

CRIME WATCH

A Newsletter by Crime Stoppers of Houston

April 2021



*We remain committed to our mission
to solve and prevent serious crime in
the Greater Houston Area.*

WELCOME

It has been an incredibly busy time for us especially with the legislative session in full gear. Hence, I will do my best to bring everyone up to speed on what's been happening regarding felony bond reform and legislative efforts to fix our broken bail system.

To date, I have now documented 114 people who have been killed/murdered by defendants released on multiple felony bonds, felony PR bond and or bond forfeitures. Keep in mind the 114 will be increasing substantially as more and more defendants end up being charged with murder.

I, along with my colleague Sydney Zuiker, testified in favor of SB 21 a bill sponsored by Texas State Senator Joan Huffman. SB 21 seeks to address the release practices surrounding habitual and violent offenders and aims to protect the safety of victims, law enforcement officers and their communities. The bill passed out of committee and was voted out of the Senate by a vote of 23-8.

I, also testified in support of Governor Abbott's bond bill HB 20 which was voted out of committee and awaits a full house vote.

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TIP LINE PROGRAM

129
CASES SOLVED

79
SUSPECTS
ARRESTED

72
TIPSTERS PAID

\$70,075
PAID IN
REWARDS

\$149,255
SEIZED/
RECOVERED
PROPERTY &
DRUGS

The **Tip Line Program** continues to be a national crime solving system and aims to equip and motivate all citizens to report crime. Through collaboration with more than 70 local and federal law enforcement agencies, the Tip Line has proven its success in solving and preventing crime in the Greater Houston Area.

Did you know? Tipsters remain anonymous and could be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$5,000.

Call 713.222.TIPS (8477)

Use our **Mobile App**
Download app name:
Crime Stoppers Houston

Go to crime-stoppers.org

Report crime and suspicious activity by calling, using our mobile app or going

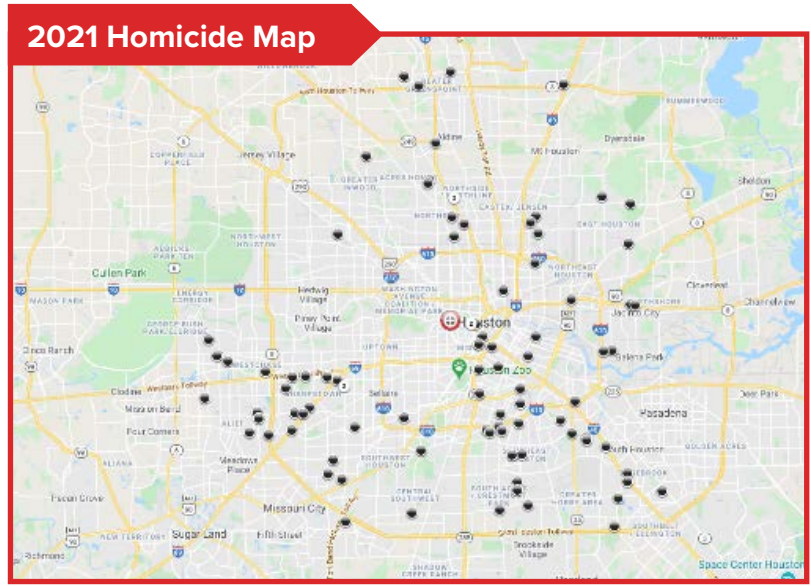
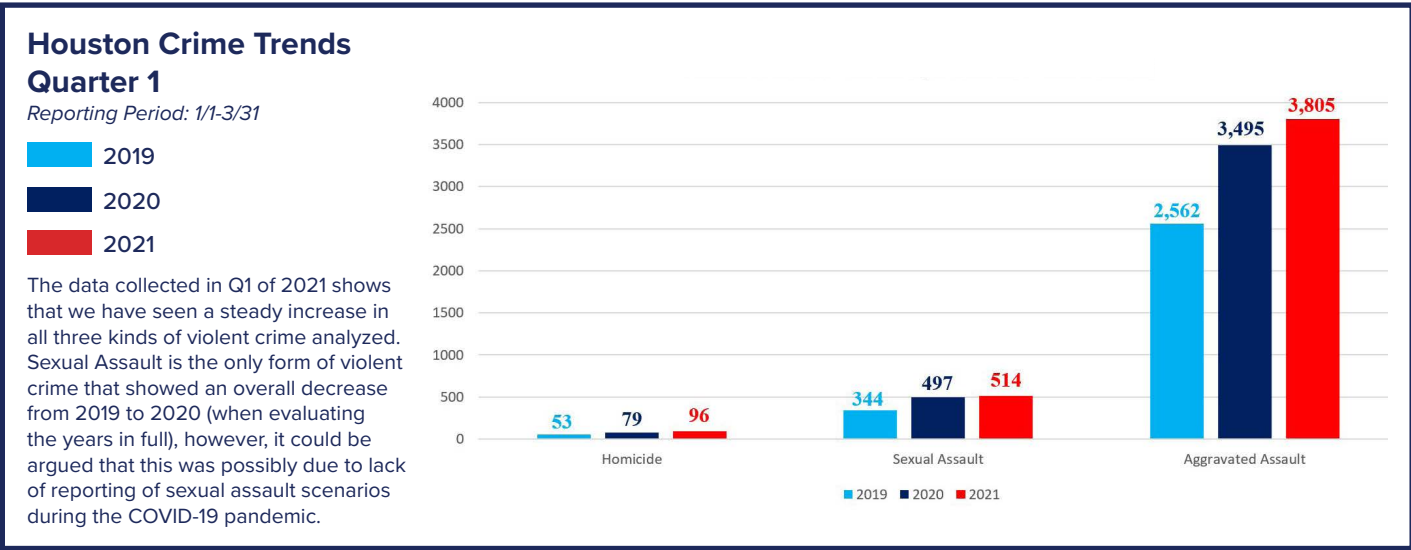
	THROUGH MARCH 2021	SINCE 1980
Cases Solved	129	35,896
Suspects Arrested	79	27,127
Tipsters Paid	72	23,416
Paid in Rewards	\$70,075	\$13,072,695
Seized/Recovered Property & Drugs	\$149,255	\$197,128,896

