Good afternoon:

As you probably are already aware, effective last Friday, March 13, 2020 the Tennessee Supreme Court entered an administrative order ADM2020-00428 imposing a suspension of in-person court appearances in all courts throughout the State of Tennessee through Tuesday, March 31, 2020. Although the Supreme Court's order provided for certain limited exceptions to this suspension of in-person hearings, those hearings necessary for the extension of orders of protection are NOT included as an exception.

Therefore, the prevent orders of protection from expiring without the protected person having the opportunity to seek an extension, the Supreme Court's order also provides as follows: "Orders of protection and temporary injunctions that would otherwise expire between March 13 and March 31, 2020 are hereby extended until April 6, 2020."

In other words all existing orders of protection that would expire during the period of time in-person court proceedings are suspended are automatically extended until April 6, 2020.

It is foreseeable that someone subject to an order of protection, as well as someone protected by an order of protection, set to expire between March 13 and 31 could not know the expiration date of their particular order has been extended, and engage in, or be a victim of, conduct that violates the OP.

Patrol officers are the first line of law enforcement likely to encounter a domestic dispute. Therefore it is critically important that all patrol officers be informed of the automatic extension of orders of protection ordered by the Tennessee Supreme Court.

Judges across the State of Tennessee have been urged by the Supreme Court to communicate with the leadership of law enforcement agencies throughout the various judicial districts. With this email, I and my colleagues in the 21st Judicial District urge you to inform all of your officers, especially those in your patrol divisions, of this significant development.

Thank you for your leadership in serving and protecting the citizens of our community.

Judge Joseph A. Woodruff

Circuit Judge Div. I

21st Judicial District

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