SUPREME COURT OF ARKANSAS

IN RE RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	**Delivered:** March 20, 2020

PER CURIAM

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Supreme Court of Arkansas issued a per curiam order on March 17, 2019, suspending in-person court proceedings and implementing emergency precautions to protect the public from unnecessary risks. *In Re Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2020 Ark. 116 (per curiam). Subsequently, Governor Hutchinson extended closures within the state due to the evolving nature of this pandemic and public health officials' recommendations to protect public safety. Today the Supreme Court of Arkansas likewise announces additional measures to protect the public, including the employees of the Arkansas judicial branch.

Effective March 19, 2020, at 5:00 p.m., the Justice Building in Little Rock closed to the public and shall remain so until further notice. Notwithstanding this closure, the Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals shall remain open. The previously announced suspension of in-person proceedings in Arkansas's courts is hereby extended to Friday, April 17, 2020.

In addition to the existing authority of the Clerk of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals to grant filing extensions, the Clerk may also grant extensions in response to this pandemic. A request for a filing extension will be granted by the Clerk if the grounds for

the extension relate to COVID-19 and the length of the extension is reasonable under the circumstances. Such requests should indicate whether any opposing party has an objection.

This order is to be interpreted broadly for the protection of the public, including the employees of the Arkansas judicial branch, from the risks associated with COVID-19. This order applies statewide to all courts and court clerks' offices except administrative courts of the executive branch, federal courts, and federal court clerks' offices located in Arkansas.

It is so ORDERED.

FOR THE COURT:

John Dan Kemp, Chief Justice