

#070



July 28, 2021

Glenn A. Grant, J.A.D.
Acting Administrative Director of the Courts
Comments on the Future of Court Operations
Hughes Justice Complex; P.O. Box 037
Trenton, NJ 08625-0037
VIA EMAIL comments.mailbox@njcourts.gov *and US MAIL*

RE: COMMENTS ON FUTURE COURT OPERATIONS (REMOTE AND IN-PERSON)

Dear Judge Grant:

I am a family law attorney and practice exclusively family law. The opinions in this letter are my own and I cannot and do not speak for all members of my Firm, as I do not know their positions.

I am writing to express my wholehearted agreement with a "remote first" procedure for Motion arguments, case management conferences, and all Family matters listed in subparagraph (d) of page 3 of the July 16, 2021, Notice to the Bar and Public. I also believe in certain instances, it is wholly appropriate and indeed, preferable, to have bench trials in the Family Division proceed remotely.

I have been involved in numerous remote bench trials in the family division including three Final Restraining Order hearings and two divorce trials from December of 2020 to April of 2021. In many ways, I have found them easier to conduct remotely than in person, especially with the requirement of multiple trial days. Remote proceedings save time and money by not requiring counsel and parties to be part of a "cattle call" waiting all day to be heard when, especially in FV matters, the Court schedules numerous cases, including trials, at the same time. I believe that if all parties consent to remote proceedings and the Court has no preference, then the Court should allow remote proceedings for trials also.

It is my hope that individual judges, despite what may be a remote-first procedure for many proceedings, do not backslide and require in-person appearances for routine matters.

Not only have remote proceedings been a significant time and money savings to both clients and lawyers but having remote appearances has greatly reduced the need for me to make alternate and sometimes last-minute childcare arrangements in the mornings and afternoons.

I consider remote proceedings in the family division (and also being able to file on JEDs) the silver lining of the Pandemic for our practice.

Very truly yours,



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