

2014
Report on the Condition
Of
The Brown County Court at Law

December 1, 2014
(Exhibit # 8)

To the Commissioner's Court of Brown County, Texas

Thirteen years ago the Commissioner's Court of Brown County, Texas made the decision to request that the Texas Legislature create a Court at Law for Brown County. The Court was created by the legislature and funded by the Commissioner's Court. The Court began operations on January 1, 2003, and was tasked under the Local Rules with hearing misdemeanor criminal and family law cases. I have been privileged to serve as the Judge of the Court at Law since its inception.

As I prepare to leave office, I want to report to the Commissioner's Court on the condition of the Court. I am attaching information compiled for the Council of Presiding Judges for their November 14, 2014 meeting, including maps showing information concerning the number of cases pending, cases disposed of, and length of time between filing and disposition. I am happy to report that the Brown County Court at Law stands among the best in the State of Texas.

Over the last 12 years, we have overcome many obstacles, including finding space for a courtroom in an already crowded courthouse, dealing with security concerns, and an increasing caseload. I am proud of many accomplishments, including the creation of the DWI Court program, which was successful until the grant source was lost, and the establishment of Brown County as a "no refusal" county for DWI alcohol testing. Since the "no refusal" policy was implemented I have executed hundreds of search warrants for blood analysis in DWI cases at all hours of the day and night. The Court at Law has operated within its budget every year, and in most years has operated under budget.

Some things were not accomplished. For several years I have sought the assistance of the District Attorney and the County Attorney in implementing electronic search warrants for DWI blood analysis and evidentiary search warrants. The technology exists at reasonable cost. Drafting and executing search warrants by electronic means would save time and costs for law enforcement, and would require less time in the middle of the night for the issuing judge. I hope that the incoming judge will receive more cooperation in this matter from the prosecutors.

It has been my greatest honor and privilege to serve as Judge of the Court at Law for the last twelve years, and I thank this Commissioner's Court and the attorneys of Brown County for their part in making this Court a success.

Frank Griffin

Statutory Purposes

74.001 Government Code

- (c) At the meetings, the judges shall:
- (1) study the statistics reflecting the condition of the dockets of the courts of the state to determine the need for the assignment of judges under Subchapter C;
 - (2) compare the regional and local rules of court to achieve the uniformity of rules that is practicable and consistent with local conditions;
 - (3) consider uniformity in the administration of this chapter in the various administrative regions; and
 - (4) promote more effective administration of justice through the use of this chapter.

Rule 3, Texas Rules of Judicial Administration

- ...
- (e) at the meetings, the council shall:
- (1) study the condition of the dockets of the courts of the State to determine the existence of:
 - (a) a significant increase in the number of new cases filed;
 - (b) a disposition rate below the state average;
 - (c) fewer cases disposed of than new cases filed;
 - (d) an excessive number of cases pending on the docket for a lengthy period of time;
 - (e) a large number of inactive tax cases, non-arrest criminal cases, cases held pending action in other courts or other cases which are not ready for disposition;
 - (f) cases tried and awaiting the entry of judgment;
 - (g) the need for technical assistance in caseflow or case management; and
 - (h) the need for the assignment of visiting judges to any court;
 - (2) compare the regional and local rules of court to achieve the uniformity of rules that is practicable and consistent with local conditions;
 - (3) consider uniformity in the administration of Chapter 74 of the Texas Government Code in the various administrative regions; and
 - (4) promote more effective administration of justice through the use of Chapter 74 of the Texas Government Code.

Figure 14 shows the criminal clearance rate for FY13 and FY14 for statutory county courts. The statewide statutory court criminal clearance rate was 100.5 percent.

