



Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan



701 COLEMAN A. YOUNG MUNICIPAL CENTER • 2 WOODWARD AVE • DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226-3413

For Immediate Release

Contact: Timothy M. Kenny, Chief Judge
Zenell B. Brown, Executive Court Administrator
(313) 224-2236

Subject: Hitting the Pause Button on Jury Trials, Bench Trials, and Evidentiary Hearings

The Third Circuit Court continues to ensure the health and safety of jurors, judicial stakeholders, court users, and the public.

After creating an extensive safety plan which included health screening and the installation of plexi-shield barriers in courtrooms, the Third Circuit Court resumed jury trials the week of September 21, 2020. Two jury trials were successfully conducted in the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice. The jurors who appeared indicated that they felt safe and comfortable with all of the extra precautions and safety measures.

However, the rising number of positive COVID-19 cases necessitates that the Court once again stop jury trials, bench trials, and evidentiary hearings. Chief Judge Timothy M. Kenny has a standing call with Wayne County officials to discuss issues related to the pandemic. The Director of Wayne County Public Health, Carol Austerberry, is a participant on that call.

“It is crucial under our Local Administrative Order that I discuss the trajectory of documented cases to determine the safety of court operations. As the numbers are on an upward spiral, it is clear that it would not be safe to continue jury trials, bench trials, and evidentiary hearings at this time,” Judge Kenny explained. Jurors who have received summons will be notified that their jury service has been completed: they are not required to serve as a juror for the Court for at least the next 12 months. The Court will continue hearing other matters remotely via Zoom, and jury trials and other in-person trials and evidentiary hearings are expected to resume starting January 6, 2021.

Chief Judge Kenny in his notice to the bench reiterated, “The Third Circuit Court has taken important steps to ensure everyone’s health and safety in the courthouses. Two successful jury trials have already taken place. We plan to build on our successful efforts.”

The Mission of Third Judicial Circuit Court is to provide accessible and equal justice with timely dispute resolution. **The Third Judicial Circuit** has jurisdiction over Civil, Criminal, and Family matters arising in the County of Wayne. The National Center for State Courts has cited the Third Circuit Court as one of the model urban courts in the United States for case flow management and the timely disposition of the Court's docket. For more information, visit our website www.3rdcc.org, follow us at Twitter@3rdccorg, and like us on Facebook @3rdccorg.