

COUNTY-LEVEL COURTS

ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 1993

This section contains the court activity of the 254 constitutional county courts, the 167 statutory county courts-at-law, and the 18 statutory probate courts. Four additional statutory county courts-at-law have been authorized by the Legislature to be made operational at a later date.

From the number of cases reported, criminal cases constituted 75.5 percent (494,847) of the 655,829 new cases filed or appealed from lower courts. This figure includes criminal, civil, and juvenile new cases filed and appeals from lower courts, as well as cases filed under probate and mental health. Civil cases accounted for 12.6 percent (82,403), probate cases represented 8.3 percent (54,434), mental health cases represented 3 percent (19,922), and juvenile cases represented 0.6 percent (4,223) of the total.

CRIMINAL DOCKET

Concerning the criminal cases only, 20.4 percent of those filed in or appealed to the county-level courts were for theft, 19.7 percent were for driving while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs (DWI/DUID), 5 percent for violations of drug laws, 21.9 percent for traffic offenses (81.6 percent of which were cases appealed from justice of the peace or municipal courts), 7.5 percent were for simple assault, and 25.5 percent were for other criminal offenses.

Only 19.3 percent of the total criminal cases added to the county-level court dockets came by way of appeal from justice of the peace or municipal courts rather than being filed originally in the county-level courts or added in another manner.

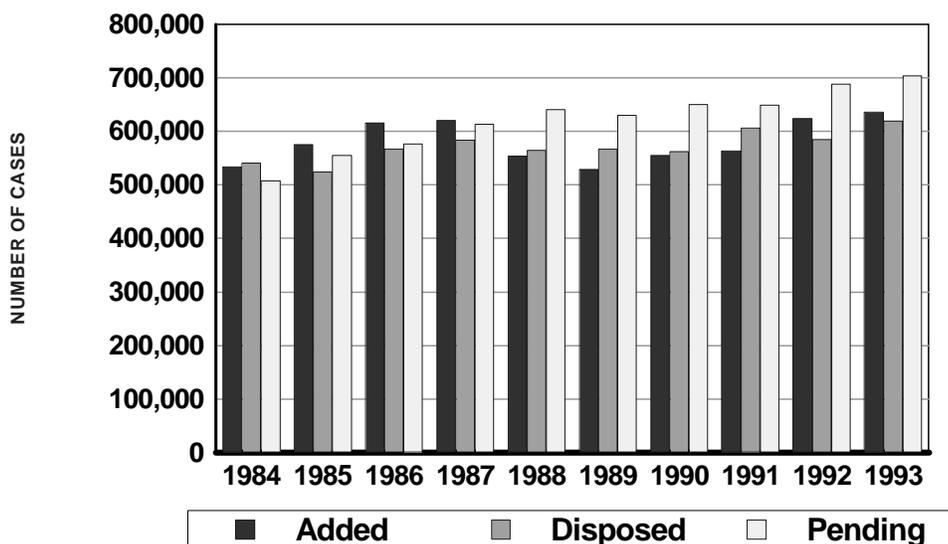
CIVIL DOCKET

Of the civil cases filed in or appealed to the county-level courts during the year ended August 31, 1993, 33.6 percent were classified as suits on debt, 16.5 percent concerned personal injury/damage suits, 7.2 percent were divorce suits, 0.6 percent were tax suits, 5.1 percent concerned other family matters, and 37 percent were other civil cases.

During the twelve-month reporting period, the county-level courts of the State disposed of 46.8 percent of the 1,323,263 total criminal, civil, and juvenile cases on their dockets (added during the year or carried over from the previous year). No statistics on the disposition of probate or mental health cases are recorded. The disposition rate was highest for juvenile cases, with 66 percent. Forty-nine percent of the criminal cases and 36 percent of the civil cases on the docket were disposed.

Of the criminal cases on the docket, 56 percent of the drug charges, 52 percent of the DWI/DUID charges, 36 percent of theft charges, 55 percent of assault charges, 56 percent of traffic cases, and 56 percent of other criminal cases were disposed.

COUNTY-LEVEL COURT ACTIVITY*
CASES ADDED, DISPOSED, AND PENDING**
FISCAL YEAR 1984 THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 1993

