

JAN 27 2021

JAMES N. HATTEN, Clerk  
By:  Deputy Clerk

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA**

**IN RE: PILOT PROJECT FOR  
LIVESTREAMING AUDIO OF  
QUALIFIED CIVIL PROCEEDINGS**

**GENERAL ORDER 21-02**

**WHEREAS**, the Judicial Conference of the United States, the national policy-making body for the federal courts, has authorized a two-year district court pilot program to evaluate streaming live audio of proceedings in civil cases of public interest;

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia has volunteered to be and been designated a pilot court;

**WHEREAS**, live audio streaming involves real-time broadcast of audio from a courtroom or virtual proceeding to a media player that is accessible to the public online.

**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** as follows:

1. The Court will participate in the pilot project to stream live audio of qualified civil proceedings consistent with the guidelines established for the project. The live audio may be streamed only on the Court's YouTube channel. The pilot program is limited to civil proceedings.
2. The following civil proceedings are excluded from the pilot:
  - a. Any civil proceeding involving live witness testimony;
  - b. Any civil proceeding involving sealed, confidential, or classified materials; and
  - c. Any civil proceeding involving jurors or potential jurors, including voir dire and trial.

3. To qualify for live audio streaming under the pilot, the proceeding or the civil case, generally, must involve an issue of public interest. Examples of issues of public interest include but are not limited to: a claim that, once resolved, may impact the public or a discernable group of people (e.g., employees, residents of a city or state, or consumers); a case raising issues of public health or safety; a case involving a civil rights claim; a case involving a public entity, agency, or official; and a case that has received media attention.
4. All parties to the proceeding must consent to streaming live audio of the proceeding. The presiding judge or assigned magistrate judge (if applicable), *sua sponte* or upon request of a party, may ask the parties whether they consent to streaming live audio of a proceeding. Consent to live audio streaming of one proceeding in a case will not be construed as consent to streaming live audio of any other proceeding in that case.
5. The presiding judge or assigned magistrate judge (if applicable) will retain the ultimate discretion to deny a request to stream live audio of a proceeding and to stop streaming live audio at any point during a proceeding should an issue or concern arise. It is not intended that a grant or denial of a request to stream live audio of a proceeding under this pilot be subject to appellate review insofar as it pertains to and arises under this order or the administrative guidelines governing the pilot, except as otherwise provided by law.
6. Any content streamed in connection with the pilot project is not the official record of the proceeding and must not, in full or in part, be recorded, broadcast, posted, rebroadcast, or otherwise reproduced in any form by any person or entity outside of the federal judiciary. Streamed content will not be available for playback on YouTube after the proceeding.
7. The pilot will be administered by the Judicial Conference's Court Administration and Case Management Committee and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and will be used to study the feasibility of livestreaming audio of district court civil proceedings.
8. The Clerk of Court is authorized and directed to develop procedures to implement this Order.

9. This General Order supersedes all inconsistent provisions in existing local rules or other general orders of the Court.

**IT IS SO ORDERED**, this 27 day of January 2021.

  
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**THOMAS W. THRASH, JR.**  
**CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE**