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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein Responds to Municipal Court's Decision to Limit Operations Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

Busiest court in the state announces changes to day-to-day operations to help minimize community spread following latest directives from Columbus Public Health and State of Ohio

COLUMBUS, OH— The Franklin County Municipal Court is the busiest court in the State of Ohio, handling more than 120,000 cases annually. The Columbus City Attorney's office is responsible for prosecuting approximately 90 percent of these adult, misdemeanor cases. Given the volume of people the court serves on a daily basis, effective Monday, March 16, 2020, the court will be adjusting its daily operations to help mitigate the potential for community spread of COVID-19.

All scheduled court hearings, including traffic and criminal arraignments, with the exception of those cases where the defendant is currently incarcerated, will be continued to a later date with new court dates to be determined by the court. Arraignment session for those currently in jail will proceed as normal this week. However, effective March 23, 2020, arraignments for defendants who are in custody will be held on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays only.

City Attorney Zach Klein issued the following statement in response to the court's decision:

“All of us are facing a new reality as we adhere to the guidance and expertise of our city, county and state health professionals who are advising unprecedented measures to help mitigate the community spread of COVID-19. Data and modeling show that being aggressive up front is our best option in the fight against this pandemic, and I especially want to thank Columbus Public Health, Franklin County Public Health, and the Ohio Department of Health for coordinating their efforts to help protect the health, safety, and well-being of our residents. I also want to commend the Franklin County Municipal Court for making what I'm sure was a difficult, but necessary, decision to adjust the court's day-to-day operations for the next several weeks. My office and our prosecutors will continue actively working with the court as they continue to assess and monitor the situation to help protect the public health.”

A copy of the Franklin County Municipal Court's press release, with additional details pertinent to traffic court, 4-C arraignments, small claims, eviction hearings and other court matters, can be found by clicking here: <http://bit.ly/2UfaJce>

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