

MAR 25 2021

TONY H. MOORE, CLERK
BY _____ DEPUTY

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

**THIRTEENTH SUPPLEMENTAL ORDER REGARDING
COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES
CREATED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

On March 16, 2020, this court entered an Order regarding court operation for the Louisiana Western District, recognizing the exigent circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 17, 2020, this court entered a First Supplemental Order restricting public access to Clerk's Office intake counters in our offices located in Alexandria, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe and Shreveport. On December 18, 2020, this court entered an Eleventh Supplemental Order further extending the restriction of public access to our intake counters located in Alexandria, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe and Shreveport, which is set to expire on April 1, 2021.

The Court further finds that the pandemic continues and indeed has experienced a surge in the number of cases and deaths in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health authorities continue to recommend social distancing as a means of limiting further community spread of COVID-19. The State of Louisiana previously issued various orders directing all Louisiana residents to shelter at home and limit movements outside of their homes beyond essential needs. As of the

date of this Order, The State of Louisiana is in a “Phase III Reopening.” Governor Edwards announced that Louisiana will stay in Phase III until March 31, 2021, with further extensions to be determined based on data available at the end of that period. The unpredictable continued spread of COVID-19 within this state and this district still strongly suggests a lengthy pause in the conduct of jury trials, even though vaccinations are under way. However, due to the vast geography of our district within the State of Louisiana (42 of 64 parishes) and the different regions pertaining to COVID data collection in our district (6 of the 9 regions), the Court has determined that, based on the best interest of the public, the bar and our staff, all civil and criminal jury trials, bench trials, hearings, conferences, and or proceedings shall return to the discretion of the trial judge presiding over the case, beginning April 5, 2021.

Each district judge shall determine the appropriate COVID safety precautions and protocols after considering the then-current government guidelines in their respective areas.

Therefore and in light of these findings and recommendations, the Court orders the following:


IT IS ORDERED this order supersedes any and all prior orders related to civil and criminal jury trials, access to the divisional offices and scheduling of non-court related events.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED THAT:

1. Any events involving the Court that are not case-specific, including, but not limited to, continuing legal education courses, public tours, administration of oaths to attorneys, and naturalization ceremonies conducted by the Court which are scheduled to occur between the date of this order and July 6, 2021 are hereby cancelled and may be rescheduled as appropriate on or after July 6, 2021.
2. Public access to the Louisiana Western District Clerk of Court Offices in the Alexandria, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe and Shreveport Divisions may resume on July 6, 2021.
3. All civil and criminal jury trials, bench trials, hearings, conferences, and/or proceedings are subject to the discretion of the trial judge presiding over the case, beginning April 5, 2021.

Unless extended, modified or rescinded, this Order will expire on July 6, 2021.

THUS DONE AND SIGNED, in Shreveport, Louisiana, and effective this 25th day of March, 2021.



S. MAURICE HICKS, JR.
CHIEF JUDGE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA