IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA SOUTHERN DIVISION

HILLCREST OPTICAL, INC., a corporation, on behalf of itself and all others in the State of	* *	
Alabama similarly situated,	*	
•	*	
	*	
Plaintiffs,	*	
	*	
V.	*	CIVIL ACTION NO.: 1:20-cv-275
	*	
CONTINENTAL CASUALTY COMPANY,	*	
	*	
	*	
Defendant.	*	
	*	

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

Plaintiff Hillcrest Optical, Inc., on behalf of itself and all others in the State of Alabama similarly situated, brings the following Complaint against Defendant Continental Casualty Company:

PARTIES, JURISDICTION, AND VENUE

1. Plaintiff Hillcrest Optical, Inc. ("Hillcrest" or "Plaintiff"), is a corporation organized under the laws of the State of Alabama, with its principal place of business located in Alabama.

2. Defendant Continental Casualty Company ("Continental" or "Defendant"), is a corporation organized under the laws of the State of Illinois, with its principal place of business located in Illinois. ¹

¹ Plaintiff's insurance policy bears the logo "CNA" throughout, but it states that coverage is provided by Continental Casualty Company. *See* Exhibit A, Policy, Renewal Declaration, p. 1. CNA is the corporate parent of Continental.

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3. This Court has subject-matter jurisdiction of this class action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. \$ 1332(d)(2)(A), because the matter in controversy, the aggregated claims of the members of the proposed Class, exceeds the sum of five million dollars, exclusive of interest and costs, and Plaintiff, a member of the proposed Class, is a citizen of a state different from Continental; pursuant to 28 U.S.C. \$ 1332(d)(4)(A)(II)(cc), in that the only Defendant is not a citizen of the state in which this action has been filed; and pursuant to 28 U.S.C. \$ 1332(d)(5), in that the proposed Class has more than 100 members.

4. Venue is proper in the Southern District of Alabama pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2), because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims asserted occurred in this judicial district. Venue is also proper in the Southern District of Alabama pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1), in that the Defendant, Continental, is deemed to reside in this judicial district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(d). Defendant has purposefully conducted and continues to purposefully conduct substantial business in this judicial district.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

5. Plaintiff Hillcrest owns and operates an optometrist's office in Mobile, Alabama.

6. Continental issued Hillcrest a commercial property insurance policy, with a policy period of May 1, 2019, to May 1, 2020, bearing policy number B 4030650931.

7. Hillcrest's policy is an all-risk policy that insures against all risks of direct physical loss unless the loss is specifically excluded by the policy.

8. Hillcrest's policy has the following Continental Casualty (CNA) coverage forms: Businessowners Special Property Coverage Form No. SB146801I, and Business Income and Extra Expense Form No. SB146802E. A copy of Hillcrest's policy is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

9. Plaintiff's Businessowners Special Property Coverage Form provides as follows:

A. Coverage

We will pay for direct physical loss of or damage to Covered Property at the premises described in the Declarations caused by or resulting from a Covered Cause of Loss.

Exh. A, Coverage Form No. SB146801I, p. 1.

10. Covered Property at the premises described in Plaintiff's Policy Declarations

includes Plaintiff's business premises.

11. Hillcrest's Coverage Form addressing Business Income and Extra Expense

provides:

Business Income and Extra Expense

Business Income and Extra Expense is provided at the premises described in the Declarations when the Declarations show that you have coverage for Business Income and Extra Expense.

1. Business Income

. . . .

b. We will pay for the actual loss of Business Income you sustain due to the necessary "suspension" of your "operations" during the "period of restoration". The "suspension" must be caused by direct physical loss of or damage to property at the described premises. The loss or damage must be caused by or result from a Covered Cause of Loss....

Exh. A, Coverage Form No. SB146802E, p. 1.

12. Hillcrest also purchased coverage for Extra Expense, which is:

2. Extra Expense

a. Extra Expense means reasonable and necessary expenses you incur during the "period of restoration" that you would not have incurred if there had been no direct physical loss of or damage to property caused by or resulting from a Covered Cause of Loss.

Exh. A, Coverage Form No. SB146802E, p. 2.

13. Hillcrest's policy also defines Covered Causes of Loss:

A. Coverage

. . . .

