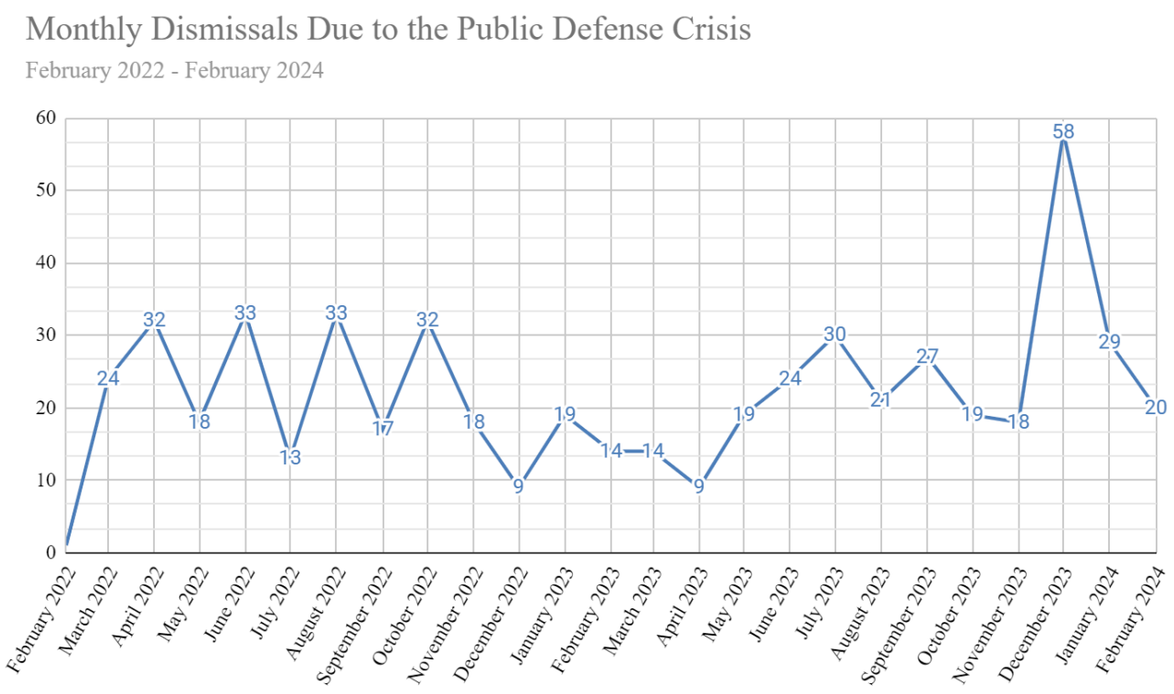
Multnomah County District Attorney's Office

Overview

Since February 2022, hundreds of criminal cases in Multnomah County have been set over, delayed, dismissed, or otherwise impacted by an ongoing public defense crisis wherein the court has been and remains unable to appoint a defense attorney on various felony and misdemeanor cases. Due to low staffing and high caseload sizes for public defenders, this issue poses a major concern for the courts and the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, as all defendants have the right to an attorney throughout the adjudication of a criminal case. As a court case cannot reasonably progress without a defense attorney, the court may opt to dismiss a case in order to avoid violating the rights of a defendant. It should be noted that dismissals typically occur after repeated attempts to appoint counsel, and MCDA is permitted and continues to reissue charges in these instances. To increase transparency around this issue, DA Mike Schmidt has chosen to publicly release those cases which are dismissed due to the defense counsel crisis on a weekly basis since November 2022. **In total, there have been 551 cases identified on the Justice Center Courtroom 3 (JC3) docket as dismissed due to an inability to appoint counsel to a defendant between February 24, 2022 and February 29, 2024.**

