King County Superior Court

2026

Mission & Values

MISSION

The mission of the King County Superior Court is to equitably serve our diverse public by administering justice in accessible, inclusive, and unbiased forums.

VISION

Be open to
Be trusted by
Provide justice for **ALL**

CORE VALUES

FAIRNESS AND TIMELINES
Act fairly, timely, and without bias, and ensure decisions are clear and equitable.

LEADERSHIP
Model leadership, excellence, civility, and high ethical standards at all levels, and in all areas, of the Court.

RESPECT
Be respectful and inclusive of all backgrounds and cultures.

ACCESSIBILITY
Ensure court proceedings and information are understandable to all, courthouses are barrier-free, and court services are accessible to all.

SAFETY
Provide a safe and secure courthouse for everyone, ensuring the right to witness and participate in the delivery of justice.

PUBLIC SERVICE
Assist court users in navigating the court system efficiently and effectively.

INNOVATION
Implement best practices and innovative programs / solutions to advance the Court and meet future needs.

COLLABORATION
Work with regional partners and stakeholders to achieve results that benefit all members of the community.

King County
Superior Court

Overview

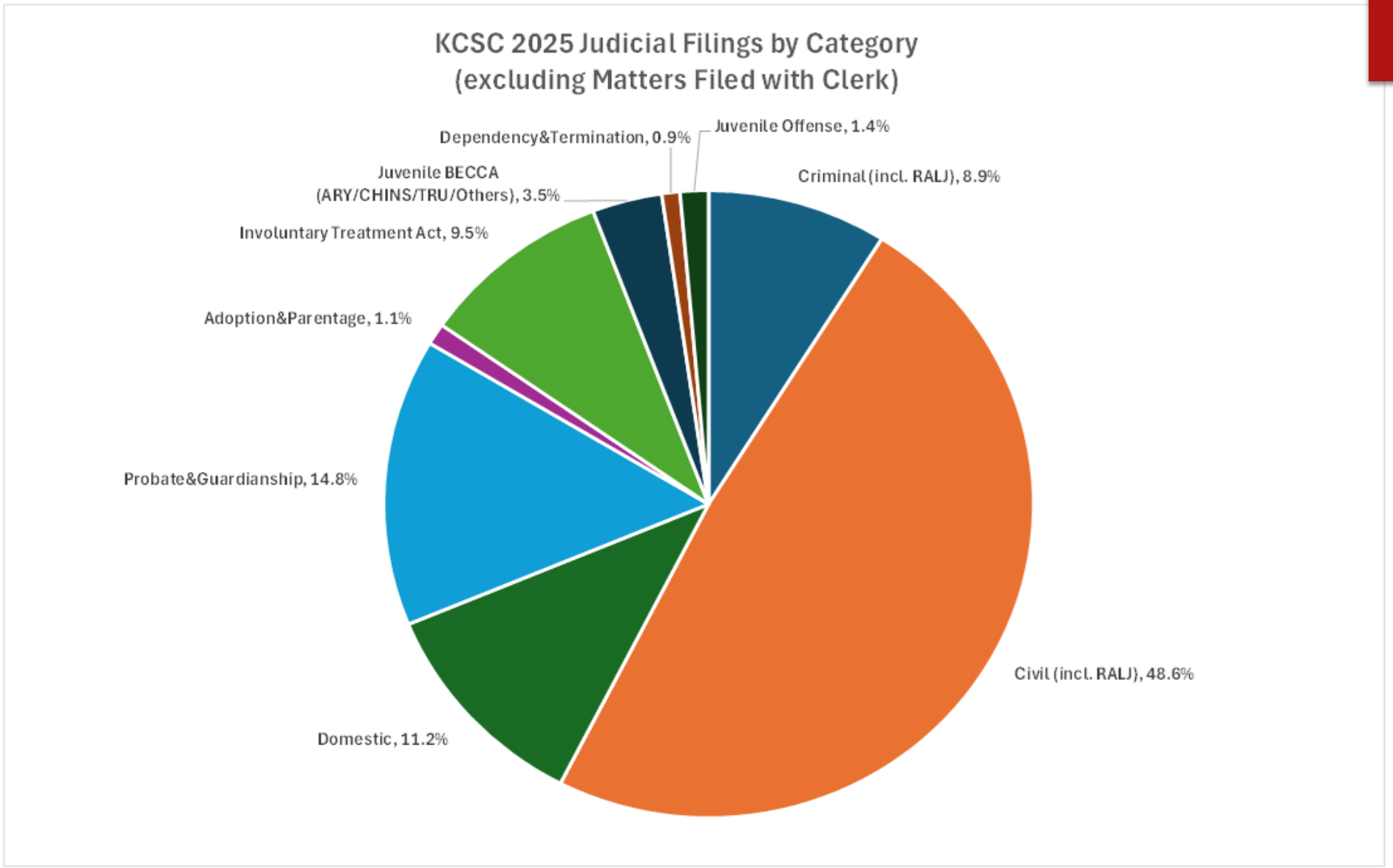
- 56 Judges + 13 Commissioners

  New Housing Commissioner March 26
- 385 Employees
- $168.5 Million Biennial Budget
- 4 Courthouses:
  - Seattle = 29 Judges
  - CCJFC = 9 Judges
  - MRJC = 17 Judges
  - Harborview = 1 Judge
- 59,000 cases filed in 2025 requiring judicial action: 6% increase from 2024 attributable to civil filings.

Pictured: 40 King County Superior Court Judges 2024.

