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From: Douglas Mitchell <douglas@lawyermitchell.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 2:41 PM
To: Comments Mailbox
Subject: [External]Future of Court Operations - Remote and In-person Proceedings
Attachments: Gmail - 08_05_2021 THURSDAY CALENDAR.pdf

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Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.
Acting Administrative Director of the COurts
Comments on the Future of court Operations
Hughes Justice Complex; POB 037
Trenton, NJ 08625-0037

Judge Grant,

My name is Douglas Mitchell and I am a solo-attorney in private practice. My practice consists of a large docket of Superior Court criminal matters in addition to municipal court cases. While the COVID-19 pandemic has caused our society much harm, remote appearance represents somewhat of a silver lining.

I say this because prior to the COVID shutdown, state court practitioners, unlike our federal and bankruptcy counterparts, did not have an established means of appearing in court remotely. When we were unable to be at a particular court at a given time we had to make ready-hold requests and/or adjournment requests to the chagrin of the bench and co-counsel in many instances. The end result of such practice(s) was the unnecessary delay in case progression and resolution.

While the current system is not perfect, I think it works better than what was previously done. Remote appearance helps solo/private attorneys who have to appear in multiple courts/counties, sometimes the same day/date and time, handle all of their matters much more expeditiously.

My observations and suggestion applies specifically to criminal arraignments, status conferences, pre-trial conferences and the like. Please note that my understanding is that the aforementioned matters will proceed remotely per the July 16, 2021 Notice to Bar and Public. However, today August 4, 2021, I received notice from the law clerk for Judge Ciffelli out of Essex County that for the August 5, 2021, calendar all attorneys are **"expected to appear in-person"** and that **"zoom links will not be provided except for COVID-19 reason, etc.."** (See attached email)

I am unclear as to whether or not the Supreme Court is being followed in this instance. Please consider my suggestions with respect to the future direction of appearance protocol, and advise as to whether zoom links can be withheld per the Supreme Court's position. Thank you,

Regards,
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08/05/2021 THURSDAY CALENDAR

Sergio Rojas <sergio.rojas@njcourts.gov> Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 1:38 PM
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Please be advised that Judge Cifelli expects all attorneys to be present in Courtroom 1102 for their matters. Zoom links will no longer be provided except for COVID-19 related reasons (e.g., a positive test) or other extenuating circumstances. Thank you.

Sergio A. Rojas

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