



Failing to Appear in South Texas Justice of the Peace Courts

October 2026

WHY PEOPLE MISS COURT

Most missed court dates are unintentional. When people who had missed a court hearing were asked for the main reason, the most common answer was that they forgot.¹ Missing court can lead to an arrest warrant or a hold on a person's driver's license.

37%

forgot about the hearing

8%

never received notice of the hearing

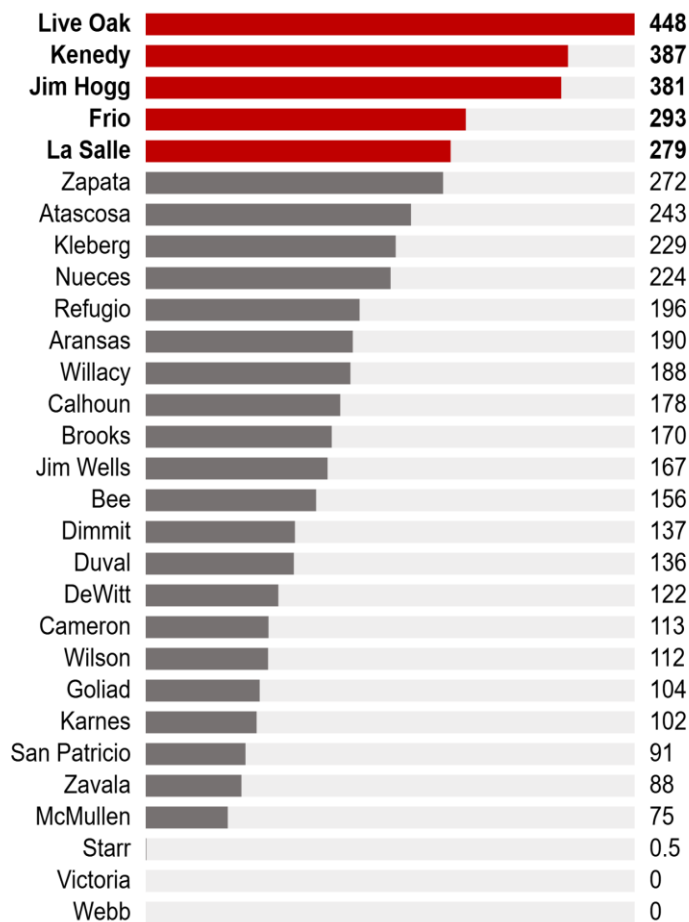
5%

found the information they received confusing

FTAP HOLDS ACROSS SOUTH TEXAS

FTAP HOLD RATE BY COUNTY, 2025

Active Failure to Appear/Pay holds per 100 new cases filed²



Hidalgo County: no data reported.

23 of 29

South Texas counties had higher FTAP rates than the state median of 94 holds for every 100 new cases filed.

448

FTAP holds per 100 new cases in Live Oak County, the region's highest rate. Kenedy (387) and Jim Hogg (381) follow.

12

counties issued Class C warrants at a higher rate than the state median of 2 FTA warrants for every 100 new cases filed (see chart on back).