TYPE OF CRIME	THROUGH MARCH 2021	SINCE 1980
Capital Murder	1	467
Muder/Manslaughter/Attempted Murder	4	676
Assaultive Offenses	21	1,174
Auto Theft/UUMV	2	1,601
Burglary-Business & Habitation	6	2,461
Robbery	15	4,596
Theft	12	1,698
Narcotics	4	4,656
Sex Crimes-Children	7	245*
Sex Crimes-Adult	0	53*

*Started looking at sex crimes by the age of the victim in 2009. This number reflects the total from 2009-Current. Actual since inception for all sex crimes is 548.

HARRIS COUNTY CRIME STATISTICS & TRENDS

The following statistics are based on the reporting of Houston Police Department and research done by Crime Stoppers Safe Community Program.



The rising crime rates in Houston are alarming to our staff at Crime Stoppers of Houston.

The data collected in Q1 of 2021 shows that we have seen a steady increase in all three kinds of violent crime analyzed.

Compared to the past three years, in the first quarter of 2021 we have seen:

- 22% **increase** in homicides
- 3% **increase** in sexual assault
- 9% **increase** in aggravated assault

Sentences of Suspects Identified via Tip Line 2010-2017

- Over an eight year period, our anonymous tipsters have helped our law enforcement partners detain and sentence **3,462** suspects.
- Anonymous tips solving murder cases have resulted in **48 life sentences** and a combined total of **3,555 years** in prison.
- **94%** of suspects had a previous criminal history and **90%** of the cases our anonymous tips helped solve resulted in prison or jail time.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

[Continued from page 1]

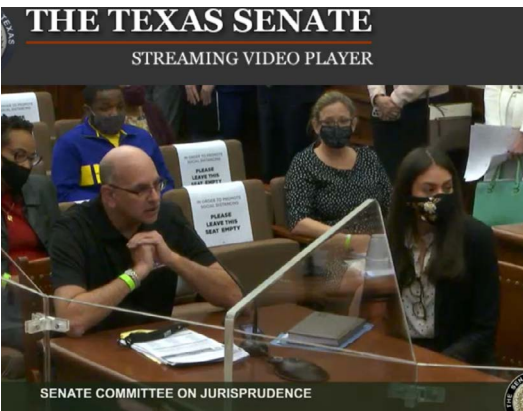
In addition, I testified against HB 1805 which would allow over 23,000 violent offenders including 5,377 murderers and over 7,000 sex offenders to accrue good time credits to expedite their parole eligibility. Current statute mandates violent offenders must serve half of their sentence before being eligible to receive parole. HB 1805 would reduce time served to approximately one-fourth if it passes. The bill was left in committee pending a vote.

Stay up to date on these bills and the 87th Texas Legislative Session by following Crime Stoppers of Houston on social media [@crimestoppersofhouston](#).

We will continue to aggressively work with partners and citizens, law enforcement and victim families, media and colleagues, to ensure the utter most safety of everyone who calls Harris County home.

Best regards,

Andy Kahan
Director of Victim Services & Advocacy



87th Texas Legislative Session Bills to Watch:

Senate Bill 21

SB 21 seeks to address the release of habitual and violent offenders. This bill is now in the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee. Track the bill [here](#).

