

# Commonwealth of Virginia

## COUNTY OF FAIRFAX

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### **FAIRFAX COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY RELEASES DATA DASHBOARD ON PRETRIAL DETENTION AND CASH BAIL REFORMS**

*Data shows that prosecutors are requesting most alleged perpetrators of violent and sexual crimes be detained pretrial, most defendants in nonviolent crimes be released*

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA – Today Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano released the [first data dashboard](#) his team has developed as part of his plan to build a sophisticated data program to drive the office's decision-making and promote transparency.

This first dashboard provides an unprecedented look at the pretrial and bond recommendations of Descano's prosecutors. Shortly after taking office, Descano directed his team to stop requesting cash bail to more effectively promote public safety and address disparities in the legal system. At bond review hearings, Fairfax prosecutors now simply recommend that a judge detain those individuals they deem a danger to the community pretrial and release those who do not pose a danger.

**The dashboard demonstrates that Fairfax prosecutors recommend that the vast majority of individuals charged with violent crimes or sex offenses - and a higher percentage than judges ultimately decide to hold - be detained pretrial. The dashboard also shows that prosecutors recommend that the majority of individuals charged with nonviolent crimes - also a higher percentage than judges decide to release - be released pretrial.**

"This data illustrates that reform and safety go hand-in-hand," said **Descano**. "We are striving to recommend detention exclusively for those who pose a true danger to the community because of the downstream consequences of unnecessary incarceration. And we are making progress."

Descano was also quick to add that the data demonstrates there is more work to be done in pursuit of this goal.

"By sharing this data we aim to be more transparent – but we also aim to constantly improve in pursuit of our vision. We are taking a close look at our recommendations, for instance, to determine whether there are more individuals charged with nonviolent crimes who do not pose a safety risk and can be released pretrial. This is an area where I expect we'll find room to improve."

Descano's Data Director, **Jaime Michel, PhD**, emphasized the unique ambition of the program she is helping him build.

"We're aiming to go beyond simply sharing tools with the community to track the flow of cases through the legal system and truly peel back the curtain on the decisions we make in this office," Michel said. "Ultimately, we aim to use data to evaluate our decision-making at every point of discretion in the legal process to effectively and equitably serve the community."

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