

# 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

SEPTEMBER 2021

**#1 JUDGE HAZEL B. JONES**



**0%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

174TH DISTRICT COURT

**#1 JUDGE NIKITA V. HARMON**



**0%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

176TH DISTRICT COURT

**#1 JUDGE CHRIS MORTON**



**0%**

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>
2.	209TH	BRIAN E WARREN	0.55%
3.	338TH	RAMONA FRANKLIN	0.65%
4.	185TH	JASON LUONG	1.14%
5.	262ND	LORI CHAMBERS GRAY	2.09%
6.	482ND	JUDGE PRESIDING	3.88%
7.	RIC	BROCK THOMAS	7.48%
8.	180TH	DASEAN JONES	12.50%
9.	263RD	AMY MARTIN	17.61%
10.	337TH	COLLEEN GAIDO	17.71%
11.	339TH	TE'IVA J. BELL	18.82%
12.	179TH	ANA MARTINEZ	18.95%
13.	351ST	NATALIA "NATA" CORNELIO	20.75%
14.	184TH	ABIGAIL ANASTASIO	21.38%
15.	248TH	HILARY UNGER	21.65%
16.	182ND	DANILO LACAYO	22.22%
17.	232ND	JOSH HILL	22.36%
18.	177TH	ROBERT JOHNSON	22.95%
19.	208TH	GREG GLASS	23.26%
20.	228TH	FRANK AGUILAR	24.63%
21.	178TH	KELLI JOHNSON	26.11%
22.	183RD	CHUCK SILVERMAN	34.44%

**TOTAL PDO APPOINTMENT RATE**

**14.16%**

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.