

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

IN RE:	:	
	:	
USE OF ELECTRONIC	:	STANDING ORDER
SIGNATURES IN PRISONER AND	:	
<i>PRO SE</i> CASES DUE TO THE	:	
EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES	:	
CREATED BY COVID-19	:	

On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared that the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak constitutes a national emergency under the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.

On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136, 134 Stat. 281 (2020) was enacted. On March 29, 2020, the Judicial Conference of the United States found, pursuant to the CARES Act, that emergency conditions due to the national emergency declared by the President with respect to COVID-19 have materially affected and will materially affect the functioning of the federal courts generally.

Since March 13, 2020, this Court has taken significant steps to limit operations due to the exigent circumstances created by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and in the interest of public health and safety. The Court has issued a series of Standing Orders that, among other things, limit access to courthouses, Court locations, and Court offices in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and make adjustments to the operations of the Clerk's Office and the use of the Case Management/Electronic Case Filing (CM/ECF) System. On March 17, 2020, the undersigned, as Chief Judge, issued a Standing Order suspending the restriction set forth in Local Rule of Civil Procedure 5.1.2 that initial papers in civil cases cannot be filed electronically by counsel. That Standing Order did not address filings by unrepresented litigants, most of whom rely on paper

filing. Although paper filings are still being accepted by mail and via the drop box in the lobby of the James A. Byrne U.S. Courthouse in Philadelphia, paper filings are not being accepted in person in the Clerk's Office and are discouraged at this time. Pro se litigants have instead been encouraged to submit documents for filing by email to PAED_DOCUMENTS@PAED.USCOURTS.GOV.

The current circumstances, as well as the reported difficulties of prisoners in accessing postal services during the COVID-19 emergency, may make it impracticable for prisoners and pro se litigants to file pleadings and other papers in person and through the mail. For these reasons, it is ORDERED that, where a judge finds that obtaining an actual signature is impracticable or imprudent in light of the public health situation relating to the COVID-19 emergency, the judge may permit any document submitted electronically by an unrepresented litigant to be signed electronically by entering “/s/” and the litigant's name on the signature line of the document. Documents to be filed with the Clerk of Court by unrepresented litigants may be emailed to PAED_DOCUMENTS@PAED.USCOURTS.GOV. Documents submitted by email should be in PDF format, if possible.

 /s/ Juan R. Sánchez
Juan R. Sánchez
Chief Judge

Date: May 13, 2020