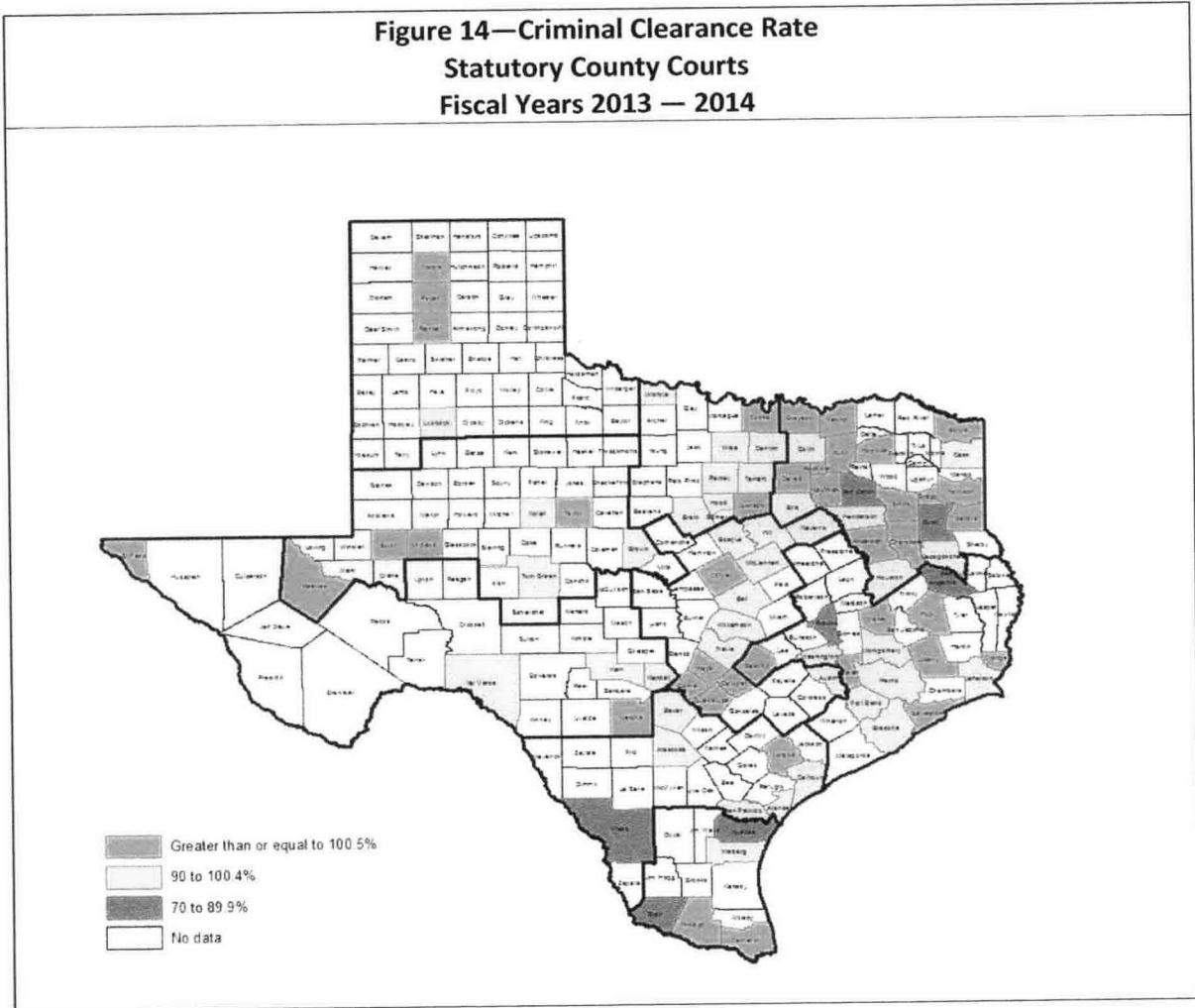


Figure 15 shows the civil clearance rate for FY13 and FY14 for statutory county courts. The statewide statutory court civil clearance rate was 100.1 percent.

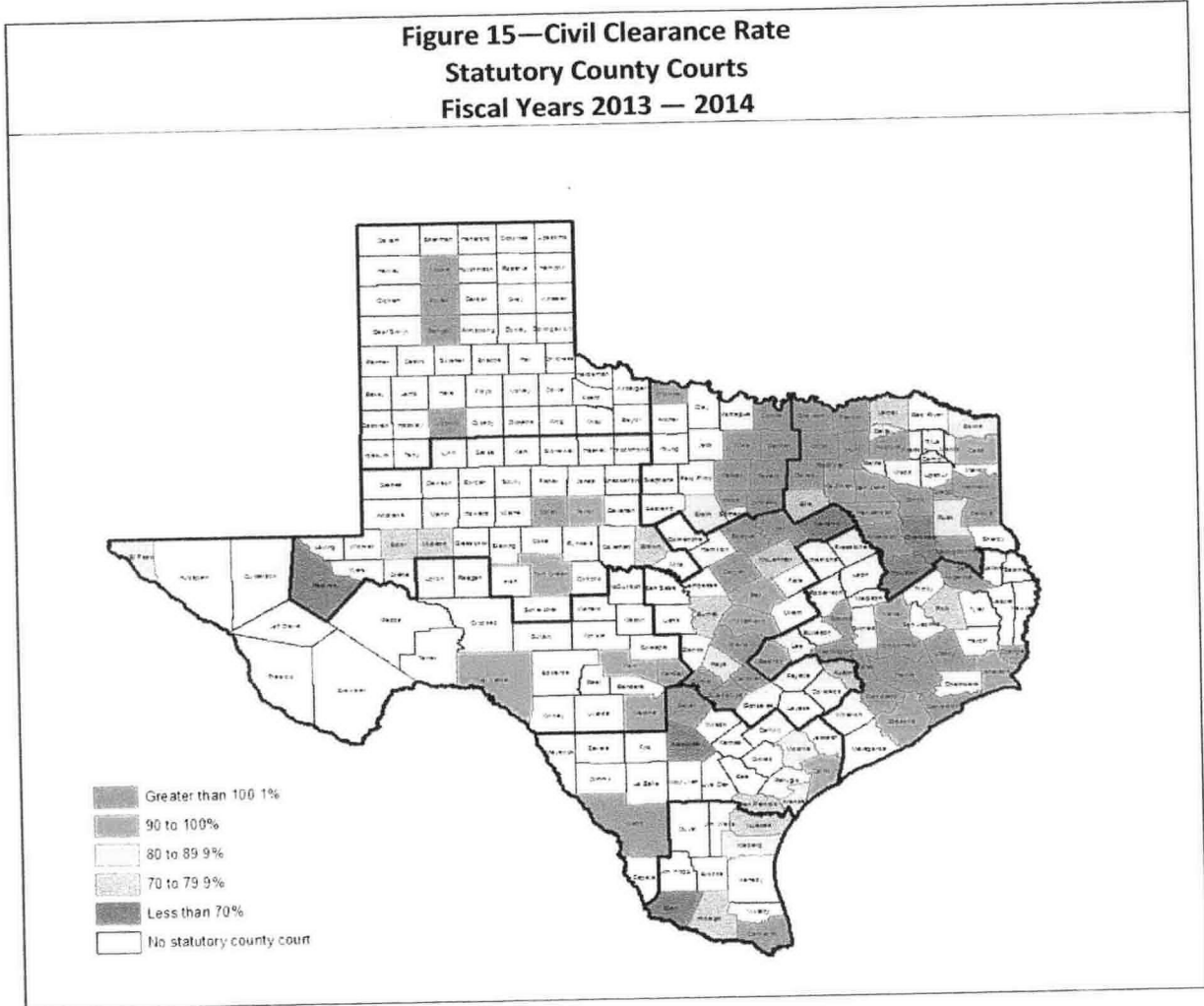


Figure 16 shows the family clearance rate for FY13 and FY14 for statutory county courts. The statewide statutory court family clearance rate was 93.6 percent.

