

# 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

OCTOBER 2022

**#1 JUDGE BROCK THOMAS**




**2.88%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

RIC

**#2 JUDGE DANILO LACAYO**




**9.20%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

182ND DISTRICT COURT

**#3 JUDGE FRANK AGUILAR**



**11.18%**

OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO

228TH DISTRICT COURT

| <u>RANK</u> | <u>COURT</u> | <u>JUDGE</u>            | <u>% OF INDIGENT CASES ASSIGNED TO PDO</u> |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------------|--|
| 4.          | 176TH        | NIKITA V. HARMON        | 12.74%                                     |
| 5.          | 262ND        | LORI CHAMBERS GRAY      | 13.09%                                     |
| 6.          | 174TH        | HAZEL B. JONES          | 13.21%                                     |
| 7.          | 177TH        | ROBERT JOHNSON          | 13.46%                                     |
| 8.          | 185TH        | JASON LUONG             | 13.89%                                     |
| 9.          | 248TH        | HILARY UNGER            | 15.43%                                     |
| 10.         | 351ST        | NATALIA "NATA" CORNELIO | 15.82%                                     |
| 11.         | 208TH        | GREG GLASS              | 15.98%                                     |
| 12.         | 339TH        | TE'IVA J. BELL          | 16.03%                                     |
| 13.         | 482ND        | MARITZA ANTU            | 16.22%                                     |
| 14.         | 180TH        | DASEAN JONES            | 17.12%                                     |
| 15.         | 183RD        | CHUCK SILVERMAN         | 17.50%                                     |
| 16.         | 209TH        | BRIAN E WARREN          | 17.90%                                     |
| 17.         | 184TH        | ABIGAIL ANASTASIO       | 18.40%                                     |
| 18.         | 230TH        | CHRIS MORTON            | 19.27%                                     |
| 19.         | 338TH        | RAMONA FRANKLIN         | 20.81%                                     |
| 20.         | 178TH        | KELLI JOHNSON           | 20.90%                                     |
| 21.         | 179TH        | ANA MARTINEZ            | 21.05%                                     |
| 22.         | 232ND        | JOSH HILL               | 23.43%                                     |
| 23.         | 337TH        | COLLEEN GAIDO           | 24.03%                                     |
| 24.         | 263RD        | AMY MARTIN              | 25.88%                                     |

**TOTAL PDO APPOINTMENT RATE**

**16.01%**

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.