



THE CITY CLUB OF CLEVELAND



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### BROADCAST OF COURTING JUSTICE A FORUM HOSTED BY TAVIS SMILEY A conversation on fines, fees and bail

Dec. 9, 2016 (Cleveland) – “Courting Justice,” a forum on fines, fees and bail facilitated by Tavis Smiley, will be broadcast on WVIZ/PBS ideastream on Dec. 13 and 14 at 11:30 p.m. and on most PBS stations nationwide. The forum is part of an initiative developed by Tavis Smiley and the National Center for State Courts to stage a series of forums around the country. These events allow judges to engage with the communities they serve and provide stakeholders from disenfranchised communities an opportunity to discuss the issues that erode trust in the judicial system and offer solutions.

An audience composed of community and grassroots leaders, legal professionals, and citizens adversely impacted by the justice system participated in a live recording of the forum in Cleveland on Dec. 8. The panelists for the forum included: Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio Maureen O’Conner, Cleveland Municipal Court Judge Ronald Adrine, Former Supreme Court of Ohio Justice Yvette McGee Brown, and Lakewood Municipal Court Judge Pat Carroll.

The Cleveland Foundation, The City Club of Cleveland and ideastream are collaborating with the national partners on the forum and with other interested partners on a subsequent community engagement initiative that will continue the conversation through forums throughout Ohio over the next year.

Both Civic Commons ideastream and The City Club of Cleveland will facilitate the year-long community engagement. The initiative will include self-organized and hosted community discussions, and panel discussions and speaker presentations at The City Club of Cleveland. A culminating event will be held at the Idea Center at Playhouse Square that brings together all groups and individuals engaged throughout the year to discuss potential policy actions and ideas generated and additional efforts needed to reform the criminal justice system throughout Ohio and beyond.

The attached fact sheet illustrates an extension of the program through community engagement and online resources.

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#### **Media contacts**

**Marissa Norris, ideastream, 216-916-6318, [marissa.norris@ideastream.org](mailto:marissa.norris@ideastream.org)**

**Stephanie Jansky, the City Club, 216-350-5577, [sjansky@cityclub.org](mailto:sjansky@cityclub.org)**

**Michael Murphy, Cleveland Foundation, 216-615-7003, [mmurphy@clevefdn.org](mailto:mmurphy@clevefdn.org)**

### **About ideastream**

The mission of [ideastream](#) is to strengthen our communities. ideastream pursues this mission as a multiple media public service organization by providing distinctive, thought-provoking programs and services that enlighten, inspire, educate and entertain.

### **About The City Club of Cleveland**

The [City Club of Cleveland](#) is dedicated to creating conversations of consequence that help democracy thrive. A product of the Progressive Era, the City Club was founded in 1912 and is renowned for its tradition thoughtful debate and discussion. For more than a hundred years, audience members have posed unscripted questions to every speaker, from sitting presidents to community activists, striving to fulfill the vision of strong and informed communities and individuals that prize freedom of speech and civil, civic dialogue.

### **About the Cleveland Foundation**

The [Cleveland Foundation's](#) mission is to enhance the lives of all residents of Greater Cleveland, now and for generations to come, by working together with our donors to build community endowment, address needs through grantmaking, and provide leadership on key community issues.

### **About The National Center for State Courts**

The [National Center for State Courts](#), headquartered in Williamsburg, Va., is a nonprofit court organization dedicated to improving the administration of justice by providing leadership and service to the state courts. Founded in 1971 by the Conference of Chief Justices and Chief Justice of the United States, Warren E. Burger, NCSC provides education, training, management and research services to the nation's state courts.

### **About Tavis Smiley**

[Tavis Smiley](#) is currently host of the late night television show Tavis Smiley on PBS, now in its 13th season, as well as "The Tavis Smiley Show" on Public Radio International. He is the author or co-author of 20 books, and his non-profit Tavis Smiley Foundation is now in the midst of a \$3 million four-year campaign called "Ending Poverty: America's Silent Spaces" to help focus on alleviating endemic poverty in America. TIME magazine named Smiley to the TIME 100, a list of "The World's 100 Most Influential People."

## **FACT SHEET**

### **Current Challenge**

Issues relating to fines, fees and bail impact every community in the country but those issues are of particular interest in Cleveland and northeast Ohio because those involved in the leadership of reform efforts live here in our community.

In partnership with the National Center for State Courts, Tavis Smiley, host of the late night television talk show “Tavis Smiley” on PBS, is convening a series of forums under the banner “Courting Justice.” At these forums, judges from around the country are engaging with the communities they serve and are providing stakeholders from communities an opportunity to discuss the issues that erode trust in our judicial system, while offering real world solutions. The first of the forums was held in Los Angeles and broadcast on PBS stations as part of the “Tavis Smiley” series in June. The second forum was held in Little Rock, Arkansas on Sept. 23 and recorded for broadcast on Sept. 28 and 29 on PBS stations as part of the “Tavis Smiley” series.

### **Program Description**

A Courting Justice forum will be held at the Idea Center at Playhouse Square in Cleveland on Dec. 8 at 11 a.m. and recorded for broadcast on PBS stations across the country as part of the “Tavis Smiley” series over two half-hour programs. Courting Justice is a series of forums where judges engage with the communities they serve, provide stakeholders an opportunity to discuss the issues that continue to erode trust in the judicial system, and solutions.

An audience composed of community and grassroots leaders, legal professionals, and citizens adversely impacted by the justice system has been invited to participate.

Panelists include the following: Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio Maureen O’Conner, Cleveland Municipal Court Judge Ronald Adrine, Former Ohio Supreme Court of Ohio Justice Yvette McGee Brown, and Lakewood Municipal Court Judge Pat Carroll.

The Cleveland Foundation, The City Club of Cleveland and ideastream are collaborating with the national partners on the forum and with other interested partners on a subsequent community engagement initiative that will continue the conversation through forums throughout Ohio over the next year. Both Civic Commons ideastream and The City Club of Cleveland will facilitate the year-long community engagement. The initiative will include self-organized and hosted community discussions, and panel discussions and speaker presentations at The City Club of Cleveland. A culminating event will be held at the Idea Center at Playhouse Square that brings together all groups and individuals engaged throughout the year to discuss potential policy actions and ideas generated and additional efforts needed to reform the criminal justice system throughout Ohio and the U.S.

The City Club of Cleveland will sponsor a series of forums and community discussions throughout the year. Civic Commons ideastream will develop a community engagement package that can be utilized

by interested nonprofit community groups to conduct discussions in communities throughout Ohio. The package will include an ideastream-produced multiple media feature describing the impact of current policies and reform efforts. In addition, ideastream will edit carefully selected segments of the Tavis Smiley forum, including conversation prompts, and put together a discussion guide for use by interested nonprofit community groups including:

- Organizer tips for running a successful engagement session – e.g. the principles of engagement to consider
- Sample agenda for the engagement session
- Resources, both technical and human, needed to pull off a successful engagement for each of the engagement options
- Moderator tips (e.g. techniques to support participatory conversations) and suggested prompts that elaborate on and complement the prompts in the video
- Articulating means of capturing the engagement session from taking notes on a laptop to full video/audio recording and uploading and providing forms to easily fill in with input shared during the engagement session

The materials will be made available through the web at no cost for use in community forums on a noncommercial basis.