



Proclamation

By the Governor of Alabama

WHEREAS, records show that over 940,000 Alabamians live in poverty, and that of these, one in every four experienced legal problems. The majority of these problems were civil problems, 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, each year, the low-income citizens of Alabama 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 civil 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 422,000 low-income households in the State of Alabama; and

WHEREAS, although 2772 members of Alabama's legal community donated 5220 hours in free legal services last year and made generous financial contributions to legal aid organizations in our state, 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 Week 2009 will educate the public about the extensive work Alabama 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; and

WHEREAS, Pro Bono Week 2009 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:

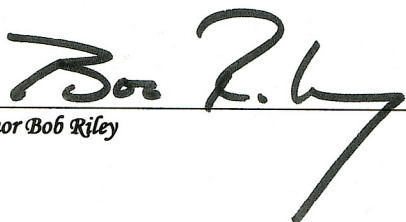
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bob Riley, Governor of Alabama, do hereby proclaim October 25 through October 31, 2009, as

Pro Bono Week

in the State of Alabama.



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 25th day of June 2009.


Governor Bob Riley