SUPREME COURT OF ARKANSAS

IN RE RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	**Delivered:** April 3, 2020

PER CURIAM

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Supreme Court of Arkansas delivered per curiam orders on March 17, 2020, and March 20, 2020, implementing emergency precautions to help protect the public from unnecessary risks. *See In re Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2020 Ark. 116 (per curiam); *In re Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2020 Ark. 125 (per curiam). Today the Supreme Court of Arkansas announces additional measures to combat the spread of the disease to the public, including the employees of the Arkansas judiciary.

The courts of the State of Arkansas shall remain open. The previous suspension of all in-person proceedings in all appellate, circuit, and district courts shall be extended through Friday, May 1, 2020, and may be extended by this court as circumstances warrant.

This Order allows in-person hearings for the excepted proceedings listed in the March 17 per curiam, *In re Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2020 Ark. 116.). While hearings in individual cases of these types may be set by judges, and such hearings may be held in person, judges are encouraged to utilize all available technologies—including teleconferencing and video conferencing—to further limit in-person courtroom appearances. The administrative judge of each judicial circuit is authorized to determine the manner in which the listed in-person exceptions are to be conducted. Such proceedings shall

be limited to the attorneys, parties, witnesses, security officers, a press-pool representative, and other individuals necessary to the proceedings as determined by the presiding judge.

All proceedings that do not require in-person appearances of parties or counsel are not suspended and may continue or be suspended at the discretion of the presiding judge as circumstances allow. For the duration of this Order, judges may exercise their discretion to conduct proceedings that do not require in-person appearances or in-person proceedings suspended as a result of this Order, by teleconferencing, video conferencing, or other available technology. Any criminal or civil court rules that would impede a court clerk's or a judge's ability to utilize such technologies are hereby suspended for the duration of this Order.

Any summonses for persons to participate in jury panels are hereby suspended through Tuesday, June 30, 2020.

For criminal cases, in light of the public-health emergency, any delay for speedy-trial purposes during this emergency shall be deemed to be extraordinary circumstances that shall presumptively constitute good cause as an excluded period for the period of delay under Arkansas Rule of Criminal Procedure 28.3(h).

This Order is to be interpreted broadly for protection of the public from the risks associated with COVID-19. This Order applies statewide to all courts and court clerks' offices except administrative courts of the executive branch, federal courts, and federal court clerks' offices in Arkansas.

It is so ORDERED.

FOR THE COURT:

John Dan Kemp, Chief Justice