

# 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

APRIL 2021

### #1 JUDGE NIKITA V. HARMON



**0%**

OF INDIGENT  
CASES ASSIGNED  
TO PDO

176TH DISTRICT COURT

### #2 JUDGE HAZEL B. JONES



**0.66%**

OF INDIGENT  
CASES ASSIGNED  
TO PDO

174TH DISTRICT COURT

### #3 JUDGE CHRIS MORTON



**0.68%**

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.	262ND	LORI CHAMBERS GRAY	1.04%
5.	263RD	AMY MARTIN	1.70%
6.	185TH	JASON LUONG	1.79%
7.	182ND	DANILO LACAYO	2.14%
8.	208TH	GREG GLASS	3.14%
9.	177TH	ROBERT JOHNSON	3.24%
10.	RIC	BROCK THOMAS	4.03%
11.	209TH	BRIAN E. WARREN	4.43%
12.	338TH	RAMONA FRANKLIN	9.81%
13.	232ND	JOSH HILL	10.39%
14.	180TH	DASEAN JONES	12.11%
15.	179TH	ANA MARTINEZ	14.75%
16.	339TH	TE'IVA J. BELL	17.02%
17.	184TH	ABIGAIL ANASTASIO	18.01%
18.	178TH	KELLI JOHNSON	18.63%
19.	248TH	HILARY UNGER	19.55%
20.	351ST	NATA CORNELIO	19.57%
21.	183RD	CHUCK SILVERMAN	20.90%
22.	228TH	FRANK AGUILAR	21.79%
23.	337TH	COLLEEN GAIDO	22.22%

**TOTAL PDO APPOINTMENT RATE**

**9.92%**

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.