

Failure to Appear Continued: Prevalence and Possible Interventions

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Goals

- 1) Understand the prevalence of failure to appear
 - Active warrants
 - Issued warrants
 - Served warrants
 - Percent of CSSD interviewed clients where an FTA warrant is pending
 - Percent of CSSD interviewed clients where an FTA warrant is pending or the defendant has a history of failure to appear
- 2) Does a history of FTA, without controlling for other factors, increase likelihood of a defendant being detained?
- 3) Possible policy interventions?
 - Efforts to decrease the impact FTA has on decision making?
 - Efforts to increase appearance rates?

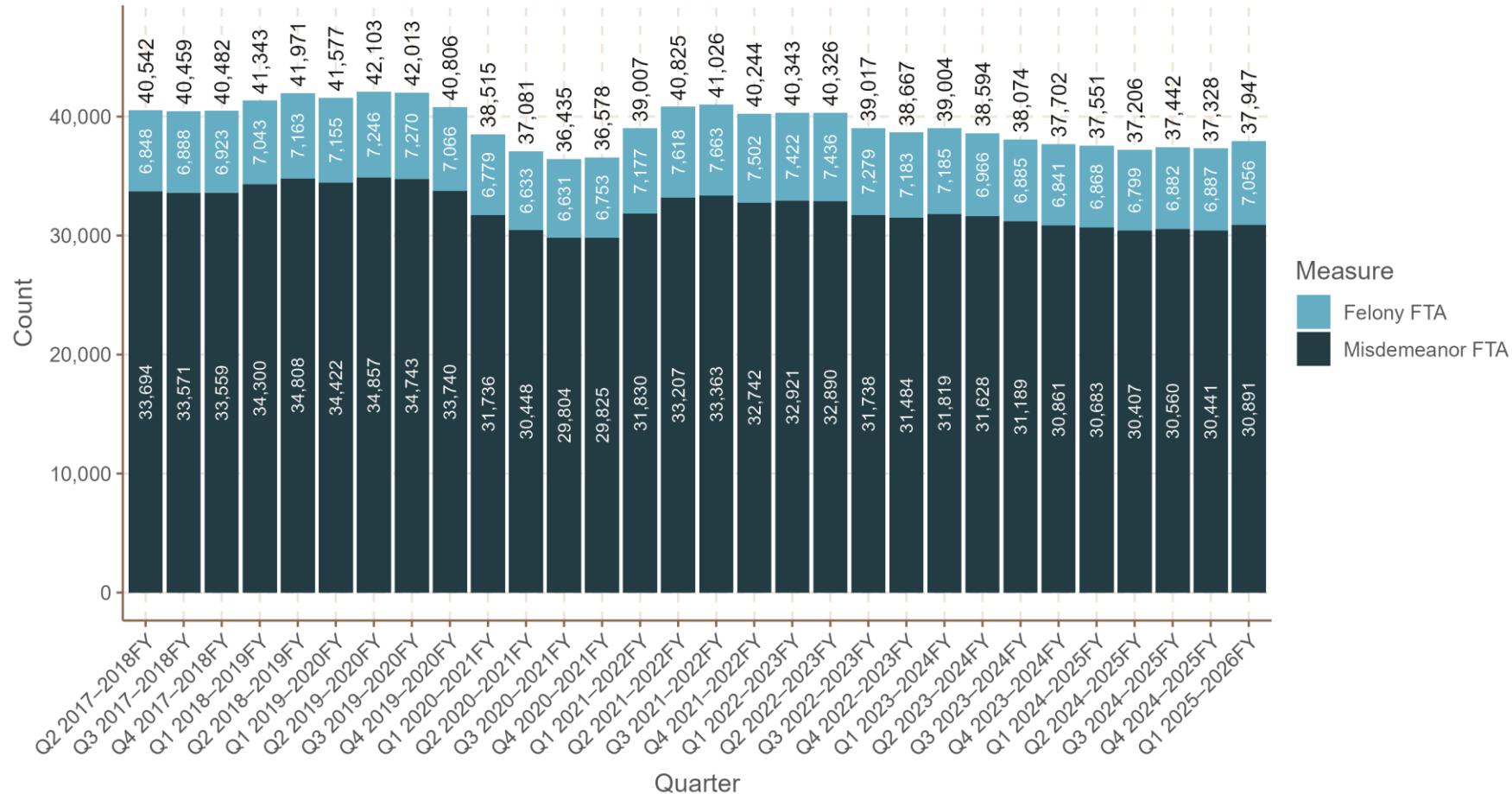
Key Points

- Failure to appear warrants are more common than VOP warrants with around 37,000 active at any given time.
- The vast majority of active FTA warrants are not for felonies.
- The number of issued and served FTA warrants decreased drastically during the COVID-19 pandemic and have since rebounded but remain below pre-pandemic levels.
- More FTA warrants are issued in any given quarter than warrants served.
- 17%-20% of those seen by CSSD had an FTA warrant active at the time of arrest.
- 41%-47% of CSSD interviewed clients either have an active FTA or a history of FTA at the time of arrest.
- From 2018-2023, those with prior FTAs were detained at a higher rate than those without.
- Are there interventions not yet tried than could increase appearance rates?

Failure to Appear Prevalence: Active

Active FTA Warrants by Quarter

Arrest Warrants, 2017–2025



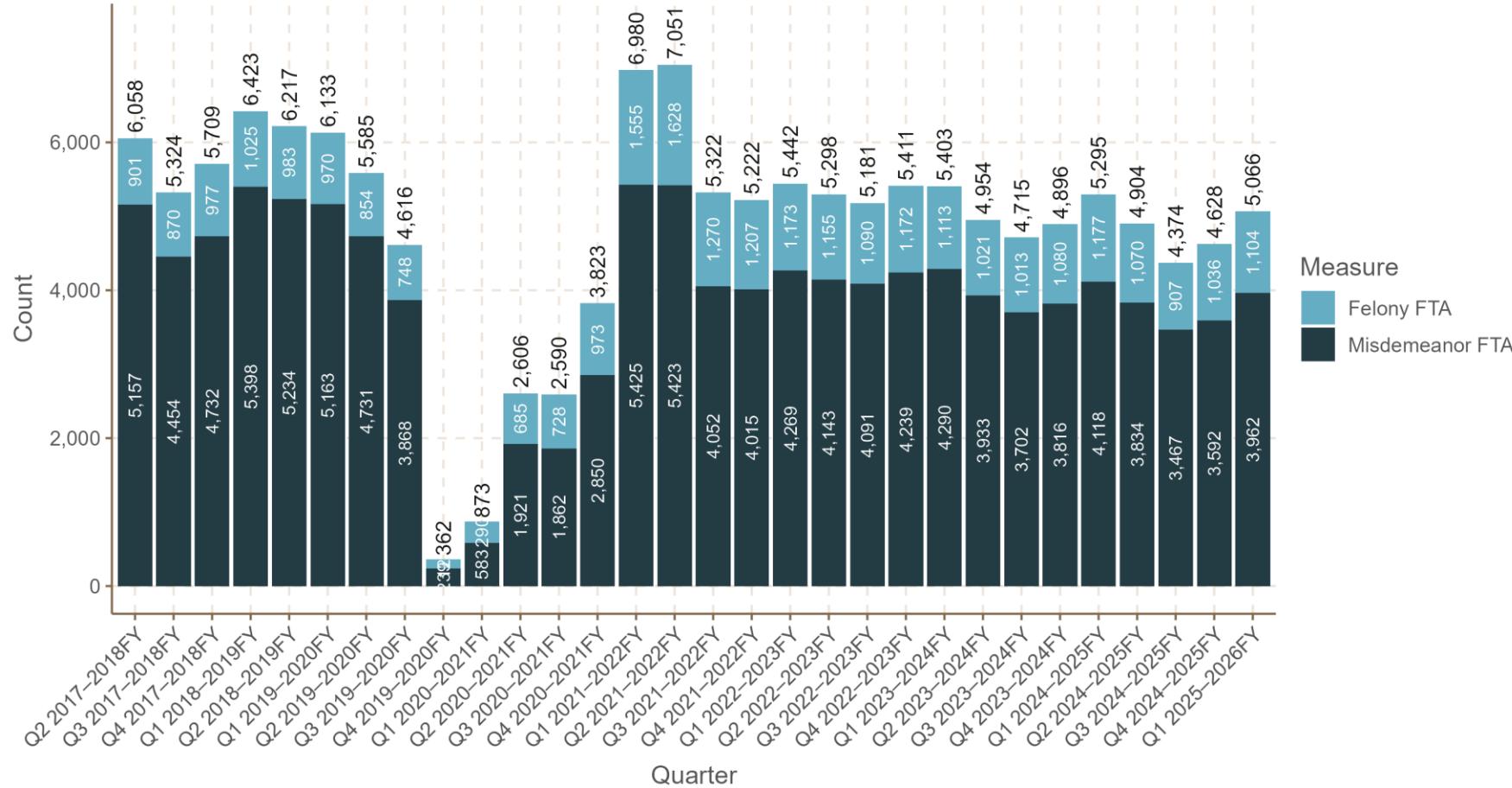
Source: jud.ct.gov

- As of 9/30/2025, there were 37,947 active FTA warrants, with 81% of them being misdemeanor (second-degree) FTA warrants.
- The number of active FTAs has decreased from pre-pandemic levels of ~40,000.
- There were only about ~5,000 active VOP warrants on 9/30/25.
- How many of these warrants are more than 5 years old?

Failure to Appear Prevalence: Issued

FTA Warrants Issued by Quarter

Arrest Warrants, 2017–2025



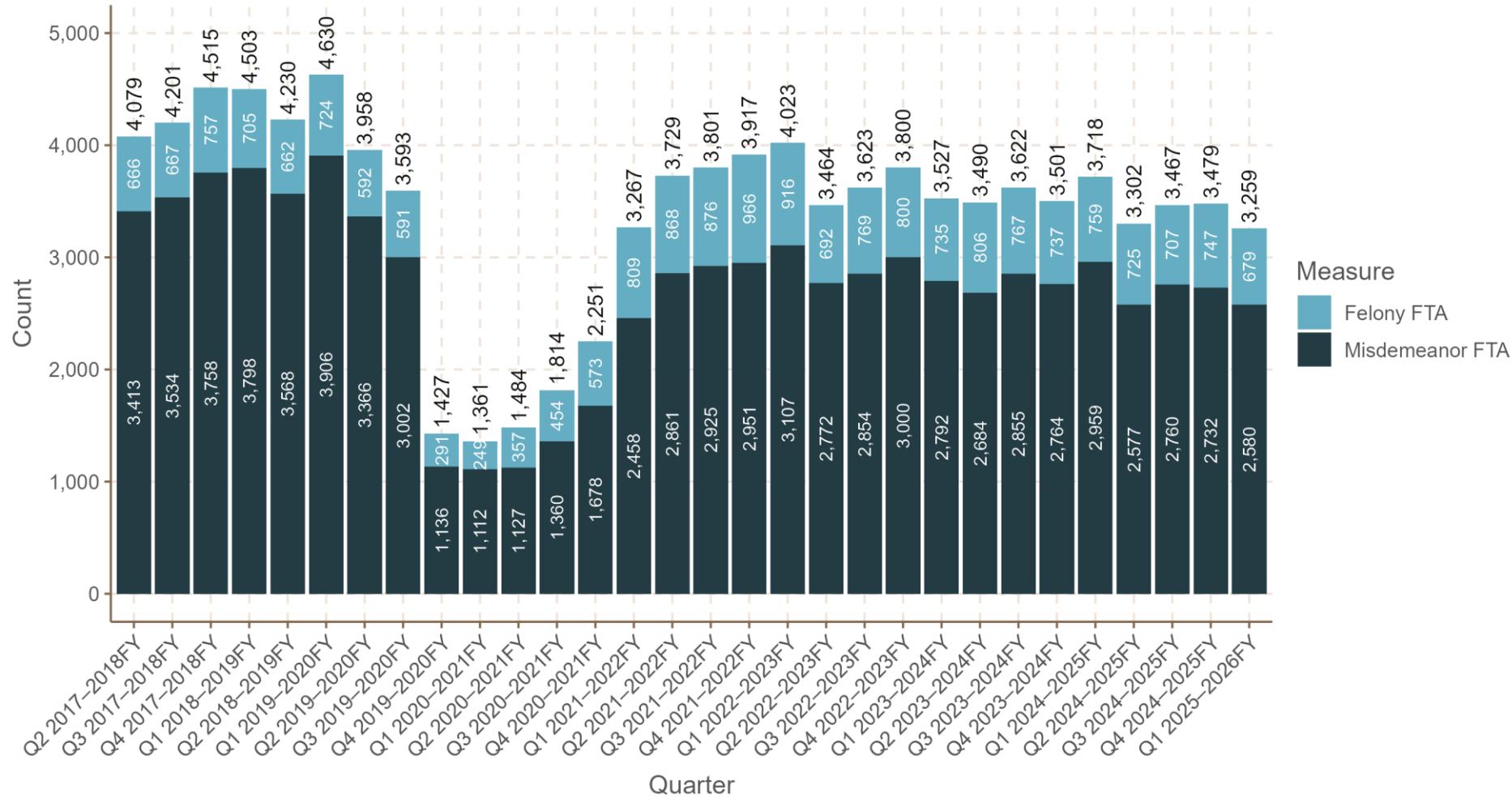
Source: jud.ct.gov

- Around 5,000 FTA warrants are issued every quarter.
- Unsurprisingly, the number of FTA warrants issued greatly decreased to near 0 during the pandemic.
- The number issued has decreased slightly compared to pre-pandemic levels, but perhaps not in proportion to the decrease in arrests.

Failure to Appear Prevalence: Served

FTA Warrants Served by Quarter

Arrest Warrants, 2017–2025



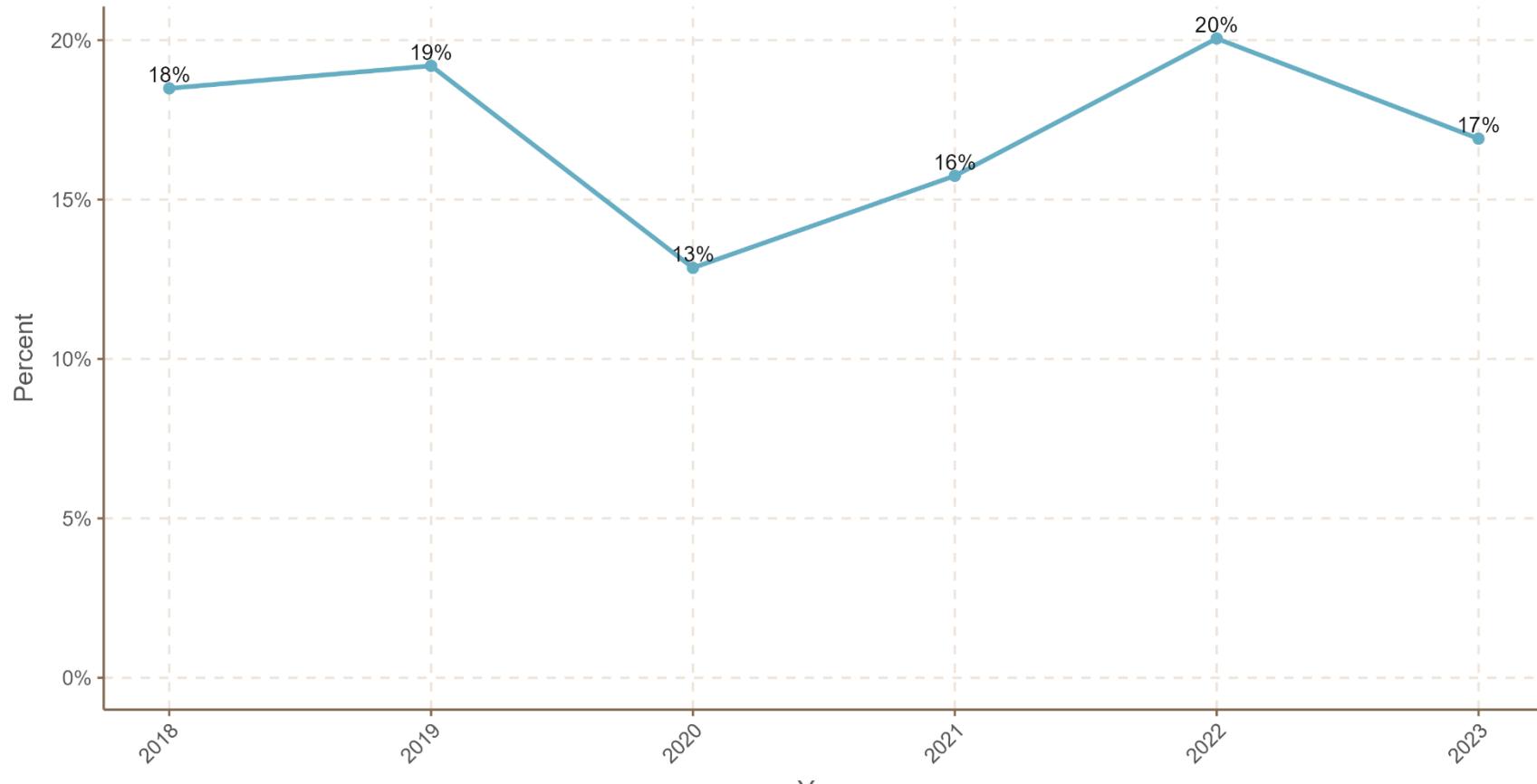
Source: jud.ct.gov

- Around 3,500 FTA warrants are served every quarter.
- In Q1 2025-2026, 1,807 more FTA warrants were issued than served.
- Generally, more FTA warrants are issued than served in any given quarter.
- Other ways to clear a warrant instead of being served?

