

Unflagging backlog in Harris County Civil Courts, 70,000 cases pending

Relief possible through creation of new courts and increased use of mediation

HOUSTON, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, June 1, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- There are around 70,000 civil cases pending in Harris County, according to Harris County District Clerk's office. Most cases that are currently being tried were filed four or more years ago.

"Harris County's civil judges are working hard to try cases, or see that they are otherwise resolved, but there are only 28 of them serving the third most populous county in the nation and about 100 new cases are filed every business day. The numbers simply cannot be overcome without the addition of new courts," [Peter Taaffe](#), a civil mediator with Comeaux Mediation in Harris County said Thursday.

Harris County Commissioners [recently voted](#) in support of adding more criminal courts. But, the county is badly in need of new civil courts too.

The Office of Court Administration for the State of Texas has determined that there is a [shortage of nineteen](#) Civil Court officers in Harris County.

The last time the legislature created a new civil district court in Harris County was in 1985, when the population was approximately 2,747,000 – it has since grown by over 2 million people. This means more drivers, more auto accidents, more workplace injuries, more business disputes - and more lawsuits.



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Taaffe, a former University of Houston Law Center lecturer, former Vice-Chairman of the University of Houston System Board of Regents, and a civil litigator for twenty-five years, believes that in addition to the creation of new courts, some of the caseload burden can be relieved through mediation, which can be done in person or via virtual means.

“Regardless of the number of judges, the sheer volume of pending cases tells you that very few can be tried — but most can benefit from mediation,” Taaffe said.

Mediation, at its core, provides a forum to narrow down exactly what is in dispute, and one that allows for the parties to consider all alternatives before continuing with the time-consuming and expensive litigation process, according to Taaffe.

“I am a strong believer in the jury system and some cases simply must be resolved through a jury trial,” Taaffe added.

“However, most cases should, and do, settle before trial when the parties and their lawyers realistically assess the issues at mediation.”



Peter Taaffe is a civil mediator in Harris County. He is a former University of Houston Law Center lecturer, former Vice-Chairman of the University of Houston System Board of Regents, and a civil litigator for twenty-five years.

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*Peter Taaffe, Comeaux
Mediation*

ABOUT PETER TAAFFE

After 25 years as a trial lawyer, Peter K. Taaffe now exclusively serves as a mediator for civil cases. He mediates auto accident, workplace accident, industrial accident, breach of contract, sexual assault, insurance coverage, professional liability, toxic tort exposure, mass tort action, intellectual property, maritime injury and death, dram shop, probate, construction and real estate, and premises liability cases.

He is licensed to practice law in Texas and before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit, the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, and the U.S. District Courts for the Northern, Southern, Eastern and

Western Districts of Texas.

Taaffe has been recognized by the Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program and Travis County Volunteer Legal Services for his pro bono legal service. He served as an adjunct professor at the University of Houston Law Center and was on the advisory board of the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law at the same university.

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Comeaux Mediation is a statewide mediation panel located in Harris County, Texas.

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