

## PRESS RELEASE

### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

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INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana (August 2, 2021): Due to the continued threat to public health and safety currently posed by COVID-19, as well as the related variants of the virus currently circulating in the United States, and the recent increase in cases nationally and locally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health and governmental authorities have advised individuals and entities to take precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19. Specifically, on July 27, 2021, the CDC recommended that all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, wear face coverings in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission.

Therefore, following a meeting and with the majority vote of the Facility Security Committees for the Birch Bayh Federal Building and United States Courthouse, the Lee H. Hamilton Federal Building and United States Courthouse, the Winfield K. Denton Federal Building and United States Courthouse, and the Terre Haute Federal Courthouse, Chief Judge Tanya Walton Pratt issued a [General Order](#), effective Tuesday, August 3, 2021, that requires all entrants and occupants of said courthouses to wear face coverings and maintain six feet of social distancing in all public spaces, regardless of vaccination status.

The General Order contains provisions allowing tenant agencies in the courthouses to determine the face covering and social distancing policies in their own spaces. Judges have the authority to determine such policies in their courtrooms, chambers, and any other spaces in which a court proceeding is being conducted, including at naturalization ceremonies. All persons summoned for jury service and court staff interacting with such persons, regardless of vaccination status, must also wear face coverings and adhere to social distancing requirements while in rooms and public spaces designated for juror check-in, orientation, and related activities, unless social distancing cannot be accommodated due to operational necessity.

The face covering must fully cover the wearer's nose and mouth. Any visitor seeking entry to a courthouse without a face covering will be offered a disposable mask free of charge at the security screening checkpoint, provided they have a need to and are otherwise permitted to enter the courthouse. Any person seeking entry to a courthouse who refuses to wear a face covering will be denied entry to the courthouse, and any person found to have violated this Order may be held in contempt of court, cited, and/or expelled from the courthouse.

An exception to this Order may be made for any person providing documentation that he or she is unable, for medical reasons, to wear a face covering.

Individuals who are unwilling to wear a face covering will be directed to signage with contact information for each agency in the courthouse. Individuals may contact that agency directly to make whatever arrangements are needed to allow that person to complete their business.