

IN THE SUPERIOR COURTS OF HALL AND DAWSON COUNTIES  
NORTHEASTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
STATE OF GEORGIA

FILED  
HALL CO. GA  
2020 SEP 18 AM 9:38  
CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURTS  
NORTHEASTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

IN RE: Declaration of Judicial Emergency \*  
\*  
Date: September 18, 2020 \*

**ORDER DECLARING JUDICIAL EMERGENCY**

On July 15, 2020, the undersigned entered an *Order Declaring Judicial Emergency* for both Hall and Dawson Counties due to the threat of transmission of Coronavirus/COVID-19. This local order was permitted to expire on September 10, 2020. On March 14, 2020, the Honorable Harold D. Melton, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, declared a statewide judicial emergency. This state of emergency remains in effect today pursuant to a *Sixth Order Extending Declaration of Statewide Judicial Emergency* entered on September 10, 2020. Today's order supplements and applies Justice Melton's *Sixth Order*, and renews a local emergency.

The COVID-19 disease continues to pose great risk to public health and, despite the implementation of and adherence to safe operating guidelines in this circuit, a number of courthouse employees have tested positive for COVID-19.

Therefore, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-60(2)(D), it is hereby DETERMINED that a Judicial Emergency exists in Hall and Dawson counties, affecting all courts such that there is a serious health emergency. The emergency substantially endangers and infringes upon the normal functioning of the judicial system, the ability of persons to avail themselves of the judicial system, and the ability of litigants or others to have access to the courts.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 38-3-61, the undersigned does hereby DECLARE a Judicial Emergency in the Northeastern Judicial Circuit.

Accordingly, IT IS THE ORDER of the undersigned that all courts, litigants, parties, visitors, and members of the public shall continue to abide by the Safe Operating Guidelines, remote hearing policies, and all other terms previously laid out in the *Order Declaring Judicial Emergency* entered on July 15, 2020.

**I. Grand Jury Proceedings**

Pursuant to Justice Melton's *Sixth Order*, and in consultation with Mr. Lee Darragh, District Attorney for the Northeastern Judicial Circuit, the undersigned hereby authorizes grand jury proceedings to resume in person on or after November 2, 2020. Such proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with guidelines from the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Judicial Council's COVID-19 Task Force, as well as in strict compliance with any and all protocols enacted by this circuit's COVID-19 Jury Committee.

**II. Jury Trials**

As stated in the *Sixth Order*, Georgia's current broad prohibition on jury activity must soon give way to a safety plan that allows cases to proceed to trial. Therefore, this circuit's COVID-19 Jury Committee should submit written plans to the Administrative Office of the Courts as soon as possible, and begin preparing court stakeholders for a possible pilot trial in Hall and Dawson counties before the end of the year. Recurrent trial proceedings will not resume before 2021.

**III. COVID-19 Jury Committee**

By order entered July 15, 2020, the undersigned previously established and appointed for this circuit a COVID-19 Jury Committee. Today's order amends that appointment only by adding the following committee members noted in italics.

The following persons, or their designee, are hereby appointed to the committee:

Hon. Kathlene F. Gosselin, Chair, Chief Judge, Northeastern Judicial Circuit  
Hon. B.E. Roberts, III, Chief Judge, Hall County State Court

Mr. Lee Darragh, District Attorney, Northeastern Judicial Circuit  
Mr. Brad Morris, Circuit Public Defender, Northeastern Judicial Circuit  
Ms. Stephanie Woodard, Solicitor General, Hall County  
Mr. Charles Baker, Clerk of Courts, Hall County State and Superior Courts  
Mr. Justin Power, Clerk of Courts, Dawson County Superior Court  
Mr. Jason Stephenson, Court Administrator, Northeastern Judicial Circuit  
Lt. Johnny Holtzclaw, Dawson County Sheriff's Office  
Dr. Pamela Logan, Director, Georgia Department of Public Health District 2  
Ms. Lynn Ansley, Deputy Court Administrator, Northeastern Judicial Circuit  
Ms. Natalie Teston, President, Gainesville-Northeastern Bar Association  
*Hon. Jason J. Deal, Superior Court Judge,*  
*Hon. Clint G. Bearden, Superior Court Judge*  
*Mr. Matt Leipold, Assistant Public Defender, Northeastern Judicial Circuit*  
*Mr. Chris van Rossem, Assistant Public Defender, Northeastern Judicial Circuit*  
*Mr. Conley Greer, Assistant District Attorney, Northeastern Judicial Circuit*  
*Ms. Wanda Vance, Assistant District Attorney, Northeastern Judicial Circuit*  
*Mr. Clint Teston, Gainesville-Northeastern Bar Association*  
*Mr. Jon Pope, Attorney, Hasty Pope Trial Lawyers*  
*Mr. Zack Tumlin, Attorney, Tumlin Law Group*  
*Mr. Joshua Thompson, CIS Director, Northeastern Judicial Circuit*

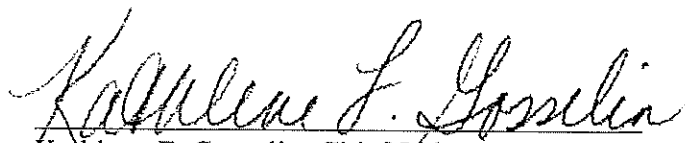
**This Judicial Emergency shall terminate on October 18, 2020, at 11:59 p.m., unless otherwise extended, rescinded, amended, or superseded.**

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, pursuant to O.C.G.A § 38-3-63, that the Sheriffs of Hall and Dawson Counties shall post this Order on their public notification site and in the courthouses;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the undersigned shall immediately notify and serve Chief Justice Harold D. Melton of the Supreme Court with a copy of this Order, such service to be accomplished via email to Tee Barnes, the Clerk of the Supreme Court of Georgia.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the undersigned shall immediately notify and serve a copy of the order on the judges and clerks of all courts sitting within the jurisdictions affected.

**IT IS SO ORDERED** this 18<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2020 at 9:00 a.m./p.m.

  
Kathlene F. Gosselin, Chief Judge  
Northeastern Judicial Circuit