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PRESS RELEASE

D.C. Courts Announce Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking of Youth in the District

WASHINGTON, DC – The Family Court of the DC Superior Court is establishing a multidisciplinary team of justice system stakeholders to address the sexual exploitation of court-involved youth and those at risk of being trafficked. Presiding Family Court Judge Hiram Puig-Lugo has invited the Center for Court Innovation to lead a 2-day session next month for District representatives, many of whom have been working with the Family Court’s Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Working Group for over three years, to develop a detailed action plan that lays out roles, responsibilities, timeframes, services, training plans, and other requirements necessary to combat human trafficking in the District.

Chief Judge Eric T. Washington of the DC Court of Appeals said “We applaud the Mayor’s January 11th announcement of the District government efforts to combat human trafficking. The Administration’s commitment will go a long way to ensure stakeholder support for the DC Courts work in this area, which has been underway for the past three years.” Superior Court Chief Judge Lee Satterfield stated “Over the last several years our Social Service Division’s Child Guidance Clinic has developed and validated a screening tool, believed to be a first in the nation, to identify youth who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing sexual exploitation. A number of jurisdictions have expressed an interest in our tool, believing it will help identify victims of sexual exploitation.”

Both Chief Judges support the continued efforts of the multidisciplinary group, and expressed appreciation for the leadership of Judge Puig-Lugo and Mayor Bowser for this important work.

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