

Analysis of Activity for the Year Ended August 31, 2000

Overview

During the state fiscal year 2000, municipal courts operated in 861 Texas cities. Section 71.035 of the Texas Government Code and Sections 171.1 and 171.2 of the Texas Administrative Code require each court to submit a monthly activity report to the Texas Judicial Council. Statewide, the Council received 9,333 reports out of a possible 10,332 for the year (a 90 percent reporting rate).

Revenue collected by the reporting courts totaled \$411,337,731 for the year, a one percent increase over the previous year. The amount of revenue per disposition averaged approximately \$57 dollars. The courts deposit this revenue in the treasury of the city where the court has jurisdiction; however, certain court costs on each case are remitted to special funds of the State.

Cases Filed

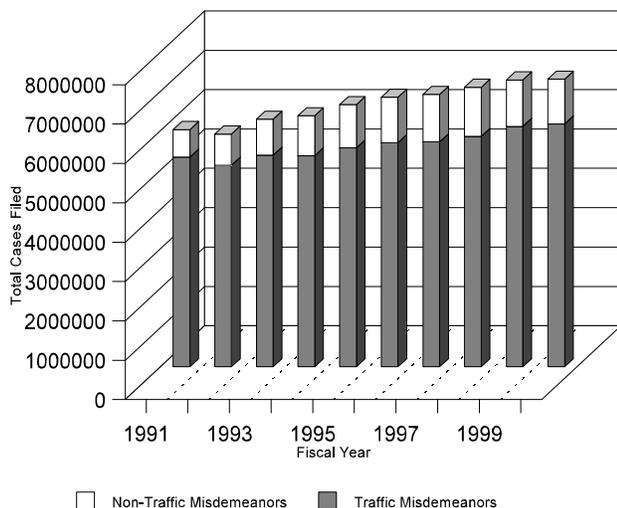
In fiscal year 2000, there were 7,305,255 new cases filed, approximately the same number as filed in fiscal year 1999. As compared to 10 years ago, however, the total number of new cases filed during the fiscal year has grown substantially-- by over 20 percent, or more than 100,000 cases per year. Figure 1 below indicates the number of cases filed over the last decade.

Of the total cases filed, traffic cases accounted for 84 percent, and non-traffic criminal cases accounted for the other 16 percent of the cases filed. Non-parking misdemeanors accounted for 82 percent of all traffic misdemeanors filed, with the remaining 18 percent for parking violations. Parking misdemeanors accounted for 15 percent of all cases filed.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The state had an average clearance rate (total cases disposed / total cases added) of 98 percent.
- Only 1.2 percent of the cases disposed at trial resulted in appeals, down from 12 percent in 1986.
- Forty-five percent of all dispositions occurred prior to trial. Most of these dispositions, 82 percent, were by payment of fine.
- Of the 1,201,965 cases that went to trial and were not dismissed, 99 percent were tried before a judge alone.
- Of all cases actually receiving a final judgment at trial, 97 percent were awarded a guilty verdict.
- Municipal courts issued an arrest warrant approximately every 15.8 seconds.
- In regards to juvenile activity, there were 121,167 transportation code offenses, 41,013 alcoholic beverage code offenses, and 2,898 DUI of alcohol offenses filed.

Figure 1: Docket Composition for the Past 10 Years



As Figure 1 indicates, the actual docket composition for the municipal courts has not changed dramatically over the last decade; however, non-traffic misdemeanors does appear to be slowly becoming a larger part of the total caseload. Although the number of non-traffic misdemeanors filed in fiscal year 2000 decreased approximately 5 percent over 1999 filings, in comparison to 10 years ago, the number has increased by nearly 62 percent.