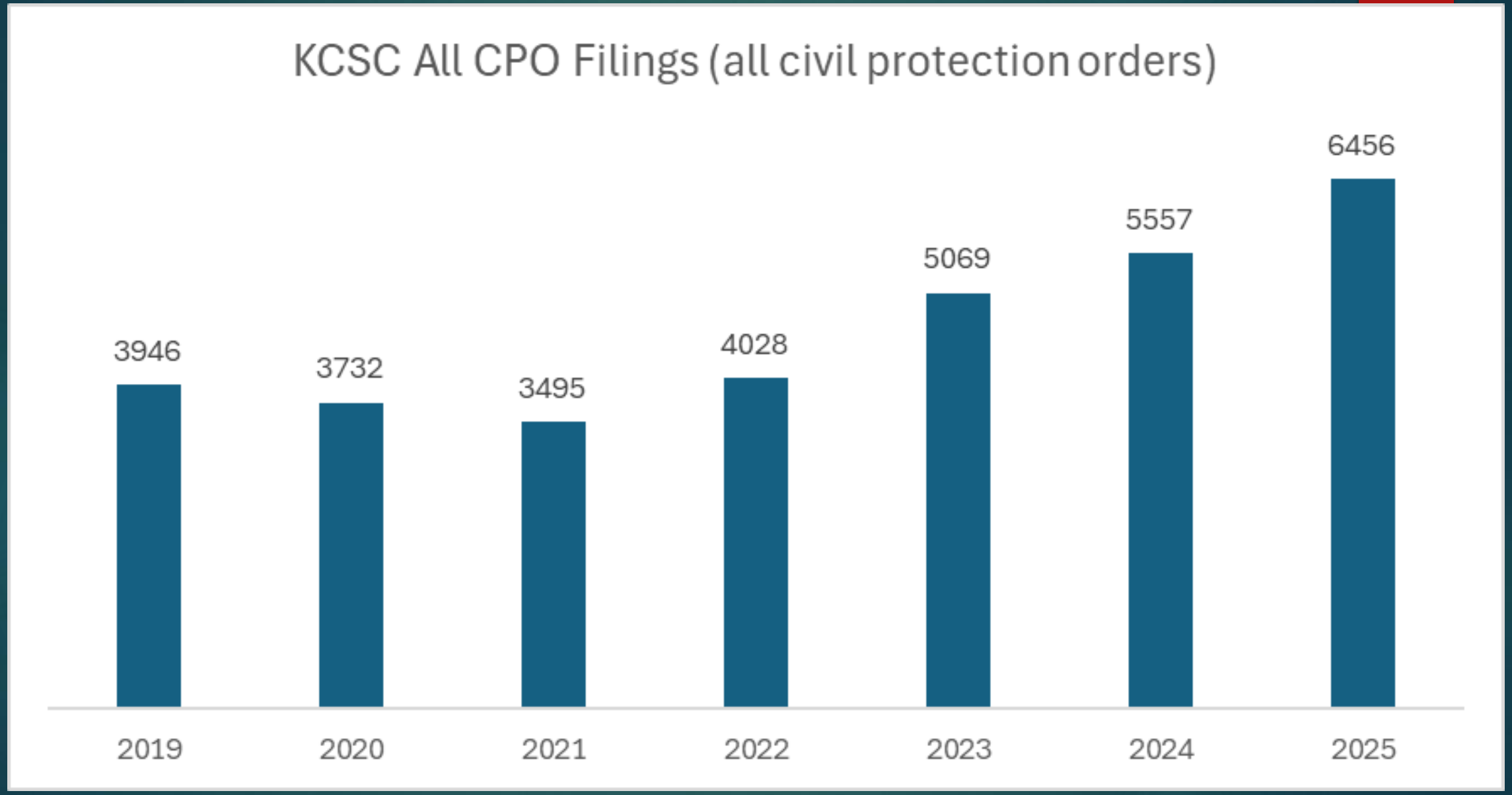
Filings for judicial action by Departments

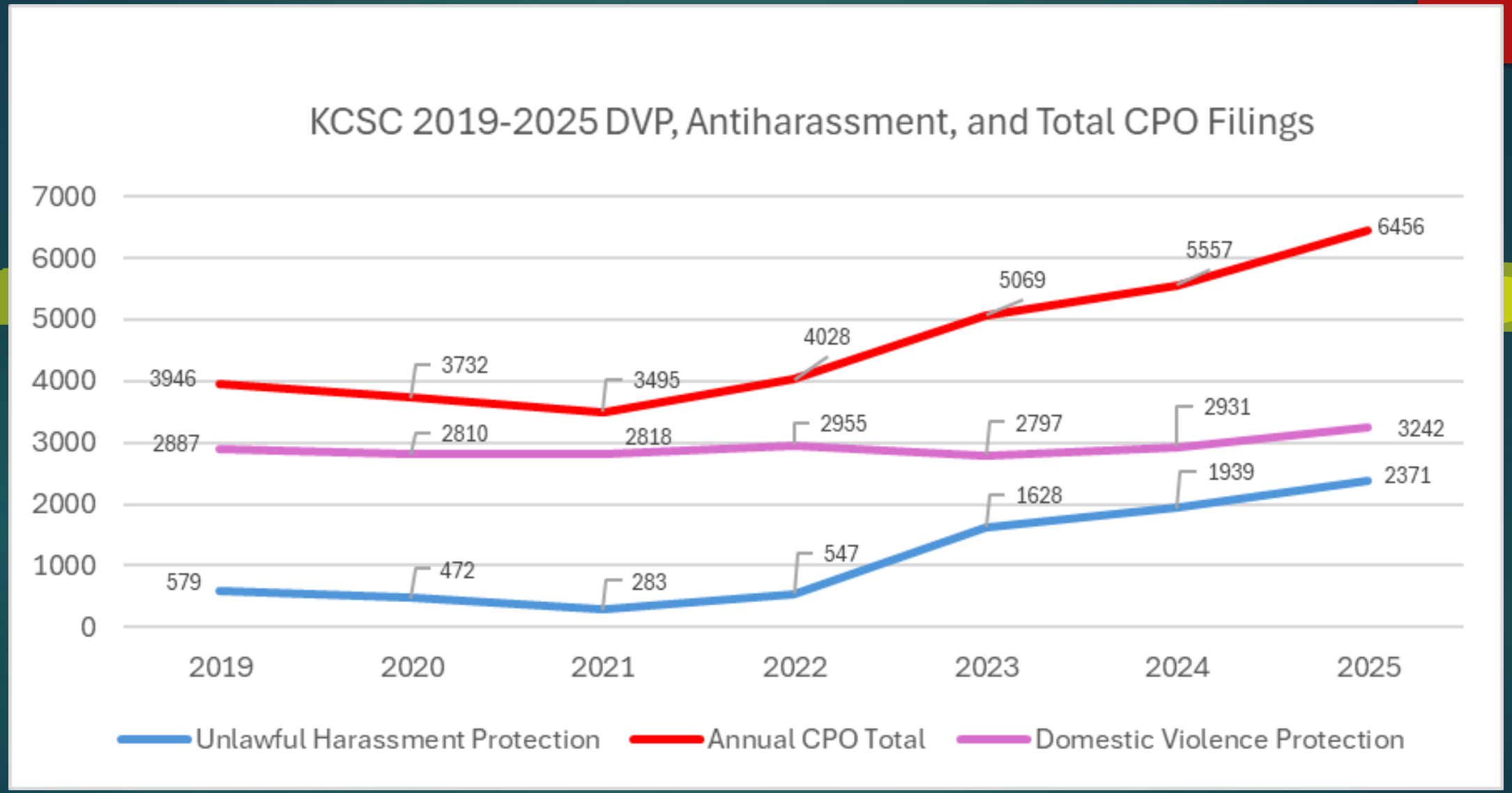
- Civil = 49%
- Probate/Guardianship = 15%
- Domestic = 11%
- ITA = 10%
- Criminal = 9%
- Becca = 4%
- Juvenile Offender = 1%
- Dependency = 1%


KCSC 2025 Judicial Filings by Category
(excluding Matters Filed with Clerk)
Dependency&Termination, 0.9%
Juvenile Offense, 1.4%
Juvenile BECCA
(ARY/CHINS/TRU/Others), 3.5%
Criminal (incl. RALJ), 8.9%
Involuntary Treatment Act, 9.5%
Adoption&Parentage, 1.1%
Probate&Guardianship, 14.8%
Civil (incl. RALJ), 48.6%
Domestic, 11.2%

Civil Trends

- Civil Protection Orders Dramatic increase in anti-harassment petitions
  - 309% increase in Anti-Harassment Petitions since 2019
- Unlawful Detainers (Residential Eviction) New normal: 8,730 in 2025
- Guardianship/Probate Trending up
- General Civil Trials Lowest statutory/Constitutional priority
  - wait for trial judges for lengthy trials


KCSC All CPO Filings (all civil protection orders)
3946
3732
3495
4028
5069
5557
6456
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025


