Supreme Court of Florida

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Chief Justice authorizes some remote criminal jury trials due to continuing pandemic conditions

TALLAHASSEE – Florida's Chief Justice Charles Canady has issued an administrative order authorizing some remote criminal jury trials as COVID-19 pandemic conditions persist around the state. This order extends a similar authorization issued in June 2020 for some civil trials.

Under the order, the defendant must agree to the remote trial, and trial judges must consider the views of prosecutors and victims. Remote jury trials must be conducted under requirements & evaluation criteria developed by a COVID-19 Workgroup.

Canady on March 13, 2020, suspended jury trials around the state to protect the health of participants and the public from transmission of the coronavirus.

The move toward remote "virtual" hearings is a major historical shift in state court operations, which have relied heavily on in-person proceedings since Florida became a state in 1845.

All state court coronavirus emergency orders and advisories are linked on the Florida Supreme Court's website: https://www.floridasupremecourt.org/Emergency

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