UNITED STATES DISTRICT
COURT DISTRICT OF KANSAS

IN RE: COURT FURNISHING JURY LUNCHES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	)))	ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2021-06

ORDER

WHEREAS due to the protracted impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Court faces a backlog of trials and, in the interest of justice, the Court plans to resume in-person civil and criminal jury trials in April 2021.

WHEREAS COVID-19 cases in the State of Kansas remain a major health concern and for the purpose of resuming trials and protecting grand and petit jurors, the Court put in place many safety protocols consistent with guidance from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

WHEREAS in the area surrounding the courthouses there may be few available restaurants and releasing jurors for lunch increases their exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Furthermore, to the extent jurors travel long distances to attend jury duty or spend the night in a hotel, requiring jurors to bring their lunch every day may be burdensome.

WHEREAS the District of Kansas has a backlog of trials and a limited number of courtrooms that allow adequate social distancing among trial participants. Allowing jurors to leave for lunch not only increases their exposure to COVID-19, it costs the court additional time which is inefficient and problematic.

WHEREAS in the District of Kansas there are indicators from public health officials that the COVID-19 virus is not contained and furthermore there exists an urgency to resume trials in order to secure the ends of justice for all litigants. This requires measures, such as partial sequestration, under 28 U.S.C. § 1871(e), instructing that the jurors are to be "kept together and not to separate" for their safety and security.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that, at the trial judge's discretion, sitting grand and petit jurors may be considered partially sequestered for the period of time that COVID-19 spread prevention measures are being promoted by the CDC and/or the KDHE. If the trial judge determines health risks dictate that lunches should be furnished, and jurors are required to serve through the lunch break to ensure the safety and security of themselves and others, then lunches will be paid for through the juror fee appropriation.

SO ORDERED this 1st day of April 2021.

s/ Julie A. Robinson

JULIE A. ROBINSON, CHIEF JUDGE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT