



District Courts
of Harris County

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Judge Vanessa Velasquez appointed to the 486th Criminal District Court

July 14, 2026 — The Harris County District Courts welcome the return of Judge Vanessa Velasquez to the bench following her appointment by Governor Greg Abbott to the 486th District Court.

“We are pleased to have Judge Velasquez back with the Harris County District Courts,” said Judge Gloria E. López, Local Administrative District Judge and presiding judge of the 308th District Court. “Drawing on her prior 13-year tenure as judge of the 183rd District Court and a career dedicated to public service, her experience will continue to benefit the people of Harris County.”

Judge Velasquez brings with her decades of legal and judicial experience both on the bench and as an assistant district attorney. She is a member of the State Bar of Texas, Texas Center for the Judiciary, and Texas Association of Retired, Former and Senior Judges. Judge Velasquez earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Houston and a Juris Doctor from South Texas College of Law.

This appointment fills the vacancy created when Judge Aaron Burdette stepped down from the 486th District Court in May. Judge Velasquez’s appointment ensures the continued administration of justice for the residents of Harris County.

The Harris County District Courts congratulate Judge Velasquez on her appointment and look forward to her continued service to the judiciary and Harris County.

About the Harris County Criminal District Courts:

The 29 Harris County Criminal District Courts handle state jail felonies up to first degree felonies, including capital murder charges. State jail felonies include 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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