

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: LIMITED EXTENSION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY FOR THE SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT : EMERGENCY ORDER NO. 2021-1 : 43 MM 2020 :

ORDER

AND NOW, this 5th day of March, 2021, pursuant to the Supreme Court Orders of April 28, 2020 and May 27, 2020, which allowed the President Judge of any judicial district the discretion to extend the period of judicial emergency beyond June 1, 2020, the Court issues the following Order, effective immediately.

I. Extension of Judicial Emergency

The judicial emergency for the Seventh Judicial District, originally declared by the undersigned on March 17, 2020, and subsequently extended generally and for limited purposes, is extended through June 30, 2021, for the limited purposes outlined herein.

II. Suspension of Rule-Based Right of Criminal Defendants to Prompt Trial

Subject to state and federal constitutional requirements, the operation of Pa.R.Crim.P. No. 600 is suspended through June 30, 2021, or such other date as may be declared by further order of court. Accordingly, the time from March 17, 2020 through June 30, 2021, or such other date as may be declared by further order of court, shall be excluded from any time computation under Pa.R.Crim.P. No. 600.

III. Use of Advanced Communication Technology

1. Subject to state and federal constitutional requirements, the operation of any statewide or local rules that restrict, directly or indirectly, the use of Advanced Communication Technology is suspended.

2. Subject to the discretion of the presiding judge or judicial officer, the circumstances of the case, and applicable state and federal constitutional requirements, Advanced Communication Technology shall be used to conduct proceedings whenever practicable.

3. Where use of Advanced Communication Technology is impracticable or otherwise precluded by the circumstances of the case or applicable state and federal constitutional requirements, matters shall be scheduled to be heard in person before the Court in a manner that complies with applicable COVID-19 safety protocols.

IV. Continuance of All Non-Emergent Proceedings

Any proceeding deemed by the Court or the Court Administrator to be non-emergent may be continued in the sole discretion of the Court or Court Administrator pending expiration of the judicial emergency or further order of court.

V. Suspension of Jury Trials and Arbitrations

1. All jury trials, whether criminal or civil in nature and without regard to the number of jurors required, are suspended through May 31, 2021.

2. All compulsory arbitration proceedings are suspended through April 30, 2021.

This order supersedes any previously entered emergency order regarding the subject matter hereof, including Emergency Order No. 2020-24, the final emergency order issued during calendar year 2020, and shall expire on June 30, 2021, unless extended or superseded by further order of court.

BY THE COURT:


Wallace H. Bateman Jr., President Judge