



# The Business Court of Texas Annual Report FY 2025





# About the Court

The Business Court of Texas became operational on September 1, 2024, under House Bill 19 in the 88th Legislative Session. Section 25A.0171 of the Texas Government Code requires the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to submit to the legislature a report on the case activity of the Business Court in the preceding year. This first report includes data for Fiscal Year 2025 (the first year the court was in operation).

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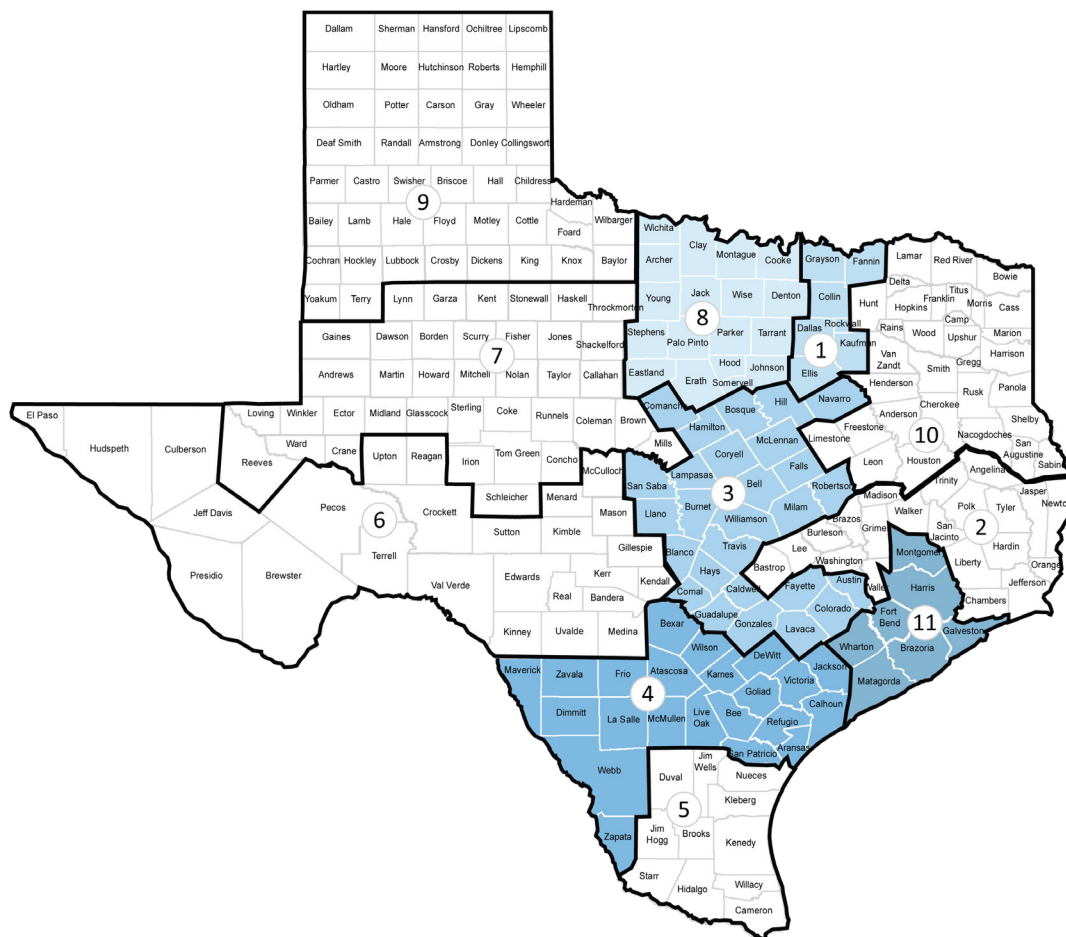
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## BACKGROUND

The Business Court of Texas is a specialized trial court with jurisdiction over certain complex business disputes. Texas is one of thirty states home to some form of dedicated business courts. By statute, the Texas Business Court is administratively attached to OCA. OCA provides administrative support to the Court as needed. Other than the judges, employees of the Business Court are employed by OCA.

