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## **FAIRFAX COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY STEVE DESCANO RELEASES ADDITIONAL PRETRIAL DATA**

*Prosecutors continue to recommend holding individuals accused of violent offenses, but increasingly recommend releasing individuals accused of nonviolent offenses*

Fairfax County, VA — Today Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano released new data for the OCA's bond data dashboard, showing that **prosecutors increasingly recommend individuals accused of nonviolent offenses be released pretrial, while continuing to recommend holding the vast majority of individuals accused of violent crimes or sex offenses**. This new release of data shows closer alignment with the OCA's policy on pretrial release and detention and affirms that data can be used to implement prosecutorial reforms and improve decision-making in real time. The OCA will continue to use its data program to improve and implement reforms in other areas.

CA Descano first released the dashboard in October 2022 as part of the office's plan to build a sophisticated data program to drive decision-making and promote transparency. The dashboard provides an unprecedented look at the pretrial bond recommendations of Fairfax County prosecutors, [who never ask for cash bail](#), and make pretrial detention recommendations based only on whether the individual is dangerous to the community.

"When we released our first analysis, we discussed publicly that we believed there was an opportunity to better align prosecutorial decision-making with the office's bond policy. We subsequently trained attorneys to focus on dangerousness when making recommendations for nonviolent offenses, and after a concentrated training effort, we saw our prosecutors recommend release more often at bond hearings for individuals accused of nonviolent offenses," Descano said. "This is ultimately how we improve community safety; while we recommend holding those who represent a danger to the community, for those who are not a danger to the community, keeping them in jail cuts them off from their family, job, and housing, which can lead to more crime in the future."

**At bond review hearings for individuals accused of nonviolent misdemeanors, the OCA recommended release for 86% of cases in the fourth quarter, a 23 percentage-point increase from Q3 of 2022 (63% of cases). Over the same period, release recommendations for individuals accused of nonviolent felonies increased by 12 percentage-points, from 51% to 63%. Recommendations for individuals accused of violent offenses held steady, as ACAs recommended holding 76% of individuals accused of violent felonies in Q3 and 75% in Q4; and recommended holding 93% individuals accused of felony sex offenses in Q3 and 88% in Q4.**

Descano's Data Director, Dr. Jaime Michel, is looking forward to developing similar systems for tracking the office's implementation of other key reforms. "We're aiming to build comprehensive data tools for every decision-making point in the office," she said. "Not only will this peel back the curtain on the prosecutorial decision-making, hopefully helping to improve trust and accountability, but we also use it in real time to ensure that our policies are being put into practice to make the community safer and more equitable." The OCA's original dashboard also has geographic, wealth, and racial breakdowns.

"Data is a tool for us as well as the public," Descano added. "This new release affirms that data has a real role to play in prosecutorial reform as we continue to build towards an equitable system."

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