NEWS RELEASE

Judicial Branch, State of New Hampshire

For Immediate Release:
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New Hampshire Superior Court Cancels Strafford Jury Trial Due to COVID Concerns

Trials in other counties will continue as scheduled

CONCORD, NH – In light of rapidly rising COVID-19 infection rates and limited air circulation in the Strafford County courthouse, Chief Justice of the Superior Court Tina Nadeau has made the decision to cancel the jury trial in Strafford County currently scheduled to begin with evidence on Thursday, November 12, 2020. The infection rate in Strafford County is 16.8 cases per 100,000 as of November 10.

“We considered the current infection rate, and evaluated whether the air filtration and ventilation system in the Strafford County courthouse would make it prudent to continue with the trial,” noted Chief Justice Nadeau. “After further consultation with the Judicial Branch expert, Dr. Erin Bromage, the decision was made to cancel the trial. This is a difficult decision and it was made to ensure the continued health and safety of court staff, jurors, and parties to the case.”

Nadeau noted, however, that the decision to cancel the trial in Strafford due to COVID concerns held only for this particular trial in this select county. Trials scheduled to take place this month in Rockingham County, Hillsborough County Northern District and Merrimack County will continue as scheduled until further notice. Trials in Strafford will likely resume when infection rates in the county subside.

“The infection rates in other counties where trials are scheduled are lower than Strafford County, and given that the building filtration systems in those counties are strong, our expert has indicated that trials can occur safely. Nonetheless, we will reexamine this decision on a daily basis.”

For more information on jury trials in New Hampshire, see the NHJB website.

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