The Business Court has eleven divisions, five of which are currently active. The division map largely tracks the existing eleven Administrative Judicial Regions. The exceptions are Montgomery County, which was moved from the Second Division to the Eleventh Division (the Houston-area Business Court division) on September 1, 2025, and Bastrop County, which will move from the Second Division to the Third Division (the Austin-area Business Court division) on December 4, 2025. The only divisions with assigned judges are the First (centering on Dallas County), Third (centering on Travis County), Fourth (centering on Bexar County), Eighth (centering on Tarrant County), and Eleventh (centering on Harris County). See the map below.





## COURT DIVISIONS, JUDGES, AND STAFF

The five operational divisions of the Business Court are as follows:

- First Business Court Division, with chambers in Dallas and McKinney, TX
- Third Business Court Division, with chambers in Austin, TX
- Fourth Business Court Division, with chambers in San Antonio, TX
- Eighth Business Court Division, with chambers in Fort Worth, TX
- Eleventh Business Court Division, with chambers in Houston, TX



Per statute, the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appointed two judges to each division.<sup>1</sup> Each judge's term was effective September 1, 2024, and is set to expire on August 31, 2026. Below is a list of each division and its judges.

Business Court Division		Judges
First Business Court Division	Business Court 1A	Hon. Andrea K. Bouressa
	Business Court 1B	Hon. Bill Whitehill
Third Business Court Division	Business Court 3A	Hon. Melissa Andrews
	Business Court 3B	Hon. Patrick K. Sweeten
Fourth Business Court Division	Business Court 4A	Hon. Marialyn Barnard
	Business Court 4B	Hon. Stacy Sharp*
Eighth Business Court Division	Business Court 8A	Hon. Jerry D. Bullard
	Business Court 8B	Hon. Brian Stagner
Eleventh Business Court Division	Business Court 11A	Hon. Sofia Adrogué
	Business Court 11B	Hon. Grant Dorfman*

\*The Honorable Grant Dorfman was elected Administrative Presiding Judge by vote of all the Business Court judges on September 3, 2024. The Honorable Stacy Sharp was elected Administrative Presiding Judge Pro Tempore by vote of all the Business Court judges on September 4, 2025.

## INAUGURAL YEAR: DEVELOPMENT OF COURT INFRASTRUCTURE

In its first year, the Office of Court Administration and the Business Court established the Court's infrastructure and recruited, hired, and trained all personnel needed to operate the Court.

- Deputy Clerk of the Court
- Staff Attorneys for each judge
- Court Managers
- Law Clerks
- Court Reporters
- Chief Staff Attorney
- Clerk of the Court



<sup>1</sup> Two judges were appointed to the first five divisions only; per statute, non-operational divisions would only be appointed one judge. Gov. Code § 25A.009 (2).

The Clerk of the Texas Business Court is Beverly Crumley. The Clerk is responsible for receiving and processing all case filings and reporting and maintaining case records as the custodian of the records. The Business Court Clerk's Office is located in Austin.

The Court has established judicial chambers in all five divisions and collaborated with counties, state appellate courts, and law schools to secure space for hearings and upcoming trials. Each division now has its own assigned, full-time court reporter. Additionally, five deputy court reporters are available as needed.

The judges of the Court met frequently throughout the Court's inaugural year. During these meetings, they crafted and voted on an initial and two amended versions of the Business Court Local Rules to govern attorneys' practice in the Court. They also adopted the Local Rules of Administration for the Texas Business Court, which include internal operating procedures for the judges of the Court.

## **EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS, MEETINGS, AND JUDICIAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The enabling statute for the Business Court specifies that "the official duties of a business court judge include "presenting educational information regarding the business court to legal and business groups" and "attending educational meetings in this state and other states of the United States relating to business law, business litigation, and the function of the business court." Section 25A.00111(c) of the Texas Government Code. The Texas Business Court judges took this legislative charge to heart. In the first year, the Business Court judges gave over 250 presentations about the Court at continuing legal education (CLE) conferences, bar association meetings, law schools, law firm events, business group meetings, and in-house counsel forums with litigators, transactional attorneys, corporate leaders, paralegals, and clerks. The judges have given presentations throughout Texas and elsewhere, including New York City, San Diego, Colorado Springs, Louisville, and Buenos Aires, and at such universities as Duke, Wake Forest, and Berkeley. Judges also attended educational meetings throughout Texas, in the District of Columbia, and at the American College of Business Court Judges Annual Meeting in Michigan.

