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NEWS RELEASE

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**D.A. Lynne Abraham and Drug Treatment Court Judge Louis Presenza Urge
Funding For Drug Treatment Court and Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Projects**

Tough Drug and Alcohol Treatment Jams A Wedge in Crime's Revolving Door

WHAT: PRESS CONFERENCE

WHEN: MONDAY DECEMBER 15, 2003
11AM

WHERE: DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
1421 ARCH ST.
FIRST FLOOR PRESS ROOM

PARTICIPANTS: -- District Attorney Lynne Abraham
--Municipal Court President Judge Louis J. Presenza
--Three Former Drug Addicts and Graduates of Judge Presenza's
Drug Treatment Court:

1. William Rodriguez, 42
2. Elaine Goss, 55
3. Kevin Bland, 47

District Attorney Lynne Abraham and Drug Treatment Court Judge Louis Presenza today urge Governor Edward Rendell and all state legislators, as they return to session today, to restore to the state budget the \$104-M in funding for drug and alcohol addiction treatment. The alternative is an immediate spike in the crime rate.

“Study after study confirms that tough drug and alcohol treatment is the proven way to jam a wedge into the criminal justice system’s revolving door,” said District Attorney Lynne Abraham.

Without these funds, according to the state government’s own facts, 40,000 people will not get the treatment they need before they commit violent or property crimes.

With approximately 80% of criminal offenders having substance abuse problems, a critical component in the battle against crime is addressing addiction.

Without treatment programs, there is a tremendous cost in human suffering by innocent victims of crime as well as the family members of those addicted to drugs and alcohol. **Additionally, the budget cuts will end up costing taxpayers seven dollars for every dollar cut** through dramatic increases in crime, DUIs, hospital emergency room admissions and other health care costs, birth defects, job losses, workplace costs (accidents, theft and absenteeism,) family violence and child abuse.

The numbers in Judge Presentza's Drug Treatment Court opened on April 2, 1997. The numbers tell the story:

- Successful completions: 746
- After one year, 86% of the people have not been arrested
- Current enrollment: 300

William Rodriguez, Elaine Goss and Kevin Bland were all addicted to heroin, cocaine or crack, and they all graduated from Drug Treatment Court. They will share their stories and describe how Drug Treatment Court was their ticket out of addiction and into successful and productive lives.

“Drug courts have proven to be successful in promoting public safety, providing an alternative to incarceration and affording people an opportunity to change their lives and ‘break the cycle,’ said Judge Louis Presentza. “Moreover, it has been proven that it is much more cost-effective to provide treatment than pay for health and prison costs. Therefore, the governor and legislature must restore substance-abuse dollars.”