

# Analysis of Signature Bonds and Cash Bail

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For the Community Justice  
Council Pretrial Subcommittee



September 13, 2023



# Previous and current initiatives

- Report “Frequency of Signature Bonds in Dane County Criminal Cases: 2012-2016,” by Judge McNamara showed that 81% of criminal cases in Dane County got a Signature Bond at some point
- Query tool at the time did not allow analysis of different population groups, amounts of cash bail, or whether people paid bail
- Additional analysis in response to County Board 2020 Resolution 177



# Key takeaways

New analysis reviews Signature Bond and Cash Bail events at or subsequent to initial appearance in 34,000 felony, misdemeanor, and criminal traffic cases filed in Dane County from 2017 to 2022.

- Defendants in most criminal cases are released on Signature Bonds
- The share of felony cases that receive Signature Bonds has declined
- There is a significant disparity between Black defendants and white defendants with regards to who gets a Signature Bond.
- In cases with Cash Bail, defendants paid the bail 57% of the time.