

## County Commissioner's vote on CAFA Implementation - Justice Delayed is Justice Denied

(AUSTIN, TX) - On Tuesday, the community heard an update on the status of Counsel at First Appearance aka CAFA at the Travis County Commissioners Court, and we were very disappointed to hear the following:

- That the timeline for full implementation of CAFA remains protracted, meaning that 2/3 of people will continue to be denied their constitutional right to counsel during the early stages of their legal cases and only the lucky few who happen to be magistrated during an existing CAFA shift will have access to legal counsel
- That there is not a concrete plan yet to provide in-person interpretation.

The self-congratulatory tone that pervaded the hearing is insensitive to the 2/3 of people ensnared in the criminal legal system who will continue to be denied their constitutional rights in the process, simply because they are going in front of a magistrate judge at the wrong time of day when attorneys happen to not be available.

SB4 remains a looming potential threat to the immigrant community. This community is at risk of not only the already devastating collateral consequences of pretrial detention but also of deportation if they are arrested and unable to challenge the unconstitutional arrests on the basis of racial profiling that SB4 would allow.

The lack of a firm plan for interpretation reveals a dismissive lack of regard for people who do not speak English and are facing already confusing hearings without proper interpretation.

The allocation of 28% of the budget to the sheriff's office reinforces the narratives that legally innocent people in pre-trial hearings require heavy state surveillance and control, and that the county is more interested in investing in law enforcement than in expanding support services that ensure better outcomes for individuals caught up in the system, and consequently for the community.

We are not prepared to celebrate until we have heard a concrete plan that includes a guarantee of in-person interpretation and the full implementation of CAFA for all human beings passing through our county jails.

**Viridiana Hernandez**, ASN community member.

"For me, this is very disappointing, I have shown up to the court all summer long sometimes with my kids and grandkids to talk to the court about the urgency of needing attorneys. During these test shifts my son was arrested, and he didn't have access to attorneys which made it harder for me to communicate with him about what was happening during his case. It's disappointing knowing that legal representation is vital to our criminal justice system and our county officials are treating our rights like a budgeting issue. I will continue to come to court sessions and demand our constitutional rights be respected now"



**Lilly-Ann Ortiz**, ASN member:

"The truth is, not many people know CAFA is not being implemented in Travis County. Many don't know that our fellow citizens are being denied their constitutional rights here in our city. If more people knew, more people would be outraged, just as we are. When every other major city in the state is able to provide CAFA, it really makes one wonder what is truly going on. The jails are overcrowded. Mental illness is prevalent everywhere. Not to mention the blatant law enforcement pursuit of black and brown people and the racial stereotyping and profiling that we know is occurring because we all have the data. The truth is, that people's very lives depend on CAFA, and at this point, the excuses need to stop, and the competence of our elected public officials needs to be shown and it needs to be shown in a timely manner that corresponds with the seriousness of the issue."

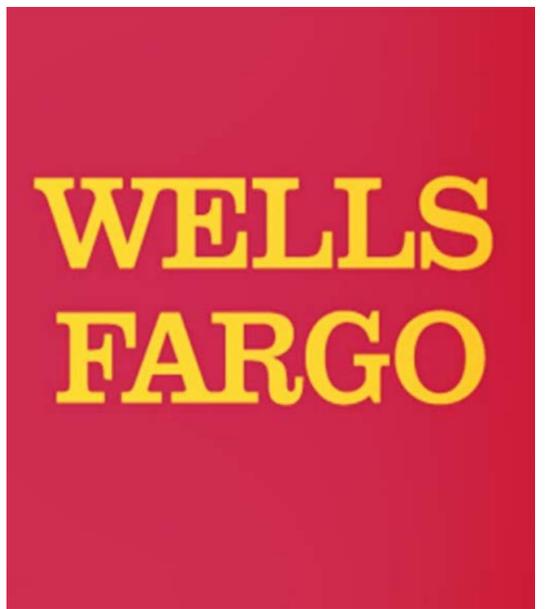
**Peggy Morton**, ASN board member

"Everything about too many arrests often starts with a communication problem that has nothing to do with second languages, and it turns into innocent people or people with low-level misdemeanors sitting in jail unnecessarily when they have their Constitutional right to an attorney denied," longtime ASN volunteer Peggy Morton said. "Add to that the lack of in-person interpretation and everyone suffers, magistrate judges, attorneys, and victims of false or low-level charges and their families. Why keep people sitting in jail at taxpayer expense for up to 14 days because of miscommunications and no attorneys?"