KCSC 2019-2025 DVP, Antiharassment, and Total CPO Filings
7000
6000
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
3946
3732
3495
4028
5069
5557
6456
2887
2810
2818
2955
2797
2931
3242
579
472
283
547
1628
1939
2371
Unlawful Harassment Protection
Annual CPO Total
Domestic Violence Protection

Monthly average CPO filings:

2026 to date 509

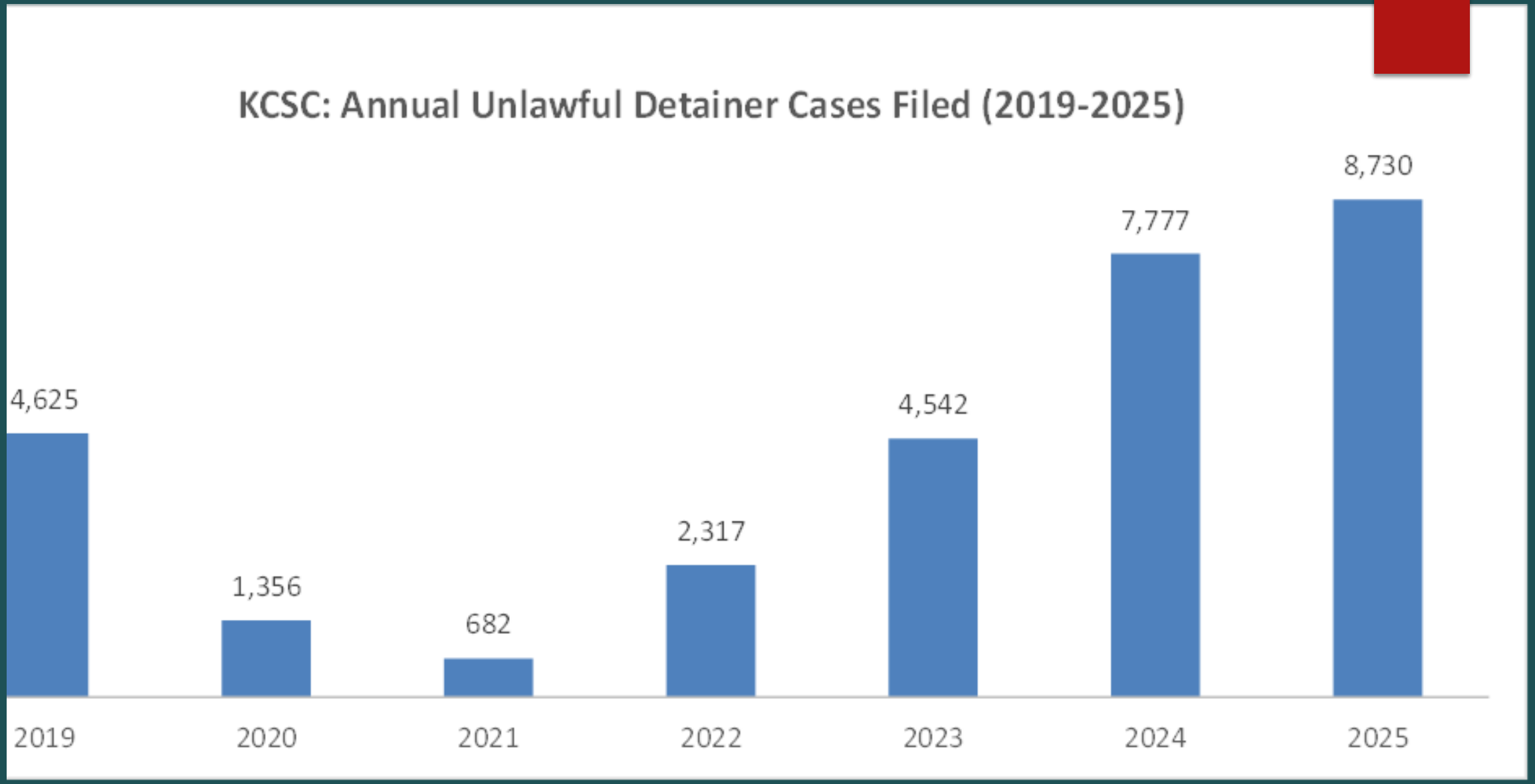
(Daily high 40 = 40 temp order hearings)

