

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:**

Rep. Jay Inslee Honors Court Commissioner Eric B. Watness as an *Angel in Adoption*<sup>TM</sup>  
To Be Recognized at National Event in Washington, DC

Seattle – September 2, 2010 – Congressman Jay Inslee has selected Eric B. Watness, King County Superior Court Commissioner, as a 2010 *Angel in Adoption*<sup>TM</sup> for his outstanding advocacy of adoption and foster care issues. The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI), which orchestrates the *Angels in Adoption*<sup>TM</sup> program, will honor Commissioner Watness, along with more than 190 Angels, at an awards ceremony and gala event in Washington, DC, October 6, 2010.

Commissioner Watness is being honored for his tireless efforts to improve efficiency in the Juvenile Court system in Washington State to help place children in permanent adoptive homes and out of foster care. Since his appointment to the King County bench in 1995 Commissioner Watness has displayed constant dedication to helping others within and outside the courtroom on countless occasions. He began his career with the Washington State Attorney General's Office in 1977 where he represented DSHS Child Protective Services and the Office of Child Support. Later, in private practice, his clients included each member of the adoption triad as well as serving as legal counsel for private adoption, foster care and Native American welfare agencies. Commissioner Watness recently organized a coalition of judicial officers, state agency staff, Assistant Attorney Generals, private adoption agency personnel and others to discuss strategies to improve and expedite each child's journey through the foster care system and into a permanent home. He lectures about and participates in advocacy efforts for improvement of the juvenile welfare system. And he and his wife, Carolanne Watness, at one time became licensed foster parents to assist in the care of two children in need. It is this exceptional level of selflessness and compassion that makes Commissioner Eric Watness a true Angel in Adoption. While Commissioner Watness does not seek recognition for his groundbreaking ideas and work, he definitely deserves it.

The *Angels in Adoption*<sup>TM</sup> program is CCAI's signature public awareness campaign and provides an opportunity for all members of the U.S. Congress to honor the good work of their constituents who have enriched the lives of foster children and orphans in the United States and abroad.

"The Angels in Adoption program is unlike any other program in the Nation's Capitol. Because of it, over 1600 "Angels" have come to share with Washington their adoption experience and left with a renewed excitement of all that adoption makes possible," said Kathleen Strotman. "I learned one simple lesson from my time on the hill, knowledge is power. Angels in Adoption is meant to give Members of Congress the knowledge they need to use the power they have toward making the dream of a family a reality for every child."

In addition to the more than 190 local angels from around the country, several National *Angels* will also be recognized at the ceremony and gala for their dedication and commitment nationally and internationally to child welfare on a grand scale. Former “National Angels” include First Lady Laura Bush, Patti LaBelle, Jane Seymour, Muhammad Ali, the late Dave Thomas, Steven Curtis Chapman, Bruce Willis, Alonzo Mourning, and Marcus Samuelsson.

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) is a 501(c)3 nonpartisan organization dedicated to raising awareness about the tens of thousands of orphans and foster children in the United States and the millions of orphans around the world in need of permanent, safe, and loving homes through adoption. CCAI’s goal is the elimination of the barriers that hinder these children from realizing their basic right of a family.

CCAI was created in 2001 by the active co-chairs of the bicameral, bipartisan Congressional Coalition on Adoption (CCA) to more effectively raise Congressional and public awareness about the issue of adoption.

*The Angels in Adoption*<sup>™</sup> program was established in 1999 as a Congressional press conference to honor outstanding individuals. Since then, the program has developed into a yearlong public awareness campaign culminating in an extraordinary awards Gala and celebration in Washington, D.C.

CCAI does not receive any government funding and they rely on the generous support of foundations, corporations, and individuals to accomplish their mission. For more information visit <http://www.ccainstitute.org/>