



News Release

www.njcourts.com

For more information:
Winnie Comfort
Pete McAleer
609-815-2910

For immediate release:
May 4, 2017

First Quarter Statistics Show Criminal Justice Reform Meeting Initial Goals

First-quarter statistics released today by the Administrative Office of the Courts show Criminal Justice Reform continues to meet its initial goals as high-risk defendants are being detained until trial and low-risk defendants are no longer sitting in jail simply because they can no longer afford bail.

The statistical report covers the period from Jan. 1 through March 31, during which judges made initial release decisions for 10,193 defendants.

Prosecutors, relying on a constitutional amendment that went into effect on Jan. 1, motioned for pretrial detention in 2,256 cases. Judges granted detention in 1,262 of those cases (55.9 percent). The remaining 994 defendants were released to the monitoring of the Judiciary's newly-created Pretrial Services Program.

Bail was imposed as a condition of release for only eight defendants.

The report also provides a breakdown of the level of monitoring assigned to those defendants released to Pretrial Services. As of March 31, the overall breakdown of initial decisions is as follows:

- 37.5 percent of defendants were being monitored at the highest level, which ranges from weekly visits and contact with pretrial services staff to electronic monitoring and house arrest;
- 36.9 percent were being monitored at lower levels, ranging from monthly in-person visits to contact by phone;
- 10.7 percent were released on their own recognizance; and
- 12.4 percent were detained pending trial.

Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting Administrative Director of the Courts, testified before the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee today and said the program is off to a strong start. The Judiciary continues to meet with the Attorney General's Office and the Public Defender's Office, he said, to discuss potential refinements to Criminal Justice Reform.

"When you consider that we have replaced a system that stood for more than 70 years, the transition has been remarkably smooth," Grant said.

Criminal Justice Reform, Judge Grant said, has removed money as a factor in in pretrial release decisions and replaced it with "an honest and direct conversation about whether a defendant is a risk to the community."

"For the first time, prosecutors can now file motions seeking to have high-risk defendants held until trial. For the first time, judges can decide to release defendants for monitoring by a newly created pretrial services unit

until trial. And, for the first time, low-risk defendants no longer have to linger in jail for months at a time because they cannot afford to post even modest amounts of bail,” Grant said.

The Judiciary’s [statistical report](#) is attached. The numbers provide a preliminary summary of Criminal Justice Reform data.

###