

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF DODGE COUNTY
OCONEE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

ORDER DECLARING JUDICIAL EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, Chief Justice Melton issued an Order Declaring Statewide Judicial Emergency on March 14, 2020 due to the spread of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 in order to protect the health and safety of those who work in or are required to appear in our courts. Said Order directed courts to remain open to address essential functions to the extent feasible and has most recently been extended by Third Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency on June 12, 2020.

WHEREAS, IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED that a Judicial Emergency exists in Dodge affecting all levels of court such that there is a serious health emergency pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-60(2)(D). See O.C.G.A. § 38-3-60. The nature of this emergency is the return of a positive test for Coronavirus/COVID-19 for a member of law enforcement who operates in the Dodge County Courthouse Annex.

WHEREAS, the Dodge County Courthouse Annex poses a health hazard to the public and must be closed for sanitization procedures. The Dodge County Commissioners shall have the building cleaned and sanitized prior to reopening.

WHEREAS, IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED that the Judicial Emergency substantially endangers or infringes upon the normal functioning of the judicial system as it relates to the function of the Probate and Superior Courts as said offices have been instructed to close for cleaning. The Clerk of Court shall also be forced to close. Continued public operation of said courts is no longer feasible and would constitute a public health hazard. To the extent possible, the Courts shall continue to utilize video or telephone conference for emergency and critical functions.

Therefore, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-61, The Honorable Chief Judge Sarah F. Wall of the Superior Court of the Oconee Judicial Circuit Circuit **DOES HEREBY ORDER AND DECLARE** the existence of a Judicial Emergency in Dodge County. The nature of this emergency is the continued transmission of Coronavirus/COVID-19 throughout Dodge County and within the Dodge County Courthouse Annex and the potential infection of those who are required to appear in said courts or wish to conduct business with said courts.

This local Judicial Emergency shall terminate on June 28, 2020 at 11:59 p.m., unless otherwise extended.

Thus, the undersigned hereby makes this declaration of a judicial emergency affecting the Probate and Superior Courts. All judicial functions in said courts shall cease unless they can be conducted via video or teleconferencing.

Accordingly, **IT IS THE ORDER** of the Court that the Dodge County Courthouse Annex be closed to the public immediately and until further notice. Individuals having come into contact with the infected individual shall be notified by county officials and encouraged to self-isolate and be tested.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-62, during the period of this Order, the Court hereby suspends, tolls, extends, and otherwise grants relief from any deadlines or other time schedules or filing requirements imposed by otherwise applicable statutes, rules, regulations, or court orders, whether in civil or criminal cases or administrative matters.

Should the state of emergency extend beyond the period indicated above or should the nature of the emergency otherwise require modification by the Court, the Court will make a determination of available alternative remedies for the conduct of court business, as necessary, and a corresponding Order will be entered and distributed in accordance with Georgia law.

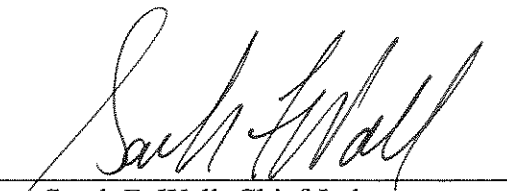
IT IS ORDERED that the Sheriff of Dodge County shall post this Order on the Dodge County Annex doors. The Dodge County Sheriff shall ensure that the doors to the building are locked.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the undersigned shall immediately notify and serve Chief Justice Harold D. Melton of the Supreme Court with a copy of this Order, such service to be accomplished via email to Tee Barnes, the Clerk of the Supreme Court of Georgia, at barnest@gasupreme.us;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the undersigned shall immediately notify and serve a copy of the order on the judges and clerks of all courts of Dodge County and on the clerks of the Georgia Court of Appeals and the Georgia Supreme Court, such service to be accomplished through reasonable means to assure expeditious receipt; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the public shall be notified of this Order via the posting of this Order in writing at the various courthouses of the Oconee Circuit and that this Order shall be provided to the local Bar Association. Affected parties shall also be notified.

SO ORDERED this 25^h day of June, 2020.



Sarah F. Wall, Chief Judge
Oconee Judicial Circuit