Circuit Court for Prince George's County
Case No. C-16-FM-24-009497

UNREPORTED*

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF MARYLAND

No. 1993

September Term, 2025

OLUTOSIN AJAKAIYE

v.

OMOWUNMI H. OLADIPUPO

Wells, C.J.,
Albright,
Lazerow, Alan C.
(Specially Assigned),

JJ.

Opinion by Lazerow, J.

Filed: June 16, 2026

* This is an unreported opinion. This opinion may not be cited as precedent within the rule of stare decisis. It may be cited for its persuasive value only if the citation conforms to Rule 1-104(a)(2)(B).

This appeal follows the judgment of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County awarding joint legal custody of A.A. (also referred to as "Child") to Omowunmi H. Oladipupo ("Mother") and Olutosin Ajakaiye ("Father"), granting Mother tie-breaking authority and primary physical custody, and awarding Father visitation rights. This appeal followed.

Father presents four issues for our review, which we have recast as follows[1]:

I. Did the trial court properly exercise its discretion in awarding (i) joint legal custody with tie-breaking authority to Mother, and (ii) primary physical custody to Mother?

II. Did the trial court properly exercise its discretion in denying Father's motions for reconsideration?

As we explain more fully below, we answer these questions in the affirmative and, therefore, affirm.

---

[1] Father phrased the issues as follows:

I. The Trial Court Erred or Abused Its Discretion When It Awarded Tie-Breaking Authority to Mother.

II. The Trial Court Erred or Abused Its Discretion When It Ordered Primary Physical Custody of The Minor Child to Mother with Visitation Access to Father, As Opposed to Shared Physical Custody, Based on All the Evidence and Considering the Relevant Factors.

III. The Trial Court Did Err, Or Abused Its Discretion, When It Denied Father's First Motion for Reconsideration, Based on New Evidence, Concerning Mother's Employment and Her Role As Not the Primary Physical Caretaker of the Minor Child.

IV. The Trial Court Did Err, Or Abused Its Discretion, When It Denied Father's Second Extensive Motion for Reconsideration, Concerning Shared Physical Custody of the Minor Child.

BACKGROUND

Mother and Father are the unmarried parents of A.A., born July 21, 2024 in Baltimore. The two met in mid-2023 at their church in Prince George's County. Soon after beginning their relationship, Mother moved in with Father after losing her job as an accountant. In December 2023, the parties were engaged to be married and learned that Mother was pregnant. Mother delivered A.A. via cesarean section at thirty-two weeks.[2] A.A. thereafter experienced medical complications, including cholestasis and germinal matrix hemorrhage, requiring Mother's and A.A.'s hospitalization from birth through the end of August 2024.

Following their discharge from the hospital, Mother and A.A. lived with Father for just over a month. In October 2024, Mother and A.A. began living with her brother. Father visited A.A. that November and December. Father lives with his parents and sister. He also has an eight-year-old son, G., who has sickle cell disease and resides with Father on a week-on, week-off basis.[3]

In December 2024, Father filed a complaint seeking joint legal custody with tie-breaking authority and shared physical custody. Mother counterclaimed, requesting joint legal custody with tie-breaking authority and primary physical custody. In April 2025, the parties appeared before a family magistrate for a pendente lite hearing. The court's May

[2] Mother testified that she experienced complications during the pregnancy, including "bleeding for the most part of the pregnancy, … an incompetent cervix, and severe morning sickness." Mother described the pregnancy as "a very high-risk one."

[3] G.'s mother is not a party to this case.

2025 Pendente Lite Order awarded Father access to A.A. on alternating weeks from Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. until Thursday at 9:00 a.m., and on alternating weekends from Friday at 7:00 p.m. until Sunday at 7:00 p.m.

On June 10, 2025, the trial court conducted a one-day custody trial. At the trial, Father testified regarding his involvement in A.A.'s life—describing his attendance at medical appointments and characterizing himself as highly involved in A.A.'s care. Father also testified that the parties' relationship deteriorated after A.A.'s birth, including disagreements over Father's sister residing in the home. Father testified that, in October 2024, Mother informed him via text message that she was leaving with A.A. Father further testified that he made repeated efforts to contact Mother and request access to A.A. after she left, including sending daily text messages. Father stated that he did not see A.A. for about one month following Mother's departure and did not have overnight visitation until shortly before the pendente lite hearing.