Dismissals by month

Measures the month-to-month change in number of dismissals over time



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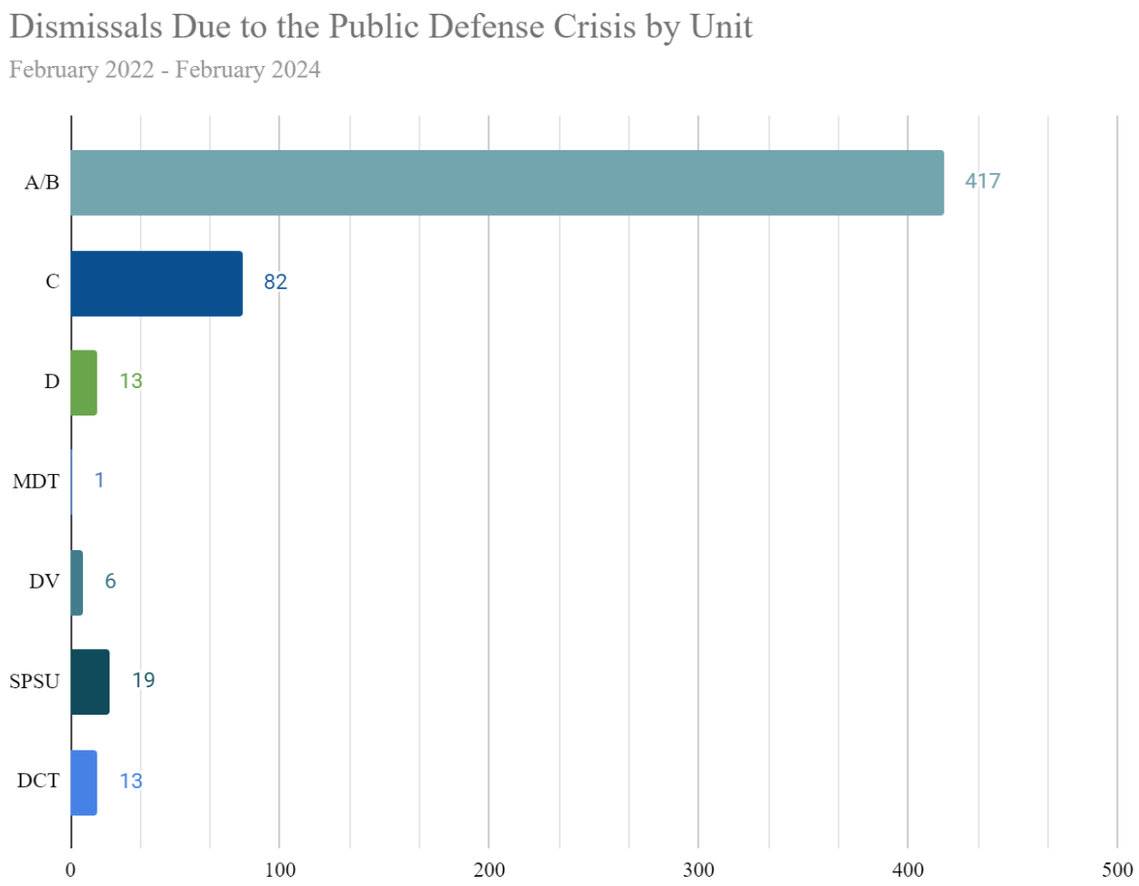
Dismissals by unit