Several Business Court judges have also joined organizations and participated in education programs designed to equip business court judges from across the country with the knowledge and skills necessary to efficiently address the intricacies and challenges inherent in working with complex cases. Judge Bullard was appointed Secretary of the American College of Business Court Judges.

## **BUSINESS COURT CASE ACTIVITY**

The cases heard by the Business Court are complex commercial cases that often involve large numbers of pretrial motions on procedural and substantive disputes between the parties in preparation for trial. In the reporting period, the Business Court judges issued over 680 orders and held over 270 hearings and conferences.

The Business Court's enabling statute also directs the Texas Supreme Court to issue rules concerning the issuance of written opinions. In response, the Supreme Court issued Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 360, which requires the Business Court judges to issue written opinions in specified circumstances and further authorizes the judges to issue a written opinion in connection with any order, at their discretion. In the Court's first year, the Business Court judges issued 42 written opinions.

## SUMMARY OF CASELOADS

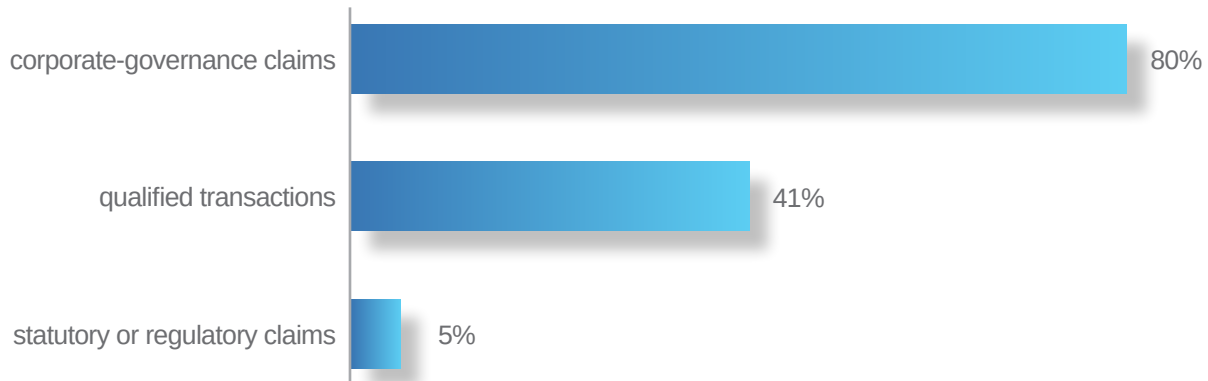
### Cases Filed

#### By Case Type

From September 1, 2024, to August 31, 2025, a total of 185 cases were filed in the Business Court. The majority of actions concerned the energy, real estate, technology, or financial industries.

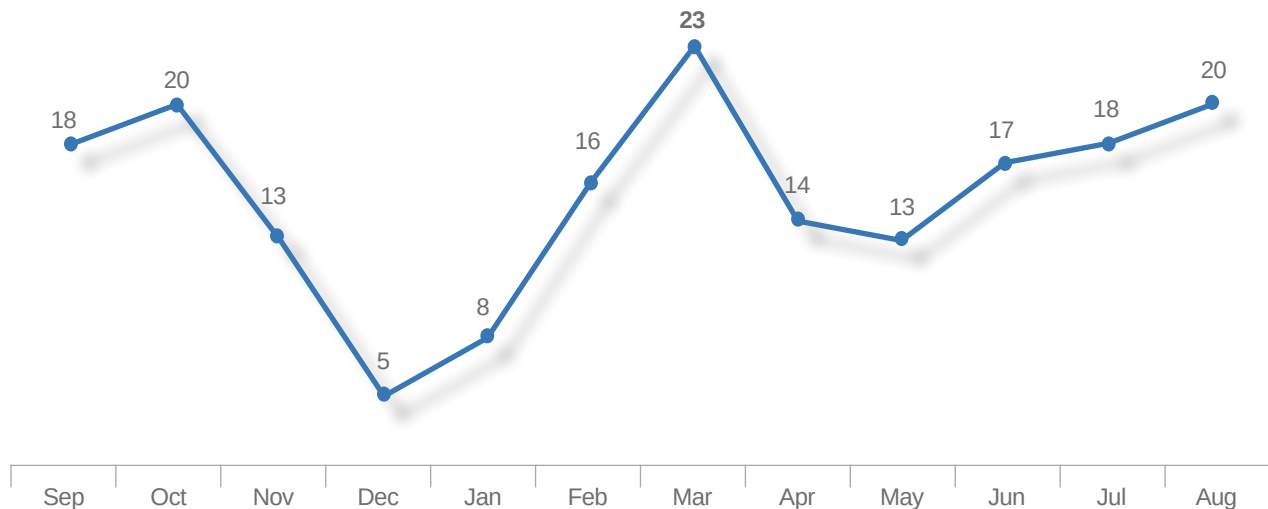
- 145 cases invoked the Court's jurisdiction over corporate-governance claims.
- 75 cases invoked the Court's jurisdiction over claims concerning "qualified transactions."
- 10 cases invoked the Court's jurisdiction over certain statutory or regulatory claims.

