Serial: **234989**

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF MISSISSIPPI

FILED

DEC 18 2020

OFFICE OF THE CLERK
SUPREME COURT
COURT OF APPEALS

No. 2020-AD-00001-SCT
&
No. 89-R-99038-SCT

IN RE: EMERGENCY ORDER RELATED TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

ORDER

This matter is before the Court on the Joint Petition of the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General and the Office of the State Public Defender to Invoke Mississippi Rule of Criminal Procedure 17.5 in Trial-Court Proceedings Statewide.

On December 10, 2020, the Attorney General for the State of Mississippi and the State Public Defender filed a joint petition seeking permission "to invoke Mississippi Rule of Criminal Procedure 17.5 to allow Mississippi's two active Medical Examiners to testify by deposition in trial-court proceedings statewide." Petitioners state that "[b]y allowing the two active Medical Examiners to be deposed, their testimonies about cause of death and other pertinent topics may be secured long before trial – eliminating the scheduling problems that will arise if they are required to testify live." Petitioners believe the procedure is necessary to assist the trial courts, to limit the number of persons in the courtroom during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to accommodate the "extraordinary demands" placed on the Medical Examiners during this time.

After due consideration, the undersigned Chief Justice, in his capacity as chief administrative officer of all courts in the state, finds that the bench, the bar, and any

interested parties shall be provided the opportunity to respond or offer comment on the petition. Given the exigency of the circumstances, all such responses and comments shall be filed with the Court on or before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 8, 2021.

IT, THEREFORE, IS ORDERED that the bench, the bar, and any interested parties shall be provided the opportunity to respond or offer comment on the Joint Petition of the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General and the Office of the State Public Defender to Invoke Mississippi Rule of Criminal Procedure 17.5 in Trial-Court Proceedings Statewide. All such responses and comments shall be filed with the Court on or before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 8, 2021.

SO ORDERED, this the 18 day of December, 2020.

MICHAEL K. RANDOLPH
CHIEF JUSTICE