

*This opinion is nonprecedential except as provided by
Minn. R. Civ. App. P. 136.01, subd. 1(c).*

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN COURT OF APPEALS
A26-0222**

Kaylee Anne Vartanian OBO Elena Jo Vartanian-Dixon,
Respondent,

vs.

Hillary Anne Laska,
Appellant

**Filed August 10, 2026
Affirmed
Larson, Judge**

Olmsted County District Court
File No. 55-CV-25-5245

Kaylee Anne Vartanian, Byron, Minnesota (self-represented respondent)

Hillary Anne Laska, Byron, Minnesota (self-represented appellant)

Considered and decided by Harris, Presiding Judge; Frisch, Chief Judge; and
Larson, Judge.

NONPRECEDENTIAL OPINION

LARSON, Judge

Self-represented appellant Hillary Anne Laska challenges the district court's decision to grant respondent Kaylee Anne Vartanian's petition for a harassment restraining order (HRO) for herself and her minor child. We affirm.

FACTS

Laska and Vartanian are neighbors who share a fence. In July 2025, Vartanian petitioned the district court for an HRO to protect herself and her minor child from Laska. Vartanian alleged that Laska repeatedly “followed, monitored, or pursued” Vartanian and her minor child, made “uninvited visits” along the property line, and “made harassing phone calls or sent harassing text messages.” Vartanian also alleged that Laska placed cameras on her property that recorded Vartanian and her family while in their own backyard. Vartanian stated that Laska’s conduct “frightened” her and affected her family’s “safety, security[,] or privacy.”

A hearing was held before a referee. On October 28, 2025, the referee issued an HRO in Vartanian’s favor, listing Vartanian and her minor child as protected persons.¹ The next day, the sheriff’s office served Laska with notice of the filing and the order granting the HRO. On November 4, 2025, Laska filed a request for review, alleging the referee misapplied the law and “improperly categorized lawful, police-directed documentation” as harassment. Laska also asked the district court to dissolve the HRO due to an “improved relationship” between the parties with “[g]ood-faith efforts and peaceful conduct.” She further claimed that the referee improperly included the minor child as a protected person in the HRO.

After additional motion practice, the district court scheduled a hearing for December 29, 2025. At that hearing, the district court verbally denied Laska’s requests. More motion

¹ Under Minn. Stat. § 609.748, subd. 5(b)(3) (2024), “When a referee presides at the hearing on the petition, the [HRO] becomes effective upon the referee’s signature.”

practice ensued and, ultimately, the district court filed a written order to memorialize its December 29, 2025 decision.

Laska appeals.

DECISION

Laska appeals from the district court’s decision to approve the issuance of the HRO. We review the district court’s decision for an abuse of discretion. *See Borth v. Borth*, 970 N.W.2d 699, 701 (Minn. App. 2022). “A district court abuses its discretion if it makes findings of fact that are not supported by the record, misapplies the law, or resolves the matter in a manner that is contrary to logic and the facts on record.” *Id.* (quotation omitted). We give “due regard” to credibility determinations and will not disturb factual findings unless they are clearly erroneous. *Peterson v. Johnson*, 755 N.W.2d 758, 761 (Minn. App. 2008); *see also* Minn. R. Civ. P. 52.01.

An HRO may be issued if “there are reasonable grounds to believe that the respondent has engaged in harassment.” Minn. Stat. § 609.748, subd. 5(b)(3). In the context of this case, “harassment” means “repeated incidents of intrusive or unwanted acts, words, or gestures that have a substantial adverse effect or are intended to have a substantial adverse effect on the safety, security, or privacy of another, regardless of the relationship between the actor and the intended target.” Minn. Stat. § 609.748, subd. 1(a)(1) (2024); *see also Harris ex rel. Banks v. Gellerman*, 954 N.W.2d 604, 610 (Minn. App. 2021) (holding that “harassment requires multiple incidents of adverse and unwanted contact” (emphasis omitted)). “Harassment” requires “both objectively unreasonable conduct or intent” from the harasser and “an objectively reasonable belief” from the harassed person.

