

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Chance to Celebrate Failure, Death and a Continuation of the Drug War: National Drug Court Month

(Asbury Park – May 31, 2018) – May is National Drug Court Month a time to “shine a light on the unparalleled success” of these programs according to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. However, New Jersey’s drug courts show that these courts are dangerous, have overwhelming failure rates and are best described as an extension of the drug war itself.

“The drug court program is an appendage of the criminal justice system not a health service which carries grave consequences for people with substance use disorders, including the belief that displaying a symptom of a clinically identifiable health issue (drug relapse) is grounds to be incarcerated” said Randy Thompson, CEO of Help Not Handcuffs, Inc. “The human rights implications of this program are grave and are certainly not cause for celebration” Thompson said.

Below are some celebratory claims from Drug Court Month that are refuted with facts from New Jersey’s Drug Courts:

NADCP Claim: Drug courts “save lives”

FACT: New Jersey drug courts are often a death sentence as 124 NJ drug court participants DIED while on the program in a five-year period¹.

NADCP Claim: Drug courts are the “single most successful intervention for addicted offenders”

Fact: NJ drug court has a 77.2% FAILURE rate²

Additionally, the New Jersey Drug Court program has been cited for publicizing misleading and inaccurate success rates of participants, as reported in a 2012 report by the Office of the New Jersey State Auditor³. Drug Courts were expanded statewide and made compulsory under former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie.

¹ Open Public Records Request to the Superior Court of New Jersey, June 4, 2016.

² “New Jersey Adult Drug Court Program New Jersey Statistical Highlights February 12, 2018” Lines 1 and 4, New Jersey Judiciary.

³ “Adult Drug Court Program” page 4, Office of the New Jersey State Auditor – 2012.