

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF HOUSTON COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

FILED IN OFFICE, SUPERIOR COURT OF  
HOUSTON COUNTY

IN RE: Changes In Court Proceedings  
Date: March 13, 2020

MAR 13 2020

*Carey J. Sullivan* Clerk

**ORDER MODIFYING COURT PROCEEDINGS**

WHEREAS, there is an increasing concern as to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 contagion and its effects on the community of Houston County, and

WHEREAS this concern warrants some changes in court proceedings in this circuit in order to minimize the risks of infection for those who have business before the various courts in Houston County, while ensuring the judicial system continues to function and be accessible to citizens,

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the following temporary adjustments be made to court functions in the Houston Judicial Circuit:

1. All jury trials in the Superior Court and State Court are postponed until May 1, 2020. Anyone presently summoned to appear as a juror for March or April may disregard the summons. A new summons/subpoena will be issued when jury trials resume.

2. The proceedings of the Houston County Grand Jury are hereby suspended for the months of March and April. Witnesses subpoenaed to appear before the Grand Jury are to contact the District Attorney's Office for further instructions.

3. Court proceedings which do not involve jurors will continue as scheduled, with the judges for each level of court making the procedural changes they believe appropriate to keep at a minimum the number of participants together in one room at a given time. These proceedings include, but are not limited to bench trials, arraignments, plea and bond hearings, temporary hearings, domestic rules, etc. Changes include, without limitation, staggering the times for participants to appear, limiting the number of cases which may appear on a calendar, using video conferencing, etc.

While these changes are being made in an effort to protect the citizens of Houston County, the Court is **not**, by this Order, declaring a "Judicial Emergency" as that term is defined in O.C.G.A. § 38-3-60(2). Accordingly, this Order does not suspend, toll, extend, or otherwise grant relief from deadlines or other time schedules or filing requirements imposed by applicable statutes, rules, regulations, or court orders, whether in civil or criminal cases or administrative matters.

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The Sheriff of Houston County shall post this Order on his public notification site and in the various courthouses in the county. The Clerk of the Superior Court of Houston County shall immediately notify and serve a copy of this Order on the judges and clerks of all classes of courts sitting within Houston County, and shall post same on the public access web site for the Superior Court Clerk's Office.

SO ORDERED, this thirteenth day of March, 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elda B. Bani", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.