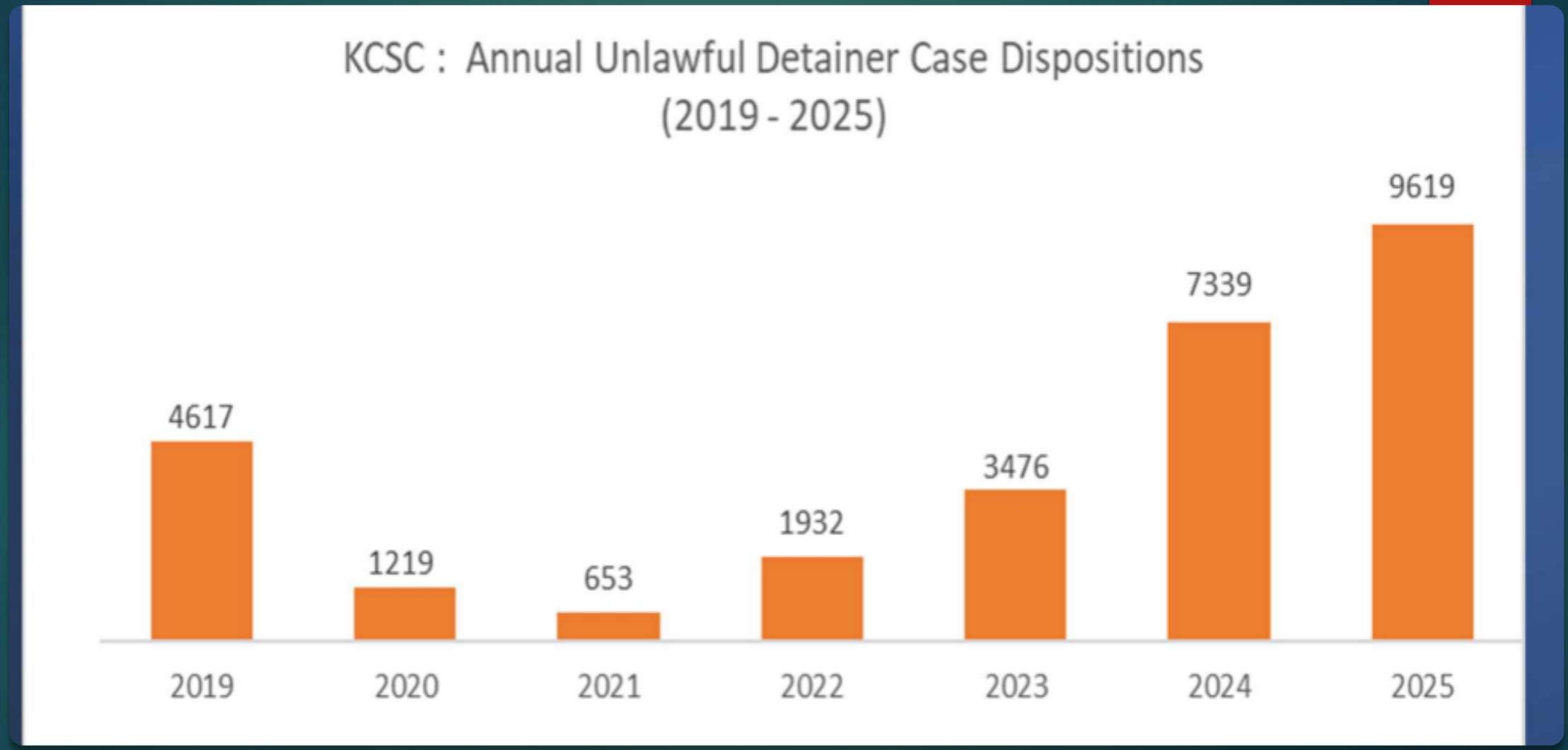
2025 538

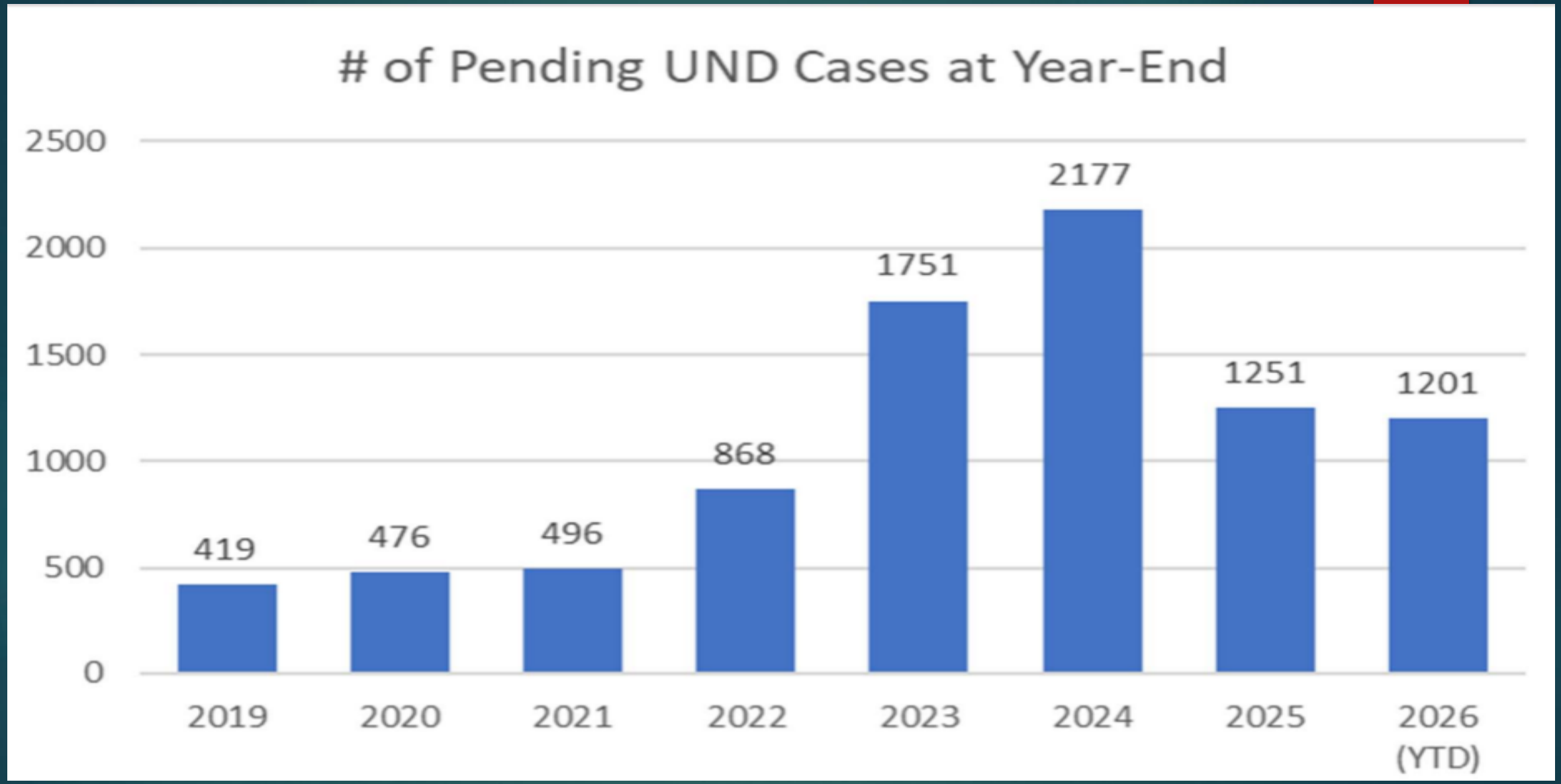
2024 463

Annual Protection Cases Filed (2019-2025) by Petition Type

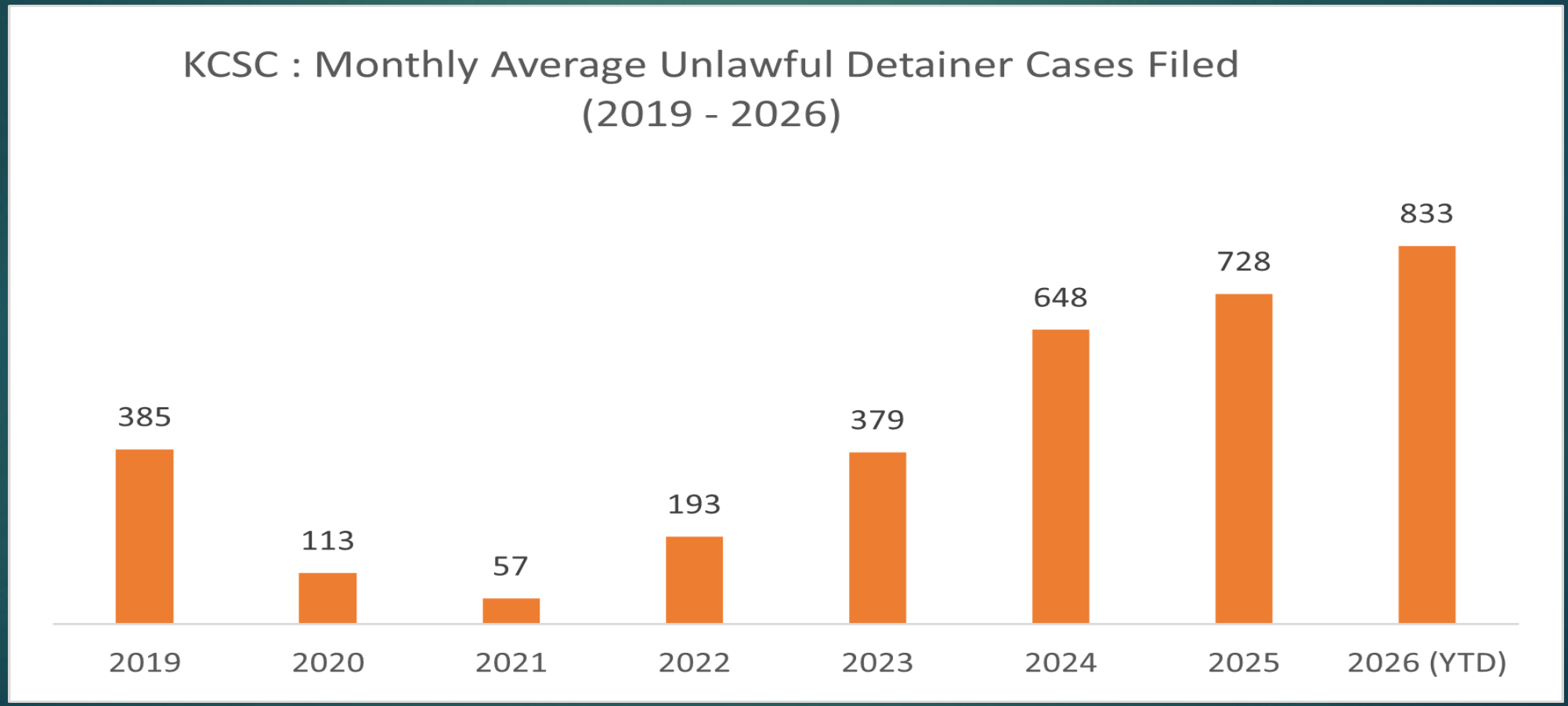
Petition Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Domestic Violence Protection	**2,887**	**2,810**	**2,818**	**2,955**	**2,797**	**2,931**	**3,242**
Unlawful Harassment Protection	**579**	**472**	**283**	**547**	**1,628**	**1,939**	**2,371**
Stalking Protection	97	118	80	131	145	201	264
Sexual Assault Protection	121	83	95	120	183	217	167
Vulnerable Adult Protection	172	141	127	134	145	154	230
Extreme Risk Protection Order	65	79	69	89	116	87	121
Extreme Risk Protection Under 18	2	0	0	1	0	0	13
Foreign Protection Order	23	29	23	51	55	28	48
Annual Total	**3,946**	**3,732**	**3,495**	**4,028**	**5,069**	**5,557**	**6,456**