Safe Outdoor Dogs Bill

Collectively known as the Safe Outdoor Dogs Bill, HB 873/ SB 474 are progressing in congress. Register to receive action alerts at [THLN.org/join](#).

Reckless Discharge Bill

HB 670 aims to create criminal consequences for the reckless firing of a firearm. Track the bill [here](#).

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

SB 21 PRESS CONFERENCE

On March 31, we held a press conference with victims and their families to address felony bond reform and Senate Bill 21.

Highlights included:

- Crime Stoppers Director of Victim Services Andy Kahan shared new data presented by Kim K. Ogg at the SB21 hearing.
- CEO Rania Mankarious and Andy Kahan responded to the Harris County Justice Administration (JAD) report, “Felony Bail Practice: The Landscape in Harris County”, and to the testimony the administration provided at the Senate Criminal Jurisprudence Hearing.
- Taseer Badar, Chairman and CEO of ZT Corporate and Crime Stoppers Board Member, shared his personal crime victim story.
- Marisol Ramos, sister of a 32-year old Ramon Ramos who was murdered on Christmas Day, spoke on behalf of her family.

At the press conference, we displayed a flag memorial with the name and age of each victim is on display in memory of the now over 100 people killed/murdered by defendants released on a variety of bonds, including felony and personal bonds.

[Watch the full press conference here.](#)



Breaking Bond: Judges who allowed defendants to remain free on bond that ended with deadly consequences

What do six criminal district court judges have in common? They allowed at least six defendants in their courts to remain free on multiple felony or PR bonds until they were charged with killing someone.

[Click to watch.](#)



OUTCOMES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING RELATED CASES

On April 8, we released our ‘Outcomes of Human Trafficking Related Cases Filed in Harris County’ report. The present study analyzes human trafficking related charges in Harris County from January 2018 to December 2020. Our findings were significant.

In total there were 549 cases filed during the period of study and those cases were dispersed amongst 217 defendants. We sub-categorized the 217 defendants into 6 groups including: defendants currently out on bond; defendants on bond at the time of the new charges in custody; defendants wanted for bond forfeiture (wanted fugitive); defendant with cases transferred to federal custody and dispositions (state and federal); and defendants with cases dismissed due to a missing witness, lack of witness, or defendant death, or issues related to probable cause.

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offender after conviction.

We found that 67% of defendants charged in state courts received sentences of 5 years or less or community supervision. We also found that 90% of offenders did not have to register as a sex offender after conviction.

We believe that these findings can aid Harris County and anti-trafficking advocacy work better comprehend the landscape of human trafficking offenders in Houston.

The report is available at
bit.ly/CSOH-Trafficking-Report-2021

CRIME STOPPERS OF HOUSTON
Report: Outcomes of Human Trafficking Related Cases
Filed in Harris County

Abstract

The present study analyzes human trafficking related charges in Harris County from January 2018 to December 2020. In total there were 549 cases filed during the period of study and those cases were dispersed amongst 217 defendants. We subcategorized the 217 defendants into 6 groups including: defendants currently out on bond; defendants on bond at the time of the new charges in custody; defendants wanted for bond forfeiture (wanted fugitive); defendant with cases transferred to federal custody and dispositions (state and federal); and defendants with cases dismissed due to a missing witness, lack of witness, or defendant death, or issues related to probable cause. We found that 67% of defendants charged in state courts received sentences of 5 years or less or community supervision. We also found that 90% of offenders did not have to register as a sex offender after conviction. These findings can aid Harris County and anti-trafficking advocacy work better comprehend the landscape of human trafficking offenders in Houston.

Key words: Unsecured Bond, Recidivism, Human Trafficking, Compelling Prostitution

Introduction

In October 2019 Crime Stoppers in conjunction with Houston Police Department and the Harris County District Attorney's Office held a press conference regarding an alarming trend we discovered of defendants charged with murder that had previously been released on multiple felony and Personal Recognizance bonds. In March of 2020, Crime Stoppers of Houston, under the supervision of Victim Services Director, Andy Kahan, began compiling a list of victims allegedly killed/murdered by defendants who were either on multiple felony bonds, Felony Personal Recognizance (PR) bonds (also known as unsecured bonds), or bond forfeiture. In this list we included victims who died as a result of Intoxication Manslaughter and His-Ran Fatalities because these are presumably preventable deaths if the defendant has not been released into the community on bond. The criteria excluded defendants who were charged with Murder while out on only 1 Felony Bond. The time period of the study looked at cases filed in the Harris County District Courts (HCDC) from January 2018 through December 2020. The examination of loss of life due to the actions of repeat felony offenders released on multiple felony bonds, PR bonds, or with a motion to revoke bond denied led to the desire to learn more about how repeat offenders and human trafficking cases correlate.

