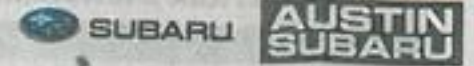


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Jarrell to redo school board election after ballot questions, close vote. B2



TEXAS COURTS

Study: Require pretrial sharing

Texas does not force prosecutors to provide evidence, statements to defense attorneys.

By Chuck Lindell
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Criminal justice in Texas could be fairer, faster and less likely to convict innocent people if prosecutors and defense lawyers were required to share more information

before trial, a report by two legal advocacy groups says. Texas law does not require prosecutors to disclose information that is commonly shared in most states, including police reports, witness statements and reports compiled by expert witnesses, says the report, "Improving Discovery in Criminal Cases in Texas," to be formally released Wednesday.

The result is a hodgepodge of rules varying from county

Read the report with this story at statesman.com.



to county, with many district attorney's offices employing a robust open-file policy for defendants while others restrict information, "meaning access to justice can depend, in part, on where the case is filed," the report says.

What's more, Texas is the only state that does not require some sort of mutual

discovery before a criminal trial, with defense lawyers opening their files to prosecutors to reveal witness statements, expert opinions and other information that does not incriminate the defendant.

"By disclosing all relevant information, both parties are able to investigate and scrutinize the evidence against the accused. This increases the likelihood that a just result

Discovery continued on B10

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