



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Judge Natalia Cornelio elected to lead Harris County Criminal District Courts

October 1, 2025 — The Administrative Office for the Harris County District Courts congratulates Judge Natalia Cornelio, having been elected by her peers to serve as Administrative Judge over the 29 Harris County Criminal District Courts for a two-year term.

About Judge Natalia Cornelio:

Natalia Cornelio, known in her community as “Nata,” is a proud bilingual Mexican-American judge with two decades of legal experience. She has dedicated her career to ensuring that all people have meaningful access to the law.

Before taking the bench, Judge Cornelio served as an associate at the law firm Locke Lord and Liddell, a staff attorney for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, an assistant federal public defender in Houston, and as legal director for the Texas Civil Rights Project.

Since taking the bench in 2020 and her re-election in 2024, Judge Cornelio has dedicated her court to fairness, due process, and ensuring that every person who comes before her has the opportunity to be heard.

About the Role of Administrative Judge:

Administrative judges are elected by fellow judges within each division (Civil, Criminal, Family, and Juvenile) and serve fixed terms. Their leadership ensures consistent application of court policies, enhances access to justice, and strengthens coordination between the judiciary and the broader legal community. As new challenges and demands emerge, this position helps guide the courts in serving the public with fairness, integrity, and transparency.

About the Harris County Criminal District Courts:

The 29 Harris County Criminal District Courts handle state jail felonies up to first-degree felonies, as well as capital murder charges. This includes burglary of a building, habitual burglary of a motor vehicle offenders, and possession of controlled substances less than one gram. First-degree felonies include murder, aggravated robbery, and aggravated sexual assault. Capital murder can include situations where an individual is sentenced to death or life in prison without the possibility of parole.

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