

Anna L. Berry, Mayor

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**Pro Bono Week Proclamation 2011**

WHEREAS, last year one in every four of the 941,000 Alabamians living in poverty experienced legal problems, with the majority of these civil problems being consumer issues , health issues , family law issues , employment issues and housing issues ; and

WHEREAS each year low-income citizens of Heflin lack access to legal assistance for their legal problems that are often critical to their safety and independence, forcing them to resolve complex legal problems on their own; and

WHEREAS, the need for legal aid in Alabama is dire, since unlike in the criminal defense system, funding for low-income Alabamians who need civil legal assistance is very slim ; and

WHEREAS, there are fewer than 60 paid legal aid lawyers to serve the more than 422,000 low-income households in the State of Alabama; and

WHEREAS, although 17 % of the members of the Cleburne County legal community donated their time and talents in free legal services each year, a huge unmet need for legal assistance remains for the disadvantaged in our area; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alabama continues to be impacted by recession and high unemployment, resulting in significant budget cuts to numerous State programs and services that would help fill the gap of indigent defense; and

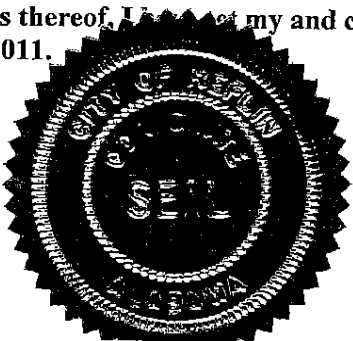
WHEREAS, as a result of the continuing needs of Alabama's residents, the demand for pro bono services by members of the Alabama State Bar has never been greater, and

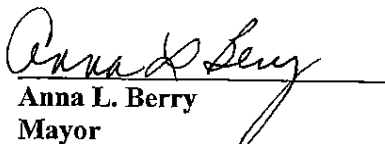
WHEREAS, sponsored by the Alabama State Bar and its Pro Bono Task Force, with support from local bar associations statewide, Pro Bono Week 2011, from October 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011, will educate the public about the extensive work Alabama lawyers are doing by donating their time to improve the lives of vulnerable members of our community; and

WHEREAS, Pro Bono Week 2011 will feature legal aid clinics throughout the State, assisting Alabamians who need legal assistance but cannot afford to pay for that help.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF HEFLIN does hereby proclaim October 23-29, 2011 to be PRO BONO WEEK, and urges all Heflin residents to recognize the contributions of our legal community helping those most in need.

In witness thereof, I, Anna L. Berry, do hereby certify and caused the seal of the City of Heflin to be affixed on this the 11<sup>th</sup> day of October 2011.



  
Anna L. Berry  
Mayor