



## News Release

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# **Clerk of Courts Greg Hartmann Continues To Allow Prompt Public Records Access**

*Website Restrictions Will Not Hamper Public's Ability To Inspect Records*

CINCINNATI --- Hamilton County Clerk of Courts Greg Hartmann today reminded members of the public that they can visit his office in person to access public records that were previously available from his website. Working from a protocol officially instituted today, Hartmann's staff will allow access to the records after they remove Social Security numbers from each document requested.

"My obligation is to follow the law, protect citizen privacy, and prevent identity theft while still providing the best service possible given the circumstances," said Hartmann. "I take that obligation seriously."

Document Request forms are available at all Clerk of Courts locations and on the Clerk's website, [www.courtclerk.org](http://www.courtclerk.org). Copies of public records will be provided at \$0.10 per page. Postage must be prepaid if the fulfilled request is to be mailed. The docket is available online. There are also docket terminals available at the Courthouse and the Justice Center to help citizens focus their public records requests. The Clerk's paper rooms are no longer open to the public. Access to court documents via the public terminals in the Clerk's office is also temporarily suspended.

Hartmann has made protecting personal information a top priority since taking office. In 2004, he convened a broad-based, bi-partisan task force to recommend safeguards to protect personal information while still maintaining access to public records.

Since then, Hartmann has taken many proactive steps to protect citizen privacy. For example, he blocked public Internet access to court documents that routinely contained Social Security numbers, most domestic relations records, and all documents known by the Clerk's office to contain sensitive information such as child custody records, bank account numbers, and child victims' names.

MORE . . .



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After a recent internal audit showed that there was not a 100% guarantee Social Security numbers could be fully protected through the website, Hartmann suspended public Internet access to court documents.

In addition to the suspension of public Internet access to court records and ongoing redaction of Social Security numbers, Hartmann is also working with the Hamilton County Courts to determine and implement best practices that limit the inclusion of sensitive information in court records before they are filed and become public records.

“Ohioans expect government offices to honor the right to privacy and protect them from potential identity thieves. Redacting Social Security numbers from public records is a step in the right direction.” Hartmann concluded.