

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY**

USDC DNJ DOCUMENT ELECTRONICALLY FILED DOC #: DATE FILED: <u>December 17, 2020</u>
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IN RE: SUSPENSION OF IN-PERSON JUDICIAL :
PROCEEDINGS AND LIMITATION OF GRAND : **EXTENSION OF**
JURY PROCEEDINGS, DUE TO THE RESURGENCE : **STANDING ORDER 2020-17**
OF COVID-19 :

WHEREAS, due to the ongoing resurgence of COVID-19, the National Emergency declared on March 13, 2020 continues in effect, and the national public health emergency declaration, first made on January 31, 2020, was renewed by the federal government on October 23, 2020 and will last until January 21, 2021; and

WHEREAS, on November 23, 2020, the Governor of the State of New Jersey extended the Public Health Emergency, first declared on March 9, 2020, until December 23, 2020, and is expected to renew that declaration at that time for another 30 days, due to the continued resurgence of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health authorities continue to advise taking precautions to reduce the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 and to slow the spread of the disease by, among other things, wearing face coverings, severely restricting the size of group gatherings of people, especially indoor gatherings, and maintaining six feet of physical distance from others (“social distancing”); and

WHEREAS, the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey (“Court”) is still in Phase Three of its Recovery Guidelines, mandating the wearing of face coverings, social distancing, limited elevator occupancy and observance of instructional signage, and the duration of Phase Three remains uncertain; and

WHEREAS, due to the second wave of infection from COVID-19, the Court’s previously-entered Standing Orders, applicable to all persons seeking entry into and occupying this District’s courthouses, and which require the wearing of face coverings (2020-13), establish a COVID-19 protocol for all entrants (2020-14), and institute temperature screenings of all entrants (2020-16), remain in effect; and

WHEREAS, the resurgence of COVID-19 is now occurring in all states and territories of the United States, and consequently, New Jersey’s travel advisory is no longer specific to certain states and indicates that there is an increased risk of spread of COVID-19 upon return from any travel; and

WHEREAS, the daily number of new cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey continues its upswing trend, reaching a record high of 6,240 on December 12, 2020, and the number of deaths resulting from the pandemic totaled 17,775 as of December 14, 2020; and

WHEREAS, despite pleas by the Governor of New Jersey to restrict holiday travel and gatherings, individuals' exposure to COVID-19 is expected to rise due to holidays, such as Chanukah, Christmas, and New Year's Eve and Day; and

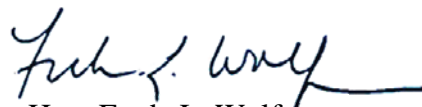
WHEREAS, even if accorded priority grouping under the New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, the prison population and the federal judiciary of New Jersey are not expected to receive the requisite second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine before January 31, 2021, and vaccination of the general population is not anticipated before March 2021; and

WHEREAS, prisoners' in-person attendance at judicial proceedings therefore still increases the risk of exposure to COVID-19 among the prison population, prison staff, Court employees, this Court's Security Officers and Deputies of the U.S. Marshals Service; and

WHEREAS, in response to the continued, severe effects of the ongoing second wave of COVID-19, presenting a serious threat to public health and safety, the Court deems it necessary to extend its prior suspension of all in-person judicial proceedings, in both civil and criminal cases, regardless of whether the criminal defendant is in or out of custody,

IT IS, THEREFORE, on this 17th day of December, 2020, **ORDERED THAT**:

1. Except as otherwise provided herein, all in-person judicial proceedings in this District, in both civil and criminal cases, shall be suspended through January 31, 2021.
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Extension, the provisions of the Court's Third Extension of Amended Standing Order 2020-06 ("In Re: Video Conferencing and Teleconferencing for Criminal Proceedings under The CARES Act") shall remain in full force and effect.
3. During the suspension period, extended herein through January 31, 2021, Probation and Pretrial Services shall be permitted to bring defendants/individuals under supervision into the District's courthouses for extraordinary circumstances and emergent matters only, for the protection of the community and officers, upon approval of the Chief Probation or Chief Pretrial Services Officer, and such appearances shall be by appointment only and by escort into the office space, with advance notification provided to the U.S. Marshals Service and Court Security Officers.
4. Until further Order of the Court, grand jury sittings in this District shall be limited and convened only to the extent deemed necessary and warranted under the circumstances.


Hon. Freda L. Wolfson
U.S. Chief District Judge
District of New Jersey