

CONTACT:
TRINA S. VINCENT
504-310-2590

MARCH 16, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT ISSUES ORDER FOR LOUISIANA COURTS

The Louisiana Supreme Court today issued an Order, in response to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Louisiana, Governor John Bel Edwards' declaration of a public health emergency in Proclamation Number 25 JBE 2020, and President Donald Trump's declaration of a national emergency on March 13, 2020, and in consideration of public health recommendations to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus and slowing the spread of the disease while balancing the need to maintain access to Louisiana courts, directing Louisiana courts to proceed in the following manner:

1. All jury trials, both civil and criminal, scheduled to commence in any Louisiana state court between the date of this Order and March 27, 2020, are hereby continued to a date to be reset by local order no earlier than March 30, 2020. Civil and criminal jury trials that are in progress as of March 13, 2020 may continue to conclusion, in the discretion of the local court.
2. Except as otherwise provided herein, all civil trials, hearings and court appearances set for any date between the date of this Order and March 27, 2020 are hereby continued to a date to be reset by local order, except for hearings related to the following: civil protective orders, child in need of care proceedings, emergency child custody matters, proceedings for children removed from their home by emergency court order, proceedings related to emergency interdictions and mental health orders, matters of public health related to this crisis and other emergency matters necessary to protect the health, safety and liberty of individuals as determined by each court.
3. Criminal initial appearances for adults and juveniles, arraignments for incarcerated individuals and bond hearings shall continue as scheduled and shall be conducted with the use of telephone and video conferencing whenever possible.
4. All judges and court clerks are urged to limit in-person courtroom contact as much as possible by utilizing available technologies, including alternative means of filing, teleconferencing, email and videoconferencing.
5. This Order expressly does not prohibit any court proceedings by telephone, video, teleconferencing, or any other means that do not involve in-person contact. This Order does not affect courts' consideration of matters that can be resolved without in-person proceedings.
6. Given the public health concerns and the necessity of taking action to slow the spread of the disease, the continuances occasioned by this Order serve the ends of justice and outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial. Therefore, the time

periods of such continuance shall be excluded from speedy trial computations pursuant to law, including but not limited to those set forth in the Louisiana Code of Criminal Procedure and the Louisiana Children's Code, and presumptively constitute just cause.

“Both the Center for Disease Control and the Louisiana Department of Health have advised people to take precautions in light of the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) outbreak, and Governor John Bel Edwards has declared a public health emergency,” said Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson. “First and foremost, we must handle this public health crisis in a way that protects the health and safety of everyone at our court facilities, while at the same time, to the extent possible, maintains access to the courts. To that end, we have issued this Order to allow access to the courts while balancing the need to be proactive in protecting those who work in and come in contact with those in the court system to help lessen the potential impact and spread of the coronavirus.”

REMINDER FOR ALL MEDIA:

In response to the public health emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Louisiana Supreme Court is posting Orders and information from Louisiana's courts on its website, <http://www.lasc.org> and www.lasc.org/COVID19. We ask and encourage all who are seeking information on Louisiana courts and the COVID-19 pandemic to visit the Supreme Court's website for information.