Court News ...

2020-12-03-01

The Supreme Court of South Carolina

Re: Circuit Court Jury Trials

ORDER

Pursuant to the provisions of Article V, Section 4 of the South Carolina Constitution,

I find that since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has required unprecedented changes to ordinary court operations throughout the state. These changes have impacted not only judges, attorneys, elected officials, and court staff, but also South Carolina's citizens who use the courts and may be called to serve as jurors.

I further find that in light of the ongoing increase in COVID-19 cases throughout South Carolina, and the expectation by the medical community and experts that the number of positive cases will continue to increase in the near future, it is prudent to once again make changes to the operations of the circuit courts for the protection of those who work within the courts, as well as those who serve our state by participating in jury service. Based on the foregoing,

IT IS ORDERED that the circuit courts statewide shall not commence any jury trials after December 4, 2020. Circuit Court Judges shall continue to preside over all other regularly scheduled hearings as assigned. Beginning with the week of December 7, 2020, all circuit court hearings currently scheduled, with the exception of trials by jury, shall proceed as previously scheduled. Where possible, the use of remote communication technology to conduct hearings is encouraged.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all Circuit Court Judges shall notify the office of Court Administration should their scheduled term of court break down for one or more days.
This Order shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by Order of the Chief Justice. Any Order allowing the resumption of jury trials will be issued at least three weeks prior to the affected date to allow for the proper summoning of jurors.

s/Donald W.
Beatty
Donald W. Beatty
Chief Justice of South Carolina

Columbia, South Carolina
December 3, 2020