

to file under seal and incorporates that legal standard here. (Order, at 3-6.)

Now that the Court is able to view the relevant document, upon review of Plaintiff's amended motion to file under seal, the Court finds good cause to seal the financial statement. First, allowing access would not impair court functions, but Defendant Equity Experts possesses a privacy interest in its financial statements disclosing its margins. Carraway v. BBC Sys., Inc., No. 6:18-cv-1413-Orl-37GJK, 2018 WL 7267876, at *2 (M.D. Fla. Oct. 30, 2018) (finding disclosing information concerning "financial figures related to its profits and distributions to shareholders" would "harm [the] [d]efendant's legitimate privacy interests by exposing its financial information to the public, including competitors"); see also GJ&L, Inc. v. CNH Indus. Am., LLC, No. 117-179, 2018 WL 1911348, at *2 (S.D. Ga. Apr. 23, 2018); Cognotion, Inc. v. Grace Hill, LLC, No. CV 115-201, 2016 WL 1529904, at *1 (S.D. Ga. Apr. 14, 2016) ("[C]ourts have found that a company's interest in the privacy of its financial records . . . outweigh[s] the public right of access.") (citation omitted). Second, Defendant Equity Experts sets forth that disclosure carries a likelihood of injury if its competitors obtain access to this financial information. (Am. Renewed Mot. to File Under Seal, at 6-7.) Third, Plaintiffs have the opportunity to respond to the financial information and address any concerns

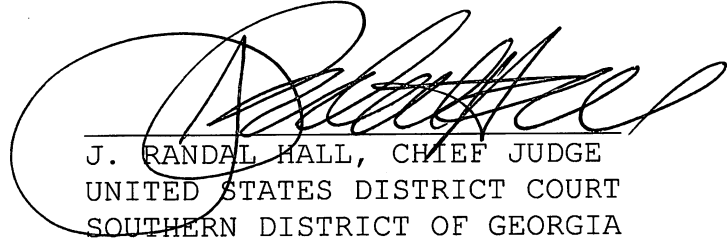
regarding the reliability of the figures provided. See Carraway, 2018 WL 7267876, at *2. Fourth, the document exhibits no information concerning public officials or public concerns. Cf. GJ&L, 2018 WL 1911348, at *2. Defendant Equity Experts is a privately held company; thus, its financial information is not generally considered a public concern. See Carraway, 2018 WL 7267876, at *2. Fifth, the Court finds no less onerous alternative. Limiting redaction to only the financial figures leaves little meaningful information in the document.

Pursuant to Local Rule 79.7(b), Defendant Equity Experts requests to seal only the contents of the financial statement. Further, Defendant Equity Experts asks that the seal remain in effect for a defined period of time – until the conclusion of any direct appeal – under Local Rule 79.7(e). (Am. Renewed Mot. to File Under Seal, at 5.) The Court finds these requests reasonable to restrict only the information necessary for the time period required to protect the privacy interests at stake. Accordingly, Defendant Equity Experts's privacy interests outweigh the public's interest, and good cause exists to seal the financial attachment.

For the foregoing reasons, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that Defendant Equity Experts's Amended Renewed Motion to File Under Seal (Doc. 141) is **GRANTED** and Defendant Equity Experts's Unopposed Renewed Motion to File Under Seal (Doc. 140) is **DENIED AS MOOT**. The Clerk is **DIRECTED** to **SEAL** the appropriate documents (Docs. 140-1, 140-

2)¹ until the conclusion of any and all direct appeals of this matter.

ORDER ENTERED at Augusta, Georgia, this 8th day of May, 2020.



J. RANDAL HALL, CHIEF JUDGE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

¹ Defendant Equity Experts "seeks to have its 2018 [and] 2019 Financial Statements sealed." (Am. Renewed Mot. to File Under Seal, at 5.) In Defendant Equity Experts's filings, the Court finds only an unredacted version of the 2018 Financial Statement. (See Doc. 140-1.) Should Defendant Equity Experts file an unredacted version of its 2019 Financial Statement, the terms of this Order **SHALL** equally apply to that filing.