Shows the distribution of dismissals across MCDA units



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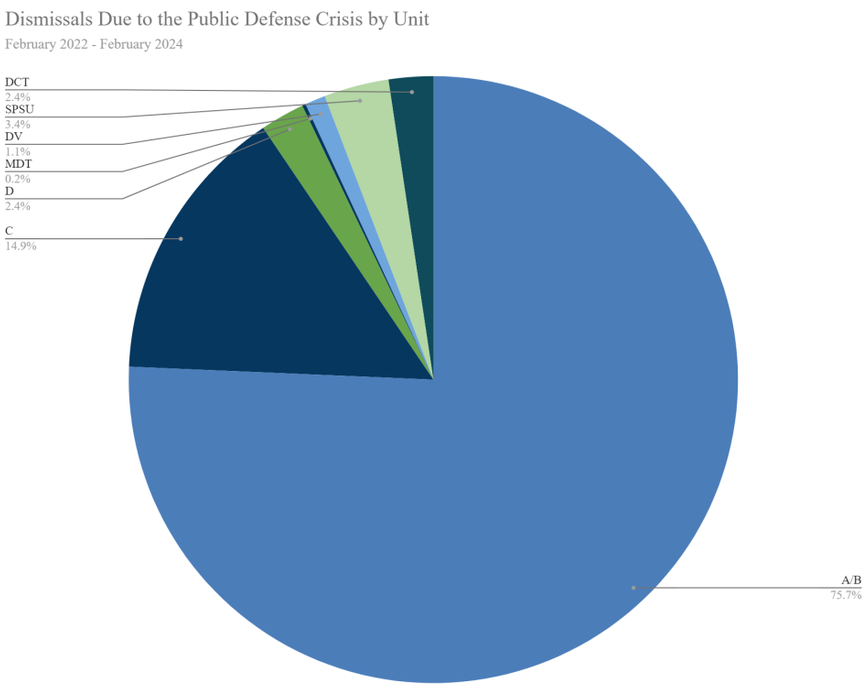
Shows the proportion of dismissals across units



Unit Description Key:

***Unit A/B**: This unit prosecutes a variety of felonies including property crimes, traffic offenses, and all forms of overdose prosecutions.*

***Unit C**: This unit prosecutes major felonies, serious vehicular crimes and gang-related offenses.*

***Unit D**: This unit is responsible for the prosecution of all non-DV related felony crimes such as personal violence, sex crimes, and sex assaults against children.*

***SPSU (Strategic Prosecution and Services Unit):** This unit is specialized and prosecutes a broad range of cases, including high-volume offenders.*

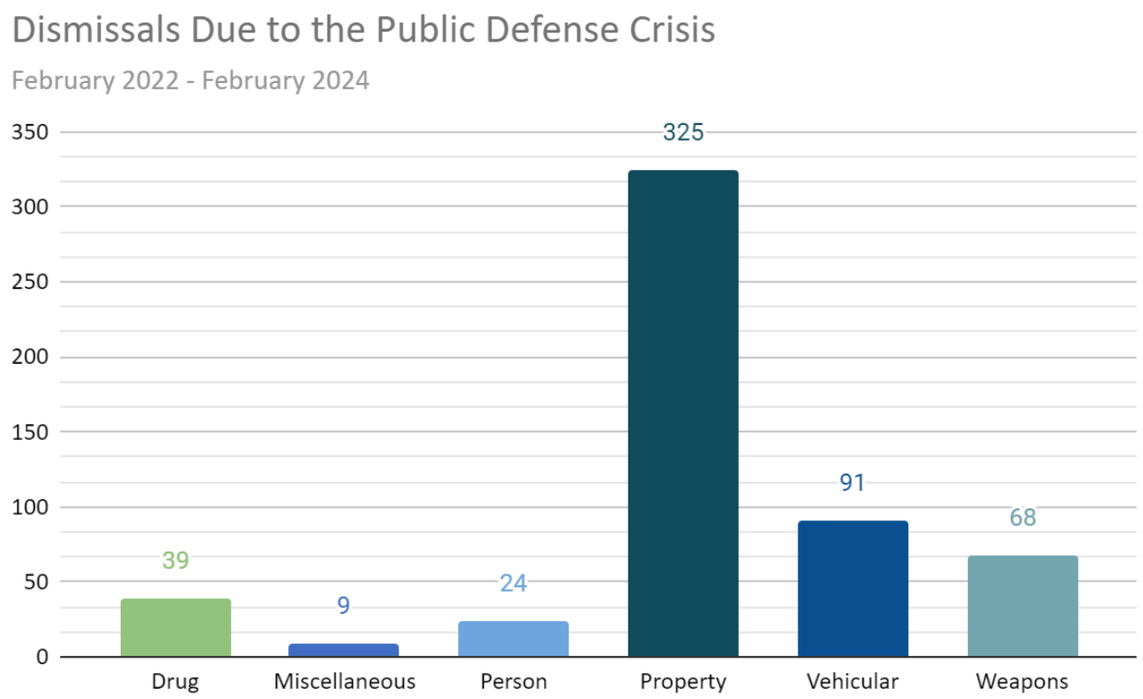
***DV Unit**: This unit prosecutes all crimes of domestic violence between family or household members as defined in ORS 135.240(4).*

***MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Teams)**: This unit prosecutes familial child abuse and neglect cases.*

***DCT (District Court Trial)**: This refers to misdemeanors that accompanied felonies as a lesser charge.*

Dismissals by offense type

Shows the distribution of dismissals across offense type classifications



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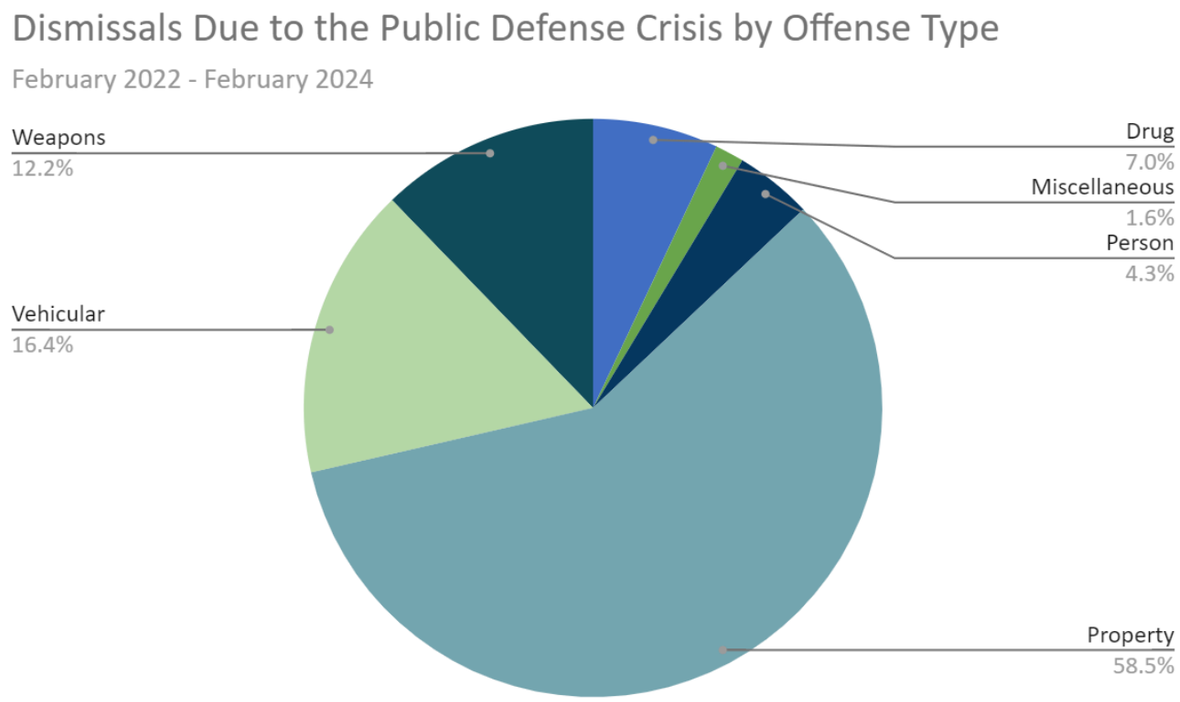
Shows the proportion of offense types within dismissals



