

CJ Griffin Quoted in Article on Transparency Concerns After eCourts Rollout

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CJ Griffin, a partner in the Media Law practice quoted in Law.com article, “N.J. Judge’s U-Turn on Sealed Verdict Highlights Transparency Concerns After eCourts Rollout.” The article explains lawyers’ fears that judges may be likely to seal documents because they can be accessed online.

But some lawyers said baseless orders to seal proceedings and documents appear to be experiencing an uptick. That’s thanks to the state judiciary’s rollout of eCourts, said CJ Griffin, co-chair of the New Jersey State Bar Association’s Media Law Committee.

The judge’s initial decision to seal the verdict falls in line with a disturbing trend, said Griffin.

“Whenever courts reflexively seal court records or close the courtroom, there is a cause for concern. With the implementation of eCourts, it seems like there is a trend towards judges being more inclined to reflexively seal documents or dockets, [or] sign overly broad confidentiality orders,” Griffin wrote in an email. “The courts need to be very cautious before doing so and instead apply the standards set forth in the court rules and the volumes of case law that discuss the presumption of public access,” wrote Griffin, who is with Pashman Stein Walder Hayden in Hackensack.

While New Jersey court records have always been open, the expansion of eCourts has made it less cumbersome for the public to obtain them without visiting the courthouse, Griffin said.

“My general sense is that in response to that ease of access, more people are in fact accessing court records. And, I have heard anecdotes from clients and reporters who have experienced courts sealing records more reflexively than before, likely because of the

knowledge that the documents are easier to access in the online docket now,” Griffin wrote.

Please click [here](#) for an online version of the article.

