

---

**From:** Thomas Parker  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 21, 2020 9:28 AM  
**To:** RulesCommittee Secretary  
**Subject:** proposed rule amendment

Good morning,

I propose the federal criminal rules be amended to authorize initial appearances, arraignments, detention hearings, and change of plea hearings to be conducted by video conference on a regular basis, not only in the case of national emergency. The rules should allow such proceedings in this manner whenever (i) jointly requested by the parties, (ii) upon motion of either party for good cause shown, or (iii) elected by the judicial officer based on a statement of justification (e.g. reduced inmate transportation cost; emergency situation; security concerns). The rules should expressly predicate such use of video proceedings upon: (i) the availability of private conferencing capability for the defendant and counsel before and during the proceedings, (ii) the availability of a facility that allows the defendant to see the other hearing participants directly (e.g. not through a screen or other holding cell barrier). The ability to proceed by video conference should not be contingent upon the approval of either party.

I would note that state courts routinely conduct initial appearances and arraignments by video and have done so for years. It is a much more cost effective way to proceed.

Thank you.



**Thomas M. Parker**  
**United States Magistrate Judge**  
United States District Court  
Northern District of Ohio  
801 W. Superior Ave.  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
[REDACTED]