

# JUDICIARY'S BUDGET NEEDS REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

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**House Committee on Judiciary**  
**February 13, 2024**

# Vermont Judiciary Mission Statement

The mission of the Vermont Judiciary is to provide equal access to justice, protect individual rights, resolve legal disputes fairly and timely, and provide everyone the opportunity to have their day in court.



# Governor's Recommended Budget

FY24 GF Budget \$58,250,863

## Governor Recommend

Pay Act	\$2,633,940	
ISF	(\$248,174)	
Two Superior Court Judges	\$539,234	
<b>Subtotal Increases</b>		<b>\$2,925,000</b>

FY25 Gov. Rec. \$61,175,863

# Judiciary's Budget Request

## Additional Pressures

Tech Fund Revenue Replacement	\$2,561,585	
Fifteen New Staff Positions	\$1,319,507	
S.17 Security Recommendations	\$2,044,331	
Language Access Program	\$120,000	
CHINS Superior Court Judge*	\$0	
	Subtotal	<b>\$5,985,423</b>

Proposed Judicial FY25 Budget

**\$67,161,286**

\*Funding from CHINS Tobacco Settlement Monies

# Superior Court Judge Positions

- Three Superior Judge Positions
  - Northern Float
  - Statewide Treatment Court Float
  - Statewide Juvenile Docket Float\*

\*in lieu of replacing Judicial Master; funded by Tobacco Settlement Monies

# Court Technology Fund Request

- "Tech Fund" created in 2007 for court tech needs
- Three administrative fees comprise revenue source
- Revenue source has declined significantly
- Court tech needs have increased significantly
- Tech Fund no longer a viable funding source for  
Judiciary's tech needs

## Fifteen New Staff Positions

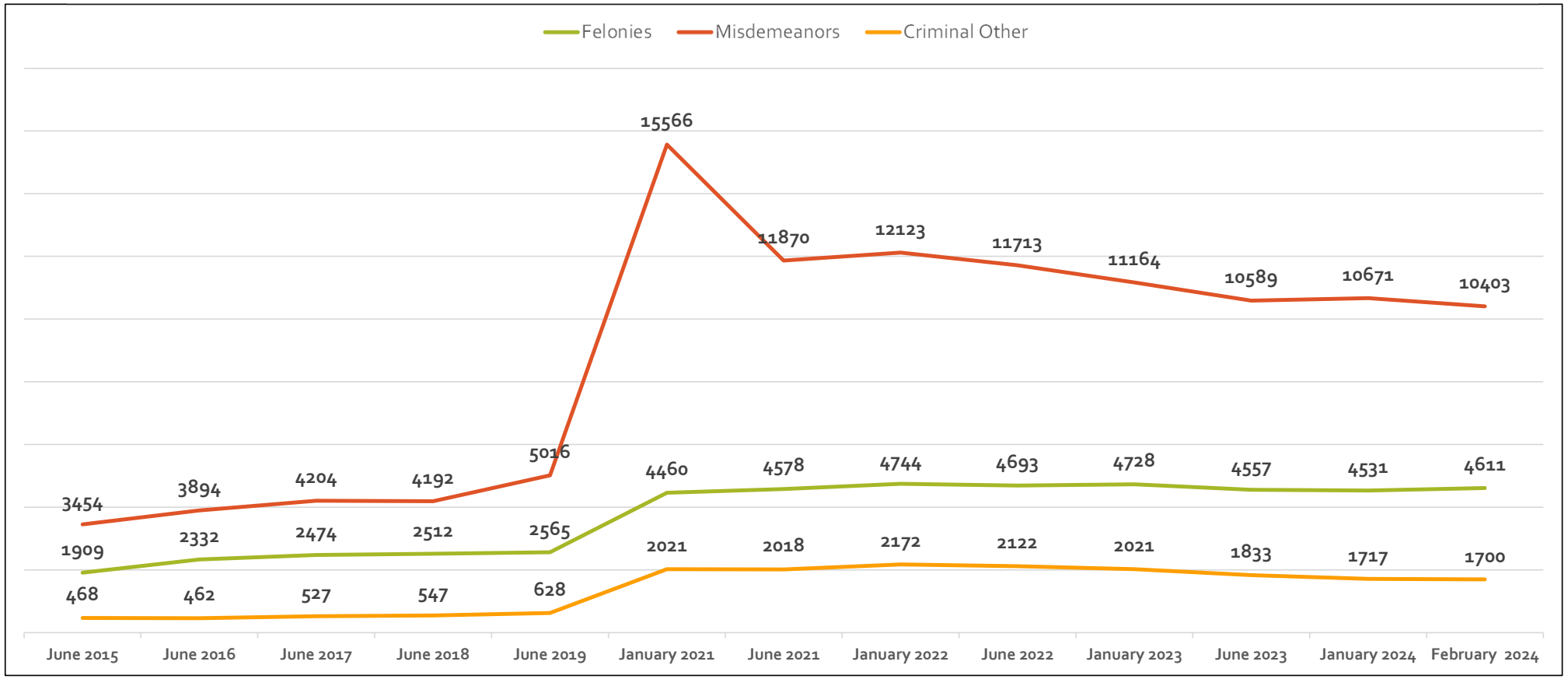
- Ten Judicial Assistants
- Two IT Help Desk Analysts
- Two Centralized Service Analysts
- One Database Administrator
- Potential for \$280,000 savings with new positions versus contracted positions

