

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE EASTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF GEORGIA

FILED IN OFFICE

IN RE:)
DECLARATION OF)
JUDICIAL EMERGENCY)

2021 AUG -4 P 4: 12

Autrey Middleton
DEP. CLERK SUPERIOR CT
CHATHAM COUNTY, GA

DECLARATION OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY: JULY 30, 2021

WHEREAS, IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED that a Judicial Emergency exists in Chatham County, Georgia affecting all courts such that there is a serious health emergency pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-60(2)(D).

WHEREAS, as an “authorized judicial official” as defined in O.C.G.A. § 38-3-60, the undersigned hereby declares that this Court is confronted with a judicial emergency. Therefore, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-61, the Honorable Chief Judge Penny Haas Freeseemann of the Superior Court of Chatham County, Eastern Judicial Circuit DOES HEREBY REAFFIRM the existence of a Judicial Emergency in the Eastern Judicial Circuit in Chatham County, Georgia. The nature of this emergency is the continued transmission of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 throughout Chatham County, Georgia and the potential for infection of those who are required to appear in our courts, who may be required to interact with large groups, and those who work in court facilities. Moreover, the Court is apprised that employees who work in the courthouse have tested positive or are symptomatic for COVID-19; such courthouse employees work directly with the public in close proximity to other employees, and the close and confined conditions of the work areas within the courthouse necessitate this Order.

WHEREFORE, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-61(c), the Court finds that the circumstances underlying the judicial emergency makes access to the J. Tom Coleman Courthouse, 133 Montgomery Street, Savannah, Georgia 31401, temporarily impossible or impractical for conducting grand jury sessions. **The Court hereby designates the following**

facility, which is reasonably accessible and appropriate, for the conduct of court business:
**THE RALPH MARK GILBERT CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM, 360 MARTIN LUTHER
KING, JR. BOULEVARD, SAVANNAH, CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA.¹**

During the pendency of this Order, the court also hereby suspends, tolls, extends, and otherwise grants relief from the deadlines set forth in O.C.G.A. § 44-7-54(a).

Unless otherwise ordered, this Order shall remain in effect for a period of thirty (30) days **from Friday, July 30, 2021.**

This Order shall not serve to alter, amend or in any way modify the earlier declarations and determinations referenced above.

IT IS ORDERED that the Sheriff of Chatham County shall post this Order in a public manner in the affected courthouse location and at each public entry point of the courthouse.

There shall be no interruption of normal electronic filing services and electronic or digital search capabilities in the affected courts to the extent that they are otherwise normally available.

Moreover, all courthouse offices, including the Clerk of the Superior Court, shall remain open for public access by email, telephone and by person during regular business hours of eight o'clock (8:00) a.m. until five o'clock (5:00) p.m. Monday through Friday, less and except legal holidays.

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 ta barnest@gasupreme.us.

¹ The Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum is located in the county seat, Savannah, Georgia, within the Eastern Judicial Circuit and is approximately 0.6 mile from the J. Tom Coleman Judicial Building at 133 Montgomery Street, Savannah, Georgia.

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 sitting within the jurisdiction affected and on the clerks of the Georgia Court of Appeals and Georgia Supreme Court, such service to be accomplished through reasonable means to assure expeditious receipt; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the undersigned shall give notice of the issuance of the order to the affected parties, counsel for the affected parties and the public.

SO ORDERED this 4th day of August, 2021, nunc pro tunc July 30, 2021.



PENNY HAAS FREESEMANN
CHIEF JUDGE, SUPERIOR COURT
EASTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT