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CHIEF DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

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General Court of Justice  
26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

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TO: Rep. Leo Daughtry, House of Appropriations Committee,  
2011 House & Senate Appropriations Committees, and  
2011 House & Senate Appropriations Sub-Committees for Justice & Public Safety

FROM: Mecklenburg County 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court Judges

DATE: April 12, 2011

RE: Drug Treatment Courts in North Carolina

Without a single exception, my nineteen (19) District Court colleagues join me in opposing any budget reductions that eliminate Drug Treatment Courts in North Carolina.

North Carolina's first Drug Treatment Court was created and began operating in Mecklenburg County in 1995, when a group of progressive court officials fashioned a treatment court based upon other proven national models. It had become quite obvious to the group members, including judges, district attorneys, public defenders and probation officers, that the archaic approach of simply incarcerating drug offenders and addicts was not only counterproductive, but perpetuated the endless cycle of drug abuse, arrest, prosecution, and incarceration. The more one offended the higher in costs to the individuals, their families, to society, and to the State.

After 16 years of operation, drug treatment court graduates are remaining drug and alcohol free, raising healthy children, participating in their communities, attending and completing school, working and paying taxes. From the inception of their first Drug Treatment Court a decade and a half ago, North Carolina has endorsed this proven method, and expanded to 25 Adult Drug Treatment Courts, 12 Family Drug Treatment Courts and Four Youth Treatment courts statewide in 21 judicial districts.

These intensively structured programs offer substance addicted offenders charged with non-violent offenses an alternative to incarceration. Program participants are held accountable for their behavior in a rehabilitative environment that provides a holistic approach to substance abuse while ensuring the safety of our citizens.

