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Comment:

I respectfully oppose the proposal.

I do not oppose limited remote hearings for procedural matters such as scheduling, motions to adjourn, and routine discovery disputes.

However, dispositive motions, evidentiary hearings, and any substantive matter that could materially affect the outcome of a case should be held in person unless there is a specific, justifiable reason to conduct the hearing remotely.

Remote hearings should be avoided because they:

1. Reduce if not eliminate the solemnity and dignity of the courtroom setting, which reinforces the authority of the court and the seriousness of the proceeding.
2. Reduce if not eliminate the benefits of face-to-face interactions between attorneys, parties, witnesses, and the court.
3. Reduce the fairness of public hearings by introducing unnecessary technology that is not consistently reliable.
4. Decrease the public confidence in judicial proceedings.
5. Decrease if not eliminate important training opportunities for young practitioners.
6. Decrease if not eliminate an important tool in fostering professionalism and civility.

I appreciate the convenience of appearing remotely, which is why I do not oppose it on procedural matters. However, convenience is not a justifiable reason to appear remotely in all hearings and conferences.

Thank you.