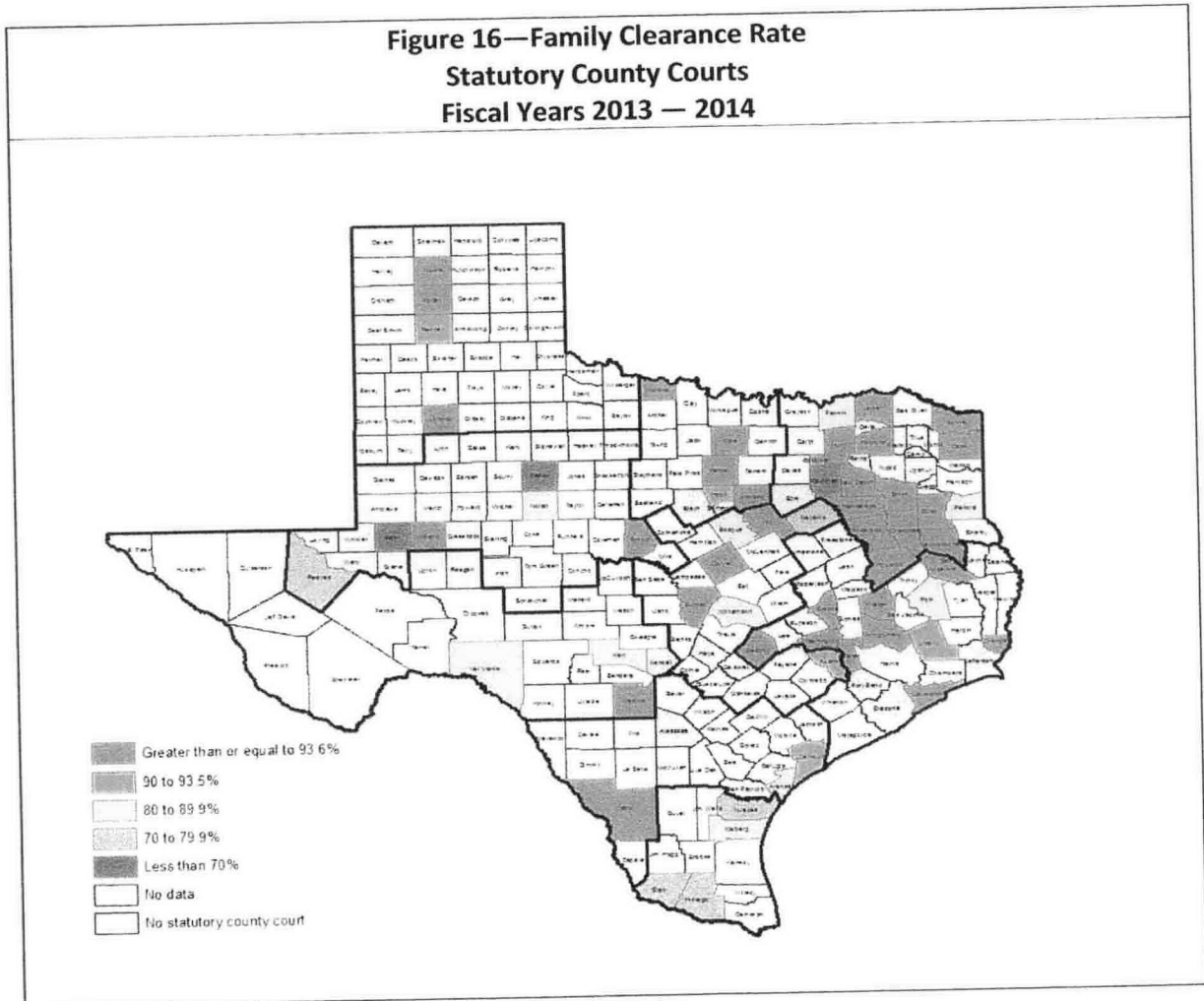


Figure 17 shows the juvenile clearance rate for FY13 and FY14 for statutory county courts. The statewide statutory court juvenile clearance rate was 96.8 percent.

