



SUPREME COURT OF ILLINOIS

**CHAMBERS OF
CHIEF JUSTICE ANNE M. BURKE**

**160 NORTH LASALLE STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601
(312) 793-5470
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June 14, 2021

Re: Confirming Ongoing Support of Remote Court Appearances

Dear Colleagues,

While the effects of the pandemic are beginning to recede, remote court proceedings will not. While we may desire that the judicial branch go back to “normal,” we cannot ignore that courts, lawyers, and litigants have significantly benefited from remote court proceedings, and the option to appear remotely will continue as a key component in keeping our court system open and accessible.

Despite these major gains, I am concerned some courts are stepping back from technology we have fought hard to learn and use. For instance, an Illinois Court Help guide spoke with a self-represented litigant who lived 50 miles from the courthouse. He did not have a car and there was no public transportation option. He wanted to appear remotely. Rather than advising him of the option to appear by phone or video conference, he was informed that because the courthouse was fully open, he must find a way to attend his court date in person or be held in default.

This is not only an access to justice issue for litigants. Lawyers across the state have embraced remote court proceedings as it has allowed them to appear in multiple courts, representing multiple clients, without extensive travel. When a lawyer has the option of appearing remotely, the client pays for 20 minutes, not 3 hours or more, and the lawyer can make better use of her time.

It is essential to evaluate every court proceeding to determine if appearing remotely is appropriate. Illinois Supreme Court Rule 45, which applies to all case types, including criminal and juvenile delinquency matters, and Rule 241 are permanent and enduring fixtures of our justice system. Remote court proceedings are a critical part of meeting the current and changing needs of our society, and the Supreme Court continues to encourage and support remote court appearances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anne M. Burke".

Hon. Ann M. Burke
Chief Justice

cc: Justices of the Supreme Court
All Judges and Chief Judges of the Circuit Courts
All Trial Court Administrators and Administrative Assistants
All Appellate Clerks
All Circuit Clerks