Father also testified about his ability to provide care for A.A. He testified that he holds a master's degree in environmental and health sciences and is employed as an environmental health and safety manager with the Department of Defense. Father testified that he works from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and has the flexibility to work remotely. Father stated that his work responsibilities allow him to care for A.A. during the day and that, when needed, he can rely on his parents and sister for help. Father reported an annual income of $163,000 and testified that he provides financial support for G., though not under a court order.

On cross-examination, Father acknowledged that, while the parties lived together, A.A.'s primary daytime caregivers during Father's work hours were Mother or his sister. Father testified that, after Mother moved out, he was informed of A.A.'s medical appointments but believed that Mother exaggerated A.A.'s medical conditions to limit his access. Father maintains that he has five children in total, disputing the validity of a paternity test pertaining to a sixth child.

Father's sister testified about her role in A.A.'s childcare and described Father's involvement in feeding, soothing, and putting A.A. to bed. Father's sister stated that Father is regularly at home with A.A. from Tuesday through Thursday and that her parents assist with childcare when Father is otherwise occupied.

Mother also testified about her ability to care for A.A. at trial. She testified that she holds a master's degree in accounting and financial management and, at the time of the hearing, was unemployed but actively seeking remote employment. Mother also described complications during her pregnancy and testified that A.A. was born prematurely with a brain hemorrhage and a blood disorder.

Mother further testified regarding the parties' relationship, alleging that Father made financial demands, including requests for rent and encouraging her to pursue litigation against her former employer or to obtain unemployment benefits for Father's financial gain. Mother also alleged that Father pressured her into sexual activity, describing the relationship as abusive.

Mother testified that in February 2024, before A.A. was born, she moved out of Father's residence to live with her brother, later returned to Father's home to reconcile, and

ultimately left again because of alleged sexual abuse during pregnancy. Mother acknowledged that she was initially hesitant to permit Father access to A.A., citing concerns stemming from Father's earlier custody dispute involving G., including an incident in which law enforcement was contacted after Father did not return G. to his mother.

At trial, consistent with his pretrial demands, Father requested joint legal custody with tie-breaking authority in his favor. As for physical custody, Father requested joint physical custody, proposing a week-on, week-off schedule. Mother, on the other hand, requested joint legal custody with tie-breaking authority in her favor and primary physical custody, with Father's access remaining as in the May 2025 Pendente Lite Order.

At the conclusion of trial, the trial court reviewed various custody factors, including those in *Taylor v. Taylor*, 306 Md. 290 (1986), and *Montgomery County Department of Social Services v. Sanders*, 38 Md. App. 406 (1978),[4] and issued its ruling. The court awarded (i) the parties joint legal custody, with tie-breaking authority to Mother; and (ii) Mother primary physical custody, with visitation to Father.[5]

[4] Trial in this case took place in June 2025. In 2025, the Legislature passed what is now—effective October 1, 2025—MD. CODE ANN., FAM. LAW § 9-201, providing sixteen factors that "the court may consider" "in determining what legal custody and physical custody is in the best interest of a child[.]" Because trial in this matter occurred before the effective date of FAM. LAW § 9-201, the trial court appropriately considered the factors enumerated in our appellate caselaw.

[5] The trial court ordered that Father has access to A.A. every other weekend from Thursday at 7:00 p.m. until Sunday at 7:00 p.m. During weeks in which Father does not have weekend access, he has access from Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. until Thursday at 7:00 p.m. The parties also agreed to divide major holidays equally, alternating each year.

In July 2025, Father filed a motion for reconsideration, asserting that Mother was then employed and arguing that a joint physical custody arrangement—instead of the trial court's award of primary physical custody to Mother—was proper. In August 2025, the trial court held a hearing on the motion for reconsideration, ultimately denying it. In September 2025, Father filed a lengthy second motion for reconsideration, generally challenging the trial court's custody order anew. The trial court similarly denied the second motion for reconsideration.

Father noted this timely appeal. Additional relevant facts are supplied below.

DISCUSSION

I. THE TRIAL COURT PROPERLY EXERCISED ITS DISCRETION IN AWARDING MOTHER (I) JOINT LEGAL CUSTODY WITH TIE-BREAKING AUTHORITY, AND (II) PRIMARY PHYSICAL CUSTODY

Father contends that the trial court erred in awarding (i) joint legal custody with tie-breaking authority to Mother, rather than to Father; and (ii) primary physical custody to Mother, rather than joint physical custody. We address both issues in turn.

A. STANDARD OF REVIEW

We review a trial court's child custody determinations using three interrelated standards of review. *See In re Yve S.*, 373 Md. 551, 586 (2003). First, when scrutinizing the trial court's factual findings, the clearly erroneous standard applies. *Id.* Second, if the court's determination involved "interpretation and application of statutory and case law," we decide "whether the circuit court's conclusions are 'legally correct' under a *de novo* standard of review." *Barrett v. Ayres*, 186 Md. App. 1, 10 (2009) (quoting *Walter v. Gunter*, 367 Md. 386, 391-92 (2002)). And third, if the court's conclusion is "founded

upon sound legal principles and based upon factual findings that are not clearly erroneous," we do not disturb that conclusion absent a clear abuse of discretion. *See Kadish v. Kadish*, 254 Md. App. 467, 502 (2022) (quoting *In re Yve S.*, 373 Md. at 586).

"[I]n any child custody case, the paramount concern is the best interest of the child." *Taylor*, 306 Md. at 303. "The best interest of the child is therefore not considered as one of many factors, but as the objective to which virtually all other factors speak." *Id.*

B. THE TRIAL COURT DID NOT ABUSE ITS DISCRETION IN AWARDING JOINT LEGAL CUSTODY WITH TIE-BREAKING AUTHORITY TO MOTHER

Father does not contend that the trial court erred in awarding the parties joint legal custody (an award both Mother and Father sought). Father contends, instead, that the trial court erred in awarding tie-breaking authority to Mother. In support, Father points to his trial testimony regarding the strong bonds between his family and A.A. He asserts that, after leaving his home, Mother denied him access to A.A. for about six weeks, which Father contends is inconsistent with a custodial parent's duty to foster a child's relationship with both parents and extended family. He argues that Mother's conduct is inconsistent with a parent's willingness to promote and support the child's relationship with the other parent. According to Father, the evidence of denied access and impaired family relationships warrants closer scrutiny of the trial court's decision to grant Mother tie-breaking authority.

In response, Mother argues that the trial court did not err because it "evaluated all relevant factors and prioritized the minor child's well-being."

In *Santo v. Santo*, 448 Md. 620, 632 (2016), our Supreme Court explained that "'[l]egal custody carries with it the right and obligation to make long range decisions' that

significantly affect a child's life, such as education or religious training." (Quoting *Taylor*, 306 Md. at 296). In joint custody arrangements, "both parents have an equal voice in making [long range] decisions, and neither parent's rights are superior to the other." *Taylor*, 306 Md. at 296. In *Santo*, the Court addressed an issue "not addressed explicitly in *Taylor*," *i.e.*, "the propriety of the use of provisions in joint custody awards that grant one parent the authority to make a decision about a matter affecting the child when the parents cannot agree." *Santo*, 448 Md. at 624. The Court explained:

> In a joint legal custody arrangement with tie-breaking provisions, the parents are ordered to try to decide together matters affecting their children. When, and only when the parties are at an impasse after deliberating in good faith does the tie-breaking provision permit one parent to make the final call. Because this arrangement requires a genuine effort by both parties to communicate, it ensures each has a voice in the decision-making process.

Id. at 632-33. The Court rejected the contention that tie-breaking provisions "are inconsistent with *Taylor*," explaining that "such an award is still consonant with the core concept of joint custody because the parents must try to work together to decide issues affecting their children." *Id.* at 631, 633.

Here, the trial court explained its decision to award Mother tie-breaking authority:

> [THE COURT]: However, there has to be one party—because at some point they are going to disagree, and there has got to be a remedy for when the parties disagree. What this Court [heard] is that when [A.A.] was initially born … Mom was primarily caring for her along with help from the sister. Dad would come and help when he came home from work, but it was primarily Mom … [who] has been actively involved, though Dad has attended as well to doctor's appointments.

