

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
STATE OF LOUISIANA
PARISHES OF EAST CARROLL, MADISON AND TENSAS

ORDER 2020-005

Acting under the authority of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974, Article V, Section 1; and the inherent power of this Court, and considering the continuing spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Louisiana. Governor John Bel Edwards' Declarations of Public Health Emergency in Proclamation Numbers JBE 2020-25, JBE 2020-27, JBE 2020-30, JBE 2020-33, JBE 2020-41, and JBE 2020-52 and President Donald Trump's Declaration of a National Emergency on March 13, 2020, the Louisiana Supreme Court's Orders dated March 16, 2020, March 20, 2020, March 23, 2020, April 6, 2020, April 22, 2020 and April 29, 2020, and in consideration of ongoing public health recommendations to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus and slowing the spread of the disease while balancing the need to protect the constitutional rights and public safety of the citizens of the state by maintaining access to Louisiana courts,

IT IS HEREBY ORDER THAT:

1. The courthouses for the parishes of East Carroll, Madison and Tensas will continue to be closed to the public although the offices in the courthouses are open. The courts can be contacted at: Honorable Michael E. Lancaster, Chief Judge, at 318-574-2712 and Honorable Laurie R. Brister, Judge, at 318-559-2388.
2. Except as otherwise provided herein, all civil and criminal non-jury trials, Civil and Criminal hearings, Civil and Criminal Court Appearances and Criminal Arraignments, Pretrial Conferences, Sentencing Hearings and Revocations set for any date between May 1, 2020 and May 31, 2020 are hereby continued and will be reset by further orders of this court, except for hearings related to the following emergency matters:
 - A. Civil protective orders,
 - B. Child in Need of Care proceedings,
 - C. Emergency child custody matters, including La. C.C.P. Art 3945 matters,
 - D. Proceedings for children removed from their home by emergency court order,
 - E. Proceedings related to emergency interdictions and mental health orders,
 - F. 72 hour hearings and continued custody proceedings,
 - G. Any other matter considered an emergency by the Court.

3. Criminal initial appearances for adult arraignments for incarcerated individuals and bond hearings (including Gwen's Law) shall continue as usual and shall be conducted with the use of telephone and/or video conferencing whenever possible.
4. East Carroll, Madison and Tensas Clerk of Court offices will continue to be open from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. through May 15th; however, all business will be conducted by appointment only. All offices are urged to limit in-person contact as much as possible by utilizing available technologies as follows:
 - A. Fax Filing:
 1. East Carroll Clerk of Court Fax No. 318-559-0037
 2. Madison Clerk of Court Fax No. 318-574-3961
 3. Tensas Clerk of Court Fax No. 318-766-3926
 - B. Online (if available) and appointments, please call:
 1. East Carroll Clerk of Court Phone No. 318-559-2399
 2. Madison Clerk of Court Phone No. 318-574-0655
 3. Tensas Clerk of Court Phone No. 318-766-3921
5. This Order expressly does not prohibit any court proceedings by telephone, video, teleconferencing, or any other means that do not involve in-person contact. This Order does not affect courts' consideration of matters that can be resolved without in-person proceedings.
6. Given the public health concerns and the necessity of taking action to slow the spread of the disease, the continuances occasioned by this Order serve the ends of justice and outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial. Therefore, the time periods of such continuance shall be excluded from speedy trial computations pursuant to law, including but not limited to those set forth in the Louisiana Code of Criminal Procedure and the Louisiana Children's Code, and presumptively constitute just cause.
7. This Court may issue further orders regarding this matter as necessary to address the circumstances arising from this pandemic and will post such Orders on the Louisiana Supreme Court's website at www.lasc.org

8. This Order is retroactive to the date of this Court's Order of March 16, 2020. This Court's March 16, 2020 Order, this Court's March 23, 2020 Order, this Court's March 25, 2020 Order, this Court's April 3, 2020 Order, this Court's April 9, 2020 Order and any and all other Orders issued by this Court in response to the COVID-19 pandemic shall remain in full effect except to the extent that such Orders are in conflict with this Order.

Tallulah, Louisiana this ~~4th~~ day of May, 2020.


MICHAEL E. LANCASTER, CHIEF JUDGE


JUDGE LAURIE R. BRISTER