



Office of the State's Attorney
Madison County, Illinois
Thomas A. Haine
State's Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2024

Haine releases 2023 Annual Report, highlights continued record pace of prosecution and managing challenges of SAFE-T Act's impact

Edwardsville, IL — Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine has announced the release of the State's Attorney's Office's [2023 Annual Report](#) to the County Board and the public. The report provides stakeholders — including residents, community organizations, elected officials, County Board members and Law Enforcement agencies — valuable insights into the State's Attorney's Office's achievements and operations.

"I'm proud to present our 2023 Annual Report to the people of Madison County and the Board, highlighting the remarkable efforts of the dedicated prosecutors and support personnel in the State's Attorney's Office," Haine said. "These are hard-working public servants who share the vision of keeping neighborhoods safe, upholding the law and advocating for justice in Madison County. This report reflects our shared commitment to accountability and continuous improvement."

He added: "It is an honor to serve as State's Attorney, and work with so many incredible professionals every day. I'm grateful for the support and cooperation our office receives from the County Board, County officials, the Courts, Law Enforcement agencies and others in the Criminal Justice System."

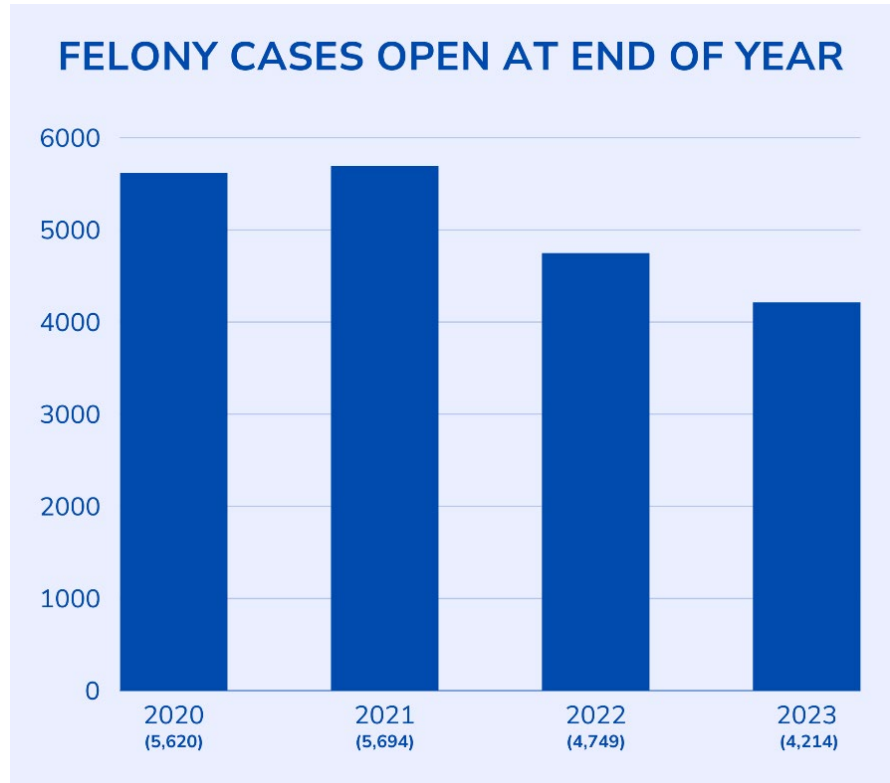
Haine encouraged the public to review the Annual Reports, which are online at www.madcoSAO.gov, and provide feedback on the office's efforts.

"Accountability and transparency are essential components of effective governance," Haine said. "We remain committed to serving the needs of our community and working collaboratively to address challenges and promote public safety, and we appreciate everyone's feedback so we can continue to improve and keep Madison County a wonderful and safe place for all of us in the future."

Highlight 1: Continued record pace of prosecution, and reduction of case backlog.

The State’s Attorney’s Office in 2023 prosecuted 3,769 felonies to conclusion, through trial convictions, guilty pleas and other dispositions. As a result, the State’s Attorney’s Office has continued making significant progress in reducing a case backlog that developed during COVID restrictions.