The trial court thoroughly analyzed and evaluated thirteen custody factors in its legal custody determination.[6] As a result, the trial court's conclusion was "founded upon sound legal principles," *see Kadish*, 254 Md. App. at 502, and our review is thus limited to determining whether the trial court abused its discretion.[7] Given the trial court's extensive analysis of more than a dozen custody factors and its recognition—based on its familiarity with the parties and their history—that "at some point [the parties] are going to disagree," we cannot conclude that the trial court abused its discretion in awarding tie-breaking authority to Mother. *See Shenk v. Shenk*, 159 Md. App. 548, 560 (2004) (upholding a tie-breaking provision where "the court was concerned that disagreements about trivial matters might result in renewed litigation"). Notably, both below and now on appeal, Father does not contend that an award of tie-breaking authority was inappropriate in a general sense—he just takes issue with the parent to whom that authority was awarded. In a situation where both parents agree that tie-breaking authority is appropriate, assuming the trial court analyzes the appropriate custody factors, the decision about which parent to award tie-

[6] The trial court considered: (1) the parents' capacity to communicate and make shared decisions, (2) the fitness of the parents, (3) the relationship between the child and each parent, (4) the preference of the child, (5) the potential disruption of the child's social and school life, (6) the proximity of the parental homes, (7) the demands of parental employment, (8) the age and number of children, (9) the sincerity of the parents' requests, (10) the financial status of the parents, (11) the impact on state or federal assistance, (12) the benefit to the parents, and (13) the parents' past conduct.

[7] In his opening brief, Father argues that "[a] full reassessment of this factor will ensure that the legal custody determination reflects a balanced application of Maryland's best-interest standard and prioritizes the child's opportunity to build and sustain strong family relationships." But our task here is not to conduct a "[a] full reassessment of this factor"—it is to determine whether the trial court abused its discretion.

breaking authority is classically within the discretion of the trial judge. And again, the trial court did not abuse that discretion.[8]

Father's sole argument that the trial court abused its discretion is that Mother "denied [Father] access to the child after moving out of the family home," which, in his view, "deprived the child of a unique opportunity to establish and strengthen [A.A.'s] natural family connections." But even assuming the truth of Father's allegations, an award of tie-breaking authority is not meant to "even the score" regarding past conduct or misconduct. Instead, tie-breaking authority allows one parent, in the event of an impasse, "to make the final call" on matters bearing on legal custody. *Santo*, 448 Md. at 632-33. That a parent denied another parent access to a child for some period[9] may be wholly unrelated to which parent should be given the authority to make that final call on matters bearing on legal custody. Even if the denial of access was a relevant factor, it was one of many that the trial court analyzed appropriately. *See Jose v. Jose*, 237 Md. App. 588, 600 (2018) (quoting *Best v. Best*, 93 Md. App. 644, 656 (1992)) ("'When considering the *Sanders-Taylor* factors, the trial court should examine 'the totality of the situation in the alternative environments' and avoid focusing on or weighing any single factor to the

[8] We caution, however, that tie-breaking authority is not appropriate in every case, and neither the trial court's ruling nor this opinion should be read as suggesting to the contrary.

[9] Here, the trial court referenced a four-week period in which Mother denied Father access, further concluding that the parties agreed to a temporary custody arrangement thereafter.

exclusion of all others."). Father's argument misses the mark, and the trial court did not abuse its discretion in awarding Mother tie-breaking authority.

C. THE TRIAL COURT DID NOT ABUSE ITS DISCRETION IN AWARDING PRIMARY PHYSICAL CUSTODY TO MOTHER

Father essentially mounts a two-pronged attack on the trial court's physical custody ruling. *First*, Father disagrees with the trial court's determinations as for certain factors, arguing that certain facts "warrant examination." *Second*, Father apparently argues that the trial court's award really amounts to "shared custody," as defined in MD. CODE ANN., FAM. LAW § 12-201(o), and asks us "to examine this issue so that both the custody classification aligns with the custody framework and the record." Father is wrong on both fronts.

