



Proclamation

By the Governor of Alabama

WHEREAS, in a democratic society, access to justice is a fundamental and essential right; however, records show that one in every four of the more than 900,000 Alabamians living in poverty experience legal problems with the majority of these being civil problems, consumer issues, bankruptcy issues, health issues, family law issues, employment issues and housing issues; and

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

WHEREAS, the need for civil legal aid in Alabama is dire, because 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 weakens our democratic society as a whole; and

WHEREAS, there are fewer than 60 paid legal aid lawyers to serve the more than 900,000 low-income citizens in the state of Alabama; and

WHEREAS, while members of the Alabama State Bar are vital members of their communities who donate thousands of hours in free legal service and make generous financial contributions to legal aid organizations in our state in an effort to improve the lives of others and the vitality of community organizations, a huge unmet need for civil legal assistance remains for disadvantaged Alabamians; and

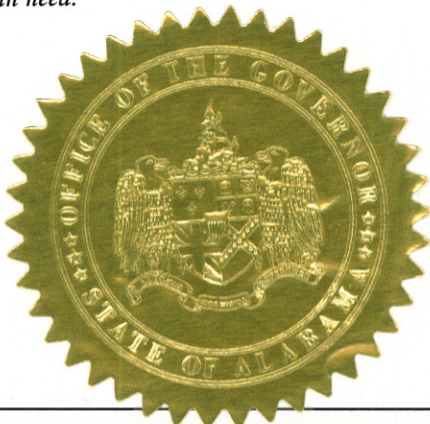
WHEREAS, sponsored by the Alabama State Bar and its Pro Bono Celebration Task Force, with support from local bar associations statewide, Pro Bono Month 2016 will educate the public about the extensive work Alabama lawyers are doing by donating their time to improve the lives of vulnerable members of our community, and 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 Month 2016 will feature legal aid clinics throughout Alabama, 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, I, Robert Bentley, Governor of Alabama, do hereby proclaim the month of October 2016, as

Pro Bono Month

in the state of Alabama, and urge citizens to recognize the contributions of our legal community helping those most in need.



Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the Office of the Governor at the State Capitol in the City of Montgomery on the 31st day of August 2016.

Robert Bentley
Robert Bentley, Governor