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In response to the Notice of the Court asking for comment for the continuation of virtual hearing even after the pandemic, I am in full support of such a proposal. Specially, as it relates to civil cases, the vast majority of hearings (arbitrations, settlement conferences, motion hearings & CMCs) should remain virtual/video/telephone. It provides resilience to the justice system if the public health crisis continues and/or a new one develops in the future. It took the system 3-6 months to ramp up the technological aspect of virtual hearings and to revert back to in person hearing would be going back to square one. In addition, from a pure work-life balance of attorneys (a group of progression where work has increased without a comparable raise of pay), traveling to a hearing usually results in more time then the actually hearing. There is no reason an attorney should have to travel an hour each way to a hearing that would last less then fifteen minutes (arbitrations and motions). Even with private firms, travel time is at a half rate and is essentially a lost of income. Relative to arbitrations, hearings have been more productive in light of arbitration statements being submitted to arbitrators prior to the hearing rather then the arbitrators in the court house who have to rush to read statements as well as listen to arguments of counsel. Motion hearings are usually just for questions from the judges, as the vast majority have the arguments laid out in the papers and the court has already formed an impression of where the decision will be.

Accordingly, I am in fully agreement and support with the court's proposal for virtual hearings as it will provide resiliency to the court, improve efficiency, and provide a real improvement in the work/life balance of attorneys that has been been ignored/missing from the practice of law.

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