



CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution of Virginia in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

PRO BONO MONTH

WHEREAS, access to justice is a fundamental and essential right in a democratic society; and

WHEREAS, the Justice Gap is the difference between the level of legal assistance available and the amount that is necessary to meet the needs of low-income people; and

WHEREAS, 48 percent of low- and moderate-income households experience a legal problem each year; and

WHEREAS, one in eight Virginians are eligible for free legal services from Virginia's legal aid programs; and

WHEREAS, there are 160 legal aid lawyers throughout the Commonwealth, meaning there is one legal aid lawyer per 6,000 low-income individuals in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, more than 80 percent of the civil legal needs of the poor in Virginia and nationwide go unmet; and

WHEREAS, a recent study of Virginia's civil court system demonstrates that individuals who are represented by counsel are twice as likely to receive a favorable outcome in Virginia's courts compared to those who are unrepresented; and

WHEREAS, Rule 6.1 of the Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct and its comments provide that every active lawyer, regardless of professional prominence, should devote two percent of his or her professional time to pro bono public legal services activity; and

WHEREAS, pro bono work expresses the highest ideals of the legal profession, and makes a significant contribution to access to justice and the Rule of Law; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Access to Justice Commission exhorts Virginia lawyers to provide pro bono legal services to Virginians who cannot afford counsel; and

WHEREAS, the National Pro Bono Celebration is a coordinated effort to showcase the differences that pro bono lawyers make in their communities by substantially enhancing the access to justice;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ralph S. Northam, do hereby recognize October 2018 as **PRO BONO MONTH** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.