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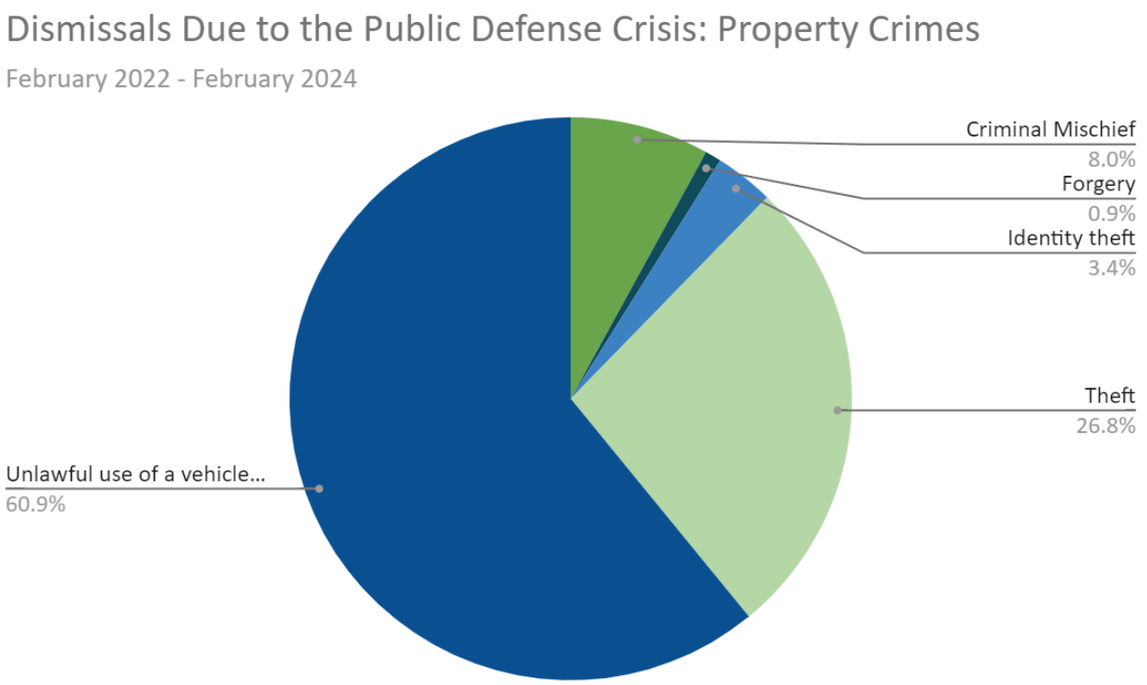
Dismissals by primary charge type: Property crimes

Shows the breakdown of dismissed property crimes by primary charge



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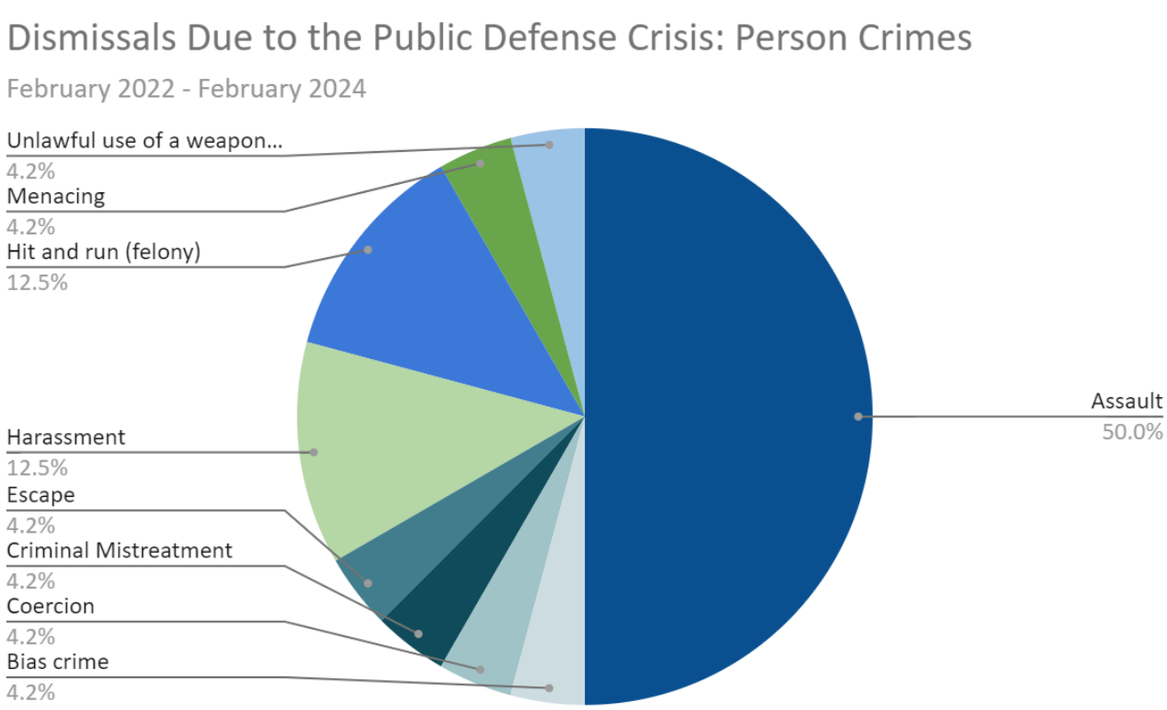
Dismissals by primary charge type: Person crimes

