

# 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

MAY 2022

**#1 JUDGE BROCK THOMAS**




**4.07%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

RIC

**#2 JUDGE NIKITA V. HARMON**




**5.98%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

176TH DISTRICT COURT

**#3 JUDGE AMY MARTIN**



**6.21%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

263RD DISTRICT COURT

<u>RANK</u>	<u>COURT</u>	<u>JUDGE</u>	<u>% OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO</u>
4.	482ND	MARITZA ANTU	6.50%
5.	338TH	RAMONA FRANKLIN	6.53%
6.	177TH	ROBERT JOHNSON	8.82%
7.	230TH	CHRIS MORTON	9.38%
8.	248TH	HILARY UNGER	10.12%
9.	174TH	HAZEL B. JONES	11.72%
10.	178TH	KELLI JOHNSON	12.75%
11.	209TH	BRIAN E. WARREN	13.07%
12.	351ST	NATALIA "NATA" CORNELIO	13.19%
13.	184TH	ABIGAIL ANASTASIO	13.25%
14.	228TH	FRANK AGUILAR	13.42%
15.	232ND	JOSH HILL	13.87%
16.	339TH	TE'IVA J. BELL	13.87%
17.	185TH	JASON LUONG	13.90%
18.	180TH	DESEAN JONES	14.18%
19.	208TH	GREG GLASS	15.43%
20.	262ND	LORI CHAMBERS GRAY	15.71%
21.	183RD	CHUCK SILVERMAN	16.47%
22.	179TH	ANA MARTINEZ	16.67%
23.	182ND	DANILO LACAYO	17.26%
24.	337TH	COLLEEN GAIDO	18.54%

**TOTAL PDO APPOINTMENT RATE**

**11.81%**

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.