

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
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In re)
)
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER) Administrative Order FLMB-2020-4
TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING)
ATTORNEYS' OBLIGATION TO)
OBTAIN POSSESSION OF CLIENTS')
ORIGINAL SIGNATURES PRIOR TO)
FILING PETITIONS AND OTHER)
PAPERS BY CM/ECF)
_____)

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER TEMPORARILY SUSPENDING
ATTORNEYS' OBLIGATION TO OBTAIN POSSESSION OF CLIENTS' ORIGINAL
SIGNATURES PRIOR TO FILING PETITIONS AND OTHER PAPERS BY CM/ECF**

Local Rule 1001-2 prescribes procedures for electronic filing using the Court's online case management and electronic filing system ("CM/ECF"). Local Rule 1001-2(e)(2) permits attorneys who are Electronic Filing Users to file papers signed by their clients by including the client's name on a signature block, subject to the requirement of section (f). Section (f) requires Electronic Filing Users to retain paper copies of bankruptcy petitions and supporting lists and schedules and of affidavits and unsworn declarations bearing original signatures for two years after the closing of the case.

In light of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on the communities in the Middle District of Florida, the current recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control, the possibility that stay-at-home orders may be entered by state and local governments, and to facilitate attorneys' representation of their clients, the Court has determined that a modification of the requirements of Local Rule 1001-2(e) is appropriate.

Accordingly, effective March 23, 2020, and continuing until entry of an order vacating this Administrative Order it is

ORDERED:

1. The Court suspends any requirement that an Electronic Filing User secure the signer's original signature prior to electronically filing a paper bearing that signature on the condition that, prior to filing, the Electronic Filing User has verified with the signer that the signer has received the entire paper(s) to be filed and has communicated with the signer regarding the substance and purpose of the papers, including the review of a bankruptcy petition, schedules, and statements, and

(a) has obtained express written permission (including by email) from the signer to affix the signer's signature to the document and has retained a hard copy of the written permission;

or

(b) has obtained in his or her possession at the time of the filing an image, photograph, or other facsimile of the signature page(s) and has retained a hard copy of the image, photograph, or facsimile; or

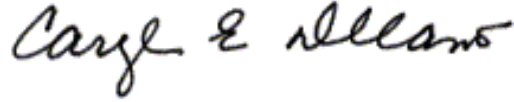
(c) has obtained the signer's digital signature via any commercially available digital signature software that provides signature authentication; *and*

has instructed the signer to send or deliver the original signed paper(s) to the Electronic Filing User as soon as is practicable as required by Local Rule 1001-2(f). The original signed paper(s) shall be retained for two years from the closing of the case.

2. The filing of a paper with an electronic signature constitutes the Electronic Filing User's certification under Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure 9011 and this Order that the Electronic Filing User either has obtained the signer's original signature or has complied with paragraph 1 of this Order.

On written request by any party in interest, the Electronic Filing User shall promptly provide evidence to the requesting party of compliance with the terms of this Order.

DATED: March 23, 2020.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caryl E. Delano".

CARYL E. DELANO
Chief United States Bankruptcy Judge