

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

IN RE:
VIDEO TELECONFERENCING
AUTHORIZATION FOR
CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS UNDER
THE CARES ACT

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MISC. NO. 00-308

STANDING ORDER 2021-14

On March 29, 2020, as Chief Judge I entered Standing Order 2020-06 authorizing the use of video and telephone conferencing, under certain circumstances and with the consent of the defendant, for various criminal case events during the court of the COVID-19 emergency pursuant to the CARES Act § 15002. I subsequently reviewed and extended that authorization for additional 90-day periods several times. *See* Standing Orders 2020-15, 2020-17, 2020-22, 2021-05, 2021-08. However, given improved conditions, I permitted that authorization to lapse on November 25, 2021. In the interim, circumstances have changed sufficiently to warrant reinstatement of those authorizations. Maryland has seen a significant increase in COVID-19 cases and the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 raises concerns that this period of increased infections may be prolonged. Unfortunately, public health considerations once again favor virtual proceedings in some circumstances.

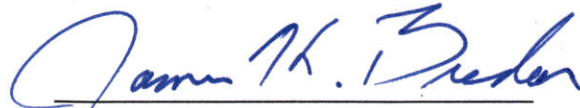
Accordingly, pursuant to Section 15002(b)(1) of the legislation, I again hereby authorize the use of video conferencing, or telephone conferencing if video conferencing is not reasonably available, for all events listed in Section 15002(b) of the legislation, with the consent of the defendant after consultation with counsel.

Pursuant to Section 15002(b)(2), I further specifically find that many felony pleas under Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure and many felony sentencings under Rule 32

of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure again cannot be conducted in person in this district without seriously jeopardizing public health and safety, as well as the health and safety of certain court participants at increased risk of serious illness from COVID-19. As a result, if a judge in an Case individual case finds, for specific reasons, that a felony plea or sentencing in that case cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice, the judge may, with the consent of the defendant after consultation with counsel, use video conferencing, or teleconferencing if video conferencing is not reasonably available, for the felony plea or sentencing in that case. Judges may also use this authority for equivalent events in juvenile cases as described in Section 15002(b)(2)(B).

Pursuant to Section 15002(b)(3) of the legislation, this authorization will remain in effect for 90 days unless terminated earlier. If emergency conditions continue to exist 90 days from the entry of this order, I will review this authorization and determine whether to extend it.

Date: December 20, 2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James K. Bedar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

James K. Bedar, Chief Judge
United States District Court