



PROCLAMATION

NORTH CAROLINA JUDICIAL BRANCH

RESTORATION OF FULL COURT OPERATIONS

WHEREAS, ARTICLE I, SECTION 18 OF THE NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION PROVIDES THAT “[A]LL COURTS SHALL BE OPEN” AND THAT “JUSTICE SHALL BE ADMINISTERED WITHOUT FAVOR, DENIAL, OR DELAY[;]”

WHEREAS, THE EMERGING COVID-19 PANDEMIC NECESSITATED THE TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF SOME COURT OPERATIONS IN EARLY 2020;

WHEREAS, THESE LIMITATIONS OF COURT OPERATIONS WERE EXTENDED MULTIPLE TIMES THROUGHOUT 2020 BY ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS;

WHEREAS, I ENTERED AN ORDER ON 14 JANUARY 2021 ALLOWING LOCAL COURT OFFICIALS TO RESUME IN-PERSON PROCEEDINGS;

WHEREAS, THE GOVERNOR LIFTED ALL MASS GATHERING LIMITS ON 14 MAY 2021 AND ANNOUNCED THAT MASKING AND SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS WOULD NO LONGER BE NEEDED IN MOST PLACES; AND

WHEREAS, I TERMINATED ALL REMAINING EMERGENCY DIRECTIVES BY AN ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER DATED 7 JUNE 2021;

WHEREAS, FEDERAL AND STATE OFFICIALS HAVE STATED THAT COVID-19 WILL NOT BE ELIMINATED AND THAT COMMUNITIES SHOULD RETURN TO THEIR NORMAL ACTIVITIES;

WHEREAS, NORTH CAROLINA IS EXPERIENCING A SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN COVID-19 CASES, VACCINES REMAIN READILY AVAILABLE, AND PEOPLE ARE RETURNING TO NORMAL DAILY LIFE IN OTHER AREAS OF SOCIETY;

WHEREAS, THE GOVERNOR AND STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS HAVE RECENTLY ENCOURAGED SCHOOLS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO END MASK MANDATES AND MOST MUNICIPALITIES AND SCHOOL BOARDS HAVE ENDED MASK MANDATES;

WHEREAS, SOME JUDICIAL DISTRICTS ARE STILL LIMITING THEIR COURT OPERATIONS WHICH IMPAIRS THEIR ABILITY TO ADMINISTER TIMELY AND IMPARTIAL JUSTICE.

NOW, THEREFORE, I ADVISE ALL JUDICIAL OFFICIALS TO RESUME IMMEDIATELY FULL COURTHOUSE OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTER JUSTICE WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY AS MANDATED BY THE NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION.

THIS THE 24TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2022.

PAUL MARTIN NEWBY, CHIEF JUSTICE
SUPREME COURT of NORTH CAROLINA