

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

GENERAL ORDER 20-0022

IN RE: TELECONFERENCING AND VIDEO CONFERENCING FOR FELONY PLEAS  
AND SENTENCINGS

The CARES Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136, § 15002, 134 Stat. 281, 527-30 (2020), authorizes the use of video and telephone conferencing, under certain circumstances and with the consent of the defendant, for various criminal case events during the COVID-19 emergency. 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.

On my own motion, pursuant to Section 15002(b)(2) of the CARES Act, I 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 a judge in an individual case finds, for specific reasons, that a felony plea or sentencing in that case cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice, the judge may, with the consent of the defendant after consultation with counsel, use video conferencing, or teleconferencing if video conferencing is not reasonably available, for the felony plea or sentencing in that case. Judges may also use this authority for equivalent events in juvenile cases as described in Section 15002(b)(2)(B).

Pursuant to Section 15002(b)(3) of the legislation, this authorization will remain in effect until September 12, 2020, unless terminated earlier. If emergency conditions continue to exist on September 12, 2020, I will review this authorization and determine whether to extend it.

ENTER:



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HON. REBECCA R. PALLMEYER  
Chief Judge

Dated at Chicago, Illinois this 12<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2020