

NON-PRECEDENTIAL DECISION - SEE SUPERIOR COURT O.P. 65.37

APRIL HIGGINS	:	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF
	:	PENNSYLVANIA
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
	:	
ZACHARY HIGGINS	:	
	:	
Appellant	:	No. 1416 MDA 2025

Appeal from the Order Entered August 7, 2025
In the Court of Common Pleas of Luzerne County Civil Division at No(s):
202508024

BEFORE: SULLIVAN, J., LANE, J., and STEVENS, P.J.E.*

JUDGMENT ORDER BY SULLIVAN, J.: **FILED: SEPTEMBER 4, 2026**

Zachary Higgins ("Higgins") appeals *pro se* from the order granting a protection from abuse order ("PFA") against him on behalf of April Higgins ("Mrs. Higgins"). We dismiss this appeal and strike the case from the argument list.

From the available record, we discern the trial court entered a three-year PFA order in this case and ordered Higgins to relinquish a weapon.

As an initial matter, we must consider whether the defects in Higgins's "brief" require dismissal of the appeal. Appellate briefs must conform materially to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Rules of Appellate Procedure ("Pa.R.A.P."), and this Court may dismiss an appeal if the defects in the brief are substantial. ***See Commonwealth v. Tchirkow***, 160 A.3d

* Former Justice specially assigned to the Superior Court.

798, 804 (Pa. Super. 2017). “Although this Court is willing to construe liberally materials filed by a *pro se* litigant, a *pro se* appellant enjoys no special benefit. Accordingly, *pro se* litigants must comply with the procedural rules set forth in the Pennsylvania Rules of the Court.” ***Id.*** (citation omitted). It is an appellant’s duty to present arguments that are sufficiently developed for our review. ***See Commonwealth v. Westlake***, 295 A.3d 1281, 1286 n.8 (Pa. Super. 2023). An appellate brief must support its claims with pertinent discussion, references to the record, and citations to legal authorities. ***See Commonwealth v. Hardy***, 918 A.2d 766, 771 (Pa. Super. 2007). “This Court will not act as counsel and will not develop arguments on behalf of an appellant.” ***Id.*** If a deficient brief hinders this Court’s ability to address any issue on review, the issue will be regarded as waived. ***See Commonwealth v. Gould***, 912 A.2d 869, 873 (Pa. Super. 2006) (citation omitted) (holding an appellant’s failure to support his claim with factual background and citations to the record represented “serious deviations from the briefing requirements of the Rules of Appellate Procedure,” waiving review of the claim).

Higgins’s brief fails to comply with any of the Pennsylvania Rules of Appellate Procedure. ***See*** Pa.R.A.P. 2111. It does not contain: a statement of jurisdiction (***see*** Pa.R.A.P. 2114), a statement of order or other determination in question (***see*** Pa.R.A.P. 2115), a statement of both the scope of review and the standard of review (***see*** Pa.R.A.P. 2111(a)(3)), a statement of the questions involved (***see*** Pa.R.A.P. 2116), a statement of the case (***see***

Pa.R.A.P. 2117), a summary of argument (**see** Pa.R.A.P. 2118), or an argument (**see** Pa.R.A.P. 2119).

Higgins's "brief" consists of an untethered discussion of facts that may be related to the hearing that led to the issuance of the PFA. **See** Higgins's Brief at 1-2 (unnumbered). It is devoid of both citations to the record and to any legal authority. **See id.** In the main, Higgins's "argument" consists of assertions, *inter alia*, about property he owned with Mrs. Higgins, a laptop, an assertion Mrs. Higgins "used her connections to a local constable" to post a notice for him to quit their property, his accidental striking of Mrs. Higgins, a broken cell phone, his loss of belongings and job prospects, and her alleged use of the chief of police and fire company personnel to harass him. **See id.**

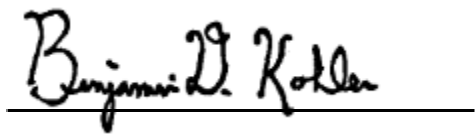
Higgins chose to proceed *pro se*. It is not the responsibility of the trial court, court staff, or opposing counsel to give a party legal advice or tell him how to navigate the procedural aspects of this matter. **See Commonwealth v. Ray**, 134 A.3d 1109, 1114 (Pa. Super. 2016) (citations omitted) (stating "a layperson choosing to represent himself in a legal proceeding to a reasonable extent assumes the risk that his lack of legal training will place him at a disadvantage").

Given the severe deficiencies in Higgins's brief, this Court is unable to meaningfully review this appeal. We will not develop arguments on behalf of an appellant or comb the record for factual underpinnings to support an appellant's position. **See Keller v. Mey**, 67 A.3d 1, 7 (Pa. Super. 2013).

Accordingly, Higgins's failure to conform with our appellate rules compels the dismissal of the appeal. **See** Pa.R.A.P. 2101 (providing that "if the defects . . . in the brief . . . are substantial, the appeal . . . may be . . . dismissed").

Appeal dismissed. Case stricken from argument list.

Judgment Entered.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Benjamin D. Kohler", is written over a horizontal line.

Benjamin D. Kohler, Esq.
Prothonotary

Date: 9/04/2026