

SF Public Defender Presentation on the Crisis in the Courts

**BOS Government Audit and
Oversight Committee
December 2, 2021.**



A Humanitarian Crisis at 850 Bryant

451

People waiting

of people whose pending case is past the legal deadline for trial

People in jail on felony charges are typically waiting in custody **more than eight months** past their trial deadline; for those out of custody, the wait is almost **a year past** their deadline.

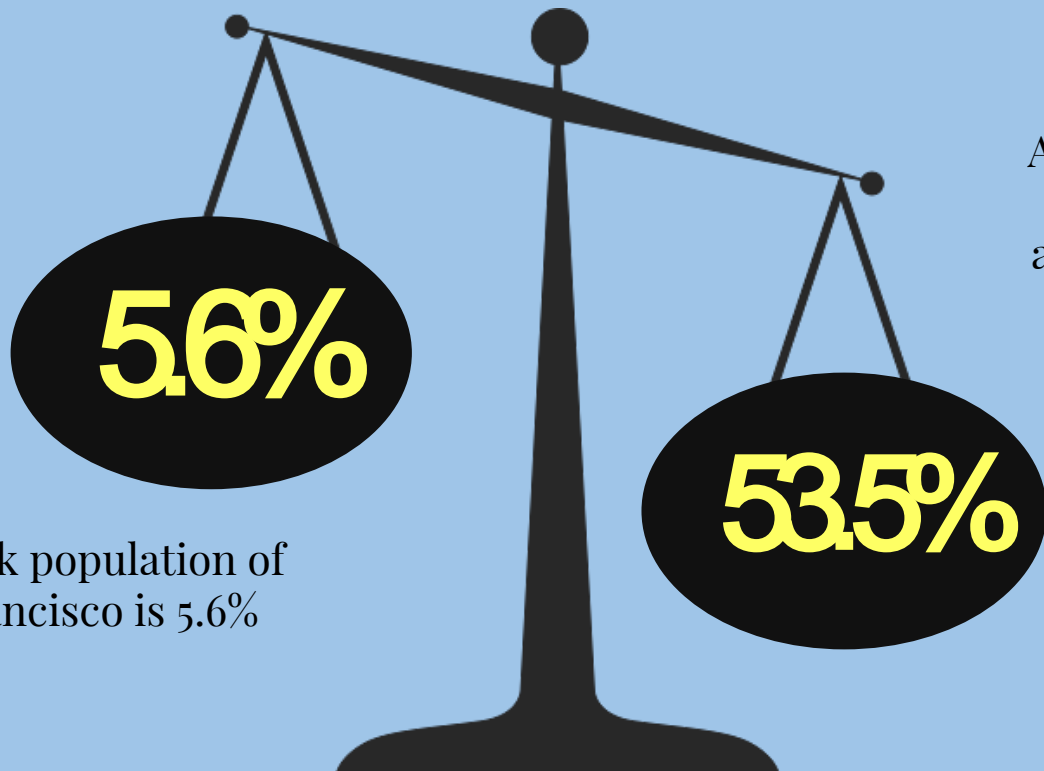
218

People in Custody

of people in custody as they await trial



Clear Racial Implications



The Black population of San Francisco is 5.6%

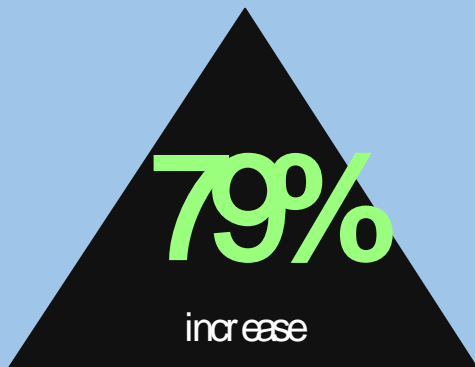
As of September 7, 2021, of the people in jail awaiting trial past their last day for trial, approximately 53.5% were Black.

Effects of Extended Pre-Trial Caging



- Many of these presumptively innocent people have been confined to their cells for **23 hours a day**.
- Isolation has adverse impacts on **physical, emotional, and mental health**.
- Pre-trial detention has a rippling effect on people's lives; **job and income loss, housing insecurity, and traumatic family disruption** are common.
- Extended pre-trial detention also increases a defendant's likelihood of **pleading guilty even when innocent** and has even been linked to **harsher sentences upon conviction**.

Now is the Time to Open the Courts



Despite the Superior Court's announcement that it would be "fully reopened" in late June, the backlog of people in custody past the deadline has ballooned from 125 to 218— a **79% increase**.

In the past five months, the Court has sent out only 6 in-custody trials.



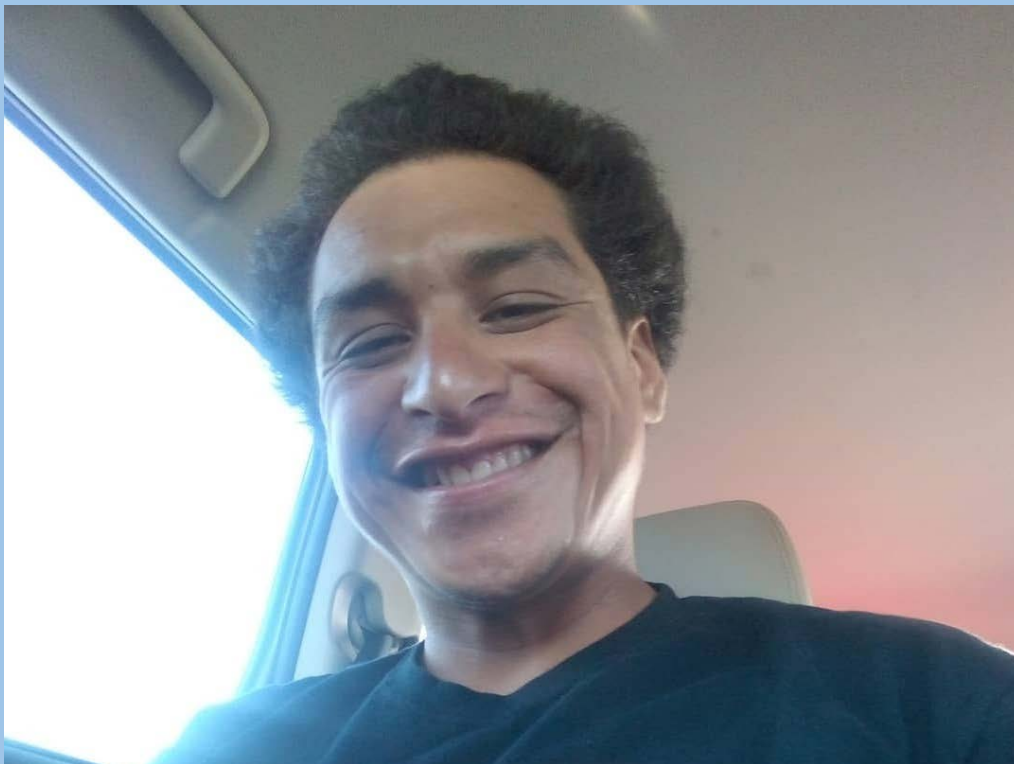
The Court has **12** jury trial departments at the Civic Center Courthouse.

In the last 15 years **56 felony jury trials have been sent out to the Civic Center Courthouse for trial.**

24

In of those cases, the defendant was in custody.

The Human Impact of the Crisis in the Courts











SF Public Defender's Office

From Injustice We Rise



