

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF PATAULA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
STATE OF GEORGIA**

**IN RE:** )  
**Declaration of Judicial Emergency** )  
 )

**ORDER**

The undersigned Chief Judge and Judge of Superior Courts for the Pataula Judicial Circuit of the State of Georgia, upon their own motion, do hereby declare the existence of a judicial emergency in this circuit, pursuant to O.C.G.A. §38-3-60, et. seq. The nature of this emergency is due to Hurricane Helene which is expected to affect this judicial circuit from approximately Thursday, September 26, 2024 through Friday, September 27, 2024. The undersigned make this declaration in conformance with the Order by Governor Brian Kemp who has issued a state of emergency in the State of Georgia, including Southwest Georgia and all counties in the Pataula Judicial Circuit, effective September 24, 2024. Accordingly, it is the order of the court that Clay, Early, Miller, Quitman, Randolph, Seminole and Terrell County Superior, Magistrate, Probate and Juvenile Courts and Early and Miller County State Courts be closed for business Thursday, September 26, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. and continuing through and until the regular close of business on Friday, September 27, 2024. Thereafter, the above-named Courts in the Pataula Judicial Circuit shall reopen for business on Monday, September 30, 2024, at the regular time.

Given the uncertain nature or duration of this emergency, the court hereby suspends, tolls, extends and otherwise grants relief from all deadline or other time scheduled or filing requirements imposed by otherwise applicable statutes, rules, regulations, or court orders, whether in civil or criminal cases or administrative matters, including, but not limited to:

1. A statute of limitation;
2. The time within which to issue a warrant;
3. The time within which to try a case for which a demand for speedy trial has been filed;
4. The time within which to hold a commitment hearing;
5. A deadline or other schedule regarding the detention of a juvenile;



6. The time within which to return a bill of indictment or an accusation or to bring a matter before a grand jury;
7. The time within which to file a writ of habeas corpus;
8. The time within which discovery or any aspect thereof is to be completed;
9. The time within which to serve a party;
10. The time within which to appeal or to seek the right to appeal any order, ruling, or other determination;
11. The time within which hearings must be held in stalking and family violence cases and all ex-parte relief is continued until next scheduled hearing in said matter; and
12. Such other legal proceedings as may be determined to be necessary.

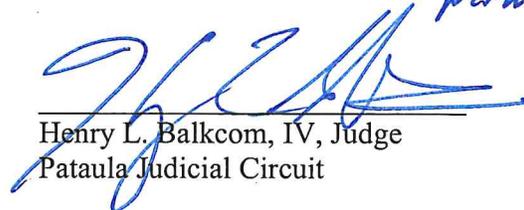
The relief granted herein expires at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, September 27, 2024, unless otherwise ordered by the court.

Because the court expects all public buildings within the circuit to be closed for an indeterminate period of time, the court is unable to designate another facility for the transaction of court business. Should the state of emergency extend beyond the closure period indicated above, the court will make a determination of an available, appropriate facility for the conduct of court business when it is appropriate to do so.

This order shall be served upon the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, Chief Judge of the Georgia Court of Appeals and the respective clerks thereof; all judges and clerks in the Pataula Judicial Circuit; all lawyers and litigants if possible; and the pertinent newspapers in the circuit. All Clerks are ordered to post this order conspicuously in their respective courthouses and spread this Order upon the minutes of the courts.

SO ORDERED, this 25 day of September, 2024.

  
T. Craig Earnest, Chief Judge  
Pataula Judicial Circuit *w/ express permission*

  
Henry L. Balkcom, IV, Judge  
Pataula Judicial Circuit

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that I have this day served a copy of the above and foregoing ORDER OF JUDICIAL EMERGENCY upon the following named persons:

Supreme Court of Georgia  
Chief Justice Michael P. Boggs via fax: 404 656-2253  
Therese Barnes, Clerk barnest@gasupreme.us

Georgia Court of Appeals  
Patty Bender, Deputy Clerk coaefast@gaappeals.us

Hon. Henry L. Balkcom, IV  
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Hon. Joe C. Bishop  
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The Dawson News	news@thedawsonnews.com

This 25<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2024

  
Sharon Williams, Judicial Administrative  
Assistant to Chief Judge T. Craig Earnest