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**From:** David Wasserman <dw@andrewparkpc.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 6, 2021 9:08 AM  
**To:** Comments Mailbox  
**Subject:** [External]Return to in-person court proceedings

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Dear Judge Grant:

I am an attorney who practices in north and central New Jersey. I am writing to provide feedback about the future of court proceedings.

I have found that remote proceedings have worked very well for arbitrations, settlement conferences, and motion arguments.

However, I am very apprehensive about returning to in-person court appearances, especially when vaccination rates have not reached herd immunity. Currently, there is a very infectious virus variant prevalent in the area. I am concerned about the prospect of spending long periods of time indoors in courthouses, even with masking and social distancing, because the current variant is increasingly contagious. This is a particular concern for me with the scheduling of civil trials, whether virtual or in-person. I have experienced multiple trial judges pressuring me to appear in person for virtual trials because it is more expedient for most of the trial participants to be present in court. This pressure is very uncomfortable because I do not wish to alienate or upset judges, but I also have young children at home who are not eligible for vaccination.

I would respectfully suggest that remote proceedings continue, but that civil trials remain remote and not return to in-person until vaccination rates reach the threshold of herd immunity. Increased use of settlement conferences can be used to greater effect in reducing the backlog of cases scheduled for trial.

Respectfully,

David Wasserman