

**THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE  
PUTNAM COUNTY**

**IN RE:** )  
 )  
**COVID-19 PANDEMIC** )

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**ORDER TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING IN-PERSON PROCEEDINGS  
IN ALL PUTNAM COUNTY COURTS**

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The judiciary of this district has monitored developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic closely. In recognition of an outbreak among court staff and officers, and consistent with the obligations imposed by the Tennessee Supreme Court's order of March 25, 2020, the undersigned deems it necessary and appropriate at this time to take temporary measures to balance the interests of justice with the interests of public health.

***IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED THAT:***

1. All in-person proceedings in all state and local courts in Putnam County, Tennessee, including, but not limited to, municipal, juvenile, general sessions, and state trial courts are hereby suspended from the close of business on Tuesday, November 10, 2020, until 8:00 a.m. on Monday, November 30, 2020, subject to the exceptions enumerated below.

2. Notwithstanding the above, the following in-person proceedings shall continue as scheduled:

a. Proceedings necessary to protect the constitutional rights of criminal defendants, including bond-related matters and plea agreements for incarcerated individuals;

b. Proceedings related to relief from abuse, including but not limited to orders of protection;

- c. Proceedings related to emergency child custody orders;
- d. Department of Children's Services emergency matters related to child protection;
- e. Proceedings related to petitions for temporary injunctive relief;
- f. Proceedings related to emergency mental health orders;
- g. Proceedings related to emergency protection of elderly or vulnerable persons; and
- h. Other exceptions as approved by the presiding judge of the Thirteenth Judicial District.

3. Judges' offices and court clerks' offices shall remain open during this temporary suspension. Physical access to these offices is hereby restricted during the suspension of proceedings contemplated by this order, though offices shall remain accessible by telephone, email, and facsimile transmission to the greatest extent possible during regular business hours.

4. Judges shall work with local law enforcement and other county officials to ensure that, to the extent possible, courthouses remain accessible to carry out essential constitutional functions and time-sensitive proceedings.

5. Under the terms of this order, the courts of Putnam County remain open, consistent with the Judicial Branch's obligation to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19.

SO ORDERED this 10<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2020.

  
RONALD THURMAN  
Chancellor and Presiding Judge  
13<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Tennessee