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Newsroom: Savage on Mentally Ill Convicts

Roger Williams University School of Law

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Newsroom

Savage on Mentally Ill Convicts

Distinguished Jurist in Residence Judge Judith Savage discusses ways to avoid repeated imprisonment of those with mental health problems.

From the PROVIDENCE JOURNAL: [“Summit examines ways to deliver proper treatment to R.I.'s mentally ill”](#) by Rich Salit, Journal Staff Writer



WARWICK, R.I., Jun. 8, 2015 — Recognizing that the state is falling short when it comes to caring for people with behavioral health problems — and too often imprisoning those struggling with addiction and mental illness instead of treating them — Governor Raimondo and other top state officials convened a day-long conference on Monday to discuss what's wrong with the state's health-care system and to identify potential solutions. [...]

That set the stage for **former Superior Court Judge Judith Savage, who** spent 20 years on the bench and **now is at Roger Williams University Law School focusing on mass incarceration**, to talk about ways to prevent people with behavioral health problems from repeatedly returning to jail.

"You have been shoveling against the tide," **she said**, urging the state to expand efforts that have begun on a small scale here, and on a larger scale in other states. [...]

While Rhode Island may have long ago succeeded in eliminating a system that relied on placing people with behavioral health problems into mental institutions, it now has created another problem.

"The ACI is not only our state prison, it is our largest mental hospital," **she said**. "I see brokenness. I see a broken mental health system, broken people. I don't see justice. I see injustice." [...]