Physical custody is "the right and obligation to provide a home for the child and to make the day-to-day decisions required during the time the child is actually with the parent having such custody." *Taylor*, 306 Md. at 296. Here, in making its ruling as for physical custody—which gave Father five out of fourteen nights—the trial court analyzed seventeen factors.[10]

[10] The trial court considered the following physical custody factors: (1) fitness; (2) character and reputation of each parent; (3) desire of the parents and any agreement between them; (4) maintaining natural family relations; (5) preferences of the child; (6) material opportunities affecting the child's future; (7) age, gender, and health of the child; (8) residences of the parents and opportunity for visitation; (9) impending relocation of the parents; (10) environment and surroundings in which the child would be reared; (11) influences likely to be exerted on the child; (12) physical, spiritual, and moral wellbeing of the child; (13) contact and bonding between child and parents; (14) stability, foreseeable health and welfare of the child; (15) ability to share the rights and responsibilities of raising the child; (16) maintaining the child's relationships with parents and siblings; and (17) ability to promote child's relationship with other parent.

The trial court's ruling was thorough, going factor by factor and providing its analysis on each. As the court determined, most of the factors were either inapplicable—given A.A.'s age or otherwise—or in equipoise. The trial court did conclude, however, that two factors weighed in Mother's favor.

First, the trial court concluded that the "age, gender, and health of the child" factor weighed in Mother's favor. The trial court heard testimony regarding A.A.'s health issues and the parties' involvement in managing those issues, ultimately concluding that Mother's candor regarding A.A.'s ongoing problems and her experience with managing appointments "weighed a little bit more heavily in favor of Mo[ther]."

And *second*, the trial court analyzed the parties' ability to promote the child's relationship with the other parent. On this factor, the trial court revealed that it was "a little bit concerned" given Father's position that Mother had made decisions that rendered her unfit where the court "heard not one example, really … that [Mother] is unfit." In the trial court's view, "that plays into the … parties' ability to promote a health relationship with … the other parent," given that how one parent sees "the parent who doesn't have the child at a given moment … is important and will become important in the child's development." The trial court thus, at least implicitly, found that this factor weighed in Mother's favor.

The foregoing reflects that the trial court's factor-by-factor analysis was thorough. And although the trial court's task is not simply to tally factors for one parent or the other, the court's analysis reveals that many factors were in equipoise, with at least two factors weighing in Mother's favor. Under the circumstances, we cannot conclude that the trial court abused its discretion in fashioning its order as for physical custody.

Father's second argument is difficult to follow, but Father appears to be saying that what the trial court ordered—primary physical custody to Mother—is inconsistent with the number of overnights the trial court awarded Father (roughly 130 nights), because the Family Law Article defines "shared physical custody" as an arrangement in which a "parent keeps the child or children overnight for more than 25% of the year," *i.e.* ninety-two nights per year or more. Thus, Father apparently challenges the label the trial court employed—*primary* versus *shared* physical custody.

We can quickly dispose of this argument because the statute that Father relies on, section 12-201(o) of the Family Law Article, is in Title 12 of the Family Law Article and deals with child *support*, not *custody*. Thus, when the Legislature defines "shared physical custody" as an arrangement in which a "parent keeps the child or children overnight for more than 25% of the year," it does so only relating to child support.[11] Section 12-201(o)'s definition of "shared physical custody" has nothing to do with a trial court's physical or legal custody determinations, and thus the trial court correctly coined its physical custody determination as primary physical custody in Mother's favor. *See Matter of Marriage of Houser*, 490 Md. 592, 612 (2025) (distinguishing between custody, which is a "parental right," and child support, which is a "parental obligation").

[11] Under the child support guidelines, a general formula is used to determine each parent's child support obligation where one parent has sole or primary physical custody, and an adjusted formula is applied where the parents share physical custody. *Compare* MD. CODE ANN., FAM. LAW § 12-204(l) *with* (m). We cannot discern whether the circuit court ordered child support in this matter. In any event, neither party has challenged child support here.

For these reasons, we conclude that the trial court did not abuse its discretion in awarding Mother tie-breaking authority (or in fashioning its custody order otherwise).

II. THE TRIAL COURT PROPERLY EXERCISED ITS DISCRETION IN DENYING FATHER'S MOTIONS FOR RECONSIDERATION

Father contends that the trial court erred in denying (i) Father's first motion for reconsideration, based on new evidence regarding Mother's alleged employment, which he argues affected her role as the primary physical caretaker of A.A.; and (ii) Father's second motion for reconsideration. We review both issues in turn.