The number of open felony cases stood at 5,620 at the end of 2020, and 5,694 at the end of 2021. By the end of 2022, that number of unresolved felony cases had been whittled down to 4,749. For the conclusion of 2023, the backlog was pared even further, down to 4,214 open cases.



“Our goal is to have no more open felony cases than we charge in a given year,” said Haine. “We are almost there. This is important because for the victims of crime, justice delayed is justice denied.”

He added: “These efforts were made all the more complicated due to the implementation of the SAFE-T Act approximately two-thirds of the way through 2023.”

Highlight 2: Managing the SAFE-T Act

The SAFE-T Act, which Haine opposed, was originally set to go into effect Jan. 1, 2023. But, after a lawsuit was filed by Haine, Sheriff Jeff Connor and dozens of other county officials throughout the state, a major amendment was passed in mid-December alleviating some of the more egregious problems with the original bill. This lawsuit also caused a pause in the effective date of the new law, which eventually went into effect on Sept. 18, 2023.

“These last-minute changes to the law, and the additional months to prepare, have been essential in alleviating the worst-case scenarios with this new law,” said Haine.

The SAFE-T Act eliminated cash bail and allows for a defendant to be held in custody prior to trial only if he or she is charged with certain high-level offenses. But even if the defendant is charged with one of those eligible offenses, the State’s Attorney’s Office is required to persuade a judge that the defendant meets additional criteria, such as being a “real and present threat” to others. Judges make these

determinations at a new type of hearing called a Detention Hearing, where the State’s Attorney’s Office is required to present a case for why the defendant should remain in pretrial custody.

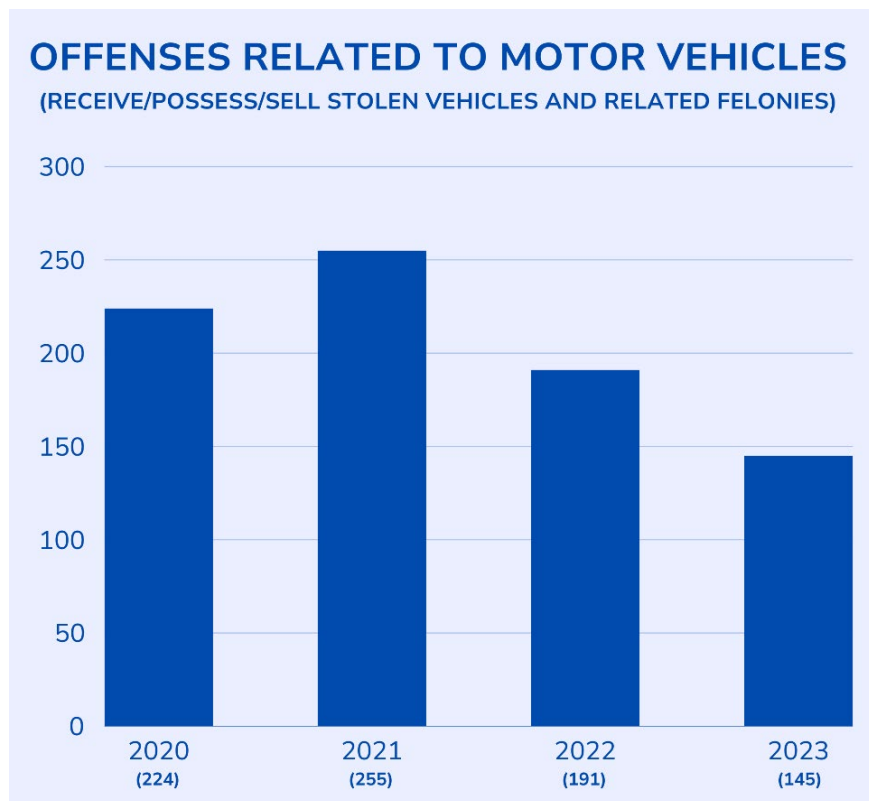
“The SAFE-T Act remains a major challenge, and it has taken a major effort to ensure that we continue keeping our communities safe while working within the constraints of this new law,” Haine said. “Prosecutors from the State’s Attorney’s Office held multiple strategy meetings and training sessions with Law Enforcement agencies to find ways to minimize the harmful impact of the SAFE-T Act. I’m immensely grateful for their work, along with the cooperation we’ve received from the Courts, Probation Department, Circuit Clerk’s Office and other stakeholders.”

