



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, across New York State, people who are economically disadvantaged benefit from voluntary services provided by the legal community and, in the interest of social justice and responsible jurisprudence, many legal firms partner with other components of the judicial system, educational institutions and social service agencies, to ensure accessibility of services to people in need of representation; and

Whereas, each year, thousands of lawyers in the Empire State devote a significant amount of time to *pro bono* work by providing legal services without fee to those unable to pay for such services – from tax and estate planning for the elderly to assisting victims of domestic violence in family court proceedings – and these attorneys continue to offer assistance in a range of legal areas to those who are financially disadvantaged; and

Whereas, by providing *pro bono* services to needy, low-income and underprivileged New Yorkers, many attorneys uphold a longstanding tradition of compassion and concern for people and to ensuring their rights as, over the years, the recipients of such services have been highly grateful for the generosity shown by our legal community that willingly shares its time and professional expertise to assist them; and

Whereas, providing legal services at no charge to the poor is a noble and time-honored tradition, and the phrase “pro bono publico” has become synonymous with those attorneys who demonstrate the type of selfless commitment and civic-mindedness envisioned by the framers of our common law system, and a week in honor of those who recognize a professional obligation to provide *pro bono* legal services – and who act accordingly – is well-deserved; and

Whereas, the week of October 25-31, 2009 is being celebrated as the first “National Pro Bono Week” by the American Bar Association, and the New York State Bar Association is proud to join in this observance by holding activities in support of the occasion and by encouraging attorneys across this State to participate in *pro bono* work, and all New Yorkers join to recognize those attorneys, law firms, and law students whose *pro bono* efforts have been especially noteworthy in reinforcing the importance of providing legal services to those unable to afford such assistance, as their conduct and character are deserving of our utmost admiration and praise;

Now, Therefore, I, David A. Paterson, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim October 25-31, 2009 as

PRO BONO WEEK

in the Empire State.



G i v e n under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State
at the Capitol in the City of Albany this twentieth day
of October in the year two thousand nine.

David A. Paterson

Governor

Lawrence Schwartz
Secretary to the Governor