

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

IN RE: THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

3:21-MC-3

FIFTH 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.

The Standing Order was set to remain in effect “for 90 days unless terminated earlier.” That 90-day period ended on July 1, 2020. Prior to its expiration, on June 29, 2020, the Court, finding that the same emergency conditions continued to exist in this District at that time, entered an Extension of the Standing Order, extending the Standing Order for an additional 90 days beginning on July 2, 2020. The Standing Order has been extended multiple times since then. The most recent Extension was filed March 30, 2021. *See* No. 3:21-MC-3 [4].

Although the pandemic’s impact on daily life in this District has lessened over the past several months as the number of confirmed cases per day has declined and vaccines have become

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

more widely available, the pandemic is not over. So as to allow each judge in this District the discretionary authority to continue to hold certain hearings by video conferencing or telephone conferencing, the Court finds that 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 June 29, 2021. 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 29th day of June, 2021.



DEBRA M. BROWN, CHIEF JUDGE