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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
100 EAST HOUSTON STREET
MARSHALL, TX 75670

CHAMBERS OF
Rodney Gilstrap
CHIEF JUDGE

May 6th, 2020

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To All Prospective Jurors
Summoned to Appear for
Jury Selection at the
U. S. District Court
in Marshall, Texas
on Monday June 1st, 2020

RE: Your Upcoming Jury Service in the Era of Coronavirus

Dear Prospective Jurors:

This letter is attached to the Summons directing you to appear for Jury Service at 7:45 a.m. on Monday, June 1st, 2020 at the Sam B. Hall, Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse at 100 East Houston Street in downtown Marshall.

This will be the first jury trial which I have undertaken since the advent of the Coronavirus pandemic. I want to assure you that every reasonable precaution will be taken to enhance the health and safety of the jury, the parties, the lawyers and the Court staff during jury selection and the jury trial to follow.

So that you won't be surprised when you arrive, please be aware of the following:

1. Each prospective juror will have their temperature taken via a hand-held thermometer as they enter the Courthouse, to ensure that no one with fever or an elevated temperature is admitted;
2. Once you enter the building and pass through the initial security screening, you will be separately escorted by Court Staff to the Courtroom and seated to achieve the maximum distancing possible;
3. Masks will be distributed, or you may wear your own when you enter the Courtroom. Until the eight (8) person jury is actually selected, seated and

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sworn, everyone appearing as a prospective juror will be required to wear a mask;

4. Latex gloves will be available for those who wish to wear them, but gloves are not required. If you would like gloves, ask the Court staff for them when you are seated in the Courtroom;
5. Smartphones, iPads or similar electronic devices should be left outside the Courthouse. You may certainly leave them in your vehicle rather than at home, if you choose, but do not bring them into the Courthouse;
6. Hand sanitizer (alcohol based) will be available to you at multiple locations inside the Courthouse, and you may ask Court Security Officers to make it available at your seat, once you are seated in the Courtroom;
7. Those selected for this jury should know that the eight (8) jurors will be spaced in the fourteen (14) seat jury box to achieve maximum distancing between jurors during the trial;
8. The jury box, jury room and jury room bathrooms will be deep cleaned each evening when the Court recesses, and this will continue throughout the trial;
9. Individual lunches will be provided to the eight (8) selected jurors during each day of the trial, to minimize any travel in and out of the Courthouse and to minimize juror's interaction at local restaurants.

If you:

a) have been diagnosed by a licensed physician as having Coronavirus anytime within the past 30 days;

b) are actively caring for a family member or loved one who has tested positive for the Coronavirus, or

c) are now in self-quarantine status and that status will continue on June 1st;

then, in any of these situations: you should immediately advise Mrs. Kecia Clendening, the Court's Deputy in Charge, at her phone number in the attached summons. Her phone number is also listed at the conclusion of this letter. She may ask you to furnish documentation regarding such from your physician, for the Court.

There are two cases that are now scheduled to begin trial on June 1st. At this time, I am not sure which trial will actually begin on the 1st. However, the longest of these trials should last from June 1st through approximately June 10th. That being the case, if you have a scheduled surgical procedure for yourself or a dependent that can't be rescheduled, or if you have some other pre-existing obligation that would make it extremely difficult and create a real hardship on you to be here each day from June 1st through the 10th, then you should immediately advise Mrs. Kecia Clendening, the Court's Deputy in Charge, at her phone number listed at the conclusion of this letter. Please be aware that the right to trial by jury

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is one of the cornerstones of our democracy, and jury trials necessarily involve sacrifice from those citizens called upon to serve. This has always been true, but it is especially true during these unique and trying times. It is my personal conviction that jury service is the second highest form of public service that any American can perform (second only to service in the Armed Forces). The right to trial by jury has been enshrined within the Seventh Amendment to our U. S. Constitution since 1791, and it was one of the stated principles in the Declaration of Independence which fueled our struggle to become an independent nation. Only those with extreme hardships should seek to be excused based on pre-existing obligations.

It is vital that you appear and present yourself for jury service on June 1st; however, the Court wants you to know that we are mindful of these challenging times and we will take every reasonable precaution to maintain your health as well as that of the parties, lawyers and Court staff during this upcoming trial.

I hope this personal letter is helpful and informative. I look forward to seeing you in Marshall on June 1st.

Respectfully,



J. Rodney Gilstrap
Chief United States District Judge

cc: Mrs. Kecia Clendening
Deputy Clerk in Charge
Phone: 903.935.2912