



## PROCLAMATION

*Whereas*, last year one in every four of the 940,872 Alabamians living in poverty experienced legal problems, with the majority of these civil problems being issues (Medicaid, government insurance, nursing home), family law issues (divorce, child support/custody, abuse), employment issues (unemployment benefits, pension, lost job), and housing issues (unsatisfactory repairs, foreclosure, eviction, poor living conditions); and

*Whereas*, 16.5% of the citizens in Jefferson County live in poverty; and

*Whereas*, each year the low-income citizens of Jefferson County 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 has not yet been met, with the consequences being a lack of access to justice which is devastating for the poor and which weakens our democratic society as a whole; and

*Whereas*, there are fewer than 55 paid legal aid lawyers to serve the more than 422,119 low-income households in the State of Alabama; and

*Whereas*, although 29% of the members of the Jefferson 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*, sponsored by the Alabama State Bar and its Pro Bono Celebration Task Force, with support from the Birmingham Bar Association and other local bar associations statewide, Pro Bono Week 2011, from October 23 to 29, 2011, will educate the public about the extensive work that Alabama Lawyers are doing to improve the lives of vulnerable members of our community, and will encourage more individuals in the legal community to get involved in pro bono work and financially support the legal aid system; and

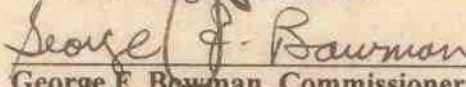
*Whereas*, Pro Bono Week 2011 will feature legal aid clinics throughout the State, assisting Alabamians who greatly need legal assistance but cannot afford to pay for that help, and will also feature service projects throughout the State of Alabama helping lawyers and law students make volunteer connections with legal aid organizations serving Alabamians:

*Now, therefore, Jefferson County*, does hereby proclaim October 23 – 29, 2011 to be PRO BONO WEEK, and urges all Jefferson County residents to recognize the contributions of our legal community in helping those most in need.

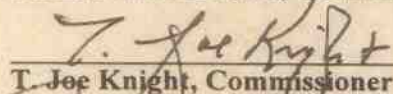
**DATED** this the 11th day of October, 2011.



  
W. D. Carrington, President

  
George F. Bowman, Commissioner

  
Sandra Little Brown, Commissioner

  
T. Joe Knight, Commissioner

  
James A. Stephens, Commissioner