues that this restraining order is unsubstantiated. However, Garcia-Leija does not identify what parts of the order are unsubstantiated or provide citations to the record explaining her claim. We thus do not address this issue on appeal. *See* RAP 10.3(a)(6).

#### V. ALLEGATIONS OF JUDICIAL BIAS

Garcia-Leija argues that the trial court judge was biased against her and should have recused herself. Garcia-Leija argues that the trial court violated the appearance of fairness when the trial court judge stated at a hearing that she had a “skewed lens” and was “biased” against Garcia-Leija. Am. Br. of Appellant at 5-6 (*Leija II*) (quoting record). Garcia-Leija also contends

that the trial court exhibited bias and prejudice by suppressing evidence of Leija's alleged domestic violence and consistently ruling against Garcia-Leija.

We generally review claims of judicial bias under the appearance of fairness doctrine. *See, e.g., State v. Solis-Diaz*, 187 Wn.2d 535, 540, 387 P.3d 703 (2017). Under “the appearance of fairness doctrine, a judicial proceeding is valid if a reasonably prudent, disinterested observer would conclude that the parties received a fair, impartial, and neutral hearing.” *Id.* “The test for determining whether the judge’s impartiality might reasonably be questioned is an objective test that assumes a reasonable observer knows and understands all the relevant facts.” *Id.* “A party asserting a violation of the doctrine must produce sufficient evidence demonstrating bias, such as personal or pecuniary interest on the part of the decision maker; mere speculation is not enough.” *In re Pers. Restraint of Haynes*, 100 Wn. App. 366, 377 n.23, 996 P.2d 637 (2000). A judicial ruling “almost never constitute[s] a valid showing of bias.” *In re Pers. Restraint of Davis*, 152 Wn.2d 647, 692, 101 P.3d 1 (2004).

Garcia-Leija does not provide specific facts sufficient to support her contention that the trial court was biased.<sup>2</sup> Garcia-Leija cites the trial court judge’s comments that she had a “huge bias” and her lens had been “skewed” against Garcia-Leija over the course of the proceedings. Suppl. VRP at 97-98 (*Leija I*). However, when read in context, these statements do not violate the appearance of fairness doctrine. The trial court made these comments while *granting* Garcia-Leija’s request for more parenting time, even after Garcia-Leija violated the terms of the parenting plan by filing a professional complaint against the parenting coordinator. Repeatedly throughout

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<sup>2</sup> Garcia-Leija also argues judicial conduct violations, but this court is not authorized to evaluate such claims. *See In re Matter of Keenan*, 199 Wn.2d 87, 93-94, 502 P.3d 1271 (2022).

these proceedings, the trial court expressed that it wanted Garcia-Leija's children to be able to see their mother. But the trial court became increasingly frustrated and skeptical because Garcia-Leija continued to violate court orders and put the children's well-being at risk. While the trial court could have expressed its sentiments in different terms, an objective observer would not question the fairness of the proceedings simply because the trial court warned Garcia-Leija that her actions would be taken in the context of her prior behavior. Garcia-Leija has not shown that the trial court judge had a personal or pecuniary interest in her case. And the number of judicial rulings against Garcia-Leija throughout the proceedings is not sufficient evidence of bias. *See Davis*, 152 Wn.2d at 692. Thus, we conclude that Garcia-Leija has not shown evidence of actual bias or the appearance of partiality.

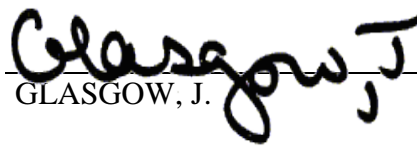
## VI. OTHER ISSUES

Garcia-Leija argues that the trial court's alleged bias violated several of her constitutional rights. Broadly, she contends that the trial court "colluded with Clark County officials" to violate her rights by "unlawful severing of parenting rights, sabotaging Mother's family wealth management work, disproportionately distributing rights to property, preventing rights to fair access to the law, ignoring rights to be let alone from undue burdens of the government, preventing access to rights to safety, protection, life, liberty, happiness," and the "rights of a parent to raise a child." Br. of Appellant at 9 (*Leija III*). However, Garcia-Leija fails to specify which of the trial courts actions violated her rights and how those rights were violated. We therefore decline to consider these issues further.


CONCLUSION

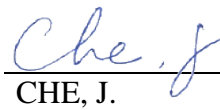
We affirm.

A majority of the panel having determined that this opinion will not be printed in the Washington Appellate Reports, but will be filed for public record in accordance with RCW 2.06.040, it is so ordered.

  
GLASGOW, J.

We concur:

  
VELJA, J.

  
CHE, J.