A. STANDARD OF REVIEW

We review a trial court's ruling on a motion for reconsideration for an abuse of discretion. *See Miller v. Mathias*, 428 Md. 419, 438 (2012). To find an abuse of discretion, the alleged error must have been "well removed from any center mark imagined by the reviewing court and beyond the fringe of what that court[] deems minimally acceptable." *Aventis Pasteur, Inc. v. Skevofilax*, 396 Md. 405, 418-19 (2007) (quoting *Wilson v. John Crane, Inc.*, 385 Md. 185, 199 (2005)). An abuse of discretion, therefore, "should only be found in the extraordinary, exceptional, or most egregious case." *Wilson*, 385 Md. at 199. Because the standard provides "generous allowances for the trial court's reasoning," we uphold the conclusion unless a serious error has occurred. *Cent. Truck Ctr., Inc. v. Cent. GMC, Inc.*, 194 Md. App. 375, 398 (2010) (quoting *Das v. Das*, 133 Md. App. 1, 15 (2000)). Although abuse of discretion is a highly deferential standard of review in any context, the required degree of deference is even greater when the appeal challenges a discretionary decision not to revise a judgment—in such a context, "even a poor call is not

necessarily a clear abuse of discretion." *Stuples v. Balt. City Police Dep't*, 119 Md. App. 221, 232 (1998).

B. THE TRIAL COURT DID NOT ABUSE ITS DISCRETION IN DENYING FATHER'S FIRST MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION

Father contends that the trial court erred in denying Father's first motion for reconsideration of the trial court's custody order, based on what he says is new evidence regarding Mother's alleged employment and its bearing on her role as A.A.'s primary caretaker. He argues that he testified credibly, based on information gathered from a private investigator, "that Mother was observed in an Extra Space Storage in Gambrills, Maryland, for an extended period of time, without [A.A.]." Father further testified that Mother was observed at the storage facility "for seven consecutive days, remaining for 8-12 hours each day, including times[] when she had testified she was serving as the child's full-time caregiver."

During the August 2025 hearing on the first motion for reconsideration, Father's counsel confirmed that, although they had subpoenaed certain records that they would use to support Father's argument that Mother was indeed working, they had not yet received any responsive documents.[12] The trial court emphasized that Father "should have been prepared" for the hearing and "should have had" evidence substantiating his claim about Mother's employment status. In denying the first motion for reconsideration, the trial court explained that it "d[id]n't have anything via exhibits, evidence, or testimony that [Mother]

[12] Father's counsel explained that she had only been retained "two or three weeks" before the hearing, stating that counsel "obviously need[s] more time in order to provide" substantiating documents.

is employed at the Extra Space Storage," noting that, for "[a]t least … three of the days that are in question for that … one-week period of time, the care of [A.A.] … isn't really an issue because … [A.A.] was in [Father]'s custody at that time." The trial court reiterated that it "just ha[s] not received any evidence that [Mother] is, in fact, employed at the Extra Space Storage."

The trial court did not abuse its discretion in denying the first motion for reconsideration. Again, Father's sole contention in that motion was that Mother was employed at Extra Space Storage. The trial court patiently received Father's testimony and counsel's argument on that point and found to the contrary. Father's counsel conceded that Father had no documents to substantiate his claim that Mother was newly employed. And as to Father's point that, working or not, Mother was seemingly near the storage facility for seven straight days (three of which Father had physical custody of A.A.), the trial court appropriately commented that "we are still not talking about a significant period of time." For these reasons, the trial court did not abuse its discretion in rejecting Father's contention that so-called new evidence warranted reconsideration of Mother's ability to be A.A.'s primary caretaker, and thus the trial court did not abuse its discretion in denying the first motion for reconsideration.

C. THE TRIAL COURT DID NOT ABUSE ITS DISCRETION IN DENYING FATHER'S SECOND MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION

Father contends that the trial court erred in denying his second motion for reconsideration of the trial court's custody order. Father argues "that certain evidence, testimony, and legal principles may not have been fully weighed or applied as intended."

