

VERMONT SUPERIOR COURT  
Washington Unit  
65 State Street  
Montpelier VT 05602  
802-828-2091  
www.vermontjudiciary.org



CIVIL DIVISION  
Case No. 23-CV-04485

**Granite City Investors, LLC v. Ashley Perrotte et al**  
**ENTRY REGARDING MOTION**

Title: Motion to Seal (Motion: 1)  
Filer: Francine Belville  
Filed Date: August 29, 2024

Defendant Belville has filed a motion seeking to seal this action under V.R.P.A.C.R. 9. She asserts her belief that this eviction action might later be viewed and considered against her by potential future landlords. Plaintiff opposes the request.

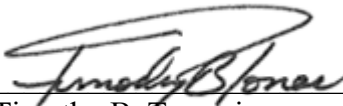
While the Court appreciates the potential concerns cited by Defendant, they do not warrant granting the extraordinary request. First, Vermont's Courts and its cases are typically open and transparent to public view. That ensures public scrutiny and oversight over most judicial proceedings. Second, this case does not fall into the narrow category of cases that are statutorily exempt from public view, such as juvenile matters. Third, where circumstances warrant, individual documents are sometimes sealed in other types of cases. Defendant, however, seeks to seal this entire case.

Finally, any request to seal faces a high bar. The Court must find that the request is supported by "good cause and exceptional circumstances." *Id.* Those terms are further reinforced and defined by the strong constitutional right of access to court records set out in cases such as *State v. Densmore*, 160 Vt. 131, 133–35 (1993). *See also Press-Enterprise Co. v. Super. Ct. of Cal.*, 478 U.S. 1, 13–14 (1986) (sealing must be "essential to preserve higher values and ... narrowly tailored to serve that interest").

Defendant's proffered fears of possible future uses of this proceeding fail to reach that high bar and, if accepted, would result in an order to seal in a great many eviction cases. The standards set out in Rule 9 do not support such a result.

The motion is denied.

Electronically signed on Monday, September 30, 2024, per V.R.E.F. 9(d).

  
Timothy B. Tomasi  
Superior Court Judge