



**Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury**

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## **Updates Needed to Measure Judicial Caseloads in Tennessee**

A new report shows updates are needed to produce the study state lawmakers consult when allocating resources across Tennessee's 32 judicial districts.

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office is required by law to complete a weighted caseload study to understand how criminal and civil cases impact district attorneys (DAs), public defenders (PDs), and trial court judges each year; however, the Comptroller's Office has not updated the weighted caseload study in several years due to a variety of factors.



Most notably, the weights for the state's trial court judges, which are set by a third-party vendor, were last updated in 2013 and have grown increasingly outdated. The National Center for State Courts recommends updating the weights every five to seven years. The 2013 weights also fail to account for changes to court operations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The current weights for district attorneys and public defenders were last updated in 1999 – and the last weighted caseload update for DAs and PDs from the Comptroller's Office was for fiscal year 2006.

In addition to outdated weights, another complicating factor is that some judicial districts have not yet implemented the preferred software needed to upload data from their General Sessions courts into the General Sessions Data Repository, which was created in 2021 to compile data in a single database.

The General Assembly appropriated \$400,000 a decade ago to update the weights for state trial court judges, district attorneys, and public defenders. The weights were not updated for DAs and PDs, however, because of problems with data from the General Sessions Courts. The cost of conducting a new study to create up-to-date weights is likely to be higher than a decade ago.

The Comptroller's new report also analyzes criminal and civil case filing trends from 2016 to 2022. The trend shows a decrease in filings through that seven-year period. County-level data and maps are also included in the new report.

To read the new report, please visit the Comptroller's website at: [tncot.cc/orea](https://tncot.cc/orea).

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