

1 **SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA**

2 **COUNTY OF SAN BENITO**

3
4 **CHANGES TO COURT OPERATIONS IN**
5 **RESPONSE TO GLOBAL COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

SPECIAL MATTER ORDER

6 NO. 2020-04

7 WHEREAS Governor Gavin Newsom on March 4, 2020 proclaimed the existence of a state of
8 emergency in California in response to the global COVID-19 outbreak, and on March 19, 2020 issued Executive
9 Order N-33-20 recommending the practice of social distancing;

10 WHEREAS the Centers for Disease Control, the California Department of Public Health, and local county
11 health departments have recommended increasingly stringent social distancing measures of at least six feet between
12 people, and encouraged vulnerable individuals to avoid public spaces;

13 WHEREAS Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye recognized in her Statewide Order dated March 23, 2020 that
14 the health restrictions implemented to combat the spread of COVID-19 prevent superior courts from operating
15 normally; and

16 WHEREAS the health and safety of the parties in civil and criminal proceedings, the public, court staff,
17 judicial officers, attorneys, witnesses, jurors, and others present at these proceedings is of great importance.

18 NOW, THEREFORE, I find good cause to order that:

19 **1. CERTAIN CALENDAR SETTINGS VACATED**

20 The calendar settings of matters that fall within the following categories between March 24 and May 4,
21 2020 are hereby vacated and re-set for the court day six weeks thereafter, at the same time of day:

22 • Out of custody criminal arraignments on complaints, excluding felony arraignments on
23 information.

24 • Out of custody misdemeanor pre-trial conferences

25 • Truancy court

26 • Drug court

27 • Behavioral health court

28 • Traffic arraignments

• Criminal fine reviews

• Civil and probate jury and court trials

- Unlimited civil motions
- Limited civil motions and trials – excepting unlawful detainers
- Small claims hearings
- Adoption proceedings
- Non-urgent trust & estate matters
- Case management conferences
- Mandatory settlement conferences
- Non-emergency family hearings and trials
- Non-emergency child support hearings
- Friday morning walk-in calendar

2. All time waived criminal trials, jury or bench, shall be vacated and re-set. All jury trials, criminal and civil, shall be vacated within the scope of the Chief Justice’s March 23, 2020, order.

3. SELF-HELP CENTER SUSPENSION

All self-help center appointments and walk-in visits are suspended until May 5, 2020.

4. CLERK’S OFFICE HOURS CLOSED


The clerk’s office hours will be closed. This reduction in hours shall remain in effect until Governor Newsom lifts the state of emergency. Clerk’s office staff will remain available by phone until 4 p.m. daily. Parties may deposit documents in the drop box located inside the courthouse entrance. Documents deposited in the drop box before 4:30 p.m. will be accepted for filing on that court day. Documents deposited after 4:30 p.m. will be accepted for filing as of the following court day.

This order is taken, in part, in light of the authority granted to the trial courts in the “Statewide” order of Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye dated March 23, 2020.

This order may be deemed part of the record in affected cases without the need to file the order in each case.

SO ORDERED.

Dated this 26th of March, 2020.



Steven R. Sanders
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court