Supreme Court of Florida

No. AOSC20-20

IN RE: COVID-19 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO SPOKEN LANGUAGE COURT INTERPRETER REGULATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

WHEREAS the Florida State Courts System continues to monitor and take measures to address the effects on court operations of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), a severe acute respiratory illness that can spread among humans through respiratory transmission; and

WHEREAS the World Health Organization has declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic, the Governor of Florida has declared a state of emergency exists, and the Surgeon General and State Health Officer has declared a public health emergency exists; and

WHEREAS the health, safety, and well-being of judicial officers, court personnel, and community members who interact with the courts are a high priority for the Florida State Courts System; and

WHEREAS section 25.386, Florida Statutes, requires the Supreme Court of Florida to establish standards and procedures for qualifications, certification,

professional conduct, discipline, and training of foreign language court interpreters; and

WHEREAS the Florida State Courts System recognizes that the challenges of travel limitations, local operational issues, and cancellation of various court events, educational programs, and testing activities may preclude interpreters from fully complying with the requirements specified by the Florida Rules for Certification and Regulation of Spoken Language Court Interpreters and other requirements promulgated therefrom; and

WHEREAS it is the intent of this order to temporarily suspend procedural requirements and limitations that could hinder court interpreters' efforts to comply with renewal and maintenance of registration requirements and official state-level designation attainment in accordance with Florida Rules for Certification and Regulation of Spoken Language Court Interpreters 14.200, 14.205, 14.210, and 14.215;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority conferred upon me by Article V, section 2(b), of the Florida Constitution and Florida Rules of Judicial Administration 2.205(a)(2)(B)(iv) and 2.205(a)(2)(B)(v),

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The timeframe by which an interpreter must submit to examination – specifically, within the first year of any two-year registration period

or applicable renewal period – is hereby suspended during the period from the date of this order through December 31, 2020.

2. For an interpreter whose registration and any corresponding official state-level designation expires on or after the issuance of this order, the reporting cycle is hereby suspended during the period from the date of this order through December 31, 2020.

3. Any applicant who has been fingerprinted as of the date of the signing of this order shall be allowed through December 31, 2020, to file his or her initial or renewal registration application with the Court Interpreter Certification and Regulation Program in accordance with operating procedures of the Court Interpreter Certification Board. An applicant who submits an application during the period from the date of this order through December 31, 2020, shall be allowed to be fingerprinted through March 31, 2021.

4. For court-employed interpreters hired between September 1, 2019, and the date of this order who have not yet attained official state-level certification, the one-year time period to attain certification is suspended from the date this order is signed through December 31, 2020. The suspension of the one-year time period restores additional days equal to the number stated in this order. Applicants who are

selected as court-employed interpreters and who are hired between the signing of this order and December 31, 2020, shall have their employment date deemed January 4, 2021, solely for purposes of becoming certified within one year of employment.

5. The two-year timeframe for language skilled interpreters to take and pass the certifying examination upon notice of its availability or risk loss of language skilled status is suspended from the date this order is signed through December 31, 2020. The suspension of the two-year time timeframe restores additional days equal to the number stated in this order.

6. The two-year timeframe for provisionally approved interpreters to attain official state-level designation is suspended from the date this order is signed through December 31, 2020. The suspension of the two-year timeframe restores additional days equal to the number stated in this order.

All other provisions governing the renewal and maintenance of registration of spoken language court interpreters shall remain in effect.

These provisions are effective upon signing of this administrative order.

DONE AND ORDERED at Tallahassee, Florida, on March 31, 2020.

AOSC20-20 3/31/2020

Chief Justice Charles T. Canady

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ATTEST:

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John A. Tomasino, Clerk of Court

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