

NEWS RELEASE  
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO



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**PRESIDING JUDGE ANNE-CHRISTINE MASSULLO: DATA  
INDICATES A SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN FELONY TRIAL  
CASELOAD SINCE LAST COVID ORDER IN MAY**

**Data Shows Increase in Held to Answer Determinations in Preliminary  
Hearings and Decrease in Pending Felony Trials**

Judges have held more defendants to answer to criminal charges in preliminary hearings this year – about 70 percent higher than last year – and the number of held to answer (HTA) rulings has risen steadily since the last COVID order in May, Presiding Judge Anne-Christine Massullo announced today.

In addition, the Court's pending felony trials have decreased by 39 percent since the start of 2023 – from 426 in January to 259 in October, Presiding Judge Massullo announced.

"These statistics indicate significant progress in the reduction of the criminal caseload thanks to the diligence of our judges and staff," Presiding Judge Massullo said. "The Court remains focused on continuing these positive trends."

The number of HTA rulings has risen steadily since the end of the 2020 and is projected to climb 30 percent this year compared to 2019. In the year before the pandemic, the Court made 1,150 HTA rulings.

In felony cases, after the arraignment, if the case does not settle or get dismissed, the judge holds a preliminary hearing. At this hearing, the judge decides if there is enough evidence that the defendant committed the crime to make the defendant appear for a trial. If the judge decides

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**SFSC/HTA**  
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there is enough evidence, the prosecutor will file a document called “the Information.” Then, the defendant will be arraigned, a second time, on the Information. At that time, the defendant will enter a plea and proceed to trial.

In another sign of progress, Court statistics indicate that the average number of days from case filing to HTA rulings after a preliminary hearing has fallen 26 percent since 2019. In the year before the pandemic, the average number of days from the case filing until the HTA ruling was nearly 151 days compared to 111.57 days to date in 2023.

“The Court is eager to share its progress with our justice partners and the public,” Presiding Judge Massullo said. “Public trust and confidence in our court system depends on transparency and openness. We look forward to making these updates available to assure that the public can rely on the Court for accurate information about access to justice in San Francisco.”

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