

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND, SUPERIOR COURT

INTER-OFFICE MEMO

TO: Judicial Officers of the Superior Court

FROM: Alice Bridget Gibney, Presiding Justice

CC: Paul A. Sutell, Chief Justice; J. Joseph Baxter, State Court Administrator; Marisa P. Brown, Superior Court Administrator; All Superior Court Personnel; Members of the Rhode Island Bar; Rhode Island Department of Sheriffs

RE: Reduction of In-Person Court Matters – Superior Court

DATE: November 11, 2020

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The rising number of COVID cases in the State of Rhode Island has had a very significant and direct impact on the Superior Court as we have seen a surge in positive cases that has affected judicial officers, staff, sheriffs, and court participants who have been conducting business in our courthouses. It is imperative, therefore, that we move towards a further reduction of in-person court matters.

Commencing November 16, 2020 through December 18, 2020, judicial officers will move to remote calendars and hearings wherever feasible. For those of you who are assigned to calendars where emergency and time sensitive, in-person scheduling is a necessity, additional daily limits will be instituted.

Please be sure to discuss your staff and technology needs with the clerks of your respective counties to ensure appropriate staff assignments, particularly for those qualified and trained to handle court matters remotely.

In the coming days I will be speaking with each of you directly as we continue to navigate through these unprecedented times. The health and safety of all court personnel, counsel, litigants and court users must remain our highest priority as we continue to provide access to justice for all.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to you and all staff members of the Superior Court for the level of commitment I have witnessed during this crisis. Your ability to adapt to an ever-changing environment and forge ahead during these last seven months has been nothing short of remarkable.