Traffic Cases Continue to Dominate Dockets

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(Continued)

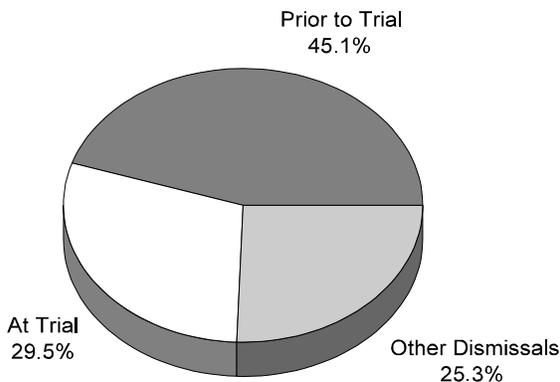
In fiscal year 2000, state law violations made up 78 percent of all non-traffic misdemeanors filed, with violations of city ordinance accounting for the remaining 22 percent. As compared to fiscal year 1999, the number of cases involving state law violation has decreased by 6 percent, while cases involving a violation of city ordinance has decreased 3 percent.

Dispositions

The reporting municipal judges achieved a clearance rate (total cases disposed/ total cases added) of 98 percent. Total dispositions for traffic and non-traffic misdemeanors increased 4 percent to 7,183,748 for the year ended August 31, 2000, compared to the total 6,933,398 dispositions in fiscal year 1999.

As Figure 2 below indicates, 45 percent of disposition in fiscal year 2000 occurred prior to trial. Most of these dispositions, 82 percent, were by payment of fine. Of the 1,201,965 cases that went to trial and were not dismissed, 99 percent were tried before a judge alone, and jury trials disposed of 5,057 cases. Of all cases actually receiving a final judgment at trial, 97 percent resulted in a guilty verdict.

Figure 2: Case Dispositions



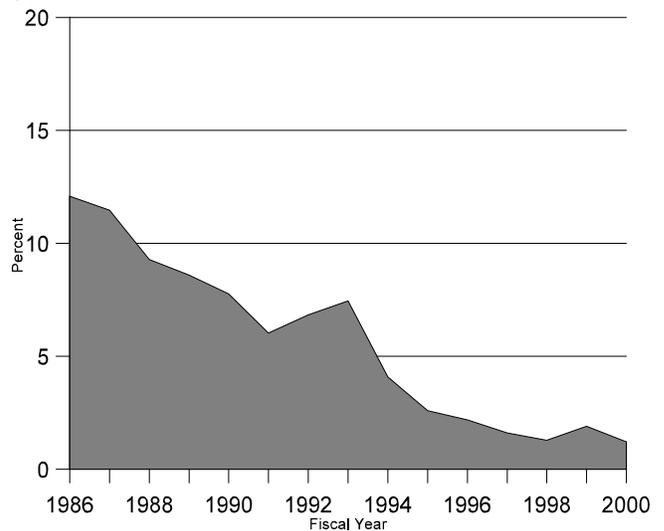
Appeals Continue to Decrease

The number of appeals filed as a percentage of all cases disposed at trial for fiscal year 2000 remained very low at 1.2 percent, a slight decrease from the previous year. Figure 3 displays the trend for the last

15 years.

In accordance with the trend of past years, the total number of appeals filed has been decreasing while the number of cases disposed of at trial has been steadily increasing. The 14,453 cases appealed in 2000 was a decrease of 20 percent from the number of cases appealed in fiscal year 1999. In comparison to 1993, the number of cases appealed has decreased by 80

Figure 3: Appeals Filed as a Percent of Dispositions at Trial



percent, while the number of cases disposed at trial has increased over 40 percent.

Other Activity

During fiscal year 2000, there were 1,944,174 arrest warrants issued, 4,608 search warrants issued, and 4,731 emergency protective orders given. Safety responsibility and driver's license suspension hearing were held 6,027 times.

In regards to juvenile activity, there were 121,167 transportation code offenses, 41,013 alcoholic beverage code offenses, and 2,898 DUI of alcohol offenses filed. Non-traffic fine-only offenses accounted for 103,929 of the juvenile cases filed.