



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Michael T. Dougherty, District Attorney

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Press Release – Trials Resuming in the 20th Judicial District

Trials have been suspended for much of the past year due to the health risks associated with the pandemic. This week, Boulder County will resume jury trials in Boulder and Longmont.

The top priority for the District Attorney's Office is the safety and well-being of our community. With trials resuming this week, our staff is working tirelessly to address the trial backlog caused by the shutdowns due to the pandemic while, also, continuing to adhere to health and safety protocols in the office and the courtrooms.

Criminal trials are essential to our office's ability to ensure community safety and hold individuals accountable. Trials are a fundamental function of the American justice system. The suspension of all trials made it impossible to conduct trials, as well as difficult to resolve cases. The mere prospect of a trial is essential to resolving a case because it encourages prosecutors, defense attorneys, and defendants to accurately evaluate, assess, and decide on a case.

COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on our justice system and community safety. The trial backlog has grown. In Boulder County, there are 113 felony jury trials, all of which take several days to complete, scheduled for the next 100 days. Throughout the State of Colorado, there is a backlog of 14,000 trials. The District Attorney's Office, along with the Colorado Supreme Court, has urged the State Legislature to take action to address the speedy trial implications associated with this backlog.

The health and safety protocols at the courthouse, which were developed in coordination with Boulder County Public Health, are designed to protect the staff and community members. Through our strong partnerships in Boulder County, we will continue to be decisive and proactive in taking steps to protect our community's health -- while carefully balancing public safety, victims' needs, and the constitutional rights of offenders.

District Attorney Michael Dougherty stated, "It is a long and difficult journey through this pandemic, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We are excited for trials to get underway because public safety is our top priority and the justice system grinds to a halt without trials. I am so grateful to the dedicated public servants of the DA's Office. We greatly appreciate the many community members who serve as jurors, especially so throughout the pandemic."