KCSC: Annual Unlawful Detainer Cases Filed (2019-2025)
4,625
1,356
682
2,317
4,542
7,777
8,730
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025


KCSC : Annual Unlawful Detainer Case Dispositions
(2019 - 2025)
4617
1219
653
1932
3476
7339
9619
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025


# of Pending UND Cases at Year-End
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
419
476
496
868
1751
2177
1251
1201
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026 (YTD)

Monthly Filings Continue to Climb



Unlawful Detainer Filings 2026

15% higher than 2025

March 2026 1,000

April 2026 881

Resolutions

March 2026 786

April 2026 867

In 2025, two judges assigned full-time to unlawful detainer hearings to address a backlog and in March 2026 added a housing commissioner.

RESULTING DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Show Cause hearing availability reduced from 6+ month wait to 2-3 weeks (slight increase in June/July due to accommodations for FIFA).
2. Typical resolution of case for failure to pay rent: 6-8 weeks
3. Town Hall discussions held with stakeholders support systemic improvements and communication of information.
4. Dedicated zoom links and email address for consistent access.
5. New calendar management system increased efficiency of scheduling.

Civil Trends Cont'd

- Probate/Guardianship increase during pandemic

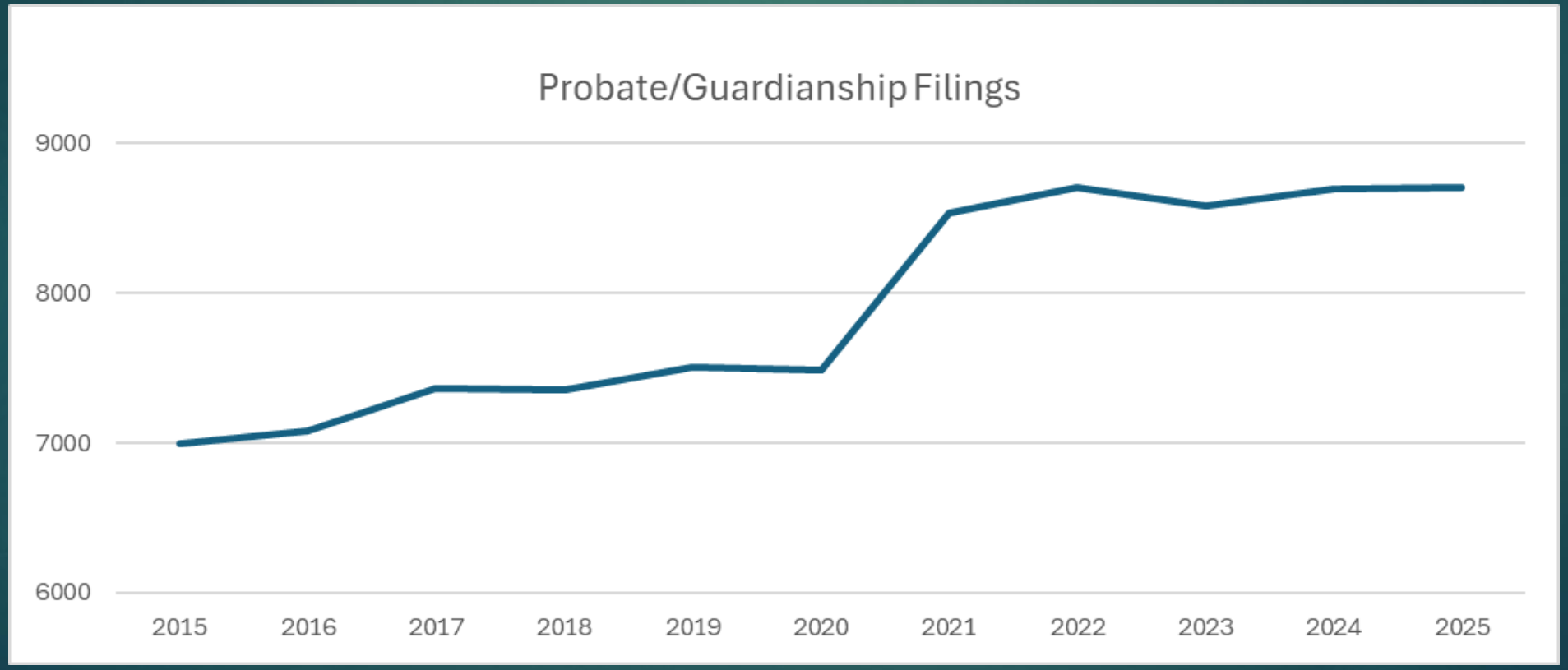
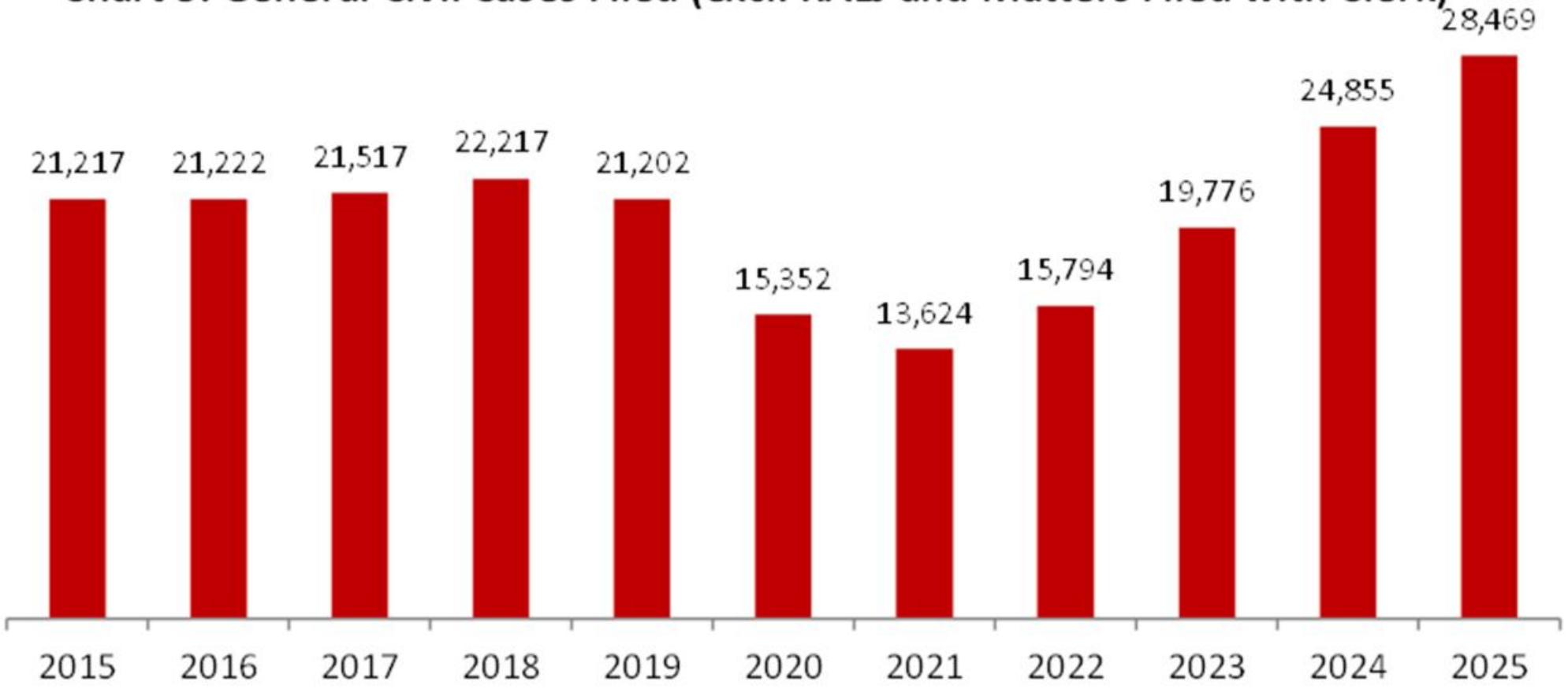
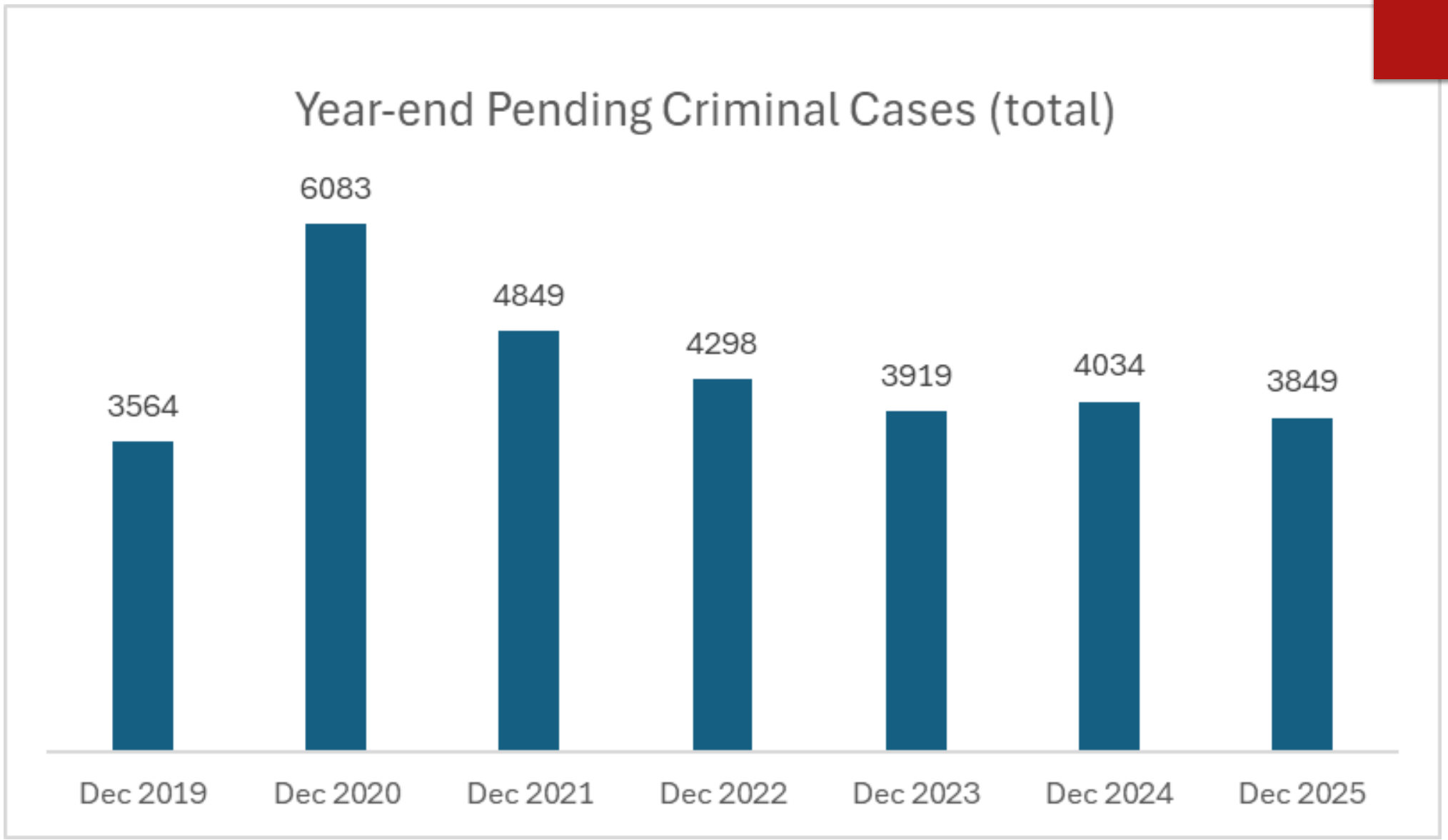


Chart 5: General Civil Cases Filed (excl. RALJ and Matters Filed with Clerk)



Criminal Filings and Completion Trends

- Cleared pandemic backlog generally
- Complex and serious felonies (murder, sex offenses) have the longest time to resolution
- Juvenile resolutions up and filings slightly down in 2025


Year-end Pending Criminal Cases (total)
3564
6083
4849
4298
3919
4034
3849
Dec 2019
Dec 2020
Dec 2021
Dec 2022
Dec 2023
Dec 2024
Dec 2025