Dunham v. Roer, 708 N.W.2d 552, 567 (Minn. App. 2006), *rev. denied* (Minn. Mar. 28, 2006). An HRO decision must be based “on testimony and documents properly admitted.” *Kush v. Mathison*, 683 N.W.2d 841, 844 (Minn. App. 2004), *rev. denied* (Minn. Sept. 29, 2004). From her brief, we discern that Laska raises two arguments, which we address in turn.²

First, Laska argues that the district court abused its discretion when it approved the HRO because the referee made inadequate findings. The HRO statute creates no requirement regarding the level of specificity required for the findings of fact, *see* Minn. Stat. § 609.748, subd. 5 (2024), but there must be sufficient findings to allow for meaningful appellate review, *see* Minn. R. Civ. P. 52.01.³

Generally, Laska criticizes the referee’s issuance of the HRO on the basis that it does not identify dates, incidents, or exhibit numbers to support the findings. But the referee listed five circumstances that constituted harassment toward Vartanian and her minor child. And the exhibits submitted into the record support the referee’s findings that these incidents occurred.

² To the extent Laska raises other arguments, we decline to reach them on the basis that they are inadequately briefed. *See State, Dep’t of Lab. & Indus. v. Wintz Parcel Drivers, Inc.*, 558 N.W.2d 480, 480 (Minn. 1997) (declining to address an inadequately briefed question).

³ To the extent Laska challenges the district court’s decision to deny her motion for amended findings on the basis that it failed to consider new evidence, Laska did not file a motion to reopen the record and, therefore, the new evidence was not properly before the district court. *See Zander v. Zander*, 720 N.W.2d 360, 364 (Minn. App. 2006) (“A motion to amend findings must be based on the files, exhibits, and minutes of the court, not on evidence that is not a part of the record.”), *rev. denied* (Minn. Nov. 14, 2006).

More specifically, Laska contends there were inadequate findings regarding her intent. For support, Laska cites *Peterson*, 755 N.W.2d at 761. But *Peterson* is distinguishable. *Peterson* involved a record that was “devoid of evidence” supporting an objectively reasonable belief that Peterson had engaged in harassing conduct. *Id.* at 766. Unlike *Peterson*, here there is ample evidence supporting the finding that Laska’s conduct was “intimidating and interfere[d] with [Vartanian’s] and her family’s sense of security and safety in their own backyard.” Notably, the record supports the explicit findings that Laska placed security cameras on her property to monitor Vartanian and her family in their own backyard despite “other home-security options that would not substantially interfere with [Vartanian’s] sense of security or privacy.” And the referee explicitly found Laska’s testimony regarding the reason she installed the security cameras not credible. On this record, there are sufficient findings to enable appellate review.

Second, Laska argues that the district court improperly approved the referee’s decision to include the minor child in the HRO. Laska claims the findings supporting an HRO must be “tethered to the record” and that the record does not contain “child-specific conduct” to support the minor child’s inclusion in the HRO. We are not persuaded.

Our persuasive, nonprecedential opinion in *Grittner v. Buhr* is instructive on this point. No. A19-1991, 2020 WL 5359394, at *1 (Minn. App. Sept. 8, 2020); *see also* Minn. R. Civ. App. P. 136.01, subd. 1(c). In *Grittner*, we affirmed a district court’s decision to grant an HRO for an entire family. *Id.* at *4. We observed that the alleged conduct was targeted at the entire household, not just the adults, and therefore concluded the record was sufficient to sustain an HRO that included the children. *Id.* This case, like *Grittner*,

involves conduct that targeted the entire family. In particular, the district court relied on the security-camera placement to watch the backyard where Vartanian's minor child played to support its decision. Thus, we discern no abuse of discretion in the district court's decision to include the minor child as a protected person in the HRO.

For these reasons, we conclude the district court did not abuse its discretion.

Affirmed.