

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

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IN RE:
COURT OPERATIONS UNDER THE EXIGENT
CIRCUMSTANCES CREATED BY COVID-19

GENERAL ORDER

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has declared a national emergency, and the Governor of the State of Connecticut has declared a public health emergency throughout the State;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has advised people to take precautions in light of the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) outbreak, and has noted that the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus, through, among other means, social distancing;

AND

WHEREAS, the Court continues to review its operations to identify measures that will help slow the spread of the virus by minimizing contact between persons, while at the same time preserving its core mission of serving the public through the fair and impartial administration of justice;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, effective immediately and through April 10, 2020, that:

- 1) All in-court (in-person) civil and criminal proceedings scheduled to commence on or before April 10, 2020, before any district or magistrate judge in any courthouse in the District of Connecticut shall be CONTINUED pending further Order of the Court, with the exceptions and under the procedures noted in paragraph 2 below;
- 2) During this period, the Court will handle, in court and without interruption, presentment of new arrests, detention hearings, grand jury returns, and civil matters requiring a prompt hearing under Fed. R. Civ. P. 65; in addition, each district or magistrate judge may, in his or her discretion, choose to handle other matters in court (as opposed to continuing the matter or handling it via video or teleconference) to the extent each judge deems it necessary to do so in the interests of justice, after giving due consideration to the public health risks presented by in-court appearances; each judge will notify the parties through the CM/ECF system as to whether a particular proceeding

assigned to that judge and scheduled to occur on or before April 10, 2020, will take place as scheduled and, if so, whether the proceeding will occur in court or through remote communication (i.e., video or telephone conference);

3) During this period, staff in the Clerk's Office will telework to the maximum extent possible consistent with serving the needs of the public, except that limited staff will be present at the Clerk's office at each seat of court to accept filings and answer questions from the public during normal business hours. Telework policies applicable to judges' chambers will be decided by each judge;

4) The Court will issue further orders concerning these matters in the coming weeks, including orders that relate specifically to the Bankruptcy Court.

The District of Connecticut courthouses (including the facilities at 157 Church Street, New Haven) remain open for all other business. Court staff not physically present at the courthouse are equipped to work remotely, and will work normal hours during each business day. Staff in the Clerk's Office are available by telephone, mail will be received, and intake desks remain open for filings. Electronic filings may still be made through the CM/ECF system. The public is encouraged to continue utilizing Court services while following all applicable public health guidelines.

SO ORDERED:

Dated: March 16, 2020
Bridgeport, CT

/s/ Stefan R. Underhill
Stefan R. Underhill
Chief United States District Judge