The Annual Report notes that the State’s Attorney’s Office launched a Warrant Division in 2023, in part to meet new requirements of the SAFE-T Act. The Warrant Division, staffed primarily by two Assistant State’s Attorneys as well as support personnel, evaluates investigations presented by Law Enforcement agencies and determines what, if any, charges should be issued. In addition, the Warrant Division prepares Detention Petitions and presents arguments in support of those petitions during Detention Hearings.

Highlight 3: Continued efforts against Cross-River Crime and vehicle thefts

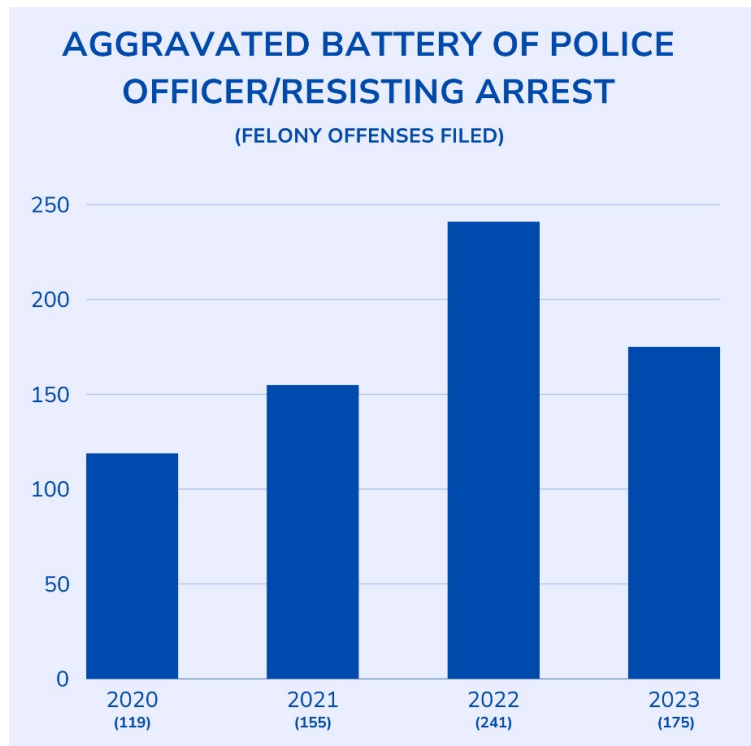
The report notes the continued impact of the Cross-River Crime Task Force. The State’s Attorney’s Office continues to see a reduction in the number of vehicle-theft charges filed. The Task Force was formed in 2021 amid growing concern of criminal activity – including vehicle thefts – flowing into Madison County.

Following a record high in 2021, the number of vehicle-theft cases presented to the State’s Attorney’s Office has sharply declined. In 2021, the SAO charged 255 individuals with Offenses Related To Motor Vehicles (a category that includes possessing, receiving or selling a stolen vehicle). That total dropped to 191 in 2022. The total dropped further, to 145, in 2023.



Other highlights from the Annual Report include:

- Data showing aggressive prosecution of those who attempt to flee from or harm Law Enforcement officers.
- Implementation of a new case-management software system, Prosecutor By Karpel, for felony cases. This system has the ability to streamline workflows, cut costs, and increase the capabilities and speed of prosecutors. As the volume of digital data associated with the prosecution of a criminal case continues to grow (for example, body-camera video mandated by the SAFE-T Act), this new system will improve the office’s efficiency.
- Launch of redesigned website, www.madcoSAO.gov.
- List of the top felony charges filed in 2023, led by Possession of Methamphetamine (476 filed) and Possession of Controlled Substance (363).



2023 Top felony charges

