

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
SOUTHERN DIVISION**

**REPUBLICAN NATIONAL
COMMITTEE; MISSISSIPPI
REPUBLICAN PARTY; JAMES
PERRY; and MATTHEW LAMB**

PLAINTIFFS

VS.

Civil Action No. 1:24-cv-00025-LG-RPM

**JUSTIN WETZEL, *in his official
capacity as the clerk and registrar of the
Circuit Court of Harrison County*; TONI
JO DIAZ, BECKY PAYNE, BARBARA
KIMBALL, CHRISTENE BRICE, and
CAROLYN HANDLER, *in their official
capacities as members of the Harrison
County Election Commission*; and
MICHAEL WATSON, *in his official
Capacity as the Secretary of State of
Mississippi***

DEFENDANTS

ORDER

THIS CAUSE having come before the Court on *Defendant Secretary of State Michael Watson's Unopposed [17] Motion to Exempt Defendant from Filing Answer to Plaintiffs' Complaint to Accommodate Parties' Anticipated Filing of Early Cross-Motions for Summary Judgment*, and the Court, finding that the motion is unopposed, and otherwise being fully advised in the premises, finds that said motion is well taken and should be **GRANTED**.

IT IS, THEREFORE, ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that Defendant Secretary of State Michael Watson's above-mentioned [17] Motion, be and the same hereby is **GRANTED**, and Defendant Michael Watson, in his official capacity as Secretary of State of Mississippi, is hereby exempted from filing an answer or other response to Plaintiffs' [1] Complaint by February 26,

2024, or otherwise, subject to further order of this Court regarding the prospective entry of a briefing schedule on the parties' anticipated cross-motions for summary judgment.

SO ORDERED AND ADJUDGED this the 23rd day of February, 2024.

s/ *Louis Guirola, Jr.*

Louis Guirola, Jr.

United States District Judge