

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI**

IN RE: THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

3:21-MC-3

TWELFTH EXTENSION OF STANDING ORDER

On March 27, 2020, Congress authorized, and the President of the United States signed, the CARES Act in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 29, 2020, the Judicial Conference of the United States found, “pursuant to the CARES Act, that emergency conditions due to the national emergency declared by the President under the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) with respect to COVID-19 have materially affected and will materially affect the functioning of the federal courts generally.”¹

On April 2, 2020, this Court entered a Standing Order which specifically found that “most criminal court proceedings, including all those enumerated in the Act, and felony pleas and sentencings, cannot be conducted in person anywhere in the District without seriously jeopardizing public health and safety.” *See* No. 3:20-MC-9 [3]. The Standing Order made other specific findings, as required by the CARES Act, and was set to remain in effect “for 90 days unless terminated earlier.” That 90-day period ended July 1, 2020. Prior to its expiration, on June 29, 2020, the Court, finding the same emergency conditions continued to exist in this District at that time, extended the Standing Order for an additional 90 days beginning July 2, 2020. The Standing Order has been extended multiple times since then. The most recent extension took effect December 19, 2022. *See* No. 3:21-MC-3 [19].

Although the pandemic’s impact on daily life in this District has lessened as the number of confirmed cases per day has declined, the pandemic is not over. Out of an abundance of caution

¹ *See* Director’s Memo from James C. Duff to All United States Judges March 29, 2020.

and so as to allow each judge in this District the discretionary authority to continue to hold felony pleas and sentencings by video conferencing or telephone conferencing as needed, the Court finds the same emergency conditions continue to exist in this District and hereby extends the Standing Order for an additional 90 days, unless terminated earlier, beginning on March 20, 2023. All terms of the original Standing Order shall remain in place during this extended time period. The Court will review this authorization and determine whether to extend it further if emergency conditions continue.

SO ORDERED, this 17th day of March, 2023.



DEBRA M. BROWN, CHIEF JUDGE