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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT ANNOUNCES THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF THE CONCORD PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT SESSION**

It is with deep regret that the Probate and Family Court announces the temporary closure of the Concord Session of the Probate and Family Court due to the budget crisis and the shortage of staff to run the sessions in Concord. The effective date of this change is January 1, 2010. We expect this suspension of sessions in Concord to be temporary and will work to open the session when we are able to obtain sufficient staff to do so.

We carefully listened to the valid concerns expressed by the Bar both at our recent meeting and by email, however, our circumstances make it extraordinarily difficult to continue to deliver justice in one location in Middlesex County, let alone four locations. In the last couple of months, the Middlesex Probate and Family Court lost ten people to voluntary retirements and layoffs. Our remaining employees simply cannot service the session in Concord and still operate in Cambridge effectively given the volume of cases in Middlesex County.

At this time, we will continue operating the Marlboro and Lowell sessions. The Cambridge Probate and Family Court will attempt to accommodate those traveling long distances in the Cambridge, Marlboro and Lowell sessions. Additionally, the current policy of uncontested cases being heard by any judge, independent of the individual calendar system, will continue in Marlboro provided prior arrangements are made.

We expect to have a dedicated email address to allow you to quickly address problems you may be having with scheduling. Please go to our website at <http://www.mass.gov/courts/courtsandjudges/courts/probateandfamilycourt/index.html> for more information.