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IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION

JOHN DOES 1-4 and JANE DOE,)
)
Plaintiffs,)
)
v.)
)
LISA MADIGAN, Attorney General of the)
State of Illinois, and LEO P. SCHMITZ,)
Director of the Illinois State Police,)
)
Defendants.)

No. 16 CV 4847
Hon. Charles R. Norgle

ORDER

Plaintiffs' Motion for Leave to Proceed Anonymously [4] is granted.

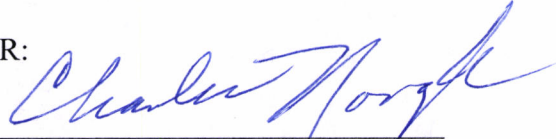
STATEMENT

Before the Court is Plaintiffs' unopposed motion to proceed anonymously because they fear physical and social harm if they are identified as sex offenders in the public records of this case. Moreover, they argue that the use of anonymous pseudonyms is appropriate where, as here, they would be the "likely target of retaliation by people who would learn [their identities] from court filings." Pls.' Mot. Proceed Anon., ¶ 4.

Generally, the public has a right to access the facts of a case, and the concealment of a party's identity impedes that access. Doe v. City of Chicago, 360 F.3d 667, 669 (7th Cir. 2004). A party's identity is typically considered public information. Id. However, "[t]he danger of retaliation is often a compelling ground for allowing a party to litigate anonymously[.]" Id.

Here, Plaintiffs are five registered sex offenders challenging the constitutionality of several sections of the Illinois Sex Offender Registration Act. They fear retaliation by the public at large because of their status as sex offenders and because they seek to challenge a law designed to protect the public. See Pls.' Mot. Proceed Anon., ¶ 6. Moreover, it is plausible that Plaintiffs could be subject to retaliation by local law enforcement if it becomes known that they seek to visit places that are otherwise restricted to sex offenders. The Court finds that the threat of harm from the public and the threat of criminal prosecution is sufficient to permit the Plaintiffs to proceed anonymously.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

ENTER: 
CHARLES RONALD NORGLÉ, Judge
United States District Court

DATE: March 7, 2017