These filings include both original petitions and cases removed from state district courts. The visual below shows the percentage distribution among the above-identified claims. Because some cases include overlapping claims, the percentages do not add up to 100%.



#### Cases Filed by Month

During Fiscal Year 2025, an average of 15.4 cases commenced in the Business Court each month.



***Procedure for Commencement of Business Court Cases:***

There are three potential paths to the Business Court. First, a plaintiff can file its suit as an original petition originating in the Business Court. Second, if either the plaintiff or the defendant wants to transfer their case from a district court or county court at law to the Business Court, they can file a Notice of Removal. The Notice of Removal is filed with both the Business Court and the court in which the case was originally filed. On receipt of the notice, the clerk of the court in which the case was originally filed will immediately transfer the case to the Business Court in accordance with rules adopted by the Supreme Court. The third path involves the judge of the court in which the case was filed requesting a transfer; in which case, the presiding judge of that administrative region can transfer the case to the Business Court if the judge finds the transfer will facilitate the fair and efficient administration of justice. As of August 31, 2025, no cases have been initiated by transfer from a state district or county court.

During Fiscal Year 2025, Business Court litigants filed an average of nine original petitions and seven removal notices per month. The Court's 185-case total compares favorably with the Texas Business Court's most recently launched peers. For example, Georgia's statewide business court, launched in 2019, received 86 new filings in its first 32 months of operation—an average of 34 cases per year. Wyoming's statewide chancery court went live in December 2021, with 13 cases filed in its first eleven months. North Carolina's business court averaged 52 cases a year in its first 14 years of operation.

The table below shows the origination of Business Court cases during Fiscal Year 2025, broken down by Original Petitions and Notices of Removal by division:

<b>Business Court Division</b>	<b>Original Petitions (OP)</b>	<b>OP- Percentage of Total</b>	<b>Notices of Removal (NoR)</b>	<b>NoR Percentage of Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
First Business Court Division	31	60%	21	40%	52
Third Business Court Division	9	53%	8	47%	17
Fourth Business Court Division	8	47%	9	53%	17
Eighth Business Court Division	12	60%	8	40%	20
Eleventh Business Court Division	46	58%	33	42%	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>185</b>



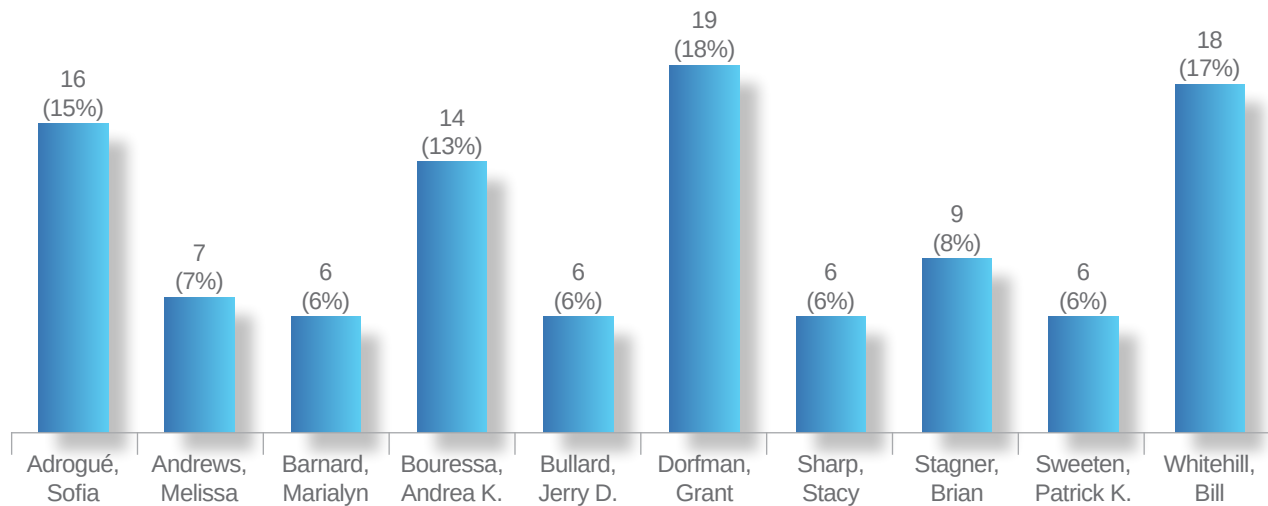
Business Court staff training,  
November 2024.



