

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

FEBRUARY 2023

#1 JUDGE KRISTIN M. GUINEY

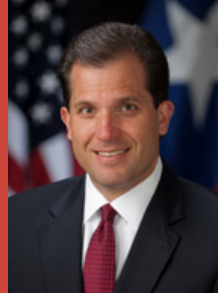


1.92%

OF INDIGENT
CASES ASSIGNED
TO PDO

183RD DISTRICT COURT

#2 JUDGE BROCK THOMAS



2.88%

OF INDIGENT
CASES ASSIGNED
TO PDO

RIC

#3 JUDGE RAMONA FRANKLIN



9.09%

OF INDIGENT
CASES ASSIGNED
TO PDO

338TH DISTRICT COURT

<u>RANK</u>	<u>COURT</u>	<u>JUDGE</u>	<u>% OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO</u>
4.	351ST	NATALIA "NATA" CORNELIO	10.18%
5.	176TH	NIKITA V. HARMON	11.28%
6.	209TH	BRIAN E WARREN	11.66%
7.	182ND	DANILO LACAYO	12.34%
8.	248TH	HILARY UNGER	12.63%
9.	174TH	HAZEL B. JONES	13.02%
10.	185TH	ANDREA BEALL	13.51%
11.	208TH	BEVERLY D. ARMSTRONG	14.12%
12.	228TH	FRANK AGUILAR	14.38%
13.	180TH	DASEAN JONES	14.57%
14.	232ND	JOSH HILL	14.65%
15.	262ND	LORI CHAMBERS GRAY	14.67%
16.	178TH	KELLI JOHNSON	14.89%
17.	263RD	MELISSA M. MORRIS	15.08%
18.	179TH	ANA MARTINEZ	15.51%
19.	337TH	COLLEEN GAIDO	16.98%
20.	339TH	TE'IVA J. BELL	17.84%
21.	482ND	VERONICA M. NELSON	18.18%
22.	184TH	KATHERINE N. THOMAS	19.70%
23.	177TH	ROBERT JOHNSON	20.14%
24.	230TH	CHRIS MORTON	20.34%

TOTAL PDO APPOINTMENT RATE

13.37%

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.