



MELESA N. JOHNSON

Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney

January 14, 2025

Dear Police Chiefs and Municipal Prosecutors:

As your new Jackson County Prosecutor, I look forward to strengthening our partnership as we work toward a safer Jackson County. Each of you play a vital role in improving the safety of our community and I believe by working closely together, we can significantly reduce violent crime in our neighborhoods.

I am writing to provide an update and clarity regarding our office's charging policies in drug distribution and domestic violence cases, two areas where our agencies can improve cooperation to save lives.

In 2023, drugs played a role in at least 19 homicides in Kansas City. Research indicates that when drug trafficking is reduced, the overall homicide rate can decrease. Prior to my administration, our office only sought drug distribution cases when there is a nexus to violence or aspect of community interruption. As a result, we are reacting to tragedies rather than preventing them. Effective immediately, I urge your departments to submit all drug distribution cases to our office for review. This will allow us to proactively disrupt illegal drug operations and prevent future crime escalation, saving lives.

Similarly, we must strengthen our response to serious domestic violence cases. In 2023, at least 22 homicides involved domestic violence. Our current system has the Municipal Court handling dozens of serious domestic violence cases, allowing offenders to repeat offenses without proper consequences. I am requesting all domestic violence cases involving strangulation, stitches or staples, broken bones, weapons, or any of the other criteria in the more detailed attached list, be referred to our office for charging. We must ensure offenders receive proper conviction for serious offenses.

I am committed to ensuring this transition is seamless and effective for all agencies and my team is available to talk through details or provide any training. I am confident these guidelines will help us create a safer Jackson County.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or my office directly with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued dedication to public safety.

Yours in service,

Melesa N. Johnson

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Jackson County Prosecutor

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