



U.S. Department of Justice

Matthew M. Graves
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District of Columbia

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August 8, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Chairperson Edward Ryder
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B
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Chairperson Ryder:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the ANC 6B Public Safety Committee Meeting in April. We agree that transparency with the community is critical. Our Office was the first in the Department of Justice, to our knowledge, to take advantage of the new “Data Science” occupational series created in December 2021 by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. We invested our Office’s resources to pioneer this new position because we recognize the value of data-driven prosecution and increasing transparency through data. Our data scientist onboarded in January 2023, and since that time, we have been able to provide unprecedented levels of transparency into our Office’s Superior Court practice. Each month, we issue a Superior Court report outlining key data points. The reports since May 2023 can be found [here](#). We also work with D.C.’s Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (“CJCC”) on maintaining multiple dashboards that relate to some of the data points discussed in your letter. We provide extensive data to the CJCC concerning charging and dispositions in adult firearms cases, available [here](#). We worked closely with the CJCC as it developed a dashboard concerning diversion, and that data is available via the same link. In short, our Office during my tenure, has provided more data about its prosecutions than it has at any other point in its existence.

Additionally, this macro-level data is not the only way of tracking our prosecutorial efforts. As a longstanding piece of transparency, our Community Engagement staff publishes a report each month entitled the “Court Report” for each D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (“MPD”) district. The Court Report contains a summary of significant cases in your community

that our Office prosecuted during the previous month and discusses crimes that have occurred in your MPD Patrol Service Area (PSA). The monthly Court Report includes detailed information about charged cases, including the defendant's name, the address and PSA where the crime occurred, the offense(s) charged, and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia's case number. The public can then use that information to view the status of any pending criminal case using the Court's online eAccess system (<https://eaccess.dccourts.gov/eaccess/home.page.2>). The public docket provides real-time information in pending cases about charges, pleas, dismissals, trials, verdicts, diversion, and sentencings, among many other things, and users can often retrieve documents that discuss the factual information in the case. This same information may be available for cases that are no longer pending, though many cases are wiped from the eAccess system after a conviction under the Youth Rehabilitation Act or pursuant to other sealing laws.

Our current case-management system, which was built in the 1980s, precludes us from providing much more robust data than the data we are currently reporting through our monthly Court Reports and CJCC. As I explained when we met—and as you note in your letter—we are in the process of working with an outside vendor to develop a new case management system. After many years of hard work to scope the project and to solicit and to review bids, we were able to enter into a contract with the vendor in September 2023. We *hope* that the new system will be live by next summer. Getting this contract executed last year was one of the Office's most significant accomplishments, outside of a courtroom, in recent memory. We will be the only Office of the 94 U.S. Attorney Offices to have such a tool, and it will greatly increase the efficiency of our Superior Court prosecutions. Another reason I was deeply committed to getting a contract in place is that a modern case management system is a necessary prerequisite to more robust data: both for our internal use in making prosecutorial decisions and for public reporting.

Our data scientist is integrally involved in developing our new case management system. Transitioning to this new system is an enormous undertaking, and our first priority will be ensuring our core mission of prosecuting cases and meeting court obligations is uninterrupted. But once we are fully transitioned, we intend to turn to leveraging the new case management system to develop a publicly available USAO-DC dashboard. Since 2021, our career prosecutors have consulted on data issues—including a potential dashboard—with external subject matter experts such as those in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland and in numerous local prosecutors' offices, and have attended national conferences sponsored by the National District Attorneys' Association, the Prosecutor's Center for Excellence, and the Institute for Innovation in Prosecution. We will carefully consider the suggestions in your letter as we continue to consult with subject matter experts in these areas.

Some of the metrics you suggest, though, are outside the capabilities of a prosecutor's dashboard, and we have not seen them in other local prosecutors' dashboards we have studied, such as that of the D.C. Office of the Attorney General and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office. If you review these and other dashboards, you will notice that they generally report data related to overall activities, not case-specific data. The reason you will see this trend is at least

two-fold. First, as we discussed, there are limits that exist for good reason about information that prosecutors' offices can provide that is not part of the court record. Second, because of those limits, any case-specific information that a prosecutors' office would provide, would be redundant of the relevant court's public docket. Again, the Court Reports we already issue provide all the information needed to track on eAccess what is happening in a particular case. The advantage of the dashboards is that they provide a macro-level picture of what is happening with prosecutions that individual cases cannot. Finally, a prosecutor's case management system would not contain sufficient information to derive recidivism statistics as, among other issues, the system will only capture arrests that occur in the jurisdiction of that particular prosecution office. That is not to say this data is not important, only that such data analysis may be better suited for an agency such as the CJCC.

Thank you for your continued interest in this issue and other issues that impact community safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Graves", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

MATTHEW M. GRAVES
United States Attorney