3. Covered Causes of Loss

RISKS OF DIRECT PHYSICAL LOSS unless the loss is:

- a. Excluded in Section B. EXCLUSIONS;
- b. Limited in paragraph A.4. Limitations; or
- c. Excluded or limited by other provisions of this policy.

Exh. A, Coverage Form No SB146801I, pp. 1-3.

14. The State of Alabama, the United States, and the world are in the midst of the novel coronavirus pandemic. The virus causes the viral illness known as COVID-19. The virus is extremely contagious. To date, Alabama has had over 10,000 coronavirus cases and over 400 of those people have died.

15. On March 13, 2020, Donald J. Trump, the President of the United States, declared the COVID-19 pandemic a National Emergency.

16. Also on March 13, 2020, Kay Ivey, Governor of the State of Alabama, declared the COVID-19 pandemic a State Public Health Emergency. Gov. Ivey directed the appropriate state agencies to exercise their statutory and regulatory authority accordingly.

17. On March 27, 2020, Dr. Scott Harris, the Alabama State Health Officer, entered a Statewide Order which provided, among other things, that effective March 28, 2020, at 5:00 PM., all medical procedures were postponed until further notice, except procedures necessary to treat an emergency medical condition. A copy of Dr. Harris's Order is attached hereto as Exhibit B. Hillcrest, as an optometrist's office, performs medical procedures. Hillcrest shut down in compliance with the Order. Hillcrest furnishes routine primary eye care and rarely has ocular

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emergencies. Accordingly, Hillcrest was completely shut down from March 28 until April 30, when it was allowed to reopen as explained below.

18. Effective April 30, 2020, at 5:00 PM, Dr. Harris entered a Statewide Order allowing the resumption of all medical procedures. A copy of Dr. Harris's Order is attached as Exhibit C. Hillcrest reopened in accordance with this order. The aforesaid orders of Gov. Ivey and Dr. Harris were valid exercises of the government's executive police power.

19. Hillcrest has suffered a substantial loss of business income due to the shutdown, and submitted a claim for the loss to CNA (acting on behalf of Continental) under the businessincome provision of Hillcrest's insurance policy. Hillcrest's claim was filed on or about April 15, 2020. Hillcrest furnished documents and information requested by CNA, purportedly to evaluate the claim. On May 4, 2020, Hillcrest's counsel emailed CNA's claims specialist advising that if CNA did not provide a response to Hillcrest's claim, either accepting or denying coverage, within five business days, "we will consider this claim denied and we will proceed with filing a lawsuit in Federal Court." Exhibit D, May 4, 2020, email from Richard H. Taylor to Darryl Tucker.

20. The five-business-day period referenced in Hillcrest's counsel's email has now expired and CNA/Continental still has not responded to Hillcrest's claim. Accordingly, Hillcrest brings the instant lawsuit.

21. As addressed above, Hillcrest's policy is an all-risk policy that insures against risks of direct physical loss and promises to pay for "direct physical loss of or damage to Covered Property." Exhibit A, Coverage Form No. SB146801I, p. 1.

22. Hillcrest sustained direct physical loss of covered property, its business premises, because the State Health Officer issued an order that shut Hillcrest's business down. There was a direct physical loss of Hillcrest's business premises because its business premises were rendered

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physically unusable for their intended purpose. The loss was direct because Dr. Harris's order was expressly directed to a category of businesses to which Hillcrest belongs, facilities performing medical procedures, and because the order was the direct cause of Hillcrest's loss of the use of its business premises.

23. Hillcrest's policy has an endorsement excluding loss or damage caused directly or indirectly by the "[p]resence, growth, proliferation, spread or any activity of 'fungi,' wet or dry rot, or 'microbes.'" Exhibit A, Form No. SB147084B, p. 1. But this exclusion does not apply to Hillcrest. The endorsement defines "microbes" as "any non-fungal micro-organism or non-fungal, colony-form organism that causes infection or disease." *Id.* There is general agreement in the scientific community that a virus is not a microorganism or an organism, because a virus is not alive. To the extent there is disagreement, the term "microbe" as used in the policy is ambiguous and must be construed in favor of coverage, to not include viruses. Moreover, the exclusion requires the "[p]resence, growth, proliferation, spread or any activity of . . . 'microbes.'" This terminology limits the exclusion to the actual presence of microbes in or on the insured premises. There is no indication that the novel coronavirus was ever actually present in or on Hillcrest's business premises.

