

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

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

Case No. 4:95mc40111

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

Congress has passed legislation authorizing the use of video and telephone conferencing, under certain circumstances and with the consent of the defendant, for various criminal events during the course of the COVID-19 emergency. See the CARES Act, H.R. 748. The Judicial Conference of the United States has also found that emergency conditions due to the national emergency declared by the President have affected and will materially affect the functioning of the federal courts generally.

As Chief Judge and with the consent of all active and senior United States District Judges in the Northern District of Florida, pursuant to Section 15002(b)(1) of the legislation, I hereby authorize the use of video conferencing, or telephone conferencing if video conferencing is not reasonably available, for all events listed in Sections 15002 of the legislation.

Pursuant to Section 15002(b)(2), I further specifically find that felony pleas under Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure and felony sentencings under Rule 32 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure cannot be conducted in person in this district without seriously jeopardizing public health and safety. As a result, if judges in individual cases find, for specific reasons, that felony pleas or sentencings in those cases cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice, the judges may, with the defendants' consent, use video conferencing for felony pleas and sentencings in those cases, and may use teleconferencing if video conferencing is not reasonably available.

Pursuant to Section 15002(b)(3) of the legislation, this authorization will remain in effect for 90 days unless terminated earlier. If emergency conditions continue to exist 90 days from the entry of this order, I will review the authorization and determine whether to extend it.

DONE AND ORDERED this 30th day of March, 2020.

s/ Mark E. Walker

Chief United States District Judge