

Bail Reform in Harris County, Texas

EFFICIENCY, COST & PUBLIC SAFETY GAINS



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Public Policy
Research Institute

Under the O'Donnell Consent Decree:

- Most misdemeanor cases released on unsecured General Order Bonds
- High-risk cases have bond determined in a court hearing

74% FEWER SECURED BONDS



\$1,191

NET COST
REDUCTION



CASE PROCESSING COSTS DECLINED

- Simplified Bookings & Pretrial Screens
- Bond Hearings Cut by Half
- Pretrial Detentions > 3 Days Reduced by 50%
- Jail Sentences Reduced by 50%
- Probation Sentences Down 1/3



\$1,735 / CASE
COST REDUCTIONS

DUE PROCESS COSTS INCREASED

- 2x More Court Settings
- 2x More Dismissals
- 89% Fewer Pleas While Detained

\$544 / CASE
COST INCREASES



COMMUNITIES BECAME SAFER

- 5% Fewer Cases with Re-Arrests
- 12% Fewer Re-Arrests Per Case

\$310 / CASE
COST REDUCTION



The **O'Donnell** Consent Decree reformed a less safe and more costly system focused on pretrial detention to a fairer system focused on due process while saving money and improving public safety.