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April 27, 2016

Honorable David Hudson
Sebastian County Judge

Re: Sebastian County Mental Health Court

Dear Judge Hudson:

I am writing this letter in support of a team effort to create, establish, and maintain a Mental Health Court in Sebastian County. The team that has been assembled (Circuit Judge Annie Powell Hendricks; Sheriff Bill Hollenbeck; Jim West; yourself, and I) has already begun work regarding the target population, the types of cases to be accepted (misdemeanor and/or felony), program duration, and the treatment options. Judge Hendricks and I are aware of Administrative Order #14 and the broad authorization of mental health courts by the Supreme Court of Arkansas; however, we both feel strongly that enabling legislation by the Arkansas General Assembly will help clarify not only jurisdiction, but also give important guidance with defining eligibility and other core terms. The team members each have an understanding that incarcerating non-violent, mentally ill people in the Sebastian County Detention Center continues to result in unproductive jail stays, no treatment for the underlying mental health issue, and preventable recidivism. I believe it is in our power to change this scenario and I am personally committed to doing so.

SINCERELY,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Shue", written over a horizontal line.

DANIEL SHUE
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

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