

**THIS OPINION HAS NO PRECEDENTIAL VALUE. IT SHOULD NOT BE
CITED OR RELIED ON AS PRECEDENT IN ANY PROCEEDING
EXCEPT AS PROVIDED BY RULE 268(d)(2), SCACR.**

**THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In The Court of Appeals**

South Carolina Department of Social Services,
Respondent,

v.

Leslie Heather Burns and Patrick Burns, Jr., Defendants,

Of whom Patrick Burns, Jr., is the Appellant.

In the interest of minors under the age of eighteen.

Appellate Case No. 2023-000853

Appeal From Laurens County
Joseph C. Smithdeal, Family Court Judge

Unpublished Opinion No. 2024-UP-115
Submitted March 29, 2024 – Filed April 1, 2024

AFFIRMED

Kimberly Yancey Brooks, of Kimberly Y. Brooks,
Attorney at Law, of Greenville, for Appellant.

Andrew Troy Potter, of Anderson; and Ashley P. Case,
of Fountain Inn, both for Respondent.

Marcus Wesley Meetze, of Law Office of Marcus W. Meetze, LLC, of Simpsonville, for the Guardian ad Litem.

PER CURIAM: Patrick Burns, Jr. appeals the family court's final order finding he physically neglected his minor children (Children) and placed Children at a substantial risk of physical abuse, and granting physical and legal custody of Children to the South Carolina Department of Social Services. *See* S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-20(6)(a)(i), (iii) (Supp. 2023); S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-1660(E) (Supp. 2023). Upon a thorough review of the record and the family court's findings of fact and conclusions of law pursuant to *Ex parte Cauthen*, 291 S.C. 465, 354 S.E.2d 381 (1987), we find no meritorious issues warrant briefing.¹ Accordingly, we affirm the family court's ruling and relieve Burns's counsel.

AFFIRMED.²

THOMAS, MCDONALD, and VERDIN, JJ., concur.

¹ *See SCDSS v. Downer*, S.C. Sup. Ct. Order dated February 2, 2005 (expanding the *Cauthen* procedure to situations in which "an indigent person appeals from an order imposing other measures short of" termination of parental rights).

² We decide this case without oral argument pursuant to Rule 215, SCACR.