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News Release
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DA Announces Juvenile Diversion Program

District Attorney Patricia Lykos announces the implementation of a Juvenile Non-Petition Deferred Prosecution Program effective, Monday, March 2nd. The goal of this program is to ensure that first-offender juveniles who commit non-violent misdemeanor offenses are not charged with a crime, but instead are diverted to a type of community supervision that, upon successful completion, will not result in a criminal conviction or record. The program is a collaborative effort between the Harris County District Attorney's Office and the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department.

Juveniles who have committed Class A or B misdemeanor offenses will be eligible for the program, unless the offense involves a weapon, violence against a person, intoxication, or the burglary of a motor vehicle. After an initial screening of a juvenile's case by the Harris County District Attorney's Office and referral to the program, the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department will contact the juvenile and family to inform the parents of their rights, gather social history information and inquire as to the family's interest in participating in the Deferred Prosecution Program. If a juvenile successfully completes the probation, the juvenile will not be charged with a criminal offense in juvenile court by the District Attorney's Office.

The program conforms with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's juvenile justice reform protocol. It has been designed to guide youth away from delinquent behavior, to conduct themselves responsibly, so they can transition into productive adulthood. The program will rely on proven, family-focused intervention programs and create opportunities for positive youth development.

Lykos states, "Implementation of this new diversion plan gives at-risk youngsters the opportunity to develop wise decision-making, to control their impulses and channel their energy into constructive pursuits. This is a rehabilitative program that will transform many young lives."

END