## PENDING CASES BY BUSINESS COURT JUDGE

### Active Pending Cases

Active pending cases are cases that the Court has control over and are awaiting disposition. As of August 31st, 2025, there were 107 active pending cases in the Business Court.<sup>2</sup> The number of active pending cases each judge had and percentage of the total (107) on August 31st can be seen below.



### Inactive Pending Cases

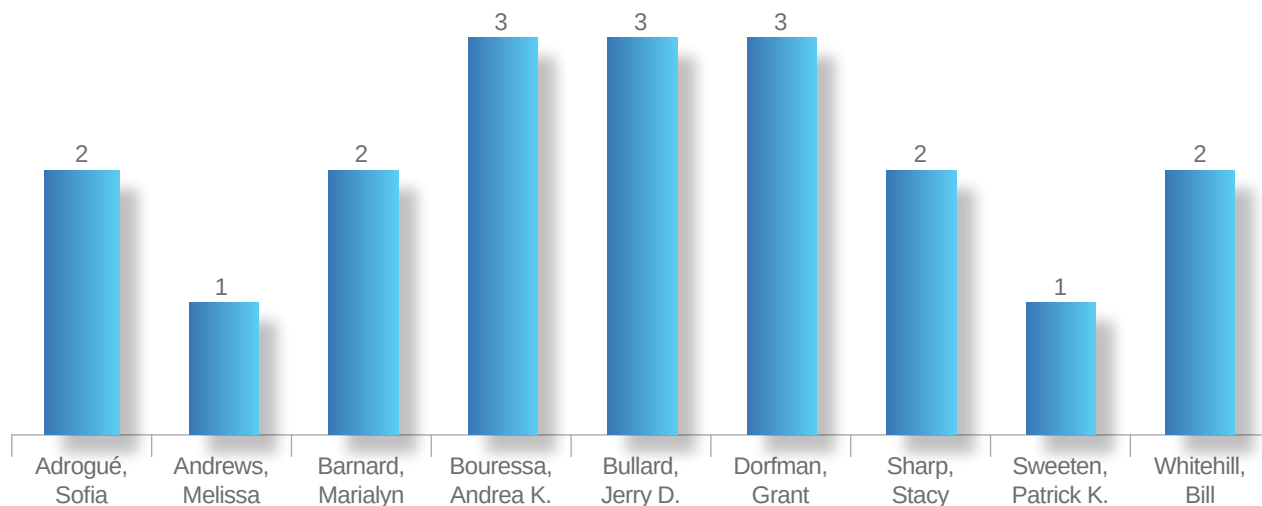
Cases placed on inactive status are those for which further court proceedings and activities cannot be resumed until an event restores the case to the Court's active pending caseload. As of August 31st, 2025, there were twelve inactive pending cases in the Business Court.

Judicial Officer	Inactive Pending cases end of Year
Adrogué, Sofia	1
Andrews, Melissa	0
Barnard, Marialyn	1
Bouressa, Andrea K.	3
Bullard, Jerry D.	1
Dorfman, Grant	2
Sharp, Stacy	2
Stagner, Brian	0
Sweeten, Patrick K.	0
Whitehill, Bill	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>

<sup>2</sup> As of November 18, 2025 (Fiscal Year 2026) there were 157 active pending cases, resulting in an 47% increase over an 11-week period.

