District of Columbia Courts
Joint Committee on Judicial Administration
Washington, D. C. 20001

FILED
MAR 18 2020
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COURT OF APPEALS

JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

ORDER REGARDING OPERATION OF THE DC COURTS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY

(Filed—March 18, 2020)

WHEREAS, Pursuant to D.C. Code § 11-1701(b)(9) and (c)(1), the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration, with the concurrence of the Chief Judge of the D.C. Court of Appeals and the Chief Judge of the D.C. Superior Court, shall have responsibility and is granted the authority over the policies and practices of the District of Columbia court system; and

WHEREAS, In instances of emergency conditions, whether natural or otherwise, that significantly disrupt access to or the operations of one or more courts or other judicial facilities of the District of Columbia or the ability of the Judiciary to operate effectively, the Joint Committee and the Chief Judges of the D.C. Court of Appeals and the D.C. Superior Court may be required to determine the extent to which court operations or judicial functions shall be modified and continue; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to D.C. Code §§ 11-745(c) and 11-947(c), the Chief Judges of the D.C. Court of Appeals and the D.C. Superior Court, in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency situation requiring the closure of the Court of Appeals or Superior Court or rendering it impracticable for the United States or District of Columbia Government or a class of litigants to comply with deadlines imposed by any Federal or District of Columbia law or rule, may enter such order or orders as may be appropriate to delay, toll, or otherwise grant relief from the time deadlines imposed by otherwise applicable laws or rules for such a period as may be appropriate for any class of cases pending or thereafter filed in the Court of Appeals and the Superior Court beyond an initial fourteen-day time period; and

WHEREAS, Due to the pandemic of the coronavirus (COVID-19), and consistent with guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control, and in light of the state of emergency in the District of Columbia as declared by Mayor Muriel Bowser on March 11, 2020, and the National Emergency as declared by President Donald J. Trump on March 13, 2020, court operations must be adjusted in order to ensure the safety and well-being of litigants, counsel, other members of the public, and Judiciary personnel;

NOW, THEREFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ORDERS, this 18th day of March 2020, that pursuant to the authority conferred by D.C. Code § 11-1701, and pursuant to the order of March 15, 2020, issued by the Chief Judge of the D.C. Superior Court[1] and the order of March 16, 2020, issued by the Chief Judge of the D.C. Court of Appeals,[2] the courts shall remain operational as modified during this emergency period for the administration of justice while balancing the health and safety needs of litigants, court visitors, and personnel, to ensure continued access to justice; and

THE JOINT COMMITTEE FURTHER CONSENTS and ORDERS, that the Chief Judges of the D.C. Court of Appeals and the D.C. Superior Court are vested with the authority to issue additional orders extending the period during which deadlines are tolled or extended for all statutory and rules-based time limits in the D.C. Code, the D.C. Rules of Appellate Procedure, and the Superior Court Rules, during this emergency situation and consistent with the best interest of the administration of justice.

Orders setting forth the time limits that are extended will follow.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL ADMINSITRATION:
Chief Judge Anna Blackburne-Rigsby, D.C. Court of Appeals, Chair
Chief Judge Robert Morin, D.C. Superior Court
Associate Judge John Fisher, D.C. Court of Appeals
Associate Judge Lynn Leibovitz, D.C. Superior Court
Associate Judge Laura Cordero, D.C. Superior Court

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[1] English: https://www.dccourts.gov/sites/default/files/Order-3-15-20.pdf
Spanish: https://www.dccourts.gov/sites/default/files/Order-Chief%20Judge%20Final%20(Spa).pdf

[2] https://www.dccourts.gov//sites/default/files/2020-03/DCCA_Order-Operations_During_Coronavirus_Emergency-March_16_2020.pdf