Failure to Appear Prevalence: Outstanding FTA Warrants

Proportion of Arrests with an Outstanding FTA Warrant at the Time of Arrest

CSSD Interviewed Clients, 2018–2023



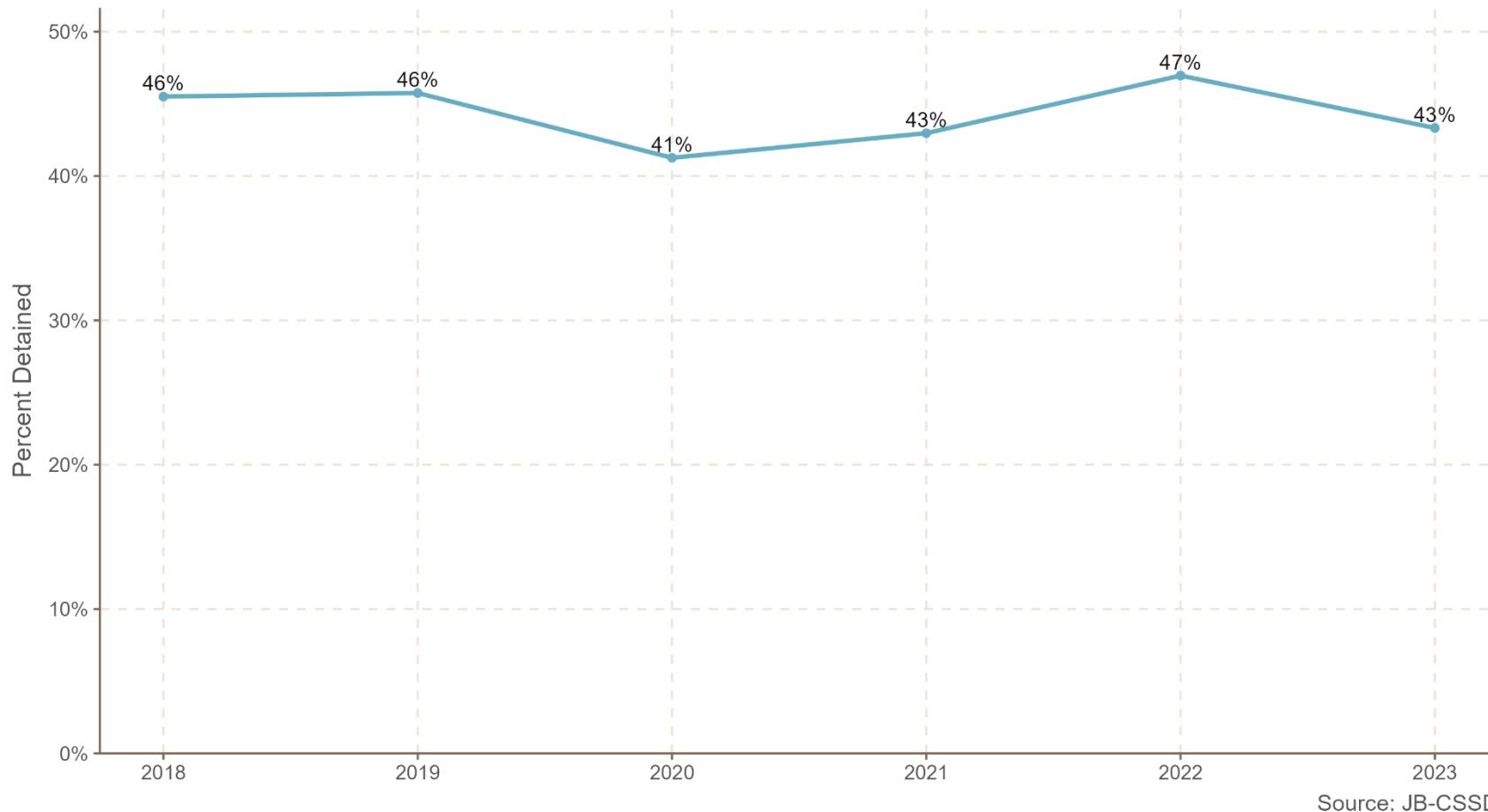
- With the exception of COVID-19, 17% to 20% of arrestees interviewed by CSSD had an active FTA warrant at the time of arrest.
- Those facing FTA warrants make up a large portion of defendants who end up being seen by CSSD.