**Carmen Zuvieta**, ASN member and Organizer:

"It's sad to know that our state governments continue to attack immigrant communities, and people of color state-wide, and instead of defending our rights our local county officials are budgeting away our rights. I would like to remind them that S.B. 4 is still a real threat to our community and the best defense against deportations is attorneys giving proper representation and advice on what to say."

## Black Business Month: The Journey of Black-Owned Businesses in the Middle Market



(MONEY) - In honor of Black Business Month, Wells Fargo is spotlighting the unique challenges faced by Black-owned businesses in the middle market. Despite their vital role in the economy, these businesses often encounter significant barriers, including discrimination and difficult certification processes.

Moses Harris and Jetheda Hernandez offer expert insights on how Black entrepreneurs can overcome these challenges:

### Key Challenges:

**Discrimination and Bias:** Black business owners often face obstacles like limited access to capital and unequal treatment.

**Certification Hurdles:** Obtaining and maintaining certifications, such as Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), is crucial but challenging.



**Moses Harris**

prise (MBE), is crucial but challenging.

"Overcoming the barriers that Black-owned businesses face in the middle market isn't just about survival—it's about thriving against the odds. By building strategic alliances and fostering a resilient mindset, we can transform these challenges into opportunities for growth and success."

— **Moses Harris**, Middle Market Business Expert, Wells Fargo



**Jetheda Hernandez**

"Certification is more than just a stamp of approval; it's a gateway to new opportunities. Yet, the process can be daunting. By staying informed and seeking the right guidance, Black-owned businesses can navigate these hurdles and position themselves for long-term success."

— **Jetheda Hernandez**, Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships and MBE Services, Wells Fargo Strategies for Success:

Focus on financial literacy and strategic planning.

Cultivate a robust online presence and diversify revenue streams.

Leverage resources from organizations supporting minority-owned businesses.

Wells Fargo is committed to empowering Black entrepreneurs with the tools and networks they need to succeed in the middle market.

## City of Austin announces completion of Austin-to-Manor Trail



Local city and county officials cut a ribbon to celebrate the official opening of the Austin-to-Manor trail. From left: Bike Texas Executive Director Robin Stallings, Capital Delivery Services Director James Snow, Austin City Council District 1 Council Support Specialist Destiny Brown, District 4 Austin City Council Member Chito Vela, Travis County Judge Andy Brown, District 8 Austin City Council Member Paige Ellis, Pflugerville City Council Member Rudy Metayer, Manor Mayor Christopher Harvey, Transportation and Public Works Assistant Director Pirouz Moin and Manor City Council Member Aaron Moreno

(AUSTIN, TX) – Hiking and biking from Manor to Austin just became easier. The City of Austin, in partnership with Travis County and the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), is proud to announce the completion of the Austin-to-Manor Urban Trail project. The new 2.9-mile extension makes the full Austin-to-Manor trail 5.5 miles long, connecting Ben E. Fisher Park in Manor to the Southern Walnut Creek Trail system.

The newly completed trail provides a safe, comfortable alternative to the existing shoulder lane on Decker Lane, and provides users the unique experience of riding and walking through Walter E. Long Park away from vehicle traffic. "Our voters tell us by their recent support of Mobility Bonds that they want more Urban Trails in Austin," Austin Mayor Kirk Watson said. "So we're

getting it done. The completion of the Austin-to-Manor trail is further proof of how we're creating a world-class trail network that becomes a part of life for Austinites." "This trail for walking and biking is exactly the kind of project I hoped for when I championed Austin's Mobility Bond," said Austin Council Member Paige Ellis, "and I look forward to many more urban trails to come." "I'm excited to celebrate the completion of the Austin-to-Manor trail," said Austin City Manager T.C. Broadnax. "This trail is a testament not only to the hard work of our organization, but also a reflection of our commitment to meeting the needs of our residents and neighbors." Funding for the trail came through 2016 and 2020 Mobility Bond funding, a CAMPO grant and a Travis County Interlocal Agreement.