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District Attorney
22nd Judicial District
Washington – St. Tammany Parishes

Warren Montgomery
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April 1, 2020

22nd JDC Criminal Law Practitioners,

In the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Court, District Attorney's Office, Clerk's Office, Public Defender's Office and the STPSO Jail have collaborated to create a "virtual court" in order to maintain a level of activity for our criminal justice system. Over the last several years, the District Attorney's Office has overhauled its file management system, digitized all files, and shifted to an e-discovery system. All assistant district attorneys and other designated personnel have department issued laptop computers that can remotely access all of their criminal files.

Because of these advancements, this can access all existing cases and actively screen/process new cases from law enforcement through our established remote intake processing. A system is now in place to conduct virtual arraignments, conferences, revocation hearings and guilty pleas for incarcerated defendants. The Court has acquired 13 business level Zoom licenses to "host" video conferences/virtual court sessions. Last week the virtual court system was tested and live court proceedings were conducted through the Zoom video conferencing application. The court can host up to 99 participants per meeting. Each participant of a virtual court session will be invited through a link sent from the Court via text message or email. Each invitee can participate via cell phone or computer.

Those participating by computer would simply click on the link in the email sent out. Those participating through a cell phone would download the Zoom video conferencing application onto the cell phone in advance of participating. Once downloaded, simply click on the link from the text message or email to participate.

We are working diligently to create a platform through which we can all operate and conduct our legal business. Our Assistant District Attorneys are all on duty and available to conduct the majority of the business of our office. I have attached a waiver the court has uniformly adopted which must be executed by the defendant (remotely sent to the defendant in jail) and his/her attorney in order to make an appearance through the Zoom video conferencing in lieu his/her physical presence in the courtroom.

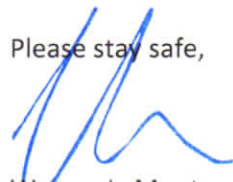
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If I may answer any questions about this process or any other matters pertaining to the operations of the District Attorney's Office during this period, please do not hesitate to contact me via email wmontgomery@22da.com or office phone: (985) 809-8304. You may also reach out to Collin Sims, Chief of Criminal via email csims@22da.com or cell phone (985) 400-9016, as well as any of our Assistant District Attorneys.

Please stay safe,



Warren L. Montgomery
District Attorney

WLM/wmo

Attachment – Zoom Conferencing Waiver