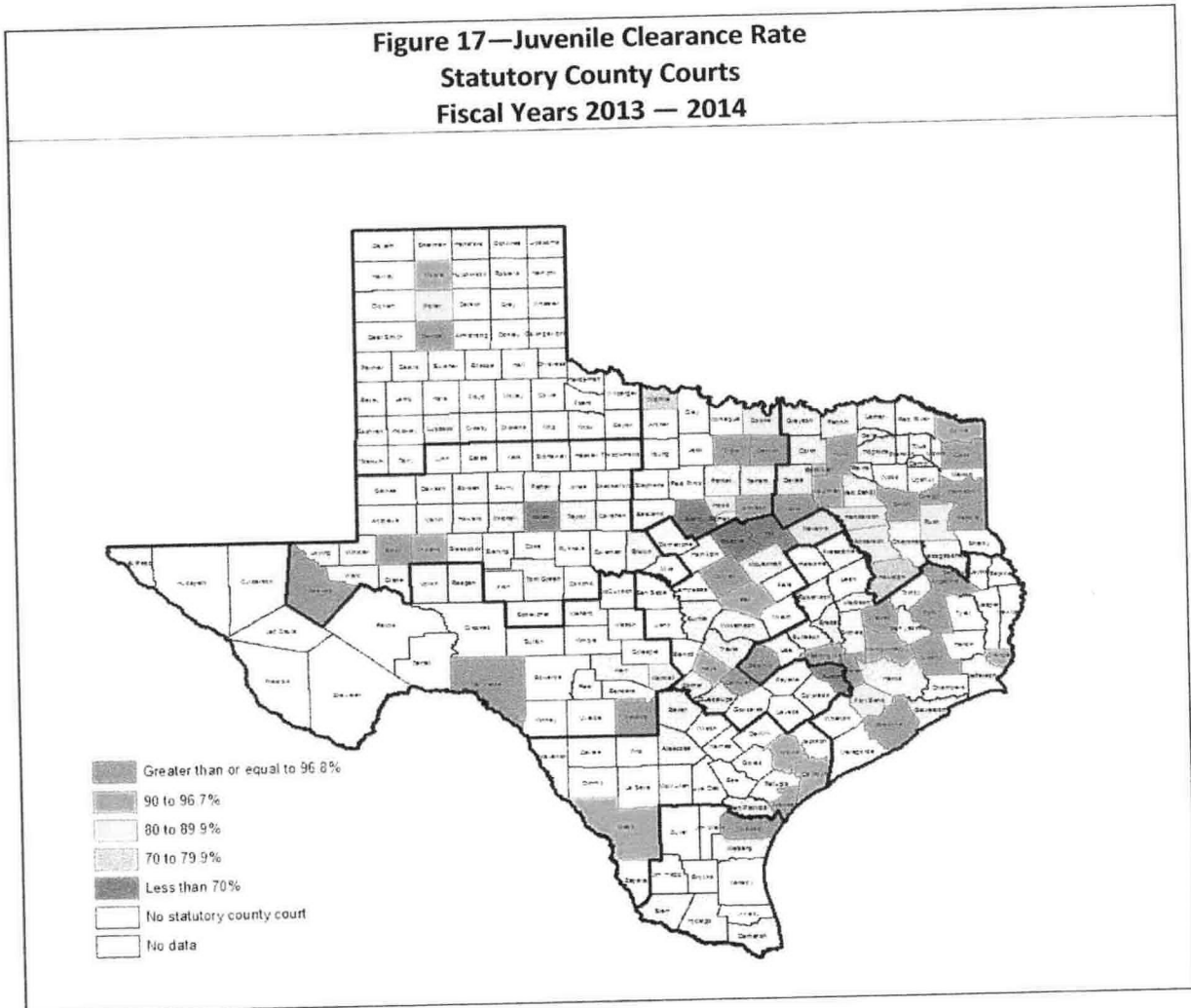
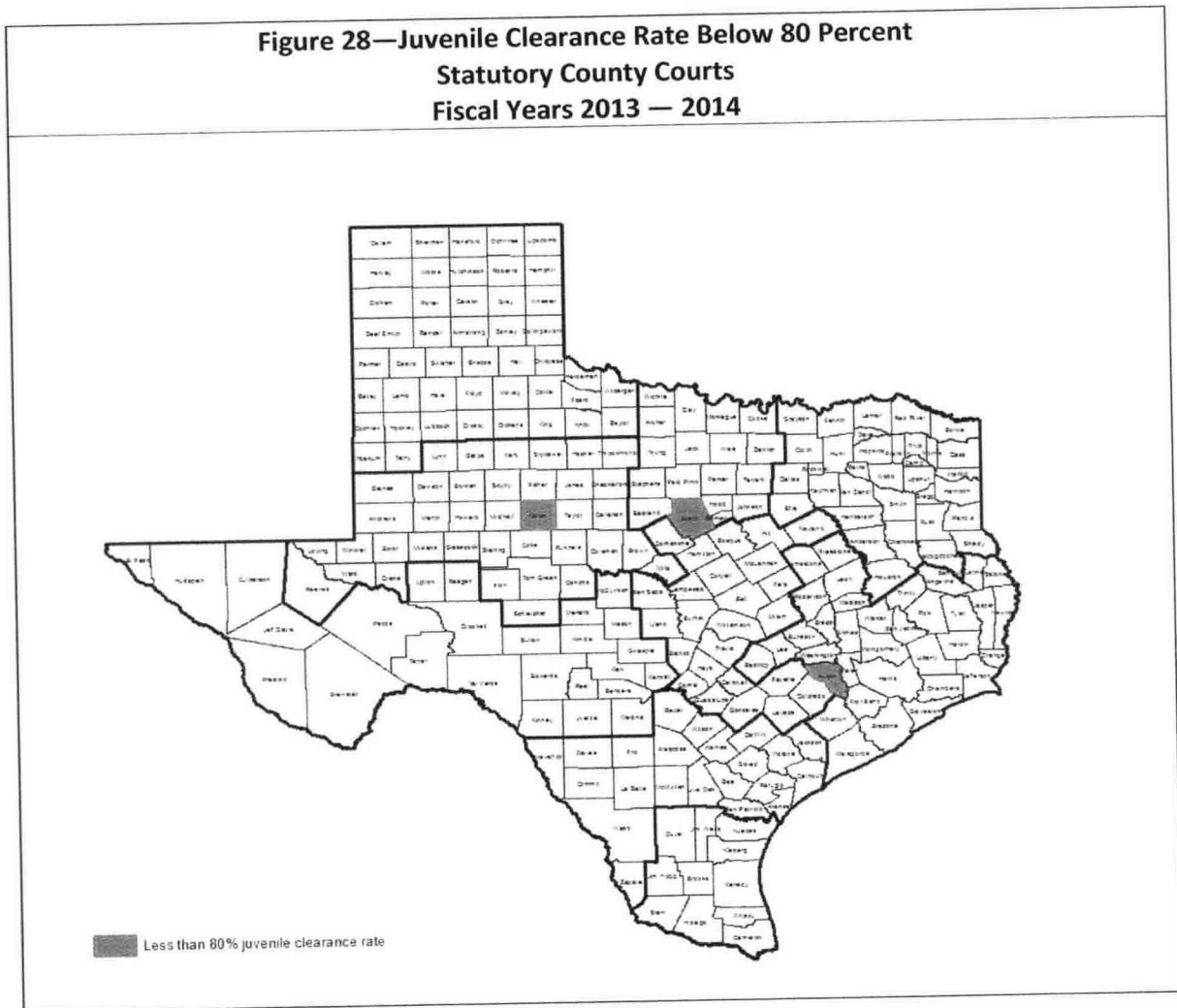


