IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE

ORDER NO. 8204

Update regarding Authorizing Videoconference Grand Jury Proceedings

Under Chief Justice Order 8157, the Second Judicial District was authorized to conduct a pilot project allowing grand jury proceedings by videoconference. This project has been successful in Kotzebue. Due to recent case counts, the presiding judges in other districts have suspended in-person grand jury proceedings in some locations. This order would allow grand jury proceedings to be conducted by videoconference statewide. Therefore under the authority of Supreme Court Order No. 1957,

IT IS ORDERED:

1. For any location or district affected by the coronavirus pandemic, the presiding judge may allow witnesses, interpreters, prosecutors, grand jurors, and other required participants to participate by videoconference, but the grand jury foreperson must be personally present at the courthouse;

2. The prosecutor and the foreperson shall ensure that all grand jurors can see, hear, and communicate with the other participants;

3. The prosecutor shall require all participants to verify that their participation cannot be overheard and to notify the foreperson immediately if an person can overhear their participation; and

4. All participants shall maintain the secrecy of grand jury proceedings as required by Criminal Rule 6(l).

DATED: November 2, 2020

Joel H. Bolger
Chief Justice

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