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MISSOURI

info@newmoplan.com | 573-635-0782 | PO Box 1524 Jefferson City Missouri 65102

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For More Information, Contact:
James Harris (573-761-7875)

**Better Courts for Missouri Responds to Chief Justice Stith's State of the
Judiciary**

*"Chief Justice Stith's naivety continues to blind her ability to improve the
judiciary"*

--James Harris, Executive Director, Better Court for Missouri

(Jefferson City, MO) – Today, Better Courts for Missouri Coalition (BCM) applauded Chief Justice Stith's remarks in her State of the Judiciary Address that called for an unbiased judiciary and an enhancement of the public trust in the judiciary. "We hope that this is a new direction for Missouri's top judicial officer," stated James Harris, Executive Director of BCM. "I extend an open hand to working with Chief Justice Stith to accomplish the goals she outlined regarding an impartial judiciary and to restore the public's trust in our legal system," added Harris.

However, BCM asked the Chief Justice to now to show actions, not just words. "Missourians believe in an open and accountable government," stated Harris. "I hope that this speech today means that the Chief Justice has opened her eyes to the control that the trial attorneys have over the judicial selection process and we now ask her to work with BCM to improve Missouri's judiciary".

In Justice Stith's remarks, she identified four strategic missions of the legal system, including "providing a fair, unbiased and impartial forum for resolving disputes" and "enhancing the public's trust and confidence in the justice system". Justice Stith also cited the Missouri Constitution, stating that "Justice shall be administered without sale, denial, or delay". (Article I, Section 14).

"The facts are that trial lawyers continue to control the process of selecting judges in secret. That is not good for Missourians and is the antithesis of what our Constitution states and Justice Stith today advocated," added Harris.

To schedule an interview with James Harris, Executive Director, Better Courts for Missouri, please contact Elizabeth Ray at (703)-683-5004, ext. 130, eray@crccpublicrelations.com.

Chief Justice Stith's full remarks can be found at
<http://www.courts.mo.gov/pressrel.nsf/fa1bcbaea6d7c117862567670079a321/f220e2a90f9c8b0c8625754c006d2e59?OpenDocument>.

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