Shows the breakdown of dismissed person crimes by primary charge



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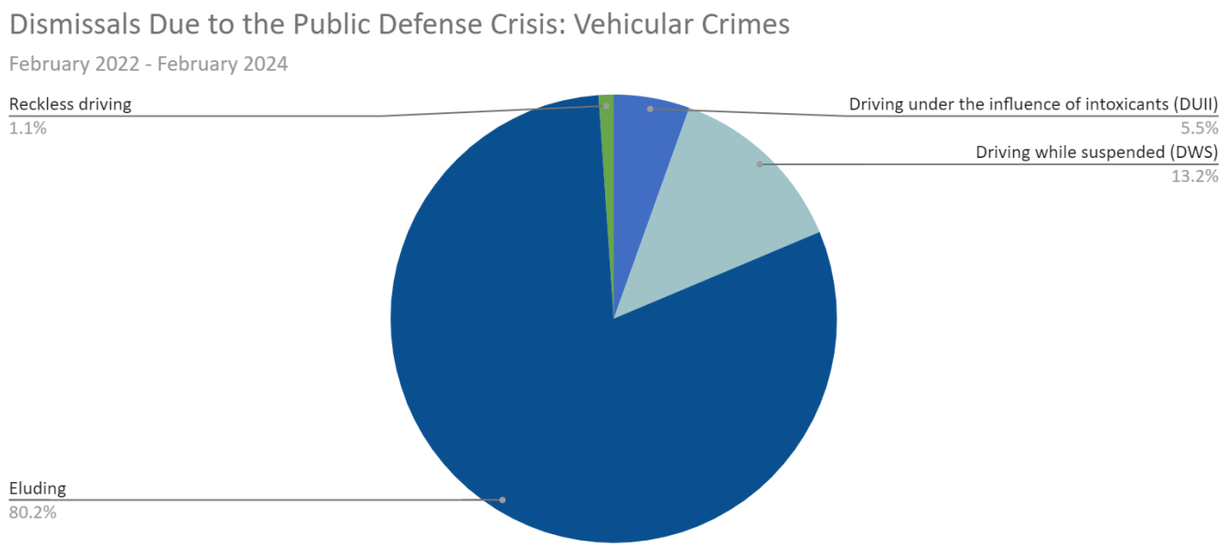
Dismissals by primary charge type: Vehicular crimes