Source:JB-CSSD

Failure to Appear Prevalence: Outstanding or Past FTA

Percent of Arrests with a Prior or Active Failure to Appear

Clients Interviewed by CSSD, 2018-2023

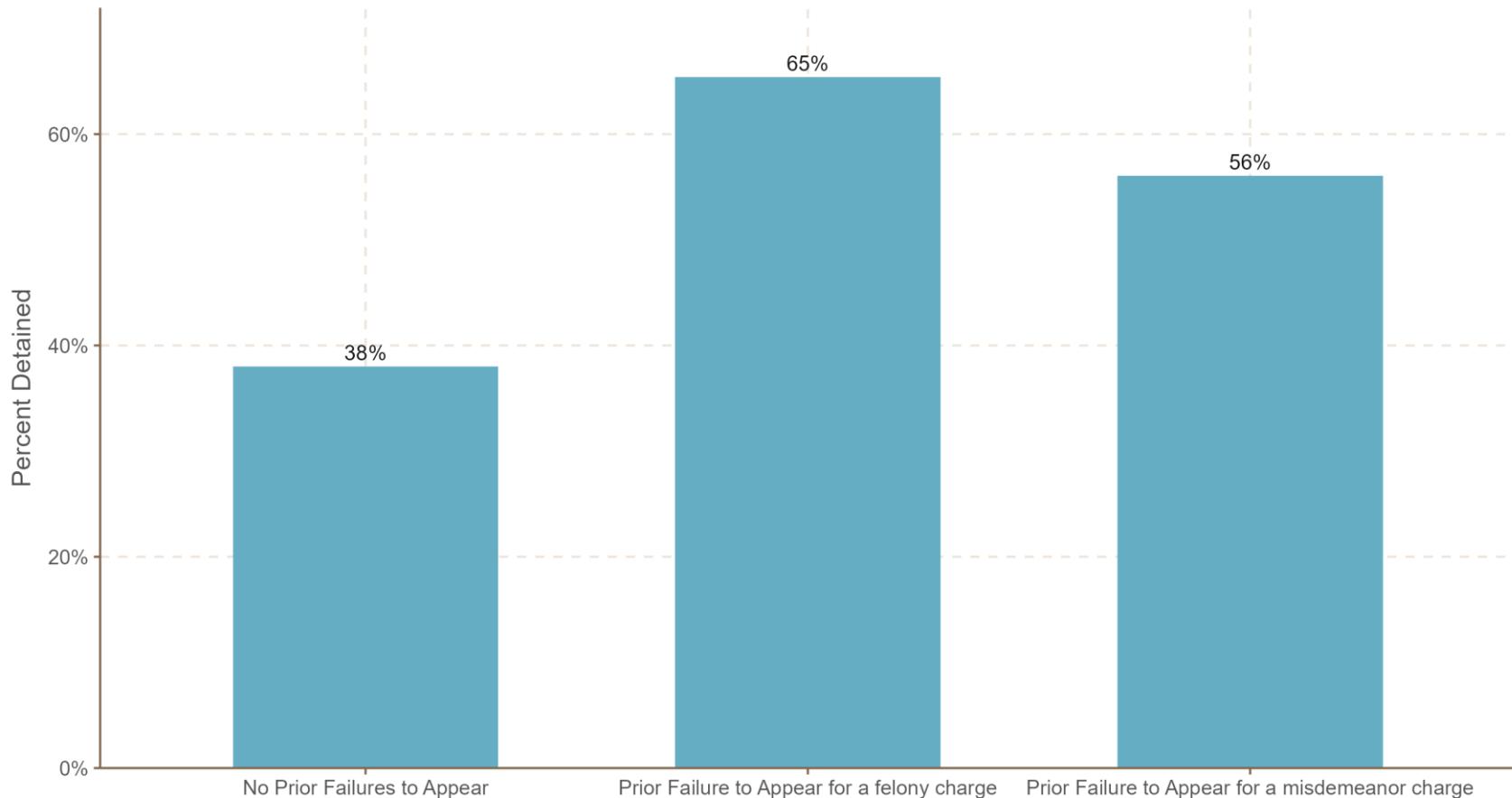


- 41% to 47% of arrestees interviewed by CSSD had an either active FTA warrant at the time of arrest or at least one prior failure to appear on their record.
- A significant number of arrestees have at least some history involving failure to appear charges.
- FTA is a factor in a significant portion of bail decisions, suggesting that actions to increase appearance rates could have a large impact on the pretrial population.

Detention Rate For Those Who Have Prior Failure to Appears

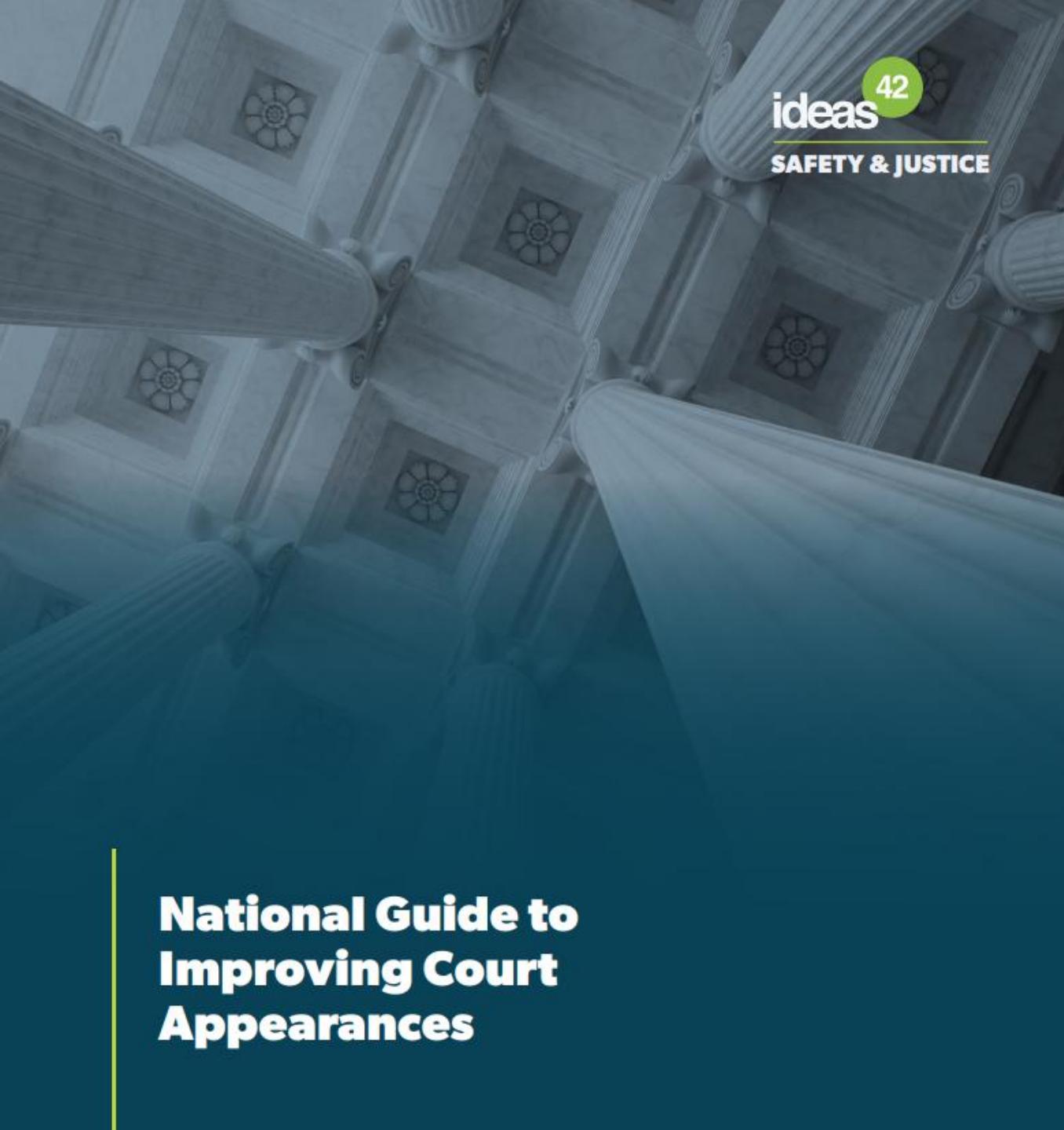
Percent Detained at Arraignment by FTA Status