Criminal Trends

Criminal backlog has reduced thanks to Council support

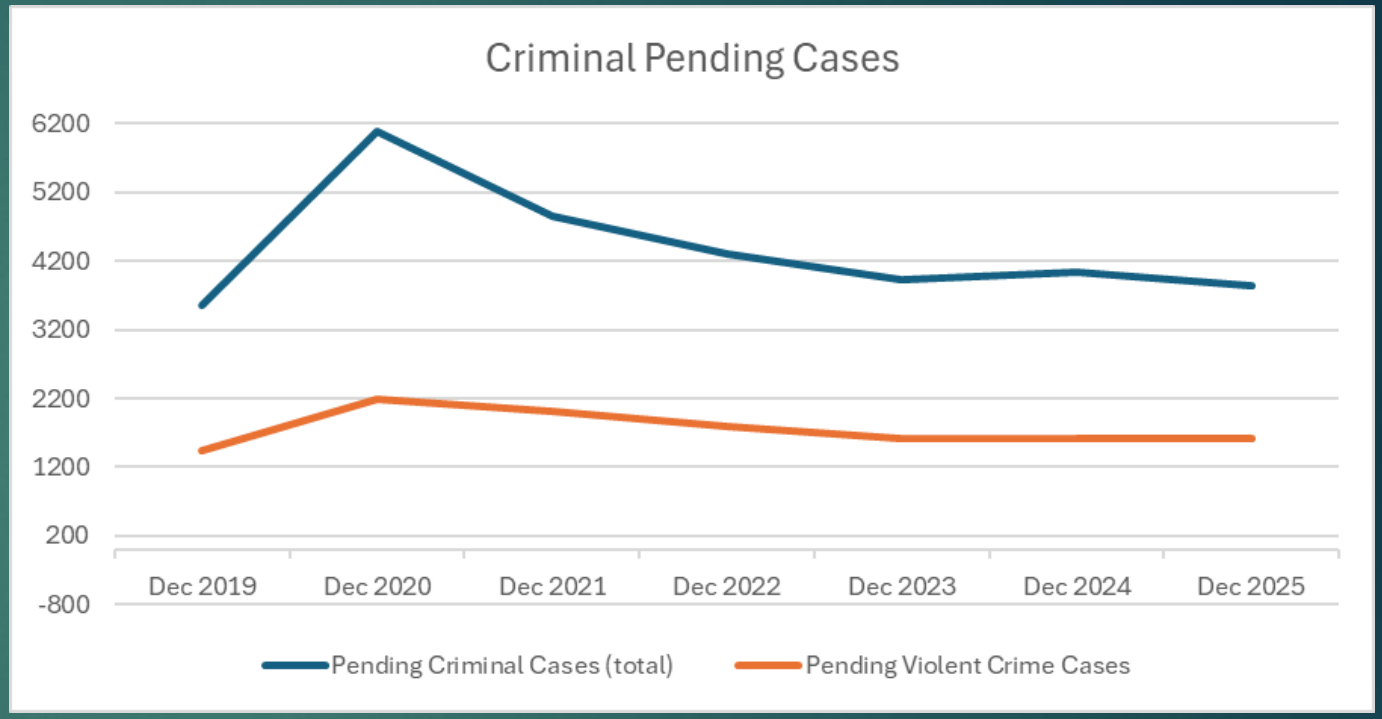
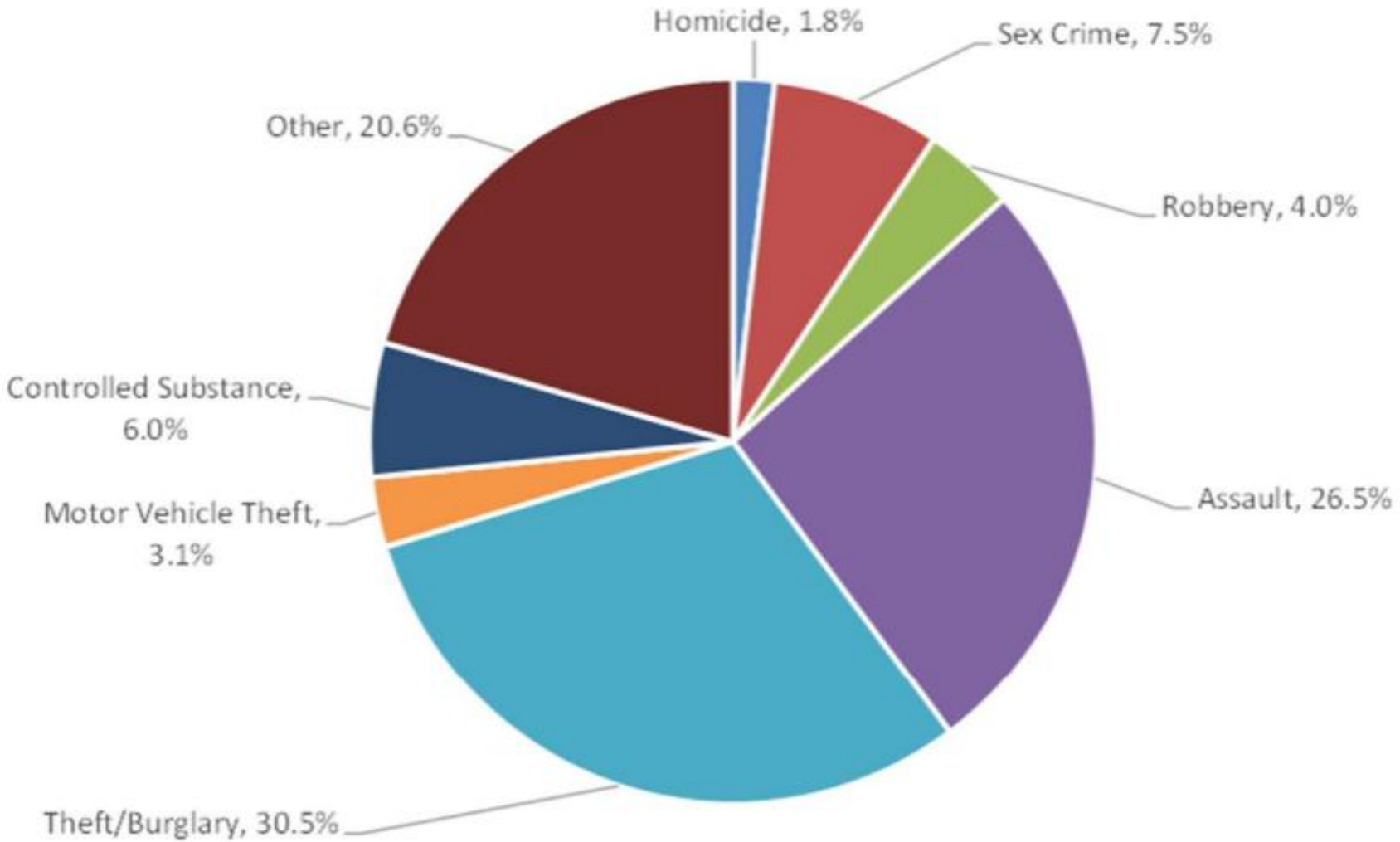
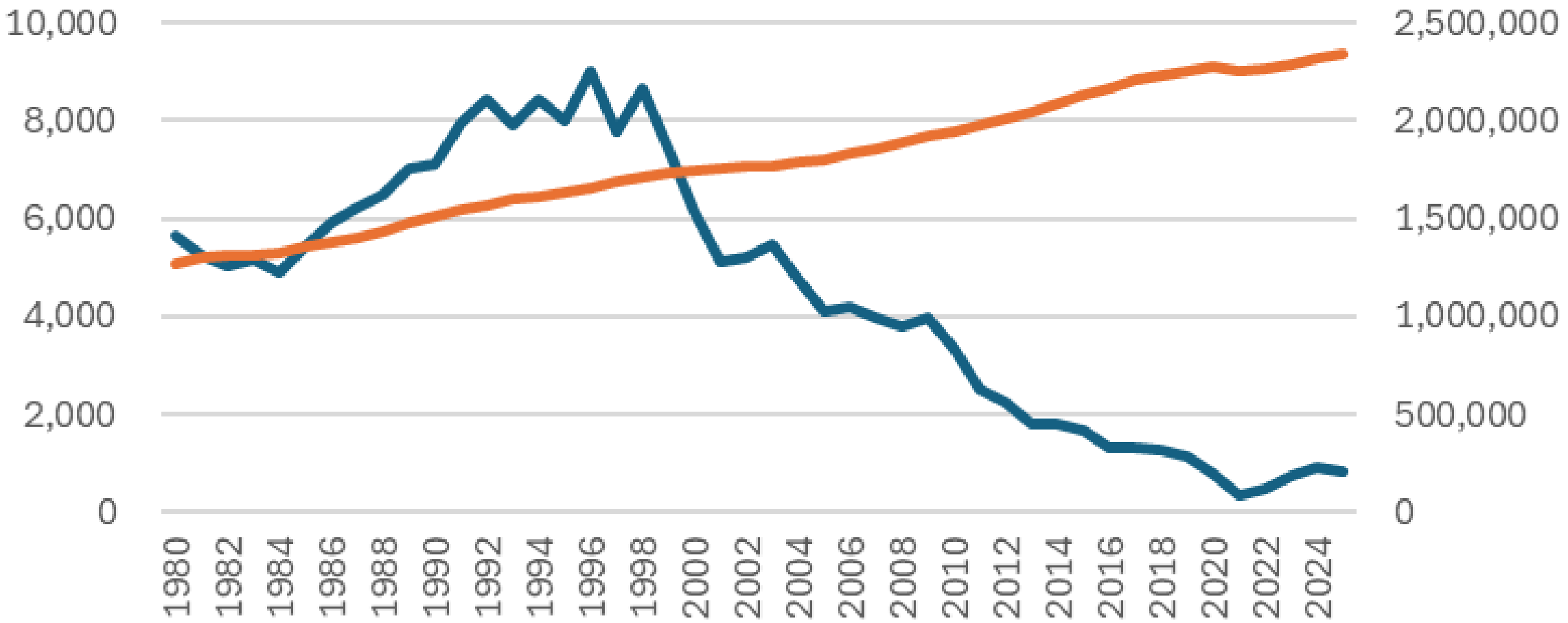