Shows the breakdown of dismissed vehicular crimes by primary charge



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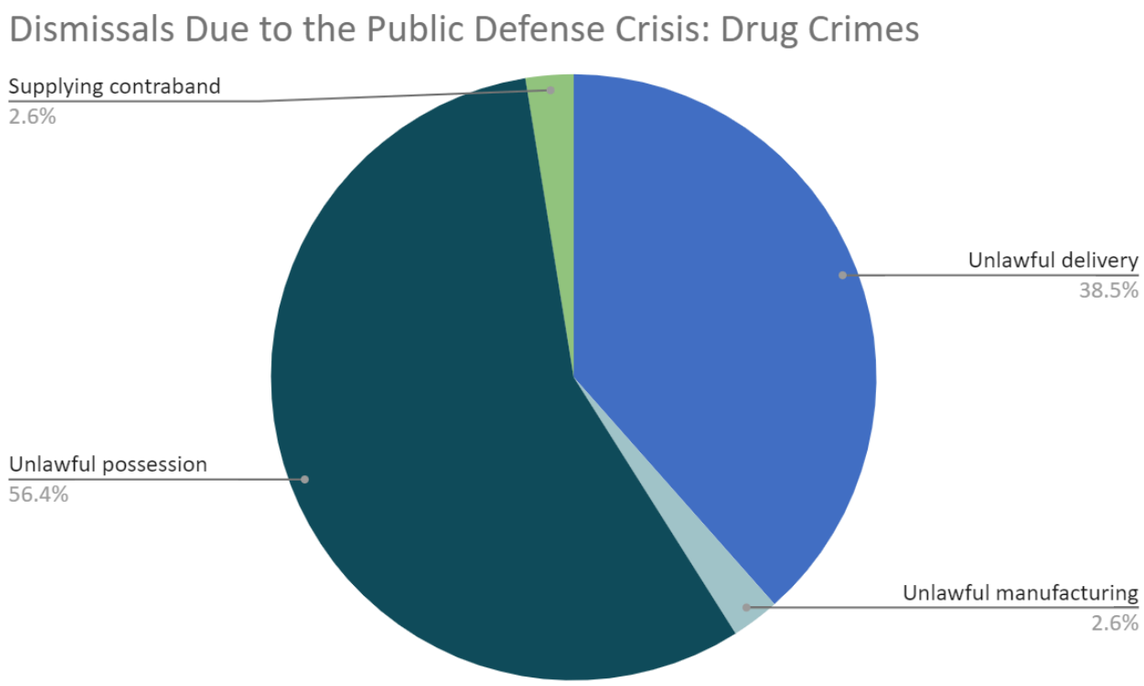
Dismissals by primary charge type: Drug crimes

Shows the breakdown of dismissed drug crimes by primary charge



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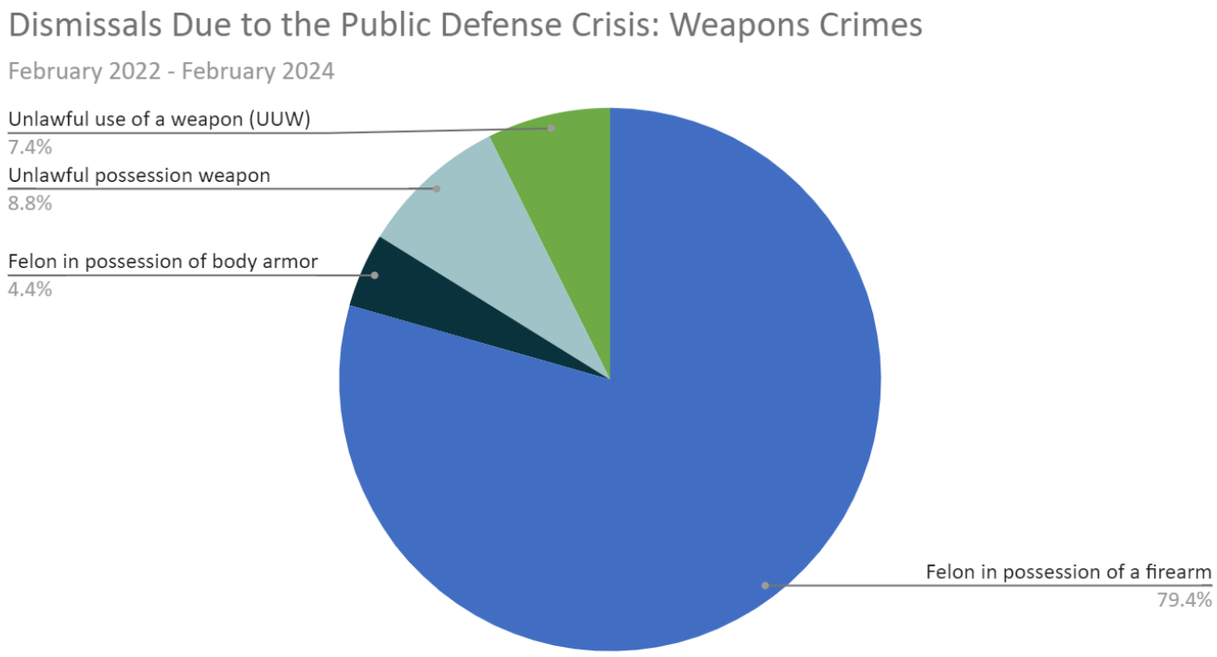
Dismissals by primary charge type: Weapons crimes