# Language Access Program

- Judiciary is required to provide court interpreters
- Increased demand for interpreters in recent years that is expected to continue
- Projected increase for interpreters and translation services for FY 25 totals \$120,000



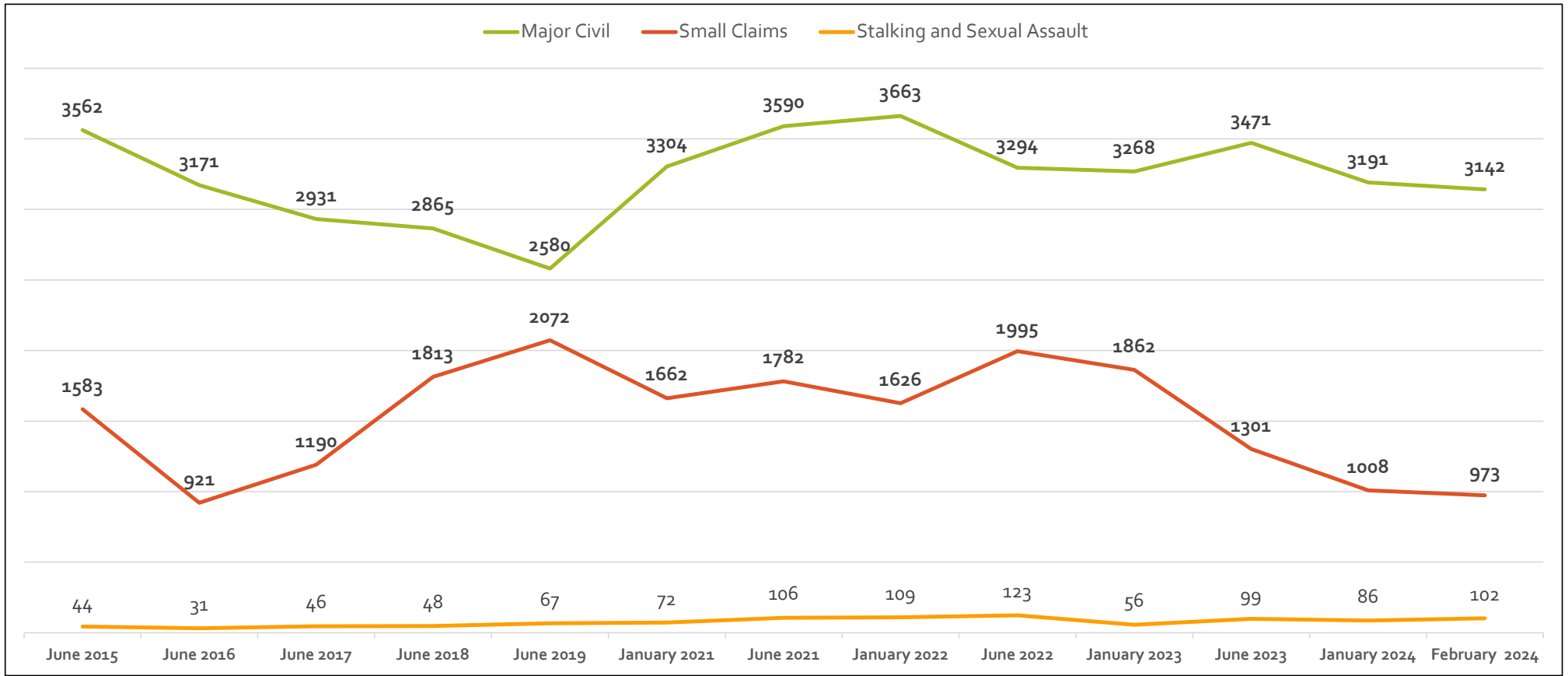
# Active Cases Pending in Criminal Division: Pre-Pandemic and Now



