



MEDIA ADVISORY

UNH Professor Available to Comment on Recent Violence Against Judges

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Charles Putnam, co-director of Justiceworks at the University of New Hampshire and a research associate professor of political science, is available to comment on the recent violence against judges. Putnam worked in the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office for 15 years; his last two assignments were as chief of the Homicide Prosecutions Unit and chief of the Criminal Justice Bureau. **He can be reached at 603-862-7041 or 603-742-8581 over the weekend.**

Putnam notes that the two recent cases are very different — one shooting occurred in a Georgia courtroom while the other involved the suspect hunting down and killing a judge's family members. Nevertheless, he notes that in his experience there has been a history of concern about threats and overt acts of violence against judges, particularly in the area of family law. Judges have to make difficult and often unpopular decisions, and due to the nature of the American adversary system, at least one person typically is deeply unhappy with the judge's decision.

"I have certainly seen wholesale changes in courthouse security over my career," Putnam said, "but protecting judges from violence must remain a top priority in order to protect the integrity of our criminal justice system. We all depend on judges to make tough decisions and share a common interest in protecting them and their families from violence committed by disgruntled litigants."