Supreme Court of Florida

No. AOSC20-31

IN RE: REMOTE CIVIL JURY TRIAL PILOT PROGRAM

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

As a result of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, jury trials in the Florida state courts have been suspended since March 16, 2020.[1] The Florida State Courts System recognizes the need to resume jury proceedings and trials in criminal and civil cases at the earliest opportunity and is working diligently to do so in a manner that protects the rights of parties, criminal defendants, crime victims, and the public while also protecting the health of all participants and the public.

To evaluate the feasibility of conducting jury trials through remote means, the establishment of a remote civil jury trial pilot program is hereby authorized. The purpose of the pilot program is to establish the framework and identify the logistics of trying a case remotely.

The Workgroup on the Continuity of Court Operations and Proceedings During and After COVID-19 is charged with developing requirements for

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[1]. See *In re: COVID-19 Emergency Procedures in the Florida State Courts*, Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC20-13 (March 13, 2020).

participation in the remote civil jury trial pilot program and with selecting up to five judicial circuits to participate in the pilot program. Because of the complex constitutional and due process issues presented in criminal cases, such pilot program shall, at this time, be limited to civil cases. Additionally, the selection of case(s) by the circuits should be based upon the case being conducive to a remote proceeding, and all parties must consent to participate in the pilot program.

Each participating judicial circuit shall present the results of its remote civil jury trial pilot project and report its findings and recommendations to the chief justice through the state courts administrator no later than July 31, 2020.

DONE AND ORDERED at Tallahassee, Florida, on May 21, 2020.

AOSC20-31 5/21/2020

Chief Justice Charles T. Canady

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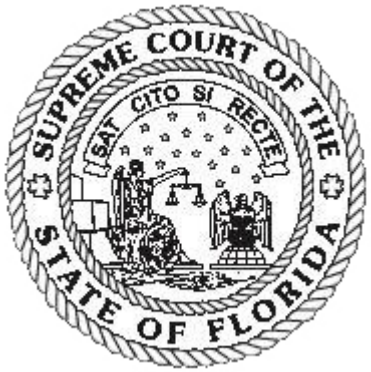
ATTEST:



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John A. Tomasino, Clerk of Court

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