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SCMF-20-0000152

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF HAWAI‘I

In the Matter of the Judiciary’s Response
to the COVID-19 Outbreak

ORDER EXTENDING ORDER REGARDING TEMPORARY EXTENSION
OF THE TIME REQUIREMENTS UNDER
HAWAI‘I RULES OF PENAL PROCEDURE RULE 5(c)(3)
(By: Recktenwald, C.J., Nakayama, and McKenna, JJ.,
and Chief Judge Ginoza, assigned by reason of vacancy,
with Wilson, J. dissenting[1])

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a public health emergency. In response to the pandemic, the Judiciary postponed non-urgent court business and limited in-person proceedings in an effort to ensure the health and safety of court users and Judiciary personnel, and to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19 in the courts. As COVID-19 cases remained low, court operations resumed in accordance with public health safety guidance, and to the extent possible with available resources. Criminal proceedings have proceeded in-person and by video conference in accordance with court rules and as feasible.

[1] A dissent by Wilson, J., is forthcoming.

Since July 2020, however, there was a surge of COVID-19 cases in Hawai‘i, with record numbers of positive cases and increased hospitalizations being reported. There was also a surge of COVID-19 cases in our community correctional centers and facilities, particularly at the O‘ahu Community Correctional Center ("OCCC"). As a result, inmates were being held in quarantine and the transport of custody defendants was suspended, thus impacting the time requirements for preliminary hearings under Hawai‘i Rules of Penal Procedure ("HRPP") Rule 5(c)(3). Further, in a letter to the court dated August 18, 2020, the Office of the Public Defender requested the temporary suspension of, *inter alia*, HRPP Rule 5(c)(3), noting that defendants released from OCCC on bail or otherwise may need to quarantine and comply with isolation requirements, and that allowing the courts to continue matters for non-custody defendants would assist in those endeavors.

Thus, on August 27, 2020, this court entered the "Order Regarding Temporary Extension of the Time Requirements Under Hawai‘i Rules of Penal Procedure Rule 5(c)(3)," which provided that the first circuit may temporarily extend the time requirements for preliminary hearings no longer than reasonably necessary to protect public health and safety, while encouraging judges to follow the time requirements under HRPP Rule 5(c)(3) to the extent possible and to utilize remote technology as feasible. The order expires on September 17, 2020.

Since the order was filed, the number of positive COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations statewide has remained high, and the transport of custody defendants from all Oʻahu correctional facilities continue to be suspended. The current public health emergency and the changing conditions require flexibility and vigilance. The continued need to protect the health and safety of court users and Judiciary personnel during this unprecedented time remains vital, thus necessitating a further extension of the August 27, 2020 order for first circuit criminal matters.

Accordingly, pursuant to article VI, section 7 of the Hawaiʻi Constitution and Hawaiʻi Revised Statutes ("HRS") § 602-5(a)(6), Governor David Y. Ige's Emergency Proclamations, and HRS § 601-1.5,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the August 27, 2020 "Order Regarding Temporary Extension of the Time Requirements Under Hawaiʻi Rules of Penal Procedure Rule 5(c)(3)" for first circuit criminal matters is extended until October 16, 2020, unless otherwise further modified or extended.

Dated: Honolulu, Hawaiʻi, September 11, 2020.

/s/ Mark E. Recktenwald

/s/ Paula A. Nakayama

/s/ Sabrina S. McKenna

/s/ Lisa M. Ginoza