

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Adiel McKnight, Deputy Clerk of the Board

DATE: October 21, 2024

SUBJECT: **PROCLAMATION** re: Proclaiming the Week of October 20, 2024 as Pro Bono Law Week to Honor and Thank Attorneys who Volunteer Time and Expertise to Provide Legal Services to Those in Need

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

The proposed proclamation recognizes the important pro bono work those lawyers provide, providing individuals access to legal representation regardless of their means, ensuring that our justice system continues to uphold the fundamental principles of equity and fairness for all.

ANALYSIS:

Pro Bono Law Week highlights the over 243,691 hours of volunteer legal help given to individual and families throughout the state of Washington, with Jefferson and Clallam County Pro Bono Lawyers contributing over 750 hours annually, protecting civil liberties and representing low income residents with issues related to health care, consumer and financial services, domestic violence, child custody, foreclosure and eviction. Three in four state residents face urgent civil legal issues annually but less than 25 percent receive legal assistance that can improve economic security and personal safety. Today's proclamation presents a public opportunity to honor and thank the attorneys who volunteer their time and expertise to provide legal services to those in need.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Today's proclamation has no direct fiscal cost; however, the legal services provided pro bono have inestimable worth both to the judicial system and the citizens that are guaranteed access to the courts through the volunteer hours donated by attorneys.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Proclamation re: Proclaiming the Week of October 20, 2024 as Pro Bono Law Week

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator

10/16/24
Date

PROCLAMATION

PRO BONO LAW WEEK

WHEREAS, our justice system is founded on the fundamental principles of equity and fairness for all, and pro bono services grant individuals access to legal representation regardless of their means; and

WHEREAS, nearly three in four Washington residents face urgent civil legal issues each year, including issues related to health care, consumer and financial services, domestic violence, divorce, child custody, foreclosure, eviction, and abuse; but less than 25 percent receive legal assistance; and

WHEREAS, access to legal assistance can improve economic security and personal safety, protect civil liberties, and lead to a more just society; and

WHEREAS, legal services agencies, pro bono service programs, law-schools, the American Bar Association, the Washington State Bar Association, the Jefferson County Bar Association, and private firms throughout the state have enlisted the services of volunteer attorneys to address the legal needs of low-income people; and

WHEREAS, all attorneys licensed in Washington State are encouraged to provide at least 30 hours of free legal services annually to those unable to obtain legal counsel; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, volunteer attorneys in Washington State provided legal help to over 20,000 individuals and families. Additionally volunteer attorneys with Clallam-Jefferson County Pro Bono Lawyers provided over 750 hours of service; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT we, the Jefferson County Commissioners, proclaim the week of **October 20th - October 26th 2024**, as

PRO BONO LAW WEEK

in Jefferson County to honor and thank the attorneys who volunteer their time and expertise to provide legal services to those in need.

PROCLAIMED this 21st day of October, 2024

JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SEAL:

Kate Dean, Chair

ATTEST:

Heidi Eisenhour, Member

Carolyn Gallaway, CMC, Clerk of the Board

Greg Brotherton, Member