

May 11, 2020

RE: Grand Jury Term – May, 2020

Dear Grand Jury Foreman and Members:

Since the Coronavirus Pandemic began, we were forced to cancel the empanelment of a new Grand Jury that was scheduled for March. Law enforcement authorities now have a backlog of pending investigations that need to be presented. Due to this backlog, we have no choice but to move forward with the scheduled May 26, 2020 Grand Jury.

Normally, the Circuit Clerk pulls 250 names to be sent a jury summons to create a jury pool. There are numerous safety concerns in trying to have that many people at a time in one room. However, the law allows us to reconvene a prior Grand Jury because Miss. Code Ann. § 13-5-39 provides that, “. . . upon impanelment, a grand jury may be convened and reconvened in term time and in vacation to serve from term to term until the next grand jury is impaneled. . .” Therefore, with this letter you will find a summons for you to appear again as the Warren County Grand Jurors beginning May 26, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

The Court understands your possible anxieties related to the pandemic and takes all concerns seriously. We have met with Sheriff Martin Pace, District Attorney Ricky Smith and Circuit Clerk Jan Daigre to devise a special plan of protection for you and all parties involved in the Grand Jury process. These safety measures include the following:

- 1) Cases will be presented in the Circuit Courtroom instead of in the Grand Jury Room. This will allow you to spread out keeping a distance of 6ft apart from one another. Using the courtroom will also allow the District Attorney and witnesses to present cases from the front of the courtroom near the bench.
- 2) Everyone will be required to wear a mask. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided for you.
- 3) Hand sanitizer will be available for you to use upon entering and exiting the courthouse/courtroom.
- 4) The courtroom will be deep cleaned, including wiping down all pews each morning.
- 5) You will not be required to make any inspections (i.e. jail, youth court, etc.).
- 6) Lunch will be provided to you each day in the courtroom.

The Court appreciates your previous service and your cooperation in serving beginning May 26, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Lee Ann Stuart, Circuit Court Administrator via telephone at 601-638-8981 or via email at leeanns@co.warren.ms.us.

Sincerely,

M. James Chaney, Jr.
Circuit Court Judge

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Cc: Richard Smith, Jr., District Attorney
Sheriff Martin Pace
Jan Daigre, Circuit Clerk