

**STATE OF TEXAS**

**RESOLUTION**

**of the**

**TEXAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL**

**Joint Criminal Justice Committee and Civil Justice Committee Remote Proceedings  
Recommendations**

WHEREAS, the Texas Judicial Council is the policymaking body for the Texas Judicial Branch, created under Chapter 71, Texas Government Code; and

WHEREAS, the Council is charged with improving the administration of justice; and

WHEREAS, the Criminal Justice Committee and Civil Justice Committee were jointly charged with monitoring remote proceedings within the state judiciary and recommending any necessary reforms; and

WHEREAS, Texas saw its first diagnosed case of COVID-19 on March 4, 2020, and no one could have predicted the destruction and disruption the pandemic would cause our communities; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Judiciary had activated its response plan weeks before the first COVID-19 diagnosis in Texas and began taking actions, including preparing to hold court online; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, the Texas Supreme Court, joined by the Court of Criminal Appeals, issued the First Emergency Order Regarding the COVID-19 State of Disaster to allow or require remote participation in a court hearing or proceeding; and

WHEREAS, Texas courts led the nation in online innovations during the pandemic — the first state to have its nine-member Supreme Court host remote oral arguments, the first state to hold a virtual non-binding civil jury trial in May 2020, and the first state to hold a virtual criminal jury trial in August 2020; and

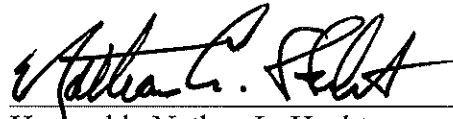
WHEREAS, through the end of August 2022, 2,438 Texas judges have held 2,573,608 remote hearings, and a staggering 9,719,672 participants have been involved in a remote hearing

since March 2020; and

WHEREAS, many judges have praised the increase in access to justice by holding court online with judges reporting greater participation from litigants due to the efficiency and ease of attending and remote participation also appears to benefit witnesses, victims, and others who fear for their safety when appearing in court, those who live in more remote locations, those with transportation constraints, and those with family care responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, while remote hearings will never fully replace in-person proceedings, the progress made during the pandemic in access to justice, accessibility, and efficiency should continue;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Judicial Council recommends that the Legislature remove statutory barriers to allow remote proceedings to continue to increase access to justice and enhance court efficiency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan L. Hecht", written over a horizontal line.

Honorable Nathan L. Hecht  
Chair, Texas Judicial Council