

# INDIGENT COUNSEL IN THE HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT COURTS

A REPORT BROUGHT TO YOU BY RESTORING JUSTICE AND THE TEXAS CENTER FOR JUSTICE AND EQUITY

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 2021

### #1 JUDGE BRIAN E WARREN



**0%**

OF INDIGENT  
CASES ASSIGNED  
TO PDO

209TH DISTRICT COURT

### #2 JUDGE RAMONA FRANKLIN



**2.63%**

OF INDIGENT  
CASES ASSIGNED  
TO PDO

338TH DISTRICT COURT

### #3 JUDGE CHRIS MORTON



**7.28%**

OF INDIGENT  
CASES ASSIGNED  
TO PDO

230TH DISTRICT COURT

<u>RANK</u>	<u>COURT</u>	<u>JUDGE</u>	<u>% OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO</u>
4.	174TH	HAZEL B. JONES	7.69%
5.	178TH	KELLI JOHNSON	9.79%
6.	185TH	JASON LUONG	10.13%
7.	RIC	BROCK THOMAS	12.10%
8.	228TH	FRANK AGUILAR	12.58%
9.	262ND	LORI CHAMBERS GRAY	14.86%
10.	232ND	JOSH HILL	15.63%
11.	248TH	HILARY UNGER	15.66%
12.	337TH	COLLEEN GAIDO	15.82%
13.	179TH	ANA MARTINEZ	17.20%
14.	180TH	DASEAN JONES	18.13%
15.	208TH	GREG GLASS	20.45%
16.	176TH	NIKITA V. HARMON	21.71%
17.	482ND	VISITING JUDGES*	22.12%
18.	182ND	DANILO LACAYO	23.08%
19.	177TH	ROBERT JOHNSON	25.45%
20.	183RD	CHUCK SILVERMAN	25.48%
21.	351ST	NATALIA "NATA" CORNELIO	26.83%
22.	263RD	AMY MARTIN	27.08%
23.	184TH	ABIGAIL ANASTASIO	28.26%
24.	339TH	TE'IVA J. BELL	31.07%

**TOTAL PDO APPOINTMENT RATE**

**16.84%**

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.

\* VISITING JUDGES PRESIDE OVER THE 482ND DISTRICT COURT, WHICH BEGAN TAKING CASES SEPTEMBER 1, 2021