Shows the breakdown of dismissed weapons crimes by primary charge



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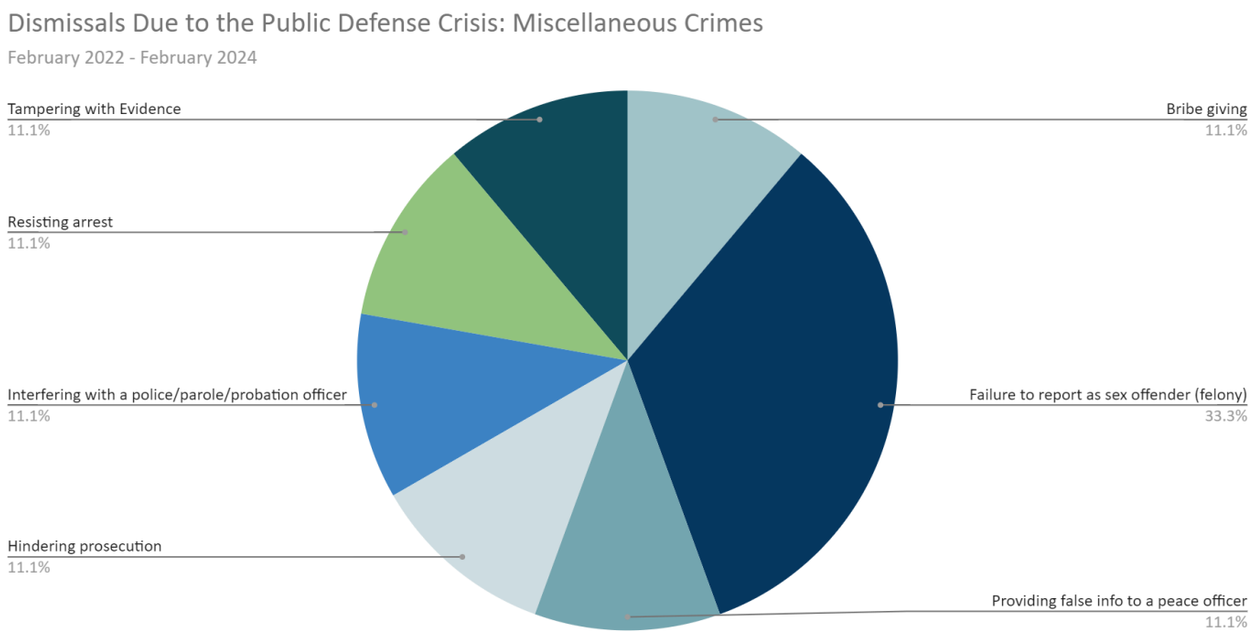
Dismissals by primary charge type: Miscellaneous crimes

Shows the breakdown of dismissed miscellaneous crimes by primary charge



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