UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS EL PASO DIVISION

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IN RE: CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ORDER REGARDING ENTRY INTO THE COURTHOUSE

In recognition of the national emergency declared by the President of the United States on March 13, 2020, the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas, El Paso Division has used the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ("CDC") guidance to determine how to best protect the public while conducting necessary, in-person operations. After due consideration of CDC guidelines and El Paso County statistics, the court hereby renders the following order effective March 15, 2022.

The CDC recommends using COVID-19 Community Levels as an indicator of the intensity of safety precautions to be implemented.¹ At the time of this Order, the COVID-19 Community Level in El Paso County is classified at Medium, with the CDC recommending individuals stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and get tested if they have symptoms.² At this level, the CDC no longer recommends the general public wear a mask indoors.³

¹ See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Use and Care of Masks, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html (last visited Mar. 8, 2022) [hereinafter Use and Care of Masks].

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *COVID-19 by County*, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html (classifying El Paso County, Texas at "Medium" on a Low-Medium-High Scale) (last visited Mar. 8, 2022).

³ The CDC does, however, recommend individuals at high risk of severe illness talk to their healthcare provider about whether to wear a mask and take other precautions. *See Use and Care of Masks*.

Additionally, the vaccination rate in El Paso County exceeds the national average,⁴ and those who do contract COVID-19 are occupying fewer hospital beds.⁵ Having considered these factors, the Albert Armendariz, Sr. United States Courthouse, 525 Magoffin, El Paso, Texas will be open for business to the public without the requirement to wear a mask or other face covering. Any individual who wishes to continue to wear a mask or other face covering may do so. Individual judges may require masks for those entering their chambers or courtroom. In that event, signs will be prominently posted giving notice of the requirement.

This order supersedes all previous orders relating to entry into the Albert Armendariz, Sr. United States Courthouse and will remain in full force and effect until further Order of this Court.

SO ORDERED. day of Th SIGNED this //

ISTRICT JUDGE

S. DISTRICT JUDGE

U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE

DAVID BRIONES

SENIOR U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE

⁴ See El Paso Strong, City/County of El Paso COVID-19 Results, https://www.epstrong.org/results.php (last visited Mar. 8, 2022) (showing the percentage of the El Paso County population over 5-years-old that is fully vaccinated at 79.2%) [hereinafter City/County of El Paso Covid-19 Results]; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States, https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations_vacc-total-admin-rate-total (last visited Mar. 8, 2022) (showing the percentage of the total United States population over 5-years-old that is fully vaccinated at 69.3%).

⁵ See City/County of El Paso Covid-19 Results (showing hospitalization of COVID-19 patients declining at a steady rate for over 14 days).