



**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-00-18

RE: COVID-19 JUROR EXCUSAL FOR JURY SELECTION DURING PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, due to concerns regarding the spread and treatment of the Coronavirus, known as COVID-19, on March 1, 2020, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed executive order 20-51, declaring a public health emergency in the State of Florida. The Florida Supreme Court issued Administrative Order No. AOSC20-23, *Amendment 6*, regarding mitigating the impact of the Coronavirus on the court system and the potential impact on those summoned for jury duty. The Florida Supreme Court also issued Administrative Order No. AOSC20-32, *Amendment 3*, which provides recommendations for who should and should not enter a courthouse facility.

In order to provide for continued operations of the Court during an emergency, and in accordance with Article V, section 7, Florida Constitution, Rule of Judicial Administration 2.215, and sections 43.26 and 40-013, Florida Statutes,

IT IS ORDERED:

1. The Bay County Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Calhoun County Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Gulf County Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Holmes County Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Jackson County Clerk of the Circuit Court, and the Washington County Clerk of the Circuit Court shall notify the Chief Judge, or his/her designated trial judge, if a potential juror summonsed for jury service submits a sworn affidavit or otherwise indicates, subject to penalty of perjury that he or she:

- a. Would not pass a health screening because he or she has any of the following symptoms excluding those due to a known medical reason other than COVID-19:
 - i. Fever of 100.4 degrees or more;
 - ii. Cough;
 - iii. Shortness of breath;
 - iv. Fever or chills;
 - v. Fatigue;
 - vi. Muscle or body aches;
 - vii. Headache;
 - viii. Sore throat;
 - ix. New loss of taste or smell;
 - x. Congestion or runny nose;

- xi. Nausea or vomiting;
 - xii. Diarrhea;
- b. Has experienced symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
 - c. Has had close contact with someone with a COVID-19 diagnosis or is awaiting COVID-19 test results within the past 14 days;
 - d. Is currently awaiting test results to determine if the potential juror has COVID-19;
 - e. Is otherwise under instructions to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19;
 - f. Is someone at a higher risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 as identified by the Centers for Disease Control and requests to be excused. People at increased risk for severe illness are presently identified by the CDC as older adults (65 years or more) and people of any age with the following underlying medical conditions:
 - i. Cancer;
 - ii. Chronic kidney disease;
 - iii. COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease);
 - iv. Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system);
 - v. Obesity (body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher);
 - vi. Serious heart conditions;
 - vii. Sickle cell disease;
 - viii. Type 2 diabetes mellitus;
 - g. Is caring for a child or relative whose regular care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19; or
 - h. Is receiving leave pursuant to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

2. The Chief Judge, or designee, shall consider the circumstances and determine if the person(s) should, in his/her discretion, be excused or postponed from jury service. The Clerk shall, based upon the Court's decision, excuse or postpone such jurors.

3. The Bay County Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Calhoun County Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Gulf County Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Holmes County Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Jackson County Clerk of the Circuit Court, and the Washington County Clerk of the Circuit Court shall also notify the Chief Judge, or his/her designated trial judge, if a potential juror summonsed for jury service submits a sworn affidavit or indicates, subject to penalty of perjury that he or she:

- a. Has recently returned to work after being unemployed due to COVID-19; or
- b. Has suffered a financial or personal loss due to COVID-19 that makes it a hardship to perform jury service.

4. The Chief Judge, or designee, shall consider the circumstances and determine if the person(s) should, in his or her discretion, have their service postponed. The Clerk shall, based upon the Court's decision, postpone the jury service for such person(s) for up to six months.

5. The Clerks of Court shall take all reasonable measures to assist the Court in determining in advance of the day of service that persons summonsed for jury service be considered for postponement or rescheduling for their service when it appears the potential juror might be a risk for transmitting COVID-19, might suffer a severe illness if exposed to the virus or would otherwise be unable to serve on a jury if selected during Phase 2 or Phase 3 operational restrictions occasioned by COVID-19.

6. Pursuant to this order all judges of the 14th Judicial Circuit are hereby designated to consider the attendant circumstances of each person summoned for jury service and determine, in their discretion, whether to postpone jury service for up to six (6) months.

This Administrative Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until further order of the Court.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers, at Panama City, Bay County, Florida, this 23rd day of September, 2020.



CHRISTOPHER N. PATTERSON
CHIEF JUDGE



A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
BILL KINSAUL CLERK
OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
By Bill Kinsaul
Deputy Clerk