

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

In re: )  
 )  
Debtor Signatures on Electronic Filings, ) Standing Order No. 20-6  
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 )

ORDER TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING REQUIREMENT TO OBTAIN ORIGINAL  
SIGNATURES FROM DEBTORS FOR ELECTRONIC FILINGS

This Order is being issued in response to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic. On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) advises that individuals should engage in “social distancing” to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In addition, there are individuals who may be in isolation because they are sick or have been exposed to someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19. Accordingly, to reduce the need for personal contact, there is good cause to suspend temporarily and conditionally the requirement that an attorney obtain a debtor’s original, physical signature for an electronic filing.

Now therefore it is hereby ORDERED that effective March 17, 2020, and until further notice:

For all documents that require a debtor’s signature, the Court suspends the requirement that an attorney secure the debtor’s original, physical signature prior to electronically filing such documents on the condition that, prior to filing, the attorney has either (a) obtained the debtor’s digital signature via any commercially available digital signature software that provides signature authentication and maintains a copy of the digitally signed document(s) in the debtor’s case file; or (b) obtains express written permission from the debtor to affix the debtor’s signature to the document(s) and maintains a copy

of the writing in the debtor's case file. The filing of the document(s) with a debtor's digital signature constitutes a certification that the attorney either has obtained the debtor's original, physical signature or has complied with the foregoing conditions.

It is so ORDERED.

**FOR THE COURT:**

  
FRANK J. SANTORO  
Chief United States Bankruptcy Judge

Dated: March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020