73906

SPECIAL ORDER NO. _____

STATE OF TEXAS	§	IN THE DISTRICT COURT
	§	GIVING PREFERENCE TO
	§	CRIMINAL MATTERS
AND	§	144TH, 175TH, 186TH, 187TH
	§	226TH, 227TH, 290TH
	§	379TH, 399TH, AND 437TH
COUNTY OF BEXAR	§	OF BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS

DISTRICT COURT OF BEXAR COUNTY, TX

STANDING ORDER FOR REFERRAL OF CASES TO PRE-INDICTMENT COURT

In accordance with Chapter 54A of the Texas Government Code, which governs the referral of cases to Associate Judges, the District Courts of Bexar County hereby enter the following Standing Order of Referral. It is the intent of the Courts that this Order be interpreted and applied in harmony with the provisions of Chapter 54A. To the extent any portion of this Order conflicts with the Texas Government Code, the statutory provisions shall control.

Pre-Indictment Courts and Associate Judges

a. Associate Judges of Bexar County's Pre-Indictment Courts are selected and appointed by the Criminal District Court Judges of Bexar County under the provisions of Chapter 54A, Texas Government Code.
b. The Pre-Indictment Courts are authorized to handle felony cases which have not been indicted by a grand jury.
c. District Court Judges may refer to an Associate Judge any matter arising out of a criminal case involving:
    i. a negotiated plea of guilty or no contest before the court;
    ii. a bond forfeiture;
    iii. a pretrial motion;
    iv. a writ of habeas corpus;
    v. an examining trial;
    vi. an occupational driver's license;
    vii. an appeal of an administrative driver's license revocation hearing;
    viii. a civil commitment matter under Subtitle C, Title 7, Health and Safety Code;
    ix. setting, adjusting, or revoking bond, subject to limitations established in Art. 17.092, Tex. Code Crim. Pro.;

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x. the issuance of search warrants, including a search warrant under Article 18.02(a)(10), Code of Criminal Procedure, notwithstanding Article 18.01(c), Code of Criminal Procedure; and

xi. any other matter a district court judge considers necessary and proper.

d. An Associate Judge may accept an agreed plea of guilty or no contest from a defendant charged with misdemeanor, felony, or both misdemeanor and felony offenses and may assess punishment if a plea agreement is announced on the record between the defendant and the state.

e. An Associate Judge has all of the powers of a magistrate under the laws of this state and may administer an oath for any purpose.

f. An Associate Judge may select a jury, however, an associate judge may not preside over a trial on the merits, whether or not the trial is before a jury.

2. To refer a case to an Associate Judge, a District Court Judge must issue a written order of referral that specifies the matter being referred in accordance with Sec. 54A.007, Tex. Government Code.

   a. Each district court should normally alternate its referrals between Pre-Indictment Court #1 and Pre-Indictment Court #2.

   b. The referral shall be provided to the court coordinator for the pre-indictment court for which the matter is referred.

   c. It will be the responsibility of the court coordinator to contact the defense attorney and prosecutors to schedule a date for a hearing on the matter that has been referred.

   d. The matter should be scheduled within 14 days of the district court's referral.

   e. If a hearing cannot be held within 14 days, the pre-indictment court shall notify the referring district court and specify the reason why the hearing cannot be held within the 14 day period.

   f. When scheduling hearings, priority should be given to writs and bond reduction matters in which defendant's are currently in custody.

3. Associate Judges may not enter a ruling on any issue of law or fact if that ruling could result in dismissal or require dismissal of a pending criminal prosecution. The Associate Judge shall make findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the District Judge referring the matter to the Associate Judge for hearing.

4. At the conclusion of the proceedings, the Associate Judge shall transmit to the referring court any papers relating to the case, including the Associate Judge's findings, conclusions, orders, recommendations, or other action taken.

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5. Not later than the 30th day after the date an action is taken by an Associate Judge, the referring district court may modify, correct, reject, reverse, or recommit for further information the action taken by the Associate Judge; if the referring court does not modify, correct, reject, reverse, or recommit an action to the associate judge, the action becomes the decree of the court.

6. The following matters shall not be referred to Associate Judges for action:

   a. Any motion to reduce the amount or conditions of bond that were set by the judge of a district court.
   b. Appointment of attorneys to sit as second chair.
   c. Any other bond matters that are prohibited by law from being handled by an Associate Judge.

SIGNED, ORDERED AND ENTERED THE 12th day of November, 2026.

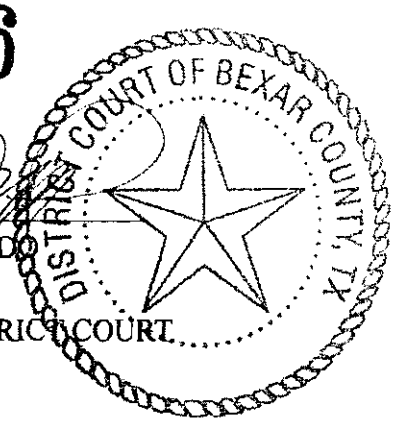
MICHAEL MERY
JUDGE
144TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

CATHERINE TORRES-STAHL
JUDGE
175TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

KRISTINA ESCALONA
JUDGE
186TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

STEPHANIE BOYD
JUDGE
187TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

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BEN ROBERTSON
JUDGE
226TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

CHRISTINE DEL PRADO
JUDGE
227TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

JENNIFER PEÑA
JUDGE
290TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

RON RANGEL
JUDGE
379TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

FRANK CASTRO
JUDGE
399TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

JOEL PEREZ
JUDGE
437TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

CERTIFIED COPY CERTIFICATE STATE OF TEXAS
I, GLORIA A. MARTINEZ, BEXAR COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF THE ORIGINAL RECORD NOW IN MY LAWFUL CUSTODY. WITNESS MY OFFICIAL HAND AND SEAL OF OFFICE ON THIS:

November 12, 2026

GLORIA A. MARTINEZ
DISTRICT CLERK,
BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS

By: _____

DOMINGO RIVERA, Deputy District Clerk

(NOT VALID WITHOUT THE CLERKS'S ORIGINAL SIGNATURE.)