24. Based upon the foregoing, there is coverage for Hillcrest's claim.

25. Based on Plaintiff's counsel's knowledge, information, and belief, Continental is routinely reacting in two ways to its insureds' claims made under its policies' business-income coverage, which arise out of the COVID-19 pandemic and report that governmental orders closed their businesses to the public or restricted their on-premises business operations. One routine reaction is to deny coverage on the ground that there was no direct physical loss of or damage to

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covered property. The other routine reaction is to do nothing, not deny the claims but fail to accept them as covered losses, which has the effect of a denial.

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

26. This action is brought as a plaintiffs' class action pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(b)(2) and 23(b)(3). Plaintiff brings this action on its own behalf, and on behalf of all others in the State of Alabama similarly situated, as representative of the following Class:

All businesses in the State of Alabama that were issued insurance policies by Continental Casualty Company ("Continental") with Businessowners Special Property Coverage Form No. SB1468011 and Business Income and Extra Expense Coverage Form No. SB146802E, whose policies were in effect on and after March 27, 2020, which businesses had their on-premises business operations shut down to the public or restricted by the Alabama State Health Officer's Order of March 27, 2020, who filed claims after that date under the policies' Business Income and Extra Expense Coverage Form, and whose claims were denied by Continental because there was allegedly no coverage under the policies, or, whose claims Continental did not expressly deny but failed to accept as covered losses.

Excluded from the Class are all businesses whose policies have an endorsement specifically excluding coverage for loss or damage caused by, resulting from, or relating to a "virus."

Further excluded from the Class are (1) the officers, directors, and employees of Continental, and its affiliated entities; and (2) all judicial officers of the United States who preside over or hear this case, and all persons related to them as specified in 28 U.S.C. § 455(b)(5).

27. The members of the Class are readily identifiable from Continental's books and records.

28. Upon information and belief, the Class consists of hundreds and possibly thousands of members, and therefore is so numerous that individual joinder of all members is impracticable. The members of the Class are geographically dispersed throughout the State of Alabama.

29. There are questions of law and fact common to Class, which predominate over any questions affecting only individual members of the Class. The questions common to the Class include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Do the policies' Business Income and Extra Expense Coverage Forms cover losses ultimately caused by COVID-19?
- (b) Do the policies' Business Income and Extra Expense Coverage Forms cover losses directly caused by the orders of the governmental authorities that shut down or restricted access to the Class members' businesses?
- (c) Is it a breach of Continental's contractual obligations under the policies for it to deny the Class members' claims under the Business Income and Extra Expense Coverage Forms, for lack of coverage under the policies?
- (d) What is the meaning of the policy provision "direct physical loss of or damage to" covered property?

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30. Plaintiff's claims are typical of those of the Class and are based on the same legal theories as those of the members of the Class. Plaintiff's claims and those of the Class members all arise from the same pattern of conduct or practice by Continental, as set out above.

31. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the members of the Class. Plaintiff has retained counsel who are highly experienced and competent in class-action litigation and other complex litigation, and who are knowledgeable regarding the applicable law. Plaintiff and its counsel intend to prosecute this action vigorously. Neither Plaintiff nor its counsel have any interests that might cause them not to vigorously pursue this action. Plaintiff's interests are coextensive with those of the Class, and Plaintiff has no interests adverse to those of the Class members.

32. Plaintiff has made arrangements with its counsel for the discharge of its financial responsibility to the Class. Plaintiff's counsel have the necessary financial resources to adequately and vigorously litigate this class action.

33. A class action is superior to all other available means for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversary, and it is desirable to concentrate the litigation of the claims in this forum. The damages suffered by many Class members are relatively small compared to the burden and expense that would be entailed by individual litigation of their claims against Continental. Moreover, many of the Class members are unlikely to be aware of their rights. Therefore, it is unlikely that these Class members, on an individual basis, can obtain effective redress for the wrongs done to them.

34. Additionally, the court system would be adversely affected by such individualized litigation. Individualized litigation would create the danger of inconsistent judgments arising from the same set of facts. Individualized litigation would also increase delay and expense to all parties

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and the court system from the issues raised by this action. In contrast, the class-action device provides the benefit of adjudication of these issues in a single proceeding, with economies of scale and comprehensive supervision by a single court.