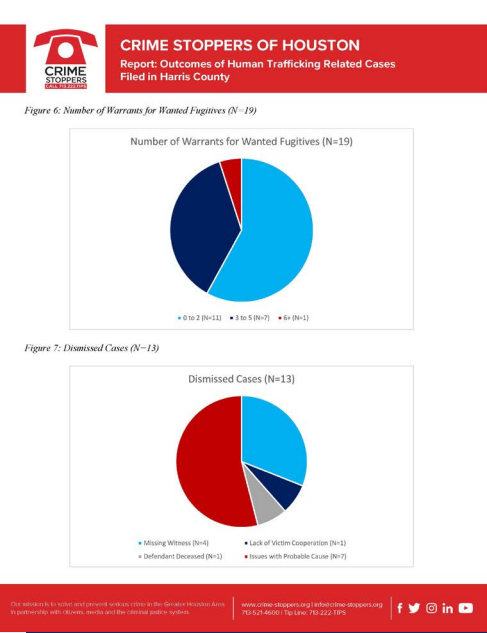
Background

According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2016), Houston ranks #1 for the amount of human trafficking in all cities in the United States. Since being named the top place for trafficking in the nation, the City of Houston and Harris County at large has worked to implement programs and policy to combat human trafficking.

Our research is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an offer of legal advice. For more information, please contact Crime Stoppers of Houston at 713.521.4600. Top Case: 713.222.1995

www.crimestoppers.org | info@crimestoppers.org

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [y](#) [in](#)



Download our full report here.

OUTCOMES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING RELATED CASES

What is the
S.M.A.R.T Act?

HB 1655, HB 3520 are two bills collectively known as the S.M.A.R.T Act which stands for ‘Standardizing Minimum Age Requirements in Texas’. This act aims to raise the minimum age of employment in sexually oriented businesses (SOBs) from 18 to 21 and increase the criminal penalty for establishments that do not comply.

Data shows that by 21 years old, individuals are better equipped to spot a trafficker’s false promises and manipulation. By increasing the age, law enforcement will be better able to spot minors and hold SOBs accountable.

To understand what you can do to make sure we pass legislation, please join the **Texas SMART Act Army** Facebook page [here](#).



HUMAN TRAFFICKING PRESS CONFERENCE



On April 16, we held a press conference to:

- Respond to questions regarding our ‘Outcomes of Human Trafficking Related Cases Filed in Harris County’ report,
- Announce top 5 wanted fugitives for human trafficking related charges,
- Mother of survivor/victim shared her compelling story,
- Legislative update on the S.M.A.R.T Act was provided by Crime Stoppers Board Member and community advocate, Jennifer Hohman.

Watch the recorded press conference [here](#).

On Episode 15 of The Balanced Voice Podcast, we discuss the shocking trend of the repeat release of violent offenders on bond. In their conversation, Rania Mankarious, Andy and Expert Contributor, Jennifer Hohman, break down how this disturbing trend correlates to rising crime rates and affects Human Trafficking Victims.

Watch the episode [here](#).
Learn more at thebalancedvoicepodcast.com.

Episode 15: Bond Reform

With Guest,
ANDY KAHAN
Director of Victim Services at
Crime Stoppers of Houston

&

Expert Contributor,
JENNIFER HOHMAN
Anti-Human Trafficking Advocate
& Co-founder of The Houston 20

& Human Trafficking

CONTACT OUR TEAM



Rania Mankarious
Chief Executive Officer

Crime Stoppers of Houston is committed to offering the most up-to-date public safety messaging. You and your family's safety remains our top priority. For media, speaking engagements, interviews, or blogs, please contact Rania.

✉ rmankarious@crime-stoppers.org



Nichole Christoph
Deputy Director

Our Tip Line Program runs efficiently and effectively thanks to meticulous attention of our Law Enforcement Officers and our Deputy Director. If you have questions on how to utilize our anonymous Tip Line, please contact Nichole.

✉ nchristoph@crime-stoppers.org



Andy Kahan
Director, Victim Services & Victim Advocacy

Our Victims Services & Victim Advocacy department works year round to fight for the rights of victims of violent crimes. If you are a surviving victim or family member of a victim seeking further assistance, please contact Andy.

✉ akahan@crime-stoppers.org

**KEEP OUR
HOUSTON
SAFE.**



FOLLOW.

For the latest crime news, educational opportunities, and community events, follow us on our socials!

[@crimestoppersofhouston](#)

[@theraniareport](#)

SHARE.

We are passionate about the work we do and hope you are to! **Spread the word** by sharing on social media and in conversations. Thank you!

GIVE.

We are Houston's top non-profit that keeps you safe everyday. Visit crime-stoppers.org to give to our mission.



CRIME STOPPERS OF HOUSTON

P.O. Box 541654
Houston, TX 77254
(713) 521-4600

www.crime-stoppers.org

