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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-**

**District Attorney Announces Partnership Programs with Community Agencies Aimed at Reducing Inmate Population**

**October 8, 2018, TULSA, OK** – District Attorney Steve Kunzweiler announced today the beginning of a partnership program between the Tulsa County DA’s Office and several local nonprofit agencies with the joint goal of providing opportunities for defendants to become in compliance with probation requirements, thereby potentially avoiding jail or prison time.

“Mindful of concerns relating to national over-incarceration and the opportunities for defendants to turn their lives around, my goal is to help those people who are trying to make their lives better but lack the resources to do so,” says DA Kunzweiler.

Under the present system, if a defendant is convicted and sentenced to probation, he or she given a list of conditions to complete in order to be in compliance with the probation requirements. Conditions of probation vary with each case but can often include requirements such as obtaining employment, attending classes, paying restitution and/or participating in community work hours. When a defendant fails to comply with a condition, the Probation Supervisor notifies the DA’s Office which results in an Application being filed to revoke the probation. The defendant is then arrested for failing to comply with the conditions of probation and is incarcerated again.

“This new partnership program will pair a Probation Supervisor with local agencies in a proactive and pre-emptive model format. The concept is to provide assistance to a defendant in order to get in compliance with probation conditions *before* any violation reports are sent to my office. I am authorizing these Probation Supervisors to hit the pause button on their violation reports and instead, to first take steps to assist these defendants by matching them with community agencies. The goal is to help defendants get in compliance with their probation conditions to avoid re-incarceration. Abraham Lincoln once said that sometimes, “mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice.” For the low-level, non-violent defendants to whom this program is aimed, giving them the assistance to get their lives on the right track, is, I hope, the best way my office can serve the public as a whole,” DA Kunzweiler says.

Supporting this new partnership is the Department of Corrections, the Office of the Tulsa County Public Defender, the Women’s Justice Team and Family & Children’s Services. This program will not be made available to those defendants who are charged with new crimes while on probation.