35. Plaintiff and its counsel are aware of no litigation concerning the controversy already begun by or against members of the Class. This also indicates that the Class members' interest in individually controlling the prosecution of separate actions is minimal.

36. Plaintiff does not anticipate any likely difficulties in the management of this action as a class action.

37. Continental Casualty has acted or refused to act on grounds that apply generally to the Class, as specified above, so that corresponding declaratory relief is appropriate respecting the Class as a whole.

COUNT I DECLARATORY JUDGMENT

Plaintiff alleges as follows against Continental, on its own behalf and on behalf of the members of the Class, pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(b)(2) and 28 U.S.C § 2201:

38. Plaintiff realleges Paragraphs 1 through 37 hereof.

39. There is an actual, substantial, and justiciable controversy between Plaintiff and the Class members on the one hand, and Continental on the other, regarding whether Plaintiff and the Class members' losses of business income and any extra expenses are covered losses under the coverage forms specified above.

40. A judgment declaring the rights of Plaintiff and the Class members will serve a useful purpose in settling and clarifying the legal relations at issue, and will terminate and afford relief from the uncertainty, insecurity, and controversy giving rise to this request for a declaratory judgment.

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41. Plaintiff and the Class members are entitled to a judgment declaring that their losses of business income and any extra expenses are covered losses under the specified coverage forms.

<u>COUNT II</u> BREACH OF CONTRACT

Plaintiff alleges as follows against Continental, on its own behalf and on behalf of the members of the Class, pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(b)(3):

42. Plaintiffs reallege Paragraphs 1 through 37 hereof.

43. There are valid contracts of insurance binding Plaintiff and the Class members on the one hand and Continental on the other.

44. Plaintiff and the Class members have performed their obligations under the contracts of insurance. Plaintiff and the Class members have filed claims with Continental for their lost business income.

45. Continental has not performed its obligations under the insurance contracts, in that it has denied coverage for, or failed to accept as covered, Plaintiff's and the Class members' losses of business income when those losses are covered losses under the coverage forms specified above.

46. Plaintiff and the Class members have been damaged by Continental's denial of coverage, and by its failure to accept coverage, in the amount of their lost business income.

47. Plaintiff and the Class members are entitled to a judgment against Continental in the amount of their lost business income and any extra expenses.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff individually, and on behalf of the members of the Class, asks that the Court:

- (a) Certify the Class proposed herein;
- (b) Appoint Plaintiff as representative of the Class;

- (c) Appoint Plaintiff's counsel as attorneys for the Class;
- (d) Declare the rights of Plaintiff and the Class as follows: declare that Plaintiff's and the Class members' losses of business income and any extra expenses are covered losses under the specified coverage forms.
- (e) Enter judgment awarding Plaintiff and the Class members monetary damages for Continental's breach of their insurance contracts, in the amount of their lost business income and any extra expenses;
- (f) Award Plaintiff and the Class members prejudgment interest and post-judgment interest as provided by law;
- (g) Award Plaintiff and the Class members a reasonable attorney's fee and the costs of this action; and
- (h) Provide such further relief as may be just and proper.

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff, on behalf of itself and the members of the Class, demands a trial by jury on all

issues so triable.

Dated: May 14, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

By: <u>/s/ Richard H. Taylor</u> RICHARD H. TALYOR (TAYLR8925)

By: <u>/s/ W. Lloyd Copeland</u> W. LLOYD COPELAND (COPW3831)

By: <u>/s/ Steven A. Martino</u> STEVEN A. MARTINO (MARS7433) P.O. Box 894 Mobile, Alabama 36601 Phone: (251) 433-3131 Fax: (251) 433-4207 Email: <u>richard@taylormartino.com</u> <u>lloyd@taylormartino.com</u> <u>stevemartino@taylormartino.com</u> Case 1:20-cv-00275 Document 1 Filed 05/15/20 Page 13 of 13 PageID #: 13

ATTORNEYS FOR PLAINTIFF AND THE PROPOSED CLASS

OF COUNSEL:

John W. "Don" Barrett (pro hac vice application to be filed) BARRETT LAW GROUP, P.A. 404 Court Square North Lexington, Mississippi Phone: (662) 834-9168 Fax: (662) 834-2628 Email: <u>donbarrettpa@gmail.com</u>

