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## **RESEARCH REVIEW OF 391 TULSA COUNTY FELONY CASES RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT PROSECUTION OUTCOMES, VICTIM PROTECTION, AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

TULSA, OKLA. — A new research review of Tulsa County felony case outcomes has identified several trends that warrant further public discussion regarding prosecution practices, victim protection, and public safety. The research was conducted by two volunteer attorneys (one a former prosecutor) and a Ph.D.

The study examined **391 randomly selected felony criminal cases** filed in Tulsa County during 2025. Cases were selected using a stratified systematic sampling methodology. Researchers noted that a sample of 357 cases was sufficient to achieve a **95% confidence level**, making the final sample of 391 cases statistically significant for purposes of identifying broad trends.

The review sought to better understand how felony cases are resolved and whether current outcomes align with community expectations regarding accountability, victim protection, and crime reduction.

Among the study's findings:

### **GENERALLY**

- **26.3% (1 out of 4)** of reviewed cases involved **dismissed charges, deferred sentences, amended charges**, or other outcomes identified by researchers as potentially concerning for public safety.
- **17% (almost 1 out of 5)** of reviewed felony cases were **dismissed entirely**, with costs assessed to the State and no criminal punishment imposed.
- Among defendants sentenced to prison, **88.2% (approximately 9 out of 10)** reached that outcome through plea agreements rather than trial.
- **No cases in the sample went to jury trial. Some were still ongoing awaiting court dates.**

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

- **12.3%** of all reviewed cases involved violent domestic offenses. **Not one of the domestic violence related offenses reviewed was sentenced to prison time.**
- Of those violent domestic cases, **64.6% resulted in charges being dismissed, amended, or resolved through reduced pleas.**
- The violent domestic category included offenses such as **domestic assault by strangulation, rape by instrumentation, and DV in the presence of a child.**
- Of the **Domestic Strangulation** cases reviewed, **none of them were sentenced to prison.** The most serious punishment for a charge of domestic strangulation was a 6-year suspended sentence (probation).

## DRUG TRAFFICKING (INCLUDING FENTANYL)

- **7.2%** of reviewed cases involved allegations of drug trafficking.
- **10% (6)** cases involving drug trafficking were sent to prison, all were by plea agreement.
- All other trafficking cases were **pled down to probationary out time**, some were pled in to drug court, and one was given a deferred sentence with trafficking as the controlling charge.\*

Researchers emphasized that national criminal justice statistics show varying rates of dismissals, plea agreements, and deferred sentences across jurisdictions. However, the study's authors noted that local communities have a legitimate interest in understanding how these trends affect public safety and whether outcomes reflect community expectations regarding violent crime prosecution.

Particularly notable was the concentration of amended, dismissed, or reduced outcomes among violent domestic violence cases.

Domestic violence experts have long recognized that offenses involving strangulation, sexual violence, child abuse, and coercive control present unique challenges for prosecutors. Victims frequently face intimidation, financial dependence, emotional manipulation, and safety concerns that can make continued participation in the criminal justice process difficult.

For that reason, many criminal justice professionals view domestic violence prosecution as a critical measure of a prosecutor's effectiveness in protecting vulnerable victims. This data reflects what victims in Tulsa have long said: they are not being protected by our legal system.

The findings raise questions regarding victim engagement practices, witness management, filing timelines, charging decisions, and the allocation of prosecutorial resources in Tulsa County.

The study does not attempt to evaluate individual prosecutors, judges, or specific case decisions. Rather, it seeks to identify broader trends that may inform future discussions regarding criminal justice policy, prosecutorial priorities, and public safety outcomes.

Researchers encourage policymakers, community leaders, victim advocates, law enforcement agencies, and members of the public to review these findings and consider whether current outcomes reflect the level of accountability and victim protection that Tulsa County residents expect from their criminal justice system.

The complete data set, methodology, and case review summaries are available for public inspection upon request.

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