



News Release

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Judiciary Develops Technology to Share Mental Health Information with Law Enforcement

The Judiciary is playing a critical role in providing mental health information for gun background checks, Chief Justice Stuart Rabner announced today.

The Civil Commitment Automated Tracking System (CCATS) was developed by the Administrative Office of the Courts to supply accurate and timely information to the New Jersey State Police concerning the identity of people who have mental health adjudications or commitments that would disqualify them from obtaining firearms.

The New Jersey State Police forwards the information to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), the national system used by law enforcement to check the backgrounds of those seeking to obtain firearms.

The Judiciary has forwarded to the state police nearly 413,000 records of involuntary commitments, or those cases in which judges have found mentally ill persons to be dangerous to themselves or others.

So far, approximately 200 “hits” against CCATS data have occurred in the course of background checks performed around the country.

“I am proud of the work our staff has done to build the database and backload relevant case information so the New Jersey State Police can share the information with other law enforcement agencies,” said Chief Justice Stuart Rabner. “This database will help promote public safety not only in New Jersey, but in every state.”

The Judiciary developed CCATS with a grant from the NICS Improvement Amendment Act that was signed into law on Jan. 8, 2008. The \$860,331 grant covered the costs associated with building the database.

An additional \$2.7 million grant enabled the courts to enter about 623,000 existing cases into the database. The database includes cases filed in all 21 counties from 1975 to today.

Recent legislation will allow the Judiciary to forward thousands of cases involving those who voluntarily seek admission to mental health treatment facilities using the existing infrastructure.

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