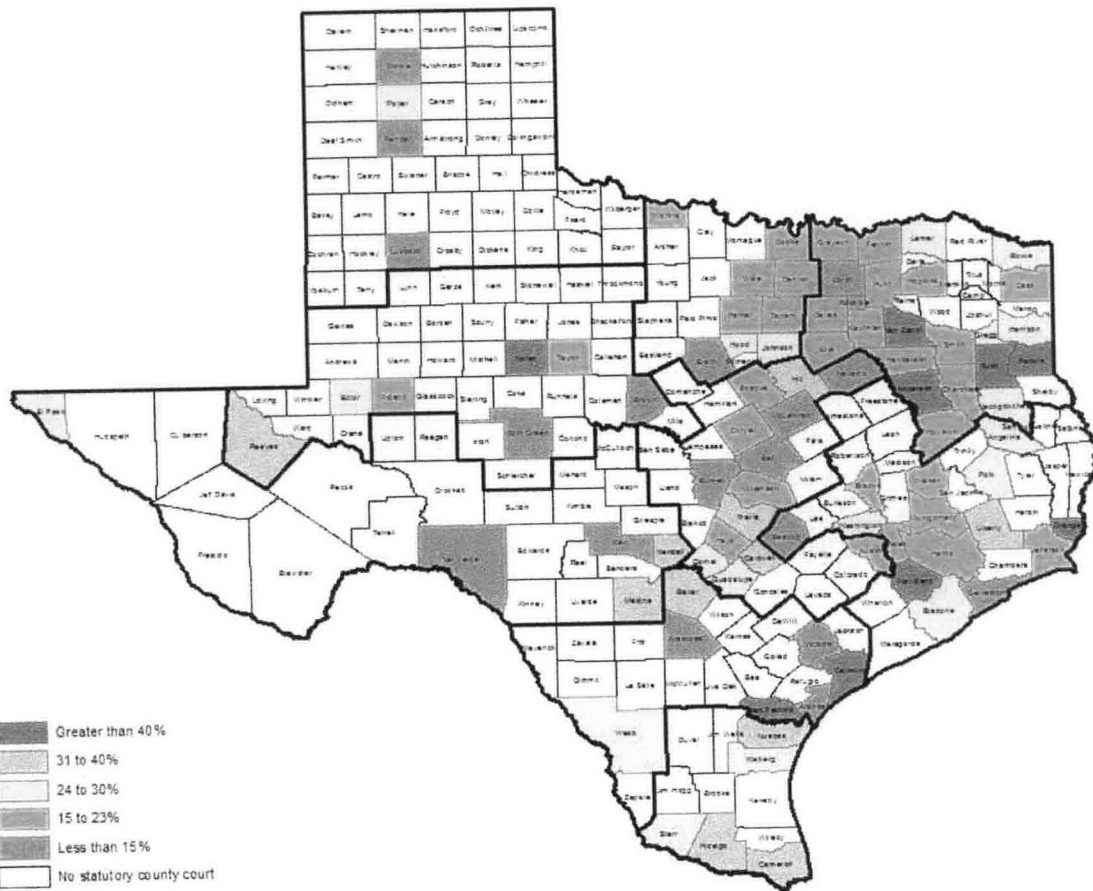
Figure 28 shows counties with a statutory county court juvenile clearance rate of less than 80 percent for both FY 2013 and 2014.



Texas Council of Presiding Judges
 November 14, 2014 Meeting Material

Figure 33 shows the percent of civil cases disposed 12 months or later in statutory county courts. The statewide statutory county court average was 23 percent.

**Figure 33—Percent of Civil Cases Disposed 12 Months or Later
 Statutory County Courts
 Fiscal Years 2013 – 2014**



Percent Criminal Cases Disposed After 90 Days (County) and 180 Days (District)

Figure 35 shows the percent of criminal cases disposed later than 90 days in statutory county courts. The statewide statutory county court average was 53 percent.