Chart 4: KCSC 2025 Criminal Filings by Category



Juvenile Filings & King County Population by Year

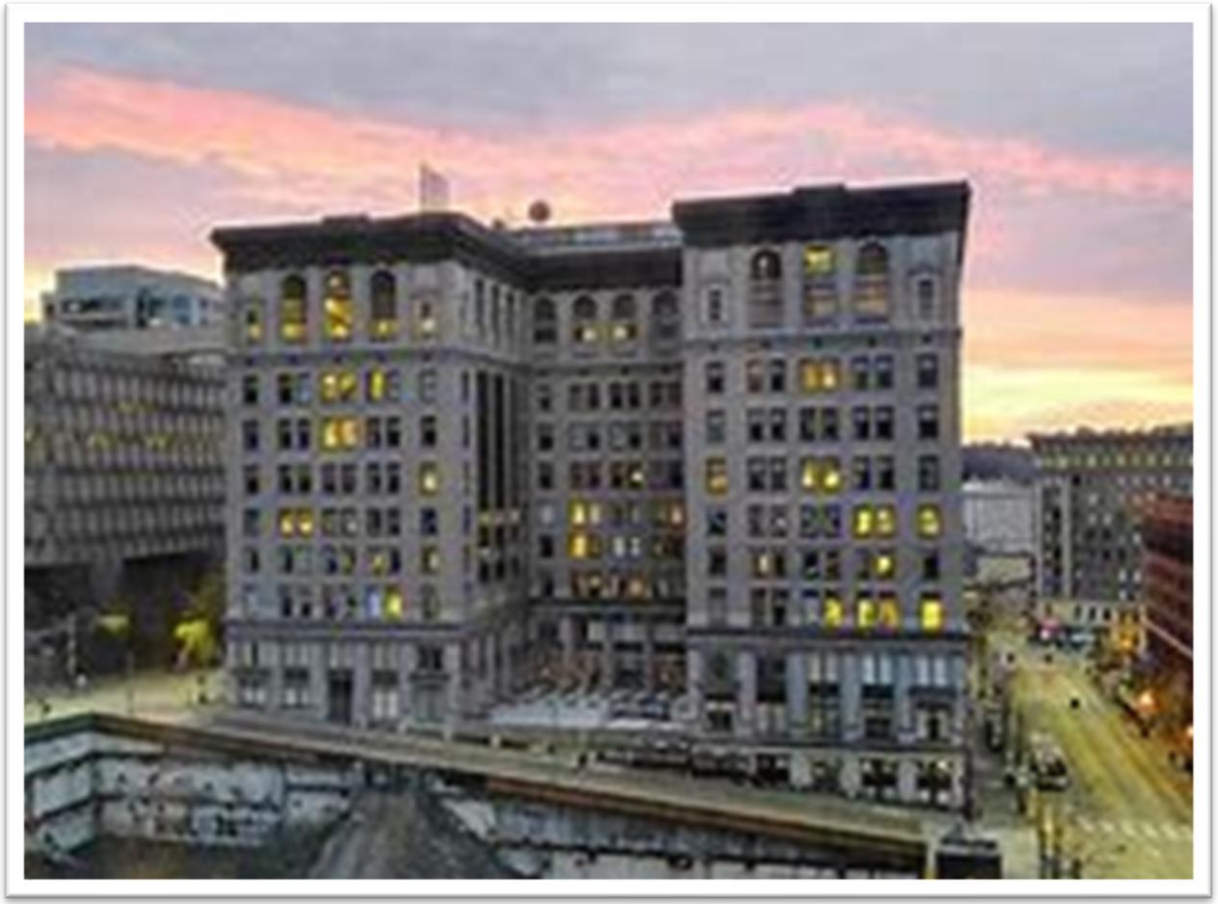


ORANGE: King County Population

BLUE: Juvenile Court Filings

Capitalized on Covid Funds for Modernization

- Increased access to our court through remote proceedings
- Remote jury selection
- Ability to utilize judges throughout courthouses



Future Challenges

Need Long-Term Planning of Courthouse AND DAJD Facilities ("Jail")

Challenges

IT infrastructure: support expanded remote proceedings/services and cybersecurity that provide increased access

Meet continued demand for timely service: **U**nlawful detainers, protection orders, probate/guardianships, and civil trials

Support the Rule of Law: Grow the public's understanding and appreciation of the courts

Access to Justice:

Safety, Security and Maintenance of Physical Locations

The Judicial Branch
Elected by the people to uphold the rule of law.