Court News ...

2020-12-03-02

The Supreme Court of South Carolina

Re: Summary Court Jury Trials

ORDER

Pursuant to the provisions of Article V, Section 4 of the South Carolina Constitution,

I find that since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has required unprecedented changes to ordinary court operations throughout the state. These changes have impacted not only judges and court staff, but also South Carolina's citizens who use the courts and may be called to serve as jurors.

I further find that in light of the ongoing increase in COVID-19 cases throughout South Carolina, and the expectation by the medical community and experts that the number of positive cases will continue to increase in the near future, it is prudent to once again make changes to the operations of the summary courts for the protection of those who work within the courts, as well as those who serve our state by participating in jury service. Based on the foregoing,

IT IS ORDERED that the summary courts statewide shall not commence any jury trials after December 4, 2020. Summary Court Judges shall continue to preside over all other regularly scheduled hearings as assigned. Beginning with the week of December 7, 2020, all summary court hearings currently scheduled, with the exception of trials by jury, shall proceed as previously scheduled. Where possible, the use of remote communication technology to conduct hearings is encouraged.

This Order shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by Order of the Chief Justice. Any Order allowing the resumption of jury trials will be issued at least three weeks prior to the affected date to allow for the proper summoning of jurors.

s/Donald W. Beatty
Donald W. Beatty
Chief Justice of South Carolina

Columbia, South Carolina
December 3, 2020