



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, last year, one in every four of the thousands of Louisianians living in poverty experienced legal problems, with the majority of these civil problems being consumer issues (creditor harassment, utility non-payment, bankruptcy issues), health 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, 17.5% of the citizens in Lafayette Parish live in poverty; and

WHEREAS, each year the low-income citizens of Lafayette Parish 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 Louisiana is dire, since unlike in the criminal defense system, funding for low-income citizens 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 15 paid legal aid lawyers to serve low-income households in the 16 parishes served by Acadiana Legal Service Corporation, including Lafayette Parish; and

WHEREAS, although many members of the Lafayette Parish 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, Pro Bono Week 2016, from October 23 – 29, 2016, will educate the public about the extensive work Lafayette lawyers are doing 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.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Joel Robideaux, Mayor-President of Lafayette Consolidated Government, do hereby proclaim the Week of October 23 – 29, 2016 as

“PRO BONO WEEK”

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Lafayette Consolidated Government to be affixed this 18th day of October, 2016.



***JOEL ROBIDEAUX, MAYOR-PRESIDENT
LAFAYETTE CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT***