Clients Interviewed by CSSD, 2018-2023



Source: JB-CSSD

- From 2018-2023, those with a history of failure to appear had a higher detention rate than those with no prior failures to appear.
- Those with a history of felony FTA were detained at the highest rate.
- In the current risk assessment revision (Rev. 2024), an FTA within two years is weighted more than a failure to appear older than two years.
 - An FTA within two years is, however, weighted the same as 3 or more prior convictions and an additional set of pending charges.



National Guide to Improving Court Appearances

Interventions?

- Ideas42 is a non-profit that focuses on using behavioral science to improve government functioning, including in the criminal justice space. They drafted the [National Guide to Improving Court Appearances](#).
- Four Principles To Support Court Appearances
 - Make information clear, timely, and accessible
 - Reduce logistical challenges
 - Add flexibility
 - Provide useful resources for those who need them

Discussion

How should prior FTAs or active FTA warrants be weighed in pretrial decision-making, and are they currently weighed appropriately?

Increase the weight given FTAs?

Prohibiting consideration of FTAs older than 5 years?

Re-classification of Second-Degree FTA from a M-A to a lower classification? (Deb's idea from last week)

Use of intermediate sanctions (i.e., Minnesota's sign and release warrants for those summoned)?

Grace periods (i.e., Michigan's 48hr grace period rule)?

Interventions to reduce the number of required in-person court appearances / encourage appearance?

Practice book provisions and other ways to reduce number of required in-person court appearances?

Post-arraignment meetings? (i.e., New York City's Criminal Justice Agency)

Opt-out court date text reminders for CSSD clients, instead of opting-in?

Expanded court date text reminders to include more than only those interviewed by CSSD (i.e. including PD released and those who receive a summons)?

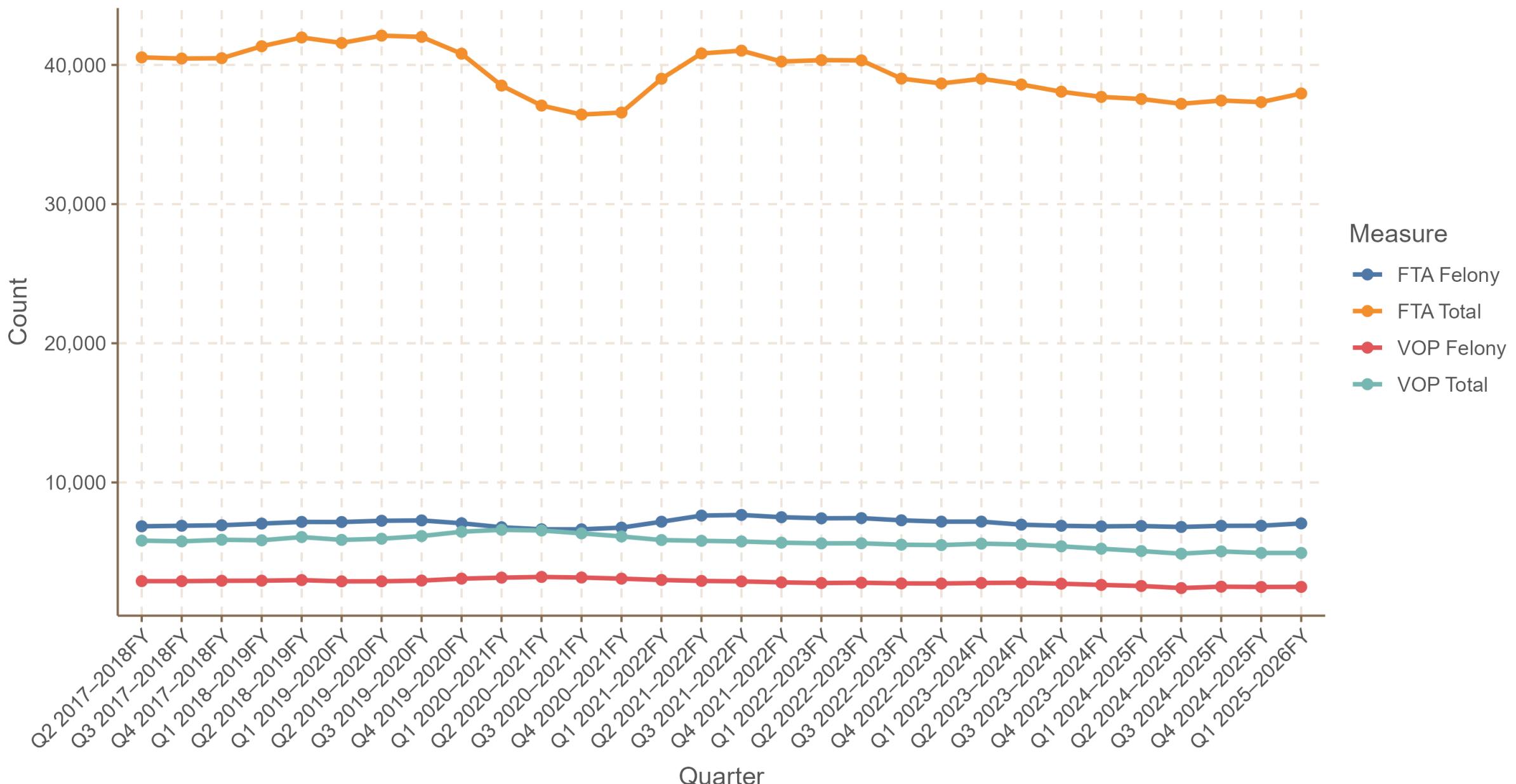
Behaviorally designed court forms (i.e., summons forms) that could make the consequences of FTA clearer and information costs lower?

