Miami Judge Steve Leifman to take part in briefing on mental health issues in the courts & prisons

November 17, 2015 -- Since 1955, the number of psychiatric hospital beds in the United States has decreased by more than 90 percent. At the same time, the number of people with mental illnesses entering our courts, jails and prisons has increased by more than 400 percent.

Jails across the United States serve an estimated 2 million people with serious mental illnesses each year.

The justice system was never designed to treat people with mental illnesses. How did we get here, and what are court and government leaders doing to turn this around?

The media is invited to a briefing about this public health crisis that state courts are struggling to fix.

When: 9 a.m., Thursday, November 19, 2015

Where: Crystal Room, Willard InterContinental Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Speakers:

- **Sen. Al Franken (D-MN)**, co-sponsor of the Comprehensive Justice & Mental Health Act

- **Rep. Doug Collins (R-GA)**, co-sponsor of the Comprehensive Justice & Mental Health Act

- **Judge Steve Leifman**, Miami-Dade County, Florida. Recipient of National Center for State Courts William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence. Judge Leifman is being recognized for his transformational work on how the courts treat people with serious mental illnesses.

- **Dr. Renee L. Binder**, President of the American Psychiatric Association

Moderators: **Chief Justice David Gilbertson**, South Dakota Supreme Court

- President, Conference of Chief Justices

- Chair, National Center for State Courts Board of Directors

- **Mary C. McQueen**, President, National Center for State Courts

Invitees: Members of the media and members of the Conference of Chief Justices

*The National Center for State Courts, headquartered in Williamsburg, Va., is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the administration of justice by providing leadership and service to the state courts. Founded in 1971 by the Conference of Chief Justices and Chief Justice of the United States Warren E. Burger, NCSC provides education, training, technology, management, and research services to the nation’s state courts.*

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