



  
Frank W. Volk  
United States District Judge

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA**  
**Dated: April 17th, 2020**

<p>IN RE:</p> <p>TEMPORARY MODIFICATION OF REQUIREMENT FOR ORIGINAL SIGNATURES ON BANKRUPTCY PETITIONS AND SCHEDULES</p>	<p>GENERAL ORDER NO. 20-04</p> <p>JUDGE FRANK W. VOLK</p>
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**ORDER TEMPORARILY MODIFYING REQUIREMENT FOR ORIGINAL  
SIGNATURES ON BANKRUPTCY PETITIONS AND SCHEDULES**

Considering the state of emergency declared by the State of West Virginia in response to the COVID-19 coronavirus, and the actions of the Honorable Chief District Court Judge Thomas Johnston to limit access to the federal courthouses in the Southern District of West Virginia, to facilitate social distancing and shelter-in place protocols, the Court is hereby temporarily modifying the requirement that counsel obtain a debtor's original, physical signature on any document before the document is filed with the Court.

The debtor's original, physical signature requirement may be satisfied in any of the following ways:

- a. Counsel secures and maintains the debtor's original, physical signature before filing the document, as presently required, or
- b. Counsel secures the debtor's digital signature via any commercially available digital signature software and maintains a copy of the digitally signed document in the case file, or
- c. Counsel obtains express written permission (including via text message or electronic mail) from the debtor to affix the debtor's /s/ signature to the document and maintains a copy thereof in the case file, or
- d. Counsel obtains an image of the specified signature page showing debtor's original signature thereon via email, text message or facsimile transmission and maintains a copy of the image and its transmission media in the case file.

Filing under any of the above methods constitutes counsel's certification to the Court that the debtor was given an opportunity to review the entire document before signing it, counsel has

received the express authorization from the debtor to file the complete document with the Court, and counsel believes in good faith that the signature method adopted establishes the identity of the debtor. The record retention requirements of the S.D.W.V. Local Bankruptcy Rule 5005-4 and the Bankruptcy Court's *Administrative Procedures for Electronic Filing* remain in place.

This General Order terminates on June 1, 2020, unless extended or terminated earlier by further order of the Court.