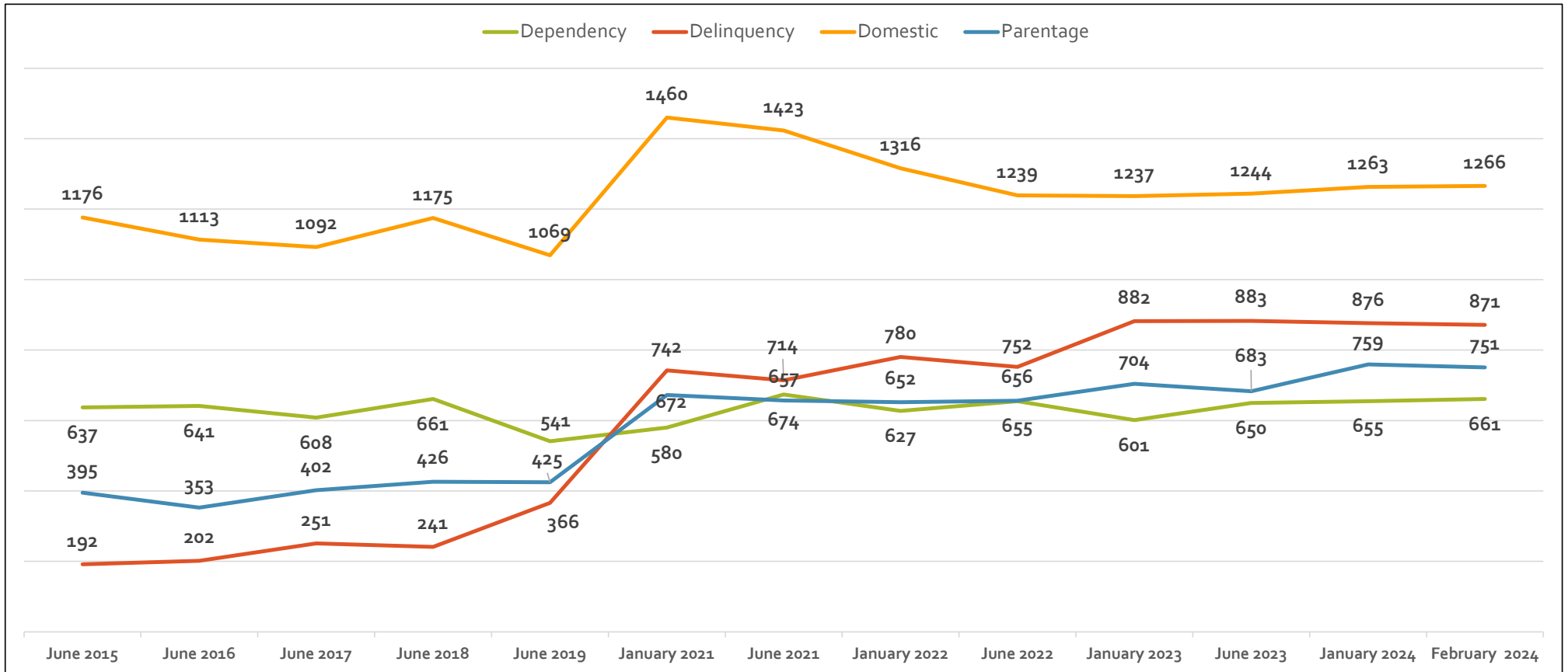
# Pending Criminal Cases as of 2.8.24

COUNTY	Under Dispo guidelines	Near Dispo guideline	Over Dispo Guideline	N/A	Percentage over Dispo "Backlog"	Total Pending Cases
Addison	178	48	140	94	30 %	460
Bennington	461	138	683	215	46 %	1497
Caledonia	295	75	852	254	58 %	1476
Chittenden	1337	240	1032	570	32 %	3179
Essex	41	13	111	68	48 %	233
Franklin	486	79	229	330	20 %	1124
