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**NEWS RELEASE**

December 23, 2015

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## **Federal Public Defender Richard Curtner Reappointed in District of Alaska**

SAN FRANCISCO – Attorney Richard Curtner of Anchorage, Alaska, has been reappointed to a fifth four-year term as United States Federal Public Defender for the District of Alaska. The reappointment, effective January 2, 2016, was announced today by Chief Judge Sidney R. Thomas of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Mr. Curtner has served as District of Alaska’s federal public defender since 1996. He was reappointed to additional terms in 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012. His office handled 319 new cases in fiscal year 2014. In addition to criminal defense and appeals, public defenders represent prisoners and witnesses and handle bail and pre-sentencing matters, and probation and parole revocation hearings.

Mr. Curtner received his undergraduate degree from Ohio State University in 1970. After serving in the U.S. Army from 1970 to 1972, he enrolled in the Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio, where he received his J.D. in 1976.

Mr. Curtner’s legal career began in 1974 as a law student working in the Franklin County Public Defender Office in Columbus. He left there in 1985 as a supervising attorney to join the faculty of the clinical law program at the Ohio State University School of Law. He moved to Alaska in 1987, working as a supervising attorney in the Alaska Public Defender Agency until 1992. He was an assistant federal defender and in private practice briefly before rejoining in 1994 the Alaska Public Defender Agency, where he worked as a training director until his federal appointment.

Congress created the Office of the Federal Public Defender to fulfill the constitutional requirement that indigents charged with crimes in the federal justice system be provided with professional legal representation at no cost. Congress funds the offices of the Federal Public Defender through the Defender Services Division of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

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By statute, judges of the courts of appeals select and appoint the federal public defender for a renewable term of four years. The court makes its initial appointment after a nationwide recruitment and the use of a local screening committee pursuant to Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines. Reappointments to additional terms are based upon demonstration of highly satisfactory performance as determined by a broad survey and performance evaluation.

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