**Figure 35—Percent of Criminal Cases Disposed Later than 90 Days
 Statutory County Courts
 Fiscal Years 2013 – 2014**

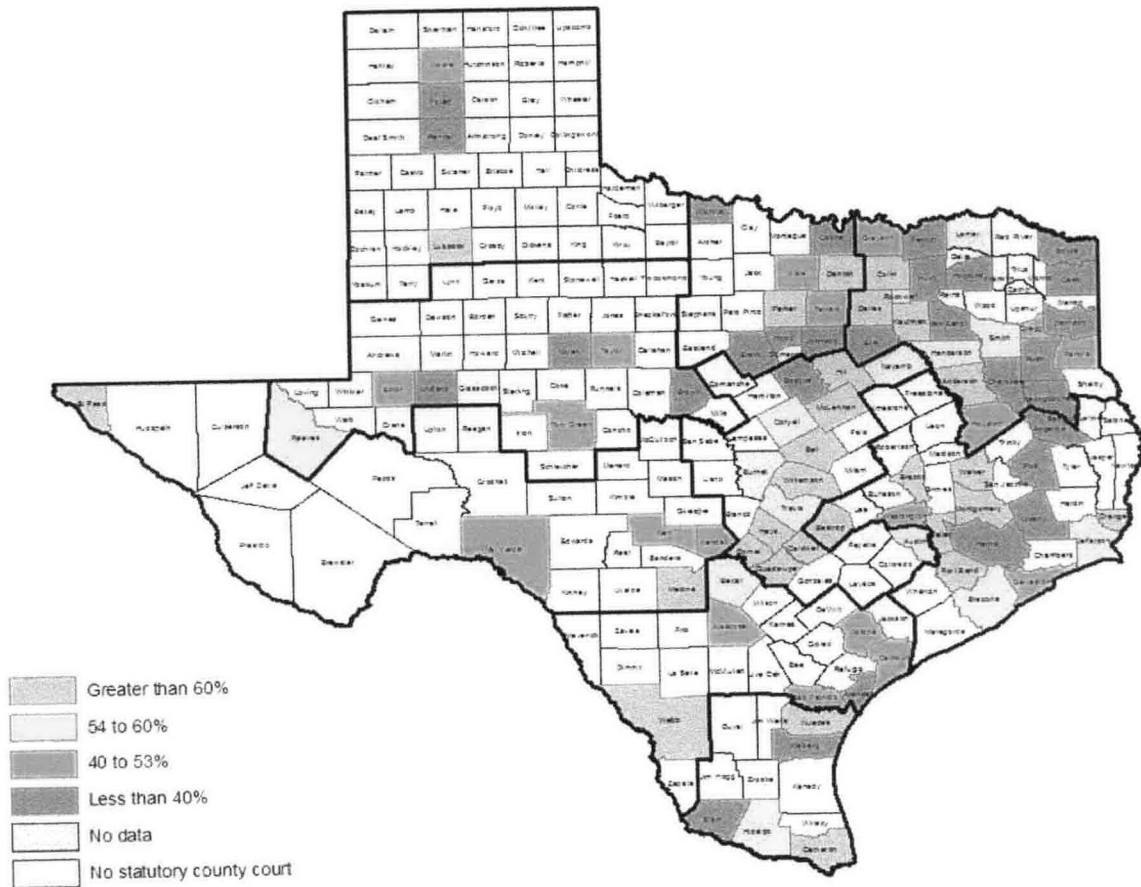
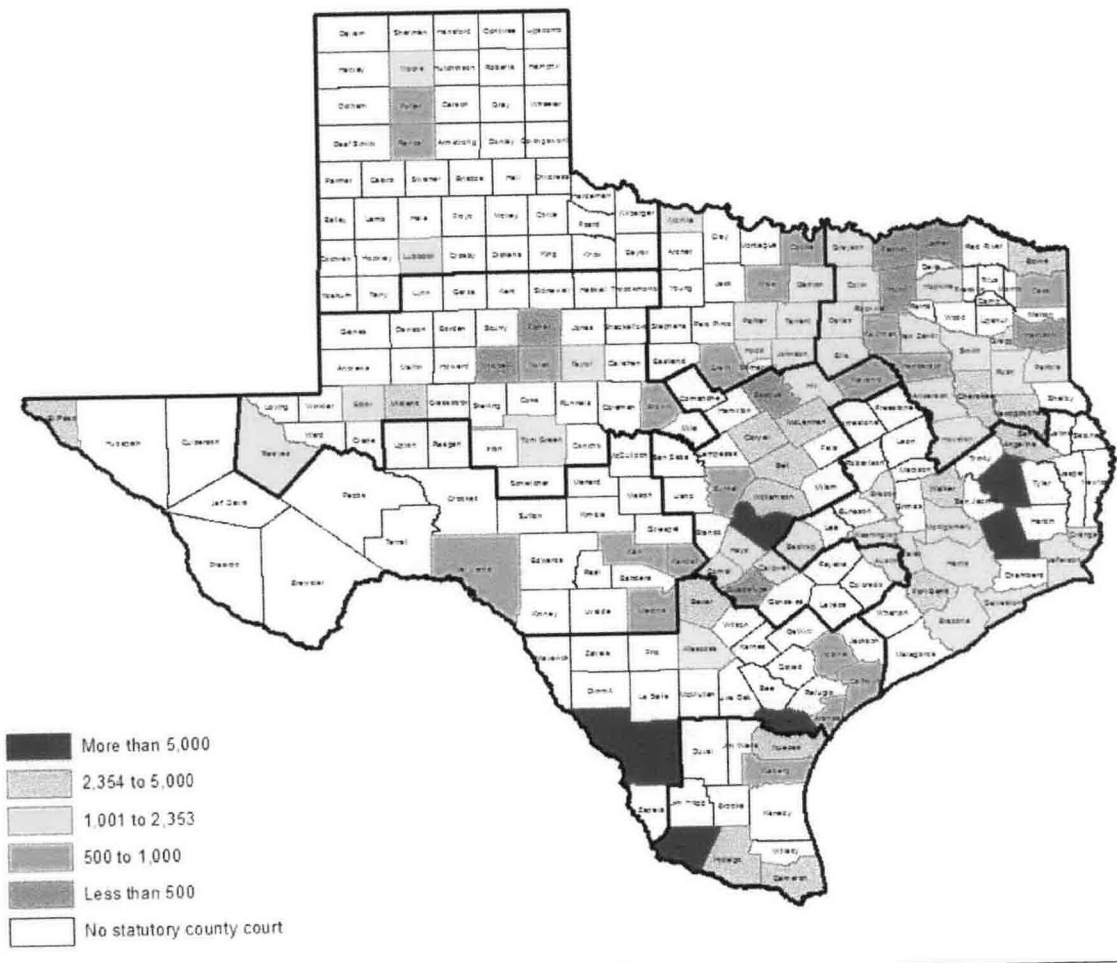


Figure 39 shows the statutory county court cases active pending per court by county. The statewide statutory county court average was 2,353.

**Figure 39—Cases Pending Per Court
 Statutory County Courts
 Fiscal Year 2014**



Additional Information:

