

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURTS OF THE SOUTHERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
BROOKS, COLQUITT, ECHOLS, LOWNDES AND THOMAS COUNTIES**

STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE:

Declaration of Judicial Operations)

Emergency Order)

ORDER

**THOMAS COUNTY
CLERK OF COURT
FILED IN OFFICE**

SEP 30 2024

CLERK DEP. CLERK

The undersigned Chief Judge and Judge of Superior Court for the Southern Judicial Circuit of the State of Georgia, upon acting under the authority of O.C.G.A. §38-3-60, et. seq., hereby declares a judicial emergency in all counties of the Southern Judicial District Circuit. This emergency is due to Hurricane Helene which has impacted judicial operations in all counties of the Southern Judicial Circuit. The undersigned makes this declaration in conformance with the Order by Governor Brian Kemp, who has previously issued a state of emergency in the State of Georgia, including all counties in the Southern Judicial Circuit.

The undersigned Chief Superior Court Judge having consulted with all of the acting Superior Court Judges within the Circuit, all are in agreement that access to the courthouses of the Southern Circuit is impossible and/or impracticable during this judicial emergency.

An initial Judicial Emergency order concerning all counties in the Southern Circuit was put in place for Thursday, September 25, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. through Friday, September 27, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. This order has ended, but due to the devastation to large parts of the Southern Judicial Circuit a new order is required.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED, all Court business within the Southern Judicial Circuit, including Superior Courts, State Courts, Magistrate Courts, Probate Courts and Juvenile Courts, be closed for business retroactively from September 28, 2024 at 12:00 a.m. to Monday, October 7, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. Due to the size of the Southern Judicial Circuit, the amount of damage and destruction within the Circuit, a daily evaluation shall be made to determine whether the Judicial Emergency shall be continued as to any particular office, courthouse or county. Different offices or courthouses may open for business while others may remain under the Emergency Order.

For the periods of the Judicial Emergency cited above, the undersigned Chief Judge of Superior Courts hereby suspended, tolls, extends or otherwise grants relief from all deadlines or other time scheduled or filing requirements imposed by otherwise applicable statutes, rules, regulations or court orders, whether in civil or criminal cases or administrative matters. This includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) A statute of limitation;
- (2) The time within which to issue a warrant;
- (3) The time within which to try a case for which a demand for speedy trial has been filed;


- (4) The time within which to hold a commitment hearing;
- (5) A deadline or other schedule regarding the detention of a juvenile;
- 6) The time within which to return a bill of indictment or an accusation or to bring a matter before a grand jury;
- 7) The time within which to file a writ of habeas corpus;
- (8) The time within which discovery or any aspect thereof is to be completed;
- (9) The time within which to serve a party;
- (10) The time within which to appeal or seek the right of appeal any order, ruling, or other determination;
- (11) Such other legal proceedings as determined to be necessary by the authorized judicial official.

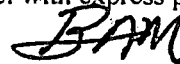
The relief granted herein expires at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, October 7, 2024 unless otherwise ordered by the Court. Separately, the Court grants a delay in the execution of any pending evictions in the Southern Judicial Circuit for a period of 30 days commencing immediately upon the date and time this order is signed.

Because of the amount of damage and destruction in the Southern Judicial Circuit a large number of government buildings are not useable and other public buildings and equipment are actively involved in dealing with the emergency at hand. Many homes are without water or power and it may be weeks before it is repaired. Because of these and other problems, the Court is unable to designate other facilities for the transaction of court business. Should the State of Emergency extend beyond the closure period indicated above, the court will make a determination of an available, appropriate facility to the conduct of court business when it is appropriate to do so and make a determination of extended dates and time for the conduct of business.

This order shall be served upon the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, the Clerk of the Georgia Supreme Court, Clerk of the Court of the Georgia Court of Appeals, all Judges of any classification in the Southern Judicial Circuit, and the Clerks of Court in Brooks County, Colquitt County, Echols County, Lowndes County and Thomas County. Further, notice of this order shall be given to all affected parties and their counsel. All Clerks are ordered to post this order in conspicuous locations in their respective courthouses and spread this Order upon the minutes of the Court.

SO ORDERED, this the 30 day of September, 20 24.
 Time: 10:30 a.m. / ~~p.m.~~


 HON. RICHARD M. COWART
 CHIEF JUDGE SOUTHERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
 Signed by Judge Brian A. McDaniel with express permission



This order has been approved by Judges:
 Hon. Brian A. McDaniel Hon. James L. Prine
 Hon. Gregory A. Voyles Hon. Catherine M. Smith

PARTIES TO BE SERVED:

Supreme Court of Georgia
Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs
Via fax: 404-656-2253

Clerk of the Supreme Court
Therese Barnes
barnest@gasupreme.us

Georgia Court of Appeals
Patty Bender
coaefast@gaappeals.us

Brooks County Bar Association
Colquitt County Bar Association
Lowndes County Bar Association
Thomas County Bar Association

Sheriff Mike Dewey	229-363-7559 fax	229-263-7558 phone
Sheriff Rod Howell	229-616-7436 fax	229-616-7430 phone
Sheriff Randy Courson	229-559-5678 fax	229-559-7526 phone
Sheriff Ashley Paulk	229-671-3442 fax	229-671-2610 phone
Sherriff Carlton Fowel	229-225-3400 fax	229-225-3300 phone
District Attorney Brad Shealy	229-245-5281 fax	229-244-7170 phone
Public Defender Wade Kruger	229-245-5220 fax	229-671-2800 phone
Brooks County Clerk	229-263-8054 fax	229-263-4747 phone
Colquitt County Clerk	229-616-7029 fax	229-616-7420 phone
Echols County Clerk	229-559-5792 fax	229-559-5642 phone
Lowndes County Clerk	229-333-7637 fax	229-333-5127 phone
Thomas County Clerk	229-225-4110 fax	229-225-4108 phone

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