

Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2020 9:21 PM

Subject: Request from Chief Justice Johnson re Prisoner Transfers

**TO: ALL JUDGES
ALL COURT ADMINISTRATORS AND APPELLATE COURT CLERKS**

To our Judges –

As you are aware, the risk of health complications due to COVID-19, known as coronavirus, continue to escalate. These risks have created an urgent situation in our prisons and jails that necessitate extra care and concern for the safety of our offenders, staff and the public at large.

Many federal and state officials, including the Center for Disease Control (CDC) have urged Americans to eliminate non-essential travel and from the court.

Out of an abundance of caution concerning COVID-19, the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections has suspended prisoner visitation, tours, transfers and volunteering for 30 days at Louisiana's eight state-run prisons as have the majority of local jails. While there have been no confirmed cases COVID-19 inside of these institutions, the Department has made this decision to protect the vulnerable incarcerated populations, staff, and to help reduce the spread of this disease. Additionally, travel to and from the court house poses risks to our offender population and to corrections officers.

As such, at the request of Secretary James LeBlanc, effective immediately, I am asking that all appearances by offenders in state or local custody be continued, if possible, for the next 30 days. If it is critical that the offender appear in your court, please contact Jonathan Vining, DOC General Counsel, at jvining@corrections.state.la.us as soon as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation,
Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson