

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 26, 2020

Order of the Resident Superior Court Judge of Judicial District 6A, Chief District Court Judge of Judicial District 6 and the District Court Judges of Judicial District 6

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order No. 116 which declared a State of Emergency to coordinate the State's response and protective actions to address the Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19") public health emergency and provide for the health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors located in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States issued an emergency declaration for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia, retroactive to March 1, 2020, and the President declared that the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States constitutes a national emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2020, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina issued an Order declaring that catastrophic conditions resulting from the public health threat posed by COVID-19 exist in all counties of this State; and

WHEREAS, more than fifty-six thousand people in North Carolina have had laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19, and more than twelve hundred people in North Carolina have died from the disease; and

WHEREAS, in Executive Order No. 141, issued on May 20, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper urged that all people in North Carolina follow social distancing recommendations, including that everyone follow the 3 W's: **WEAR** a cloth face covering, **WAIT** six (6) feet apart and avoid close contact, and **WASH** hands often or use hand sanitizer; and

WHEREAS, face coverings can decrease the spread of respiratory droplets from people, and evidence has grown, showing in numerous recent studies that the use of face coverings decreases the spread of COVID-19 within populations; and

WHEREAS, although the Superior and District Courts remain open, additional action is necessary to reduce the risk of spread of infection throughout the Halifax County Courthouse; and

WHEREAS, to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and thereby to potentially save lives, the undersigned has determined that face coverings must now be required for anyone (over the age of two) to gain entry and to conduct business within the Halifax County Courthouse; and

WHEREAS, some citizens have medical or behavioral health issues, conditions, disabilities, or other reasons that they should be excepted from wearing a face covering, and this Order requires those citizens to submit a request with accompanying documentation to the

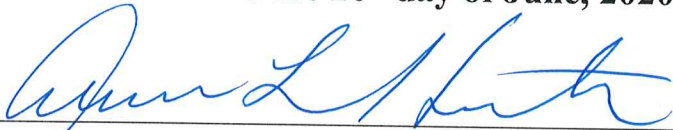
Halifax County Clerk's Office for a judicial review and discretionary determination of whether the citizen qualifies for one of the exceptions to these face covering requirements and should not wear a mask while conducting business at the Halifax County Courthouse; and

WHEREAS, in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Halifax County, the undersigned hereby issue this Order pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes section 7A-39 and pursuant to the inherent judicial authority governing courtroom decorum;

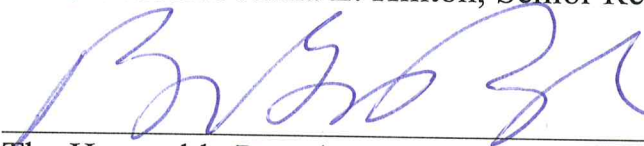
Effective MONDAY, JUNE 29, 2020, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that **Face Coverings** will be required to gain entry and to conduct business within the Halifax County Courthouse. "Face Covering" means a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is simply wrapped around the lower face. A Face Covering may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or can be improvised from appropriate household items such as scarves. A Face Covering may not depict or promote profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, violence or the use of illegal drugs. A Face Shield that covers the nose and mouth also meets the Face Covering requirements of this Order.

Additional orders or directives pursuant to NCGS section 7A-39 and other judicial authority may be entered as necessary to support the continuing operation of essential court functions in a manner that honors the Executive Orders issued by Governor Roy Cooper, the Orders issued by Chief Justice Cheri Beasley and all other relevant statutory and constitutional mandates.

Entered this the 26th day of June, 2020.



The Honorable Alma L. Hinton, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge



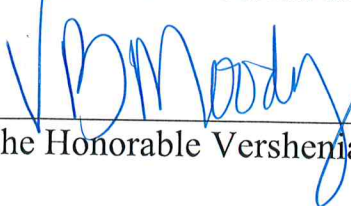
The Honorable Brenda G. Branch, Chief District Court Judge



The Honorable W. Turner Stephenson, District Court Judge



The Honorable Teresa Raquel Robinson Freeman, District Court Judge



The Honorable Vershema Ballance Moody, District Court Judge