

# 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

APRIL 2022

### #1 JUDGE RAMONA FRANKLIN



**2.98%**

OF INDIGENT  
CASES ASSIGNED  
TO PDO

338TH DISTRICT COURT

### #2 JUDGE ROBERT JOHNSON



**3.05%**

OF INDIGENT  
CASES ASSIGNED  
TO PDO

177TH DISTRICT COURT

### #3 JUDGE BROCK THOMAS



**4.23%**

OF INDIGENT  
CASES ASSIGNED  
TO PDO

RIC

<u>RANK</u>	<u>COURT</u>	<u>JUDGE</u>	<u>% OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO</u>
4.	178TH	KELLI JOHNSON	7.07%
5.	248TH	HILARY UNGER	7.51%
6.	184TH	ABIGAIL ANASTASIO	7.76%
7.	228TH	FRANK AGUILAR	8.16%
8.	174TH	HAZEL B. JONES	8.38%
9.	263RD	AMY MARTIN	9.30%
10.	339TH	TE'IVA J. BELL	9.34%
11.	337TH	COLLEEN GAIDO	10.00%
12.	176TH	NIKITA V. HARMON	10.27%
13.	185TH	JASON LUONG	10.29%
14.	482ND	MARITZA ANTU	10.32%
15.	351ST	NATALIA "NATA" CORNELIO	10.40%
16.	183RD	CHUCK SILVERMAN	11.69%
17.	232ND	JOSH HILL	12.83%
18.	182ND	DANILO LACAYO	13.38%
19.	209TH	BRIAN E WARREN	14.19%
20.	262ND	LORI CHAMBERS GRAY	15.24%
21.	179TH	ANA MARTINEZ	17.09%
22.	208TH	GREG GLASS	17.68%
23.	180TH	DASEAN JONES	19.88%
24.	230TH	CHRIS MORTON	23.91%

**TOTAL PDO APPOINTMENT RATE**

**10.82%**

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.