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From: Olivo, Steven <olivos@ci.newark.nj.us>
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To: Comments Mailbox
Subject: [External]Comments on the future of the Court

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Dear Judge Grant,

You have requested comments on the direction that the NJ courts should take in the future concerning remote vs. in-person appearances. I practice almost exclusively in the Civil Part, so I will confine my thoughts mostly to that particular part.

I have no objection to case management conferences, arbitrations, and motion hearings proceeding remotely. I'd actually like to see an addition to the rules permitting more depositions to take place remotely as well, to the effect that there is a presumption of conducting depositions remotely absent good cause for holding depositions in person. As it is, we attorneys have many pressures placed on us and it's very hard to be in multiple places on the same day and the scheduling of say, proceedings at 10 a.m. and then 2 p.m. results in time "falling through the cracks" if it needs to be used traveling. I am also mindful of "real life" issues like child care obligations, which could be significantly alleviated by the use of remote proceedings. I do think, however, that the court needs to add a weather closing policy clarification. As a single man, I have no problem if the courts call a "snow day" and I have to work from home, I can just proceed remotely from my computer. However, I am friends with another attorney who is a single mom of 2, and, if she is required to continue with educational obligations that day remotely, that could be a problem for her. If I had to make a proposal for a weather policy, I'd propose that, if the weather interferes, there be a presumption that all proceedings that can will continue remotely, with a liberal adjournment policy if the attorney concerned would have familial issues.

I do think jury trials in the Civil Part should continue in person, to allow the parties the maximum opportunity to present their cases with as little distraction to the jurors as possible.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach back out to me.

Thank you,

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