



JUDGE ROBB CATALANO

CRIMINAL DISTRICT COURT No. 3

401 WEST BELKNAP

FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76196-0215

(817) 884-1356

BRITTANY A. BOBBITT
COURT COORDINATOR
(817) 884-1252

DEBBIE G. EDWARDS
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER
(817) 884-1359

March 22, 2020

Dear fellow Judges and Attorneys in the Tarrant County criminal courts,

In light of the most recent emergency orders from the Governor and County Judge, the way we do business in the criminal courts will be impacted significantly. To this end, we (courts and attorneys) need to adapt our handling of jail cases. The Tarrant County criminal justice system has the ability to utilize the "GoToMeeting" application for pleas in the jail. Members of the judiciary, defense bar, prosecutors, law enforcement and county IT staff have met and conducted test runs today. The technology works.

It is imperative that we all move forward with an open mind and attempt to resolve our jail cases as best we can to keep court participants, including in-custody defendants, safe during this health crisis. Due to the newly mandated gathering rules our ability to conduct business in the courtroom is severely limited. We must take advantage of "Plea or Waiver of Rights by Videoconference" expressly authorized by the 27.18 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. If you have any questions on how to implement this technology and the judiciary will contact Greg Shugart, prosecutors will contact Larry Moore and defense attorneys will contact Gary Smart.

Thank you for efforts to make this process a success. We have always had a reputation for excellence in the Tarrant County criminal justice system and I'd like to keep it that way.

Sincerely,

/s/

Robb Catalano
Presiding Judge
Tarrant County Criminal Courts