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NEWS RELEASE

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Corrections Summit Brings Together Stakeholders in Prisoner Litigation

SACRAMENTO – The Ninth Circuit Corrections Summit is a first-of-its-kind effort to more effectively manage prisoner litigation within the federal judiciary’s Ninth Circuit, which takes in nine western states and two Pacific Island jurisdictions. Federal judges and court staff, members of the bar, state and federal corrections officials, and deputy state attorneys general are expected to participate in the summit, which will be held November 4-6, 2015, in Sacramento, California.

California Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., is scheduled to address attendees at a reception on the opening day of the summit. United States Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy will speak to the group by video on the final day of the summit.

The event is sponsored by the Federal Judicial Center, the Association of State Correctional Administrators, the National Association of Attorneys General and the Office of the Circuit Executive, the administrative arm of the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit. The substantive program addresses topics of common concern, including segregated housing, health care delivery, prison grievance procedures, strategies for prisoner cases filed in federal court, and class action litigation. Also participating as speakers and panelists will be academic experts and health care providers.

Prisoner litigation represents a substantial portion of the civil caseload for federal courts in the Ninth Circuit, which takes in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. In fiscal year 2014, prison inmates brought 31 percent of all new civil cases in the federal trial courts and 48 percent of new civil appeals received by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

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Prisoner litigation typically involves habeas corpus, civil rights, prison conditions and other matters. Inmates most often represent themselves and file petitions without the benefit of legal counsel. Their cases may often require additional review by specialized court staff. Inmate litigation is also a burden to state corrections departments and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

"The challenges of prisoner litigation have never been greater, and we need fresh perspectives and initiatives to address these critical issues," said Chief Judge Sidney R. Thomas of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

"The summit allows all of the stakeholders to share perspectives, gain understanding and discuss how to more effectively manage inmate litigation, from the initial grievance to trial and beyond," Judge Thomas said.

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