



40TH DISTRICT COURT
378TH DISTRICT COURT
443RD DISTRICT COURT
COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 1
COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 2

ELLIS COUNTY COURTS BUILDING
109 S. JACKSON
WAXAHACHIE, TX 75165

**LETTER SUPPLEMENT DATED MAY 15, 2020
TO BOTH THE APRIL 15, 2020 UPDATE AND
THE JOINT COVID-19 MITIGATION AND
DOCKET CONTROL PLAN DATED MARCH 18, 2020**

May 15, 2020

Dear Counsel, Members of the Ellis County Bar Association,
and Attorneys & Law Firms Practicing in the Courts of Ellis County:

In the spirit of those plowing ground to reopen our national, state, and local economies, the Judges are actively working on plans to increase the degree of traditional access to the court system as you have historically experienced.

As part of this process, it is important to highlight two key matters:

1. The Texas Supreme Court and the Office of Court Administration have mandated that each court system prepare and submit a document known as a Court Operating Plan (“Plan”), which is required to meet certain fairly rigorous requirements relating to COVID-19. The Plan must address nine subject matter areas. Our Plan is in draft form; however, we are awaiting clarification on a couple essential items. We will progress forward on our Plan as soon as we hear back from the Office of Court Administration.
2. The Texas Supreme Court’s *stay* precluding any trial court in Texas from conducting a jury trial is still in effect. There is significant speculation on the part of all stakeholders as to when (and how) the high Court will allow jury trials to resume. Not a single jury trial has taken place anywhere in Texas in approximately two months. This situation is unprecedented in the history of Texas law. If you are following issues relating to the resumption of jury trials, the questions seem endless. Issues ranging from the “right to do” versus the “right not to do” practically everything connected with jury selection are under discussion.

- a. While we await authorization from the Texas Supreme Court to resume jury trials, it is fundamentally unfair to require attorneys and litigants to burn time and money in “final” preparation for trial, when no flight path forward has been provided. Accordingly, all jury trials currently scheduled to begin with jury selection during the month of June are postponed, to be reset by mutual agreement among Counsel and our Court Coordinators.

As we begin to approach the Memorial Day time frame of 2020, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any type of administrative question or need further guidance.

As we have expressed in each communication, the Judges and Coordinators remain focused on keeping the courts open and functioning smoothly amid the COVID-19 situation.

We remain fully committed to the administration of justice and the rule of law throughout Ellis County.

Sincerely,

40th District Court



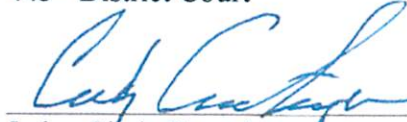
Judge Bob Carroll

378th District Court




Judge William Wallace

443rd District Court



Judge Cindy Ermatinger

Ellis County Court at Law No. 1



Judge Jim Chapman

Ellis County Court at Law No. 2



Judge Gene Calvert