Transportation assistance?

Extra Slides in Case of Questions

Active FTA and VOP Warrants by Quarter

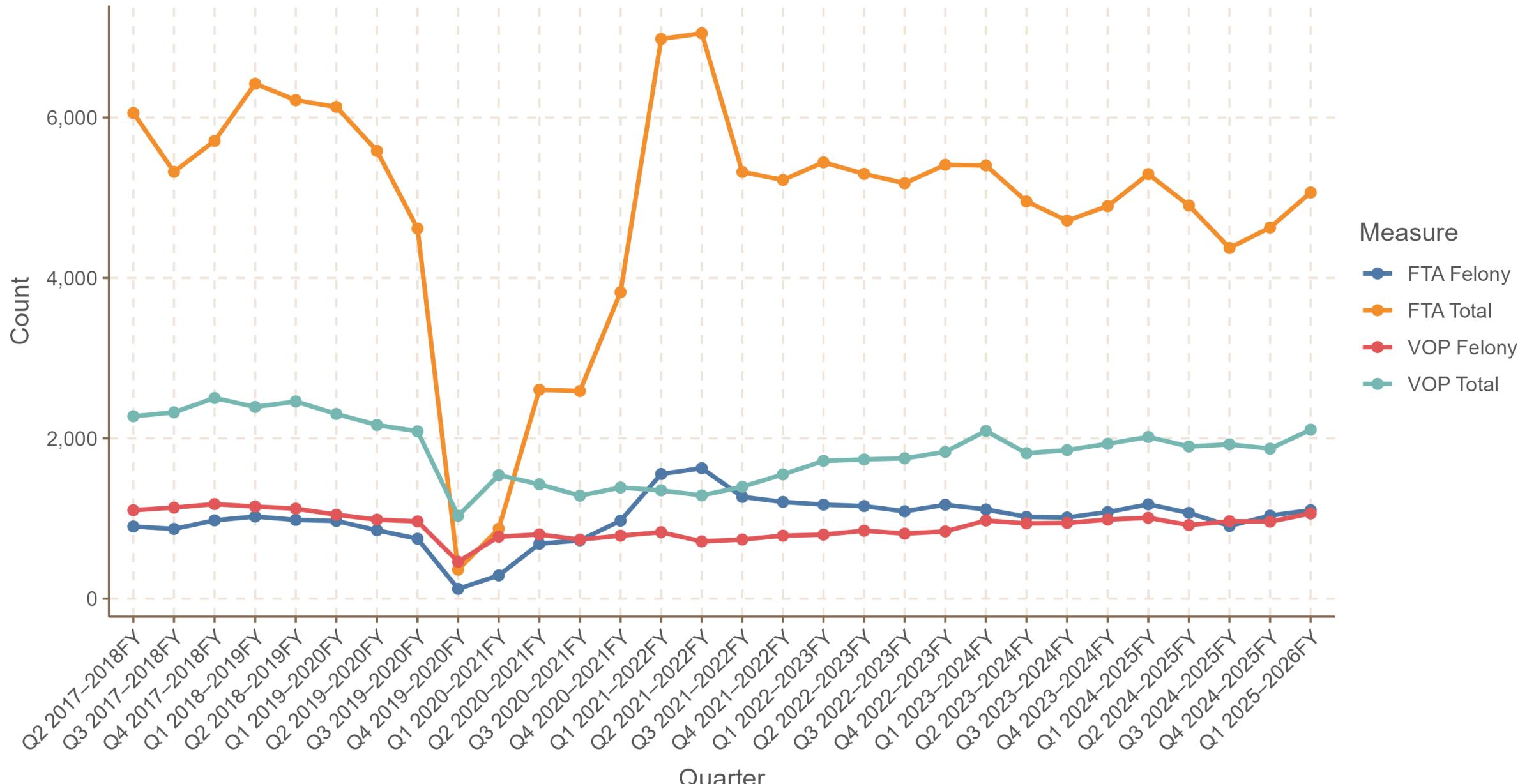
Arrest Warrants, 2017–2025



Source: jud.ct.gov

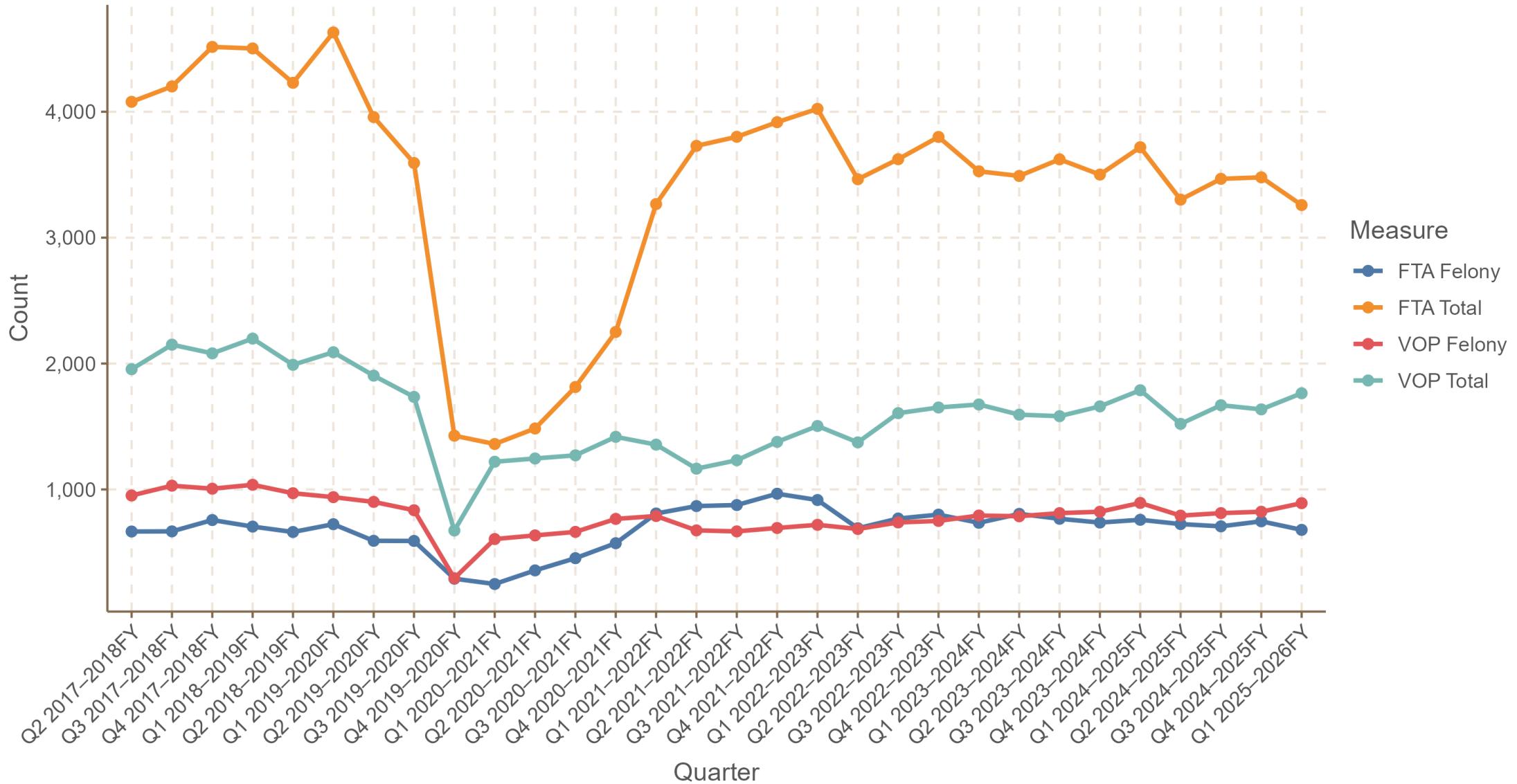
FTA and VOP Warrants Issued by Quarter