DEFENDANT TO BE SERVED BY CERTIFIED MAIL:

Continental Casualty Company c/o CT Corporation System 2 North Jackson Street, Suite 605 Montgomery, AL 36104

JS 44 (Rev. 06/17) Case 1:20-cv-00275 Document 1 Cover State 05/15/20 Page 1 of 2 PageID #: 14

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. *(SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)*

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				DEFENDANTS									
HILLCREST OPTICAL, IN others in the State of Alab			all	CONTINENTAL C	ASUALTY	COMPANY							
(b) County of Residence of		Iobile County, AL		County of Residence of First Listed Defendant									
(EX	CEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CA	(SES)		NOTE: IN LAND CO		<i>PLAINTIFF CASES O</i> ION CASES, USE TI IVOLVED.	· ·	OF					
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(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A RICHARD H. TAYLOR - 455 Saint Louis Street, St Mobile, AL 36602 (2)	Taylor Martino, P.C.	r)		Attorneys (If Known)									
	•				DINCID								
II. BASIS OF JURISDI		ne Box Only)		TIZENSHIP OF P (For Diversity Cases Only)		AL PARTIES	Place an "X" in and One Box j	or Defenda					
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2 U.S. Government Defendant	★ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)		Citiz	en of Another State	Incorporated <i>and</i> Principal Place of Business In Another State								
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT			FO	DRFEITURE/PENALTY		t here for: <u>Nature c</u> NKRUPTCY							
 CONTRACT CONTRACT CONTRACT 110 Insurance 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholders' Suits 190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY 210 Land Condemnation 220 Foreclosure 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment 245 Tort Product Liability 290 All Other Real Property 	TORTS PERSONAL INJURY PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability 315 Airplane Product Product Liability Liability 367 Health Care/ 320 Assault, Libel & Pharmaceutical Slander Personal Injury 330 Federal Employers' Product Liability Liability 368 Asbestos Personal 340 Marine Injury Product 345 Marine Product Liability Liability 370 Other Fraud 355 Motor Vehicle 371 Truth in Lending Product Liability 380 Other Personal Product Liability 380 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability 360 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability 380 Other Personal Property Damage Sto Other Civil Rights 441 Voting 463 Alien Detainee 442 Employment 540 Mandamus & Other 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment 530 General 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 540 Mandamus & Othe 550 Civil Rights 540 Mandamus & Othe 444 Edu		Y 0 62 I 0 69 XTY 0 71 0 72 72 1 72 75 XS 0 79 2 79 79	 710 Fair Labor Standards Act 720 Labor/Management Relations 740 Railway Labor Act 751 Family and Medical Leave Act 		BANKRUPTCY 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS 820 Copyrights 830 Patent 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY 861 HIA (1395ff) 862 Black Lung (923) 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609		OTHER STATUTES 375 False Claims Act 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) 400 State Reapportionment 410 Antitrust 430 Banks and Banking 450 Commerce 460 Deportation 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations 480 Consumer Credit 490 Cable/Sat TV 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts 895 Freedom of Information Act 896 Arbitration 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes					
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VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:		IS A CLASS ACTION		Sy EMAND \$		CHECK YES only URY DEMAND:		n complai					
VIII. RELATED CASE IF ANY	(See instructions):	JUDGE			DOCKE	ET NUMBER							
DATE		SIGNATURE OF AT		OF RECORD									
05/15/2020 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		/s/ Richard H.	Taylor										

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- **I.(a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".

II. Jurisdiction. The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below. United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here. United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.

Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.

Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; **NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.**)

- **III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties.** This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit. Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If there are multiple nature of suit codes associated with the case, pick the nature of suit code that is most applicable. Click here for: <u>Nature of Suit Code Descriptions</u>.
- V. Origin. Place an "X" in one of the seven boxes.

Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.

Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.

Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.

Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date. Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.

Multidistrict Litigation – Transfer. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407.

Multidistrict Litigation – Direct File. (8) Check this box when a multidistrict case is filed in the same district as the Master MDL docket. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS NOT AN ORIGIN CODE 7.** Origin Code 7 was used for historical records and is no longer relevant due to changes in statue.

- VI. Cause of Action. Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity. Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service
- VII. Requested in Complaint. Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P. Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction. Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases. This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.

Date and Attorney Signature. Date and sign the civil cover sheet.