

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND**

**GENERAL ORDER REGARDING
CRIMINAL MATTERS DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

The following order shall apply to all criminal matters in the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island.

The Court finds that a public health crisis exists, and it is in the best interest of the Defendants, their attorneys, court staff, U.S. Marshals Service and the public that human contact be minimized to the greatest extent.

All criminal hearings shall take place telephonically unless the Court is informed by defense counsel beforehand that the Defendant does not waive his/her appearance at a hearing (e.g., initial appearance, arraignment, bail hearing, change of plea or sentencing), in which case the hearing will be continued. Such telephonic hearings remain open to the public. Any member of the public wishing to access the hearing may contact the Clerk's Office in advance of the hearing to obtain the dial-in information.

During the hearing, defense counsel shall be prepared to convey whether his/her client has waived their appearance. The waiver need not be in writing, as the Court will record the hearing digitally. Where required, arrangements will be made to have the oath administered to the Defendant where the Defendant is located. A mechanism will be in place to allow defense counsel to speak privately telephonically with his/her client and well as to receive interpretative services.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

By the Court:

March 21, 2020

/s/ John J. McConnell Jr., Chief Judge