Much of the second motion for reconsideration is essentially a rehash of arguments Father previously raised to the trial court. Father challenges, among other things, certain "evidentiary inconsistencies" and the "weight given" to certain testimony and evidence. Though our Rules plainly allow for reconsideration motions, a trial court does not abuse its discretion in denying such motions when litigants merely ask for a do-over. *See Steinhoff v. Sommerfelt*, 144 Md. App. 463, 484 (2002) (recognizing that, in deciding a reconsideration motion, "the discretion of the trial judge is more than broad; it is virtually without limit[,]" and that "[l]osers do not enjoy *carte blanche*, through post-trial motions, to replay the game as a matter of right"). Because that is what Father sought to accomplish through the second motion for reconsideration, the trial court did not abuse its discretion in denying that motion.

CONCLUSION

To recap, the trial court did not abuse its discretion in awarding (i) joint legal custody with tie-breaking authority to Mother, and (ii) primary physical custody to Mother. The trial court also did not abuse its discretion in denying Father's motions for reconsideration. For these reasons, we affirm.[13]

[13] On May 26, 2026, this Court entered an Order to Show Cause, noting, among others, the following citation irregularities, in Father's opening brief:

> Page iv: Father cites three cases that do not exist as cited.
>
> Page 15: The proposition for which Father cites *North v. North*, 102 Md. App. 1, 648 A.2d 1025 (1994), is not found in that case.

Page 17: The proposition for which Father cites *Taylor v. Taylor*, 306 Md. 290, 508 A.2d 964 (1986), is not found in that case.

Page 18: The quotation from *Boswell v. Boswell*, 352 Md. 204, 220, 721 A.2d 662 (1998), does not appear in that case.

Page 18: The proposition for which Father cites *Montgomery County Department of Social Services v. Sanders*, 38 Md. App. 406, 381 A.2d 1154 (1978), is overstated.

Page 21: The proposition for which Father cites *Taylor*, *supra*, is not found in that case.

Page 22: The proposition for which Father cites *Taylor*, *supra*, is not found in that case.

Page 22: The quotation from *Boswell*, *supra*, does not appear in that case, nor does that case support the proposition for which the quotation stands.

Page 23: The proposition for which Father cites *Ross v. Hoffman*, 280 Md. 172, 372 A.2d 582 (1977), and *In re Yve S.*, 373 Md. 551, 819 A.2d 1030 (2003), is not found in those cases.

Page 27: The quotation from *Taylor*, *supra*, does not appear in that case (or any other opinion).

Page 28: The proposition for which Father cites *In re Yve* S., *supra*, is not found in that case.

Page 28: The proposition for which Father cites *Ross*, *supra*, and *Boswell*, *supra*, is not found in those cases.

Given that these irregularities are littered throughout Father's briefing, the Court was concerned that Father's counsel had utilized artificial intelligence (AI) in drafting the briefs.

On June 1, 2026, Father's counsel filed the *Response to Show Cause Order* (the "Response"), generally stating that he does "not use artificial intelligence in drafting of any of [his briefs]," but conceding that he "dr[e]w from" Father's pro se trial memoranda in preparing Father's briefs.

JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY AFFIRMED. COSTS TO BE PAID BY APPELLANT.

Assuming the truth of everything Father's counsel represents in the Response, the fact remains that counsel, throughout his briefing, used quotations that do not exist and cited caselaw that does not support the stated propositions. The Court's review of Father's briefing confirms that, for most of the offending citations, Father's counsel simply copied and pasted from the Father's pro se second motion for reconsideration. Father's counsel further concedes that he did not confirm whether AI was used in the Father's preparation of that second motion for reconsideration, seemingly relying on the fact that the pro se briefing was drafted with the assistance of Father's sister, who is a non-practicing attorney (having attended a foreign law school).

The Court recently discussed the pitfalls of relying on AI in filings and how such conduct can implicate various provisions of the Maryland Attorneys' Rules of Professional Conduct. *See Mezu v. Mezu*, 267 Md. App. 354, 368-74 (2025). Because we recently spoke on this issue, we will not belabor the point here. But we write separately to add that it is no less problematic for an attorney to blindly copy-and-paste from other filings generated using AI—which is likely what happened here—than it is to use AI improperly in the first instance. As we did in *Mezu*, we will refer this matter to the Attorney Grievance Commission.