Grand Isle	31	9	28	22	31 %	90
Lamoille	212	67	244	125	38 %	648
Orange	128	47	153	78	38 %	406
Orleans	284	98	1062	160	66 %	1604
Rutland	539	135	977	377	48 %	2028
Washington	530	82	318	483	23 %	1413
Windham	527	112	612	373	23 %	1624
Windsor	353	65	299	215	32 %	932
Total	5402	1208	6740	3364	40%	16714

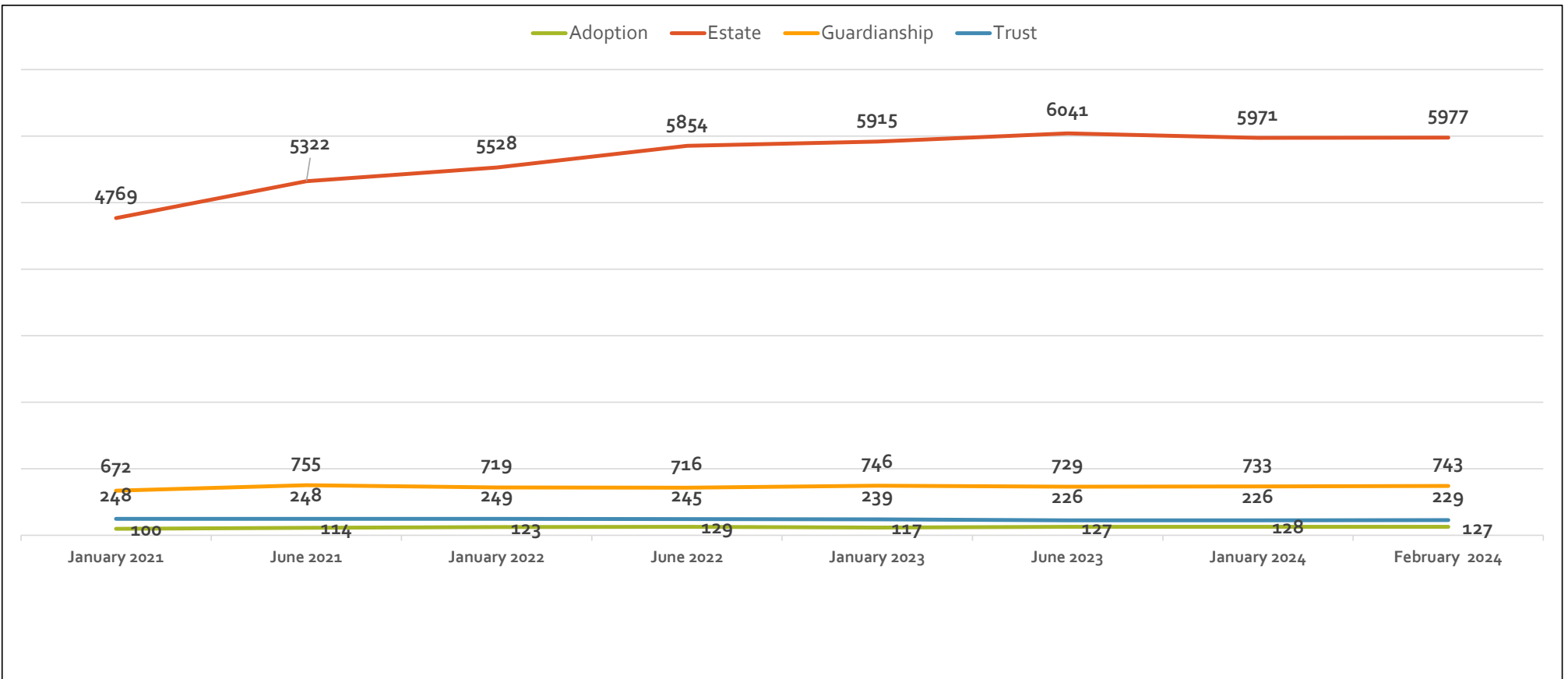
# Active Cases Pending in Civil Division: Pre-Pandemic and Now