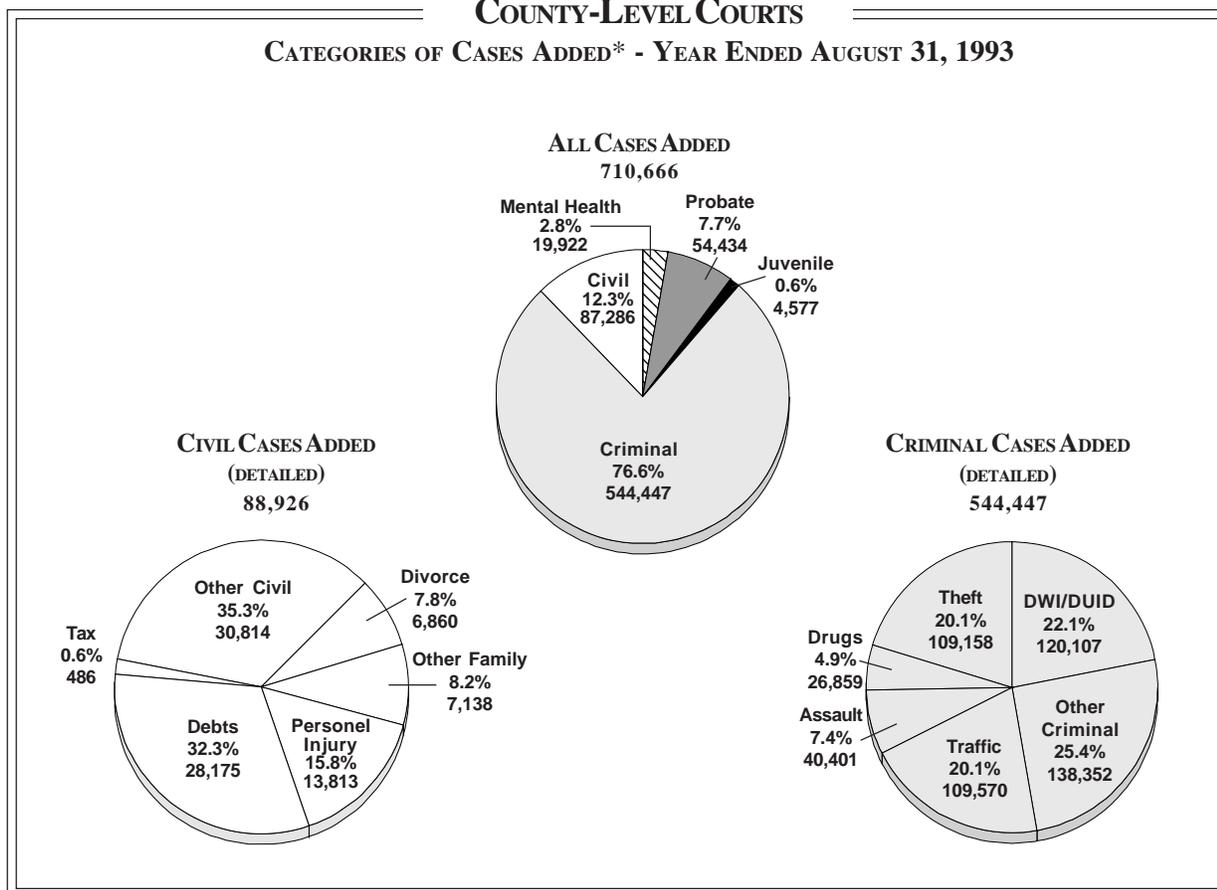


*Fiscal year 1986 includes, for the first time, show cause motions in civil activity (family law), deferred adjudications in criminal activity, and motions to revoke probation in criminal and juvenile activity.

**Cases added include new criminal, civil, and juvenile cases, and appeals from lower courts.

COUNTY-LEVEL COURTS

CATEGORIES OF CASES ADDED* - YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 1993



*Includes cases appealed from lower courts.

Of the 47,986 motions to revoke probation in criminal cases filed during the year, 17,945 were granted and 18,069 were continued on probation or deferred adjudication. Disposed motions to revoke accounted for 6.9 percent of the total dispositions in criminal cases.

Deferred adjudication accounted for 12.1 percent of the total dispositions. Of the case categories where the defendant was placed on deferred adjudication, traffic offenses was the highest with 26 percent and DWI/DUID was the lowest with 0.6 percent.

Excluding probate and mental health, the county-level courts disposed of 619,693 cases, while 636,310 cases were added to their dockets.

Of the criminal cases disposed of in county-level courts, 42.9 percent of the dispositions followed a plea of guilty or nolo contendere. Trials were held in 2 percent of the criminal cases disposed of: 6,886 were before the judge alone, and 3,593 were before a jury.

Thirty-two percent of all criminal dispositions were by dismissal. Within each case category, dismissals accounted for 13.4 percent of the DWI/DUID

cases, 47.2 percent of the theft cases, 21.6 percent of the drug cases, 38.9 percent of the assault cases, and 48.4 percent of the traffic cases, and 26.2 of the other criminal case dispositions.

With regard to civil cases, 14.3 percent of dispositions involved a trial. Of the civil cases tried, 658 were before a jury and 12,596 were before a judge alone. Default or agreed judgments accounted for 31.4 percent of civil dispositions, and 38.9 percent of all civil cases were dismissed. Of the show cause motions filed in family law cases in the county-level courts, 80.8 percent were disposed.

TOTAL PENDING CASELOADS INCREASE

Total cases pending on the dockets of the county-level courts increased by 2 percent from 688,466 on September 1, 1992, to 703,570 on August 31, 1993. This does not include probate or mental health cases.

Cases remaining on the dockets on August 31, 1993, represented a 3.1 percent decrease in pending civil cases and a 3.9 percent increase in pending criminal cases during the fiscal year.