## Remands

If the Business Court lacks jurisdiction of the action, the Business Court shall remand the action to the court in which the action was originally filed; such cases are classified as remanded cases. The Business Court remanded a total of 19 cases during the reporting period, 10.3% of total cases filed. The number of cases that each judge remanded can be seen below.



## Dispositions

*Disposed cases* are those cases that have reached a final outcome or resolution. The disposition indicates that the case was concluded, such as through a judgment, dismissal, settlement, or other means. The chart below includes dispositions cases that have been appealed, transferred, and dismissed. The percentages represent the number of cases disposed of as a percentage of each judge's total filings. As the Business Court's caseload continues to grow and stabilize, these percentages will continue to increase as well.

Judicial Officer	Cases Filed	Cases Disposed	Percentage
Adrogué, Sofia	26	9	35%
Andrews, Melissa	12	4	33%
Barnard, Marialyn	15	6	40%
Bouressa, Andrea K.	25	7	28%
Bullard, Jerry D.	14	8	57%
Dorfman, Grant	31	10	29%
Sharp, Stacy	13	4	32%
Stagner, Brian	12	2	17%
Sweeten, Patrick K.	10	2	20%
Whitehill, Bill	27	8	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>60</b>	

## Age of Cases

The table below displays the age of cases disposed for Fiscal Year 2025. Eighty-five percent of the cases disposed in the first year were resolved or reached a resolution within 180 days or less.

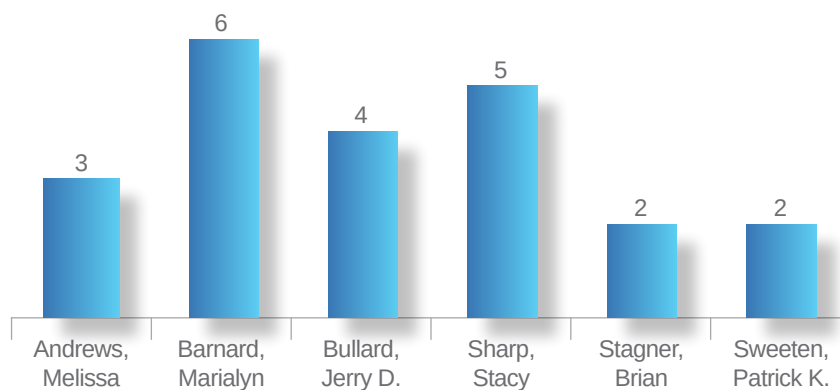
Judicial Officer	Age of Cases- 3 months or less ( $\leq 90$ days)	Age of Cases- Over 3 to 6 months (91-180)	Age of Cases- Over 6 months to 12 months (181-365)
Adrogué, Sofia	7	2	0
Andrews, Melissa	0	4	0
Barnard, Marialyn	5	1	0
Bouressa, Andrea K.	4	1	2
Bullard, Jerry D.	5	2	1
Dorfman, Grant	3	5	2
Sharp, Stacy	2	0	2
Stagner, Brian	0	2	0
Sweeten, Patrick K.	1	1	0
Whitehill, Bill	5	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>

## SUMMARY OF CASELOAD EQUALIZATION

### Re-assignments

Out of 185 cases filed in Fiscal Year 2025, 22 cases were re-assigned from the Eleventh Division to other Business Court judges for the purpose of equalizing the caseload.<sup>3</sup>