CALCULATING RATES

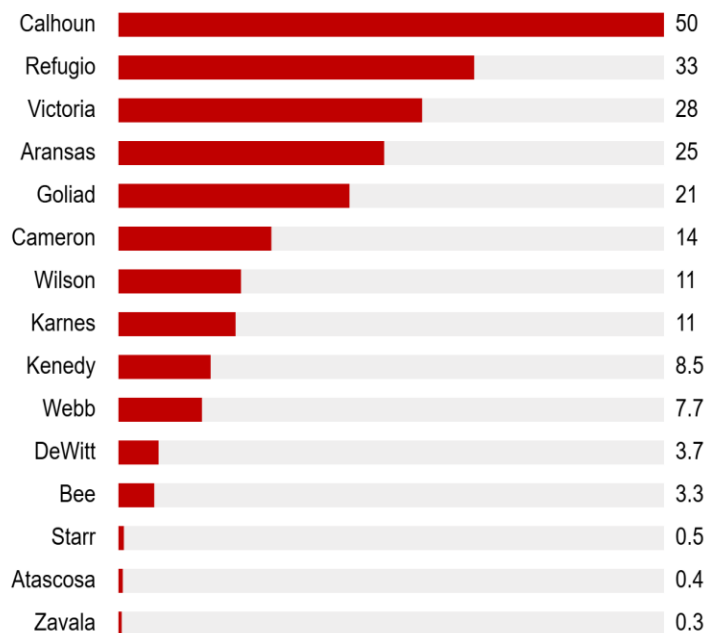
FTAP hold rate: FTAP holds active in 2025, including holds still open from cases filed in prior years, divided by new cases filed in 2025. Holds can stay open for years, and one case can generate multiple holds, which pushes rates above 100 per 100 cases.

Class C and capias warrant rates: warrants issued in 2025 divided by new cases filed in 2025; unlike hold rates, these exclude warrants carried over from prior years.³

WARRANTS FOR MISSED COURT DATES

CLASS C WARRANT RATES BY COUNTY, 2025

Class C warrants issued per 100 new cases filed⁴



14 counties reported no Class C warrants: Brooks, Dimmit, Duval, Frio, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Kleberg, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Nueces, San Patricio, Willacy, and Zapata—Hidalgo County: no data reported.

TEXT REMINDERS WORK

A text message with the date, time, and location of a hearing addresses the most common reasons people miss court. A review of the research found that reminders improved court appearance in 11 of 12 studies, with relative reductions in failure-to-appear rates of 11% to 61%.⁵

REFERENCES

¹ The Pew Charitable Trusts, "Court Reminders Have Broad Bipartisan Support," fact sheet (Nov. 2025), <https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/fact-sheets/2025/11/court-reminders-have-broad-bipartisan-support>.

² Texas Appleseed analysis of 2025 FTAP hold, Class C warrant, capias pro fine warrant and new-case data for 29 South Texas counties.

³ Texas Appleseed, "Explainer: Failure-to-Appear Rates in Texas Courts" (Apr. 2026).

⁴ Texas Appleseed analysis of 2025 FTAP hold, Class C warrant, capias pro fine warrant and new-case data for 29 South Texas counties.

⁵ The Pew Charitable Trusts, "States Underuse Court Date Reminders," issue brief (May 2025), <https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2025/05/states-underuse-court-date-reminders>.

⁶ Tex. H.B. 4293, 87th Leg., R.S. (2021).

⁷ Tex. H.B. 1, 88th Leg., R.S. (2023), General Appropriations Act, Art. IV, Office of Court Administration, Rider 14.

⁸ Master Services Agreement between the Texas Office of Court Administration and eCourtDate, Inc., OCA Contract No. 212-24-0307 (executed Aug. 12, 2024), Legislative Budget Board Contracts Database; Texas Judicial Branch, "Court Reminder Program" (early-adopter registration deadline Sept. 27, 2024).

⁹ Texas Judicial Branch, "Court Reminder Program" and "Court Reminder Program FAQ," <https://www.txcourts.gov/programs-services/court-reminder-program>.

THE TEXAS COURT REMINDER PROGRAM

2021 Legislature passes H.B. 4293, directing the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to build a court text reminder system.⁶

2023 Legislature allocates \$2.2 million to build the system.⁷

2024 OCA signs with eCourtDate as its vendor and opens early-adopter registration.⁸

2025 Rollout begins in early-adopter counties.

WHAT COURTS GET

- ✓ Free for all county courts; available to municipal courts at cost.⁹
- ✓ Text, email, or phone reminders.
- ✓ Vendor onboarding and training; courts can go live in as little as one month.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.txcourts.gov/programs-services/court-reminder-program/>



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