Arrest Warrants, 2017–2025



FTA and VOP Warrants Served by Quarter

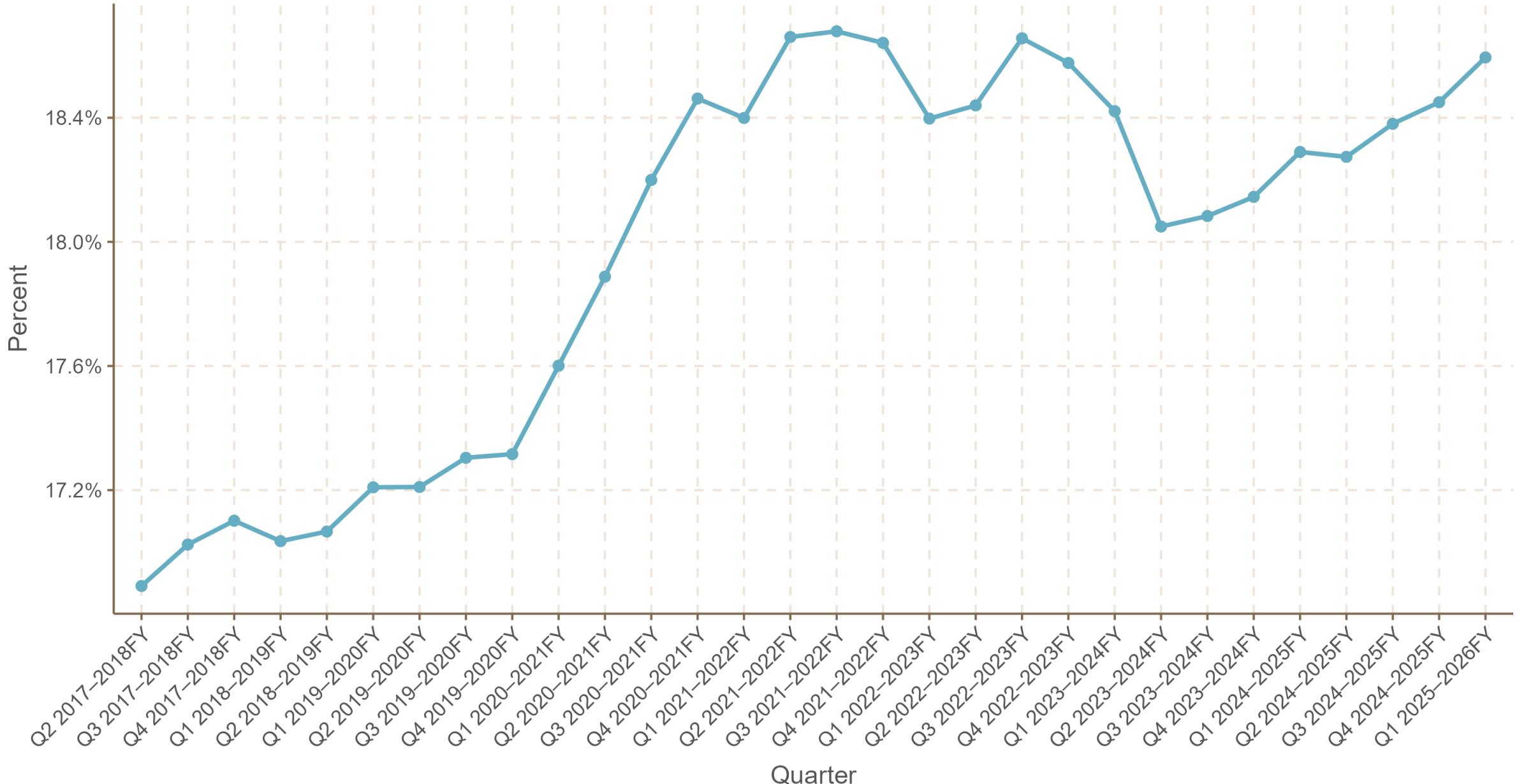
Arrest Warrants, 2017–2025



Source: jud.ct.gov

Felony FTA Warrants as a Share of all FTA Warrants

Arrest Warrants, 2017–2025



Source: jud.ct.gov