Figure 44—Misdemeanor Appointment Rates

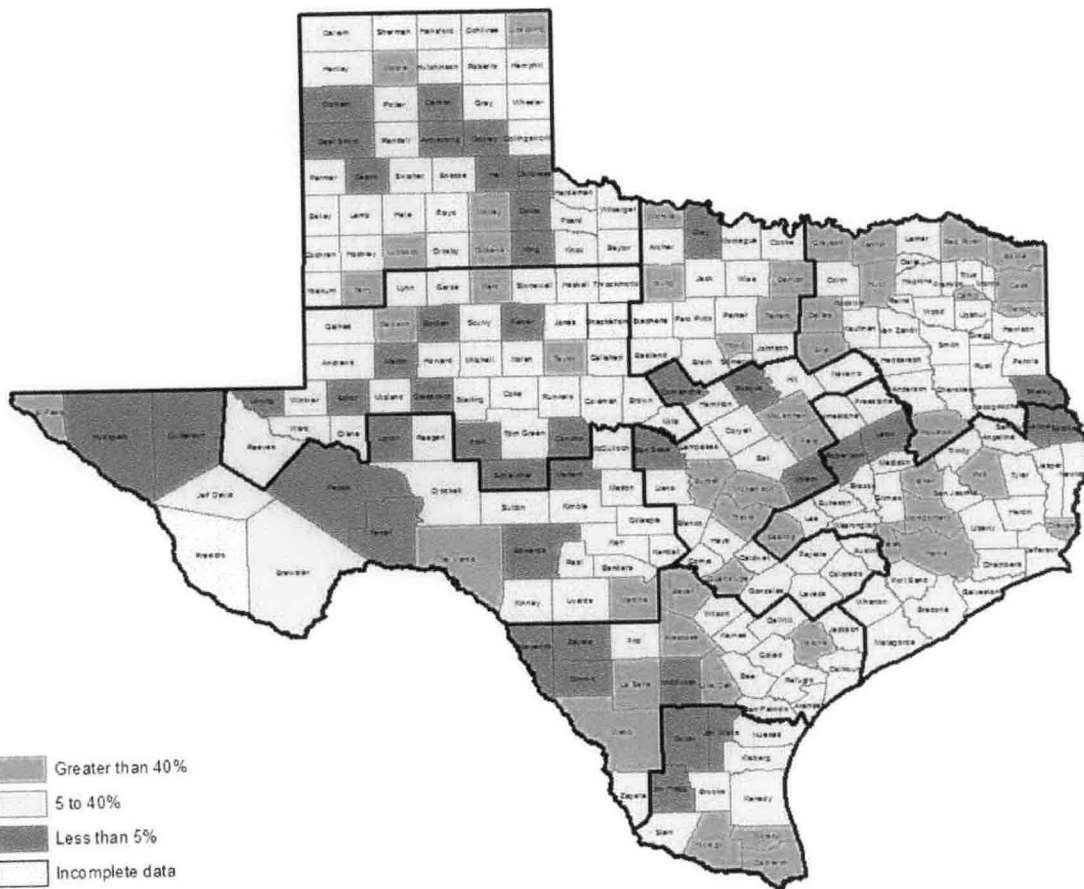


Figure 57 shows the percentage of criminal cases pending at the end of the fiscal year in statutory county courts that are inactive. The statewide average was 35%.

**Figure 57—Percent of Criminal Cases Pending at End of Fiscal Year that are Inactive
 Statutory County Courts
 Fiscal Years 2013 – 2014**

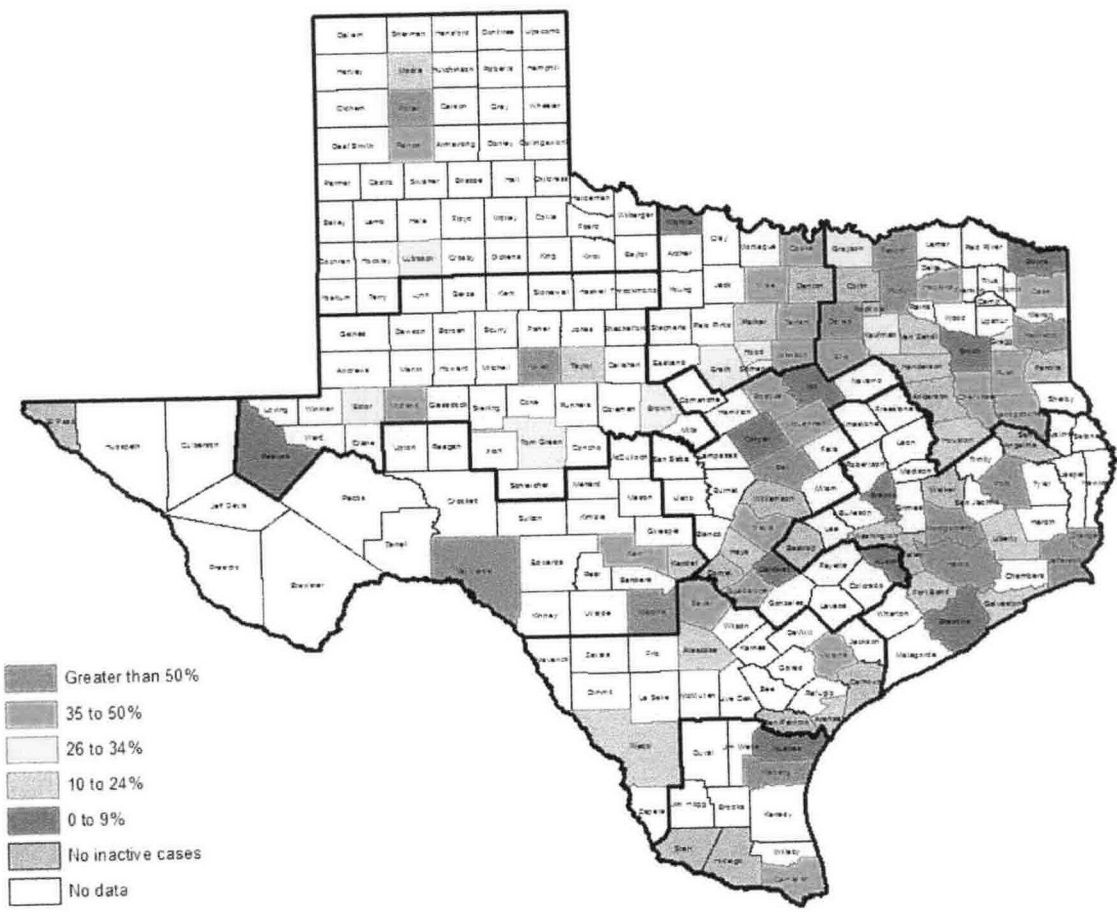


Figure 58 shows the percentage of civil cases pending at the end of the fiscal year in statutory county courts that are inactive. The statewide average was 4%.

**Figure 58—Percent of Civil Cases Pending at End of Fiscal Year that are Inactive
 Statutory County Courts
 Fiscal Years 2013 – 2014**

