

INDIGENT COUNSEL IN THE HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT COURTS


A REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY RESTORING JUSTICE AND THE TEXAS CRIMINAL JUSTICE COALITION

THIS REPORT USES DATA FROM HARRIS COUNTY'S NEW INDIGENT DEFENSE DASHBOARD TO SHOW HOW FREQUENTLY EACH OF THE DISTRICT COURT JUDGES UTILIZES THE HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE, WHICH IS CAPABLE OF RECEIVING UP TO 20% OF ALL DISTRICT COURT INDIGENT APPOINTMENTS.

DISTRICT COURTS BY LOWEST PUBLIC DEFENDER APPOINTMENT RATE

NOVEMBER 2020

#1 JUDGE HAZEL JONES




1.30%

OF INDIGENT
CASES ASSIGNED
TO PDO

174TH DISTRICT COURT

#2 JUDGE CHRIS MORTON




3.64%

OF INDIGENT
CASES ASSIGNED
TO PDO

230TH DISTRICT COURT

#3 JUDGE DESEAN JONES



4.03%

OF INDIGENT
CASES ASSIGNED
TO PDO

180TH DISTRICT COURT

<u>RANK</u>	<u>COURT</u>	<u>JUDGE</u>	<u>% OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO</u>
4.	262ND	LORI CHAMBERS GRAY	4.85%
5.	351ST	GEORGE POWELL	5.13%
6.	179TH	RANDY ROLL	5.62%
7.	177TH	ROBERT JOHNSON	7.04%
8.	176TH	NIKITA V. HARMON	7.96%
9.	185TH	JASON LUONG	8.90%
10.	232ND	JOSH HILL	10.00%
11.	184TH	ABIGAIL ANASTASIO	12.20%
12.	339TH	JESSE MCCLURE	16.28%
13.	263RD	AMY MARTIN	16.36%
14.	RIC	BROCK THOMAS	17.03%
15.	228TH	FRANK AGUILAR	19.65%
16.	183RD	CHUCK SILVERMAN	21.43%
17.	209TH	BRIAN WARREN	23.40%
18.	178TH	KELLI JOHNSON	28.24%
19.	248TH	HILARY UNGER	30.91%
20.	208TH	GREG GLASS	31.71%
21.	338TH	RAMONA FRANKLIN	32.00%
22.	182ND	DANILO LACAYO	40.88%
23.	337TH	HERB RITCHIE	54.69%

The 6th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution requires the appointment of an attorney for anyone facing criminal charges that is unable to afford their own. In Harris County, the judges of the district courts select attorneys for any indigent defendant facing charges in their court.

Despite the establishment of the Harris County Public Defender's Office in 2011, many of Harris County's elected district court judges fail to appoint the Public Defender's Office to capacity, opting to appoint private attorneys to represent indigent defendants instead.

Recent research conducted in Harris County shows that private attorneys receiving appointments are less effective than the Harris County Public Defender's Office in addition to frequently donating to judicial re-election campaigns and exceeding the Texas Indigent Defense Commission's maximum recommended caseload limits.