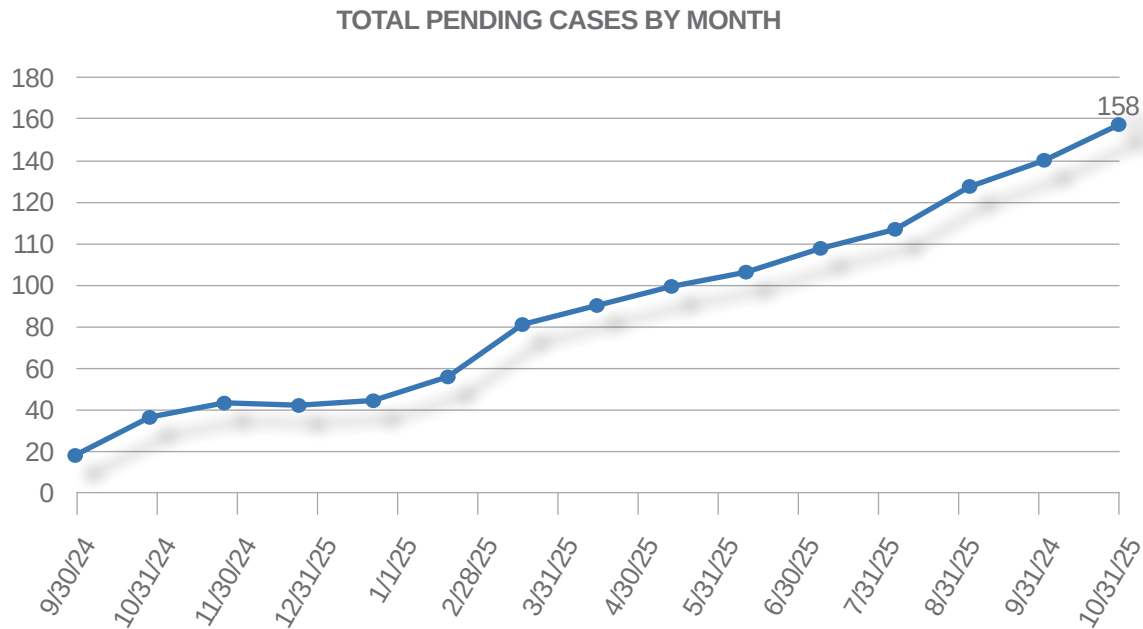
The chart below shows the judges who received cases that were reassigned for the purpose of equalization.



<sup>3</sup> Section 25A.009(f) of the Government Code: "To promote the orderly and efficient administration of justice, the business court judges may exchange benches and sit and act for each other in any matter pending before the court."

## PROJECTION OF EXPECTED CASELOADS

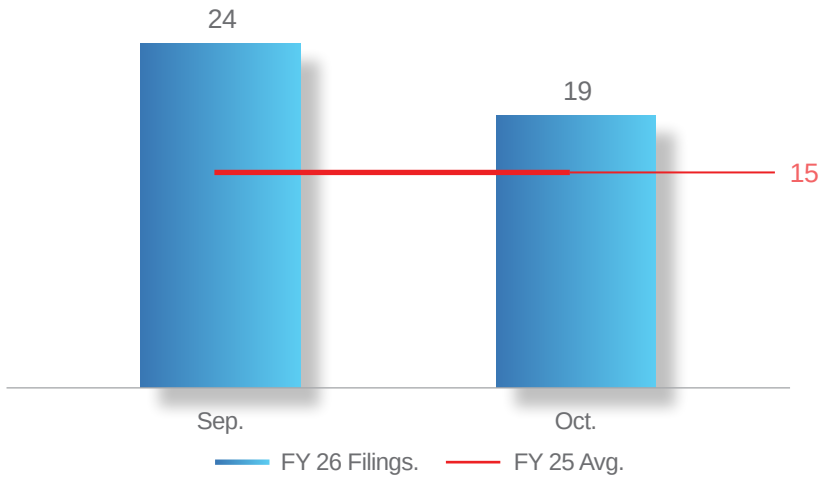
House Bill 40 (89th Regular Legislative Session) amended Sections 25A.001(14) and 25A.004 of the Texas Government Code to modify the definition of a “qualified transaction” for purposes of Texas Business Court jurisdiction, lowering the transaction and amount in controversy thresholds from \$10 million to \$5 million. This change broadens the scope of cases eligible for filing in the Business Court. It is unclear, however, what impact this adjustment will have on the Business Court’s caseload in the future. Accordingly, a more accurate projection of expected caseloads may not be feasible using the first year of data. The initial year’s filings that reflect cases based on the original \$10 million threshold do not, in OCA’s opinion, provide a reliable basis for estimating caseloads under the new, amended \$5 million value. It should be noted, additionally, that HB 40 also expanded the Court’s jurisdiction to include suits arising from certain arbitration and intellectual-property disputes, including claims under the Texas Uniform Trade Secret Act. Caseload consistently increased during the reporting period and into Fiscal Year 2026 as follows:



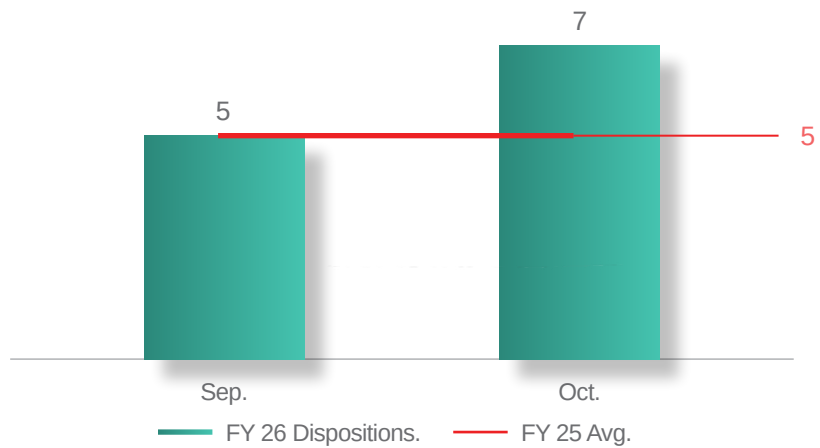
While OCA cannot accurately project expected caseloads for the next two years based on Fiscal Year 2025 data due to the statutory change in the Court’s jurisdictional scope, preliminary trend analysis is still possible. The following charts look at the average number of Business Court filings and dispositions from Fiscal Year 2025 compared to the first two months of Fiscal Year 2026 (September and October). This allows for an initial view of early filing and disposition activity following the implementation of the jurisdictional amendments.

Filings for the first few months in FY 2026 were 38% higher than the FY 2025 average, as seen in the below chart:

**FISCAL YEAR 2026 FILINGS BY MONTH**



**FISCAL YEAR 2026 DISPOSITIONS BY MONTH**





## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING TWO YEARS

Texas Government Code 25A.0171 requires “recommendations regarding action by the legislature, the governor, the chief justice of the supreme court, or the business court to ensure the business court meets existing and projected demand for the business court's services in the following two years.”

**Judges and Divisions.** In the first year, the First (Dallas) and Eleventh (Houston) Divisions' caseloads have outpaced caseloads in the remaining divisions. While active cases in the Eleventh Division have more than doubled in the past three months, the judges have adequately kept pace with their caseloads at the time of this report. However, based on current trends, appointing one or more additional judges to these divisions could be appropriate.

**Space.** The Business Court continues to work with counties, law schools, and appellate courts to find appropriate space to conduct hearings and trials. Long term, it would be desirable for the Legislature to provide dedicated, state-owned property to the Business Court to build appropriate courthouses, complete with courtroom technology, chambers, breakout rooms for the litigants, and security.

# THE BUSINESS COURT OF TEXAS 2025



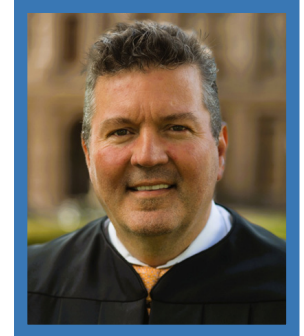
Judge  
Andrea Bouressa  
Division 1A



Judge  
Bill Whitehill  
Division 1B



Judge  
Melissa Davis Andrews  
Division 3A



Judge  
Patrick Sweeten  
Division 3B



Judge  
Marialyn Barnard  
Division 4A



Judge  
Stacy Rogers Sharp  
Division 4B and  
Administrative Presiding  
Judge Pro Tempore



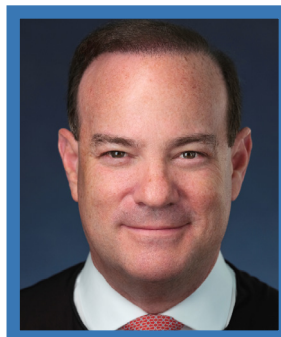
Judge  
Jerry Bullard  
Division 8A



Judge  
Brian Stagner  
Division 8B



Judge  
Sofia Adrogué  
Division 11A



Judge  
Grant Dorfman  
Division 11B and  
Administrative Presiding  
Judge



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