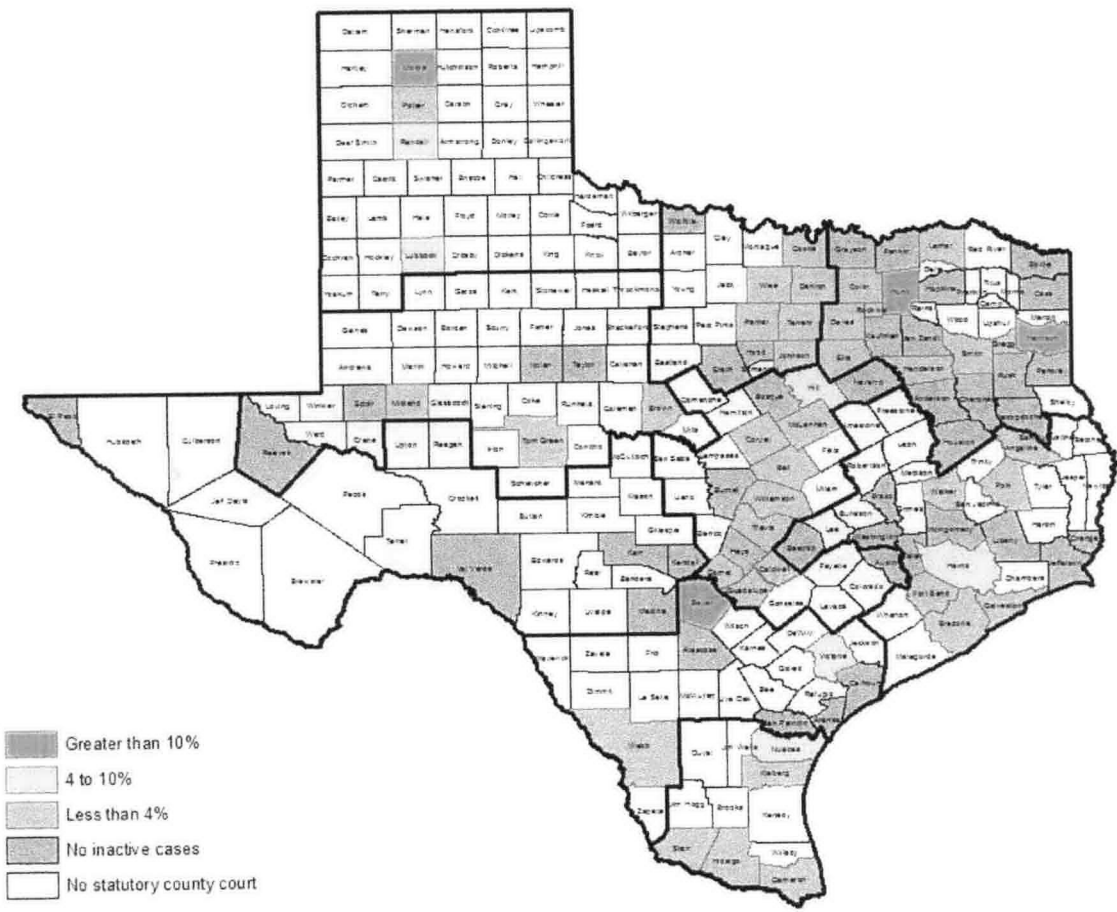


Figure 59 shows the percentage of family cases pending at the end of the fiscal year in statutory county courts that are inactive. The statewide average was 1%.

**Figure 59—Percent of Family Cases Pending at End of Fiscal Year that are Inactive
 Statutory County Courts
 Fiscal Years 2013 – 2014**

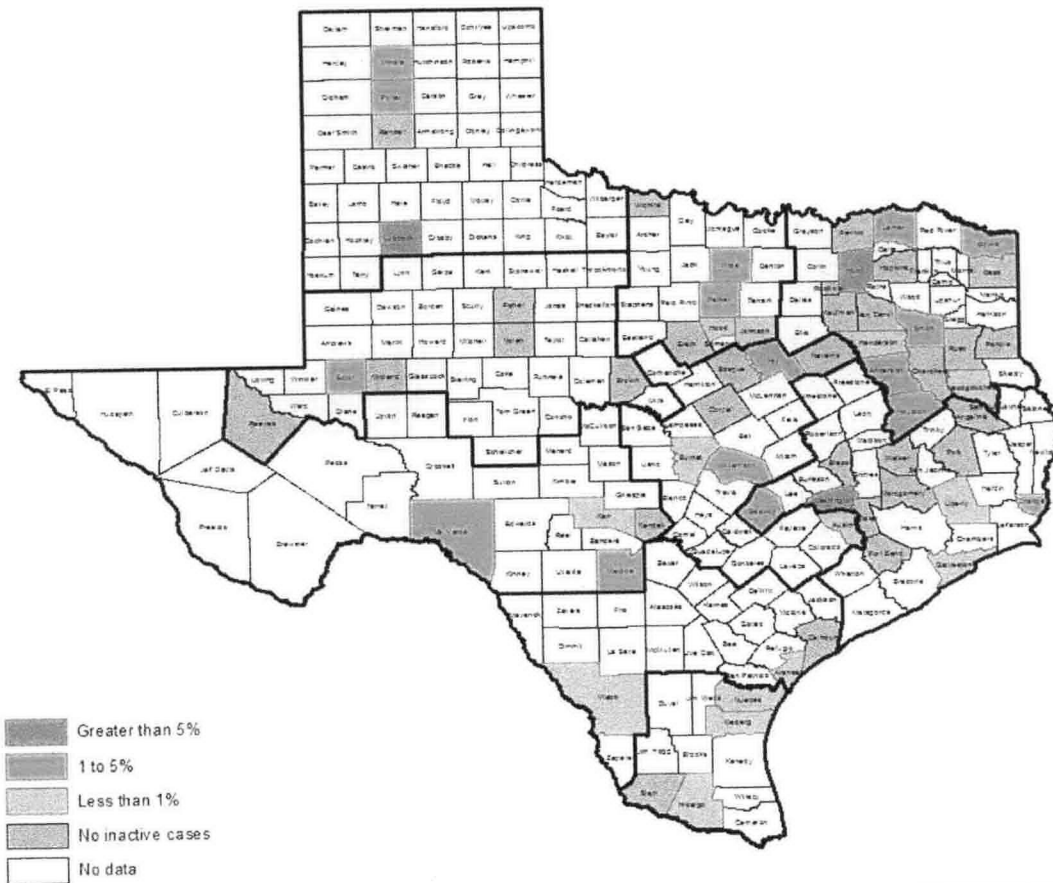


Figure 60 shows the percentage of juvenile cases pending at the end of the fiscal year in statutory county courts that are inactive. The statewide average was 7%.

**Figure 60—Percent of Juvenile Cases Pending at End of Fiscal Year that are Inactive
 Statutory County Courts
 Fiscal Years 2013 – 2014**