# Active Cases Pending in Family Division: Pre-Pandemic and Now



# Active Cases Pending in Probate Division



# Caseflow Management

- Judiciary has employed established caseflow management principles in addressing backlog
- Consultation with other jurisdictions and organizations
- Application of established principles of effective caseflow management



# Implementation of Principles in Vermont has included:

- Input from stakeholders
- State-wide and unit specific backlog plans
- Ongoing review of pending cases
- Next event set in each case
- Review of scheduling strategies



## Steps Taken to Address Backlog

- Maximizing use of remote technology
- Development of new data measures
- Generation and review of statistical reports
- Ongoing collaboration with stakeholders
- User surveys
- Jury draw and trial dates added





## S.17 Directed Judiciary to Address:

1. Number of sheriff deputies needed.
2. Recommendation regarding creation of classified position.
3. Corresponding budget request.



## Information Gathering:

- Courthouse visits.
- Stakeholder meetings.

## Factors impacting the Recommendations:

- Security personnel roles.
- Levels of security risk.
- Judicial discretion.



## Recommendation Regarding Security Positions and Roles:

- 47 armed and uniformed sheriff deputies – screeners, rovers and court officers in courtrooms.
- 33 Judiciary-employed and plain-clothed court officers in courtrooms.
- 5 Judiciary-employed and plain-clothed court officers available to be assigned state-wide.
- 3 Judiciary-employed supervisors state-wide.



# Recommendation Regarding New Classified Positions

- Judiciary-employed court officer in courtrooms.
- Expanded enforcement authority/ advanced training in non-lethal use of force.
- Ability to fulfill administrative duties if no hearings or trials in courthouse where assigned.
- Training and certification program unique to the position.



# Budget Request Related to Recommendations

	Current	Proposed	Diff (+/-)	Rate/Hr.	Annual/FTE	Total Cost
Sheriff Deputy	39.98	47.05	7.07	\$ 52.89	\$ 111,069	\$ 5,225,796
Private Guard	10.25	0	-10.25	\$ 40.00	\$ 84,000	\$ -
JUD Officer I	17	17	0		\$ 84,323	\$ 1,433,491
JUD Officer II	0	21	21		\$ 90,848	\$ 1,907,808
Supervisor	2	3	1		\$ 100,000	\$ 300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>69.23</b>	<b>88.05</b>	<b>18.82</b>			<b>\$ 8,867,095</b>

**Current Budget \$ 6,822,764**

**Net New Cost (+/-) \$ 2,044,331**



# Questions?

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

