



The Ottawa County Municipal Court

LOUIS P. WARGO III

Judge

June 4, 2020

DAVID R. BOLDT
Court Administrator/Magistrate

GAIL MILLER

Clerk

Dear Potential Jurors:

In this unsettling time, and as everyone begins transitioning back to some sense of normalcy, individuals have more questions than answers to their everyday issues and encounters. To add to this list, you have now been summoned for jury duty.

As a result of being summoned to the courthouse, you might ask yourself "Why is it necessary...why is it so important for me to serve on a jury?" Jury duty is important because it safeguards one of the most important and most crucial rights that Americans have in the American legal system. The right every person has to a trial by a jury of his/her peers is essential to our notion of a civilized society. To this extent, the courts must continue to rely on civil-minded jurors like you to help ensure fairness and provide impartial and just decisions.

Now clearly the Court takes public health and safety seriously; the Court must protect and safeguard the public, court staff and personnel, witnesses, attorneys, and of course the jurors, and prevent, as much as possible, the risk of infection from the Corona Virus. Governor DeWine's mandatory and recommended health protocols, as well as the Ohio Supreme Court's, other Ohio Courts and the Ottawa County Health Department's guideline and recommendations provide this Court with the necessary guidance to safely conduct trials in a manner that provides parties in a case access to justice, and at the same time minimizes everyone's risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Taking everyone's health and safety very seriously, this Court has implemented aggressive policies and procedures to prevent the risk of infection and safeguard everyone's health. The Court would like to assure you that it has done everything it can do to safeguard your health during your time in the courthouse by taking the following precautions:

- 1) Please let us know immediately whether you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, or have been exposed to someone experiencing these symptoms:

- (A) Fever more than 100.4 degrees;
- (B) Persistent, dry cough;
- (C) Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
- (D) Chills, muscle pain or sore throat;
- (E) New loss of taste or smell;
- (F) Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea;

- 2) Masks must be worn while you are in the court building. An exception will be made while you are speaking in a court hearing to ensure everyone is clearly understood;

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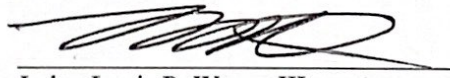
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- 3) Arrangements have been made for social distance seating during the Voir Dire examination, trial, and jury deliberations to the best extent we are able. People will have enough space to distance themselves by at least six (6) feet, as much as possible;
- 4) If you are part of a high risk group, you may be excused by providing medical documentation, along with your written request to the court explaining the medical necessity;
- 5) Non-essential persons will be required to wait outside the courthouse, and to this extent the people permitted to be in the courtroom will be restricted;
- 6) Individuals who are sick or are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, shall not be permitted in the courthouse, and should call the Court to reschedule his/her appearance. Nobody who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be permitted on the jury or in the courthouse;
- 7) The courtrooms, hallways, offices, restrooms, and other common areas are cleaned and sanitized nightly. In addition, the Court's and Clerk's staffs additionally clean the common areas two (2) times daily;
- 8) Everyone is encouraged to wash their hands regularly;
- 9) Hand sanitizer and wipes will be placed in convenient locations, including the jury deliberating room, for your convenience. Attempts will be made to wipe high contact areas, such as the doors, witness stand, tables, and podium as frequently as possible;
- 10) Everyone's temperature will be taken upon entrance to the courthouse;
- 11) Areas where seating is not permitted (for social distancing purposes) will be "taped" or otherwise cordoned off;
- 12) The Court has collaborated with the Ottawa County Health Department and the steps the Court has taken has been approved by the Health Department; and
- 13) Any additional concerns you may have should be addressed directly with the Court Bailiff.

Please note that you cannot simply ignore a summons for jury duty. You must respond to a jury summons.

We are all in this together.



Judge Louis P. Wargo III