



Judge Kirsten B. Cohoon
451st Judicial District Court of Texas
Kendall County, Texas

July 27, 2020

Dear Attorney:

On Monday, July 20, 2020, your 451st Judicial District Court met with the Office of Court Administration and the Presiding Judge for the 6th Administrative Region requesting permission to hold a felony jury trial on August 24, 2020. After outlining the plans for conducting the jury trial in light of the current Covid 19 Pandemic, the request was granted. This letter is being sent to each attorney with a jury trial pending on the August 24, 2020 docket.

Attached to this letter is a copy of the juror summons, the COVID-19 Pre-Screening Questionnaire and a Juror Questionnaire that is being sent to 450 potential jurors. ***DUE TO THE NEED FOR MORE SPACE TO ABIDE BY SOCIAL DISTANCING, THE VOIR DIRE PROCESS WILL BE CONDUCTED AT THE KENDALL HALLE LOCATED AT 215 LOHMANN ST., BOERNE, TEXAS 78006.***

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. In order to conduct this felony jury trial in the safest manner possible, please be aware of the following requirements that will be implemented:

1. Upon arrival at the Kendall Halle, jurors will socially distance as they line up to enter the facility;
2. Each person, including the lawyers, will have their temperature taken via a hand-held thermometer to ensure that no one with an elevated temperature is admitted into the facility;
3. Upon entering the Kendall Halle and after processing through the security screening, the jurors will be directed by court staff to their assigned seat to achieve social distancing;
4. Face shields will be provided and will be required during the jury selection process and the jury trial;
5. Latex gloves will be available for those who wish to wear them, but gloves are not required;
6. Hand sanitizer (alcohol based) will be available at multiple locations inside the Kendall Halle;
7. For those selected as a member of the jury, spacing will be implemented to achieve distancing between jurors during the trial; and

8. The jury box, jury room and bathrooms will be cleaned each evening when court recesses.

Each attorney will be provided the received and completed juror questionnaires before voir dire. In order to minimize the voir dire process, the questionnaires must be reviewed prior to the voir dire process. Repetitive questions of the prospective jurors will not be permitted. To the greatest extent possible, all exhibits should be electronic to minimize the need for touching and/or congregating around the exhibits.

You are invited to the courthouse at 3 p.m. on August 21, 2020 to view the courtroom layout and tour the Kendall Halle. Please RSVP not later than close of business on August 19, 2020 to jordan.frantzen@co.kendall.tx.us.

Jury trials are one of the cornerstones of our democracy, and they involve sacrifice from those citizens called upon to serve. This has always been true, and it is especially true during these unique and trying times. It is my personal conviction that jury service is one of the highest forms of public service that any American can perform. The right to trial by jury has been enshrined within the Sixth and the Seventh Amendment to our U. S. Constitution since 1791, and it was one of the stated principles which brought about our struggle for independence as a nation.

This cornerstone of our democracy cannot take a backseat to Covid-19. It is vital that we work together in order to protect the jurors, litigants, lawyers and court personnel. I want you to know that we are mindful of your concerns during these challenging times. We are committed to your safety and will take every reasonable precaution to maintain your health.

I look forward to seeing you at final pre-trial on August 14, 2020.

Truly,



Honorable Kirsten B. Cohoon
Presiding Judge, 451st Judicial District
Kendall County, Texas